



Impact Report 2021



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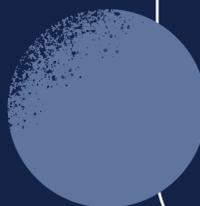
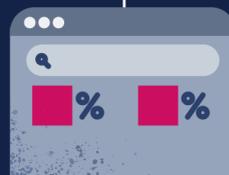
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Why Democracy Works Exists



66%

In the last presidential election,
Americans turned out at 66%

30%

Local election turnout often
struggles to break 30%

From an international pandemic to domestic misinformation campaigns, voters faced pervasive and novel challenges as they navigated our 2020 elections. Still, they persevered and ultimately turned out for the general election in record-breaking numbers. Yet, time and time again, local races see the lowest and least representative turnout across our elections. In the last presidential election, Americans turned out at 66%, while local election turnout often struggles to break 30%.

When you account for the comparatively low coverage and visibility of local and state elections, it's no surprise that they may not be top of mind for the average voter - especially in years that end in odd numbers. While these are often mischaracterized as "off years", the truth is simple: **every year is an on year for our elections.** In fact, more than 6,500 local and statewide elections were held in 2021, compared to 2020's nearly 4,000. Whether a year is odd or even, neither the importance of our elections nor the power of voters cannot be understated.

That's why in 2021, Democracy Works continued to do what we do best - helping America vote no matter what. By keeping elections big and small at the forefront, bolstering the strength of our tools, and amplifying official voting information throughout the year, Democracy Works helped millions of voters exercise their right to vote in our democracy.



Our Impact in 2021

No matter our background or zip code, Americans value our freedom. And our freedom to vote is no exception. In 2021, Democracy Works leveraged technology as a countermeasure against the barriers to voting the electorate faced.

In 2021, Democracy Works helped America vote, no matter what!

2021 BY THE NUMBERS



6.6M

voters given the ability
to track their mail ballot

23.3M

personalized reminders
sent to voters

156K

voters received
registration assistance

23K

voter inquiries
answered

162K

voters received mail
ballot request assistance



TurboVote, our flagship tool, supports voters across their voting journeys. Beyond guiding voters through the registration and mail ballot request processes, TurboVote sends users timely, location-specific, personalized election notifications. These reminders provide the tools, information, and support necessary to make participation in every election the norm.

For over a decade, voters have relied on TurboVote to help them make their voice heard in our elections - and 2021 was no different. 75% of TurboVote’s 9+ million users were eligible to participate in the local and statewide races held in 2021. Our Research Team published data for nearly 6,500 elections across the United States, ranging from the Virginia gubernatorial to St. Petersburg, Florida’s municipal election. Coupled with our powerful technology, this research enabled TurboVote to send over 23 million personalized text and email reminders to voters.

WHO USES TURBOVOTE?

Highest total TurboVote usage



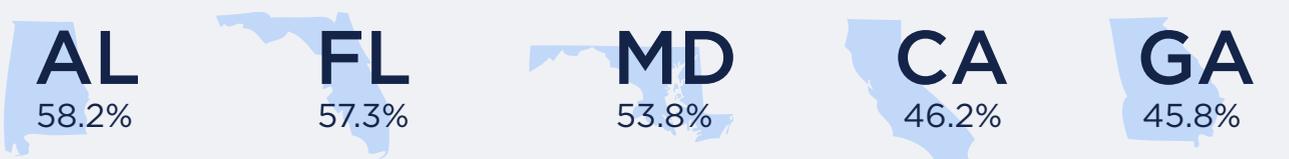
Highest populations of young (18-30) TurboVote users



Highest populations of Black TurboVote users



Highest populations of BIPOC TurboVote users





TURBOVOTE BY THE NUMBERS

 **TURBOVOTE**

To effectively help America vote, the unique experiences of every American must be prioritized alongside the voting nuances, rules, and regulations that exist across the country. To that end, we made several improvements to TurboVote that enabled us to better serve our users and our partners as they navigate the ever-shifting election landscape.

After optimizing our custom notifications tool, we were able to cover more elections, incorporate election administrator feedback more quickly, and send more localized custom notifications. We launched a referral code generator to enable our partners to more easily measure the impact of specific digital voter engagement tactics in real time. Lastly, we majorly overhauled TurboVote's front end. This included several accessibility improvements that brought our overall accessibility measure to 96%, as well as codebase updates that increased our agility in sending response notifications.

13,909,233

lifetime users served

9,061,095

total active users

162,464

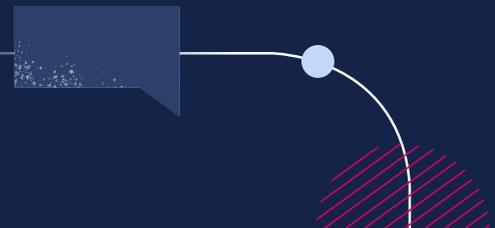
users received assistance in requesting mail ballots

155,889

users received registration assistance

**22,191,435**

election notifications sent in 2021





Voting Information Project

Through the **Voting Information Project (VIP)**, Democracy Works collaborates with over 40 state and 150 local election offices to amplify accurate, up-to-date voting information where voters look for it most – online.

In 2021, VIP launched its State Advisory Committee, which includes 11 election administrators representing different regions and methods of conducting elections. The Committee gives us first-hand insight into the challenges that election administrators face, provides feedback on our technology, and informs our strategies for connecting more states with VIP's free and powerful tools. To celebrate all that election offices overcame during the 2020 Election Cycle, we inaugurated our biannual VIP Partner Awards and awarded eight state partners across four categories.



We are honored to be a recipient of one of the inaugural VIP Partner Awards. The Voting Information Project is the single most important tool that voters have to find polling places and drop boxes in Colorado and across the country. The Colorado Department of State is proud to provide the data necessary to make this project work for Colorado voters.



Colorado Secretary of State Jena Griswold





VIP publishes its data in an open-source platform, the Voting Information Tool, so that the entire sector can use it in their civic engagement efforts. This includes political parties, private companies, and nonprofits like Election Protection Hotline, who we collaborated with this year to further amplify official, trusted election information. In addition to having access to our data published via Google’s Civic API, we coordinated with them ahead of elections, providing them with updates on last-minute polling site changes.

Throughout the year, VIP leveled up its efforts to support election administrators and voters alike. **In November of 2021 alone, VIP covered:**

30,301 polling places

4,935 drop box locations

1,368 early voting sites

VIP BY THE NUMBERS

108

elections covered

2

states referred traffic to VIP’s voter facing website, Get to the Polls (IN, NV)

4

states embedded VIP’s Voting Information Tool on their state websites (CA, CO, VA, OR)

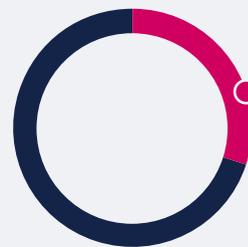
7

states used VIP tools as contingency plan (CA, TX, MN, WI, NY, OH, LA)



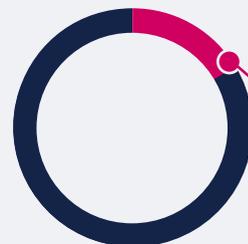
40.3%

increase in elections covered since 2017



34%

At least 34% of voters live in states that use VIP tools as a backup plan in the event their website crashes!



17%

At least 17% of voters live in a state that uses VIT as their official polling place lookup tool!



HOW TO VOTE BY
THE NUMBERS



HOWTO.VOTE

Voting isn't just about going to the polls on Election Day anymore. Options like early voting, mail-in voting, and ballot drop boxes are available to more voters than ever before and continue to grow in popularity. **How to Vote** breaks down the available voting methods in each state and D.C., thereby empowering voters to decide when and where to vote.

Additionally, How to Vote's voting and registration guides help voters overcome many of the process barriers to voting by providing information and resources for unique circumstances, such as voting overseas and voting rights restoration for formerly incarcerated citizens. Available in both English and Spanish, How to Vote is available to any and everyone online, with no sign-up required.

Designed to provide critical election information to voters in federal elections, our team worked to enhance the tool to ensure the most comprehensive and up-to-date coverage for the 2022 midterm elections. Specifically, we transitioned the resource to a new database that brings many improvements to both the technical and research side of the program. But the team didn't stop there.

We made it easier for the team to export thousands of elections at once and automatically track changes to election information on state's websites. We increased site security and reduced room for human error by implementing improvements like running automatic database queries. All these improvements allowed us to expand the number of elections we track, giving our partners and voters access to even more election information.

2,226%

increase in
pageviews since
2019

NY NJ CA TX GA

Most How to Vote
views in 2021

CA NY FL CO TX

Most How to
Register views
in 2021

With more ballots being cast by mail than ever before, voters and election administrators must be able to track the status of every vote. By providing greater visibility into each step of the ballot mailing process, **Ballot Scout** restores confidence in the mail-voting system.

Ballot Scout leverages USPS Intelligent Mail barcode (IMB) data and internal election office data to shed light on each mail ballot's full chain of custody, ensuring that ballots are not simply lost in the mail system. In 2021, we supported ballot tracking across 22 elections while simultaneously making several upgrades to the Ballot Scout tool to make tracking ballots even easier. With our eyes set on increasing ballot tracking accessibility, the Ballot Scout team worked to make every voter-facing aspect of the tool multilingual. By analyzing census-backed, voter-centric data, the team identified ten languages that would best serve our partners. Today, Ballot Scout is available in ten additional languages: Spanish, Chinese (Simplified), Vietnamese, Korean, Arabic, Russian, Polish, German, Tagalog, and Swahili.

We also implemented multiple optimizations for election administrators: we reorganized the navigation layout; made it easier for them to view and export data for their jurisdiction; added a dashboard component that displays the numbers of voters signed up for notifications and the total of messages sent; added a "Guides and Resources" section to the admin dashboard, which includes a Communications Toolkit, social media graphics, and a jurisdiction-specific QR code for their jurisdiction's voter facing tool; and updated our return IMBs to allow jurisdictions to qualify for USPS return mailing programs. Along with this work, we also completed robust technical scaling and load testing work to ensure our tool could perform successfully under very high volumes of data.

These upgrades benefited current partners and new partners alike. In 2021, we established partnerships with three new jurisdictions and signed our first multi-year contracts with three additional partners.

BALLOT SCOUT BY THE NUMBERS

496,140

ballots tracked

22

elections served

50,000+

ballot searches performed
via the voter-facing tool

438.4%

increase in ballots
tracked from 2017

6,566,438

voters live in jurisdictions
where Ballot Scout is available

20,000

ballot tracking notifications
sent to over 8,500 voters



ELECTIONMAIL.ORG BY THE NUMBERS

Electionmail.org

Mail-in voting has inarguably become a mainstay voting method. In fact, 34 states and Washington, D.C. allow voters to vote by mail with no stipulations. An additional 16 states allow voters to cast their ballots by mail as long as they meet the requirements to do so in their state. As more voters choose to vote by mail, election officials need a streamlined, dependable process through which they can escalate any anomalies they may experience with election mail.

Electionmail.org is an online resource and reporting tool that helps election officials report concerns they may have with election mail. To use the tool, election officials fill out an error report that feeds directly into the United States Postal Service's internal resolution tracking system. Beyond reporting any issues, election officials also use the site to connect with vital election mail resources. Since its creation in 2016, over 41 states have used electionmail.org to communicate with USPS.



67%
increase in pageviews
from 2019

17 STATES

used ElectionMail.org to file reports

Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Indiana, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, Virginia, and Washington

106

total reports filed by election administrators

3

military and overseas election mail related reports

9

domestic and overseas election mail related reports



94

domestic mail election mail related reports



Partner Innovation

Since 2012, Democracy Works has maintained TurboVote partnerships with campuses, nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and corporations who share in our commitment to increasing voter access and participation. Nine of our partners receive free TurboVote partnerships due to their racial justice focused missions and goals. Even in a so-called off year, our partners continued the vital work of helping America vote no matter what.

Over the years, our partners have helped millions of voters stay civically engaged and participate in our elections by connecting them with TurboVote.

TURBOVOTE USERS SINCE OUR FOUNDING IN 2012

520,672

via Campus Partners

531,521

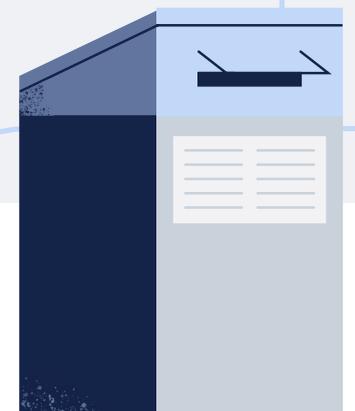
via Nonprofit and Government Partners

1,829,722

via Corporate Partners

13,604,76

via Social Media Partners



Corporate partners



Building a culture of civic engagement

Our **25 corporate partners** were relentless in their work to connect their employees and audiences with the tools needed to successfully navigate the 2021 election cycle. Ultimately, our corporate partners **helped over 85,474 voters connect with TurboVote** this year.

After seeing success with TurboVote in the 2020 election, Propeller decided to incorporate TurboVote into every one of their campaigns in 2021.

SPOTLIGHT

Our friends at **Propeller**, for example, are on a mission to inspire activism and to help build movements for change. When you take action with Propeller by signing a petition, volunteering, or registering to vote, you earn points. You can redeem those points to get rewards, like planting trees, donating to causes, or even getting access to VIP concert experiences and trips around the world.

TurboVote was a part of every **Propeller** campaign in 2021. Whether you were taking action with Demi Lovato in support of LGBTQ rights, hoping to meet The Black Keys in Mississippi, or working with Lil Dicky to fight climate change, you had the chance to sign up with TurboVote along the way. Getting people to the polls is a critical element of Propeller's overall mission. TurboVote helped ensure their community members were registered and ready to vote – even in an “off” year.

Social Media Partners

Creating an onramp for lifelong voting

After the dust settled on the 2020 election, our social media partners continued to leverage their platforms as onramps to lifelong voting. This year, we partnered with social media giants Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat to reach and support voters. And over the course of the year, **our social media partners connected an additional 159,799 voters to TurboVote.**



Campus partners

Making student voices heard in our elections

TurboVote partners with **195 campuses** across the country to help students make their voices heard in our elections. Our campus partners are distributed across 40 states and include **37 federally designated Minority Serving Institutions** and **30 community colleges**. All of our 2-year college partners receive the full benefits of TurboVote partnership, plus additional support, at a significantly reduced cost. Due to their incredible civic engagement work, **our campus partners generated 37,783 TurboVote sign-ups in 2021.**

Building off 2020's momentum, TurboVote partners kept voter registration, education, and turnout top of mind on campuses across the country.

SPOTLIGHT

Keeping students engaged when federal elections are not the focus and voter turnout is not making headlines can be challenging. Thankfully, our TurboVote Campus Community was ready to rise to that challenge and dedicated themselves to ensuring students had the information and motivation they needed to cast their vote in local and state elections last year. For many of our partners, connecting participation to interests and passion was key to engaging student communities.





James Madison University worked to turn out student voters by tying the issues they cared about directly to voter registration and to the 2021 state elections. Twice a month, JMU’s civic engagement team set up a tent in a highly-trafficked part of campus to host “Tent Talks”. During these sessions, they engaged passersby on key topics, challenged them to think critically about the issues that affect them, and inspired them to take action in our democracy. Signing up for election reminders and getting help registering to vote with TurboVote was the first step in those students’ process of taking action.

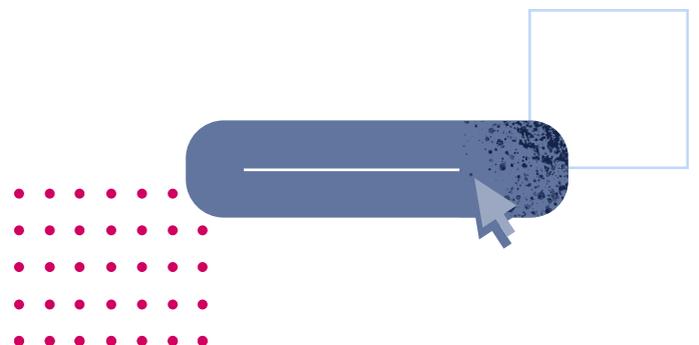


The Middlesex College men’s basketball team also tied turnout to student interests and passions by challenging their campus to register to vote before the statewide elections in New Jersey in November 2021 in an incredible video, titled [“Are you ready for a challenge?”](#)



Elgin Community College also worked to connect their campus community more directly with elections and candidates, hosting a town hall featuring candidates for community elections and the college’s board of trustees. TurboVote was once again a key call to action, making sure students had the information they needed about upcoming elections and races.

Some of our campus partners took a step beyond voter registration and turnout to deepen their campuses’ civic engagement culture by participating in our 2021 Poll Worker Recruitment Pilot Program! **Case Western Reserve University, University of Miami, and University of Pittsburgh** joined us in mitigating our nation’s poll worker shortage by building relationships with their county election officials and recruiting students to staff one (or more!) local precincts on Election Day. This group of campuses not only committed to student voter participation, but also helped to inspire a new generation to staff the polls.



Nonprofit & Government partners

Mobilizing digital communities to the polls

Our **80 nonprofit and government partners** enacted innovative strategies to engage voters nationwide. Ultimately, their work to help register, educate, and turnout voters resulted in **22,725 new TurboVote signups!**

SPOTLIGHT

According to research conducted by TurboVote partner **NYC Votes**, presidential-year voters are much less likely to vote in the following midterm if they don't participate in the local election in the intervening year. This insight inspired **NYC Votes** to make a major investment in get out the vote efforts ahead of the mayoral election. Along with persistent calls to sign up for TurboVote, they also organized a mass text banking project and did relational organizing work around the city to make sure people were hearing about the importance of turnout and participation from other New Yorkers ahead of the election.

Given the stress on our health care system over the past 18 months, our partners at **Vot-ER** felt it more important than ever to celebrate and acknowledge the link between healthy communities and healthy democracy. That's why they organized Civic Health Month in 2021 - a national, nonpartisan awareness month dedicated to focusing the nation's attention on the important connections between health care, healthy communities, and civic participation. The month aims to make voting and civic participation more accessible to all - particularly those underserved by America's healthcare system - by inspiring folks to support healthy communities, driving voter registration with TurboVote, and amplifying civic voices in healthcare. We're so excited to see Civic Health Month take its place amongst the other key civic holidays in 2022 and beyond.



By prioritizing TurboVote in their voter outreach campaigns, our nonprofit and government partners ensure their communities stay #VoteReady every day of every year.





Strength in Numbers

Voter engagement is truly a community effort. From our TurboVote partners to nonpartisan civic coalitions, the strong network of civically minded organizations we work with helps to break down barriers to voting. Working together as a larger civic engagement space allows us to amplify our impact and advance our shared goal of helping voters successfully and consistently participate in our elections.

civic alliance

In 2020, Democracy Works co-founded the Civic Alliance, a nonpartisan coalition of businesses working together to build a future where everyone participates in shaping our country. Since the 2020 Election, Civic Alliance membership swelled to 1,277 member companies with 5,750,089 employees combined. As a coalition, Civic Alliance members stand in solidarity for fair and transparent elections and use their collective influence to empower every American to use their voice.

Just as we ushered in the new year, our democracy suffered an attack on the United States Capitol. Civic Alliance members sprung into action, issuing a [Joint Statement for an Orderly and Peaceful Transition of Power](#) with 422 member signatures. As the year progressed, we saw a flood of restrictive voting laws proposed by state legislatures nationwide. In April, Civic Alliance again activated its members, issuing a [Joint Statement on Protecting Voter Access](#) with 287 member signatures. These statements provided a platform for businesses to stand up for our democracy and helped keep voters at the center of election coverage.

With the announcement of census results, the Civic Alliance launched a redistricting toolkit, town hall, and nonprofit partnership to help companies navigate the very state-specific nuances and implications of redistricting. Across 2021, Civic Alliance issued 56 member communications, launched more than ten toolkits focusing on everything from state and local elections to redistricting, and hosted ten events.



Following the historic 2020 elections, in which student voters turned out at a record-breaking 66% rate, it became clear that the needs of the nonpartisan student voting space had evolved. To account for the space's changing needs, we came together with partners across the Students Learn Students Vote Coalition to revamp **Votes & Ballots**, one of the student voting space's most beloved action planning resources.

Votes & Ballots is a suite of interactive team-wide strategic activities that take the guesswork out of writing action plans for on-campus democratic engagement. The tool is used at summits, campus coalition meetings, or any other action planning contexts.

Democracy Works first released Votes & Ballots in 2018 with support from MICA's Center for Social Design and the SLSV Coalition. This fun, interactive activity was designed to gamify the action planning process based on the Strengthening American Democracy Guide.

In 2021, Democracy Works, SLSV Coalition, and Maine Students Vote revamped Votes & Ballots into a new, digital iteration to ensure that Votes & Ballots is successful for in-person and online contexts.

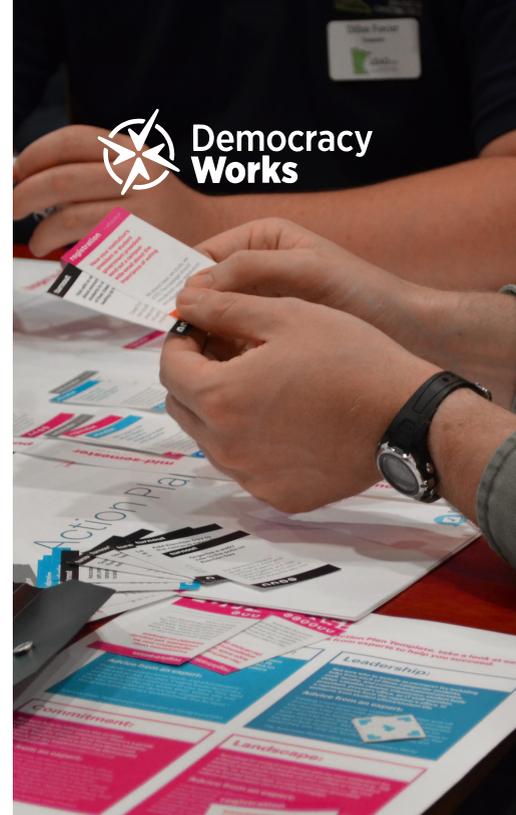
The Votes & Ballots revamp was a collaborative effort with **50+** individuals across the SLSV network. Since its launch in the fall of 2021, **more than 225 campuses** across the country have engaged with the new tool.



When local partners have supportive spaces to strategize effectively, these partners end up using more resources from more sources more effectively. Votes and Ballots helps us all serve communities better.

Sam Novey

Visiting Fellow, SNF Agora Institute at Johns Hopkins University



In its updated form, Votes & Ballots now features:

-
- A Collaborative, user-friendly, digital activity with a strategy poster for campuses to keep using over time for dynamic planning
 - An interactive action planning form that generates a first draft of an action plan
 - Updated diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice centered tactic cards
 - Train-the-trainer programming for facilitators
 - Updated classic (paper) edition



Spreading the Word

Throughout 2021, Democracy Works remained staunchly committed to helping America vote no matter what – and the press took notice!

IN THE PRESS

The Stanford Daily

The Stanford Daily, [Stanford Ranks First in the Country in Registering Students on TurboVote](#)



National Conference of State Legislatures, [Election Tech Providers Offer Advice on Cybersecurity and More](#)



AWS Public Sector Blog, [Simplifying Voter Registration and Building Confidence with the Cloud](#)

Forbes

Forbes, [This Tuesday is Not Like Any Other](#)

Forbes, [Student Voter Turnout Reached Historic Levels in 2020. Now What?](#)

Forbes, [Companies That Back Voting Rights Receive Public Support in New Poll](#)

Looking Ahead



Over the past two years, I've had the pleasure of being part of the Democracy Works team, first serving as General Counsel and since April 2022, as CEO. I'm honored and humbled to lead such a diverse and talented team dedicated to helping America vote.

During 2022 and into 2023, our team will be guided by three key principles:

Growth

in the size, reach, and impact of our programs and tools

Renewal

of our organization, products, and community to prepare for future elections

Innovation

in our technology, partnerships, and programs to support voters

GROWTH. In every election, from the local to national levels, we work to increase voter access and expand voter participation. To maximize our impact this year, we must continue to grow on all fronts. In 2022, our growth will enable us to reach *more* voters, support *more* election administrators, and surface *more* official, trusted voting information.

RENEWAL. As a 501(c)(3) nonpartisan nonprofit, we're committed to further maximizing our impact at every moment and optimizing every donor dollar that makes our work possible. Centering renewal in our technology, our team, and our partners ensures that we remain a resilient and sustainable organization that voters, election administrators, and our partners can continue to rely on for every election to come.

INNOVATION. Just as the problems we face as a country continue to evolve, so do their solutions. While we don't claim to have all the answers today, we remain committed to building, evolving, and pivoting as necessary to advancing our mission. As barriers to the ballot intensify, Democracy Works will continue to innovate to streamline the voting process for voters and election administrators alike.

For each and every year since we were founded, we have continued to evolve to strengthen our impact and reach; and in the most recent years, we have seen how critical it is that our citizens have ready access to the highest quality of information about voting. We are proud of our mission, and we ask you to continue to join and support our future as colleagues, partners, supporters, and friends. Let's help America vote - no matter what.



A handwritten signature in dark blue ink, appearing to read "Luis Lozada".

LUIS LOZADA

CEO

Democracy Works

luis.lozada@democracy.works





Serving voters.
Powering elections.
Building a better democracy.

To join us or learn more about what
we do, visit democracy.works

Questions? Reach out to us at
democracy.works/contact

