

What will I do to improve participation in this year's election?

I feel fortunate that my mother instilled in me the importance of voting. I was excited to cast my first vote and did so at 18 years old, as well as each consecutive year. I know there is power, followed by change, that comes with using your vote. I think a big barrier to more election participation is knowledge and time.

In today's generation, most of us get our information on policies, candidates, platforms, and overall, anything news-related online. People are busy working and many of us, especially after living through this years-long pandemic, are tired. I don't think people are doing research about candidates and their platforms due to their exhaustion. I think people feel too checked out to participate. I think it's important to utilize any platform to spread awareness about issues, so I plan to continue to utilize my social media to reach my followers and inform them on issues that I think are important to Native communities, especially Arizona Tribes.

I am currently a student in ASU's Indian Legal Program which leads the Arizona Native Vote Election Protection Project. I plan to become involved in their cause to ensure Native communities and their members have access to the polls and prevent voter disenfranchisement. I have witnessed attempted voter suppression at an Arizona poll where someone was being turned away. I stepped in and informed them it was their right to obtain a provisional ballot and the individual was able to cast their vote. I realized how important education is in these types of situations. Since then, I have posted voters' rights on my social media every election, to inform others.

What will I do to encourage my community's participation in this year's election?

Every year, I offer transportation to the polls to anyone that follows my social media. It is not always utilized, but I have provided multiple rides to people that otherwise would not have been able to make it to the polls. I extend this every year because I value marginalized voices. I don't believe in saviorism because the marginalized voices know best about their needs and what will make the best impact in their situation. Their votes are so important. In my little rural community, I think it is often those that have the least resources that are often ignored. Sometimes their polling place is not within walking distance and they would have no other way to vote, even though they want to. I will continue to provide transportation in my community to both municipal elections as well as Tribal elections.