

CIVIC AND VOTER EMPOWERMENT ACTION PLAN

Guidelines and Evaluation Rubric



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California
Secretary of State



STUDENTS**VOTE****PROJECT**
CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE

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Introduction

California Secretary of State Students Vote Project

Established in 2016, the **California Secretary of State (SOS) Students Vote Project (SVP)** is a state-wide nonpartisan program that amplifies college student voices and promotes civic engagement efforts to build a more inclusive democracy. Through the creation of the Students Vote Project, California was the first state in the nation to form partnerships across the state's major higher education systems to empower students to participate in the democratic process. The program objectives aim to improve college student voter education, increase college student voter registration, and provide civic and voter outreach opportunities. The SVP achieves these objectives by hosting civic engagement events, creating educational resources, and partnering with campuses and outreach organizations.

The Student Civic and Voter Empowerment Act

The Student Civic and Voter Empowerment Act (SCVEA) (**California Education Code §66850-66852; California Elections Code §2148.5**) was implemented in 2020 and requires each California State University and California Community College to submit a Civic and Voter Empowerment Action Plan (CVEAP) to the California Secretary of State. While the University of California (UC) and the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities (ICCU) are not required to provide a CVEAP, they continue to be strong participants and supporters of student civic engagement.

In addition, each of these campuses must appoint an individual on campus to be its Civic and Voter Empowerment Coordinator (CVEC). Each campus's Civic and Voter Empowerment Coordinator is encouraged to form a campus coalition comprised of student clubs, faculty members, student life members, local election offices and other organizations to collaborate on the development of the CVEAP. Campus coalitions are encouraged to meet on a regular basis to ensure ongoing coordination, communication, collective decision making and input to the CVEAP.

Resource Overview

The *Civic and Voter Empowerment Action Plan Guidelines and Evaluation Rubric* serves as a guide for creating and evaluating a Civic and Voter Empowerment Action Plan (CVEAP). A CVEAP is a document developed by California colleges and universities that includes civic engagement initiatives and strategies a campus intends to implement over two academic years. This guide contains all essential components needed to draft a successful action plan based on the Student and Civic and Voter Empowerment Act and expectations created by the California Secretary of State. This comprehensive guide is divided into five sections. Each section includes what an action plan should contain, effective outreach and event strategies, an evaluation rubric, and a sample CVEAP.

CVEAPs should be updated every two academic years and submitted to the California Secretary of State via email at caststudentsvote@sos.ca.gov by 11:59 PM on October 1 of each even-numbered year.

Creating a Civic and Voter Empowerment Action Plan

Executive Summary

This section should be a summary of your campus's action plan and what it seeks to accomplish. It should include:

- An opening statement and/or executive summary about the campus's commitment to promoting civic engagement and the importance of this work.
- An explanation how the action plan will be implemented, including the unit/office/division who will be facilitating the effort.
- A description of the strategies that will be used to ensure the plan is equitable.

Executive Summary	Exceptional	Proficient	Developing
	• Includes a campus's commitment to promoting civic engagement. • Explains how the plan will be implemented and who will be taking lead on implementation. • Provides a description of strategies to ensure the plan is equitable. 50 points	• Includes only two of three areas listed in "Exceptional" 30 points	• Includes one or fewer areas listed in "Exceptional" 10 points

Leadership

This section should describe the team responsible for developing the CVEAP and should include a brief description of their responsibilities and contributions.

- Identify and list the name(s) and contact information for the individual(s)/group(s)/department(s) that worked on the CVEAP. Parties may include, but are not limited to:
 - o Student organizations.
 - o Faculty members.
 - o Community partners.
 - o Local election officials.

Creating a Civic and Voter Empowerment Action Plan

- Specify how often the coalition met and describe the strategies used to keep campus coalition members engaged. Address turnover if applicable.
- Indicate individual support of upper administration if applicable.

	Exceptional	Proficient	Developing
Leadership	• Describes the team responsible for developing the CVEAP. • Provides a high-level overview of each member's contribution. • Identifies planning and meeting frequencies. 50 points	• Identifies the team responsible for developing the CVEAP and provides a limited summary of the CVEAP development process. 30 points	• Provides minimal to no information of the team responsible for developing the CVEAP. 10 points

Landscape

Outline your campus's civic engagement data to analyze whether your campus is reaching its goals.

Examples of civic engagement data include:

- Number of college students who attended civic engagement related events.
- Number and/or percentage of college student voter registrations on the [California Secretary of State College Hub page](#).
- Number and/or percentage of submitted college student voting plans on the [California Secretary of State College Hub page](#).
- Any other type of civic engagement data that your campus may collect in relation to your campus efforts. For access to data from previous years, you may also view the annual reports published by the [California Secretary of State Students Vote Project](#).

If your campus does not collect or use such data, identify strategies your campus will implement to collect this data in the immediate future.

Creating a Civic and Voter Empowerment Action Plan

Landscape	Exceptional	Proficient	Developing
	Demonstrates a comprehensive analysis of campus civic engagement data, highlighting strengths and identifying areas for improvement in civic engagement efforts. 50 points	- Includes a summary of civic engagement data without a detailed analysis or - Develops a strategy for future data collection. 30 points	Provides minimal information about civic engagement data. 10 points

Reflection

Reflect on the civic engagement work your campus performed during the past two academic years. Provide a summary of the details.

- Assess the number of voter registrations accumulated from events your campus has executed during the past two academic years.
- Evaluate if your campus was able to conduct all civic engagement events planned during the past two academic years.
- Identify any civic engagement barriers your campus faced during the past two academic years and explain how your campus plans to overcome these barriers in the future.
- Share any lessons learned or best practices your campus will continue to implement in the future.
- Describe previous partnerships and/or collaboration efforts with internal and external partners.
 - Examples of internal organizations include, but are not limited to:
 - Campus coalitions
 - Student governments
 - Student life

Creating a Civic and Voter Empowerment Action Plan

- o Examples of external organizations include, but are not limited to:
 - Local election offices
 - Independent voter advocacy groups
 - California Secretary of State

Reflection	Exceptional	Proficient	Developing
	• Reflects on civic engagement work from the past two academic years. • Describes lessons learned and the relationship with internal and external organizations. 50 points	• Reflects on civic engagement work in the past two academic years. • Describes lessons learned or relationships with internal and external organizations. 30 points	• Provides minimal reflection on civic engagement work in the past two academic years. 10 points

Creating a Civic and Voter Empowerment Action Plan

Goals

Provide an overview of your campus’s civic engagement short and long-term goals.

Short-term (2-year)

- List your campus’s civic education and voter engagement two-year goals or benchmarks and describe in detail how your campus will achieve these goals.
- Explain how your campus will continue to expand or begin forming a campus coalition.
- Highlight any other civic engagement initiatives your campus would like to participate in during this two-year period.

Long-term (5-year)

- Identify the goals your campus would like to achieve in the next five years.
 - Highlight your campus’s long-term goals for student voter registration, student civic engagement, student voter turnout and other desired long-term campus goals.
 - Evaluate your campus’s progress toward these goals.
- Provide evidence of the campus’s impact promoting civic engagement, such as voter registration rates or civic achievements.
- Evaluate the strength of your campus coalition and how it will play a role in your campus’s long-term goals.

Goals	Exceptional	Proficient	Developing
	• Provides an overview of short-term and long-term goals and includes strategies to reach goals. 50 points	• Provides short-term and long-term goals without including strategies to reach goals. 30 points	• Provides either short-term or long-terms goals. 10 points

Creating a Civic and Voter Empowerment Action Plan

Event Requirements

The Student Civic and Voter Empowerment Act (SCVEA) states a campus is required to have a minimum of three civic engagement events within an academic year. For every even-numbered year, **there must be an event within the final 30 days preceding a statewide primary election and a general election.**

- Provide a summary of at least six events your campus plans to execute during the next two academic years. This equals a minimum of six events total. We encourage more events, when possible, especially during statewide election cycles.
- Include event(s) 30 days preceding a statewide primary and general election.

Example:

- Fall 2026 – Summer 2027: Three events
 - Must have one event 30 days preceding the statewide general election.
- Fall 2027 – Summer 2028: Three events
 - Must have one event 30 days preceding the statewide primary election.

All outreach events should be nonpartisan.

Event Requirements	Exceptional	Proficient	Developing
	• Includes a list and detailed summary of at least six civic engagement events for the next two academic years (three per academic year). 50 points	• Includes a list and/or summary of at least five civic engagement events for the next two academic years (three per academic year). 30 points	• Provides a list and/or summary of less than five civic engagement events. 10 points

Events and Outreach Strategies

The following information provides examples of events that your campus can implement to help meet the requirements of the Student Civic and Voter Empowerment Act (SCVEA). It also includes a list of suggested strategies aimed at enhancing civic engagement on your campus.

Civic Holiday Events

- **Election Hero Day**
 - o Educate students on the key individuals involved in elections, such as local election officials, poll workers, and election clerks.
- **National Voter Education Week**
 - o Promote student understanding of the voting process by organizing activities around voter registration, understanding contents on the ballot, and creating a plan to vote.
- **National Voter Registration Day**
 - o Celebrate this day by actively engaging students in voter registration initiatives. Campuses can organize voter registration booths in populated areas on campus.
- **Vote Early Day**
 - o Utilize email and social media platforms to raise awareness about the benefits of creating a plan to vote. Promote the importance of voting early and emphasize how early voting helps ensure maximum participation in the electoral process.

Creative Events

- Host a creative design contest.
 - o Students can create stickers, t-shirts and posters around civic engagement.
 - o Campus highlight:
 - San Francisco State University hosted an **"I VOTED" sticker design contest** where students created stickers with the slogan "I VOTED." **The winners** had their sticker printed and distributed across campus.
- Host a festival centered around civic engagement.
 - o Campuses can host festivals around music, art and cultural observances.
 - o Campus highlight:
 - UC Berkeley organizes VoteChella, a free civic engagement music festival aimed at registering students to vote and promoting civic involvement.
- To learn more about how the Associated Students of the University of California hosted this event, please view the **2022 VOICE Project Report**. This report describes how UC Berkeley was able to execute this event, overall expenses and lessons learned.

Events and Outreach Strategies

Event Planning Reminders

- When planning an event, keep the following information in mind:
 - Date and time: Choose a suitable date and time for the event.
 - Reach and promotion: Ensure there is effective outreach and promotion.
 - Voter registration and election information: Provide opportunities for voter registration and share information about the upcoming statewide election.
 - Keep track of voter registration obtained from events to measure the success of your campus's events. You may use this information in the reflection section of the CVEAP.

Suggested Outreach Strategies

- Incorporate voter registration at the beginning of each semester/quarter.
 - Compose an email to all students with voter registration information and include the following link to register to vote: <https://registertovote.ca.gov/collegestudents>.
- Have a succession plan in place to ensure that your campus's Civic and Voter Empowerment Coordinator or the individual responsible for civic engagement activities is in a long-term role.
 - This strategy will improve communication with all your campus's partners.
- Create a campus coalition to include students, faculty, county election officials and community groups.
 - Schedule regular meetings to discuss event planning, share resources and coordinate initiatives.
 - Explore creative incentives for students who actively participate in the coalition, encouraging sustained involvement and recognizing their contributions.
- Encourage professors to discuss voter education and civic engagement with their students.
 - Professors can share [Students Vote Project \(SVP\) resources](#) and important election information with students.
 - Incentivize students who participate in voter registration drives, assisting at the polls or tabling.
- Collaborate with the county election officials.
 - Establish a partnership and maintain regular communication with your county election officials. They can provide election support and answer questions as needed.
- Take advantage of available toolkits and resources provided by the California Secretary of State.
 - SVP has a wide range of resources and toolkits covering voter education, action plans, outreach materials and election resources.
 - Visit the [SVP resources page](#).

Civic and Voter Empowerment Action Plan Evaluation Rubric

The Civic and Voter Empowerment Action Plan (CVEAP) standards outlined in the rubric below apply to the [California University and College Ballot Bowl competition](#) and for CVEAP submissions required by the Student Civic and Voter Empowerment Act. If any CVEAP section is not included or cannot be scored using the rubric, that section will automatically be given 0 points.

CVEAP Section	Exceptional	Proficient	Developing
Executive Summary	- Includes a campus's commitment to promoting civic engagement. - Explains how the plan will be implemented and who will be taking lead on implementation. - Provides a description of strategies to ensure the plan is equitable. 50 points	Includes only two of three areas listed in "Exceptional" 30 points	Includes one or fewer areas listed in "Exceptional" 10 points
Leadership	- Describes the team responsible for developing the CVEAP. - Provides a high-level overview of each member's contribution. - Identifies planning and meeting frequencies. 50 points	Identifies the team responsible for developing the CVEAP and provides a limited summary of the CVEAP development process. 30 points	Provides minimal to no information of the team responsible for developing the CVEAP. 10 points
Landscape	Demonstrates a comprehensive analysis of campus civic engagement data, highlighting strengths and identifying areas for improvement in civic engagement efforts. 50 points	- Includes a summary of civic engagement data without a detailed analysis or - Develops a strategy for future data collection. 30 points	Provides minimal information about civic engagement data. 10 points

CVEAP Section	Exceptional	Proficient	Developing
Reflection	- Reflects on civic engagement work from the past two academic years. - Describes lessons learned and the relationship with internal and external organizations. 50 points	- Reflects on civic engagement work in the past two academic years. - Describes lessons learned or relationships with internal and external organizations. 30 points	Provides minimal reflection on civic engagement work in the past two academic years. 10 points
Goals	Provides an overview of short-term and long-term goals and includes strategies to reach goals. 50 points	Provides short-term and long-term goals without including strategies to reach goals. 30 points	Provides either short-term or long-term goals. 10 points
Event Requirements	Includes a list and detailed summary of at least six civic engagement events for the next two academic years (three per academic year). 50 points	Includes a list and/or summary of at least five civic engagement events for the next two academic years (three per academic year). 30 points	Provides a list and/or summary of less than five civic engagement events. 10 points

Does the action plan include all six CVEAP sections in the rubric?	Yes	Partially Met
	25 points	10 points
Did the campus turn in an action plan (regardless of format) by October 1?	25 points	10 points
Are six events planned for the next two academic years?	25 points	10 points
Did the campus organize an event within the 30 days leading up to a statewide primary or general election?	25 points	10 points

Total CVEAP Score	Exceptional	Proficient	Developing
	400-360 points	359-280 points	279-0 points

Sample Civic and Voter Empowerment Action Plan

Overview

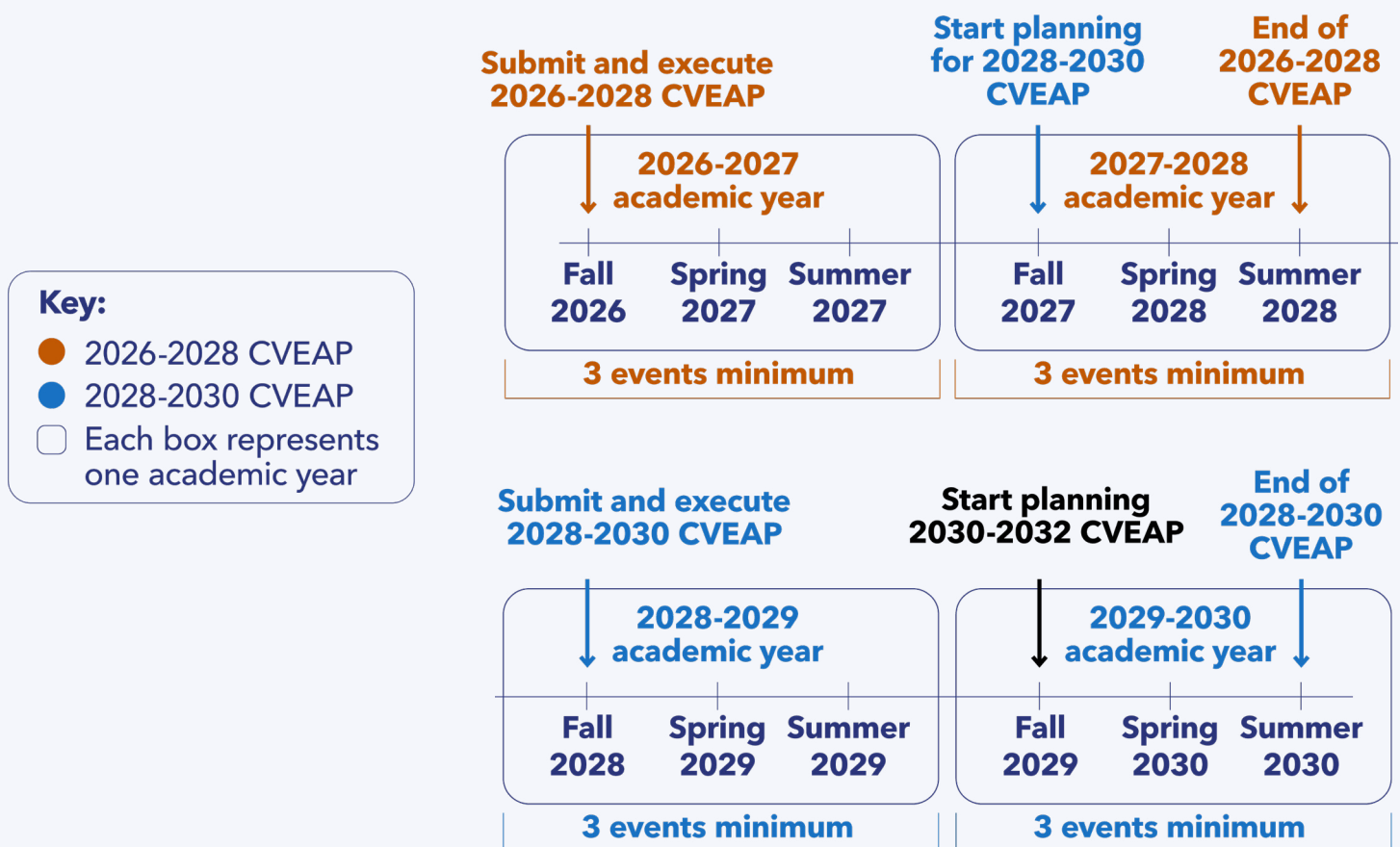
The *Sample Civic and Voter Empowerment Action Plan (CVEAP)* is designed as a strategic resource for colleges and universities aiming to earn the maximum number of points using the rubric outlined in the *Civic and Voter Empowerment Action Plan Guidelines and Evaluation Rubric*. The *Sample CVEAP* provides a clear framework that illustrates the structure, language, and level of detail expected for an “Exceptional” rating across all rubric categories. View the ***Sample Civic and Voter Empowerment Action Plan***.

Disclaimer: The *Sample CVEAP* is intended solely as a guide and reference. Campuses are encouraged to adapt their own plans to reflect their unique context, goals, and student populations.



Sample Action Plan Timeframe

A Civic and Voter Empowerment Action Plan (CVEAP) should be submitted to the California Secretary of State at caststudentsvote@sos.ca.gov by 11:59 PM on October 1 of an even-numbered year. We recommend preparing for a future CVEAP during the fall semester of an odd numbered year to allow enough time to plan. Below is a sample timeframe to consider using for future CVEAPs.



Reminder: California Community Colleges and California State University campuses are required to host a minimum of three civic engagement events per academic year. For every even-numbered year, one of the events should be held within the final 30 days preceding a statewide primary election and general election.

Submission Instructions and Contact Information

- Submit to caststudentsvote@sos.ca.gov on October 1 by 11:59 PM of an even-numbered year.
- Please title your CVEAP with the following structure:
 - Campus name, year of CVEAP submission
 - Example: Civic Engagement University, 2026-2028 Civic and Voter Empowerment Action Plan
- We encourage campuses to submit a draft of a CVEAP before the October 1 deadline to the California Secretary of State Students Vote Project for additional feedback and support. You may also schedule a meeting for review using [SVP Office Hours](#).

Transparency

Once submitted, each CVEAP is made public to the California Legislature, becomes public information, and may be subject to further review and analysis by interested parties.

Contact Us

SVP Email

For any questions regarding SVP, please email us at caststudentsvote@sos.ca.gov.

SVP Office Hours

Office Hours are a designated time when the SVP team is available to provide support, guidance, and resources. Office Hours are currently held on Thursdays from 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM PST.

- Schedule a time: <https://calendar.app.google/NTa8ynPEyjh73w6k8>
- To meet outside Office Hours, email us at caststudentsvote@sos.ca.gov to schedule an alternative time.

SVP Website



View our latest resources and updates on our website at <https://studentsvoteproject.sos.ca.gov> or scan the QR code.

Subscribe for Updates

To receive updates, [subscribe to our email list](#).

Acknowledgements

The California Secretary of State Students Vote Project's *Civic and Voter Empowerment Action Plan (CVEAP) Guidelines and Evaluation Rubric* is inspired by the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge's (ALL IN) *Strengthening American Democracy Guide (SADG) and Rubric*, which was jointly developed by ALL IN and the Students Learn Students Vote Coalition (SLSV). ALL IN and SLSV are two separate national nonpartisan programs that empower colleges and universities across the United States to excel in nonpartisan college student democratic engagement and voter participation.

California's colleges and universities are encouraged to participate in the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge to receive additional support, resources and national recognition. Notably, the CVEAP developed for the California Secretary of State can be used for participation in the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge.

For more information on how to participate in the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, please visit <https://allinchallenge.org>.

