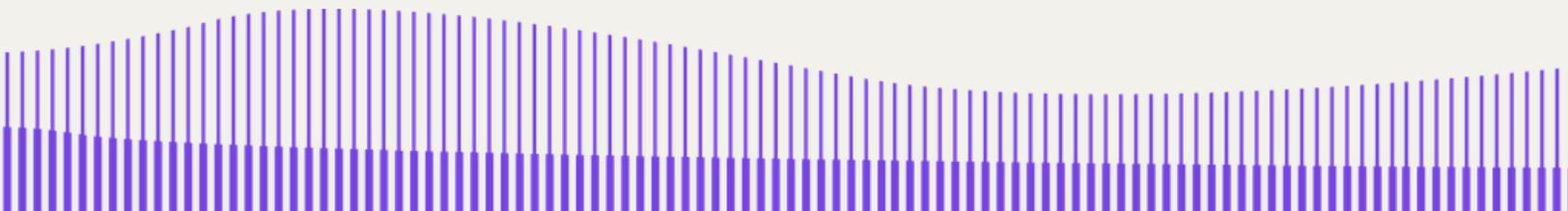# Democracy Works

2025

Impact Report

Essential Elections Infrastructure

Letter from the CEO

**By Luis Lozada,
Democracy Works CEO**

In 2025, voters navigated a shifting landscape. New voting laws took effect with little notice. Polling places moved. Deadlines changed. False claims about voter eligibility, mail ballots, and registration requirements circulated online. In election after election, voters were left asking basic questions: Where do I vote? Am I registered? What's on my ballot?

The information voters need does exist, often on state and local election websites. But it is frequently written in legal language, spread across multiple pages, or updated in ways that are easy to miss. When rules shift, even slightly, confusion follows.

The challenge is not that voters are disengaged. It's that election information can be complex and difficult to navigate when clarity matters most. Voter confusion is not a voter failure. It is a usability problem, and usability requires infrastructure.

That's where Democracy Works comes in.

51%
Higher turnout rate among first-time voters who use TurboVote vs. national average*

37%
Higher turnout rate among infrequent voters who use TurboVote vs. national average*

*-First-time voter registrants who used TurboVote for the 2024 general election turned out at 86%, dramatically exceeding the 57% turnout typical of possible first-time voters. Infrequent voters are defined as people who vote in fewer than half of their eligible elections. Those who used TurboVote turned out at 89%, well above the 65% turnout among infrequent voters nationwide.

In 2025, an odd-year cycle with fewer federal and statewide races, we still published data for 3,462 elections nationwide, including 120,980 voting locations. Our voter engagement platform, TurboVote, reached millions of Americans, delivering reliable voting guidance and helpful support. TurboVote users took action to participate in local elections in 2025 — 755,898 checked their registration, 586,784 viewed Election Guides, and 132,234 viewed a personalized sample ballot. We meet voters where they are, delivering official, verified information at the moment they need it most.

The results are measurable. In the most recent federal election cycle, 79% of TurboVote users voted in the general election, compared to an estimated 64% national turnout—a 15-point increase. Meanwhile, young voters aged 18-24 who used TurboVote were 28% more likely to cast their ballot than their peers, and first-time registrants who used TurboVote were 51% more likely to vote.

This is what essential civic infrastructure looks like: accurate information, trusted delivery, and participation that strengthens democracy.

Luis Lozada

Clarity and Confidence in Changing Elections

**By Nicole Costa,
Election Research Director**

Voting in 2025 was business as usual for some voters and dramatically different for others. From new documentary proof of citizenship requirements to a sharp increase in attention toward redistricting ahead of the 2026 midterm elections, voters experienced a shifting landscape, all while deciding impactful contests and measures at the state and local levels.

Our Research Team's work is rooted in a fundamental commitment to providing accurate and easy-to-understand information from reliable sources. In 2025, we covered more than 3,400 elections across 48 states and Washington, D.C., with more than 95% occurring at the county, municipal, or school level. Information availability can vary drastically between jurisdictions and across states. While some states maintain consistent dates and rules, others allow local jurisdictions to set their own policies for early voting, vote-by-mail, and eligibility criteria.

> **As a result, more than 60% of the elections we covered required direct outreach to local officials to confirm or clarify details that were missing or unclear on government websites, and more than 25% relied primarily on information gathered via email or phone.**

Our team prepared extensively for the voting landscape in 2026, with a particular focus on providing information for the primaries that is accurate, clear, and actionable for voters. Voting in primaries can be confusing in general, and with brewing uncertainty around redistricting, the Researchers at Democracy Works planned ahead to make sure we could communicate the complexities to come in new and thoughtful ways. This included tracking new dates and deadlines for party affiliation and party changes, as well as expanding information about options for affiliating with parties across all 50 states and Washington, D.C. In a shifting landscape, that preparation ensures voters have the clarity they need to cast their ballot with confidence.

Small Data Gaps, Big Voter Consequences

**By Danny Pease,
Engineering Manager**

Helping voters find their voting location requires accounting for every variable; even a small detail like a voter's unit number can change where they vote. In 2025, we encountered this firsthand while preparing to publish New York's voting locations dataset through the Democracy Works Elections API.

By analyzing New York's 2024 dataset, we discovered that roughly one-tenth of a percent of voter addresses cannot be reliably matched to a voting location without a unit number. That fraction sounds small. But in a state with millions of voters, it represents thousands of people who could be directed to the wrong location if unit-level information is ignored.

Not all voting location services account for this edge case. If an address matches a building, they assign a polling place and move on. We chose not to. Our team detected when unit numbers are required and ensured multi-unit buildings are matched correctly, eliminating a preventable source of voter confusion.

This is the role of the Democracy Works Elections API: transforming complex, location-specific election data into standardized, reliable guidance that powers voter information tools across the country.

> **When we strengthen the API, we strengthen the infrastructure that tech platforms, companies, and civic organizations rely on to deliver accurate election information at scale.**

Edge cases exist in every state. By solving them proactively, we ensure that even small percentages do not become real-world errors, reinforcing why our infrastructure is trusted nationwide.

Flexible Data Powering Modern Election Guidance

**By David Golden,
Product Manager**

When Democracy Works first built TurboVote, our goal was simple: make it easier for voters to get the right information at the right time. But elections are complicated, and in 2025, we made improvements to help voters navigate local contests and primaries by updating how we organize and publish election data.

In the early days, our pipeline was straightforward: our Research Team gathered information, and we imported it into a centralized system that mapped directly onto what TurboVote published. Over time, we realized this approach made it difficult to reflect the real differences between elections.

Primaries, for example, vary dramatically by state. They may be closed, open, semi-open, party-run, or ranked choice, or several of the above. Those nuances matter to voters, but our previous system limited how precisely we could model and communicate them.

In 2025, we changed that. We adopted a more flexible approach to organizing election data and began incorporating richer datasets, including detailed ballot information on candidates, measures, and endorsements. This allowed us to clearly explain primary rules state by state and tailor guidance to voters' real-world situations.

That same dataset now powers both TurboVote and our Elections API, allowing partners to build their own voter engagement tools using trusted election data.

> **By centralizing the information in a modern system, we can add new data more easily, distribute it effectively, and respond quickly to legal or procedural changes.**

The result in 2025 was a more responsive system for voters during critical elections and a stronger foundation as we head into the 2026 primary season.

Built to Evolve: How We Innovate for Voters

By Aly Valli,
VP, Product

Innovation at Democracy Works starts with curiosity about voters, especially those who do not wake up thinking about elections. Voting competes with work, childcare, and the ebbs and flows of daily life. That's why TurboVote is designed to fit into those moments and deliver personalized election guidance, reminders, and voting information that voters can access quickly, on their own time.

So we conduct ongoing user testing with everyday voters, study each moment of friction, and iterate quickly. We also build alongside the organizations voters trust most. The organizations we partner with often help us shape new ideas early, pressure-test features, and push us to meet a higher bar.

In 2025, we embraced the opportunity that follows a general election year: refine our product improvements, rebuild what needs strengthening, and respond to real usage data.
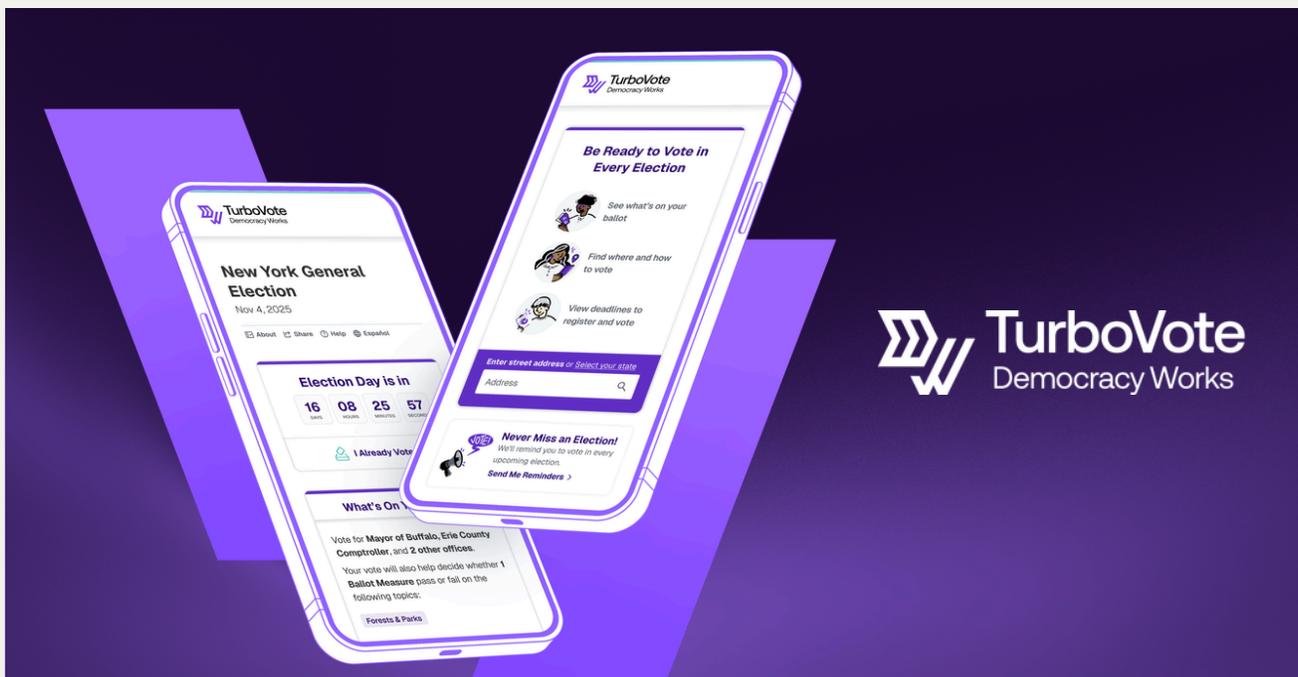
With ranked choice voting options on millions of ballots in 2025, we designed a tailored experience that lets users rank and save candidates in advance, directly in TurboVote.

> **By reducing confusion around a new ballot format, we helped voters walk into the voting booth prepared and confident, while demonstrating to our partners that we can handle evolving election systems.**

And because inspiration only matters if voters follow through, we introduced single-click voting locations. With one tap, voters can see exactly where to vote, no repetitive data entry required. It reflects the belief that voters are also consumers, and civic experiences should be as seamless as the rest of their digital lives.

Behind every feature is a durable, scalable infrastructure. The quiet work we did in 2025 positions us to reach higher expectations and even more voters in 2026.

Personalizing the Voter Journey

**By Ryan Pierson,
Senior Product Designer**

In 2025, TurboVote became more useful and engaging by investing in voter personalization and partner customization, blending into voters' busy lives and our partners' trusted brands. While we have always tailored guidance based on voters' locations, last year we took meaningful steps to support voters throughout their voter journey at every level of engagement.

Creating more personalized experiences in TurboVote was a top priority. We expanded functionality to allow voters who self-reported that they already voted in an election to snooze reminders until the next election rather than unsubscribe. We also added follow-up questions to help us better understand a voter's unique preferences, such as their voting method, frequency, and barriers to participation.

> **By personalizing the experience, this feature reduced subscriber loss while also deepening our relationship with engaged voters.**

To help voters understand what's at stake in every election, we expanded our ballot info tool to include both a personalized summary and an interactive sample ballot to help voters research, plan, and share their choices with ease. Informed by user testing, our approach was to make information and action accessible at every level, building lightweight experiences to empower voters with limited time, and deeper functionality for voters looking to maximize their impact.

Our partners, including universities, workplaces, faith-based groups, and advocacy organizations, hold their communities' trust, so we prioritize options in TurboVote that allow partners to customize it with their branding and integrate into their websites, messaging, and programming. In 2025, we also added the ability for partners to provide context for what's on the ballot through descriptions and highlights of important races and ballot measures, and endorsements of candidates and measure positions. This was a natural extension of our overall focus on partner co-branding, allowing both partisan and nonpartisan partners to provide specific and relevant guidance to voters at the moment they make their decisions.

> *Democracy Works partners with hundreds of companies, organizations, and universities that use TurboVote to empower their communities to vote.*

Creating Impact Through Partnerships

By Anjelica Smith,
Senior Director of Partnerships

In 2025, we strengthened the partnerships that power our work and laid the foundation for an even broader impact in 2026. Our approach is grounded in a simple belief: voters are most likely to engage when information comes through organizations they already trust. By growing alongside those partners, we expand access to reliable voting guidance nationwide.

We now serve a wide range of partner organizations. Each comes to us with different goals, capacities, and communities. Some operate at a national scale with complex technical needs. Others are state or local groups seeking a straightforward solution they can implement quickly. In 2025, we invested in making TurboVote and the Democracy Works Elections API more flexible and easier to implement so partners could more seamlessly integrate voter engagement into their own programs and reach their communities with less friction.

That work strengthened our ability to diversify revenue, widen our reach, and verify our impact. National organizations adopted customized, high-touch implementations that reflected the scale of their audiences. Partners brought their own communities into our tools, unlocking opportunities to serve hundreds of thousands of voters at the start of new collaborations.

> **Closer integrations and partner-owned messaging elevated our ability to verify impact, allowing us to move beyond surface-level metrics and more precisely demonstrate how voters progress from information to action.**

Through the Civic Alliance, we also supported the business community with nonpartisan resources, coaching, and programming to help companies build sustainable workplace civic initiatives, extending trusted voter guidance into workplaces. In 2025, over 90% of surveyed member companies report having a voter-friendly, civically engaged workplace. We've grown to 1,373 member companies reaching more than 9 million employees.

Because of the relationships we built and systems we refined in 2025, we are entering 2026 ready to expand our partner network, deepen engagement, and help even more voters navigate elections with confidence.

A Closer Look at Our Impact

**By Jarell Lloyd,
VP, Engineering**

At Democracy Works, our technology does more than guide voters to the ballot box; it generates rich data that is building a clearer picture of civic participation. We are expanding our ability to measure how our tools perform across different groups of voters by combining our own data with external datasets to build a clearer picture of who is engaging and turning out.

For example, we can observe the turnout rates among groups like Black voters aged 18-34 who engage with our tools and compare their participation to broader turnout rates, providing meaningful insights into which strategies are resonating.

> **We have always believed our tools make a difference. Now the data is proving it.**

Consider our impact on new voters: while the national turnout average for first-time registrants stood at 57 percent in 2024, those who used TurboVote cast their ballot at an 86 percent rate. This represents a 51 percent increase in participation, strongly suggesting that timely, targeted support makes a tangible difference.

But the true value of these insights lies in what they will allow us to build next. As our data capabilities continue to mature, they provide a powerful foundation for the future of voter engagement. By highlighting where different communities might be experiencing friction in the voting process, we can guide our partners toward more targeted, effective use of their resources. Ultimately, this growing understanding is the key to designing proactive, targeted interventions that can continuously enhance the voting journey for Americans in 2026 and beyond.

Your Support

Matters.

As we look ahead to 2026, the stakes are only rising. Midterm elections bring national visibility, increased scrutiny, and an even faster spread of misinformation. More voters will be searching for answers, and more election officials will need reliable ways to communicate changes. The demand for clear, accurate information will not slow down.

Democracy Works is not a "nice to have." We are essential civic infrastructure. We operate nationwide and remain firmly nonpartisan, focused on one goal: ensuring every voter can access accurate, official election information. For 15 years, we have built trusted relationships with election officials across the country and developed the technology to deliver election information at scale. That trust cannot be built overnight, and it cannot be easily replaced.

If this infrastructure disappears, the consequences are immediate. Voters lose clarity about where and how to vote. Election officials lose a trusted megaphone to reach their communities. Participation suffers, not because people do not care, but because the system becomes harder to navigate.

Sustained investment is what makes this work possible. We have built the team. We have built the technology. We have built the trust. But infrastructure requires ongoing support.

With your partnership, we can continue strengthening the systems that make participation possible and ensure that accurate information reaches every voter who needs it.

Donate

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