

CIRCLE Growing Voters: Foundations and Philanthropists

Foundations, philanthropists, philanthropic advisors, and other organizations that support civic engagement and democracy are critical to the transformations required to grow voters. The scale and depth of the changes envisioned by this new paradigm require both substantial resources and shifts in how these organizations decide what to support in order to generate lifelong electoral participation for generations to come.

THE FACTS

19%

of teens aren't learning about elections and voting in schools or from their personal networks. That means institutions need resources to reach those youth.

65%

of young Asian women, 53% of young Black women, and 51% of young Latinas said they worked to improve their community in 2020. The leadership shown by young women of color deserves greater support.

51%

of teens said they'd register their peers to vote if given an opportunity but only 8% have actually done it.

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

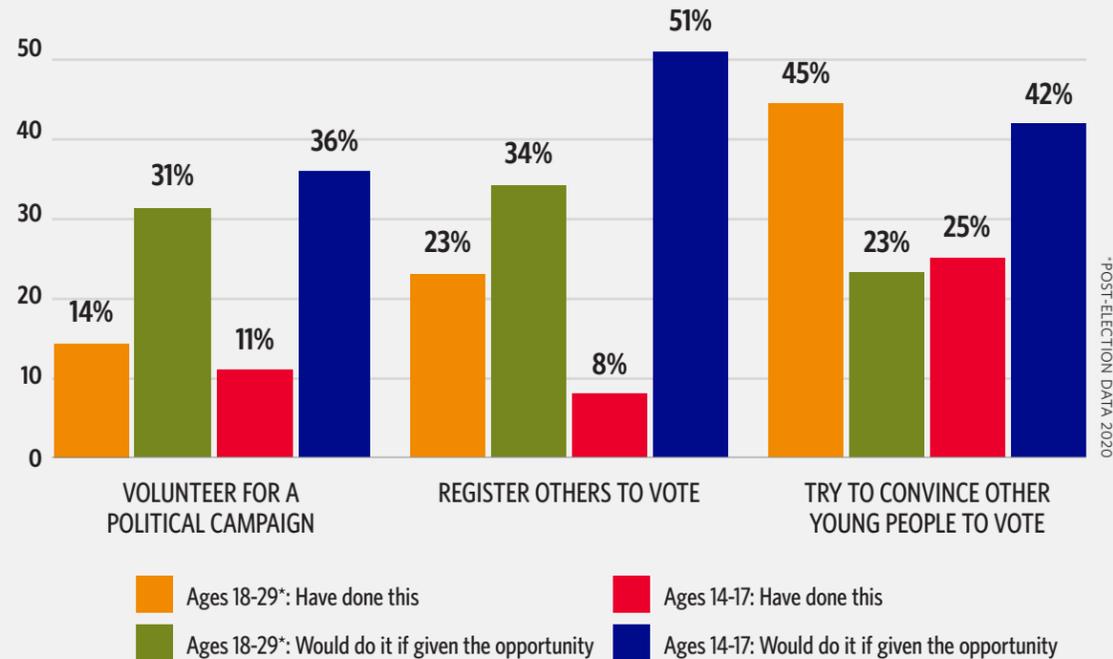


The Interest Is There; Opportunities Are Lacking:

Both teens and older youth express a desire to participate in activities like campaign volunteering and voter registration. That suggests underinvestment in creating new opportunities or more widely promoting existing opportunities for them to do so.

YOUTH INTERESTED IN ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION

Young people are interested in electoral participation, but many aren't finding accessible opportunities to turn their interest into action.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION: HOW FOUNDATIONS AND PHILANTHROPISTS CAN GROW VOTERS

WHAT

WHY

HOW

Listen to and consult young people.

Many philanthropic organizations invest in youth-related topics such as education, housing and food insecurity, and youth development.

Organizations can solicit input from young people by instituting a youth advisory group, or by involving youth in research and evaluation.

Support efforts to/that pay young people.

Compensating youth for their time helps make opportunities more accessible to young people.

Educate grant applicants and grantees about allocating appropriate budget line items to paying youth.

Don't silo or limit youth to certain areas. Fund youth-led projects in a variety of sectors.

Young community leaders are experts on how to reach and serve young people in diverse ways; many can be core partners in work like voting rights policy advocacy, democracy reform, election administration, etc.

Support youth-led organizations and groups that are working to expand the electorate through various means and networks.

Ditch election cycles in favor of year-round or multi-cycle funding.

Sustained, regular engagement—as opposed to cyclical, on-and-off efforts—is one of the most critical changes needed to grow voters.

Make investments in grassroots groups and organizations that work with youth year-round and between election cycles.

Complicate how you think about evaluation.

Through evaluation, funders can guide and support grantees' work to build sustained engagement in a community by rewarding progress on building a deep base, not just "outputs" like voter registrations and contacts made.

Integrate metrics that are building blocks to becoming a voter (or to building deeper voter engagement) into how you evaluate grantees' proposals and performance

Support diverse young leaders.

Many young people do work across sectors to improve their community, including many youth from underrepresented groups who historically have had a harder time accessing resources like funding.

Seek to understand the diversity of the youth population in your community by learning from youth-led political engagement work. Look to support efforts led by young people who are not in college, those in rural and/or Indigenous communities, and other underrepresented groups.

Develop a CIRCLE Growing Voters ecosystem in your community.

Local philanthropic organizations (e.g., community foundations) are uniquely positioned to convene and provide financial and logistical support to stakeholders across a community.

Support a core team of partners from different settings to conduct community mapping and develop an action plan to grow voters. Support the plan's continued development and implementation.



Tufts UNIVERSITY | Jonathan M. Tisch
College of Civic Life



To view the digital version of this report, please scan the QR code or visit us at
circle.tufts.edu/circlegrowingvoters