



# Faith in Elections Playbook

*Interfaith America | Protect Democracy*

Last Updated November 2023



*Our freedoms  
depend on **free and  
fair elections** —  
and communities  
of faith can play a  
**critical role** in  
defending them.*

The freedoms that Americans enjoy – including religious freedom – rest on our ability to exercise healthy self-governance. Our constitutional form of government depends upon millions of Americans stepping up to ensure that every eligible American is able to exercise their right to vote, and that our elections are administered in a way that earns the trust of the people. Regardless of the candidates we support or the values that shape us, as Americans we share a belief in the importance of free and fair elections.

Trust in our elections is at a dangerous low. Our country is divided, which puts our very ability to ensure the peaceful transfer of power under threat. We cannot run our complex, nonpartisan election system without everyday people doing their part. Everyone has a role in our democracy.

When our country is in need, people of faith mobilize to serve their communities. From responding to national disasters, to helping refugees resettle, to tackling entrenched problems – like poverty, addiction, and racial injustice – faith communities are often on the front lines. Throughout American history, civic engagement from religious leaders has been crucial to building a more perfect union.

As our election system faces unprecedented challenges in 2024, we need to join the growing cross-partisan movement to serve our country in the most fundamental way: by ensuring a smoothly-run election that earns the trust of the American people. Religious institutions and everyday people of faith have the values, power, and skillset to play a pivotal role in this effort to protect every valid vote – the foundation on which all other freedoms rest.

If you are ready and able to serve our democracy in its hour of need, we are ready to show you how. The Faith in Elections Playbook can help your organization find its own way to protect the 2024 election.

No matter where you live, your political beliefs, or which candidates you support, the playbook offers ways that your organization can meet the specific needs of your community during the 2024 election.

**Sign up** to learn about timely actions and new granting opportunities.

The playbook discusses at length the following opportunities:

Addressing polarization and building cohesion in your community.

Sharing trustworthy information about where and how to vote.

Supporting voters to have a safe, positive voting experience.

Recruiting poll workers and election judges so polling locations are adequately staffed.

Offering your space or finding an alternative so your community has enough polling locations.

Building relationships with local election officials to increase trust and incentivize good behavior.

*The recommendations in The Faith in Elections Playbook have been vetted to comply with 501(c)(3) regulations from the Internal Revenue Service.*



## Key Dates

Throughout the leadup to the 2024 election, there are opportunities for civil society to promote our elections in unique ways. Below are some of those key dates, as well as information regarding when votes will be cast.

### 2023

November 6, 2023: **Election Hero Day**

[Election Hero Day](#) is a day for Americans to join together to recognize the immense importance and work of election administration teams, poll workers, and more across the nation.

### 2024

**Primary Election Schedule**

The Federal Election Commission's [preliminary list](#) of Presidential and Congressional primary dates by state.

January 30, 2024: [Help America Vote Day](#)

August 21, 2024: [National Poll Worker Recruitment Day](#)

September 17, 2024: [National Voter Registration Day](#)

**Early Voting Dates**

Early voting dates vary by state and county. Dates are available [here](#).

November 5, 2024: **General Election Day**

### TBA

[Vote Early Day 2024](#)

If you have a date that you would like us to consider adding to this page, please email [faith@protectdemocracy.org](mailto:faith@protectdemocracy.org).



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## **Addressing polarization and building cohesion in your community**

## Addressing polarization

Our country is deeply divided. Healing will require coming together across differences and working to protect the rights of all Americans — even those with whom we disagree. Understanding our polarized environment and committing to overcome this challenge is key to supporting a free, fair, and peaceful 2024 election.



### THE NEED

- There are few issues that showcase our country’s polarization as clearly as our elections. Lack of trust in the outcome of the 2020 presidential election led some to violence, and has pushed countless others into an “us versus them” mentality. Without action, the 2024 election could further tear our communities apart, representing an existential crisis for American democracy. As trust erodes and divisions deepen, it is harder to protect the values that hold our country together, such as religious pluralism.
- Religious freedom scholar Asma Uddin [writes](#), “Our partisan affiliations have morphed into identities, and what’s more, the identities include a host of things that have nothing to do with social policy.” As a result, individual faith communities are increasingly divided, and different religions are pushed into political camps against one another rather than seeking shared values on issues such as religious liberty or help for people in need.



### THE RESPONSE

- Religious institutions can be a bulwark against polarization. People with diverse political beliefs, cultures, and socioeconomic backgrounds worship together in churches, synagogues, mosques, gurdwaras, and temples every day. Our collective faith communities must be able to live and serve together despite our different beliefs.
- There are three main ways that faith-based organizations and congregations can help to reduce polarization:

- Holding deep listening sessions and dialogue across differences within their own organizations and faith communities.
- Hosting interfaith conversations that bring people together across religious differences to identify shared values and a shared vision for improving their communities.
- Conducting acts of service (including the activities contained in the Playbook) as an interfaith coalition or alongside groups with differing political perspectives.

- In addition to using the Faith in Elections Playbook as a way to unite Americans, there are many organizations — both religious and secular — who have created resources on how you can work to reduce polarization.
- If you are interested in hosting deep listening conversations and dialogue across difference, the following links will be most helpful:

*“There is a genuine, foundational power in the building of relationships and establishing trust across diverse lines, so much so, that our individual development and community building efforts depend and rely upon these strong relationships. Indeed, they are the fabric that make American society thrive and flourish. Everything we do moves at the speed of trust and relationship.”*

[- Andrew Hanauer, One America Movement](#)

- Interfaith America’s [Shared Values Dialogue Guide](#) and [“Skills for Bridging the Gap” Curriculum](#) provide opportunities for deep listening.
- [Living Room Conversations](#) provides scripts and frameworks for dialogues across a variety of differences and on a multitude of topics, including elections.
- [Constructive Dialogue Institute](#) is a 501(c)(3) that provides lessons and online training on how to lead conversations where people with different perspectives try to understand each other — without giving up their own beliefs — in order to work together.
- [Resetting the Table](#) supports “collaborative deliberation in the face of strong differences” to find shared ways forward.
- If you are interested in hosting conversations to help find common ground or common purpose, the following will be helpful:
  - [One America Movement’s](#) work to combat toxic polarization.
  - [Braver Angels](#) has multiple options for engagement, including their [Trustworthy Elections Campaign](#), which will organize conversations in

which citizens who are concerned with fraud, voter suppression, or both meet on equal terms in mixed groups to clarify differences and seek common ground.

- [Millions of Conversations](#) brings together groups of Americans to unite around common values and to discuss shared visions for the future.
- For specific resources for Christian leaders, we recommend the following:
  - One America Movement’s [Matthew 5:9 Fellowship](#), [The Eilu v’Eilu Fellowship](#), and [Faith Over Division](#).
  - [The After Party: Toward Better Christian Politics](#). This curriculum “does the complex — but absolutely necessary — theological work of reframing Christian political identity from today’s divisive partisan options.”
  - “[Civilize it](#)” is a campaign by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to promote civility in political engagement.





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# Sharing trustworthy information about where and how to vote

## Sharing trustworthy information about where and how to vote

Faith leaders and religious organizations have a tremendous opportunity to make accurate information about our elections available to our community members. From registering to vote to tracking their ballots to finding their poll location, voters need to know where and how to vote, which is not always easy to find. Information coming from trusted members of the community can go a long way to help voters navigate a potentially confusing situation.



### THE NEED

- Misinformation, disinformation, and even just plain confusing information can serve as a barrier to voting.
  - Misinformation is false or inaccurate information.
  - Disinformation is false information which is deliberately intended to mislead.
- Americans in different areas of the country have different options on where and how to vote. Voting rules can change between elections – making it difficult for everyday people to keep track.
- Some voters – especially voters from historically marginalized groups – have been targeted and purposefully misled with false – and even intimidating – information about voting. Faith-based organizations can counter this mis- and disinformation by connecting their members and audiences with accurate information about the voting process.

*“Knowing your vote means knowing the logistics of voting, knowing what’s on your ballot, knowing about the issues that matter to you, and knowing how to find reliable sources of information – and combat unreliable ones.”*

**- Mormon Women for Ethical Government**



### THE RESPONSE

Religious organizations are hubs of information and organizing within their specific communities. They provide clear information on upcoming events, holidays, and opportunities to both provide and receive help. This communication infrastructure can be used to provide accurate nonpartisan information on voting and elections.

- Organizations that serve historically marginalized communities have a particularly important role to play in providing correct information, as these communities have faced campaigns to suppress their votes in the past – including a [campaign](#) to convince Black voters not to vote in the 2020 election.
- One of the most important ways to ensure that your members have accurate information regarding voting is to [share trustworthy information on your website and in communications](#). Add a link to your local or state election administration’s website on your own so that people know where to go for correct information. Be certain to link to the government source for information – as opposed to static text on your own site – as this information may change over time.
- You can send election-related information to your organization or congregation multiple times during the leadup to the election to ensure that they have accurate information about how they can check their registration, vote, and even track their mail-in ballots.
- Some of the most helpful pieces of information for voters include:
  - How to register to vote and check registration status.
  - Options for voting, such as early voting, mail-in voting, or dropping off their ballot on Election Day.
  - The dates, times, and locations for early voting.
  - The date, times, and locations for voting on Election Day.
  - What types of identification may be required in your county and state.
  - Checking the status of mail-in ballots that have been requested or the status of mail-in ballots that voters have returned.
  - Where to call if you are having issues casting your vote.



## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- It is legal for houses of worship, denominational organizations, and other 501(c)(3) entities to provide information about voting.
  - It is important that any shared information about voting does not privilege one candidate over another. Information on voting must not show bias toward any one candidate – either in the message that you send or by whom you choose to share this information with. All of your members should have the same access to this nonpartisan information.
  - You can read more about how to ensure 501(c)3 compliance on the IRS website [here](#).



## RESOURCES AND LINKS

- The nonpartisan US Vote Foundation [website](#) can help voters find contact information for their local election office.
- The National Association of Secretaries of State also has specific pages that connect voters to their state’s website dealing with the following topics:
  - [Registering to vote](#)
  - [Checking voter registration status](#)
  - [Finding your polling place](#)
  - [Voter ID requirements](#)
  - [Mail-in voting \(also called absentee\) and early voting information](#)
- [Vote.Org](#) outlines important deadlines related to the election and allows you to sign up to get reminders of upcoming deadlines.
- The League of Women Voters has a checklist to [Make Your Plan to Vote](#).
- You can share the following phone numbers for voters to call if they are having problems with voting:
  - 1-866-OUR-VOTE (866-687-8683)
  - 1-888-VE-Y-VOTA (en Español)
  - 1-888-API-VOTE (Asian multilingual assistance)
  - 1-844-YALLA-US (Arabic)
- You can partner with organizations to promote voting, such as:
  - [National Voter Registration Day](#) (partnership page [here](#))
  - [Vote Early Day](#) (partnership page [here](#))
- If you are interested in learning how to counter misinformation or disinformation, some great resources include:
  - [The United States Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency’s \(CISA\) two-pager on election misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation.](#)
  - [CISA’s guide to dealing with disinformation.](#)
- Find a faith-based partner:
  - [Faiths United to Save Democracy](#) has a comprehensive resource page with questions and answers related to voting.



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**Supporting voters to have a safe,  
positive voting experience**

## Supporting voters to have a safe, positive voting experience

Election Day can be an opportunity to celebrate community and our freedoms as Americans. Faith leaders can contribute to a safe, positive voting experience in two ways: by providing food and water and by serving as a peaceful presence. People should feel safe and comfortable as they prepare to cast their ballot. With increased tensions and even threats of violence in the leadup to our elections, religious leaders, community leaders, and lay people can play a positive role at polling locations by being a welcoming presence for voters. Additionally, faith-based organizations can help make it easier for voters to wait in long lines by providing food and water as people wait.

### *Providing food and water*



#### THE NEED

- During early voting and on Election Day, some polling locations face long lines. There are a [number of reasons](#) for this including voter enthusiasm, technical issues, inexperienced poll workers, and a lack of resources or polling locations.
- Especially in places with inclement weather, waiting in line can be an impediment for some. Bad experiences in long lines may cause some voters to have to step out of line during the election, which decreases their chances of choosing to vote in the next election. One study has shown [increased](#) turnout as a result of providing food and other outreach at polling locations.
- Voters may not think to bring water, a snack, and other items to keep themselves comfortable in case there is a long line at their polling location. In most states, volunteers are allowed to provide food and water at polling locations as long as they follow the regulations of the polling location.



#### THE RESPONSE

- A multitude of faith traditions have some sort of scripture or other central belief around providing food for people who are hungry. Religious communities can take on the call to feed the hungry in a new way: providing food and water to people waiting in line to vote.

- Volunteers across the country are able to provide sustenance to people waiting in line, and there have been a number of innovative approaches that are streamlining the process:
  - [Pizza to the Polls](#) has an app and online portal that allows people to report long lines at their polling locations. Once they verify the long lines, Pizza to the Polls orders pizza to be sent to that polling location.



## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Check with your local election office to make sure that volunteers are allowed to provide food and/or water at the polls.
- Different precincts, counties, and states have different rules regarding providing food and water at polling locations. Check the rules in your county.
- If you want to help this effort but are unable to physically provide for your polling locations, you can become an official partner of [Pizza to the Polls](#) or fundraise to help them carry out their mission.
  - Partnership opportunities include:
    - Promoting @PizzatothePolls: Help spread the word by creating or sharing content across social media so people know they can report a line or promote a partnered event
    - Feeding Hungry Folks: Donate snacks or beverages to be delivered to polling locations
    - Raise Dough: Share their fundraising link with your supporters
- You can email [partners@polls.pizza](mailto:partners@polls.pizza) to explore a partnership.

*“It definitely made my voting experience better,’ says Vincent. ‘Our budget was tight before the pandemic and has definitely gotten worse since, so a free meal was a moment of extra happiness that day.’”*

*- Eater, “[The Race to Feed Voters at the Polls](#)”*



## RESOURCES AND LINKS

- [Here is a checklist](#) to use as a guide for preparing to provide food and water at the polls.
- Be sure to check the [Election Official Directory](#) and contact your local elections office to find the rules about engaging in this activity.

*“When it comes to voting, the most important thing is keeping people in line. A simple bottle of water or snack can be what stops people from abandoning their right to vote... We know that voting is habit-forming, so a good experience at the polls is crucial to ensuring future participation.”*

[- Amirah Noaman, Pizza to the Polls](#)

## *Serving as a welcoming presence at a polling location*



### THE NEED

- While voting can be a celebration of exercising our rights and having a voice in building our free society, the environment at polling locations can be one of intensity and uncertainty.
- Increasingly, we have seen threats of violence against polling locations. During the leadup to the 2022 midterm elections, multiple federal agencies released a [joint bulletin](#) warning about potential violence at polling locations or against candidates.
- Elections can be a time of stress as people feel complicated emotions regarding their participation in the election, including the high stakes of casting their ballot.



### THE RESPONSE

- Faith leaders can **provide a peaceful presence at the polls.** As Dr. Barbara Williams-Skinner, leader of Faiths United to Save Democracy, told [The Washington Post](#) in 2022, “When you see a priest or a clergy or an imam or rabbi and they have their clergy garment on, for most people that is a symbol of some level of calm and peace.” By standing in the appropriate places and providing a positive, prayerful presence, faith leaders can add comfort to the experience of voting.
- Poll chaplains provide basic voter information, assist vulnerable voters, and provide a calming presence at polling locations.



- The opportunity to serve as a poll chaplain is open to clergy or religious leaders and lay leaders. While there is a welcoming presence in having faith leaders in their religious vestments at polling sites, partnering with civic organizations can expand the number of those trained to provide a peaceful presence at polling locations.

*“This is a natural extension for the care that we have for each other not only as clergy but for the greater community regardless of faith traditions... It just seemed a wise preventive kind of ministry to be involved in...I’m not there to care for one side or the other, but for every individual who has chosen to be a voter.”*

[- Rev. Karen Hagen, Tippecanoe Presbyterian Church in Bay View, Wisconsin](#)



## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- The Bridging Divides Initiative has created a bystander and de-escalation training [one-pager](#) for community members and volunteers. They also have [state-by-state guides](#) that can help you learn about providing a peaceful presence in your state.
- Faiths United to Save Democracy is recruiting a multi-faith coalition of chaplains for polling locations. You can access their toolkit [here](#).
- T’ruah specifically recruits rabbis as poll chaplains. You can find more information on their work [here](#).

*“Our job was simple: welcome people, smile, and offer a sense of calm; respond to questions or incidents that arose; provide information on voting rights; keep an eye out for conflicts and help de-escalate any problems; and thank every voter for their participation... It was also neighborly and friendly. People nodded and greeted one another, cracked jokes, and laughed. They knew they might vote differently, but they would still need to live together, whatever the results.”*

[- Bridget Moix, Quaker Volunteer](#)



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## **Recruiting poll workers**

## Recruiting Poll Workers

Our elections face a historic staffing shortage. Without enough poll workers, long lines could make it harder to vote, polling locations might need to be closed, and longer vote-counting times could reduce trust in our elections. Filling this urgent need is an opportunity to build relationships across the community while helping to ensure that every eligible person can vote and every valid vote is counted.



### THE NEED

- Our election system is made up of 117,000 polling locations across 3,000 counties. They require about a million poll workers to run smoothly.
- The average age of poll workers has increased over time, with a large share of poll workers over the age of 60. Many are retiring, leaving gaps in our election system that must be filled in order to avoid election crises. It's time for a new generation of poll workers to join this effort.
- A [recent survey](#) found that 51% of election officials worry about retaining or recruiting enough election workers in future elections.
- There is an enormous need for bilingual poll workers to adequately serve the needs of some communities.
- Our elections depend on individuals from across the country and all political leanings serving their community by being trained as election workers. Some jurisdictions even require parity of poll workers from each major political party.
- Our elections are not run from Washington, D.C. or by political elites; they are run at the state and local level. They require participation of everyday Americans serving their local communities.

*“Working alongside my fellow poll workers on Tuesday, I had a profoundly renewing experience of we, of being part of this unprecedented experiment in multicultural democracy. I say that my faith was renewed – and that is because in working together to make our democracy work, we lived out and renewed the covenant we share, the covenant that is expressed in the first words of the Constitution: We, the People. May we continue to talk, to listen, to disagree peaceably, to respect the outcome of free and fair elections, to live with – and be committed to living with – one another.*

[- Rabbi Josh Feigelson,  
Institute for Jewish Spirituality](#)

- Poll workers conduct tasks such as setting up and testing equipment, checking in voters, providing ballots, and scanning and counting the ballots. They go through legislatively-mandated training to ensure that they can carry out these functions.



## THE RESPONSE

- During the election season, faith-based organizations can recruit nonpartisan poll workers to help our elections run smoothly so that every valid vote is counted in an accurate, efficient manner.
- Poll working is one way that people who live in proximity can spend time with their neighbors and build community.
- Employers can update their employee handbooks to provide paid time off for their staff to work at the polls.
- Organizations can recruit poll workers from their staff, board, membership, or congregation. Multiple organizations can team up to create a competition for recruiting the most poll workers!



## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Because of the decentralized nature of our elections, your local county will have specific rules related to working at the polls. Check with your local county for up-to-date information and requirements.
- When recruiting poll workers, you should keep in mind the following details:
  - The total time commitment including training, the days required for service, and the time necessary to serve on each day of voting. Poll workers are often asked to work either half-day shifts or the full day of Election Day and specific days during early voting.
  - Deadlines for signing up. Be sure to check with your county so that your organization can sign up individuals on time.
  - How much poll workers are paid in your community.
- In most counties, poll workers are paid for their service. Individuals who are out of work or otherwise in financial need can serve as poll workers as a way to earn money, as well as a way to build their resumé as they seek more long-term work opportunities. There are also many programs for high school students to receive school credit for this work.



## RESOURCES AND LINKS

- [An email template for congregations to recruit poll workers](#)
- [An email template for networks to recruit poll workers](#)
- [Poll Worker Preparedness Checklist from the Election Assistance Commission](#)
- [US Election Assistance Commission state-by-state guide for poll workers](#) [Note that this link contains information from the 2020 election and will be updated for 2024 when guidance is available.]
- You can use this [Power the Polls link](#) to share with your organization and members so that they can sign up. Individuals who sign up using this link will receive an email from their local election office that outlines the requirements for training and serving as a poll worker. They will also receive follow up emails and reminders from Interfaith America.
- If you want to create an official partnership between your organization and Power the Polls, you can do so at this [link](#). By partnering directly with Power the Polls, your organization will receive additional specific toolkits, emails about the specific needs in our election system throughout the year, and helpful information on how you can make your poll worker recruitment effort as successful as possible.

*“I’ve written about the pro-democracy faith movement and worked with religious leaders to resist authoritarianism, but it’s an extra special experience to see democracy up close as a poll worker. I volunteered on Election Day 2020 in Louisville, Kentucky, and was amazed at the community coming together to make democracy happen. I took election processes for granted, but now I understand what a tough and important role poll workers play. Making the promise of democracy real requires neighbors to help neighbors, and my Christian faith teaches me that loving my neighbors is tantamount to following Christ.”*

- Guthrie Graves-Fitzsimmons, Baptist Joint Committee



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**Offering your space or finding an alternative so your community has enough polling locations**

## Offering your space or finding an alternative so your community has enough polling locations

A lack of polling locations can suppress turnout and decrease trust in the process. Faith-based organizations have served our democracy for decades by providing their own spaces and by working in their communities to find secular spaces where people can vote. Religious institutions currently play a major role in our voting infrastructure. Over 12,000 houses of worship across America open their doors to voters, representing roughly 20% of all polling locations. In Oklahoma and Arkansas, churches are the majority of polling locations.

Even with this commitment from faith-based organizations and the work of local election officials, some areas still have voting deserts. These can decrease voting access and diminish trust in elections. An insufficient number of polling locations can make it difficult for rural voters and those without access to a vehicle or public transportation to vote. Marginalized communities are disproportionately impacted.



### THE NEED

- A [2022 study](#) found that due to the Shelby v. Holder decision, in the 13 states that were previously required to disclose any changes to voting districts or election administration, 1,688 polling locations were closed between 2012 and 2018.
  - Some of these closures have been balanced out by an increase in countywide polling locations, generally known as vote centers. These are more centralized locations where large groups of voters from various precincts can vote. However, an increase in countywide polling locations harms some.
  - [Studies](#) have shown that trading local polling locations for larger vote centers “could make it harder for some groups of voters to get to the polls and lower the likelihood that they will cast ballots.”
- Native Americans who live on tribal land often have few polling locations, which dramatically decreases their access to polls.
- The problem of inadequate polling locations is [particularly challenging](#) for poorer, rural counties that lack major community centers, professional sports stadiums, and other spaces that are large enough to accommodate voting.
  - There are often not enough polling locations near college campuses.



## THE RESPONSE

- Religious structures can be well-suited to serve as polling locations because they are often large hubs for community activities, and many meet the requirements of the [Americans with Disability Act](#) and the [Help America Vote Act](#).
- Religious houses of worship are deeply embedded in their communities and can find suitable public or secular spaces that can adequately serve as a polling location, including community centers, schools, sports complexes, and other compliant institutions.
- In addition to providing for a specific need in the community, even the act of offering space can let election officials know that there are additional polling location options should the need arise.
- Spaces near a college campus are especially useful as a polling location to serve the full community. The [Andrew Goodman Foundation](#) and [Campus Vote Project](#) work on this issue.

*During the 2020 election, African Methodist Episcopal churches across Georgia volunteered their locations as polling locations. Bishop Reginald Jackson told the [Atlanta Journal Constitution](#), “There’s no excuse to have less than an adequate number of polling sites and not enough poll workers. All of the AME churches have agreed to become polling sites if they’re needed.”*



## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Before determining whether this is something to pursue:
  - Make certain that your organization can meet the requirements and that you can comfortably, fully commit to all that this entails. Remember that you will likely have thousands of people making their way through your space, many of whom do not share your religious identity.
  - Consider whether there are logistical or security concerns.
  - Be sure that you can meet the full-time commitment that is required, including early voting in certain counties. These dates may fall on religious holidays or other times in which your space will be unavailable to the public.
  - Then, call your local election officials and determine whether more polling locations are needed in your area.



- Talk to voters in your area about whether they think more polling locations are needed, and advocate with your Secretary of State or county officials to add more polling locations. Offer to work with them to find adequate locations.
- In many counties, institutions that host polling locations are compensated for the use of their space.
- In some cases, faith institutions serving as polling locations can help to build cohesion and trust between the house of worship and its neighborhood. In other cases, [such as in Florida during the 2016 election](#), institutions such as mosques and Islamic Centers have faced threats and harassment when they offered their space in this manner.
- As the [Evangelical Lutheran Church in America guide](#) describes, if your house of worship has a school attached you must ensure that there are security measures in place to separate where the children are from where people will be voting.
- The ELCA guide also notes that you should ensure that your organization's insurance carrier is aware of and okay with your building being used as a polling location.
- The federal court decision in *Otero v. State Election Board* established that houses of worship can serve the purely secular purpose of providing a place for individuals to vote. To ensure that houses of worship are not going beyond that purpose, [they should avoid activities](#) such as:
  - Distributing religious literature to people standing in line.
  - Placing voting booths where voters are facing distinct religious symbolism such as an altar or a sacramental item.
  - Displaying anything that could be construed as partisan in nature.
- Here are some of the basic steps for ensuring whether a location is able to serve as a polling place (You can find more information in the [A More Perfect Union guide](#)):
  - Step 1 - Ensure your space is fully ADA-compliant
  - Step 2 - Check to see if your county needs additional polling places/vote centers
  - Step 3 - Check with board and staff to confirm requirements can be met
  - Step 4 - Consult the Secure Community Network with any security concerns



## RESOURCES AND LINKS

- High priority states and counties will be updated regularly; [sign up](#) to receive Faith in Elections Playbook updates.
  - [Secure Communities Network's security guide](#)
  - [National Council of State Legislatures polling location guide](#)
  - [Engage Guide on How Mosques Can Serve as Polling Locations](#)
  - PDF checklist: [A More Perfect Union guide](#)
  - [The Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility checklist](#)
  - [Church Law Center's Guide for Churches Serving as Polling Locations](#)
  - [Sample Vote Center Requirements from Los Angeles County](#)
  - [Sample Polling Location Guide from Berks County, Pennsylvania](#)
  - [ELCA Polling Location Guide for Churches](#)
  - [Andrew Goodman Foundation](#) and [Campus Vote Project](#)

*"...in 2019, the County Clerk [in Houston, Texas] was able to designate the community center in the Islamic Institute & Houston Blue Mosque as an official polling location. This opened up new opportunities for Muslims to get involved and build relationships with local community Officials."*

**- [Engage: Empowering Engaged Muslims](#)**



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## **Building relationships with local election officials**

## Building relationships with local election officials

Elections are run at the state and local level. They are staffed by regular citizens who are willing to give of their time to help our elections run smoothly. You can build trust and transparency in elections by creating relationships with your local election officials — to both hold them accountable and learn about the process. Having strong relationships in place well before Election Day will make it easier to navigate challenges that may arise.



### THE NEED

- Elections in our country are run by the states — not by Washington, D.C. They have many moving parts, and the stakes surrounding elections are high. It can be hard to understand the process, from the registration and maintenance of voting, to the creation of ballots, to the system for casting and counting of votes. We can educate ourselves on the system and learn to trust the transparency and accountability measures that are in place, knowing there are laws to guide the process and watch dogs to detect any potential violations.
- The vast majority of election officials around the country are professionals with years of experience administering elections. They do not take their own personal or political beliefs into account when determining the outcome.
- Election officials are under a great deal of stress and have even faced threats and harassment.



### THE RESPONSE

- Communities can build trust in their elections by demystifying election administration and learning from their local election officials. Officials can answer questions from the public regarding how people vote, how ballots are counted, and how our elections are certified.

- By providing opportunities for direct engagement with election officials, faith-based organizations can increase trust in our elections while also raising any concerns that they have directly with the people who run our elections.
- These meetings also provide an opportunity for members from both sides of the political aisle to increase transparency and accountability from election officials. They can help election officials protect the right to vote while also maintaining the integrity of elections.
- If you can establish a relationship with election officials throughout the leadup to the 2024 election, you can better assess the information that is shared during the heat of the election itself.



## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Faiths United to Save Democracy (FUSD) will host "[We Are Watching](#)" webinars in early 2024 in ten priority states. The goal is to provide faith and lay leaders with direct access to state election officials and the opportunity to ask questions to clarify the 2024 election rules and any polling site changes. These sessions also signal to state election officials that their actions are being monitored to ensure free, fair, and safe elections for all voters.
- Election officials need the support of their communities now more than ever. Find ways to publicly thank election workers for their service, and encourage others to do the same. Projects such as "[Election Heroes Day](#)" provide resources on how to thank your election officials.
- A More Perfect Union has outlined the following steps for engaging with election officials. A more detailed version of this list can be found [here](#).
  - Step 1: Research the questions, concerns, and opportunities in your community.
  - Step 2: Choose the type of engagement that best suits your organization - whether

*"Interfaith clergy gatherings are one way to bring together multiple stakeholders for a conversation with election officials. Because feelings, fears, questions, and concerns about American elections can differ dramatically by community, organizing these leaders for a single conversation with local election officials is an efficient way to build transparency quickly and at scale."*

**- A More Perfect Union: The Jewish Partnership for Democracy**

that is interfaith events, community events, examining logic and accuracy tests, attending board meetings, or some other activity.

- Step 3: Consider what new and existing coalitions might collaborate.
- Step 4: If applicable, reach out to your local election officials.
- Step 5: Prepare your questions and topics.
- Step 6: Send a thank you note.
- Step 7: Educate your community about what you have learned.



## RESOURCES AND LINKS

- [Faiths United to Save Democracy](#) toolkit (“We Are Watching” is on page 19)
- [Election Heroes Day website](#) and partner toolkit

## About

*The Faith in Elections Playbook* is a joint project of Interfaith America and Protect Democracy to equip faith-based communities with accessible, actionable resources to support the 2024 election. This playbook is designed to help faith-based organizations across America access resources to help the 2024 elections run smoothly, so that all eligible voters can access a ballot and every valid vote is counted.

This effort is intended to provide a platform that makes it easier for faith and community leaders to join work that is already happening across America. Our hope is that by compiling and curating this information, organizations can focus on taking actions that best align with their interests, their skills, and the needs of their communities.

## Project Team



### **Chris Crawford**

Chris Crawford is a policy advocate at Protect Democracy. His work is focused on ensuring free and fair elections and the peaceful transfer of power, including staffing the National Task Force on Election Crises and working with partners across civil society to support democratic institutions. He previously worked as a senior program associate at Democracy Fund, where he managed a portfolio of faith-based initiatives focused on promoting pluralism in the United States. Chris began his career conducting political organizing at Susan B. Anthony List, the nation's largest pro-life political organization. Chris has a bachelor's degree in political science from The George Washington University and a master's degree in nonprofit administration from The University of Notre Dame.



### **Ariela Rosenberg | Policy Advocate, Protect Democracy**

Ariela Rosenberg develops and advocates for a range of reforms to shore up American democratic institutions. She works to influence federal policymaking with an emphasis on strengthening Congress, preventing abuses of power, and protecting national security. She received her B.A. in intellectual history and English literature from the University of Pennsylvania, and her masters from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy.



### **Kaitlyn Dalton | Program Coordinator, Interfaith America**

Kaitlyn Dalton, Program Coordinator, provides support for Democracy Initiatives at Interfaith America. She graduated from Arizona State University with a B.A. in Religious Studies. Additionally, Kaitlyn studied religion and conflict at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, in addition to a research internship at The Harry S. Truman Institute for the Advancement of Peace. Her interfaith involvement continued with an internship with the Interfaith Council of Metropolitan Washington and an intensive research project about American Women in Interfaith Dialogue Spaces. Kaitlyn's academic and professional aspirations are

rooted in her belief that interfaith dialogue has the potentiality to reflect our shared humanity and a universal capacity for connection.



## **Frederick A. Davie | Senior Consultant, Interfaith America**

As Senior Consultant for Racial Equity, Reverend Davie executes programming with a primary focus on the intersection of race and religion. He recently served as the Executive Vice President at Union Theological Seminary. In June 2020, US Senator Charles Schumer appointed him to the US Commission on International Religious Freedom. President Barack Obama appointed Rev. Davie to the inaugural White House Council on Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships in 2009. He is a minister in the Presbytery of New York City. He serves on the boards of Interfaith Center of NY, Climate Reality Project, and is a Commissioner for the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom.



## **Mary Ellen Giess | Vice President of Strategic Initiatives**

MaryEllen oversees innovative and collaborative program opportunities with a focus on policy and bridgebuilding initiatives. Mary Ellen has served in various programmatic and strategic roles since joining IA in 2008, including managing our program partnership with the Obama White House, stewarding our five-year research partnership (IDEALS), and co-editing *Educating about Religious Diversity: A Handbook for Student Affairs*. She joined us after completing her master's degree at Harvard Divinity School and earned



## **Rollie Olson | Program Manager, Interfaith America**

Rollie Olson is a program manager at Interfaith America. For five years Rollie served as Congressional staff for Congressman Dean Phillips (MN 03) focused on stakeholder outreach, constituent services, and finding common ground with constituents across backgrounds and ideologies. He has degrees in International Relations and Political Science from Bethel University and is completing an MPA from Metro State University in St. Paul.





## Advisory Committee



**Shirley Hoogstra | President, Council for Christian Colleges & Universities**

A visionary leader who is passionate about Christian higher education and the role it plays in the common good, Shirley V. Hoogstra became the seventh president of the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities in September 2014. She has focused on expanding diversity and inclusion on CCCU campuses and making education available, accessible, and affordable to all students. Hoogstra serves on the steering committee for the Washington Higher Ed Secretariat, is a leader for the Evangelical Immigration Table, and serves on the boards of the American Council on Education, the National Association of Evangelicals, and Trinity Forum.



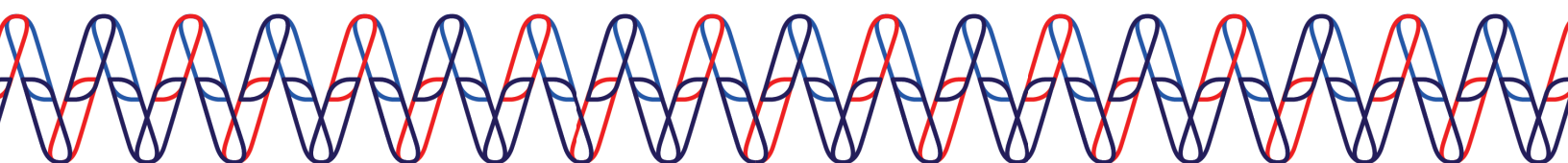
**Lauren W. Reliford, MSW | Political Director, Sojourners and SojoAction**

Lauren W. Reliford, MSW is *Sojourners'* political director, responsible for policy strategy and nationally focused advocacy. She is a passionate and mission-oriented public health professional focused on bridging the gap between social theory, spirituality, research, and practice and bringing them to the forefront in major policy making decisions. Lauren joins *Sojourners* with over 10 years of experience in research, policy, advocacy, and government relations. Prior to joining *Sojourners*, Lauren took her passion for politics and policy and turned it into a profession, focusing on domestic and international public health advocacy for a number of large nonprofit organizations. She also earned her master's degree in social work and focused primarily on the biological impacts of trauma in high-risk and vulnerable populations.



**Dani Levine | Director of Social Impact, Hillel International**

Dani Levine is the Director of Social Impact at Hillel International. Dani has a BA in Environmental Studies and Comparative American Studies from Oberlin College and received her Masters of Public Health (MPH) in Environmental Health and Policy from Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine. Prior to joining Hillel, Dani spent a decade with Avodah, first as the local New Orleans Director and ultimately as the National Program Director, responsible for overseeing all Avodah programming across multiple cities and programs. Dani lives in the best city in the world, New Orleans, with her wife and three kids.





**Galen Carey | Vice President of Government Relations, National Association of Evangelicals**

Galen Carey, National Association of Evangelicals vice president of government relations, is responsible for representing the NAE before Congress, the White House and the courts. He works to advance the approach and principles of the NAE document, “For the Health of the Nation.” He is also co-author with Leith Anderson of “Faith in the Voting Booth.” Before joining the NAE staff, Carey was a longtime employee of World Relief, the relief and development arm of the NAE, serving in Croatia, Mozambique, Kenya, Indonesia and Burundi. He received an M.Div. from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and a Doctor of Ministry from McCormick Theological Seminary.



**Sofi Hersher | Vice President of Strategy & Communications, A More Perfect Union**

Sofi Hersher is Vice President of Strategy and Communications at A More Perfect Union: The Jewish Partnership for Democracy. A dedicated problem solver, Sofi began her career at Twitter, where she started as a receptionist and worked her way up to brand manager. In 2016, Sofi earned an MA in Religion in the Contemporary World from King’s College London, afterward returning stateside to oversee communications for the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism and later all client and creative operations for Ignite, a digital strategy agency solving big problems for Jewish nonprofits. She lives with her partner, Nate, and her growing collection of Agatha Christie novels in Washington, DC.



**Kim Daniels | Director, Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life, Georgetown University**

Kim Daniels is the Director of Georgetown University’s Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life. She was appointed by Pope Francis as a member of the Vatican Dicastery for Communication in 2016 and reappointed in 2022. Kim has also served as spokesperson for the president of the United States at the Conference of Catholic Bishops. She provided strategic advice to Conference leadership as a member of the executive team, furthering the development and implementation of a positive, proactive, and unified approach across a range of complex issues where Church teachings intersect with matters of public concern. She currently serves as a consultant to the USCCB’s Committee for Religious Liberty.



**Barbara Williams-Skinner | President, Skinner Leadership Institute, Co-Convener, National African American Clergy Network**

Dr. Barbara Williams-Skinner, CEO and co-founder of Skinner Leadership Institute, regularly works with interfaith leaders on issues like health care, criminal justice reform, and voting rights. She is co-founder of a millennial and Generation X leadership excellence program - [the Masters Series for Distinguished Leaders](#). The author of two books on prayer and leadership, Dr. Williams-Skinner, co-founded [the Masters Series for Distinguished Clergy](#), equipping clergy

to voice their values in the public arena. She is also co-convener of Faiths United to Save Democracy (FUSD), a nonpartisan, multi-faith, multi-racial, and inter-generational ten-state voter protection and mobilization campaign.



## **Simran Jeet-Singh | Executive Director of Religion & Society, the Aspen Institute**

Simran Jeet Singh, Ph.D., is the Executive Director of the Religion & Society Program at the Aspen Institute and the author of the national bestseller *The Light We Give: How Sikh Wisdom Can Transform Your Life* (Riverhead, Penguin Random House). Simran earned graduate degrees from Harvard University and Columbia University, and he writes regularly for major outlets, including *Harvard Business Review*, *TIME Magazine*, and *CNN*. Simran also authored the award-winning children's book *Fauja Singh Keeps Going: The True Story of the Oldest Person to Ever Run a Marathon* (Kokila, Penguin Random House).



## **Dilara Sayeed | President, Muslim Civic Coalition**

Dr. Dilara Sayeed serves as the President of the Muslim Civic Coalition. Dilara's story goes from Headstart to Harvard, and through public school systems. She is an award winning teacher, social impact entrepreneur, and civic justice advocate. In 2021, Dilara was appointed by Governor Pritzker to the IL Commission on Discrimination and Hate Crimes (CDHC). Dilara has served on the Transition team for Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson, as well as Advisory Councils for Mayor Lightfoot and Illinois Comptroller Mendoza. She is a board trustee for the Field Museum and Indo-American Democratic Organization.



## **Tahil Sharma | Regional Coordinator for North America, United Religions Initiative**

Tahil Sharma is the Regional Coordinator for North America at the United Religions Initiative (URI). Tahil's Hindu and Sikh background inspires his work for education, pluralism, and justice, working in local, regional, and international spaces for over a decade. Tahil serves as an Interfaith Minister in Residence for the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles, a Board Member of Sadhana: A Coalition of Progressive Hindus, a member of the Racial Justice & Religion Commission at the Aspen Institute's Religion and Society Program, and as a member of the Interfaith Advisory Board for Los Angeles County District Attorney George Gascón.



## **Samantha Solemnidad | Partnerships Manager, Asian & Pacific Islander American Vote (APIAVote)**

Sam Solemnidad is the Strategic Partnerships Manager at Asian and Pacific Islander American Vote (APIAVote). In this role, she works to expand APIAVote's partner network and operationalize growth and development strategies. Prior to joining the APIAVote team, Sam completed the Coro Fellows Program in Public Affairs, an experience-based fellowship focused on gaining cross-sectoral experience and knowledge through interactions with private, public, and nonprofit

organizations and decision-makers. Sam holds a B.A. in Political Science and Asian American Studies from the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA). Born and raised in Richmond, CA, Sam is the proud daughter of Filipino migrants.



**Emma Petty Addams | Co-Executive Director, Mormon Women for Ethical Government**

Emma Petty Addams serves as co-executive director for Mormon Women for Ethical Government. After receiving her bachelor's degree in piano performance at Stanford University, she spent time in Boston and Silicon Valley working in contracts negotiation, corporate transactions and capitalization, and investor relations. In addition, she has built and run large piano studios in California, New Jersey, and now Omaha, Nebraska, where she currently resides with her husband and three sons. While seemingly unrelated, these previous career opportunities were excellent preparation for the fast-paced yet methodical and collaborative nature of the work at MWEG.



**Nabila Mansoor | Executive Director, Rise AAPI**

Nabila Mansoor has spent the last several years working to improve political awareness in underrepresented communities, especially within the Muslim American community in Texas. She is currently the Executive Director of Rise AAPI, a civic engagement organization committed to uniting, organizing, and supporting the pan-Asian community in Texas. She is past Executive Director of Engage's Texas chapter and current President of TMAC, the Texas Multicultural Advocacy Coalition. She has a background in community organizing, leadership development and strategic planning. She holds a law degree from University of Houston Law Center.

