

CIRCLE Growing Voters: Journalists and Media Organizations

National, regional, and local news media can contribute to young people's civic growth by sharing information about voting, connecting elections to everyday experiences, and giving youth a voice on issues they care about. It's a civic imperative for media organizations to bring in a wider diversity of youth as audiences, sources, and even co-creators—especially in rural areas and other communities where both civic and media access may be lacking.

THE FACTS

6%

of teens (ages 14-17) said they engage with local news at least occasionally.

49%

of young people (ages 18-29) said local news helped them feel more prepared to vote in 2020.

41%

of teens (ages 14-17) expressed interest in learning about or working with a local media outlet.

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

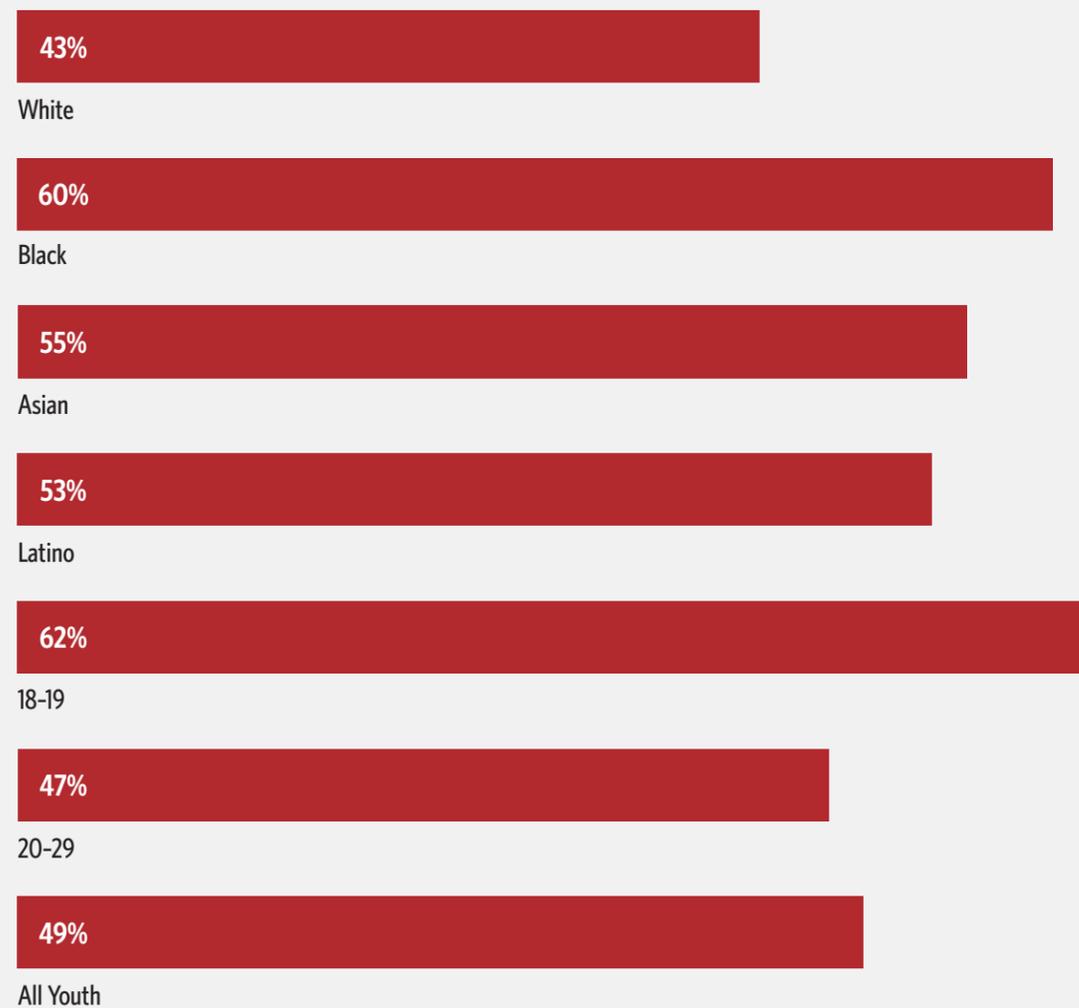


Youth Use and Need Local Media:

In 2020, half of youth said local news helped prepare them to vote in the election. Newly eligible voters and youth of color were more likely to say so, showing the importance of media to expanding the electorate.

LOCAL NEWS: HELPED YOUNG PEOPLE PREPARE TO VOTE IN 2020

The percentage of youth in different age and racial/ethnic categories who agreed or strongly agreed that local news prepared them to vote in the 2020 election.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION: HOW JOURNALISTS AND MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS CAN GROW VOTERS

WHAT

Strive to better understand your youth audience—or lack thereof.

Use explanatory journalism.

Create opportunities for youth journalism and input.

'Nothing about us without us.'

Embrace local journalism's civic responsibility.

WHY

Young people know best what reporting is most relevant and engaging to them. Understanding who you are or aren't reaching (and why) is key to expanding your audience and building trust with it, especially in communities where some youth may perceive media portrayals have been harmful.

Young audiences may be learning about an issue for the first time and need appropriate context to understand an issue and its relevance.

Data shows that young people are interested in working with media outlets. Doing so can help them feel like their voice has power, an important foundation for voter confidence and civic participation.

Young people should have a voice in reporting on issues that impact them.

Local reporters should embrace their unique ability and responsibility to focus on local races and issues, especially if they are the only media outlet covering a particular region or race.

HOW

Outlets can engage with teen audiences through social media, advisory groups, listening sessions, or focus groups. Local outlets can also use connections to schools or local organizations to hear from young people about what content they find useful, interesting, and important.

Provide accessible and engaging context that does not assume prior knowledge. [KOED's Above the Noise](#) is a great example of explanatory journalism.

Institutionalize opportunities for diverse youth to directly and indirectly inform your reporting (e.g., an advisory board, a regular column for young contributors, etc.). [Teen Vogue's #TeenVote2020 Voter Committee](#) exemplifies one possible approach. Widen your outreach to ensure diverse youth learn about these opportunities.

Rely on young people as experts and sources on all topics, but especially on issues that impact youth the most. Building relationships with youth organizations can provide access to spaces where young people already have these conversations, or you can engage young audiences directly through social media. Source audits for age diversity can help newsrooms understand their current practices and improve if necessary.

Focusing less on the 'horse race' and more on policy impact and concrete issues that impact young people's daily lives can help youth understand the importance and implications of elections.



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