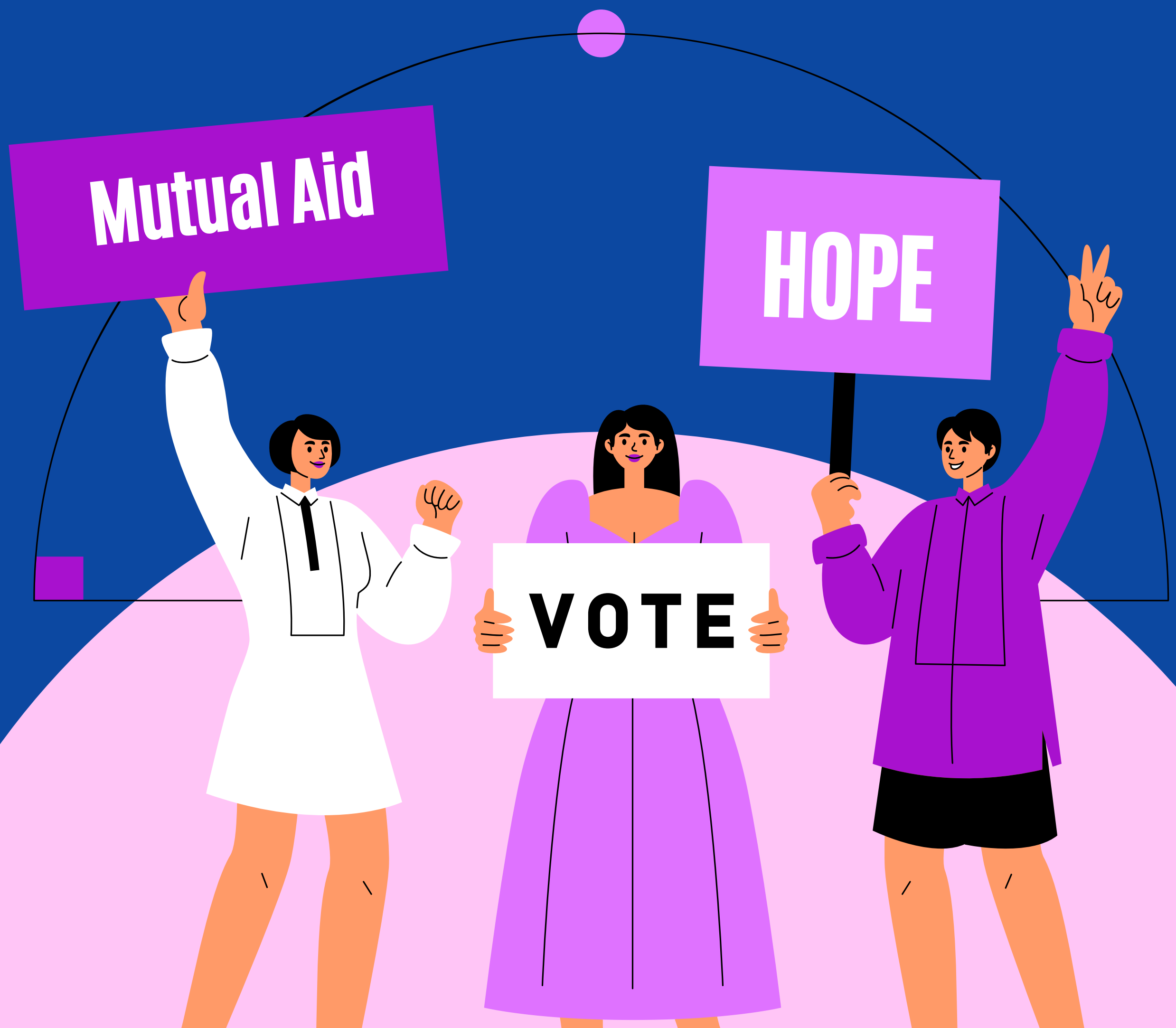


Voting is One Drop in the Ocean of Love: How to Get and Stay Engaged Post-Election

Northwestern

OFFICE OF
COMMUNITY ENRICHMENT
Education



“

Voting is a vitally important cornerstone of a functioning democracy, but it's far from everything we can do. This toolkit is a guide for jumping into the world of local collective action, a way to build community and create effective change for the people around us.

When Mariame Kaba says “hope is a discipline,” it is a call for us to think broadly about how to sustain the work of creating a more just world. This framework seeks to adjust our perspective. Hope is not an ephemeral emotion like sadness or optimism, but instead, it is a way of looking at the world as a place capable of shifting despite the seemingly insurmountable fight for justice. The practice of hope can provide a way for us to organize in a sustained way.

”

toolkit outline:

I Get Involved with
Student Organizations

II Local Organizations in
Evanston & Chicago

III Building Action
Beyond Voting

IV Navigating Social Media
During an Election

V Understanding & Participating
in Mutual Aid

VI Reflection Questions

Student Organizations

Engaging with student groups is a great way to stay informed and connected!

Here are some organizations at Northwestern to consider:

click on each organization to learn more!

Student Government Associations:

- [Associated Student Government](#)
- [SPS Student Alliance Board](#)
- [McCormick Student Advisory Board](#)
- [Graduate Leadership Advocacy Council](#)
- [Bienen Student Advisory Board](#)

Political Interest / Engagement Clubs:

- [Northwestern Political Union](#)
- [College Democrats](#)
- [College Republicans](#)
- [Swing Left](#)
- [Young Americans for Freedom](#)
- [Center for Civic Engagement](#)

Social Justice Organizations:

- [Spectrum Theatre Company](#)
- [Global Engagement Summit](#)
- [Social Justice Education](#)
- [The Jasmine Collective](#)
- [Grounding for Public Service](#)
- [Advancement for the Undocumented Community](#)

Cultural or Community Based Organizations:

- [TGS Cross-Cultural](#)
- [Pan African Students' Union](#)
- [Asian Pacific American Coalition](#)
- [Alianza - Latinx Student Alliance](#)
- [Rotaract](#)
- [ARTivate](#)

click [here](#) for a more comprehensive list of organizations to get involved in!

Evanston & Chicago Support Groups

Consider supporting or joining local community organizations that promote mutual aid and social justice:

1. **Food Not Bombs** - A grassroots organization that provides free meals while raising awareness about food waste and poverty
2. **Frontline Medics** - Volunteers who provide medical support during protests and community events
3. **PO Box Collective** - A community space focused on art, culture, and mutual support in Rogers Park
4. **Chicago Community Jail Support** - Provides support to individuals impacted by the criminal justice system
5. **Chicago Therapy Collective** - Offers affordable mental health services, emphasizing community care
6. **Affinity 95** - Black and queer-led group that works to advance social justice within and for Black LGBTQ+ communities
7. **American Indian Center** - works to preserve Native American culture and help Indigenous people in Chicago and beyond

Explore More Here:

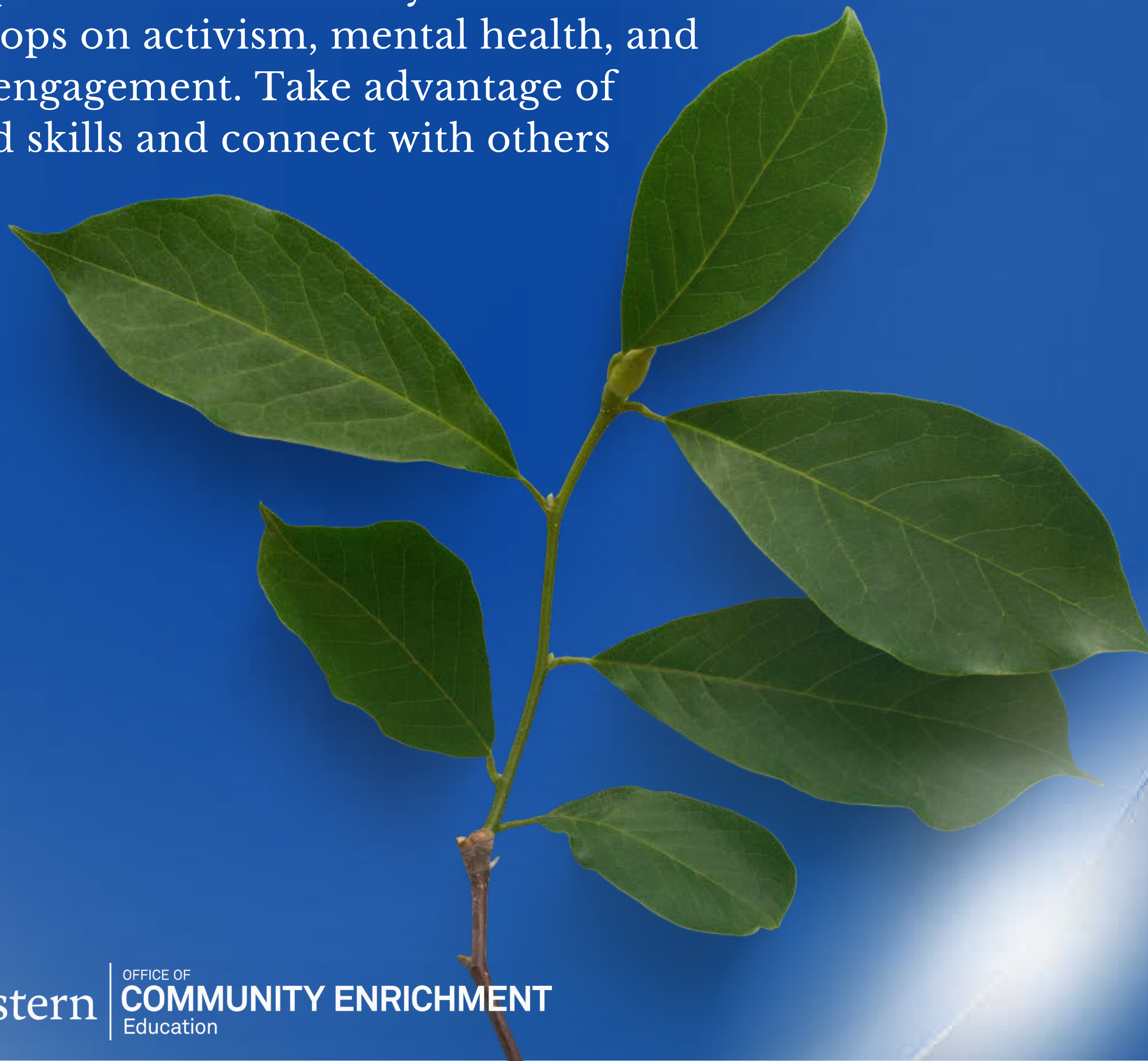
1. [Give Local](#)
2. [Beyond November](#)
3. [Community Resources](#)
4. [Crossroads Fund](#)

Building Action Beyond Voting

While voting is important, ongoing community engagement is essential.

Here are ways to sustain your community engagement.

1. **Volunteer** - Dedicate time to local organizations, whether through direct service or behind-the-scenes support.
2. **Participate in Mutual Aid Networks** - Create or join networks that share resources and support among community members. This fosters resilience against economic challenges.
3. **Host Events and Discussions** - Organize forums, workshops, or panels to educate others on pressing issues and inspire collective action.
4. **Utilize Campus Resources** - Many universities offer workshops on activism, mental health, and community engagement. Take advantage of these to build skills and connect with others

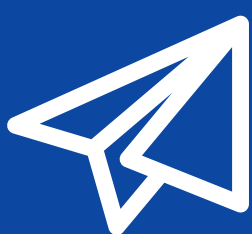


Social Media During Elections

Social media can be a powerful tool for community engagement.

It can also be harmful.

-  **Identify Credible Sources** - Follow reliable news outlets, fact check the information you find online, pay attention to official local, state, and national government websites
-  **Know When To Take A Break** - Social media can be overwhelming, especially emotionally charged content. Engage thoughtfully, mute or unfollow any accounts / posts that trigger you, set time limits on your apps
-  **Seek & Support Diverse Voices** - Follow a variety of perspectives (different backgrounds, communities, political leanings) to gain a balanced view, look for journalism that isn't mainstream - there could be new things to learn
-  **Recognize & Avoid Misinformation** - question the content you engage with, make sure to avoid fake AI pictures or videos, be cautious of fake accounts, and don't fall for misleading clickbait: read beyond headlines



Understanding Mutual Aid

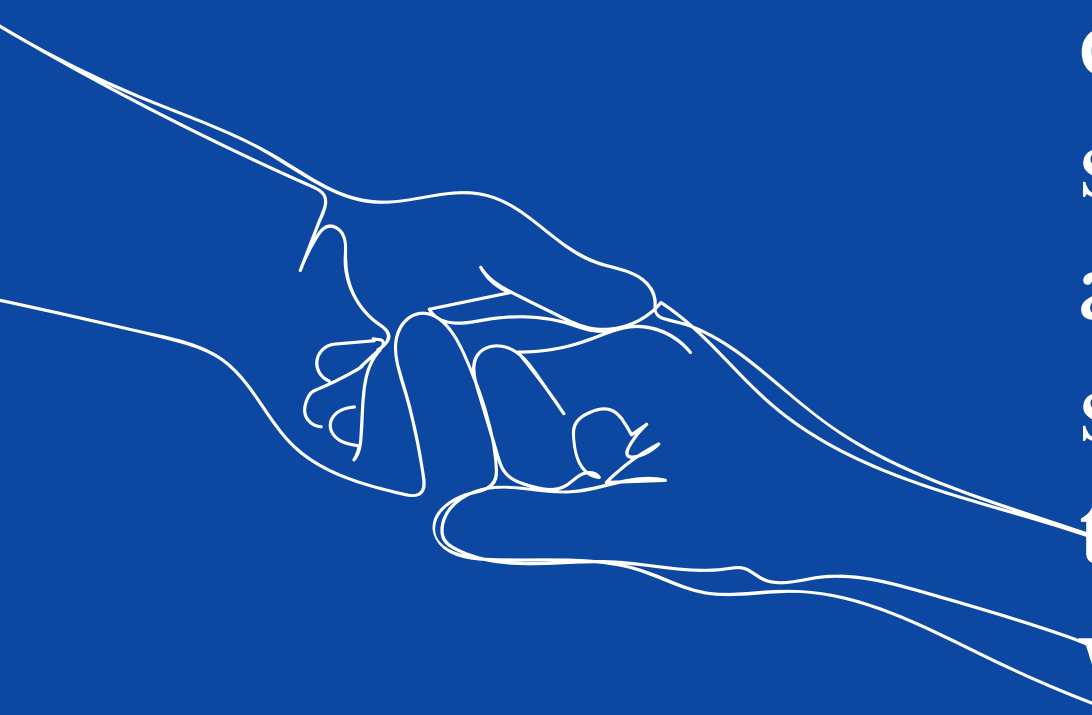
Mutual Aid is a tool for building political power, challenging systemic inequalities, and developing alternatives to harmful structures



what is mutual aid?

refers to voluntary, reciprocal exchanges of resources and services for mutual benefit. It's rooted in solidarity, not charity. It is community-led and emphasizes that everyone's needs are met through shared effort. By pooling resources and skills, we can better navigate the challenges posed by harmful systems.

Mutual aid builds solidarity. When we give each other the things we need, we can also come to understand the structural reasons why we don't all have everything we need to flourish, and we can organize to change these structures.



Mutual aid teaches us to problem-solve collectively. We so often work in hierarchical structures, where someone in an authoritarian role tells us what work we should do. In mutual aid, we not only figure things out together, but collectively decide what our problems are and how to approach them.

Share resources, create need based systems within your communities, and show up for support before, on, and after voting day. Remember that mutual aid means that you empower others and build coalitions outside of the voting booth and election periods.

Reflection Questions

What are aspects of your life that give you a sense of balance and perspective?

What are communities that you can access for support, comfort and understanding?

What are the things you will be looking for in order to determine what levels of engagement (and risk) you are willing to commit to?

As you consider your options, what community organizations or issues are you passionate about? How are you engaging or considering to engage?

While each of us may not be called into or have the resources to participate in ongoing community support, what are ways you might channel your emotional energies into creative or generative activities?

When you take time to behold nature, whether in a local park or just taking a walk in your neighborhood, what answers or ways of learning might you gain from trees, animals, insects, and plants?



Many thanks!



Kelly Bencola, director of of Leadership Development & Community Engagement at Northwestern, for organizing these fishbowls

Nick Jenkins of NU CAPS, for expertise in supporting people navigate socio-political stress

Eric Budzynski of NU Religious & Spiritual Life, for bringing expertise in contemplative practice and meaning making

Mony Ruiz-Velasco of Equality Illinois and Betty Alzamora of Indivisible Chicago, for bringing expertise in organizing and getting folks involved with issues and causes

The OIDI Education Team, for putting together the resources in this toolkit

The Northwestern Center for Civic Engagement, for all that they do around voting mobilization and engagement with democracy