

# Power of Participation

Session I: They Don't Want You to Vote!

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Facilitator Guide

# THEY DON'T WANT YOU TO VOTE!



## Snapshot



### Session Goals:

- To educate participants about the history of who has been allowed to vote, and who hasn't, during different periods of history
- To remind people of the long, hard struggles to gain voting rights, and why people involved in those struggles felt it was important to fight for the right to vote
- To help participants locate themselves in this history
- To connect the dots and make the case that voting, or not voting, significantly impacts local, state, and national power dynamics
- To build strong energy and enthusiasm for voting
- To develop a strong sense of connection among the participants, and from the participants to 9to5



## Prep & Set-Up

### Materials/handouts needed:

- Key word definitions
- Facilitator voter timeline packet
- Participant voter timeline packets
- Evaluation forms

### Equipment/supplies needs:

- Easels
- Flip chart paper
- Markers
- Tape
- Paper and pens for participants

### Room Set-up:

- Easel(s) with flip chart paper easily accessible for facilitator
- Chairs in a circle
- Work tables outside the chair circle
- Covered, pre-assembled timeline arranged around the room on the walls/windows

# Power of Participation: Session I

## Section I—Introductory Activities

25 mins

### Key Components:

🕒 3 mins	Welcome
🕒 3 mins	Intro to 9to5
🕒 10 mins	Participant intros and icebreaker
🕒 5 mins	Series and session purpose overview What the next 1 ½ hours will look like
🕒 4 mins	Group agreements and answers to any questions

## Section II—Core Activity

40 mins

### Key Components:

🕒 7 mins	Introduce exercise
🕒 15 mins	Small group work
🕒 18 mins	Art gallery activity

### Script/key points:

#### 🕒 Introduce Exercise (7 mins)

We're going to begin by reviewing some key terms that we'll be using throughout the series:

- **Democracy:** A system of government in which power is vested in the people, who rule either directly or through elected representatives. The U.S. is a representative democracy—voters elect officials to represent them.
- **Disenfranchise:** To deprive a person of rights and/or privileges.
- **Power:** The ability to make things happen or not happen.

# Power of Participation: Session I



## Facilitator Comments:

We're going to spend the next forty minutes or so reviewing the history of the U.S. related to voting rights from the founding of the country to now. Let's set the stage by reviewing what was happening in the early years of the nation:

- 1776: Only people who own land can vote
- 1787: No Federal voting standard; states decide who can vote
- 1789: George Washington is elected President—only 6% of the population can vote
- 1790: Naturalization Law is passed stating that only “free white” immigrants can become naturalized citizens.

The precedents set when the country began—limiting voting to primarily land-owning white men—lay the groundwork for voting rights struggles that continue to this day. And they also created the messy situation we still have—we do not have uniform Federal voting standards. Every state sets many of its own rules, so voting rights vary tremendously from one state to another.

## Small Group Work (15 mins)



## Facilitator Comments:

Now we're going to break up into small groups. Each group will get the same set of handouts. Working together as a team put the slides in the order you think is correct with the date you think is correct.

 Distribute shuffled timeline images and dates.

## Art Gallery Activity (18 mins)

Reveal the actual timeline and ask for insights and comments from the full group.



## Guiding Questions:

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- What are the key messages you get from looking at the timeline?
- What are some of the slides that really stand out for you?



## Facilitator Comments:




Our work is far from done; there are still many citizens of the U.S. who do not have voting rights:

- In 2000 residents of U.S. colonies were made citizens, but they were denied the right to vote
- Voting rights for formerly incarcerated individuals are determined by the states—there is no uniform federal policy and many states deny the vote to people who have been incarcerated
- And voter suppression is on the rise in many states—we'll look at this in-depth in Session III

## Section III—Discussion & Punchlines

13 mins

### Key Components:

 5 mins	Pair sharing
 3 mins	Informal report back
 5 mins	Facilitator punchlines

Script/key points:

 5 mins

Pair sharing: Ask participants to pair up



## Guiding Questions:

- Did anything surprise you about the activity we just did?
- Did it change your thinking about voting and voting rights?

 3 mins

Informal report back from a few participants

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 5 mins





## Facilitator Punchlines:

- The road to gaining voting rights has been very long and very hard for many constituencies in this country
- Voting, or not voting, significantly impacts local, state, and national power dynamics
- Voting is a form of resistance in the face of oppression and voter suppression efforts. It's also a way to fight for social change and justice.
- Voting is critical if we want our lives, our country, and the world to be better—a better world is possible, and voting is one of the ways we get there

## Section IV—Reflections & Evaluation

12 mins

### Script/Key Points:

 7 mins	Reflections/feedback from participants
 5 mins	Fill out evaluation forms