

XPLORing the Creation of the NBA Voting Rights and Registration Resources

Alex Keys, 2019-20 NBA XPLOR Resident
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As the second half of my [XPLOR](#) year started, NBA Mission Specialist [Rev. Dean Bucalos](#) proposed that I make a voter registration guide for the [Christian Church \(Disciples of Christ\)](#). He believed that this would be a good project to do because of how much it could assist churches during election season. I thought this was a good endeavor, because I had a bit of experience in this field. I conducted a voter registration drive during the 2018 election, and I hoped to replicate that experience in a guide for the greater church.

I must admit at the beginning this was not a topic that captivated my attention. It was not until I began to realize how critical it was to the election process that I started to immerse myself in the issues. I saw that voter registration was an issue that was different in each state and that some states had more strict guidelines than others.

Many of the guidelines had certain criteria for who was eligible to register as well as very important dates and deadlines. Some states allowed people to register on Election Day, while other states had deadlines weeks in advance. I also saw that some of the states with strict guidelines had a history of voter suppression. States with a history of Jim Crow laws had much stricter guidelines for registration and eligibility.

As the project progressed, I became more aware of how voting rights should not be taken for granted. Many people suffered and sacrificed a great deal so that people could have the right to vote. These rights that we take for granted have been in jeopardy in recent years and communities of faith need to stand up and protect these freedoms.

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is a community of people that stand up for people experiencing discrimination; we actively proclaim that we are an [anti-racist, pro-reconciling denomination](#). We are a church that brings people together and calls for justice. This is an issue that the church can bring attention to throughout the denomination.

This project really emphasized what XPLORE is about. Many of us are placed at community engagement sites that want to make this world a better place. We learn to live a life of faith and justice. I believe [this guide](#) embodies the [XPLORE cornerstone values](#) and I hope that it will be well used in the future.

For more information and to download our voting rights resources for faith communities, [click here](#).

Alex Keys was part of the [2019-20 NBA XPLORE cohort](#). A member of the St. Louis House he worked alongside NBA's Prison and Jail Ministry and helped plan the 2019 Immigration Detention Immersion Trip and compiled [NBA's Voting Rights and Registration Resource for Faith Communities](#).

As the health and social services general ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the National Benevolent Association partners with congregations, regions, general ministries, and a variety of Disciples-related health and social service providers to create communities of compassion and care. Founded in 1887 by six women responding to the needs of the day and on their doorsteps, for more than 130 years the NBA has continued to serve "the least of these." Learn more at www.nbacaes.org.