



CENTER FOR INFORMATION & RESEARCH  
ON CIVIC LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT

<https://circle.tufts.edu>

# Young Voters by Race/Ethnicity

Data on Asian, Black, Latino, and  
White Youth from the CIRCLE 2022  
Post-Election Survey

OCTOBER 2023

# Table of Contents

**About this Research** .....2

**Young Asian Americans: Informed, Engaged, but Still Face Barriers to Vote** .....3

    Asian American Nonvoters Blame Lack of Time, Not Lack of Information ..... 4

    Use of Ballot Boxes Drops Among Asian American Youth ..... 5

    Feeling Optimistic about Civic Action, but Not Qualified ..... 5

    Engaged on Issues Like Climate and Participating Informally ..... 7

**Black Youth Value Voting, Have Political Ambition, Face Barriers to Engagement**.....9

    Black Youth are Still Underrepresented ..... 9

    Black Youth Vote to Exercise their Right and Power..... 10

    Information Barriers and Other Structural Challenges Hinder Black Youth ..... 11

    Black Youth Are Interested in Civic Engagement..... 12

    Black Youth More Likely to Want to Run for Office..... 13

**Lack of Civic Information and Readiness Leading to Lower Latino Youth Turnout**.....14

    Lack of Information May Lead to Lower Voting Rates..... 15

    Motivated to Take Action, but Not Feeling as Ready ..... 17

**Inequities by Education and Differences by Gender Shape White Youth Civic Engagement**....19

    White Youth Prefer In-Person Voting, Some Lack Information..... 19

    White Youth Less Likely to Be Contacted by Organizations ..... 21

    White Youth Are Engaged on Issues and Taking Action ..... 22

## About CIRCLE

The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE), part of the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life at Tufts University, is a non-partisan, independent research organization focused on youth civic engagement in the United States. We conduct extensive research on youth participation, and we leverage that research to improve opportunities for all young people to acquire and use the skills and knowledge they need to meaningfully participate in civic life.

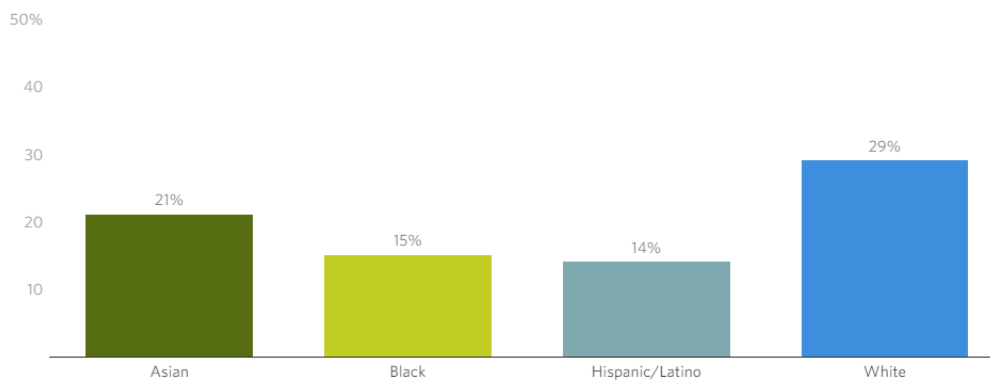
## About this Research

In every election cycle CIRCLE undertakes comprehensive analyses of trends, needs, and attitudes related to civic participation among different groups of youth—including by race/ethnicity. The current generation of young people is the most racially diverse in American history, and their different backgrounds, identities, and experiences make for different contexts that shape political participation. It is vital to understand those contexts in order to fully prepare and engage all youth in democracy.

Our research on young voters in 2022 reveals that there's still a lot of work to do to achieve full equality of civic opportunity and a truly representative electorate. There remains a major gap in youth voter turnout by race/ethnicity, with white youth voting at nearly twice the rate of Black and Latino youth in that most recent midterm election.

### Youth Voter Turnout by Race/Ethnicity in the 2022 Midterm Elections

CIRCLE estimates of the percentage of voting-eligible young people (ages 18-29) of each race/ethnicity who cast a ballot in the 2022 midterms.



**Note:** The data does not allow us to reliably report on other racial/ethnic groups.

**CIRCLE** Tufts University Tisch College - CIRCLE

Source: CIRCLE Analysis of Catalyst voter file data and American Community Survey public user microdata (PUMS) sample.

The analyses in this report are aimed at understanding the root causes of these inequities in order to eliminate barriers faced by different youth and to create opportunities for all young people to vote and otherwise engage in civic life. Based on CIRCLE's 2022 post-election survey, and originally published separately in the late summer and fall of 2023, they offer insights specific to Asian, Black, Latino, and White youth—and can serve as a roadmap for efforts to promote more equitable participation in the 2024 election.

**About the Survey:** The survey was developed by CIRCLE at Tufts University, and the polling firm Ipsos collected the data from their nationally representative panel of respondents and a sample of people recruited for this survey between November 9 and November 30, 2022. The study involved an online surveyed a total of 2,018 self-reported U.S. citizens ages 18 to 29 in the United States. Unless mentioned otherwise, data are for all 18- to 29-year-olds in our sample. The margin of error for the entire sample is +/- 2.2 percentage points; subsamples may have higher margins of error. Due to sample size, we are not able to produce data for other racial/ethnic groups.

# Young Asian Americans: Informed, Engaged, but Still Face Barriers to Vote

**Author: Peter de Guzman**

*Contributors: Alberto Medina, SJ McGeady*

*Originally published: August 2023*

## At a Glance: Main Findings

### Lack of Time is a Barrier

63% of Asian American youth who didn't vote in 2022 said they forgot or were too busy, which suggests that many are still finding the process inconvenient or time consuming.

### Not Feeling Qualified

Asian American youth are 10 percentage points less likely than their non-Asian American peers to consider themselves well-qualified for political participation.

### Top Issue: Climate

Asian American youth were 20-points more likely to name climate one of their top issue concerns, the only racial/ethnic group to rank it above all other issues.

In recent years, Asian Americans in the United States have increased their political participation at the ballot box and beyond elections. According to our estimates, **21% of Asian American youth voted in the 2022 midterm elections**, nearly matching the 23% turnout rate of youth overall. That increased engagement has helped reverse a trend from decades past, when Asian American youth had among the lowest rates of participation of any racial/ethnic group for which we have data.

That said, like all young people in the United States, Asian American youth continue to face barriers to participation that must be addressed to ensure equitable democratic engagement. These barriers include both logistical impediments related to lack of time and deeper issues related to feelings of civic efficacy, even as young Asian Americans report concern about issues and interest in civic life. This analysis, based on data from the 2022 CIRCLE post-election survey, underscores some of those issues and barriers.

**Notes on the data:** *The data cited in this analysis includes young people ages 18-29 who self-identify as American citizens and as exclusively or in part as Asian Americans, including those who identify with one or more other racial/ethnic groups. This analysis only includes young Asian Americans who report they are American citizens. Because of relatively small sample size, many of the differences between Asian American and non-Asian American youth*

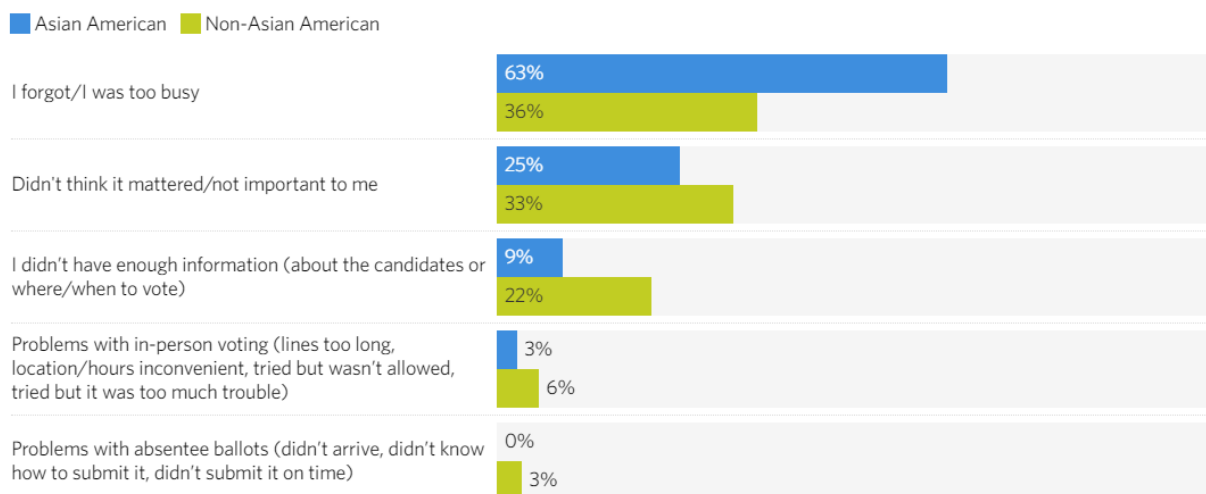
*highlighted throughout this analysis are not statistically significant. We present them as potentially indicative of broader trends or inequities that can help us understand and enhance Asian American youth's civic participation.*

## Asian American Nonvoters Blame Lack of Time, Not Lack of Information

In an effort to understand the experiences of youth who did not end up participating in the 2022 midterm election, our survey asked young people who did not vote last year why they didn't do so. Among youth overall, we found that [lack of time and lack of information were often key factors](#). Among Asian American youth, the former was significantly more prevalent: **63% of Asian American youth who didn't vote said they forgot or were too busy, compared to 36% of non-Asian American youth**. By contrast, young Asian Americans were significantly less likely than non-Asian American youth to say they didn't vote because they didn't have enough information (9% vs. 22%); they were also less likely to say they didn't cast a ballot because they didn't think it was important.

### Most Young Asian Americans Who Didn't Vote in 2022 Said They Forgot or Were Too Busy to Vote

The percentage of youth respondents (ages 18-29-years-old) that selected each response as the main reason that they did not vote in the 2022 election.



**Note:**The respondents are filtered for those who self-identified as citizens.

CIRCLE Tufts University Tisch College - CIRCLE

Source: CIRCLE 2022 Post-Election Youth Survey

That data underscores that apathy is often not the largest driver of a lack of electoral participation, and that barriers to voting can be vastly different for different communities: some may not feel like they know enough about the candidates/issues or about the voting process itself, while others have the information they need but face other logistical impediments.

## Use of Ballot Boxes Drops Among Asian American Youth

Some barriers may be related to voting method. [In previous election cycles](#) we found that Asian American youth were more likely to vote absentee, either by mailing their ballot or by dropping it off at a box or location. That was again true in 2022, at least for voting by mail: **51% of young Asian American respondents who said they voted in 2022 said they mailed in their ballot, compared to 31% of non-Asian American youth.** Some of that may be attributed to the fact that in 2022, approximately 39% of Asian American youth lived in states that automatically mail ballots to all registered voters.

However, the trend did not hold for using ballot drop boxes: **in 2020, 21% of young Asian American voters said they cast their ballot that way; in 2022, just 4% did so.** While this data reflects only the voting method preference of a limited number of Asian American youth who voted in our survey, it may suggest broader challenges that could have hindered the participation of young people who did not end up casting a ballot. For example, it's notable that several states enacted policies [eliminating or restricting the use of ballot drop boxes](#) in the 2022 midterms.

One way to ensure young people learn about any changes in voting policies and know all the voting methods available to them is for campaigns and organizations to reach out to them. In 2022, Asian American youth were about as likely as young people overall to be contacted about the election, though with some small differences in the source of that contact.

Asian American youth were slightly less likely to be contacted by a national organization, and slightly more likely to hear from a local organization or from an organization they had not heard of about the election. That may suggest that, while some major national institutions are still neglecting Asian American youth, other organizations have taken note of their rising rates of political participation and are trying to engage them.

## Feeling Optimistic about Civic Action, but Not Qualified

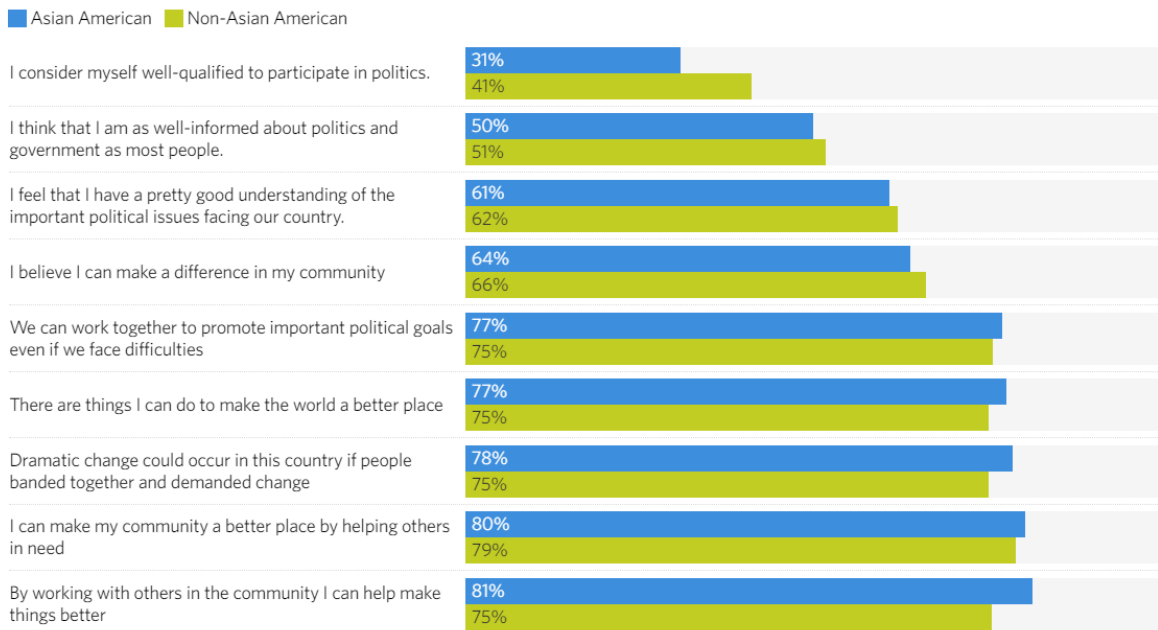
Like their peers of other races/ethnicities, Asian American youth report widely positive opinions of their desire to achieve change and their belief that it's possible. More than three quarters of young Asian Americans in our survey said that they can help improve their community, that people who band together can create dramatic change, and that important political goals can be achieved. Those rates of optimism in the potential of civic action are broadly in line with those of other youth.

As with other young people, those beliefs in the power of political and community engagement do not always translate to a belief that they, themselves, are prepared to participate. Despite a majority (61%) of Asian American youth reporting that they have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing our country, and half (50%) agreeing that they consider themselves as well-informed about politics and

government as most people, **just 31% said they feel “well-qualified” to participate in politics. By contrast, 41% of non-Asian American youth said they feel qualified.**

### Less than a Third of Asian American Youth Feel “Well-Qualified” to Participate in Politics

The percentage of young people (ages 18-29) that agreed or strongly agreed with each statement:



**Note:** Respondents were filtered for those that self-identified as citizens.

CIRCLE Tufts University Tisch College - CIRCLE

Source: CIRCLE 2022 Post-Election Youth Survey

As with the barriers to casting a ballot, this data highlights that being prepared to take political action is not merely about having information, but about a supportive environment for civic development that helps youth build their skills, confidence, and efficacy.

One potential source of support for Asian American youth is trusted peers, teachers, family, and neighbors who talk to them about elections and issues. In 2022, Asian American youth were about as likely as non-Asian American youth to hear about the election from friends and roommates, and significantly more likely to hear about it at school (27% vs. 15%). However, they were slightly less likely to hear about politics from family (50% vs. 58%), their neighbors (7% vs. 16%), or at work (19% vs. 25%).

Young Asian Americans were also more likely than non-Asian American youth to see information about issues and the election on platforms like Instagram (25% vs. 18%) and Reddit (24% vs. 10%); but less likely on cable TV (9% vs. 14%) or public/network TV (14% vs. 20%). That presents both opportunities and challenges related to [different young people’s media ecosystems](#).

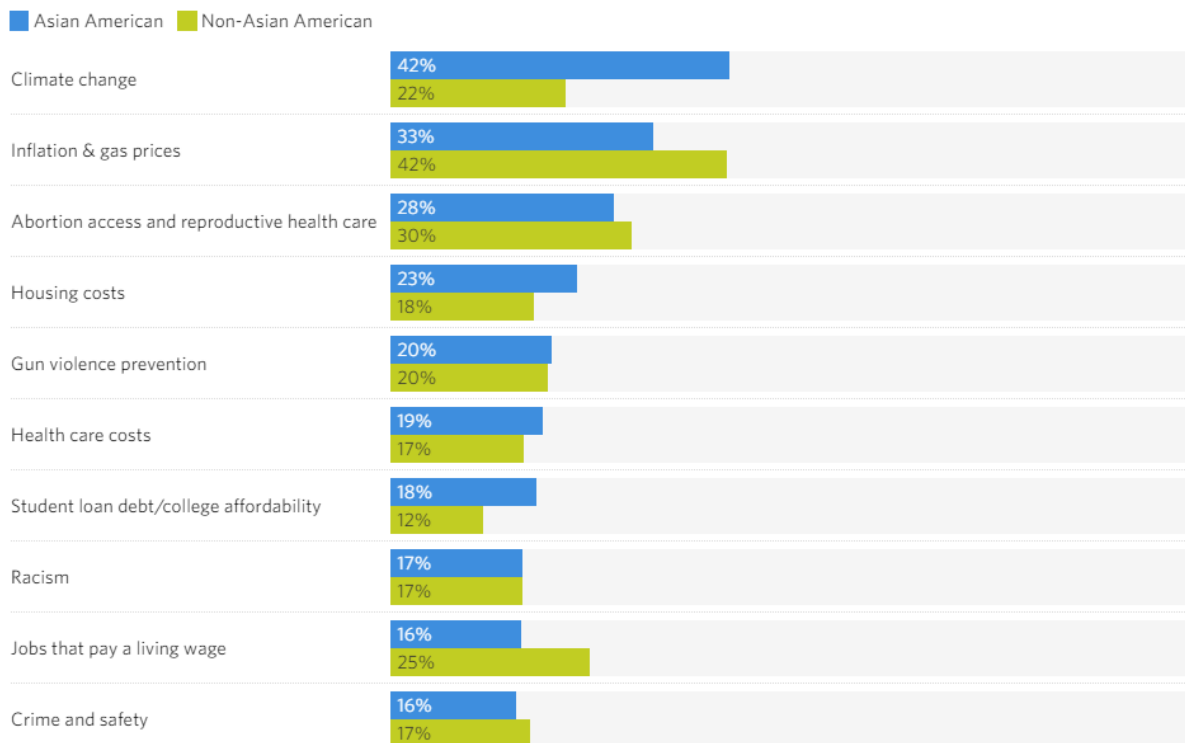
## Engaged on Issues Like Climate and Participating Informally

Immediately after the 2022 election **climate change was the biggest issue among Asian American youth in our survey: 42% selected it as one of their top three concerns**, far higher than the 22% of non-Asian American youth who chose it. Inflation (which was the top issue for youth overall) ranked second among young Asian Americans (33% vs. 42% among non-Asian American youth), alongside other economic issues like housing (23%) and health care costs (19%) as well as issues like abortion (28%) and gun violence prevention.

Notably, given the recent Supreme Court decision and political actions on student loan forgiveness, Asian American youth were slightly more likely than their non-Asian American peers (18% vs. 12%) to rank student loan debt/college affordability as one of their top issues.

### Climate Change, Economic Issues, and Abortion Access are Leading Issues Among Asian American Youth

The percentage of young people (ages 18-29) who selected each issue as one of the the top three most important issues that they were most concerned about.



**Notes:** This analysis is filtered for respondents who self-identified as citizens. Only issues that more than 10% of Asian youth selected are shown.

CIRCLE Tufts University Tisch College - CIRCLE

Source: CIRCLE 2022 Post-Election Youth Survey



Young Asian Americans are taking action on those issues and engaging in other forms of civic and political participation at similar rates to youth overall. **Nearly a third (29%) said they have signed a petition or joined a boycott, 15% have attended a demonstration or protest, 10% have volunteered for a political campaign,** and the same percentage have donated money to one. As with other young people, besides those who said they have undertaken those civic actions, many others say they would consider doing so in the future if given the opportunity.

There are also some indications that formal measures of political participation may not fully capture some of the ways that young Asian Americans are engaging in civic life. **Nearly one in five Asian American youth (18%) said they currently participate in a mutual aid group or do other informal volunteer activities**—double the rate of non-Asian American youth (9%) who said the same. Asian American youth are also slightly more likely to say they've done so in the past, and slightly more likely to say they're a member of a local or school group.

There may be untapped potential for these groups and organizations to serve as [political homes](#) for Asian American youth that connect their concerns about issues like climate and their desire to pursue political change with opportunities to grow into voters who feel well-qualified to participate in civic life.

# Black Youth Value Voting, Have Political Ambition, Face Barriers to Engagement

**Authors:** Lily Feng, Sara Suzuki

*Contributors:* Alberto Medina, Katie Hilton

*Originally published:* October 2023

## At a Glance: Main Takeaways

### Lower Voting Rate

Our previous research estimated that 15% of Black youth voted in 2022, compared to 23% of youth overall.

### Less Likely to Vote by Mail

Black youth were much less likely than youth overall to vote by mailing in their ballot in 2022: 24% vs. 34%.

### Want to Run for Office

Nearly 1 in 5 Black youth said they were interested in running for office, a sign of interest in leadership.

Two months ago Black activists and organizers commemorated [Black August](#), a month dedicated to learning from and honoring the continued engagement in political resistance by members of the Black community. Building on this moment of reflection, we present findings on the civic engagement of Black youth from a national poll conducted by CIRCLE after the 2022 midterms.

We detail unique findings on Black youth's attitudes about the role they can play in our democracy and how those attitudes may be translating to trends in their political activities and ambitions. We further highlight how knowledge barriers and other systemic obstacles may be limiting Black youth from exercising their full potential and power.

## Black Youth are Still Underrepresented

The full electoral participation of all young people is needed for our increasingly multiracial society to be a thriving and just democracy. However, Black youth participated at a lower rate than many of their peers in the 2022 midterms: **the turnout of Black youth was 15%**, significantly lower than that of Asian youth (21%) and White youth (29%).

While the overall youth turnout (23%) for the 2022 midterms reflects an emerging trend of greater civic participation by young people in the last decade, Black youth remain underrepresented in this new wave of youth participation. The 15% turnout by Black youth

in 2022 translated to them making up 14% of youth in the United States but only 9% of young voters.

**Notes on the data:** Unlike the rest of the data in this analysis, which comes from our 2022 survey, turnout-data includes youth who identify only as Black, not those who identify as Black and some other race/ethnicity.

Because Black youth prioritize different issues compared to their peers, their electoral underrepresentation can have implications for what issues are brought to the attention of the nation’s elected leaders. For example, in 2022, Black youth said racism, inflation/gas prices, and jobs that pay a living wage were their top three issues. Meanwhile, among non-Black youth, the top three issues were inflation, abortion, and climate change.

### Black Youth Were More Likely to Prioritize Racism and Good Jobs in 2022

The percentage of Black and non-Black young people who selected each issue as one of their top three priorities in 2022



CIRCLE Tufts University Tisch College - CIRCLE  
 Source: CIRCLE 2022 Post-Election Youth Survey

## Black Youth Vote to Exercise their Right and Power

The lower turnout of Black youth may not be due to apathy or a lack of interest in voting. [Many groups, including Black youth, have historically been prevented from voting.](#) Our poll suggests that Black youth are aware of this history, valuing their vote as a right and as a way to effect change.

Specifically, our analysis found that **young Black voters were 10 points more likely than other young voters to say they voted in 2022 because "voting is a right,"** and slightly more likely to say they voted because "my vote can affect the outcome." This resonates with research by the [New Georgia Project](#) that found 49% of Black voters in Georgia, ages 18-50, are motivated to vote because "people have sacrificed for my right and civic duty to vote."

## Deeper Dive: Black Youth's Motivations for Voting

In our data we found that Black youth were much less likely to say they voted because "voting is my responsibility." Compared to 40% of non-Black youth citing this as the main reason they voted in 2022, half that number (21%) among Black youth cited this as their reason.

We believe this is an important finding to explore further in future research, as research on civic engagement that is not with a sample of Black youth have tended to emphasize youth's feelings of social responsibility and sense of moral duty as drivers of their civic participation.

The way that Black youth approach voting may have less to do with responsibility and duty. A different set of factors seem to be motivating Black youth to vote—factors that are centered around historical significance and having an impact on issues.

## Information Barriers and Other Structural Challenges Hinder Black Youth

Despite a strong belief that voting is both their right and a way to have impact, Black youth may have lower turnout due to barriers they face both registering and voting. **Close to 1 in 5 Black youth (17%) who were unregistered in 2022 said they either did not know how to register to vote, had trouble with their voter registration, or missed the registration deadline.** All of these suggest a lack of information about the when and how logistics of the process.

The information barrier also extended to whether Black youth cast a ballot. **More than 1 in 5 Black youth who did not vote in 2022 (whether or not they were registered) reported that it was because they "did not have enough information" or because they had "problems with absentee ballots."**

In sum, a large number of young Black people face barriers to voting because of a lack of access to the necessary information and knowledge—not just about the issues but about the voting process itself. This reflects systemic barriers to full participation in our democracy that may be remedied by strengthening their access to civic resources, including detailed information about how to register, deadlines for registration, and how to correctly cast absentee ballots.

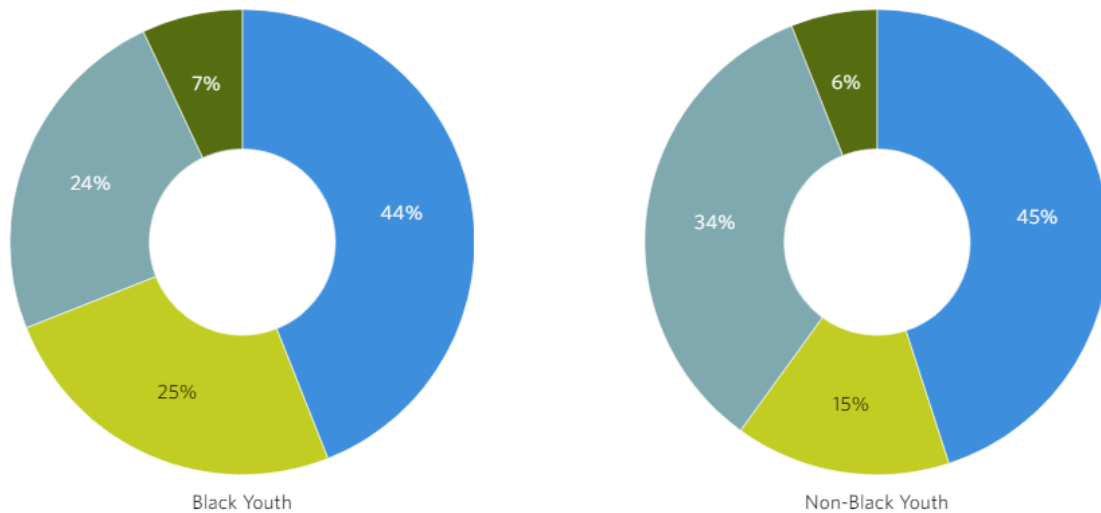
Our data on Black youth's voting methods in 2022 also sheds some light on the impact and persistence of structural barriers that may also help explain turnout disparities. **Only 24% of Black youth voted by mail, compared to 34% of non-Black youth,** which could be attributable to Black youth having less experience and information about voting by mail. Even though [research has begun to show](#) that the ease of mail voting can boost participation among youth and people of color, prior [CIRCLE research](#) has found that Black

youth had less experience with mail-in voting and are more likely to live in states where policies regarding mail-in voting are more restrictive.

### Black Youth Were More Likely to Vote Early In Person, Less Likely to Mail their Ballot

The percentage of Black and non-Black youth, ages 18-29, who said they voted using each method in 2022

■ In-person on Election Day ■ Early in-person ■ Mailed in a ballot ■ Absentee ballot (drop box or in person)



CIRCLE Tufts University Tisch College · CIRCLE  
Source: CIRCLE 2022 Post-Election Youth Survey

### Black Youth Are Interested in Civic Engagement

Civic engagement goes beyond voting, and it is important to examine how young people are involved in other civic activities. Our 2022 data shows that Black youth’s participation rates in several activities including attending a demonstration, volunteering or donating to a campaign, or attending campaign events were similar to those of non-Black youth.

However, when it came to other civic activities, Black youth lagged behind their peers. **Black youth were 9-percentage-points less likely to have signed a petition or joined a boycott than non-Black youth, and 9-percentage-points less likely to follow a candidate on social media.**

There may be potential to involve more Black youth in the wide variety of civic activities available. Our data revealed many Black youth have plans or hopes for future civic engagement, with many saying that they “will definitely do this in the future” about all of the civic activities mentioned above. Indeed, the rates at which Black youth haven’t yet, but say the definitely plan to engage in these activities in the future were often higher than those of their non-Black peers.

Findings about Black youth's sense of political self-efficacy may help explain this gap between intent and actual participation among Black youth: we found that Black youth scored lower on political self-efficacy than non-Black youth. Political self-efficacy is an important indicator of whether youth feel motivated and qualified to participate, and is an important ingredient in young people developing their identity as capable civic actors.

## Black Youth More Likely to Want to Run for Office

One of the most striking differences between Black and non-Black youth in our survey is in their level of interest in running for office. **More than twice as many Black youth (19% vs. 9%) reported that they were somewhat or very interested in a career in politics.**

Black youth also feel qualified to run for office at similar rates to their peers (16% vs. 15%). However, **more than 1 in 5 Black youth are “extremely concerned” about losing income or work while running for office.** [Prior research by CIRCLE on youth candidates for office](#) found that, compared to older adults, young people were disproportionately more likely to have financial concerns about running for office.

Our findings suggest that explicit encouragement to run for office can add to the interest in political careers among Black youth, and, that who the outreach is coming from may matter. Overall, Black youth received encouragement to run for office at similar rates to other youth, but they were more likely to receive encouragement from formal candidate training programs and members of the media. If those supporting youth to run for office can address the financial and other barriers that they face, in addition to providing encouragement, we may see higher rates of Black and other youth in elected positions in the future.

## Conclusion

In line with the historic levels of youth civic engagement in our democracy, our research has shown that Black youth are interested in engaging in different civic activities. However, our data also reveal that Black youth disproportionately experience barriers and challenges to accessing civic opportunities. In order to see higher rates of civic participation from Black youth in the future, communities and institutions must [bolster access to civic information and build stronger structural support](#) for civic engagement.

# Lack of Civic Information and Readiness Leading to Lower Latino Youth Turnout

**Authors:** Alberto Medina, Peter de Guzman

**Contributors:** Katie Hilton

**Originally published:** September 2023

## At A Glance: Main Findings

### Lower Youth Turnout

14% of young Latinos voted in 2022 (compared to 23% of all youth): the lowest youth voter turnout of any racial group for which we have data.

### Lacking Time, Not Interest

Young Latinos were more likely to say that they didn't know how to register or didn't have time—and much less likely to say it wasn't important to them.

### Lower Outreach and Support

Young Latinos were less likely to be contacted about the election by a party or organization or to hear about issues from friends and family

Young people are an increasingly influential force in American civic life, both through electoral participation and by taking action on issues in their communities. That includes young Latinos, who make up [a higher proportion of the youngest eligible voters](#) than they do of other age groups in the electorate. However, like many youth of color and other young people from historically marginalized communities, young Latinos continue to face barriers to political engagement that prevent them from fully realizing their potential as voters and leaders.

Using data from CIRCLE's youth turnout estimates and our 2022 post-election survey, we're able to highlight some key aspects of young Latinos' engagement in the past midterm election, their political views and priorities, and some of the inequities in civic access and support that still need to be addressed.

**Notes on the data:** *In this analysis, any youth who identified as multiple races and chose Hispanic as one of their ethnicities is classified as Latino; i.e., this data includes "Hispanic whites," Black Latinos, etc.*

## Lack of Information May Lead to Lower Voting Rates

According to Census data, in most national elections over the past five decades, young Latinos have had a lower voter turnout than Asian, Black, or white youth. That said, their electoral engagement [has been](#) on the rise, and in 2020 CIRCLE estimated (based on voter file data) that [48% of young Latinos cast a ballot](#), close to the national youth turnout rate of 50%—though still below white youth’s 61% participation rate.

That trend of increased electoral engagement did not hold in the most recent midterm election. CIRCLE’s recently released 2022 youth turnout data estimates that **14% of young Latinos cast a ballot, compared to the 23% national turnout rate of all youth**. State-level youth voter turnout data also suggests that there are challenges when it comes to young Latinos’ electoral engagement. Among the 10 states with the highest proportion of Latinos in its population (NM, CA, TX, AZ, NV, FL, CO, NJ, NY, IL) only one—Colorado—was among the top 10 states for youth voter turnout in 2022. In some states with large Latino populations, like Arizona, voting policies and restrictions [may also hinder the electoral participation of young Latinos](#).

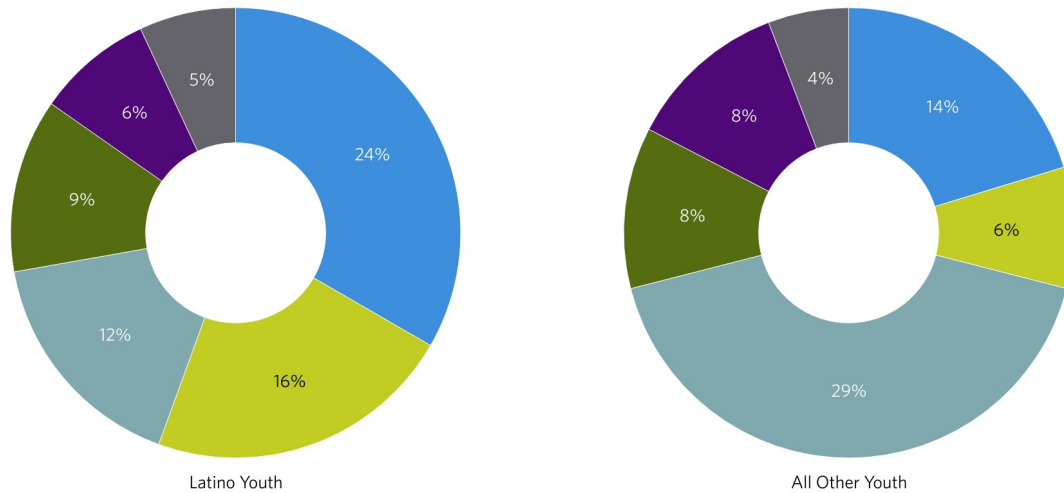
Our youth voting research has consistently underscored that youth voting rates may not reflect disinterest, but barriers and a lack of civic access and support that can especially hinder the participation of youth of color. The 2022 post-election survey suggests that some young Latinos were affected by a lack of information. Among youth who said they were not registered to vote in 2022, only 12% of young Latinos said it was because it wasn’t important to them. Meanwhile, **16% said they didn’t register because they didn’t know how—compared to 6% of non-Latino youth**. Young Latinos were also more likely to say that they didn’t have time to register (24% vs. 14% of all other youth), which may also reflect a lack of information about deadlines, processes, or options like same-day voter registration.



### Unregistered Latino Youth Were More Likely to Say They Didn't Know How to Register or Didn't Have Time

Among youth (ages 18-29) who were not registered to vote in 2022, the percentage who cited each as the primary reason they they didn't register.

■ Didn't have time ■ Didn't know how ■ It's not important to me ■ Not eligible ■ Missed the deadline ■ Had trouble with application



**Note:** Data for Latino youth includes those who identified as multiracial and selected Hispanic as one of their ethnicities.

CIRCLE Tufts University Tisch College - CIRCLE

Source: CIRCLE 2022 Post-Election Youth Survey

That lack of information may have been partially due to less outreach from organizations and fewer opportunities to hear about politics from the people around them. In our survey, **50% of young Latinos reported that they were not contacted** by any political party, campaign, or local or national organization ahead of the 2022 election. That's slightly higher than the 44% of all other (non-Latino) youth said they were never contacted. Young Latinos were especially less likely to be contacted by a national organization (21% vs 28%) or by the Republican Party/a Republican campaign (27% vs. 36%). The latter is especially notable given that, according to exit polls, young Latinos' support for Republican House candidates nationally increased from 17% in 2018 to 30% in 2022.

Young Latinos were also less likely to hear about political issues from some of the people closest to them. Trusted people in youth's personal networks can be a key source of information about elections, especially when major parties and organizations are not fully and equitably reaching all youth. **But young Latinos were 10 percentage points less likely to hear about issues in 2022 from family (49% vs. 59%),** 9 points less likely to hear from friends or roommates (40% vs. 49%) and six points less likely to hear from coworkers (19% vs. 25%).

Notably, young Latinos were more likely to get political information on YouTube (31% vs. 22%), which can be a valuable platform for consuming and creating media about elections but may present challenges related to misinformation.

## Motivated to Take Action, but Not Feeling as Ready

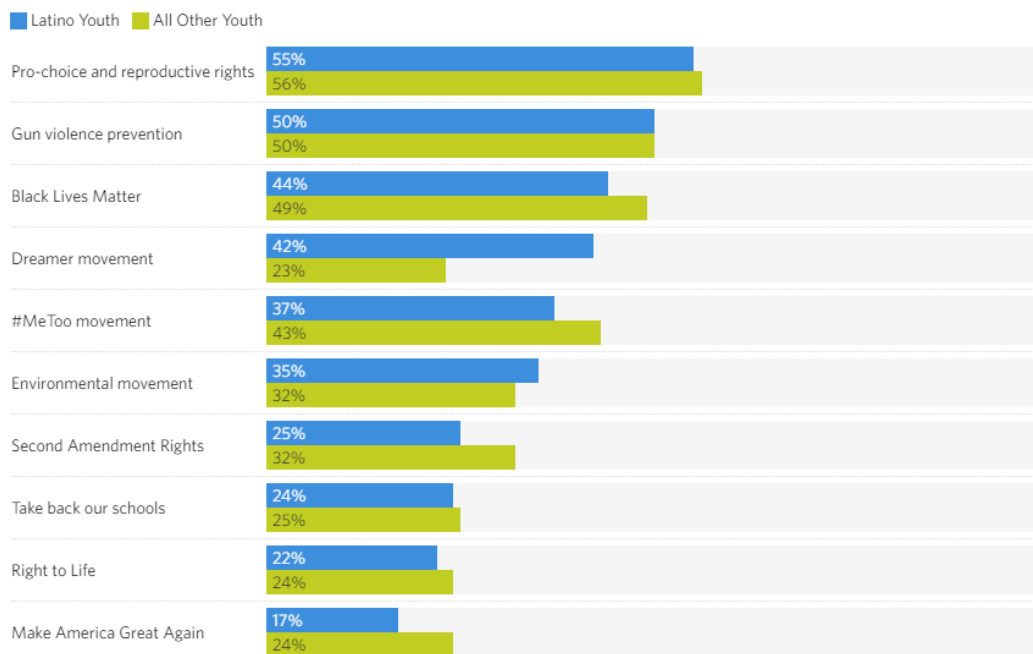
As suggested by the fact that young unregistered Latinos were less likely than other youth to say that it wasn't important to them, other responses in our survey underscore that they are far from politically apathetic. Young Latinos were just as likely as non-Latino youth to say that they have participated—or intend to participate in the near future—in a range of civic actions like attending protests, following candidates on social media, donating money to campaigns, or running for elected office.

Young Latinos are also just as likely as their peers to say they support or are actively involved in social movements like the environmental movement, the gun violence prevention movement, and the movements for or against abortion rights. They are much more likely to participate in or support the Dreamer movement for immigrant rights, and less likely to support the Second Amendment rights movement or Make America Great Again.

Similarly, young Latinos largely care about the same issue as their peers of other races/ethnicities. When asked to choose their top 3 political priorities in November 2022, **the three most frequently selected issues for young Latinos were inflation (37%), abortion (27%), and jobs that pay a living wage (25%).** Those were also the top three issues chosen by non-Latino youth.

### Latino Youth Are Participating or Supporting a Wide Range Of Political and Social Movements

The percentage of youth, ages 18-29, who said they are involved with or actively support each type of movement.



**Note:** Data for Latino youth includes those who identified as multiracial and selected Hispanic as one of their ethnicities.

CIRCLE Tufts University Tisch College - CIRCLE

Source: CIRCLE 2022 Post-Election Youth Survey

In addition, a strong majority of young Latinos “agree” or “strongly agree” that they can make their community better by helping others (79%), that change can occur in the country if people band together (73%), and that there are things they can do to make the world a better place (71%).

However, that desire to get involved and effect change on key issues does not always translate to a belief that they feel ready to do it. Only about half of all youth, including young Latinos (51%), agree or strongly agree that they feel “as well-informed as most people” about politics and government, and **Latinos are slightly less likely than non-Latino youth to say they feel well-qualified to participate in politics (36% vs. 41%)**. CIRCLE research has previously found that this lack of civic confidence or efficacy may also be related to a lack of information, outreach, and support.

The relative lack of civic readiness self-reported by young Latinos is similar to that of other youth of color and a driver of the [voter turnout inequities by race/ethnicity we saw in 2022](#) and in past elections. They underscore the need to [Grow Voters](#), broadly and equitably, by addressing related inequality in civic learning, by redoubling efforts to reach and contact young Latinos, and by understanding the issues and sources of information that are important to this fast-growing segment of the American electorate.

# Inequities by Education and Differences by Gender Shape White Youth Civic Engagement

**Authors:** Peter de Guzman, Alberto Medina

**Contributors:** Katie Hilton, Abby Kiesa

*Originally published:* August 2023

## At A Glance: Main Findings

### Education Affects Voting Method

More than a third of white youth with college experience voted by mailing in their ballot in 2022, compared to just 22% of those who have not attended college.

### No College = Less Contact

White youth were less likely to be contacted by community organizations than youth of color, and white youth without college experience received much less outreach from parties.

### Priorities: Economy and Abortion

White youth were much more likely than youth of color to prioritize inflation and abortion in the 2022 election, and less likely to prioritize other issues, notably racism.

Because of persistent racial inequities in voter turnout, white youth have historically voted at a higher rate than young people of color—[and did so again in 2022](#). However, that does not mean that white youth do not experience, to some degree, the barriers to voting and civic participation that often hinder their peers of other races/ethnicities. Moreover, white youth are not a monolithic group; in particular, there can be major differences by educational attainment that prevent some young people from having full and equal access and support for electoral participation.

Our analysis of white youth based on CIRCLE's 2022 post-election survey highlights some of these issues. For this analysis, we include "Hispanic whites" and others who self-identified as white alongside another ethnicity in our survey.

## White Youth Prefer In-Person Voting, Some Lack Information

CIRCLE estimates that **29% of white youth voted in the 2022 midterm election, the highest youth turnout rate of any racial/ethnic group** for which we have data. Nearly half (45%) of white youth who reported voting in 2022 said they voted in person on

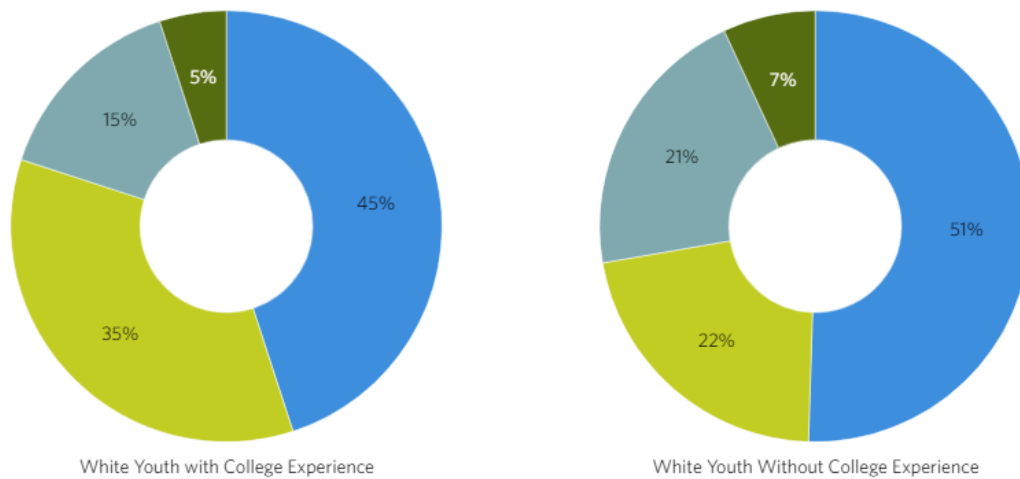
Election Day, about a third (33%) reported voting by mail, 16% said they voted early in person, and 6% by dropping off their absentee ballots.

There was a major difference in voting method between white youth with and without college experience. More than a third (35%) of white youth, ages 22-29, with college experience said they voted by mail, compared to just under 1 in 5 (22%) white youth without college experience. (When reporting on college experience, we use the 22-29 age range to account for some of the youngest eligible voters who may not have yet pursued higher education but may do so in the future.)

### White Youth Without College Experience Were Much Less Likely to Vote by Mail in 2022

The self-reported voting method of white youth (ages 22-29) with and without college experience in the 2022 midterm elections.

■ In Person on Election Day ■ By Mail ■ Early in Person ■ Absentee Ballot Dropoff



**Note:** Data for white youth includes those who identified as multiracial and selected white as one of their ethnicities. Totals may exceed 100% due to rounding.

CIRCLE Tufts University Tisch College - CIRCLE

Source: CIRCLE 2022 Post-Election Youth Survey

White youth also reported some of the same barriers to voting as their peers of other races/ethnicities. **About one in four (22%) of white youth who did not vote in 2022 said it was because they did not have enough information**—higher than the share of youth of color who said the same.

These findings underscore that young white potential voters may also benefit from additional information and outreach about elections, including about mail-in voting. They may also underscore that policies and practices related to facilitating mail-in voting may not be as helpful to engaging a critical segment of youth without college experience who are already less likely to vote.

## White Youth Less Likely to Be Contacted by Organizations

Some of the lack of information reported by youth may be due to a lack of contact from youth groups and other local organizations that often play a key role in engaging young potential voters.

While white youth were about as likely as other young people to be contacted by the Democratic Party (38%) or the Republican Party (34%) ahead of the 2022 midterms, they were **significantly less likely than youth of color to report being contacted by a youth organization (11% vs. 20%) or by a community organization (26% vs. 39%).**

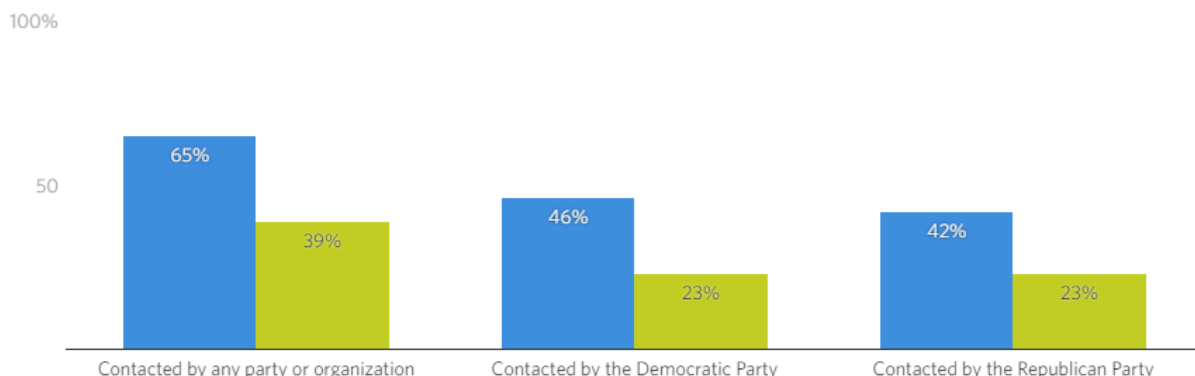
Previous CIRCLE research has highlighted that [these organizations can play a key role](#) in reaching young people of color and other youth who may be neglected by major political parties and organizations. But it appears there is potential for these groups to improve their outreach to white youth, especially those without college experience.

There is a major gap between the electoral outreach experienced by white youth in college, or with college degrees, and those without college experience. **Nearly two-thirds (65%) of white youth, ages 22-29, with at least some college experience reported being contacted by any campaign or organization about the 2022 midterms, compared to just 39% of youth without college experience.** The difference is especially acute when it comes to contact from political parties: 46% of white youth with college experience said they heard from the Democratic Party, while only half as many youth without college experience (23%) reported such contact—with similar numbers for contact from the Republican Party.

### White Youth Without College Experience Received Significantly Less Outreach in 2022

The percentage of white youth (ages 22-29) with or without college experience who reported hearing from any organization and from both major parties in the 2022 midterm elections.

■ White Youth with College Experience ■ White Youth Without College Experience



Note: Data for white youth includes those who identified as multiracial and selected white as one of their ethnicities.

CIRCLE Tufts University Tisch College - CIRCLE

Source: CIRCLE 2022 Post-Election Youth Survey

For some white youth, their personal networks or their attention to news may slightly make up for the relative lack of outreach from some organizations. White youth were about 10 points more likely than youth of color to say they saw information about politics and issues in 2022 from friends or roommates (50% vs. 40%), from family members (60% vs. 51%), and from websites (47% vs. 37%). While these differences point at inequities in youth of color's access to information and support for electoral participation, they also highlight how young people can find different pathways to becoming informed about and engaged in elections.

## White Youth Are Engaged on Issues and Taking Action

Despite the lack of outreach from some types of organizations, many white youth feel ready and willing to participate in politics and civic life. In our survey, **65% said they have a good understanding of the issues facing the country and 43% said they feel well-qualified to participate in politics**—in both cases, about 10 points higher than youth of color.

White youth are putting that belief in their power and efficacy into action. White youth were significantly more likely than youth of color to report signing a petition or joining a boycott (36%) or following a candidate or campaign on social media (28%). Notably, they were about as likely as youth of color to participate in a protest or demonstration. Here again there are major differences by educational attainment, with white youth (ages 22-29) without college experience generally less likely to report having taken civic actions than their peers with college experience.

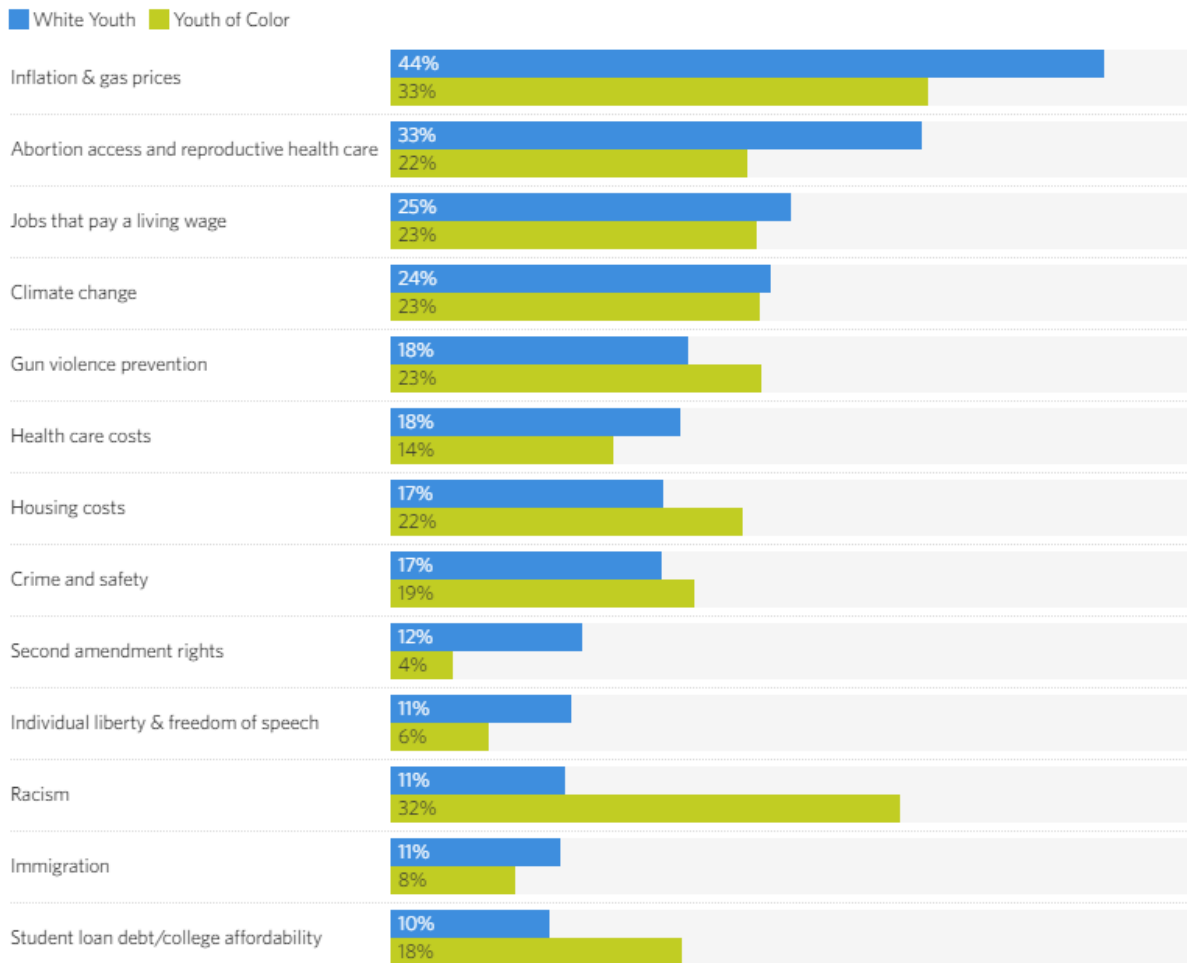
There were also differences among white youth by gender. **Young white women were significantly more likely to report engaging in protest than young white men (19% vs. 12%)**, as well as more likely to report having signed a petition or joined a boycott than young white men (39% vs 31%). This follows a trend, highlighted in previous CIRCLE research, of [young women leading the way on civic and political engagement](#).

Gender differences were also prevalent in white youth's issue priorities. Overall, 44% of white youth chose inflation and gas prices as one of their top three issue priorities after the 2022 election and 33% chose abortion, making those the top two issues among white youth—as well as among youth overall. In both cases, white youth were the most likely, compared to young people of other races/ethnicities, to prioritize those issues; by contrast, white youth were less likely than Black and Latino youth to prioritize gun violence prevention and racism.

**On the abortion issue there was a major gender split, with 45% of young white women selecting it as a top issue, compared to just 18% of young white men.**

### White Youth Were More Likely to Name Inflation and Abortion as 2022 Issue Priorities

The percentage of young people ages 18-29 in each group that selected each issue as one of the top three issues determining their vote in the 2022 election.



**Note:** Data for white youth includes those who identified as multiracial and selected white as one of their ethnicities. Totals may exceed 100% due to rounding.

**CIRCLE** Tufts University Tisch College - CIRCLE  
 Source: 2022 CIRCLE Post-Election Poll

While in some ways white youth do not face some of the same historical disadvantages of youth of color, which is partially reflected in their higher youth voter turnout rates, there is still a lot of room for improvement in reaching and engaging this critical portion of the electorate. Understanding the diversity within a group like white youth, and especially the challenges and barriers faced by young people without college experience, is key to supporting their participation. The CIRCLE Growing Voters framework, which includes recommendations for engaging young people outside of higher education and for creating diverse pathways to youth participation, can help inform more authentic outreach that meets young people where they are and supports their engagement.



The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) is a non-partisan, independent research organization focused on youth civic engagement in the United States. We conduct extensive research on youth participation, and we leverage that research to improve opportunities for all young people to acquire and use the skills and knowledge they need to meaningfully participate in civic life. CIRCLE is part of the Tisch College of Civic Life at Tufts University.

Learn more at [circle.tufts.edu](https://circle.tufts.edu)

