



5 Ways to Get Involved Today

and help turn out the largest Native Vote ever this year!

ITCA Voter Training- Friday, July 27, 2012

Access to Data & State Voices Partnership

Native Vote is partnering with State Voices to provide tribes and tribal organizations access to important voter outreach and data management tools. Please email tsmallley@ncai.org if your community or organization is interested in learning more and taking advantage of this invaluable resource.

Native Vote Gear

Order Native Vote gear online today at <http://www.cafepress.com/nativevote> or contact us for information on bulk orders.

Voter Registration at IHS Facilities

In June, Demos released a report entitled *Ensuring Access to the Ballot for American Indians & Alaska Natives: New Solutions for Strengthening Democracy* proposing IHS facilities as a potential site for voter registration (<http://www.demos.org/publication/ensuring-access-ballot-american-indians-alaska-native>). Native Vote is working with coordinators to make this a reality.

Register Voters on Your Website

Native Vote is registering voters on its website through a Rock the Vote registration widget. Learn how you can register voters using this widget at <http://www.nativevote.org/page/website-tools>.

Plan a Native Vote Week Event

September 24-28th is Rock the Native Vote Week. Throughout this week, Native youth, tribal coordinators, and Native organizations, will be hosting events, registration drives, and rallies focused to raise awareness about the Native Vote. Sign up to host an event the Native Vote website: <http://www.nativevote.org/page/rock-the-nv-week>

To learn more and for more ways to get involved, visit NativeVote.org!

Native Pride. Native Power. Native Vote. Your Voice Counts!



What is Native Vote?

Native Vote is a nonpartisan campaign initiated by the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI). It is designed to encourage American Indian and Alaska Native people to exercise their right to vote. With the heightened political participation of Native people, Indian Country has become an increasingly powerful voting bloc. In recent years, the Native vote has been publicly acknowledged as making a visible difference in national, state, and local elections.

The Native Vote campaign is working closely with regional organizations, tribal governments, and urban Indian centers to create a strong and permanent infrastructure for election training that highlights voter registration, election protection policies, and voter education.

1. **Voter Registration and Get-Out-The-Native-Vote (GOTNV).** NCAI recognizes that a strong grassroots effort is needed; and encourages all tribes, regional, and inter-tribal organizations to have a Native Vote coordinator. There is a need to get the community mobilized early, starting with registration, as Native Americans are unregistered at higher rates than other communities. To mobilize and assist tribes with the upcoming elections, Native Vote is providing toolkits, updating the Native Vote webpage, distributing e-newsletters and promotional items, creating Public Service Announcements (PSAs), and hosting telephone conferences, webinars, and trainings.
 - a. **Youth Outreach.** The Native youth population is growing at a rate higher than the rest of the country. Native Vote in partnerships with other youth non-profit organizations will be working to reach out to these new and future voters. Part of this effort will include the development of a youth curriculum to encourage civic engagement and get them involved and be part of making a difference in their communities.
2. **Election Protection.** It is critical for voters to understand their rights, especially for those who do not actively participate in the political process. In collaboration with Election Protection coordinators, Native Vote ensures that every qualified voter has the opportunity to cast a ballot on Election Day. NCAI works with Native lawyers locally and nationally to assist with the Election Protection component of this campaign. In addition, NCAI is planning to distribute materials to assist all Native Americans in knowing their voting rights. This applies especially in response to new voter identification laws.
3. **Education.** This strategy is comprised of a three pieces; 1) Assisting Native voters to be educated on the candidates and ballot measures, 2) Educating the candidates on the issues Indian Country cares about and encourage them to develop Native policy platforms, and 3) Encouraging more Native people to run for offices. Native Vote will be preparing materials to aid in this effort, working with regional organizations and other non-profits to increase voter awareness and education efforts.
4. **Data Collection: Measuring the Impact of Native Vote.** Data on voter registration and voter turnout for American Indian and Alaska Native people has historically been complex and incomplete. During the 2008 election NCAI attempted to measure data on Native voter registration and voting turnout, and uncovered a host of methodological issues. It is NCAI's intention for the 2012 cycle to gather ideas on what we can accurately collect data on and what sources are available to Indian Country. We will share data collection and data tools with tribal



leaders to encourage them to utilize these methods. Understanding the voting patterns of Native people is key to understanding the impact of Native Vote and better streamlining future efforts.

Why is Native Vote important?

In every election, Native Vote is important. American Indians/Alaska Natives make up 1.7% of the United States population. That is 5,220,579 people. The Native Vote has the power to make or break an election. Senator Lisa Murkowski (AK) knows better than anyone the influence of Our Native Vote.

During the primaries for the 2010 election, incumbent Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) lost her position; she was out of the race. It was during this time that the state and the country saw the importance of Native Vote, stating during the 2011 State of Indian Nations speech that it “encourages Native people to take control of their destiny...and it does provide a strong incentive for candidates at every level to take the concerns of their native constituents seriously.” Because of the effort of Alaska Natives, Lisa Murkowski, ran on a write in campaign to successfully regain her Senate seat. Murkowski continued by saying “If you ever wonder about the success of a program. If you ever wonder if Native Vote works look no further than Alaska and the Lisa Murkowski write in campaign. I will tell each and every one of you that my success in running this historic making write in campaign would not have been possible, it *would not have been possible* (emphasis added), if Alaska’s Native people did not turn out at the poles, did not energize, did not come together as they did. And I deeply, deeply appreciate the trust that Alaska Native peoples have placed on me.”

Key Native Vote States

Every year key Native Vote states are selected based on the population of Native Voters, positions available, and the potential impact of the vote. For the 2012 Election, the key Native Vote States are:

Alaska	Michigan	North Dakota
Arizona	Minnesota	Oklahoma
Colorado	Montana	Oregon
Florida	Nevada	South Dakota
Iowa	New Mexico	Washington
Massachusetts	North Carolina	Wisconsin

What Can You (as an individual) Do?

- **Register to vote.**
- **Registers others to vote.** Get voter registration cards from your county and register eligible family members, friends, and tribal community members. There are numerous opportunities at high school events, powwows, and IHS clinics. We need a strong grassroots effort from all tribes!
- **Volunteer to be a Native Vote Coordinator.** Every reservation and Native community needs a Native Vote coordinator to get the community mobilized. Talk to your tribal leadership and volunteer to be a Native Vote coordinator.
- **Volunteer to be an Election Judge.** Volunteer with your county to be an “election judge” on Election Day. Our communities need familiar faces at the polls when we go in to vote.

For additional information, please contact Kellcee Baker at kbaker@ncai.org.





Focus States:

Alaska

With the largest proportion of American Indians and Alaska Natives than any other state, 229 in total, Indian Country has the ability to sway national, state, and local elections. American Indians and Alaska Natives make up 19.5% of the overall state population, and 16.9% of Alaskans who are 18 and over.

Arizona

With 23 tribes in the state, American Indians and Alaska Natives comprise 5.5% of the overall state population, and 4.9% of Arizonans who are 18 and over.

Colorado

The American Indian and Alaska Native population accounts for approximately 2.1% of the state's overall population, and 1.9% of Coloradans who are 18 and over. There are two federally recognized tribes in Colorado.

Florida

Florida is home to two federally recognized tribes. American Indians and Alaska Natives make up 0.9% of the state's population. Of that percentage .08% Floridians are over 18 years old.

Iowa

American Indians and Alaska Natives make up .08% of the Iowan population, of that .07% is 18 and older, making them eligible for the vote. Iowa is home to three federally recognized tribes.

Massachusetts

There are two federally recognized tribes in Massachusetts and American Indians and Alaska Natives make up .8% of the populations with .07% eligible to vote.

Michigan

American Indians and Alaska Natives make up 1.4% of the Michigan state population. The state is home to 12 tribes with 1.3% of the population eligible to cast a vote.

Minnesota

Minnesota's population is 1.9% American Indian/Alaska Native and of that 1.6% are 18 years old or older. There are 11 tribes in Minnesota.

Montana

Montana is home to seven federally recognized tribes. The American Indian and Alaska Native population is 7.9% with 6.5% eligible to vote.

Nevada

There are 19 federally recognized tribes in the state of Nevada; together they comprise 2.1% of the population. 1.9% are 18 and older.



New Mexico

American Indian and Alaska Natives are 10.7% of the overall population and 9.06% of eligible state voters. New Mexico is home to a total of 23 different tribes.

North Carolina

There is one federally recognized tribe in North Carolina. American Indians and Alaska Natives make up 1.9% of the population with 1.8% being at least 18 years old and eligible to vote.

North Dakota

The American Indian and Alaska Native population compose 6.4% of the state's overall population, and 5.1% of eligible voters. There are five federally recognized tribes in North Dakota.

Oklahoma

The state of Oklahoma has a substantial American Indian and Alaska Native population and is home to 38 tribes. They make up 12.9% of the state's overall population, and 11.1% of people who are 18 and over.

Oregon

Oregon is home to ten federally recognized tribes and an American Indian and Alaska Native population of 2.9%. Of that population 2.5% are eligible for the vote.

South Dakota

American Indians and Alaska Natives account for 10.1% of the overall state population and 7.9% of the state's voting population.

Washington

Washington is home to 28 federally recognized tribes. With 3% of the population being American Indian and Alaska Native the Native Vote accounts for 2.6 % of Washington's eligible voting population.

Wisconsin

With 11 tribes within the Wisconsin state borders 1.5% of the population is American Indian and Alaska and 1.5% of eligible Wisconsin voters.

For additional information, please contact Kellcee Baker at kbaker@ncai.org.





Places for Voter Registration in Indian Country

In order to maximize the Native vote, it is critical that American Indian and Alaska Native people actively participate in tribal, local, state, and national elections. To encourage this effort, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) has revitalized an extensive national effort to mobilize the Native vote in collaboration with regional organizations, local tribal governments, urban Indian centers, and non-governmental organizations. Unlike other areas throughout the nation, Indian Country can present unique challenges and strenuous conditions for voter registration. NCAI has compiled the following suggestions to assist with these challenges:

Before you begin registering:

- Make sure you know the procedures, rules, and deadlines for registering voters in your state and country. You can find this information on the Secretary of State website for your respective state.
- Gather data on voter registration from the county election officer. For example, you can request the number of registered voters by county and precinct to help measure your success.
- Purchase a complete list of registered voters from the county election office.
- Pick up stacks of voter registration cards at your county election office.

Register voters and leave voter registration cards at:

- **Tribal or local health facilities.** The traffic of patients at a local IHS facility is a great place to find people to register to vote. It also gives you time to educate the voter and recruit volunteers as they wait to be seen!
- **Tribal headquarters.** All tribal headquarters should have voter registration materials available to the public.
- **Local elementary and high schools.** Registering voters at local community schools will give parents and teachers convenient access to voter registration. It also gives you direct access to the next generation of unregistered voters - high school students who are 18 and over.
- **Tribal agencies.** Places like local housing, childcare, or economic agencies, are frequented by diverse populations every day.
- **Canvass.** Get-Out-The-Native-Vote (GOTNV) by canvassing your local community and housing areas to register people to vote.

Set up a voter registration booth at:

- **Powwows and other community events.** Setting up booths at places where your community gathers will give you immediate access to large groups of people.
- **Tribal Colleges.** Local colleges and universities offer an opportunity to get young people engaged into the political process at an early age.
- **Post Office.** Since local post offices receive the most visits at the beginning of the month, this would be the best time for voter outreach.

For additional information, please contact Kellcee Baker at kbaker@ncai.org





Getting People to Vote on Election Day in Indian Country

Campaign Preparation

- **List of Registered Voters.** Go to the County election office and buy a list of all the registered voters in your community. You can use this list to call and visit registered voters to encourage them to vote.
- **Register Voters.** As you are registering be sure to keep a list of those you have registered. Combine these names with the list from the County election office.
- **Time Off to Vote.** Meet with the tribe several months before the Election and encourage them to close the offices, or allow time, for voting.

Organize Volunteers

- **Official Election Judges.** *Most states require these volunteers to be trained several months in advance of Election Day.* Encourage tribal community members to volunteer to help facilitate the electoral process at designated voting locations.
- **Drivers.** Ask volunteers to drive around the community and provide transportation to the polling stations. Aside from personal cars, be sure to work with your tribe to secure tribal vans and buses.
- **Poll Watchers/Voter Counters ("Election Protection").** Try to place a Native Vote volunteer in every precinct that includes a tribal community. These volunteers should be able to answer voter questions in regards to polling locations, election rules, and general election information. If problems arise, they should document the problem and call the Election Protection team if the voter does not have the opportunity to fairly vote.
- **Door Knockers/Outreach.** Encourage volunteers to go door-to-door throughout the tribal community, make phone calls, and encourage people to vote on Election Day. The Poll Watchers/Voter Counters should also give them a list of people who have not voted by late afternoon on Election Day.

Advertise!

- **Post Flyers.** Make flyers with general Election Day information including a list of candidates and ballot questions and a directory of polling locations. Post these flyers throughout the community at tribal agencies, tribal council offices, IHS facilities, elder centers, post offices, and other community locations where tribal members often visit. Customize these flyers to fit your community, include your tribal language, important tribal issues, and other culturally appropriate information. This is your vote and your community.
- **Mail Flyers.** Because most tribal communities are rural, work with your tribe to distribute general Election Day information. Some tribes have been successful with mailing flyers in paycheck envelopes.
- **Radio.** Get the local radio station to announce the election date, candidates, and polling precincts. Make sure the announcements are given in your tribal language as well.
- **Powwows.** Powwow emcees frequently make community announcements. Urge them to talk about the importance of Native voting.



- **Schools.** “Bring your parents to the polls.” Not only are there a number of 18 year olds in high school, but the youth have proven to be among the best voter advocates in Indian Country. Urge school officials to encourage their students to bring their parents to the polls on Election Day.

On Election Day

- **Call Voters.** Hopefully you have been keeping a list of voters you have registered throughout the summer. If not, use your county election list and the tribal telephone book as a resource for voter outreach. Remind everyone to vote on Election Day by calling them the day before and the day of elections.
- **Visit Voters.** Go door-to-door in tribal housing areas with general election information. Offer to drive them to the polls if they need a ride.
- **Drive people to the polls.** Ask your tribe to offer transportation to the polling stations. Use casino buses, senior citizen buses, head start buses, or tribal program vans.
- **Involve your family.** Ask each voter to bring their entire family and friends to the polls to vote on Election Day.
- **Know the Stakes.** All the volunteers should be familiar with the candidates and major issues, so they can educate and encourage tribal members to vote on Election Day.

Helpful Hints

- Dress like your audience. This will avoid creating an *us and them* situation; voters will feel more at ease instead of feeling like they are being watched.
- Keep your messages short and simple with only one or two points. Voting should not seem over complicated, having too many messages can confuse or irate the voter.





Election Protection: Protecting the Right to Vote

Education of Individuals or Groups

Knowing your rights as a voter is critically important, especially for those who do not continuously participate in the political process. Native Vote can play an important role in getting this information to your community.

Each community should accommodate voters who have special voting barriers, such as second-language speakers, victims of abuse, ex-felons, homeless persons, and those with disabilities. In recent years, much work has been done to address the voting needs of these constituencies; for example, when victims of domestic violence register to vote, their information is strictly confidential and there are resources available to help homeless voters establish residency. Public education, combined with community organization, can make a tremendous difference in voter protection throughout Indian Country.

Voting Rights Hotline: 1-866-OUR-VOTE

Native Vote is part of the Election Protection Coalition that was established to protect the rights of citizens across the country. The Coalition has established a hotline to respond to the questions and concerns of voters. This hotline is used to identify problems before they arise, answer voter questions, and serve as a "crisis line" in the event of Election Day problems.

Training of Citizen Advocates and Legal Experts

Widespread training of citizen advocates will help keep our elections fair and clean. With training, ordinary citizens become the "eyes and ears" of democracy. They watch for problems at the polls, assist voters, and report irregularities if they arise. Election law is not complicated, but it is essential that advocates know the rules and hold election officials accountable. A simple training program can give people the knowledge they need to ensure a fair environment at the polls. Training is essential for people who are interested in poll monitoring or poll watching on Election Day. The rules for these positions vary by locality and must be understood by volunteers.

In addition to training citizen advocates, it is also important to create a well-trained legal team of lawyers, law students, and para-professionals who have particular knowledge of Indian Country and Election law. Native Vote is working with the Lawyers' Committee on Civil Rights Under Law (LCCR) to provide assistance in election protection for Indian Country.

Data Collection

If irregularities occur, it is important to document them well. This includes names and full contact information of those whose rights may have been violated and those that may have witnessed the event, and a detailed description of the potential violation. This information must be forwarded to the respective governmental body that is responsible for guaranteeing the election. If the problem resides in the bodies themselves, then report the incident to other legal entities, such as the Lawyers Committee on Civil Rights Under Law, American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), or the Civil Rights division of the Department of Justice.

This summary only provides general guidelines. It is not legal advice. Organizations should consult with an attorney on specific questions.



Rules for Being Non-Partisan

The Native Vote campaign is a nonpartisan initiative by the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI). As a nonpartisan and nonprofit campaign, we are allowed to conduct voter registration drives and engage in nonpartisan voter education and turnout activities. By law, however, we are forbidden from engaging in partisan political activity in support of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office. There are two severe consequences for violating this law. First, our tax-exempt status may be revoked. Second, our campaign loses its reputation as being a reliable nonpartisan source for voters. The American Indian and Alaska Native population has made political progress in the last decade because our issues are nonpartisan. Consequently, political parties are compelled to compete for our vote.

Native Vote Volunteers CAN:

- Conduct nonpartisan voter registration drives.
- Host nonpartisan education sessions about participation in the political process.
- Inform people of their right to vote, provide a list of candidates, and communicate when and where to vote on Election Day.
- Distribute material educating voters about the issues at stake in the election. For example, the following language is admissible: "This election will affect taxation, IHS funding, and trust reform."
- Reach out specifically to American Indian and Alaska Native voters.
- Invite all candidates to an event to discuss their views.
- Educate the candidates on tribal issues.
- Work with all political parties to get positions included on the party's platform (with certain restrictions).
- Produce and distribute unbiased candidate questionnaires.
- Encourage voters by phone, canvass door to door, or broadcast public service announcements on the radio to remind people to vote on Election Day.

Native Vote Volunteers CANNOT:

- Endorse a specific candidate, party or PAC.
- Encourage or discourage support of a particular candidate.
- Contribute money to, or provide services for, a political candidate, party, or PAC.
- Work with a political candidate, party, or PAC in planning or carrying out voter registration, education, or turnout activities.
- Ask a candidate to sign a pledge on any issue (tacit endorsement).
- Wear candidate or party items while registering voters or working the polls.
- Publish or communicate anything that explicitly or implicitly favors or opposes a candidate.

Unlike Native Vote, Tribes *can* endorse and openly support a candidate. Native Vote team members *cannot*. All endorsements must come directly from the Tribe.

This summary only provides general guidelines. It is not legal advice. Organizations should consult with their attorney on specific questions.





Questions to Consider Before You Vote!

1. Does the candidate know and understand the U.S. Constitution and how it pertains to Indian Nations?

The Constitution is the legal foundation that recognizes Indian Nations as sovereign governments, so it is critical that your representative will fully understand and respect its importance.

2. Does the candidate understand the constitutional relationship between the U.S. Federal Government and federally-recognized tribes?

American Indian and Alaska Native tribes have a unique government-to-government relationship with the U.S. government that has existed since the formation of the United States.

3. Does the candidate understand tribal sovereignty?

An understanding of tribal sovereignty is vital for adequate representation. Tribal sovereignty allows tribes to regulate tribal land, taxes, zoning, resources, and the conduct of tribal members.

4. Does the candidate support tribal sovereignty and self-determination?

Self-governance is essential if tribal communities are to continue to protect their unique cultures and identities. In order to move forward, tribal communities need representatives that will honor and support tribal sovereignty in the national arena.

5. What is the candidate's motivation for running?

Is the candidate running because they want to bring good to the community? Will this individual be the most cohesive voice that will represent the entire community? Be cautious when assessing whether the candidate is running for you or for him/herself

6. Has the candidate visited your reservation or tribal community?

It is almost impossible to truly realize the unique challenges and obstacles that Indian communities face without witnessing it in person.

7. Does the candidate have personal integrity to keep specific campaign promises related to Indian Country?

Although it may be unpopular, will the candidate support and defend tribal interests?

8. What about the candidate or their past behavior makes you confident they will keep their promises?

Candidates tend to make promises, so it is important to look at their history. Do they actually follow through with their promises or do they just say what the voters want to hear?

9. When has the candidate been true to their word even to their own harm?

Actions speak louder than words. If the candidate has stood up for Indian issues in the past, then there's a good possibility that he/she will do it again.

10. If the candidate has already served in office, what was their voting record?

Indian Country needs representatives who will support and advocate on behalf of tribal members!





Key States Registration Deadlines, Polling Locations and General Election Polling Times (November 6th)

<p style="text-align: center;">Alaska</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Voter Registration Deadline: October 7 (postmarked)</p> <p>Polling Locations: https://webapp.state.ak.us/electionsLookup/JSP/VoterLookupMain.jsp</p> <p>Polling Hours: 7:00am to 8:00pm (AST). Alaska Time covers most of the state except for the Aleutian Islands west of Umnak Island (approximately half of Aleutian Islands). The media considers Alaska's polls to close at 8 PM Alaska Time and, thus, considers the State "callable" after that hour.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Arizona</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Voter Registration Deadline: October 9</p> <p>Polling Locations: https://voter.azsos.gov/VoterView/PollingPlaceSearch.do</p> <p>Polling Times: 6:00am to 7:00pm (MST)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Colorado</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Voter Registration Deadline: October 9</p> <p>Polling Locations: Visit your County Election Office website for polling location information, http://www.sos.state.co.us/pubs/elections/Resources/CountyElectionOffices.html</p> <p>Polling Times: 7:00am to 7:00pm (MST)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Florida</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Voter Registration Deadline: October 9</p> <p>Polling Locations: Visit your Supervisor of Elections website for polling information, http://election.dos.state.fl.us/soe/supervisor_elections.shtml or visit http://registration.elections.myflorida.com/CheckVoterStatus</p> <p>Polling Times: 7:00am (EST) & 7:00am (CST) to 7:00pm (EST) & 7:00pm (CST). Relatively small portions of this state are in CST and so the vast majority of the polls are closed by the time indicated EST.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Iowa</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Voter Registration Deadline: October 27 (Or in person on Election Day)</p> <p>Polling Locations: https://sos.iowa.gov/elections/voterreg/pollingplace/search.aspx</p> <p>Polling Times: 7:00am to 9:00pm (CST)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Massachusetts</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Voter Registration Deadline: October 17</p> <p>Polling Locations: http://www.wheredoivotema.com/bal/myelectioninfo.php</p> <p>Polling Times: 7:00am to 8:00pm (EST). By local option, municipalities may open their polls as early as 5:45am.</p>

Michigan

Voter Registration Deadline: October 16

Polling Locations: <https://webapps.sos.state.mi.us/mivote/>

Polling Times: 7:00am (EST) & 7:00am (CST) to 8:00pm (EST) & 8:00pm (CST) Small portions of this state are in Central Time.

Minnesota

Voter Registration Deadline: October 16 (or in person on Election Day)

Polling Locations: <http://pollfinder.sos.state.mn.us/>

Polling Times: 7:00am (EST) & 7:00am (CST) to 8:00pm (EST) & 8:00pm (CST). Relatively small portions of this state are in Central Time and so the vast majority of the polls are closed by the time indicated Eastern Time, when the networks feel they can project.

Montana

Voter Registration Deadline: October 7 (postmarked, or in person on Election Day)

Polling Locations: http://sos.mt.gov/elb/voter_information.asp#vote

Polling Times: 7:00am to 8:00pm (MST). A polling place with less than 400 registered voters must be open at least from noon to 8pm or until all registered electors have voted.

Nevada

Voter Registration Deadline: October 16

Polling Locations: <http://sos.state.nv.us/elections/>

Polling Times: 7:00am to 7:00pm (MST)

New Mexico

Voter Registration Deadline: October 9

Polling Locations: <https://voterview.state.nm.us/>

Polling Times: 7:00am to 7:00pm (MST)

North Carolina

Voter Registration Deadline: October 12

Polling Locations: <http://www.sboe.state.nc.us/PrecinctFinder.aspx>

Polling Times: 6:30am to 7:30pm (EST). In extraordinary circumstances, the county board of elections may direct that the polls remain open until 8:30 p.m.

North Dakota

Voter Registration Deadline: No registration

Polling Locations: <http://www.nd.gov/sos/electvote/voting/index.html>

Polling Times: Polling hours 7:00am (CST) & 7:00am (MST) to 9:00pm (CST) / 9:00pm (MST). Voting places open between 7:00am to 12:00pm and remain open until 7:00p to 9:00p depending on the size of the town.

Oklahoma

Voter Registration Deadline: October 12

Polling Locations: <http://www.ok.gov/elections/ppi/index.php>

Polling Times: 7:00am to 7:00pm (CST)

Oregon

Voter Registration Deadline: October 16

Polling Locations: Visit your County elections Offices website for polling locations

<http://www.sos.state.or.us/elections/other.info/clerk.htm>

Polling Times: Close at 8:00pm (MST) & 8:00pm (PST). Oregon votes by mail. Ballots must be in the hands of election workers or in an official drop-off location no later than 8 PM local time.

South Dakota

Voter Registration Deadline: October 6 (postmarked)

Polling Locations: <http://apps.sd.gov/applications/st25cers/>

Polling Times: 7:00am (CST) & 7:00am (MST) to 7:00pm (CST) / 7:00pm (MST)

Washington

Voter Registration Deadline: October 8

Polling Locations: Visit your County Election Department website for polling locations:

<http://www.secstate.wa.gov/elections/auditors.aspx>

Polling Times: 7:00a (PST) to 8:00p (PST). Washington votes by mail. Mail ballots must be post-marked on or before Election Day.

Wisconsin

Voter Registration Deadline: October 17 (or in person on Election Day)

Polling Locations: <http://vpa.wi.gov/VoterSearchScreen.aspx?Language=en-us>

Polling Times: 7:00am to 8:00p (CST)



Key States Presidential and Congressional Primary Dates

(Data as of 2/1/12)

Note: Dates Subject to Change / S Indicates Senate Election / General Election Data 11/6/12

State	Presidential Primary Date	Presidential Caucus Date		Congressional Primary Date	Congressional Runoff Date
Alaska		3/6		8/28	
Arizona	2/28		S	8/28	
Colorado		2/7		6/26	
Florida	1/31		S	8/14	
Iowa		1/3		6/5	
Massachusetts	3/6		S	9/6	
Michigan	2/28		S	8/7	
Minnesota		2/7	S	8/14	
Montana	6/5		S	6/5	
Nevada		2/4	S	6/12	
New Mexico	6/5		S	6/5	
North Carolina	5/8			5/8	7/17
North Dakota		3/6	S	6/12	
Oklahoma	3/6			6/26	8/28
Oregon	5/15			5/15	
South Dakota	6/5			6/5	6/26
Washington	3/3		S	8/7	
Wisconsin	4/3		S	8/14	

Other state data available here: <http://www.fec.gov/pubrec/fe2012/2012pdates.pdf>



Major Political Party Contact Information By State

Democratic Party Contact Info	Republican Party Contact Info
Alaska	
<p>Patti Higgins, Chair 2602 Fairbanks Street Anchorage, AK 99503 Phone: 907-258-3050</p> <p>Email: info@alaskademocrats.org Website: www.alaskademocrats.org</p>	<p>Randy Ruedrich, Chair 1001 West Fireweed Lane Anchorage, AK 99503 Phone: 907-276-4467</p> <p>Email: chairman@alaskarepublicans.com Website: www.alaskarepublicans.com</p>
Arizona	
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Prepared by Native Vote – current as of March 2, 2012

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**Rock the Vote Democracy Class Curriculum
National Congress of American Indians' Supplement to
Rock the NATIVE Vote!**

Civically informed youth are civically engaged youth! NCAI has developed this Native specific supplement for Rock the Vote's "Democracy Class." The class is a one-class-period program that uses video, a classroom discussion and a mock election to teach young people the skills to navigate the elections process and engage as active citizens. Almost 10 percent of Native people (474,649 people) are between the ages of 15-19 so engaging Native young people is critical to building civically engaged Native people.

This curriculum supplement is intended to help educators, tribal youth staff, and tribal leaders teach Native youth about the history and unique importance of Native Vote, the importance of participating in elections that inevitably impact tribal communities, and the reality that every voice and every vote counts. For more information about the Native Vote campaign, visit our website: www.NativeVote.org or email tsmallley@ncai.org.

I. History of the Native Vote

Trivia Question: When were American Indians and Alaska Natives given the right to vote?
(ANSWER: 1970)

Most people think that American Indians and Alaska Natives were given the right to vote in 1924 when President Coolidge signed the Indian Citizenship Act. However, it was **not until 1970, when the Voting Rights Act was passed**, that major restrictions facing American Indians and Alaska Natives voters were removed in every state. . This act ensured that Native people could participate as voters in state and national elections.

The Indian Citizenship Act extended citizenship rights to a significant number of American Indians and Alaska Natives who had become US citizens by other means (for example, serving in the military, or giving up their tribal status and affiliation). But not all the states removed limits on American Indian voters.

In 1948 the *Trujillo v. Garley*, struck down limitations in the New Mexico Constitution that prevented American Indians living on the reservation from voting. This case led New Mexico (one of the last hold-out states) to remove voting restrictions affecting American Indians living on reservations. Native people in Maine did not receive the right to vote in national elections until 1954 or in state elections until 1967. Native people in Colorado facing literacy test requirements were some of the last to be enfranchised in 1970 with the Voting Rights Act, which made these sorts of voter eligibility requirements illegal.

The National Congress of American Indians, which was established in 1944, was involved in the earliest efforts to secure and enforce voter rights for all Native peoples and remains committed to Native Vote today.

Trivia Question: What percentage of American Indians and Alaska Natives over the age of 18 are registered to vote? (ANSWER: only 66 percent compared to 74 percent of non-Hispanic Whites)

Recent data suggests that **over 1,000,000 eligible American Indians and Alaska Natives were not registered to vote in the 2008 elections.**ⁱ – this represents **34 percent of the total Native population over 18.** I think of it this way: if there are three seniors in your class who are American Indian or Alaska Native, one of them is not registered to vote.

II. Voting Rights in the Early US Constitution

Surprisingly, there is no exact language in the US Constitution that says that citizens have the “right to vote.” The US Constitution does, however, set out the rules by which the US President and Congress are elected. The Privileges and Immunities Clause of Article Four and the 14th Amendment, however, **serve as the basis for all federal voting rights laws.** This clause also prohibits specific discrimination in voting. **Overall, states determine individual voter eligibility** or “Qualifications.” however certain amendments to the US Constitution (such as the 14th, 15th, 19th, and 24th Amendments or the Voting Rights Act of 1965) limit states’ authority over voter eligibility and elections. These limits are intended to protect individuals or groups in the name of democracy. American Indian and Alaska Native peoples have a unique political status and relationship with the federal government, whereas **the relationship between tribal governments and state governments** – who oversee elections – can be more problematic.

III. What’s So Different about Native People?: The Unique Political Status of American Indians & Alaska Natives

During the 1961 American Indian Chicago Conference *The Voice of the American Indian, the Declaration of Indian Purpose* was created to speak out against US termination policies, enacted to assimilate Indian tribes into mainstream American society.

[Read excerpt from *The Declaration of Indian Purpose*]

The document begins: *“We the Indian People must be governed by principles in a democratic manner with the right to choose our way of life. Since our Indian culture is threatened by the presumption of being absorbed by the American society we believe we have the responsibility of preserving our precious heritage. We believe that Indians must provide the adjustment and thus freely advance with dignity to a better life.”*

Tribal governments are America’s oldest governments. American Indian and Alaska Native people inhabited the land that is now called America long before the founding of the United States and the US Constitution. American Indians and Alaska Natives are not another racial or ethnic group, such as Latinos or African Americans, but have a **unique, sovereign political status, acknowledged in the US Constitution**, various Supreme Court rulings, Executive Orders, Acts of Congress, and other federal policies.

American Indian and Alaska Native tribes have the same government status as states and the federal government. The Commerce Clause of the US Constitution acknowledges Indian tribes alongside states and foreign nations:

“Congress shall have the power to regulate Commerce with foreign nations and among the several states, and with the Indian tribes”.

This clause, also called the Indian Commerce Clause, recognizes Indian tribes’ **authority to self-govern**, which includes the right to:

- Establish their own governing systems,
- Determine who are tribal citizens,
- Tax citizens and others on their lands,
- Protect their borders, and
- Issue and enforce laws – though, just as states are limited, tribes cannot print or issue their own currency or declare war.

All of the land that is today the United States was first Indian land. The **US government signed many treaties** with tribal nations between 1787 and 1871 before, during, and after the Constitution was ratified in the states to secure land and establish relations with Native peoples. While the US no longer enters into treaty negotiations with tribes, the federal government is responsible to uphold the obligations included in treaties, Acts of Congress, and Executive Orders – together, these obligations are referred to as the **federal trust responsibility** towards Indian tribes and their citizens.

Part of this federal trust responsibility is providing health care to tribal citizens through the Indian Health Service and education through the Bureau of Indian Education. Some people “assume” that Native people have access to free health care and education, and do not pay taxes. This is false as American Indians and Alaska Natives pay federal income tax that contributes to paying for health and education services.

In the context of voting rights, the unique political status of Native peoples is important for three reasons:

- 1) Native peoples are often citizens of both their tribal nations and the United States;
- 2) States set voter eligibility requirements and do not have the same trust responsibility to tribes and their citizens as the federal government has; and
- 3) Federally-recognized tribes can help to increase Native voter registration and participation (for example, by providing community polling locations, issuing tribal identification cards and allowing same-day registration for their citizens).

IV. Native Voting Options

Tribal ID's: In many states, tribal ID's can be used by Native people to register and as proof of identity when casting a ballot. These include Alabama, Arizona, Idaho, Georgia, Michigan, Montana, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wisconsin. Poll workers must be better educated about the use of tribal ID's as some may turn Native voters away because they are not aware of the ID laws.

Early Voting: In some states like South Dakota, voters may have the option for early voting – which means that for a period of time before the election (e.g., 45 days), individuals can register to vote and cast a ballot at a specific location. This helps ease the burden faced by rural or elderly voters, including those living on reservations and tribal lands, who may have to travel large distances to vote, those who have to face challenging weather conditions, or those who may be moving back and forth between communities. However, there are reports that some states are trying to prevent early voting from being offered on reservations. (See <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2012/03/15/ballot-box-breakthrough-in-the-badlands-103079> for a related story)

Pre-Registration for those Under 18: Many states have laws that allow 16 and 17-year-olds to register to vote, ensuring they receive voter materials once they turn 18 in the hopes that this will increase the likelihood young people will participate in elections. This is particularly important for Native people given the young age of the population. (See <http://www.fairvote.org/youth-preregistration-fact-sheet/> for more information)

V. Power of the Native Vote

How many of you think your vote as a Native person matters? Let's talk about the power of the Native Vote.

- In 2006, US Senator John Tester (D-Montana) won his Senate seat over the Republican incumbent candidate by only 3,562 votes. In that election, more than **17,000 voters cast ballots on Montana's seven Indian reservations**. Tester's election shifted the balance of power in the US Senate that year, leading to a new Democratic Senate leadership and committee and legislative terrain.
- In 2010, US Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) became the **second person ever** to win a US Senate seat through a write-in campaign, having lost the primary to another

Republican candidate. Murkowski credits the significant power of the Alaska Native vote for her victory at the polls. She won by over 10,000 write-in votes in the general election – with over 100,000 people total writing in the name Murkowski.

Native Youth: YOU are Important!

Trivia Question: What percentage of the US population is American Indian or Alaska Native? (Over 5 million; 1.7%)

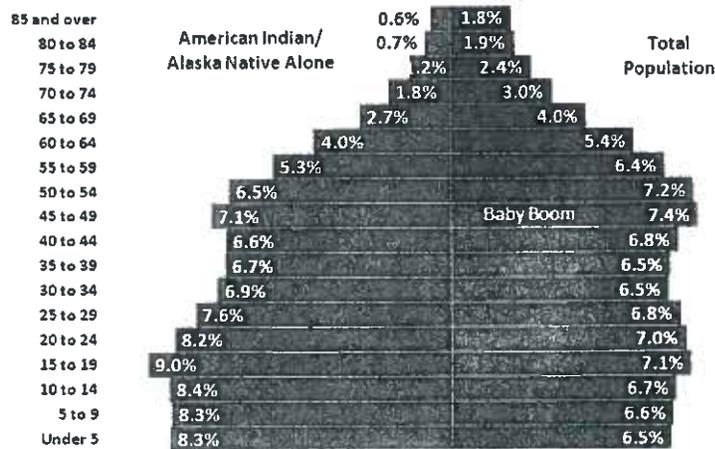
Trivia Question: What percentage of American Indians and Alaska Natives are under the age of 18? (30% nationally; over 40 percent in some states)

Trivia Question: What percentage of American Indians and Alaska Natives are under the age of 25? (42% nationally)

American Indians and Alaska Natives have the youngest population of any racial/ethnic group in the United States. **42 percent of the total American Indian and Alaska Native population** is under the age of 25.

We have witnessed a significant increase in the number of American Indians and Alaska Natives in the 15-19 age group. This age group is the largest age in the age distribution as displayed below making up over 260,000 Native youth (or nearly 1 in 10). These youth are finishing school, preparing for college, community leadership positions, or employment and are getting ready to vote for the first time — THIS MEANS YOU! Together we can make a difference by registering Native youth to vote.

Age Distribution, AIAN compared to Total US



Interesting Fact! Some states have larger American Indian and Alaska Native youth populations than others. For example, of the 71,817 American Indians in South Dakota, nearly 40 percent are under 18 years old!!

What does this mean for Native Youth?

In the next couple of years, even more Native young people will be able to vote and will likely be headed to college or other advanced education and training pathways. Be one of them!!

Tribal sovereignty stands as the legacy of generations of Native people who fought for our rights to self-determine and to participate in American democracy on our own terms. **Exercising your right to vote in tribal, national, state, and local elections honors this legacy** and helps to shape what it means to be Native American today and in the future.

[PLAY: Chaske Spenser PSA and That's My People PSA]

[Consider adding in SAMPLE ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION Section of Democracy Class Curriculum]

Key Policy Issues for Indian Country: Border security and public safety; digital communications and infrastructure (e.g., broadband and wireless technologies); educational equity; juvenile justice; public and mental health (e.g., diabetes and suicide prevention); environmental protection and climate change; economic and workforce development; cultural protection and sacred sites; anti-defamation and mascot issues.

Key Legislative Acts: Tribal Law & Order Act; Violence Against Women Act; Indian Health Care Improvement Act

¹ US Census Bureau, DataFerrett, Current Population Survey, Voting and Registration, November 2008. Analysis by Demos.