



NASS IDEAS Award Nomination

State Office: Kentucky Secretary of State Alison Lundergan Grimes

Contact: Bradford Queen
Director of Communications
(502) 782-7417
Bradford.Queen@ky.gov

Title: GoVoteKY Collaboration with InspireKY & Kentucky YMCA

Project Lead: Jacob Ewing
Special Assistant
(502) 782-7418
Jacob.Ewing@ky.gov

Description: Secretary Grimes' GoVoteKY campaign began with the launch of GoVoteKY.com, Kentucky's one-stop online voter portal and the Commonwealth's online voter registration system. Since that time, Secretary Grimes' office has partnered with youth organizations, InspireKY and Kentucky YMCA Youth Association to engage and encourage Kentucky high schoolers to register to vote.

Subject Area: Elections

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HISTORY

The Secretary of State's Elections Office

Kentucky Secretary of State Alison Lundergan Grimes is the Commonwealth's chief elections official and serves as chair of the State Board of Elections.

As Kentucky's chief election official, Secretary Grimes is the filing official for all candidates seeking an office to be voted for by the electors of more than one county, members of Congress, members of the General Assembly and of the Court of Justice. The Secretary of State also certifies candidates for those offices to be printed on the ballots, and vote totals for those offices are certified to the Secretary of State by the respective county clerks.

Collaboration with InspireKY and Kentucky YMCA Youth Association

In 2013, the Secretary of State's office worked with the Kentucky YMCA Youth Association to spearhead launching InspireKY, a state chapter of the national organization that works to register high school students to vote. Since its inception, the organization has worked closely with the Secretary of State, YMCA, and local high schools to establish local chapters, and more importantly, to register thousands of high school seniors.

In 2017, the Secretary of State's office reaffirmed its commitment to the partnership with the goal of registering thousands of eligible 17- and 18-year-old Kentuckians. By offering online voter registration, mock election resources, and incentivizing youth voter registration with the Secretary's Georgia Davis Powers Award for high schools reaching 100 percent of eligible voter registration, the partnership has mobilized hundreds of engaged high school students to register their peers across Kentucky's 120 counties.

GoVoteKY

In her first short months in office, Secretary Grimes traveled to the Middle East with other Secretaries of State to assess military voting procedures and meet with Kentuckians who are serving abroad. Upon her return, she made recommendations to the Kentucky General Assembly for ensuring that Kentuckians who risk their lives on the battlefield have their voices heard at the ballot box.

The result was Kentucky's first-ever Military Heroes Voting Initiative which eased voting for Kentucky military and overseas voters. An online portal allows covered voters to request absentee ballots and receive absentee ballots and to register or update their voter registration. This nationally-recognized effort was a tremendous success and received wide praise from its users.

Recognizing the incredible speed and ease of online registration for military and overseas voters, Secretary Grimes embarked on an effort to bring online registration to all Kentuckians.

Secretary Grimes in February 2015 appeared before the Kentucky House Committee on Elections, Constitutional Amendments, and Intergovernmental Affairs to present House Bill 214, her proposal to build a statewide online voter registration. Lawmakers on the panel cheered the plan and unanimously sent the legislation to a vote of the full House of Representatives. The bill received passed the chamber by an overwhelming bipartisan majority, 92-3. Unfortunately, the proposal was never acted upon in the Republican-controlled state Senate. Grimes is a Democrat.

Concurrent with the 2015 legislative proposal, the State Board of Elections, chaired by Grimes, promulgated an administrative regulation to achieve the same goal – bringing online voter registration to all Kentuckians. 31 KAR 3:040 was approved by two legislative panels in 2015, giving the greenlight to

Secretary Grimes and the State Board of Elections to begin implementing the online voter registration system.

The Secretary of State immediately went to work to design, build and unveil a one-stop elections portal which would include the new online voter registration system, at GoVoteKY.com. The Secretary of State, the Office of Elections, and Board staff collaborated to bring the portal to life. While online voter registration had already been implemented by more than 30 states, few states had brought all election tools and information under one, easily navigated portal.

GoVoteKY.com was programmed and developed in-house by Secretary of State and Board IT staff and was implemented using federal Help America Vote Act monies.

What makes GoVoteKY even more significant is that it is not only a one-stop online elections portal, but also Secretary Grimes' statewide registration initiative.

GoVoteKY is an ongoing initiative of historic proportions. Never before had Kentucky's Secretary of State – or any elected official in the Commonwealth – taken on the task of a statewide voter registration of this size and magnitude. During Secretary Grimes' first yearlong drive, more than 106,000 Kentuckians registered to vote and were eligible to vote in the November 2016 general election.

GoVoteKY supports the office's efforts to break down barriers to the ballot box by making it easier for Kentuckians to register to vote through the modernization of a process that had before been conducted by only paper. Further, GoVoteKY has raised Kentuckians' awareness of the importance of registering to vote and literally brought the tools necessary to them.

SIGNIFICANCE

Secretary Grimes' credits her office's collaboration with InspireKY and YMCA for the wildly successful GoVoteKY statewide voter registration drive she led in 2016 and the initiative's continued success.

Together, the partnership seeks to increase youth voter registration by incentivizing registration through GoVoteKY and the Georgia Davis Powers Award for high schools; mobilizing a statewide network of thousands of peer advocates through YMCA Kentucky Youth Assembly conferences; and tracking registration and turnout outcomes by offering registration drive assistance through InspireKY.

Building on the success of GoVoteKY's launch, Secretary Grimes' first awarded the Georgia Davis Powers Award ("Award") in 2017. The Award, which honors high schools with outstanding achievement in voter registration totals among eligible students, serves as the centerpiece of the collaboration. This incentive allows the Office of Secretary of State to engage students through InspireKY and YMCA in high schools and in extracurricular events.

YMCA's Kentucky Youth Assembly ("KYA") high school conferences engage nearly 4,000 students over three conferences – the largest Youth and Government program in the nation. The conferences provide an experiential learning program that models state government, including elections, legislative and judicial processes, and journalism and media. The Office of Secretary of State supported KYA by providing mentorship to Youth Secretaries, supplying election equipment for conference elections, and offering voter registration materials, including GoVoteKY registration kiosks. The Office also promoted the Georgia Davis Powers Award to students, and with InspireKY, encouraged students to achieve 100% registration in their high schools.

InspireKY, an organization that seeks to increase youth voter registration and turnout, provides resources for planning and conducting registration drives in high schools. The Office of Secretary of State refers high school students interested in voter registration drives & the Georgia Davis Powers Award to InspireKY for additional guidance and resources, including at KYA conferences.

Importantly, because of the synergistic and reciprocal nature of the partnership, the reach and efficacy of each organization has increased.

IMPACT/RESULTS

Benefits to Kentuckians

The Secretary of State's collaboration with InspireKY and KY YMCA has led to a renewed engagement of youth in the democratic process. **More than 22,000 18-year-olds registered to vote in Kentucky in 2017.**

Additionally, this partnership offers young citizens experience in advocacy and civic engagement. By engaging with the partnership, students are educating their peers about state and local government while learning civic mobilization and organization skills.

As Chief Advocate for Civic Engagement, Secretary Grimes believes that providing citizens with the tools to positively take part in the political process is more important than ever in today's political climate. This partnership cultivates the next generation of citizens to be active and engaged in civic affairs.

Benefits to Government

Through engaging in partnerships with stakeholder organizations, the Secretary of State is saving precious government resources in reaching a key demographic – new, young voters. In addition, using online voter registration at GoVoteKY.com to help students get registered to vote is bringing significant cost and time savings to state and local governments in the processing of voter registrations.

Georgia Davis Powers Award

Georgia Davis Powers was the first African-American and woman elected to the Kentucky State Senate.

She was an influential member of the Civil Rights Movement, and a confidante of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Throughout her life, Senator Powers was committed to equal rights and fought for causes to prohibit discrimination in schools, workplaces, and housing on the basis of race, sex, and age. She supported legislation to improve education for the physically and mentally disabled.

Senator Powers always urged young people to become involved in the democratic process and to stand up for what they believe. As a role model and mentor, Senator Powers encouraged young people to make a difference in their communities and Kentucky.



The Award: In honor of Senator Powers' support of young people, the Secretary of State's office has created the Georgia Davis Powers Award. This award is given to high schools with outstanding student voter registration. Schools are awarded one of three award tiers:

- Gold Award: 100% of eligible students registered to vote
- Silver Award: 90% of eligible students registered to vote
- Bronze Award: 75% of eligible students registered to vote

Some exemptions may apply; for example, students who choose not to register for religious beliefs.

How to Participate: Students who will be 18 years of age by the upcoming general election are eligible to register to vote. A teacher sponsor is required for a school to apply. Sponsors are responsible for submitting their application and independently verifying the registration status of eligible students.

Applications may be completed online or via mail or email using the attached form. **The deadline to apply for the Georgia Davis Powers Award is March 1.**

Mail

Georgia Davis Powers Award
Kentucky Secretary of State
State Capitol, Suite 152
700 Capital Ave.
Frankfort, KY 40601

Email

Matt.Daley@ky.gov
Subject: Georgia Davis Powers Award

Application for the Kentucky Office of Secretary of State's
Georgia Davis Powers Award

School Name: _____

City/County: _____

Sponsor Name: _____

Sponsor Phone: _____

Sponsor Email: _____

Student
Contacts
(if applicable): _____

Students Eligible/
Students Registered _____ / _____

Send completed applications to:

Mail

Georgia Davis Powers Award
Kentucky Secretary of State
Suite 152
700 Capital Ave.
Frankfort, KY 40601

Email

Matt.Daley@ky.gov
Subject: Georgia Davis Powers Award

I hereby certify that the information I have provided is true and correct to the best of my knowledge, and that I am willing to verify data with the award administrator if requested.

Sponsor Name

Date

