



Student Guide

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Congratulations

You have been selected to serve as a Secretary of State's Ambassador at your high school! Congratulations! This wonderful program will give you the opportunity to grow as a leader among your peers, to learn more about Georgia government, and to help register your friends to vote.

The Ambassador Program is designed to help you grow as a person while engaging with your community. This program will present you with new challenges, but these challenges will help prepare you for college and the world beyond. But don't worry! We have built a team in the Secretary of State's office to help assist you and support you through this journey.

More than that, you have the support and endorsement of Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger as his ambassador to your high school. You will have the opportunity to meet and talk with Secretary Raffensperger later in the school year, but please see page 6 for a special note from him regarding your appointment.

Congratulations again!



Ambassador Program Overview

As Georgia's Chief Elections Official, the Secretary of State is required to conduct secure, accessible, and fair elections. This duty includes providing opportunities for voter registration and promoting voter education. This is where you come in!

The goal of the Secretary of State's Ambassadors Program is to provide high school students an opportunity to engage as a leader within their school and community. Through this program, you will gain leadership experience by learning about and teaching Georgia civics to your peers, learning about voter registration, and promoting and encouraging other students to register to vote. You will work in a team environment to create a dialogue that gets first-time high school voters educated, excited, and engaged about elections.

Specifically, you will have three responsibilities:

1. You should educate your peers about Georgia civics and elections. This responsibility can be fulfilled by speaking to classes or school assemblies about the importance of voting and the qualifications to register to vote.
2. You should promote voter registration in your school. You can accomplish this goal by holding events and distributing voter registration information to promote the GA SOS App and Online Voter Registration (OLVR).
3. You should encourage your peers to register to vote when they are eligible, volunteer as a poll worker, and actually vote in elections.



2018-2019 Student Ambassadors



Brad Raffensperger
SECRETARY OF STATE

Dear Ambassador,

I want to be the first to congratulate you on your selection as my office's Ambassador for your high school! This is a high honor, and you should be proud of your accomplishment.

I am excited about this program, because voting is the fabric of our nation. The United States of America is the world's greatest democracy, and voting is the cornerstone of that democracy. Even though you may not have had the opportunity to cast your first ballot, this program will allow you to become engaged in the elections process in a very meaningful way.

Your generation is the future of America. It is very important that you and your friends become registered to vote to make sure your voice is represented in your government. This program will help accomplish this goal, and my staff is available and ready to assist you and your faculty advisor as you serve as an Ambassador this year.

Congratulations again on your selection as an Ambassador! I look forward to meeting you when you travel to the Regional Kick-Off Event for your training.

Sincerely,

Brad Raffensperger



Secretary Raffensperger's Biography



Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger and his wife Trica

Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger is the CEO and owner of Tendon Systems, LLC. Tendon is a specialty contracting and engineering design firm with nearly 200 employees. The firm has operated in 35 different states. Raffensperger also owns and operates specialty steel manufacturing plants based in Columbus, Georgia, and in Forsyth County. Additionally, he served two terms in the Georgia General Assembly from 2015-2019.

Brad Raffensperger earned a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Western University and was awarded his MBA from Georgia State University. He is a licensed Professional Engineer in over 30 states.

Brad and his wife, Tricia, have been married for 42 years and live in Johns Creek. Brad is a member of North Point Community Church.

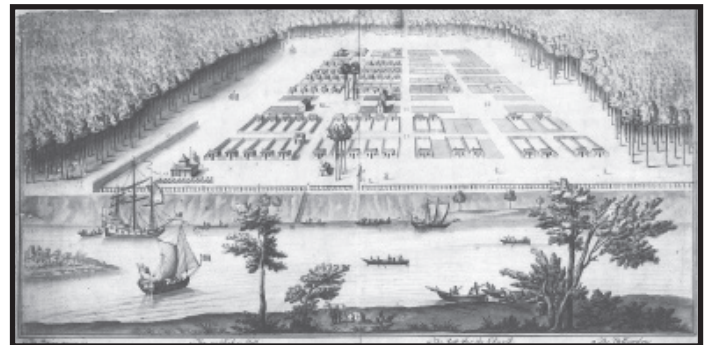
Georgia Government

The state government of Georgia is the U.S. state governmental body established by the Georgia State Constitution. It is a republican form of government with three branches: the legislative, executive, and judiciary. Through a system of separation of powers and checks and balances, each of these branches has some authority to act on its own as well as some authority to regulate the other two branches. Thus each also has some of its own authority, in turn, regulated by the other branches. The seat of government for Georgia is located in Atlanta.

Georgia History

Georgia has a rich and sweeping history that spans almost three centuries and many important events. From military conflicts to flourishing economic times, Georgia has always been a state that knows how to bounce back and make the most out of the circumstances it meets. Settled in 1733 by James Oglethorpe, Georgia was the last of the original 13 colonies to be formed. Originally intended to be a debtors' colony, Georgia's true purpose was to be a military buffer zone for the rest of the colonies from the Spanish in Florida. It officially became a state in 1788.

Georgia bypassed most of the action during the Revolutionary War. However, when the state seceded from the Union in 1861, it thrust itself into a war that would take a toll on its people and landscape. Georgia was a hotbed of activity during the Civil War, with many important battles taking place within its borders.



Savannah, Georgia. The state's first Capital City in 1735.

After the war, Georgia was in ruins. Atlanta had been burned and Sherman's infamous March to the Sea had left desolation across much of the state's rural landscape. However, Georgia was allowed to rejoin the Union in 1870. During the time period of Reconstruction (1865-1877), Georgia regained its footing as a functional state. During that time, the State Capital moved from Milledgeville to Atlanta, and the Georgia we know today began to take shape.



The five cities that have served as Georgia's capital.

Georgia Government

The early 20th century showed Georgia no mercy as the Great Depression settled into the cities and countryside. Farming took a downturn due to the climate (drought) and pests (boll weevil). President Franklin D. Roosevelt frequently visited the state as he received treatments for polio at the hospital in Warm Springs. He helped Georgia and other southern and rural states by passing the Rural Electrification Authority (REA) during the New Deal, but Georgians had to find new means of employment due to the suffering economy. During this time, the state found a new area of economic development: aviation. Georgia became a hub of activity for the airline industry, and by 1941, Atlanta's airport became home to Delta Air Lines and Eastern Air Lines.



President Franklin D. Roosevelt with a child patient at Warm Springs.

The latter part of the 20th century brought an eruption of business activity to Georgia. CNN, Home Depot, and Coca-Cola became staples of the Atlanta economic scene. The string of economic success continued when Atlanta hosted the 1996 Summer Olympics and attracted visitors from around the world. As Georgia progresses through the 21st century, the spirit of resilience continues from the Alabama border to the coast of Savannah. Residents of the historic Peach State are still making economic and social progress as they add to the rich legacy of Georgia.



Centennial Olympic Stadium (now Turner Field) just before the 1996 Olympic Opening Ceremony

Georgia Government

Government Structure

Georgia's government resembles the federal model, with an executive, legislative and judicial branch maintaining a balance of power. Like the federal government, these branches each have checks to ensure no one branch becomes too powerful, preserving a democratic form of government.

Executive Branch

The executive branch of Georgia's government is led by the Governor. This branch oversees the enforcement of laws and the administration of the state. The Governor is the chief executive of the state of Georgia. Like the President, he or she is limited to two four-year terms. The Lieutenant Governor is similar to the Vice President. He or she is president of the State Senate and becomes Governor if there is a vacancy in the Governor's Office. However, there are differences.

The Governor of Georgia does not choose a running mate. The Lieutenant Governor runs separately from the Governor and can be elected even if he or she is from a different political party. The Lieutenant Governor can also serve multiple terms.

The executive branch is divided into agencies to ensure efficient administration. Some agency heads are appointed by the Governor, but others are elected by the citizens. Among the elected executive officers are the Secretary of State, the Attorney General, the School Superintendent, as well as the Commissioners of Labor, Agriculture, Insurance, and Public Services.



The Georgia Governor's Mansion located on West Paces Ferry Road in Atlanta, Georgia.

Legislative Branch

The legislative branch, also called the Georgia General Assembly, consists of the State Senate and the State House of Representatives. The State Senate has 56 members and the State House has 180 members. Legislators serve local districts and are elected to two-year terms. There are no term limits for members of either body.

Georgia Government

To be eligible for election to the State House, a person must be a citizen of the United States and at least 21 years old. Likewise, to be eligible for election to the State Senate, a person must be a citizen of the United States and at least 25 years old. It is not uncommon for the state to have some senators and representatives that just meet these age limitations. That means they are only three to seven years out of high school!

The General Assembly meets every year for a 40-day legislative session. The session always begins on the second Monday in January and usually lasts to April. During the session, legislators submit and pass bills and resolutions that affect the state of Georgia.



The Georgia House of Representatives

They are also required by the state constitution to pass the state's budget for each fiscal year. The Governor must sign each bill for it to become law. Constitutional Amendments can also be passed by the General Assembly if they receive a two-thirds vote in each chamber. However, instead of going to the Governor, these amendments must be approved by the citizens of Georgia in a statewide referendum.

Judicial Branch

The judicial branch consists of all the courts in Georgia. The highest court is the Georgia Supreme Court. The Court has seven justices (two fewer than the United States Supreme Court). In addition to the Supreme Court, there are also seven other courts that hear cases around the state.

The Georgia Court of Appeals is an intermediate appellate court that hears cases on appeal from Superior Court before they are appealed to the Supreme Court. Superior Courts are spread throughout the state and hear major civil cases, divorce actions, and felony criminal cases.

Below the Superior Court is the State Court which exists in every county with over 80,000 people. State Courts hear minor civil cases and criminal misdemeanors. There are also Juvenile Courts for young offenders; Probate Courts that handle wills, trusts, and marriage licenses; Magistrate Courts for warrants and minor offenses (think Judge Judy); and Municipal Courts for city ordinance violations.

Georgia Government

General Facts About Georgia

Georgia has the second most counties in the United States with 159. Texas has the most with 254.

Georgia is the 21st largest state (total area) in the United States, the 9th most populous state (as of 2010), and the largest state east of the Mississippi River.

Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport is known as the busiest airport in the world according to the Airports Council International.

Surrounding States: Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Alabama

Highest Point: Brasstown Bald (4,783 feet)

Nickname: The Peach State and Empire State of the South

State Motto: Wisdom, Justice, Moderation



The Great Seal of Georgia



The Georgia State Flag adopted in 2004.

State of Georgia Symbols

Bird:	Brown Thrasher	Mineral:	Staurolite
Flower:	Cherokee Rose	Vegetable:	Vidalia Onion
Crop:	Peanut	Game Bird:	Bobwhite Quail
Reptile:	Gopher Tortoise	Marine Mammal:	Right Whale
Amphibian:	Green Tree Frog	Fruit:	Peach
Tree:	Live Oak	Insect:	Honeybee
Fish:	Largemouth Bass	Song:	Georgia On My Mind

Georgia Secretary of State's Office

The Georgia Secretary of State's office is responsible for a wide variety of administrative and regulatory duties. Among these are administering elections, regulating state securities, managing the professional licensing boards, and receiving corporation filings. The office also regulates charities and immigration assistance providers. To organize these various duties, the Secretary of State's office is divided into four divisions: Corporations, Securities, Elections, and Professional Licensing. Below are descriptions of these divisions and the duties they are charged with executing.

Corporations Division

The Corporations Division helps facilitate commerce in Georgia by serving corporations, limited liability companies, and limited partnerships. Corporations, limited liability companies, and limited partnerships in Georgia are formed by filing with the Corporations Division. Any foreign (out-of-state) corporations, limited liability companies, limited partnerships, and limited liability partnerships conducting business in Georgia must file with the Secretary of State's office. The division also registers

The division serves as a custodian of these filings and provides copies and certified copies of corporate documents. Although the question of whether a particular type of entity should be formed can be complex, the Corporations Division does not provide legal advice and does not have the authority to intervene in disputes between consumers and businesses, between businesses, or between shareholders, members, officers, or other persons involved in an enterprise.



Georgia was named the top state in the nation for doing business in 2014.

Regardless of this limitation, the Corporations Division has a large impact on business in Georgia. Efficient filings with a user-friendly interface allows businesses to transact business quickly and efficiently. This allows Georgia's economy to grow, creating more jobs. For this reason, the Secretary of State's office places a high priority on constantly improving the customer experience. This is why the office launched a new website in July of 2015 for the Corporations Division to create an easier filings process. Many new exciting features have been added to the website since its launch in 2015. The website currently offers the online user the ability to submit nearly all filing types electronically,

Securities and Charities Division

The Securities and Charities Division is charged with the administration and enforcement of the Georgia Uniform Securities Act and the Charitable Solicitations Act of Georgia. The Division is responsible for regulating securities and monitors the financial investment industry, including the registration of securities offerings, financial industry firms and financial industry professionals. It also supports an equitable, competitive, and efficient securities marketplace that contributes to the economic development of Georgia and the well-being of its citizens.

Georgia Secretary of State's Office

The Division also is responsible for regulating charities and monitors the charities industry, including the registration of charitable organizations, paid solicitors, and solicitor agents. It has oversight of fundraising activities regulated by state law and works to ensure that the charitable donations contributed by Georgians are not misapplied and squandered through fraud or other means.

The Division has a critical role in that its mission is to protect Georgia investors, donors and businesses against fraud and other misconduct. The Division implements education initiatives and offers general guidance to help Georgians make important personal decisions on investing and charitable giving. The Division aims to help financial institutions and charities better protect themselves by alerting them to the risks of fraud, financial crime and financial abuse.

Georgia has positioned itself as the leading state in the evolution of crowdfunding-based investment. As a part of the agency's work to build a stronger economy in Georgia, the Division promulgated new rules in 2011 known as the Invest Georgia Exemption (IGE), which permit intrastate crowdfunding. This exemption allows Georgia-based, private companies to sell equity (shares of stock or debt) to Georgia residents. For-profit Georgia companies can raise up to \$5 million annually from Georgia residents.

To qualify for the exemption, a company must be a for-profit business under the laws of the state of Georgia, have its principal office in Georgia, and carry out a significant amount of its business in this state. Companies issuing shares through the exemption must inform investors that the securities are unregistered and may not be resold to non-Georgia residents for a period of nine months after completion of the offering. IGE allows Georgia-based entrepreneurs who launch businesses to accelerate growth and generate momentum in the Georgia economy.

Professional Licensing Division

The Professional Licensing Boards Division of the Secretary of State's office serves as administrative support to the 40 licensing boards housed within the agency. Each licensing board is an independent legal entity and the board members are appointed by the Governor.

In addition to providing support at board meetings, the Professional Licensing Boards Division (PLB) staff assists the boards with reviewing, revising, and presenting proposed amendments for statutes and laws to the Attorney General, the public for hearing, and the governor's office for review. Applications for licensure, license renewals, complaints, and board orders related to licensing issues are processed by the PLB staff.



Nurses are the largest profession licensed through the Professional Licensing Division with over 125,000 licensees!

Georgia Secretary of State's Office

Although the PLB staff provides administrative and clerical support to assist the boards, the boards are solely responsible for determining licensing qualifications and complaint resolutions. PLB staff nor the agency have the authority to modify or overturn a board decision regarding licensing.

Approximately 500,000 Georgia professionals are licensed through the Professional Licensing Boards Division. The Boards are charged with protection of the public's interest through licensing many occupations that are vital to the state's economy. Some of the licenses issued through PLB include nursing, cosmetology, used motor vehicle dealers, veterinarians, counselors, private detectives, and the construction industry.

The goal of the Secretary of State's office is to support and help Georgia's economy grow by providing efficient and responsive government to these many license holders, impacting the entire state.

Elections Division

The Elections Division organizes and oversees all election activity in Georgia, including voter registration, municipal, state, county, and federal elections. This division is responsible for certification of election results, qualification of candidates, preparation of ballots, and election forms and materials.

The division also maintains the Georgia Voter Registration System to ensure that voter registration lists are current. Investigation into election fraud and enforcement of state election law occurs through the division as well. By setting overall state election policies, training local officials, and educating voters, the division plays a key role in keeping Georgia elections secure, accessible, and safe. The Elections Division also provides Great Seal certification for authentication of public documents for foreign use.

Through uniform voting practices, regular communication with county election offices, and coordination with Secretary of State's Investigation Division, the Secretary of State's Office works to keep elections secure, accessible, and fair for all Georgians. The Elections Division also provides great seals and authentication of documents for foreign use.



Parkview High School Students educating their peers on the importance of voting.

As a Secretary of State Ambassador, you will interact exclusively with this division of the Secretary of State's office. You will be working to educate your peers about the importance of voting and registering them to vote when they are eligible. This program has a support team within the Elections Division (see last page) that will help assist and guide you as you participate this year.

Voting in Georgia

Georgians are fortunate to have many different ways they can cast a ballot in an election. In addition to traditional Election Day voting, Georgia also offers voters the ability to vote up to 21 days before Election Day at advance voting locations. There is also a 45 day period before Election Day where voters can vote absentee ballots by mail. These various options make Georgia a state with exceptional access to the polls.



Casting ballots on Election Day.

Election Day Voting

The form of voting that most people are familiar with is traditional Election Day voting. This voting opportunity is where each county opens specific precinct locations for Election Day canvassing. This type of voting only occurs on Election Day when polls are open from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM. About half of Georgia's voters choose to vote on Election Day.

If you are curious about where your precinct is located, you can look it up on the GA SOS app or on the MVP Page of the Secretary of State's website. Your county Board of Elections can also provide you with a map showing all the precincts in your county and where the voting locations are located.

Advance In Person Voting

Advance in person voting is very popular. About 40% of Georgia's voters choose to vote during the advance in-person period. This period begins on the 24th day before Election Day and runs through the Friday before Election Day. Counties are required to open at least one advance voting location, but some choose to open as many as twenty.

The hours for advance voting is Monday through Friday during the county's normal business hours. In addition though, counties are required to open the Second Saturday before Election Day to conduct advance voting from at least 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM. Counties can also choose to open their offices for voting on Sunday for voting or during the third weekend prior to Election Day.

The advance voting period is very beneficial to voters because of how convenient it is. A busy professional does not have to wait until Election Day to squeeze in time to go by the polls. He or she can go by the advance voting location during lunch or between errands. Likewise, a student who is going out of town for the summer can still vote at his or her residence by going by the polls a couple weeks early. This convenience helps keep people engaged with the elections process.



Pins encouraging voter participation.

Voting in Georgia

Advance By Mail Voting

Absentee voting by mail is the third way a Georgians can cast their ballot. The absentee by mail period begins 45 days ahead of the election. Any registered voter can request an absentee ballot for any reason to be mailed to their home. The voter only has to take the ballot, vote, sign it, and return it to their county elections office so that it is in hand by 7:00 PM on Election Day. Voting absentee by mail, although it may be the most convenient in some respects, is the least popular form of voting. Only about 5-10% of Georgia voters choose to vote this way. Nevertheless, it provides another secure way for Georgians to have their voices heard through the elections process.

Voter ID

For voters that choose to vote on Election Day or during the advance in-person period, Georgia law requires they must show a form of photo identification when they check-in at the polls. There are many different kinds of acceptable voter ID, but the intent is the same – to ensure that no in-person voter fraud occurs at the polls.

Below, there is a list of the acceptable forms of identification for in-person voting. If a registered voter does not have one of the forms of acceptable voter ID, the State offers a free Voter Identification Card. A Voter Identification Card can be issued at any county registrar or Department of Driver Services office free of charge. The Voter Identification Card may be used for voting purposes only.

Acceptable Forms of Voter ID

State and federal law require a form of ID when a person registers to vote. If an individual registers with the GA SOS App or through the OLVR site with a valid Driver's License, this step is not required. The required ID can be any one of the following items and can be submitted with a voter registration application or at the voter's first time voting at the polls:

- A Georgia Driver's License which was properly issued by the Department of Driver Services
- A valid employee identification card containing a photograph of the voter and issued by any branch, department, agency, or entity of the United States government, this state, or any county, municipality, board, authority, or other entity of this state.
- A valid Georgia Voter ID card
- A valid U.S. passport ID
- A valid U.S. military photo ID
- A valid Tribal photo ID



An example GA Voter ID Card

Voter Registration 101

Qualifications to Register

- Must be a citizen of Georgia and the United States
- Must reside at the address shown on voter registration application
- Must be at least 17 1/2 years of age to register
- Must be 18 years of age by Election Day
- A person may not register to vote if they have been convicted of a felony and are under the term of their sentence. However, after a felony sentence has been served, a person may register to vote.
- Also, no person who has been determined by a judge to be mentally incompetent may register, remain registered, or vote unless the disability is removed.

Voter Registration Frequently Asked Questions

- Do I have to register by political party in Georgia?
No, Georgia does not register voters by political party.
- Do I have to re-register if I move?
Yes. Voters are required to notify the Board of Registrars' office of their county of residence whenever they move.
- When is the latest I can register for the next election?
You must register no later than the 5th Monday prior to the next election. Mail-in applications must be postmarked by this deadline.
- Do I have to re-register for each election?
No, you only need to register once. If you have not voted in three years, please contact your county Board of Registrars' office.
- Where do I vote?
After your county receives your voter registration form, you will receive a precinct card in the mail which will state the location of your polling place and your local, state, and federal districts. You can also download your precinct card using the GA SOS App (more on that later).

Georgia Vote Safe Program

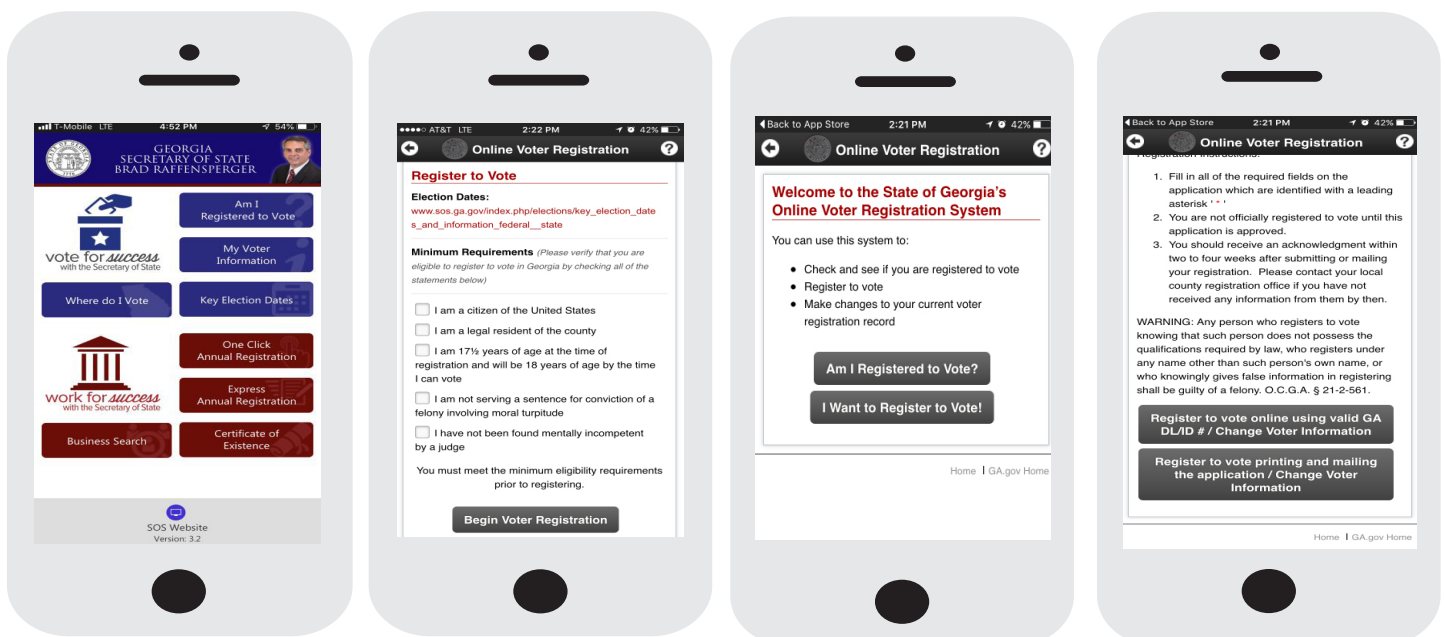
State law requires that voter lists be made available to the public. These lists include the names and addresses of registered voters. In 2009, the Georgia Legislature enacted the VoteSafe law to provide for the confidentiality of residential addresses of certain voters who have been, or may be subject to, acts of family violence, stalking, or who currently reside in a family violence shelter. Applicants who are interested in program participation should be directed to the Secretary of State's online VoteSafe website at: sos.ga.gov/votesafe.

Voter Registration 101

GA SOS - There's An App for That

The easiest way to register to vote in Georgia is through the Secretary of State's GA SOS smart phone app. It is free to download on any Apple or Android device, and it is very easy to use. The app has many functions. It allows an applicant to register to vote online, and it can allow a person to look up their precinct card, view a sample ballot, find their poll location, locate their advance voting locations, view their elected officials, and see all their registration information.

In 2014 alone, over 100,000 Georgians used the GA SOS App to register to vote or change their address. The first person to use it was even a high school student! Eniolufe Asebiomo, an 18 year old senior from Westside High School in Augusta, registered to vote for the first time using the app in March of 2014. The GA SOS App launched in June of 2016 giving Georgians the ability to also register their business and update their registration information.



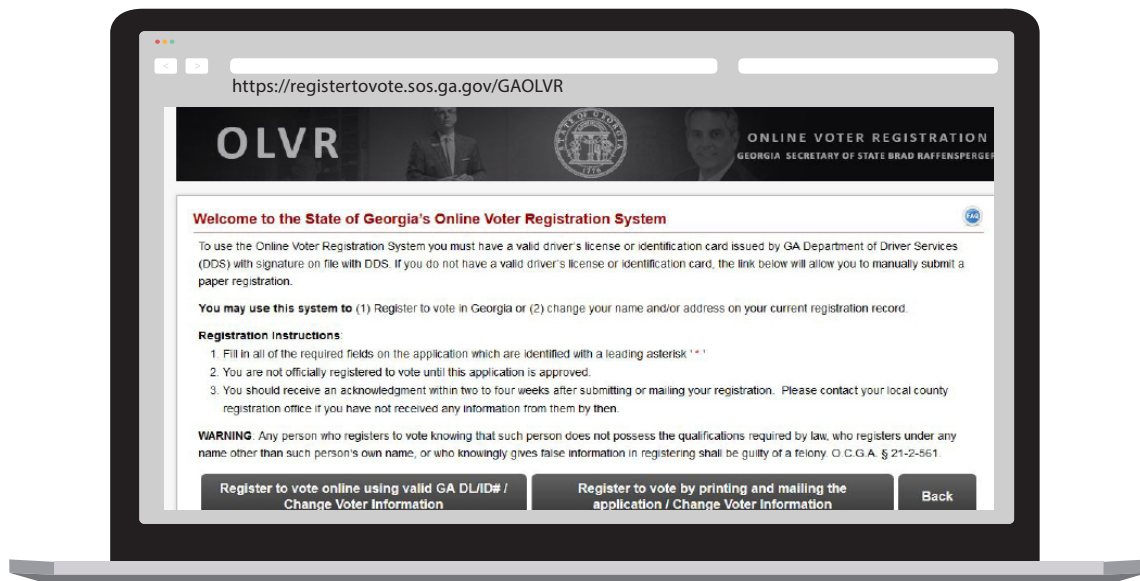
The GA SOS App is easy to find on your smart phone. On your phone navigate to the App Store icon. Enter "GA SOS" in the search bar and click Search. Click the Open button to install the app on your phone. It is that easy. When using the app, you can register to vote by using your Georgia driver's license or ID card number. Follow the step by step process that the app provides, and it will walk you through the registration process.

Voter Registration 101

Online Voter Registration

Georgia's Online Voter Registration System (OLVR) is a new way Georgians can register to vote. It uses the same technology as the GA SOS app. However, the user must visit the Secretary of State's website at <https://registertovote.sos.ga.gov/> to fill out the application. A voter may need to use OLVR as opposed to the GA SOS app if they are not registering with their Driver's License.

If a voter registers to vote online using a social security number, the voter must print out the completed application and mail it along with a document showing proof of citizenship to their county Board of Registrars' office. Despite this extra step, OLVR is still a very easy to use system that speeds up the voter registration process. Below is a screen shot that shows the OLVR homepage on the website.



Using Paper Applications

Georgians can register to vote in three ways. Through the GA SOS App, Online Voter Registration (OLVR), or by filling out a paper application. In your role as an Ambassador, you should always encourage people registering to vote to use either the GA SOS App or OLVR. Paper applications require the separate step of mail to arrive at a county registration office. By registering through the GA SOS App or OLVR, it saves time and money.

However, you may encounter a scenario when someone prefers or needs to register using a paper voter registration application. This could occur if someone does not have a valid Georgia Driver's License or ID card. You should know that there are some specific rules that apply to these applications. What you need to know is listed below, but if you ever have a question regarding a paper application, please contact a team member in the Secretary of State's office or your local Board of Registration. It is important that every application is processed correctly.

Voter Registration 101

Security of Applications

Individuals who complete a paper voter registration application always have the option to mail the application themselves. But note, if you register someone to vote with a paper application and you volunteer to turn the application in for the individual, you must keep all completed original voter registration applications in a secure and confidential manner at all times until the applications are submitted to the Secretary of State or the appropriate Board of Registrars. You should always submit a paper application (if you receive one) to the Deputy Registrar at your school. Voter registration applications contain confidential information. You may not open or share any information contained on a voter registration application. Doing so is against the law and carries criminal penalties. Applications are very important documents and must be submitted as soon as possible after they are completed. The law only allows ten (10) days at most for a third party (you) to send the application to the Secretary of State's office or Board of Registrars. This period is shorter if it is within two weeks of a voter registration deadline. You should always turn over paper voter registration applications to your school's Deputy Registrar as soon as possible.

Copying Voter Registration Applications

A person may only make copies of an original voter registration application if they have the express, written consent of the applicant. A copy can only be used to aid the applicant with verifying the timely and proper receipt and processing of his or her application by the Board of Registrars. In your work as a Secretary of State's Ambassador, you should never have a reason to make a copy of a completed voter registration application. If you have a question regarding this issue, please contact the Deputy Registrar at your school or a team member at the Secretary of State's office.

Voter Eligibility and Notifications

A voter is not added to the voter rolls until the county registrar's office approves the voter's eligibility and processes his or her voter registration application. Each person who is registered to vote is notified of their application by receiving a precinct card in the mail. Precinct cards are sent to the mailing address listed on the application.



Voter Registration 101



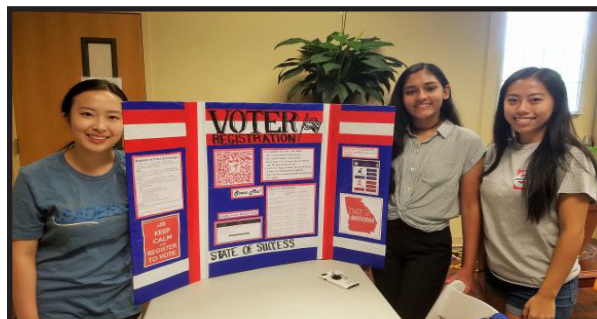
Georgia polls give out stickers on Election Day.

Sometimes applications are not approved as a voter. This can be due to a variety of different issues. Normally, it is because the applicant mistakenly included incorrect information on their voter registration application or the applicant does not possess the eligibility requirements to register to vote. When an applicant is found ineligible to be registered, that person is notified of the reason for ineligibility and given the opportunity to correct any incorrect information. If the information can be corrected, they are added to the voter rolls.

Any voter registration applicant can check the status of their voter registration on the Secretary of State's website at <http://www.sos.ga.gov/MVP>. All applicants are encouraged to access this website in advance of a primary or Election Day to verify their registration status and correct polling place. Voters can also use this website to view a sample ballot for county, state, and federal elections and track the status of their absentee ballots. This capability also exists on the GA SOS App. The app links directly to the MVP interface to allow ease of use. You should download the app and check it out!

Requirements for Voter Registration

When you are assisting in a voter registration drive, or are simply helping someone register to vote, there are certain things you must do and certain things you cannot do. These requirements and prohibitions are in law and violations of these rules carry penalties. Therefore, it is very important that you read and remember these rules when you are doing your job as a Secretary of State's Ambassador.



Student Leadership Johns Creek Student Ambassadors hosting a voter registration drive.

Voter Registration 101

Mandatory Requirements

- You must inform all applicants that they are not officially registered to vote until their eligibility has been determined by the Board of Registrars. Also inform them that, if they have not received notification of the disposition of the application within three to four weeks of submitting the application, the applicant should contact the appropriate Board of Registrars to determine if such applicant's eligibility has been determined and the applicant's name entered on the official list of electors.
- You must inform all Georgia applicants of the availability of an online registration status check and polling place locator service on the Secretary of State's website and encourage all applicants to access it in advance of a primary or Election Day to verify their registration status and correct polling place at: <http://www.sos.ga.gov/MVP>.
- You must inform all applicants that, if they are registering to vote for the first time in the jurisdiction by mail or through a private entity, they must present current and valid identification.
- You must inform all applicants of their right, under certain circumstances, to cast a provisional ballot in the event that their names do not appear on the official list of electors at the polls.

Prohibited Activities

- You cannot represent to any person that you are an employee of the Secretary of State or a member of a Board of Registrars.
- You cannot make any statement to an applicant or take any action that would discourage a qualified applicant from registering to vote.
- You cannot be inebriated or otherwise impaired by drugs, alcohol, or other substances.
- You cannot conduct voter registration where illegal or criminal activities are being conducted.
- You cannot accept a completed registration application from the applicant unless the application has been sealed by the applicant.
- You cannot copy a completed registration application without the express, written permission of the applicant.
- You cannot conduct voter registration activities in places where alcoholic beverages are sold and consumed on the same premises.

Ambassador Responsibilities

This section outlines the responsibilities that you will have as an Ambassador. At your school, you should have at least three students serving as Ambassadors: a senior, a junior, and a sophomore. However, if you attend a larger high school, you may have many more. There are three different grade levels that participate in this program so that you can build knowledge and experience about the Ambassador Program at your school. Also, having at least three students ensures that there are enough helping hands for the projects you will do throughout the year!

There are three basic responsibilities for serving as an Ambassador:

First, you will learn about Georgia government and the importance of voting. You will receive a lot of assistance from the Secretary of State's office to help you learn about these important topics. Not only do you have this guide that gives you an overview of Georgia Civics and voter registration, but you will also attend an Ambassador Regional Kick-Off Event where you will learn from the Secretary of State staff about voter registration and how to engage your friends at your school.



Second, you must encourage your friends to get involved. You can accomplish this objective every day you are at school. Tell your friends about what you have learned and how they should get involved in your community by registering to vote, volunteering as a poll worker, attending a civic meeting, or staying up to date on important current events. To help guide you in sharing these important goals with your friends, you should speak to at least five classes in your grade level or below at your high school about the importance of getting involved in the community. Although you can do this at any point throughout the year, you should speak to these classes before October 11th, 2016. This allows you to focus on your third responsibility in the spring – voter registration.

Voter registration is the most important responsibility of being a Secretary of State's Ambassador. So often, high school students become eligible to vote but do not register. It is important that you and your friends' voices are heard in the process. The only way that can happen is if they register to vote and then vote on Election Day. Fulfilling this responsibility through the Ambassador's program is easy as well. The Secretary of State's office has the GA SOS App that allows people to register from their smart phones. It only takes five minutes! To help promote the app, you should distribute materials and t-shirts that promote the app and talk about the importance of voting at a senior class or school assembly. Each school should plan to have at least three different events in the spring semester where they promote the GA SOS App and at least one event where an Ambassador speaks to an assembly. To help guide you in accomplishing these responsibilities, we have provided descriptions of duties for each grade level.

Ambassador Responsibilities

SENIORS

Seniors are the leaders of the Ambassador Program in each school. They are in charge of planning meetings, setting goals, and scheduling events. Seniors should set the tone and the direction for the Ambassador Program at each school. They are ultimately responsible for the impact of the program at their high school. Therefore, Senior Ambassadors should work hard to ensure all the Ambassadors work as a team to accomplish these goals. Seniors will also play a particularly important role as they encourage their classmates to register to vote once they are eligible.



JUNIORS

Juniors are the drivers of the Ambassador Program in each school. Once the Seniors have provided a vision for the Ambassador Program at their school, the Juniors should work with the Seniors to help execute that vision. The focus of the Junior year will be learning about voting, the process of registering to vote, and will assist Seniors in meeting goals and planning events. Juniors should also educate their classmates about the importance of registering to vote once they become eligible. They should also encourage their classmates to volunteer at a polling location or elsewhere in their community.



SOPHOMORES

Sophomores are the supporters of the Ambassador program in each school. Once the Seniors have provided a vision, and the Juniors begin driving the vision, Sophomores should support those efforts and pitch in when and where they are needed. By working with the upper classmen, Sophomores will learn how to be an effective Ambassador. Moreover, the focus of the Sophomore year will be to learn about Georgia government, civics, and the electoral process. They will also assist Senior and Junior Ambassadors with meeting goals and planning events.

Ambassador Responsibilities

In addition to these general goals, Ambassadors are expected to meet regularly and communicate often to ensure everyone has a clear understanding of expectations and plans for events and other activities around the school. Communicating is very important. It is the key to make sure that the program is as effective as it can be. This also includes communicating with the Secretary of State's office through the regularly scheduled surveys included in the calendar in the back. This communication will help facilitate a better understanding by the Secretary of State staff about how they can work to help you.



Top Right: Luella High School Ambassadors; Bottom Left: Carrollton High School Ambassadors;
Bottom Right: Fannin County High School Ambassadors

How to Be a Great Ambassador

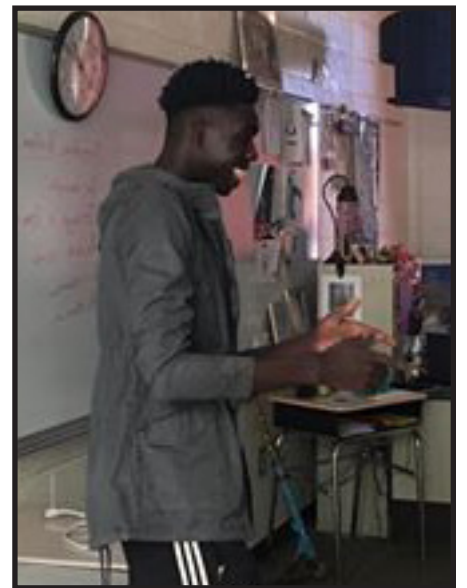
Public Speaking

Public speaking can be nerve-wracking for most people, but it is a very useful skill to have in life. During your time as an Ambassador, you will be called on to speak, but don't sweat it! Below are some simple tips that you can use to prepare for your next public speaking event.

- Talk about what you know. Take the opportunity to really learn what you will discuss in your talk. Make sure that there are no mental gaps in your understanding of the material.
- Practice. Even great speakers practice their speeches beforehand. Practice out loud with a recording device or video camera and then watch yourself to see how you can improve. If you are feeling brave, practice in front of a friend or family member and ask for feedback.
- Visit the room. If you have access to the room where you will be speaking, take the time to visit in advance and get used to your surroundings. Make arrangements for any audio-visual equipment and practice standing where you will deliver your speech.
- Visualize confidence. Visualize yourself confidently delivering your speech. Imagine feeling free of anxiety and engaging the audience. Although this may seem like a stretch for you now, visualization is a powerful tool for changing the way that you feel. Elite athletes use this strategy to improve performance in competitions.
- Realize the audience is on your side. Think about a time when you have been an audience member and the speaker was noticeably nervous. Did you think less of that person? More likely, you felt sympathetic and wanted to make that person more comfortable by smiling or nodding. The audience wants you to succeed.
- Concentrate on your message. When you focus on the task at hand, anxiety is less likely to get out of control. Concentrate on the main message of your talk and make it your goal to deliver that message to your audience.
- Observe other speakers. Take the time to watch other speakers who are good at what they do. Practice imitating their style and confidence.
- Organize your talk. Every speech should have an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. Structure your talk so that the audience knows what to expect.



Secretary Raffensperger speaks to groups all over the state on the importance of voting.



A student Ambassador encouraging his classmates to register to vote.

How to Be a Great Ambassador

- Grab the audience's attention. Most audience members will pay attention for at least the first 20 seconds; grab their attention during those early moments. Start with an interesting fact or a story that relates to your topic.
- Have one main message. Focus on one central theme and your audience will learn more. Tie different parts of your talk to the main theme to support your overall message. Trying to cover too much ground can leave your audience so overwhelmed that they retain nothing.
- Tell stories. Stories catch the attention of the audience and deliver a message in a more meaningful way than facts and figures. Whenever possible, use a story to illustrate a point in your talk.
- Develop your own style. In addition to imitating good speakers, work on developing your own personal style as a public speaker. Integrate your own personality into your speaking style and you will feel more comfortable on stage. Telling personal stories that tie into your theme are a great way to let the audience get to know you.
- Avoid filler words. Words such as "basically", "well", and "um" do not add anything to your speech. Practice being silent when you feel the urge to use one of these words.
- Vary your tone, volume, and speed. Interesting speakers vary the pitch (high versus low), volume (loud versus soft), and speed (fast versus slow) of their words. Doing so keeps the audience interested and engaged in what you say.
- Make the audience laugh. Laughter is a great way to relax both you and the audience, and telling jokes can be a great ice breaker at the beginning of a speech. Practice the timing and delivery of your jokes beforehand and ask a friend for feedback.
- Find a friendly face. If you are feeling anxious, find a friendly face in the audience and imagine that you are speaking only to that person.
- Don't apologize. If you make a mistake, do not offer apologies. Chances are that the audience did not notice anyway. Unless you need to correct a fact or figure, there is no point dwelling on errors that probably only you noticed.
- Smile. If all else fails, smile. Your audience will perceive you as a warm speaker and be more receptive to what you have to say. You will do great!

"If you have an important point to make, don't try to be subtle or clever. Use a pile driver. Hit the point once. Then come back and hit it again. Then hit it a third time - a tremendous whack."

-Winston S. Churchill

How to Be a Great Ambassador

Planning an Event

Planning an event with any organization for any purpose can be a stressful and time consuming task. However, an event can be used to really impact people. You can use an event as an Ambassador to have a big impact on people to get them excited about registering to vote and participating in democracy.



There will be a few times throughout the year when you will be expected to plan an event or speak publicly about voter registration. These opportunities should be exciting. Below is a guide to planning an event. This guide does not direct you on how to plan any specific event, but it gives you general guidance on things you should think about when planning any event as an Ambassador.

Don't stress out planning your event! Follow these easy steps to make sure your event is a huge success!

Before the Event

- Know the goal of your event. Is your event to register people to vote? Or is it to talk about the importance of voting and being engaged in the process? Perhaps you are having an event to promote the GA SOS App to your friends. Regardless of your purpose, identify what you want to accomplish and base your event around that goal.
- First decide on a date, time, and location to hold your event. You know your school and students best. When and where are they going to want to come? The pep rally, at a football game, or maybe during lunch in your school cafeteria.
- Then make sure you get permission. Ask what school administrator needs to grant permission. Your school principal or your Ambassador Program advisor can tell you who the Deputy Registrar at the school is. You will turn in any paper applications you receive to the Deputy Registrar at your school.
- Gather your friends. The more volunteers you have helping you the more successful your event will be. Use Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook to post about your event and use the hashtags #voteforsuccess and #sosambassadors to connect with the Secretary of State's office.

How to Be a Great Ambassador

- Publicize your event. The way you communicate with your friends every day is the best way to publicize your event. Use social media, Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook to spread the word and invite people to attend your event. You can even invite your local radio station to come and broadcast from your event!
- Train your volunteers. Volunteers are important to the success of an event. Regardless of what you think, you cannot do everything by yourself. Engage a team. Below are some tips on how to train your volunteers so they are ready for the event.
 - Before your event begins, devote some time to training your volunteers. If they are fully prepared and understand how the event will work and their role, they will be successful team members.
 - Explain your goals. It is helpful for volunteers to know what your goals are in having an event. Clear understandings make for long relationships.
 - Do introductions. It is always fun to have an ice breaker.
 - If you are promoting the GA SOS App or voter registration, you should have each volunteer download the app to become familiar with it so they can answer questions. If they are not registered to vote, and are eligible, they can use the GA SOS App to register!
 - Talk about each person's role at the event. Make sure that each volunteer knows exactly what you want them to do. Remember, they cannot read your mind!
- Prepare the day before your event. The day before your event, confirm everything from the logistics with location and time, to talking with your volunteers to make sure they are ready. Leave nothing to chance. Remember Murphy's Law: "anything that can go wrong, will go wrong."
- Breathe easy and do not panic. If you have prepared, your event will be great!



Remember that volunteers can help lighten your work load and it gets more people engaged with your event!

How to Be a Great Ambassador

The Day of Your Event

1. Arrive an hour before your event starts.
2. Set up whatever you will use, including your table and swag.
3. Tell your volunteers to arrive a few minutes before you anticipate needing their help. It is always better to have more time than not enough.
4. Remind your volunteers how you need them to help.
5. Have fun!

Tips for a Successful Event

1. Make sure all of your volunteers have the GA SOS app on their phones.
2. Make sure they all know how to use the app, can explain it to others, and can answer questions.
3. Do not stand behind a table. Move around, talk to folks, let everyone see how much fun you are having.
4. Ask everyone to download the GA SOS app.
5. Do not waste time trying to talk someone into downloading the app. If they say no....smile and say ... "Okay, have a good day."
6. Set a goal for each person on your team. Everyone needs to contribute and feel successful.

After Your Event

1. Thank your volunteers! Without your team your event could not have happened. Talk about the impact your event had and the difference each one of them made! Talk about the successes you shared and any problems that were encountered.
2. Think about future events. Think about the lessons you learned with your first event. Also think about whether you want to host another event and begin making those plans.
3. Share the success of your event! Post pictures of your event and don't forget to use the hashtags! #sosambassadors #gavotes #voteforsuccess



How to Be a Great Ambassador

Activity Planning Guide

Remember to identify your audience, and tailor the lesson to the group so that every participant walks away with the resources they need to be civically engaged.

When presenting to your peers, there are five steps you must think through and implement. Use this guide to assist you in planning a presentation or an event.

1. Purpose

Who:

What:

Where:

When:

Why:

2. Guiding Questions

3 questions to shape the presentation/event:

-
-
-

Sample Questions: 1) Why is voting essential? 2) Does my vote matter? 3) How do I register to vote?

3. Introduction

Activity/Game:

- Sample Activities/Games:

Two Truths and a Lie - Use facts about the history of voting or the voting process to create groups of two truths and one lie. Read all three statements as facts, and ask the audience to determine which is false.

Timeline - Prepare slips of paper with a different event or description related to the history of voting on each piece, and give one to every person. Ask the audience to arrange themselves in chronological order. This could also be done with the steps to register to vote if the group is small.

Telephone - Have everyone stand shoulder-to-shoulder, and whisper a fact or fun saying about voting to the first person next in line. Each person will repeat exactly what they hear to the person next to them. It is always a fun surprise at the end!

Hook:

4. Presentation:

Presenter(s):

Format (PowerPoint, speech, skit, interview, etc.):

Materials:

Outline:

5. Summary

Activity/game (mini quiz, Jeopardy, etc):

Prizes (consider using the SOS provided material):

Summarizing statement:

Ambassador Program Competition



The Student Ambassador Cup

Throughout the program your team will actively work to educate your peers about Georgia Civics and encourage them to register and vote. For each event that you conduct you will receive points. You can submit your points throughout the semester by posting pictures, videos, presentations, and other proof to the Ambassador website at <https://studentambassadors.sos.ga.gov/>. Upload your proof within one week of your event. We will keep track of everyone's points and keep you updated on the rankings. At the end of the semester, the school with the highest number of points will receive a prize along with their name added to the Ambassador Cup. The trophy will be housed at the winning school for the following year.

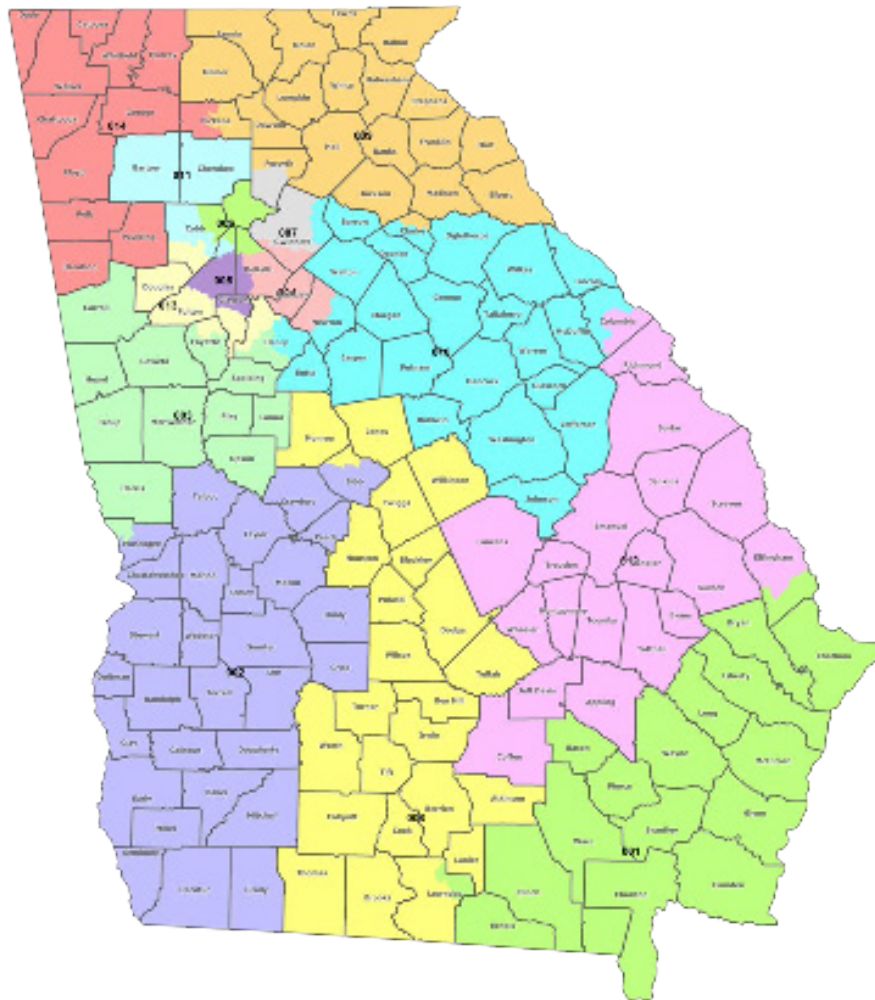
Below are the list of events and possible points.

Activity	Point Value
Sharing Election Announcements	100 points/post
Hold a Voter Registration Drive	500 points
Serve in an Elected Position	200 points
Recruit Poll Workers	1,000 points/person
Organize Service Projects	1,000 points/project
Work at a Polling Place/Help at County Elections Office	1,000 points/500 points/student
Volunteer with Non-Profit	1,000 points/event
Work as a Page at the State Capitol	400 points/student
Attend a Civic Meeting	300 points/student
Research and Report Current Events	100 points
Volunteer with Peanut Poll	400 points/student
Host an Opinion Poll	100 points
Social Media Challenge	500 points/challenge

Ambassador Program Competition

Competition Regions

Throughout the school-year, teams will organize and carry out various activities. For each activity the students complete, they will receive points towards regional and statewide competitions. Regions are determined by Congressional Districts, which are shown in the color-coded map below. At the end of the year, schools who achieve the most points will be celebrated at the State Capitol.



Ambassador Activities

Sharing Election Announcements

Elections are such an important aspect of our democracy, and we want to make sure you and your community aren't missing a beat! Throughout the year, the Outreach Team will post important election information including election dates, voter registration deadlines, and other elections news on our Student Ambassador Facebook page. Earn points for your team by sharing these post on your team's Facebook page! Simply, upload a screenshot of your shared post from Facebook.



Host a Voter Registration Drive



Dedicate a few hours of your day to help others register to vote. Hosting a voter registration drive is easy! All you need is a booth and your laptop. You can set up a registration booth at your school or at a community event and help others register today! Please submit photos of your registration booth.

The Carrollton High School Ambassadors used laptops at their booth, so their peers could use OLVR to register to vote.

Serve in an Elected Position

Student Ambassadors are leaders both in and outside of the classroom, and they understand that every vote matters! Earn points when you are elected to serve in a leadership role. These can include class President, Treasurer of a school club, team Captain, etc. If you have questions as to whether a position will count towards the competition, please don't hesitate to ask. Please submit photos of you serving in your position and a brief description of your role.



Luella Student Ambassadors spoke to many classes about voting.

Ambassador Activities

Recruit Poll Workers

Bring a friend or two or three! You can invite your friends and family to be Poll Workers at a local polling place on Election Day. Please submit a photo of you and your friends at the polling place, but be mindful of photo restrictions at the polling place. All of the information that you need to get started can be found on your county's website. The contact information for your county can be found by visiting this website:
<http://elections.sos.ga.gov/Elections/countyelectionoffices.do>.

Organize Service Projects

As a Student Ambassador, you are encouraged to come together with your peers and neighbors to give back to your community. You could form service groups, dedicate time to clean up your school or community, promote a cause or initiative, host a food or a school supply drive. There are endless opportunities to serve! Please submit a photo of all present Ambassadors during the service project as well as a description on how you served.



The Mount Zion Student Ambassadors spending time to clean up and beautify their school.

Social Media Challenges

Throughout the year, media challenges will pop up on Facebook and Instagram. Some of the media challenges are week-long while others only require one day, but all of the media challenges are dependent on your involvement. You can also submit your idea for a challenge to be issued to all of the Ambassadors. Follow us on our Facebook page, Georgia Secretary of State Student Ambassadors, and our Instagram, @gasosambassadors. Be sure to use the hashtag #SOSAmbassadors and the hashtag specific to the challenge!



Follow us on IG and FB
@GASOSAmbassadors

Work at a Polling Place/Help at the County Elections Office

You can be a Poll Worker at a local polling place on Election Day, or you can volunteer to help at your County Elections Office in preparation for the election. Please submit a photo of yourself outside the polling location/elections office as well as a description on what you learned.

All of the information that you need to get started can be found on your county's website. The contact information for your county can be found by visiting this website: <http://elections.sos.ga.gov/Elections/countyelectionoffices.do>.



Mount Zion Ambassadors spent a day helping out at the Carroll County Board of Elections.

Ambassador Activities

Volunteer with a Non-Profit Organization

You can partner with a non-profit organization in your community. You can serve as a group or individually. Identify a cause that is important to you, and do research to find a non-profit that you can partner with. Contact the organization and get started! Please submit a photo of all participating Ambassadors during the event.

The Fannin County Ambassadors serve with the Snack in a Backpack organization weekly.



Work as a Page at the State Capitol



Lanier High School Ambassadors posed with the Speaker of the House after serving as a Page.

Georgia's Legislative Session begins the second Monday in January and lasts for 40 days. Students ages 12-18 have the opportunity to come to the State Capitol and work as a Page for their local Representative or State Senator. Pages serve as a line of communication between the General Assembly and the public during session. Please submit either a photo of you with your page sticker on or with your Legislator.

Information to register can be found online on both the Georgia House of Representatives and Georgia State Senate websites listed below.

- Georgia House of Representatives Page Program:
<http://www.house.ga.gov/en-US/HousePageProgram.aspx>
- Georgia State Senate Page Program:
<http://www.senate.ga.gov/hr/en-US/SenatePageProgram.aspx>

Attend a Civic Meeting

You are encouraged to attend and participate in meetings in your community because your voice and your perspective are vital. Attend school board meetings, city council meetings, county meetings, and any related events to deepen your understanding of the problems facing your community and assist in finding solutions to the problems. Please submit a photo of all participating Ambassadors along with a brief summary of the meeting you attended.



Fannin County Ambassadors attended many meetings & built relationships with leaders like their Mayor Donna Whitener.

Ambassador Activities

Research and Report Current Events

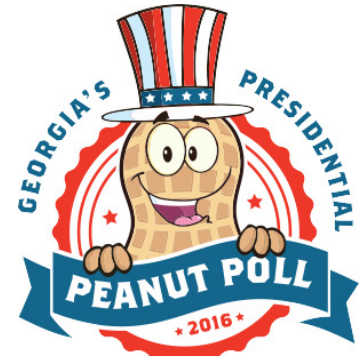
You can learn about what is going on in your community, in the state, in the country, and in the world by researching current events and reporting on your findings. Take a few moments out of your day to tune into current events through your favorite TV news station, online or print news material, or even your favorite podcast. Please provide a brief, written summary of your findings. Teams can upload 1 report per week.



Volunteer with the Peanut Poll

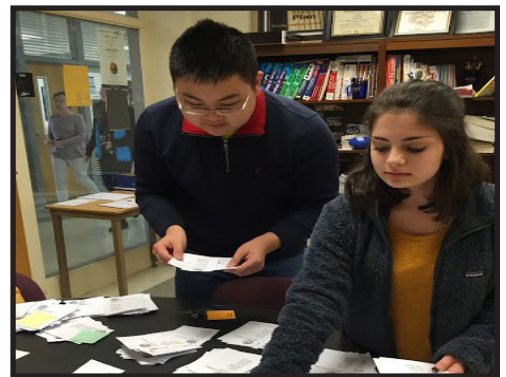
The Georgia Secretary of State's office hosts the Peanut Poll at The Georgia National Fair in Perry. As a Student Ambassador, you will have the opportunity to attend the fair and spend some time working at the Peanut Poll. This poll began in 2015 with the Presidential Primary, and it quickly became the largest straw poll in the country. To volunteer, contact the Secretary of State Outreach Team at ambassadorsupport@sos.ga.gov.

(Unfortunately as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the office will not be hosting the Peanut Poll at the Georgia National Fair this year.)



Host an Opinion Poll

You can demonstrate the voting process to your peers by hosting an opinion poll online or in person. While Student Ambassadors are free to write their own poll questions, topics are limited to politics and current events. Teams are limited to posting 1 poll per week for points. You can post your polls on Instagram or Facebook, or you can host a booth at lunch to collect results in person. Take advantage of every opportunity to get involved! Please submit a photo of your poll question and results.



Carrollton High School Student Ambassadors counting votes for who should be our next President.

Your Support Team

As you work this year as a Secretary of State's Ambassador, do not worry if you have questions or any issues come up. There is a whole team of people at the Secretary of State's office that is ready to help you!

Below are just some of the key people that are in the office ready to support you. There is also a dedicated email address and hotline where you can call to receive immediate assistance for any of your questions.

Brandon Mooney

bmooney@sos.ga.gov

All Questions, Email: ambassadorsupport@sos.ga.gov

Or Call Direct at: 470-401-8146