

5 tips for being an active, informed voter



1. LEARN

Learn about the candidates, the government offices they are running for, and any other key issues in the election.

If you find there is too much information, or too many candidates, one way to start is with an issue you care about (education, environment, jobs, healthcare, etc.). Then find information about the candidates and their views on that one issue.

2. THINK about, and ANALYZE, the information

Do you have enough information to make a decision? (if not, find more information!)

- Is this information helpful? Is it from a good, truthful source? Does it fit with other facts you know? How does it make you feel?
- Why is the candidate running for office? What information do I need to decide if he/she is qualified for the position, and will be a good representative?

Tip: In an election, focus more on the individual candidates, their ideas, and their solutions - and less on the political parties and their platforms.

3. DECIDE: Choose your candidate, or position on an issue

Review what you have learned about the candidates. Based on the information you know, rate the candidates, and use that information to make a good decision. Consider the candidate's background, positions, traits, and any other information important to you. Did they share ideas and solutions, or mostly complain? Decide which candidate you think will do the best job.

4. TAKE ACTION

Active citizens and leaders don't just read and think about information. They take action with it! One important opportunity for citizens to participate in democracy and in the community is by voting...every year. It is important to cast a ballot to make your voice heard!

You can make your voice heard outside of voting, too. Share your ideas and solutions for community problems, or report on a government meeting, leader or issue.

5. STAY ENGAGED: Keep paying attention and being involved

Once you vote, are you finished? NO!

- After the election, look for the official election results. Keep track of the winning candidates - do they keep their campaign promises? do they make good decisions?
- Stay involved - watch or attend government meetings, keep up with the news, and contact elected officials about issues you care about.

If you are in high school, get involved in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Youth Council and help to solve community problems. Middle and elementary school students, one way to get involved is by making sure the youth council members – your representatives - know what's on YOUR mind!