



VOTING is
**Social
Work**

**FIELD
SEMINAR**

**FALL
2020**



IMPORTANCE OF VOTER ENGAGEMENT

- Through nonpartisan voter engagement, we hope to **increase voter turnout and civic engagement** in communities.
- We also hope to generate conversations within the profession about **social workers' responsibility to incorporate voter engagement into their practice.**
- We know that when people vote, there are benefits to individuals and communities including: **improved health, social connections, mental health and overall well-being.**
- Voting is an **important indicator of community health** and essential in any broader efforts **to address inequality and the social determinants of health.**
- The groups **most underrepresented among voters** are populations that social workers often work with directly.

VOTING IS SOCIAL WORK



The School of Social Work at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is part of a national movement to promote nonpartisan voter engagement.

This is your guide to including Fall 2020 learning activities related to *Voting Is Social Work* in your Learning Agreement.

VOTING IS SOCIAL WORK

With this module on voter education, students will:

- Live into our NASW Code of Ethics (section 6)
- Have relevant and important tasks for two Learning Agreement competencies (3 and 5) for the fall semester
- Stand strong with a nationwide social work initiative to make informed choices, promote social work values, and bring more voters to the polls.

NASW CODE OF ETHICS

6.02 Public Participation

Social workers should **facilitate informed participation by the public** in shaping social policies and institutions.

6.04 Social and Political Action

(a) Social workers should engage in **social and political action that seeks to ensure that all people have equal access** to the resources, employment, services, and opportunities they require to meet their basic human needs and to develop fully. Social workers should be aware of the impact of the political arena on practice and should **advocate for changes in policy and legislation** to improve social conditions in order to meet basic human needs and promote social justice.

NASW CODE OF ETHICS

6.04 Social and Political Action *continued...*

(b) Social workers should act to **expand choice and opportunity for all people**, with special regard for vulnerable, disadvantaged, oppressed, and exploited people and groups.

(c) Social workers should **promote conditions that encourage respect for cultural and social diversity** within the United States and globally. Social workers should promote policies and practices that demonstrate respect for difference, support the expansion of cultural knowledge and resources, advocate for programs and institutions that demonstrate cultural competence, and **promote policies that safeguard the rights of and confirm equity and social justice for all people**.

(d) Social workers should **act to prevent and eliminate domination of, exploitation of, and discrimination** against any person, group, or class on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, or mental or physical ability.

LEARNING AGREEMENT & RELEVANT COMPETENCIES

For a comprehensive list of possible practice activities within the Learning Agreement related to voter engagement:

<https://votingissocialwork.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2468/2020/01/Example-Practice-Activities-for-Voter-Engagement-Field-Ed-1.pdf>

EXAMPLES FROM THE LEARNING AGREEMENT

Competency 3 – Advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice

3.2 Engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice

Competency 5 – Engage in Policy Practice

5.1 Identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services.

5.2 Assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services.

5.3 Apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.

NOTE: Competencies 1, 4, and 6 through 9 related to Ethics & Professionalism, Engagement, Assessment, Intervention, and Evaluation may also be appropriate to voter education and engagement activities.

GETTING STARTED



- Download this [Agency Voter Engagement Flyer](#) describing the goals of the National Social Work Voter Mobilization Campaign and **10 ways agencies can make a difference** in voter engagement.
- Check out <https://votingissocialwork.org/> for lots of great information and ideas.
- Check out this **Field Education Toolkit** for more ideas and resources: <https://votingissocialwork.org/field-education-toolkit/>
- Order your **FREE Badge Backer and Lanyard** to help you provide clients with information on how to register to vote or request an absentee ballot: <https://vot-er.org/socialwork/> The badge can be easily seen by clients, colleagues and community members whether you are engaging with them in-person or remotely (note it may take 4-6 weeks to receive the lanyard so order yours now).

RELEVANT STEPS

1. Educate yourself. You can use NASW-NC's <https://www.naswnc.org/page/Voting> and Democracy North Carolina's <https://www.ncvoter.org/> to get started
2. Discuss with your Field Instructor how learning activities related to voter education and engagement might fit with your field agency and then be added to your Learning Agreement.
3. Get help from your Field Faculty if further guidance is needed.
4. Engage agency staff and clients with voter information in this critical election season once approved to do so.
5. Celebrate your advocacy efforts and demonstrate competency as part of your end-of-semester evaluation process.

Educate

Educate yourself

Find

Find your reps and print out your sample ballot.

Learn who you want to support.

Fill out your ballot so you can vote your values at local, state, and national levels.

Review

Go over the NC Board of Elections website and your county's Board of Elections website, so you understand where to find information for yourself and others, especially around Absentee Voting this fall.

Sign up

Get on the contact list for Democracy NC, a recommended source for election information and advocacy.

VOTER SEARCH: YOUR INFO

- Use this [Voter Search link](#) to locate your voting information and sample ballots. Share this link with others.
- Once you know your federal, state, and local district NUMBERS, you can do a web search to find your candidates' names.
- Then check them out—you can find out their stance on various issues and share that information with staff and clients as well as friends and family.

IT'S NOT ONLY THE PRESIDENT!

County Commissioners vote on social services funding, sheriff departments, environment, and school funding!

City Councils decide about police oversight, homeless shelters, and zoning for affordable housing!

State legislators (NC General Assembly) plan how mental health systems can operate, set college tuition, and vote on hundreds of issues that affect all of us.

***Do you know where
the candidates stand?***

CHECK WITH YOUR FIELD INSTRUCTOR

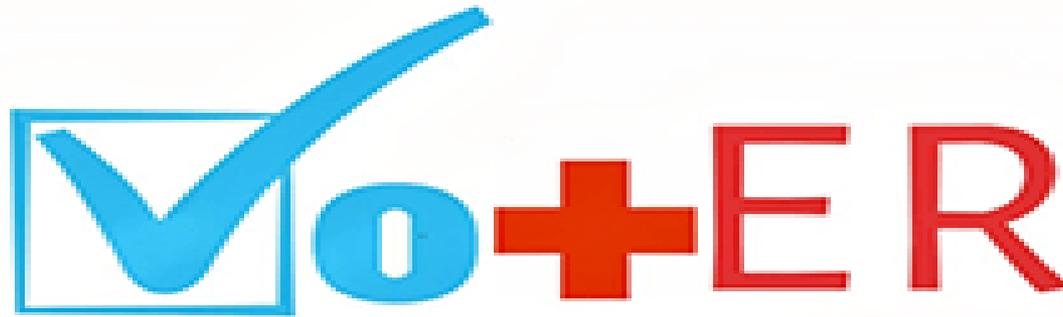
Ask your Field Instructor who the right person in the agency is for a conversation about:

- *What they do already (or don't do and why) regarding voter education and engagement with staff and/or clients.*
- *What they think might be useful, practical, and realistic steps for you to take in their agency, since the NASW Code of Ethics mandates work on civic engagement for social equity; the people that social workers serve deserve information and assistance to secure programs and policies that help their situations.*

ADD TO YOUR LEARNING AGREEMENT

- There are multiple competencies and practice behaviors where activities related to voter education and engagement may fit in your Learning Agreement (i.e., there is no one “right” place for this activity to be included).
- For example, in competency 3.2 you could add to “Other” section:
"Evaluate the ability to participate in field-related voter education & engagement activities and, if approved, create a more detailed plan outlining activities."

TELEHEALTH INTERNSHIP?



If you have an internship using telehealth conferencing, [this link](#) gives you steps and exact language to use in calls with clients around voter engagement and education.

SOME REALISTIC STEPS...

TEACH-INS. Host staff teach-ins on finding their candidates, sample ballots, and candidate information regarding positions.

CHECK-INS WITH CLIENTS. Depending on the agency, it may be possible to ask clients if they would like information or help related to voting. Do they want help registering to vote, learning about the candidates, finding a ride to the polls, getting information on absentee ballots, etc.?

SHARE LINKS ON VOTING. [Disability Rights NC](#), [NASW NC](#), [NAACP NC](#), [Democracy NC](#), [Common Cause NC](#), and other groups that educate on rights at the polls can be helpful sources of information.

CONSULT WITH FIELD FACULTY

- If you and your Field Instructor find it challenging to incorporate voter education and engagement activities at your field agency, reach out to your Field Faculty for further guidance on identifying realistic learning activities.
- Recognize that some field sites may not be in a position or place to incorporate these activities but asking and offering ideas is the only way to know!
- Another consultation source is your *Voting Is Social Work* coordinator for our School of Social Work, Dr. Sarah Verbeist at sarah_verbiest@med.unc.edu.

ENGAGE YOUR AGENCY

- Arrange for **dedicated time and space for voter education and assistance** with staff and/or clients; this may include helping people register to vote, sharing sample ballots, providing information on voting, arranging for voting day assistance, etc.
- Host **virtual or in-person teach-ins** for staff and interested clients.
- Dedicate some **supervision reflection time** to *Voting Is Social Work* tasks, to talk through options, barriers, strategies, and experiences as you engage in these activities as part of your learning experience.

FIELD HOURS RELATED TO *VOTING IS SOCIAL WORK*

With your Field Instructor's approval, you can count these activities for internship hours:

- Informing yourself about NC and county Board of Election policies and information.
- Planning how to include *Voting Is Social Work* activities into your Learning Agreement.
- Doing tasks at your agency to involve staff and clients in voter education and engagement.
- Any supervision time with your Field Instructor or Task Supervisor discussing these activities.

EVALUATION & CELEBRATION

YOUR COMPETENCY EVALUATION

You will work with your Field Instructor as the fall semester ends to assess your progress on each competency and related practice behaviors; consider your work around voter education and engagement as part of this evaluation process, including what tasks you were able to complete and what you learned about yourself as well as the process.

CELEBRATION

Celebrate what you did and what you learned. Celebrate that you involved even one more person in educated voting and civic engagement. Every vote counts. Every effort you make contributes to creating a more equitable world!