

Travis County Voter Registration News

Thanks to legislative efforts that promote voter registration in Texas, as well as the efforts of many local volunteers and groups, Travis County enjoys a very high rate of voter registration: 95%. Despite the overall high rate, one group within the population typically does not register and therefore, does not vote.

If you had to guess which age group is least represented among registered voters, which one would you choose? You probably didn't guess seniors, age 66 and above, who tend not to move and remain registered to vote. Nine out of ten seniors fit that description. Baby boomers and the oldest Gen X voters, age 46 – 65 follow seniors in high levels of registration at about 8 in 10. Voters age 26 – 45 participate at a somewhat lower rate; however, this group constitutes about one-half of all registered voters in Travis County.

That leaves the group with the most to gain (or lose) in the long run: the young. Only 1 in 3 eighteen to twenty-five-year-olds is registered to vote. Why? While we don't have all the answers we do have some educated guesses.

Two reasons that people (and maybe the young) do not register to vote is because they don't know if they can and they don't know how. So here are the basics:

- In Texas, a person must be 18 years old, a United States citizen (by birth or naturalization) and a resident of the county where they wish to register.
- Applicants must provide full name, residence address and identification such as a driver's license number or Texas Identification number.
- Find postage paid voter registration applications in public libraries, schools, post offices and in many private businesses such as HEB and Randalls stores
- Download a voter registration application at www.traviscountytax.org
- A downloaded application is not postage paid and must be addressed to Travis County Voter Registration / P O Box 149327 / Austin, TX 78714-9327
- Registration takes effect 30 days after receipt of the completed application

Over the next six months, we're targeting 10,000 young adults to join the ranks of Travis County registered voters. In early October of this year, the success of "Challenge 10,000" will be measured by comparing today's rate among young voters, 71% to a rate that we anticipate will more closely resemble the overall rate of 95%.

The most important goal of Challenge 10,000 involves voter awareness for all citizens, but especially those aged 18-25. If you are a registered voter here's what you can do to help promote this effort.

1. Check your voter status by clicking on www.traviscountytax.org or calling 854-9473. Make sure all information is correct. Once you know how easy it is to check, you can help someone else!
2. Ask the people around you, especially those who are 18 – 25, if they need assistance with voter registration, then help them or refer them to the Voter Registration helpline: 854-9473.
3. Volunteer your time to register voters as a Volunteer Deputy Registrar. Contact Cheryl Reese at 854-9473 extension 33284 or Cheryl.Reese@co.travis.tx.us

Look for an update on Challenge 10,000 next summer!

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