



HOW TO ADVOCATE FOR



EARLY VOTING SITES & HOURS IN YOUR COUNTY

This guide will help you win the Early Voting sites and hours that voters in your county need for the 2024 Primary Election!

What is an Early Voting Plan?

Each county board of elections decides the Early Voting sites and voting hours for upcoming elections. The information about site locations and hours forms the county's EARLY VOTING PLAN. This plan must be approved by the county board of elections by a unanimous vote, which must be held during a public board of elections meeting.

If the county board does not approve the Early Voting plan unanimously, any board member can submit an alternative plan to the State Board of Elections, which has the final authority to decide the plan. *The power of one Board member to submit an alternative plan is an important point of leverage to make a county's plan better*

What's the Timeline for the 2024 Primary Election?

🗳️ September-November: Counties will begin the process of choosing and securing voting sites and determining hours. This is a great time to ask your board for their draft plan.

🗳️ November: Counties will vote to approve their draft plan. *This is the time to attend your county board meeting and advocate for your plan.*

🗳️ December: The state board of elections will meet to decide Early Voting plans for counties that did not unanimously approve their plan. *This is when plans will be finalized.*

How Can I Improve My County's Early Voting Plan?

In order to win good Early Voting sites and hours, it's important to attend county board of elections meetings, get to know your board members, and speak out in favor of Early Voting sites and hours that benefit your community.



DEMOCRACY NC

Why are Good Early Voting Sites and Hours Important?

Early Voting is the most popular way to vote in North Carolina. In 2020, 66% of North Carolinians cast their ballot at an Early Voting site – compared to just 16% of voters who cast a ballot on Election Day.

Early Voting sites are so important because they give voters the option to register to vote or update their voter registration AND cast a ballot at the same time. They also help eliminate overcrowding and long lines at Election Day polling places.

It's very important to have enough Early Voting sites – and plentiful voting hours, particularly on the weekend – to ensure that voters have more options for casting a ballot. Fewer Early Voting sites and hours make it harder for all North Carolinians to cast a ballot.

Step-by-Step Instructions

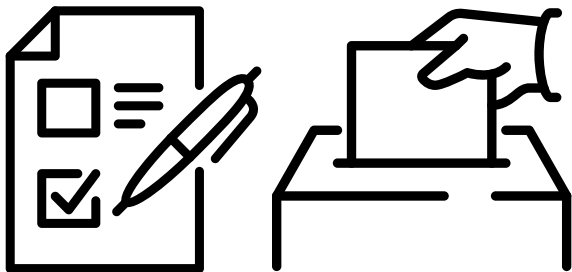
How you can win better Early Voting sites and hours in your county.

STEP 1: GATHER INTELLIGENCE

- ✔️ **Find out** when your county board of elections is meeting next and what's on the agenda. This information should be available online.
- ✔️ **Contact your county board of elections staff** or board member. Ask them:
 1. What preliminary plans exist for Early Voting sites? (If there's a draft plan, ask to see it!)
 2. What is the schedule and process for making a decision?
 3. Will they consider or support opening additional Early Voting sites?
 4. Will they consider extending voting hours to Saturday and Sunday?

STEP 2: MAKE A PLAN

- ✔ **Review Early Voting sites and hours** from prior elections in your county. Counties often reuse sites from previous years.
- ✔ **Identify gaps** that exist in the current draft plan or in past plans. Are there neighborhoods that would benefit from an Early Voting site? Are there enough weekend and evening voting hours? Are there college campuses that don't have an Early Voting site on or near campus? Visit nc.cidsitingtool.org for great information about who is in your county and where they live!
- ✔ **Develop your own plan** for locations, days, and hours. Pull in local leaders and neighbors to get their ideas.
- ✔ **See Tips for Assessing Your Plan** (next page) for more information.



STEP 4: STAY CONNECTED

- ✔ **Use our report form** to update us about Early Voting decisions: demnc.co/boereportform.
- ✔ If you have questions along the way, email elections@democracync.org.
- ⚠ **Caution: Early Voting sites that are not used by voters can set a bad precedent and make it harder to advocate for more voting sites in the future. So make sure to advocate for sites that you feel confident that voters will actually use!**

STEP 3: EXECUTE

- ✔ **Consider holding a meeting** with each Board member and a diverse group of your allies in support of your plan.
 - ✔ **Organize** by asking your friends, neighbors, and others who live in your community to get involved. Try to get a good mix of people to show diverse support (for example: faith leaders who support Sunday voting and students who support campus sites).
 - ✔ **Contact** local media outlets. Let them know that the County Board is holding a public meeting that will determine how easy or difficult it will be for voters to cast ballots. Write letters to the editor in support of the hours and sites that you support and share why others should help them too.
 - ✔ **Attend** your county board of elections meeting where Early Voting plans will be discussed. Speak out about any gaps in sites or hours that you identified.
- County boards of elections are required to announce their meetings and agenda ahead of time. These meetings are open to the public. Ask CBOE staff to include you on the email or media list for all notices of meetings.

TALKING POINTS FOR EARLY VOTING ADVOCACY

We Want Early Voting Plans That:

- ✔ **Have weekend voting hours—especially hours on Sunday.** Early Voting sites provide flexible opportunities for working voters, by opening on weekends and evenings after normal working hours. Saturday and Sunday voting have the highest use per hour.
- ✔ **Are in communities where Black and brown voters live.** Voting sites should not only be in wealthier and whiter parts of the county.
- ✔ **Are near on or near college communities.** A college campus can have as many students and staff as a city – and many students also lack transportation off campus.

