Repair the World

FALL NATIONAL DAYS OF JEWISH SERVICE 2026

# Civic Service &
# Strengthening Our Democracy

Jewish Service Learning Facilitation Resource

September 10 – October 10, 2026

Our democracy is for all of us. And it requires all of us to engage for it to be truly reflective of the diverse perspectives, experiences, and identities we hold. Our work today is in service of our democracy as we seek to actualize the adage "by the people, for the people". Civic service is holy in the lead up to the midterm elections in America's 250th year. We seek to strengthen our democracy by getting more voters involved in the electoral process, enabling safe polling places, and providing accurate election information. By practicing the Jewish value of strengthening one another, *hitchazkut*, we strengthen our democratic system.

# Issue Area Education: Voter Accessibility and Turnout

- As many as **1 in 4 eligible Americans are not registered to vote**.
- Only **46% of eligible voters voted** in the 2022 midterm election (Pew Research).
- Voters are much older, on average, than non-voters. Gen Z and young Millennials are less represented in our elections than their over-50 counterparts (Pew Research).
- Americans with less education, less money, and fewer resources are less likely to participate in elections. In states where mail-in voting is limited, barriers to voting abound, especially transit to polling places (Brennan Center for Justice).
- While racial voter turnout gaps are smaller than in previous years, the Supreme Court's 2026 decision to dismantle voter protections for marginalized groups are likely to have significant impacts on the ability of marginalized groups to vote in future elections (Brennan Center for Justice).

# Service Project Ideas

Engage in Repair the World's National Days of Jewish Service by running civic service projects. Grants are available to support projects between September 10-October 10, 2026.

Below are sample civic service projects. Each directly supports free, safe, fair, and accessible elections on November 3.

**PROJECTS:**

Each proposed project embodies the Jewish value of *na'aseh v'nishma*, action & learning. We learn in order to take meaningful action and we learn from the actions we take.

- **Voter Registration Day is September 15. Celebrate by:**
  - Hosting a voter registration event at a high-traffic area in your community.
  - Gathering friends for a letter-writing campaign to encourage voters to participate in the midterm elections.
- **National Voter Education Week is October 5-9. Support voter education by:**
  - Hosting a OneTable Shabbat dinner, leading a conversation about supporting democracy in your area and contacting election officials to gain the most local and accurate election information. Then…
  - Organizing a non-partisan phone bank effort and using A More Perfect Union's toolkit to be able to answer questions about elections in your area.
- **National Elections are November 3. Some state primary elections run through September. Ensure folks show up to the polls by:**
  - Coordinating a letter writing campaign to low-propensity voters to boost election participation in the midterms.

**Check out Repair the World's Democracy Ballot for more ways to engage and live your Jewish values.**

# Jewish Learning on Our Duty to Government and Democracy

## Pirkei Avot 3:2

*Pirkei Avot (literally "Chapters of the Fathers," also known as "Ethics of our Fathers") is a tractate in Seder Nezikin ("Order of Damages") and the only tractate in the Mishnah with almost no laws, consisting instead of short statements of advice, ethics, and wisdom. It was composed between c.190 – 230 CE. (Sefaria)*

> Pray for the welfare of the government, for were it not for the fear it inspires, every [person] would swallow [their] neighbor alive.

## Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, Nineteen Letters 16:4

*Written by Samson Raphael Hirsch in 1836 under the pseudonym "Ben Uziel," Nineteen Letters is a defense of Orthodox Judaism. In this work, written in the form of a fictional correspondence between a young rabbi-philosopher and a young intellectual, he confronts the challenges that emancipation created for modern Jews. (Sefaria)*

> It is our duty to join ourselves as closely as possible to the state which receives us into its midst, to promote its welfare and not to consider our well-being as in any way separate from that of the state to which we belong.

## Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, Likutei Moharan 5:1:2

*Rebbe Nachman of Breslov was one of the most creative Chasidic masters, whose thought and teachings continue to resonate far beyond his immediate followers. Among his many works are a profound presentation of his Chasidic and mystical teaching, Likkutei Moharan, which was printed in 1808 in Ukraine. (Sefaria)*

> Now, each person must say: "The entire world was created only for my sake" (Sanhedrin 37a). Consequently, because the world was created for my sake, I must constantly look into and consider ways of making the world better; to provide what is missing in the world and pray on its behalf.

01 According to Pirkei Avot, the government exists to keep its people in check. What vision of the government inspires you to civically serve?

02 Rabbi Hirsch calls upon each of us to promote healthy government because we are all affected by the government's decisions. When have you felt represented in local or national government? How did that representation affect your pride or trust in democracy and government institutions?

03 Rabbi Nachman speaks of improving our world; because the world was created for each of us, we are called to fix what we see is broken. What does it mean to support an election system with glaring flaws and inequities? How does increasing voter registration and turnout serve to mend the broken electoral system?

04 What does a healthy democracy look like at a national scale? How might a thriving democracy show up in our community? Consider what action you can take to support democracy locally.

VALUES TENSION

## Repair and Brokenness

**Many might ask:** if our democratic system, specifically our elections, might feel broken, why should we participate? Democracy will continue to deteriorate if we stop participating in it. To ensure we have a representative government, we must increase voter turnout. To get more voters to participate in the midterm elections, we must proactively share accurate and non-partisan information. To sustain our democracy, we must seek to fix pieces of it in our corners of the United States. Our civic service is a perfect example of balancing the values of brokenness and repair. To repair our fractured democratic system, to ensure it truly serves each and every person across the country, we have to catalyze participation.

## Reflection

One person can have an outsized impact on the health of local democracy. We strive to fix what's broken in our corner of the country, putting *tikkun olam*, repairing the world, into practice. And, we acknowledge we can't do it alone. This is the power of the Jewish service movement: repairing the brokenness together. As we move from civically serving in our communities to thinking about what happens after the midterm elections, consider:

01 How might you remain civically engaged in your area after the midterm elections? What kinds of civic participation allow you to show up, again and again, regardless of elections?

02 To strengthen our local democratic fabric, we have to be in relationship with people who may not share our views. How might you build trust and connection with community members who voted differently from you?