

# BLACK VOTER GUIDE

2023 Colorado General Election Edition



Dear Community,

We are in deep transition and becoming, again. Black Becoming takes shape in many forms as a powerfully transformative way of being. It is filled with yearning, resilience, and accountability to self and one another. If it is to be realized in our lifetime and others, we must make room to imagine dreams wild like the ones of our ancestors. If we wish for shapes of reconciliation, justice, and well-being, it will take all of us playing our part.

Grounding in our breath, connecting to our bodies, and healing our nervous systems gives us the opportunity to discern how we respond to systems that historically and presently stifle our Becoming. So take a deep breath, beloved. Close your eyes and engage your deepest senses with wonder. It can be messy and imperfect, but it is worth fighting for, isn't it?

Becoming more of our most liberated selves is a profound individual and collective responsibility. As we stand at the crossroads of history, we recognize that the decisions we make today will reverberate through generations to come.

In this pivotal moment, we believe that information is not only power but also a fundamental human right. The Black Voter Guide is designed to provide you with the knowledge and tools to step into your collective responsibility and make informed decisions at the ballot box. We invite you into an unwavering determination to shape our Afrofutures in reflection of what makes you feel seen, heard, safe, and well-cared for. You deserve no less.

In Divine Love, Peace & Power,  
Soul 2 Soul Sisters

Soul 2 Soul Sisters is a grassroots, loved-based, racial justice nonprofit organization based in Denver. We transform Colorado and beyond through Black femme-centered programming focused on Black healing, health & joy, Black civic engagement & policy, ending anti-Black racism & white supremacy culture, and reparations.



# About Us

## WE ARE WOMANIST

Inspired by Womanist creative thought, the following principles guide Soul 2 Soul Sisters:

1. All Black Gender Expansive Beloveds Matter.
2. Self-love and love of Black Women are medicine to the soul.
3. REST is a spiritual practice.
4. Black liberation work liberates Black Femmes NOW.

To learn more visit [soul2soulsisters.org](https://soul2soulsisters.org).

# the **guide** to the guide

This independent voter guide is designed to give you quick, important, and reliable information about what's on our ballot. It contains a description of elected offices and ballot measures on the Statewide, Denver, and Aurora ballots, how and where to register to vote across the state, and where you can find more information. This guide centers the policy priorities of Black Women, Femmes and Gender Expansive Beloveds by explicitly focusing on the issues and policies that shape our lives and communities.



**SECTION 1:  
GENERAL  
INFORMATION +  
VOTING  
RESOURCES**

# How & Where to Register to **Vote**

Every registered voter in Colorado will be mailed a ballot starting Monday, October 16, 2023. To receive a ballot in the mail, you should register to vote/update your address by Monday, October 30; you can do so online at [GoVoteColorado.gov](https://GoVoteColorado.gov). You can also use this site to verify your registration. Starting Monday, October 30, you may go to any in person Voter Service Center in your county to register, vote, get a ballot, or solve any election-related issue, up until 7PM on Election Day, Tuesday November 7th.

You have different options for how you choose to cast your vote:  
mail your ballot back,  
drop it off,  
or vote in-person.

# to vote with a **mail ballot**

## **DROP IT OFF**

You can drop off your ballot at any 24-hour ballot dropbox or Voter Service Center in the state. 24-hour ballot drop boxes begin to open on Monday, October 16; find a location at [JustVoteColorado.org](https://www.justvotecolorado.org). You must be in line at a drop box or Voter Service Center by 7pm on Election Day.

## **RECENTLY MOVED?**

Update your mailing address at [GoVoteColorado.gov](https://www.govotecolorado.gov) by October 30th to receive a mail ballot at your current address.

## **MAIL IT IN**

If you mail your ballot back, be sure to add postage. Ballots that are mailed must be *\*received\** by a County Clerk by 7:00 pm on November 7th, and postmarks do not count. To ensure your ballot is received on time, we recommend mailing it back by Monday, October 30th.

You may need to include a photocopy (or printed photo) of an acceptable form of ID with your mail ballot— please refer to your mail ballot to see if this is required of you.

# to vote **in-person**

Visit any Voter Service Center in your county to register, update your address, vote in person and solve any election-related issue anytime up to and on Election Day, November 7th. Voter Service Centers begin to open on Monday, October 30th; see locations and hours at [JustVoteColorado.org](https://www.justvotecolorado.org).

**You must be in line by 7:00 PM on Election Day, November 7th.**

Note: you *\*must\** bring a form of ID to vote in person; acceptable forms include: CO Driver's License, CO Student ID, Passport, Military ID, or Utility Bill. For a full list of acceptable forms of ID, visitgo to [JustVoteColorado.org](https://www.justvotecolorado.org).



# Your Rights & Some Resources

## to find a polling site or drop box, ask **questions** or report **problems**

Visit [JustVoteColorado.org](https://JustVoteColorado.org) for voting locations, FAQs, accessibility and multilingual voting information or to report problems. Call the voter hotline if you have any problems or questions: 1-866-OUR-VOTE.

## **eligibility to vote**

You are eligible to vote in the Fall 2023 General Election if you:

- will be 18 years of age or older by November 7th, 2023;
- are a United States citizen;
- have resided in Colorado 22 days immediately before the election at which you intend to vote;
- are not currently serving a sentence of confinement or detention for a felony conviction;
  - Learn more about voting eligibility for formerly incarcerated folks at <https://votingwithconviction.org/can-i-vote/>

Students have the right to register and vote in Colorado, if all eligibility requirements above are met.

## **getting your vote in on time**

If you're mailing your ballot: Your ballot must be \*received\* by your County Clerk by 7:00 P.M. on Election Day, November 7th. Postmarks do NOT count. We recommend getting it in the mail by Monday, October 30th.

If you're voting in-person or dropping your ballot off: As long as you're in line at a Voter Service Center or Ballot Dropbox by 7:00 P.M. on Election Day, Tuesday November 7th, you have the right to vote. Stay in line!

## **no ID?**

You can find a full list of acceptable IDs at [JustVoteColorado.org](https://www.JustVoteColorado.org). If you don't have a form of acceptable ID, you always have the right to vote a provisional ballot. An election official may contact you after the election to clear things up so that they can count your ballot.

## **challenges & intimidation**

If anyone challenges your right to vote or intimidates you at the polling site, you still always have the right to cast a ballot.

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**CALL THE VOTER PROTECTION HOTLINE WITH ANY PROBLEMS/QUESTIONS:**

**1-866-OUR-VOTE | [JUSTVOTECOLORADO.ORG](https://www.justvotecolorado.org)**

**Just Vote Colorado Election Protection is a non-partisan voter assistance project and is not affiliated with or promoting any party, candidate or ballot issue. Just Vote Colorado is not affiliated with or responsible for the content of this piece.**

# **SECTION 2: OFFICES ON THE BALLOT**



**AURORA**

# Aurora Mayor

## what this office does

The mayor is responsible for the general welfare of the city and has the power to make decisions that impact the lives of people within their respective communities. The mayor can recommend policies to the City Council and break tied votes.



## How this office shapes the lives of Black Beloveds

Your next Mayor can....

- Recommend policies to City Council that address the top issues within our communities such as high poverty rates or housing affordability.
- Work with City Council and the City Manager to conduct investigations on police violence against Black people, which could lead to more accountability for officers (eg. the trial for Elijah McClain's death).
- Preside over City Council meetings and bring the most prevalent issues affecting the community to the forefront of these meetings.

# Aurora City Council

## what this office does

City Council members are the policymakers for the city. They also work on setting Aurora's goals, major projects, and long-term challenges such as land use development and strategic planning.



## How this office shapes the lives of Black Beloveds

Your next City Council member can....

- Increase police accountability and push the Aurora Police Department to change their policies and practices to protect Black communities and increase our safety when dealing with law enforcement.
- Decide how the city will address housing and homelessness in an equitable way.
- Enact policies that support the city in addressing climate effects and preparing to protect vulnerable communities from future climate impacts.

# Aurora Public Schools Board

## what this office does

The public schools board is responsible for establishing the goals and priorities for the public schools in their district. The public schools board is also a policy making body for their selected district. This is a seven-member board with each member serving a four-year term.



## How this office shapes the lives of Black Beloveds

Your next City Council member can....

- Increase police accountability and push the Aurora Police Department to change their policies and practices to protect Black communities and increase our safety when dealing with law enforcement.
- Decide how the city will address housing and homelessness in an equitable way.
- Enact policies that support the city in addressing climate effects and preparing to protect vulnerable communities from future climate impacts.



# Cherry Creek Schools Board

## what this office does

This office operates has similar roles to the Aurora School Board. More specifically, The Cherry Creek School Board is responsible for establishing goals and making policies for schools within the Cherry Creek School District.



## How this office shapes the lives of Black Beloveds

Your next Cherry Creek School Board member can....

- Address ongoing issues in the district such as discrimination and harassment for people of color and women.
- Create policies to address youth violence occurring within Cherry Creek schools.
- Recruit a stronger, diverse and culturally responsive workforce to address teacher shortages, including hiring more Black teachers





**DENVER**

# Denver Public Schools Board of Education

## what this office does

As the official governing body of the Denver Public Schools district, the Board of Education oversees all Denver Public Schools and continuously reviews all school policies to ensure that the district's policies and procedures are in accordance with the law.



## How this office shapes the lives of Black Beloveds

Your next Denver Public Schools Board member can....

- Establish policies that protect students' health and wellness, especially in relation to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.
- Advocate for the needs of all students at the local, state and national levels.
- Prioritize equity when hiring the Superintendent to ensure the person in this position of power prioritizes the most vulnerable communities in their leadership.

# **SECTION 3: BALLOT MEASURES**

# COLORADO BALLOT INITIATIVES

The ballot measures in this section are on all Colorado ballots and would be implemented statewide, if passed.



# Prop II: Proposition EE Funding Retention Rate Reduction

**BACKGROUND:** In 2020, Colorado voters approved Proposition EE, which uses revenue raised by nicotine sales tax to fund Colorado's voluntary free preschool program. Proposition EE estimated a certain amount of money would be raised through the sales tax, and this estimated amount was exceeded by \$23.65 million.

**What would it do?:** Proposition II asks Colorado voters to choose between allowing the state to use the extra money raised by Prop EE to enhance the free preschool program or reduce the nicotine tax and return the extra revenue to nicotine vendors and producers.

**A "Yes" vote would:**

allow the state of Colorado to keep the excess \$23.65 million raised through the nicotine sales tax to fund the free preschool program.

**A "No" vote would:**

Require the state of Colorado to return the excess \$23.65 million to nicotine vendors and producers, and reduce the nicotine sales tax going forward.



# Prop HH: Reduce Property Taxes and Voter-approved Revenue Change

**Background:** In Colorado, the Taxpayers Bill of Rights (TABOR) restricts how taxes are changed and used in our state. Colorado voters must vote to approve new or increased taxes through the ballot. This makes it challenging for our state to raise money to fund public goods such as schools and infrastructure. Through a complex formula, TABOR determines how much money the state can keep, and requires the excess money to be refunded to taxpayers.


**What would it do?:** Proposition HH would slow the increase of property taxes. It would also change the TABOR formula, allowing the state to keep more money raised through taxes to fund public goods such as schools, and impacting the TABOR refund taxpayers receive in future years

**A “Yes” vote would:**

slow the increase of property taxes, while also changing the TABOR formula to allow the state to keep more tax money. This would impact the size of the TABOR refund taxpayers receive in future years - - increasing it in 2023 and then decreasing the amount it in future years.

**A “No” vote would:**

allow property taxes to increase at their current rate, and maintain the current amount of tax money that the state is allowed to keep under TABOR.



Soul 2 Soul Sisters  
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**We dedicate this to all of the Black Women Freedom Fighters that came before us so that all Black people could build political power today. It is their strength, their political resistance and their love that guides us in this work. We honor Harriet Tubman, Marsha P. Johnson, Fannie Lou Hamer, Octavia Butler, and countless others.**

