

Voter Engagement Workshop

A 45-Minute Training-in-a-Box for Tennessee Union Halls

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This workshop equips any union steward, organizer, CBTU or APRI member, or community leader to run a 45-minute voter-engagement training in their union hall, church fellowship hall, community center, or job-site lunchroom - with no prior political training. The PDF is the script. Print it, walk through it, and at the end every attendee leaves with a verified voter registration, their correct district, and a personal action plan.

The 2022 Tennessee redistricting redrew every state and congressional district line. Memphis, Nashville, and Chattanooga were targeted. Most working people don't know their new district. This workshop fixes that in one sitting.

1. Facilitator Agenda - 45 Minutes

0:00 - 0:03 (3 min)

Welcome + Why we're here

Open with the line: 'The maps changed. Most of us don't know what district we're in anymore. We're going to fix that today, and we're going to leave with a plan.' Pass around a sign-in sheet.

0:03 - 0:10 (7 min)

The 2022 Redistricting in 5 Bullets

Use the Kitchen-Table Conversation Guide (Section 4). Stay short. Stay factual. Avoid party labels.

0:10 - 0:18 (8 min)

Activity: Look Up Your District - Live

Pass out phones / share the laboreducation.org/voter-hub link on a projector. Everyone in the room verifies their US Congressional, TN State Senate, TN State House, and county districts. Anyone who can't find it: pair them with someone who can.

0:18 - 0:25 (7 min)

Activity: Verify Your Registration

Same drill - everyone opens tnmap.tn.gov/voterlookup/ and confirms their registration is ACTIVE at the correct address. If anyone isn't registered, they fill out the online form at ovr.govote.tn.gov right then. Don't wait.

0:25 - 0:32 (7 min)

How to Vote in TN - the 8 Rules

Walk through the Voter ID + Voting Rules quick-reference card (Section 5). Photocopy it and pass it out so everyone has a copy.

0:32 - 0:40 (8 min)

Canvasser Roleplay

Pair people up. One plays the canvasser, one plays the skeptical neighbor. Use the Door-to-Door Script (Section 6). Two minutes each side. Then swap. Then debrief - what worked?

0:40 - 0:45 (5 min)

Personal Action Plan + Close

Each attendee writes down 2 commitments: 'I will sign up ___ new voters in my workplace by ___ date.' and 'I will bring ___ people to early voting.' Collect or photograph. Send the room out fired up.

2. Materials Checklist

- > Sign-in sheet (one per workshop) - name, phone, email, home address
- > Voter ID + Voting Rules quick-reference card - PHOTOCOPY 1 PER ATTENDEE (Section 5 below)
- > Door-to-Door Canvasser Script - 1 per attendee (Section 6 below)
- > Voter FAQ - 1 per attendee (Section 7 below)
- > Phones / one shared phone or laptop with internet for the live look-up activity
- > Pens (one per attendee)

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- > Sticky notes for the personal-action-plan close
- > Snacks + water - never run a workshop without food
- > Voter-registration paper forms (free from your county Election Commission) for anyone who prefers paper
- > Sign-up form for your local's voter-protection volunteer corps

3. Facilitator FAQ - Handle These When They Come Up

Q: Do I need to be a partisan organizer to run this?

No. This workshop is non-partisan. Stick to the facts: how to register, how to vote, what your district is. Don't endorse candidates from the front of the room. If someone asks who to vote for, point them to Ballotpedia (ballotpedia.org/Tennessee) or your CLC's endorsement list.

Q: What if attendees are not US citizens?

Welcome them - the workshop covers civic information valuable to everyone, including how immigrant communities can support friends and family who do vote, and how naturalization works. Do NOT have them fill out a voter-registration form.

Q: What if someone has a felony conviction?

Tennessee allows restoration of voting rights but the process is complex. Refer them to ACLU-TN (aclu-tn.org) or The Equity Alliance (theequityalliance.org) for free legal help. Many people are eligible and don't know it.

Q: What if someone says 'my vote doesn't matter'?

Use the line: 'In 2018 the Tennessee state Senate seat for District 32 was decided by 41 votes. Local school board races in Shelby County have been decided by single digits. Your vote elects the people who run your kids' schools and decide whether your union contract gets enforced.'

Q: What if someone asks about the 2022 redistricting in detail?

Stay factual. The TN General Assembly redrew lines in 2022 under their constitutional authority. Davidson County was split into 3 congressional districts. Shelby County saw state Senate and state House line changes. The maps were challenged and largely upheld in court. The point of this workshop is not to argue the maps - it's to make sure every worker knows their NEW district so they can vote and call the right representative.

Q: How do I follow up after the workshop?

Within 48 hours: (1) Email everyone who signed in with the laboreducation.org/voter-hub link. (2) Add them to your local's volunteer list. (3) Text them 30 days before the next election with their early-voting site. (4) Run this workshop again in 60 days - bring a friend.

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4. Kitchen-Table Conversation Guide - The Redistricting in 5 Bullets

Use these 5 short factual statements. Don't lecture. Stop after each one and ask: 'Did you know that? Want to look up where YOU are?' Get them on their phone with you.

- > In 2022, the Tennessee General Assembly redrew every state and federal district line. This happens every 10 years after the U.S. Census - but the lines they drew this time changed a lot of neighborhoods.
- > Davidson County (Nashville) used to be ONE congressional district. It is now SPLIT INTO THREE different congressional districts. Your neighbor across the street may now have a different US Representative than you.
- > Shelby County (Memphis) and Hamilton County (Chattanooga) had state Senate and state House line changes that moved entire neighborhoods into different districts.
- > Most working people don't know this. They assume they're still in the same district as they were in 2018 or 2020. They're not.
- > Knowing your district = knowing who represents you = knowing who to call when your contract is on the line or your kid's school is underfunded. We're going to figure that out together right now.

5. Voter ID + Voting Rules Quick-Reference Card - PHOTOCOPY THIS PAGE**REGISTRATION DEADLINE:**

30 days before any election. Register at ovr.govote.tn.gov or any TN county Election Commission office. No walk-in registration on Election Day.

VOTER ID - REQUIRED:

TN driver's license * US passport * TN photo ID * US military ID * TN handgun-carry permit. STUDENT IDs are NOT accepted. Out-of-state IDs are NOT accepted. Expired IDs accepted up to 4 years past expiration.

EARLY VOTING:

14 days, starting 20 days before Election Day, ending 5 days before. Any registered voter can early-vote at any early-voting site in their county - no excuse needed.

ABSENTEE BALLOT:

Requires an excuse in TN. Qualify if: 60+, ill or hospitalized, caregiver, college student outside home county, military, poll official outside precinct, religious-holiday observer. Request 7+ days before the election.

ELECTION-DAY POLLING:

You MUST vote at the polling place assigned to your residential address. Most TN polls open 7am-8pm local time. Lookup at sos.tn.gov/elections or your county Election Commission.

PROVISIONAL BALLOT:

If a poll worker says you're not on the rolls - DO NOT LEAVE. Ask for a provisional ballot. Federal law says they must give you one. Then call 866-OUR-VOTE.

ELECTION-DAY HOTLINE:

1-866-OUR-VOTE (1-866-687-8683) for free legal help if anything goes wrong. En espanol: 1-888-VE-Y-VOTA (1-888-839-8682).

RIGHTS RESTORATION:

Tennesseans with felony convictions can apply for voting-rights restoration. Free legal help: ACLU-TN (aclu-tn.org) and The Equity Alliance (theequityalliance.org).

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6. Door-to-Door Canvasser Script

Use this script at a door, on a job-site walkthrough, in the church parking lot, or at the union hall. Keep it short. Listen more than you talk.

OPENING (10 SEC):

'Hi, I'm [NAME] with [LOCAL/CHURCH/CLC]. I'm not selling anything and I'm not asking for money. I'm checking to make sure folks on this block are registered to vote and know what district they're in after the 2022 maps changed. Do you have a minute?'

IF YES:

'Great. Two quick questions: 1) Are you registered at this address? 2) Do you know what US Congressional and TN State House district you're in right now?'

IF THEY DON'T KNOW:

'No problem - most people don't. We can look it up on your phone in 60 seconds. The site is laboreducation.org/voter-hub. I can pull it up if it's easier.'

IF NOT REGISTERED:

'Easiest place to do it is ovr.govote.tn.gov - takes 5 minutes on your phone. You'll need your TN driver's license number. I can wait while you start it, or I can text you the link.'

IF THEY HAVE OBJECTIONS:

(See Objection Handlers below.) After the conversation: 'Last thing - we're running a 45-min voter workshop at [VENUE] on [DATE]. Free, food provided. Want me to text you the info?'

CLOSING (10 SEC):

'Thanks for your time. The next election is [DATE]. Early voting starts [DATE]. The hotline is 866-OUR-VOTE if anything goes wrong on Election Day. Tell two neighbors.'

Objection Handlers

'My vote doesn't matter.'

'In 2018 a TN state Senate race was decided by 41 votes. Local races by single digits. Your school board, your city council, the people who decide whether your union contract gets enforced - those are all on the ballot. Your vote elects them.'

'I don't have time.'

'Early voting is 14 days and most sites are open evenings and Saturdays. Vote on your lunch break, on your way home from work, or on a Saturday morning. Takes 20 minutes.'

'I don't trust politicians.'

'I hear you. But these maps were drawn by politicians. The way to stop them from rigging the next set of maps in 2032 is to vote in the people who fix them. Quitting is what they want.'

'I don't know who to vote for.'

'You don't have to decide today. Look up your district, register, and then visit ballotpedia.org/Tennessee a week before the election. Every candidate, every position, in plain English.'

'I had a felony conviction and was told I can't vote.'

'You may actually be eligible to have your rights restored. It's a process but it works. Free legal help at aclu-tn.org or theequityalliance.org. Worth one phone call.'

'I'm an undocumented immigrant.'

'I understand. You can't vote, but you can help. Talk to friends and family who CAN vote - they probably trust you more than anyone else. And when you get citizenship, we'll be here to help you register that day.'

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7. Voter FAQ - 12 Most-Asked Questions (Hand out to attendees)

Q: Where do I register to vote?

A: Online: ovr.govote.tn.gov (need TN driver's license number). Paper: any TN county Election Commission office. Deadline: 30 days before any election.

Q: How do I check if I'm registered?

A: tnmap.tn.gov/voterlookup/ - free, official, instant. Or call your county Election Commission.

Q: What ID do I need at the polls?

A: TN driver's license, US passport, TN photo ID, US military ID, or TN handgun-carry permit. NOT a student ID. NOT an out-of-state ID. Expired IDs accepted within 4 years.

Q: When is early voting?

A: Starts 20 days before Election Day, ends 5 days before. 14 days of early voting. Any registered TN voter can early-vote at any site in their county.

Q: Can I vote by mail?

A: Only with an excuse: 60+, illness, hospitalization, caregiving, college outside home county, military, poll-official duty in another precinct, religious-holiday observance. Request 7+ days before election.

Q: Where is my polling place on Election Day?

A: Look it up at tnmap.tn.gov/voterlookup/ or call your county Election Commission. In Shelby County: shelbyvote.com.

Q: What if my name isn't on the rolls?

A: Ask for a PROVISIONAL BALLOT - federal law requires they give you one. Then call 866-OUR-VOTE immediately.

Q: Can I take time off work to vote?

A: Tennessee law says yes - up to 3 hours of paid time off to vote if polls aren't open at least 3 hours before or after your shift. Ask your employer ahead of time.

Q: What is my US Congressional district?

A: Find it at house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative - enter your zip code.

Q: What is my TN State Senate / House district?

A: Find them at wapp.capitol.tn.gov/apps/findmylegislator/ - enter your address.

Q: What if I have a felony conviction?

A: You may be eligible to restore your voting rights. Free help: aclu-tn.org or theequityalliance.org.

Q: How do I find non-partisan info on candidates?

A: ballotpedia.org/Tennessee - every candidate, every race, every ballot measure, in plain English.

8. Sources & Further Reading

- > TN Secretary of State - Elections * sos.tn.gov/elections
- > TN Voter Lookup (official) * tnmap.tn.gov/voterlookup/
- > TN Online Voter Registration * ovr.govote.tn.gov
- > TN Find My Legislator * wapp.capitol.tn.gov/apps/findmylegislator/
- > Shelby County Voter Info * shelbyvote.com
- > Election Protection Hotline * 1-866-OUR-VOTE * 866ourvote.org
- > ACLU-Tennessee Voting Rights * aclu-tn.org
- > The Equity Alliance (Nashville) * theequityalliance.org
- > ProudVoter * proudvoter.org
- > Vote.org * vote.org
- > When We All Vote * whenweallvote.org
- > Ballotpedia - Tennessee * ballotpedia.org/Tennessee
- > AFL-CIO Workers Vote * aflcio.org/our-issues/voting-rights
- > NAACP Voting Rights * naacp.org/campaigns/voting-rights
- > Labor Education Voter Hub * laboreducation.org/voter-hub

AFTER YOUR WORKSHOP - REPORT BACK

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Send the date, location, attendee count, and # of new voter registrations to labor@laboreducation.org so we can track Tennessee voter-engagement coverage by union hall, church, and community center. Every workshop counted is one more block of working-class power.