CIRCLE Growing Voters: Political Campaigns and Organizations

Partisan organizations and political campaigns are the largest stakeholders in voter engagement, but are often structured and incentivized to reach those they consider the likeliest voters. That can exclude young people who have just turned 18, youth who are not in college, and other groups that they consider less likely to turn out. They must shift away from merely mobilizing voters, to growing them.

THE FACTS

+33 PERCENTAGE POINTS
In the 2018 midterms, young people who had been contacted by a political campaign more than once were 33 percentage points more likely to report that they voted.

46% of all young people were NEVER contacted by a political campaign in 2020.

56% of Asian youth were NEVER contacted by a campaign in 2020.

The CIRCLE Growing Voters is a paradigm shift to transform how policymakers and many other stakeholders can strengthen young people’s equitable engagement in democracy. Learn more, engage in this work, and share it with others at: circle.tufts.edu/circlegrowingvoters
Leaving Votes on the Table:

Being directly asked and encouraged to register and vote is one of the strongest predictors of where youth will cast a ballot. But in the 2020 election, more than half of youth were never contacted by a Democratic campaign, and more than two thirds never heard from Republicans.

**YOUTH NEVER CONTACTED DURING THE 2020 ELECTION, BY PARTY**

Across the board, young people were less likely to be contacted by the Trump campaign or the Republican Party in 2020:

- **All Youth**: 52% Biden, 69% Trump
- **Ages 18-21**: 47% Biden, 69% Trump
- **Ages 22-29**: 54% Biden, 69% Trump
- **High School Degree (or Equivalent) or Less**: 56% Biden, 71% Trump
- **Associates or Bachelors Degree**: 46% Biden, 63% Trump
- **Black**: 37% Biden, 67% Trump
- **Latino**: 45% Biden, 70% Trump
- **Asian**: 56% Biden, 68% Trump
- **White**: 56% Biden, 68% Trump
- **Men**: 49% Biden, 66% Trump
- **Women**: 55% Biden, 72% Trump

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION: HOW POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS AND ORGANIZATIONS CAN GROW VOTERS**

**WHAT**
- Hire young people to develop and implement strategies to reach other youth.

**WHY**
- Outreach from their peers helps young people connect the dots on how issues they care about are tied to and represented in politics at every level.

**HOW**
- Embrace the diversity of youth and hire young people of different ages, languages used, races/ethnicities, neighborhoods, gender identities, etc. These youth can craft more culturally responsive and age-relevant messages and engagement strategies.

- Consider what youth-centered policies can and should look like.
- Investing in the young people in your communities is also an investment in growing lifelong voters.

- Engage with existing local grassroots organizations year-round.
- Organizations that are working to strengthen communities while building a base of committed voters, are a key source of information and opportunities for action, especially in marginalized communities.

- Reach beyond college campuses.
- College students should be encouraged to vote, but at any given point a majority of voting-eligible young people are not in college.

- Use digital tools, but don’t forget the power of personal.
- In our 2018 survey of young people from low-income communities, we found that only 5% had used a text reminder service for Election Day and their voting location, and that many youth appreciated talking to someone who would guide them and answer questions.

- Do not assume technology and digital tools can summon voters out of thin air: young voters are people first, and tech can only do so much. Create opportunities for face-to-face connections and support.

- Talk to your young constituents to find out which issues they care about, and which policies can support and incentivize their participation. Make these issues and policies central to your campaigns.

- Instead of merely trying to “leverage” them, partner with young leaders and movement organizations so that candidates can connect with diverse young people and hear about their concerns.