



I Promised a Girl Scout I'd Vote

National, state, and local election processes provide a vivid backdrop to learn, get involved, and become active in the political process.

The Girl Scout role in any election is to provide an accurate, age appropriate, non-partisan interpretation of the election process and to instill a commitment to participatory citizenship.

Girl Scouts of Eastern Massachusetts will have opportunities to be active in the election process in several ways, at the troop, family, and town levels.

This program is designed to introduce Girl Scouts to the political process in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and this country. Beginning with Voter Registration and ending with Our Government at Work, Girl Scouts will get the opportunity to experience what it is like to be an active citizen.

Troops should begin this program in the spring or early fall. Because this program follows the entire election process, it should take until after Election Day to complete. All sections need to be completed in order to earn a patch.

Purpose

The purpose of this program is to ensure that Girl Scouts have a practical experience, which helps them understand the election process and our government.

Program Goal

The goal of this program is for Girl Scouts to become involved in the political processes of this state and country and to encourage others to become involved.

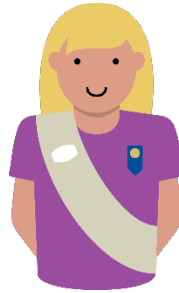
Related Girl Scout Badges



Democracy
for Daisies



Make the World
a Better Place



Democracy
for Cadettes



Finding
Common Ground



Democracy
for Brownies



Celebrating
Community



Democracy
for Seniors



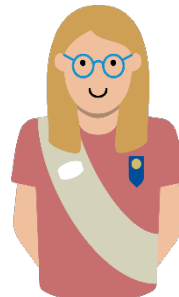
Behind the
Ballot



Democracy
for Juniors



Inside
Government



Democracy
for Ambassadors



Public
Policy



Patch Requirements

- Girl Scout Daisies complete at least one activity from each section.
- Girl Scout Brownies complete at least two activities from each section.
- Girl Scout Juniors complete at least three activities from each section
- Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors complete at least four activities from each section.

Section I: Voter Registration

1. Who is eligible to vote? Find out how a person can register to vote. What are the requirements for voter registration?
2. Plan or participate in a voter registration drive. Make posters encouraging eligible voters to register.
3. Encourage four family members who are unregistered to register. Give them a voter registration form.
4. Help younger Girl Scouts learn about voter registration. Get some voter registration forms and practice filling them out.
5. Educate yourself on the importance of voting. Talk to at least five adults about what you have learned. Find out which populations have lower voter registration and turnout, try to help them see that every vote count. Note: Voter registration can be done online at www.sec.state.ma.us/ovr.

Section II: Get Out the Vote

1. Find out where eligible voters can vote in your community. Learn about absentee ballots and how people can vote if they cannot make it to the polls. Ask a parent or another adult family member to take you with them to the polls. See what a ballot or voting machine looks like.
2. Plan or participate in a “Get Out the Vote” drive in your community. Design pledge cards that say, “I promised a Girl Scout I’d vote.” Have at least five adults (per girl) pledge to vote on Election Day.
3. Prior to Election Day, make greeting cards thanking voters for their participation in the election. Distribute the cards to voters on Election Day.
4. Discuss why voting is so important in making decisions in a Girl Scout troop. What would happen in your troop if you were not able to vote on the things you do?

Section III: The Election Process

1. Learn about the election process. Have an election or a mock election in your troop.
2. Find out about the different political parties in this country. Which party does each candidate belong to? Have each troop member bring in pictures or articles from magazines, newspapers, or online. Make a collage featuring candidates, political parties, and political issues.
3. Talk about elections as a system of selecting people who will be expected to lead and to make decisions for other people. What are the characteristics of a good leader? Discuss who you think would make a good leader.
4. In groups or individually, pick an election issue that you believe is important. Research your issue using newspaper articles, radio, and television. Summarize what you have learned and present it to your troop. Hold a debate on the issue or issues. Find out if your issue will appear on the ballot.

5. If you will be 18 years old on Election Day, you can vote! Make sure you register and vote.

Section IV: Our Government at Work

1. Find out who the elected officials are in your community, state, and country. Complete the activity, "My Representatives."
2. Investigate the different ways that you can contact your town and state elected officials.
3. Did you know that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has a state bug? Research interesting tidbits of Massachusetts trivia (including what the state bug is) and share your findings with your troop or family.
4. Find out how a bill becomes a law in your town, your state, and in the federal government.

Resources and Links

Office of the Secretary of State, Elections Division
One Ashburton Place, Room 1705
Boston, MA 02108
617-727-2828 or 800-462-VOTE
<https://www.sec.state.ma.us/divisions/elections/elections-and-voting.htm>

This web site includes links to a variety of information.

Project Vote Smart
888-VOTE-SMART
www.vote-smart.org

This site includes information about candidates and elected officials in five basic categories: biographical information, issue positions, voting records, campaign finances and interest group ratings.

The League of Women Voters
1730 M Street, Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20036-4508
www.lwv.org

League of Women Voters of MA
133 Portland Street
Boston, MA 02114
617-523-2999
Voter Information Line: 800-882-1649
www.lwvma.org

Find out how the league is making democracy work in Washington and in your community.

My Representatives

At each level of the government there are officials elected to represent the people. Did you know that you can find this information online? For state and national offices you can go to www.vote-smart.org or www.mass.gov/topics/your-government. Find out if your town has a website; you may be able to find local information there.

Go online and find the answers to the following questions. Also, find out what the purpose of each job is.

What form of government is used in your town/city? _____

Who is the head of your town/city government? _____

Do you have a Mayor or a Select Board? Who are they? _____

The governor of Massachusetts is: _____

The lieutenant governor of Massachusetts is: _____

The United States senators from Massachusetts are: _____

How many congressional districts are there in Massachusetts? _____

My congressional representative, or the member of the United States House of Representatives from my district: _____

Are there any other elected officials (local, state, or national) who are listed online?

Who are they and what do they do? _____

Visit gsema.org/programs for program opportunities to earn badges on this topic and register for civic engagement badge programs for girls of all ages.