A group of young people, mostly of Latinx descent, are sitting on a rooftop or balcony. They are holding up white papers or cards, some of which have a paw print logo. In the background, the Los Angeles skyline is visible, including the US Bank Tower. The image is overlaid with a green semi-transparent rectangle on the right side, which contains the title text.

# The LA Youth Vote and the Activation of a Young and Diverse Electorate

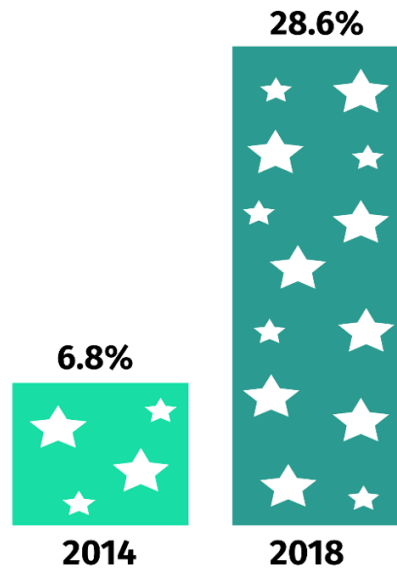
**Veronica Terriquez**  
**Steven Carmona Mora**  
September 2020

# INTRODUCTION

**B**etween the 2014 and 2018 elections, Los Angeles County experienced a fourfold increase in turnout among the youngest voters, those aged 18-24. National political dynamics and youth-led calls to mobilize in response to gun violence undoubtedly contributed to this upsurge in youth electoral participation. However, the extraordinary increase in turnout in Los Angeles County can also be attributed partly to the LA Youth Vote, a multi-sector collaboration that centered youth leadership in registering, educating, and mobilizing young voters. Initially launched by the United Way of Greater Los Angeles and developed into a more comprehensive program by the Power California youth civic engagement network, the LA Youth Vote was bolstered by grassroots youth organizing groups, the County Board of Registrars, the California Secretary of State, the Los Angeles Unified School District, individual principals and teachers, and philanthropic organizations. The initiative represents a model for how agencies can work together to promote young and racially diverse residents' informed engagement in government elections.

**Turnout Among 18-24-Year-Old LA County Residents  
Quadrupled between the 2014 and 2018 Midterm Elections**

**Figure 1**



Sources: California Civic Engagement Project (2014)  
Political Data, Inc. (2018)

In Los Angeles County, 80% of eligible voters aged 18-24 are young people of color. The LA Youth Vote targeted this diverse population with the goal of fostering a more representative young electorate. This report offers a description and analysis of this collaborative effort to enhance racially diverse young citizens' engagement in the democratic process. It proceeds in six sections. The first outlines the emergence of the LA Youth Vote project, including the policies that facilitated voter pre-registration, registration, and education. It also identifies the stakeholders who came together to support this collaborative effort, which is now part of and informing Power California's state-wide efforts. The second section describes Power California's critical approach to civics education used by the LA Youth Vote affiliates to educate and register young people. The third section covers the youth-led voter registration and education efforts, while the fourth section outlines how Power California-affiliated groups and LA Youth Vote volunteers sought to increase turnout among first-time and other young voters. Here we feature an experiment we conducted offering

strong evidence that peer-to-peer voter mobilization efforts increase turnout among young voters. By demonstrating a persistent (though shrinking) gap in registration and turnout among young voters, the fifth section highlights the need for ongoing voter engagement efforts. Finally, the sixth section offers lessons that could inform future efforts to increase youth-of-color participation across the country. This report includes appendices listing key stakeholders and high schools involved in the turnout effort.

## Report Highlights

Collaborations among grassroots community groups, school districts, county registrar, and philanthropy can bolster non-partisan efforts to register, educate, and mobilize young voters.

Non-partisan voter education that highlights the age gap in voting, exposes young people to the history of voting rights, and imparts the importance of voting at the local level can foster young people's investment in the voting process.

With proper training and support, adolescents and young adults can be at the forefront of registering, educating, and activating young voters.

Peer-to-peer voter mobilizations involving phone banking and social media outreach can increase turnout among young voters.

Ongoing, coordinated, and non-partisan efforts to register and educate young voters are necessary, given that most young eligible voters do not turn out to vote, and many remain unregistered.





# STORY OF THE LA YOUTH VOTE

Initiated by the United Way of Greater Los Angeles, the LA Youth Vote emerged in early 2015 in direct response to two statewide bills that created opportunities to activate young voters. The first, [Assembly Bill 1817](#), passed in July 2014, designated the last two weeks of April and September as High School Voter Registration Weeks. Written by Congressman Jimmy Gomez, who represented the 51st Assembly District at the time, this bill allowed county election officials to register any students or school administrators on high school campuses and to designate students as voter outreach coordinators who would plan election-related activities in their schools. The second, [Senate Bill 113](#), authored by State Senator Hannah Beth Jackson and approved in September 2014, lowered the voter pre-registration age to 16. The bill also created mechanisms allowing eligible voters to receive an official notice of registration and reminder to vote in the upcoming election cycle.

In early 2015, after hosting a forum where young people could hear from candidates vying for seats on the Los Angeles Unified School Board, the United Way recognized that mechanisms had not been put in place to register young, and often eager, voters. In response, the United Way convened Los Angeles-based youth advocacy and civil rights groups, along with the LAUSD Student Involvement, Development, and Empowerment Unit and the LA County Registrar and Recorder, to develop a youth voter registration program.

With support from community partners and spearheaded by Elmer Roldan, United Way Director of Education Programs, the LA Youth Vote ran its first coordinated registration campaign from March to May 2015. The effort targeted 11th and 12th graders and sought to generate awareness about run-off LAUSD School Board elections by organizing three youth-led debates among the candidates. The coordinated campaign surpassed its goal of registering 1,500 high school students.

**“The initial vision for the LA Youth Vote was that we would get candidates and eventual board members to start looking at young people with a different lens and change the power dynamic because adults make decisions that affect young people all the time. Seldom do they ask the opinion of young people or take into account their voice when making those decisions that are going to affect them.”**

**- Elmer Roldan, Former United Way Director of Education Programs, Founding Staff of the LA Youth Vote**

The LA Youth Vote expanded its programming throughout the 2016 cycle, partnering with the office of Secretary of State Alex Padilla to launch voter registration efforts with a one-day campaign kick-off on April 23, 2016, at Maya Angelou Community High School in South Los Angeles. More than a dozen LAUSD high schools gathered to receive voter registration and education training. Joint efforts between the LA Youth Vote and Padilla’s office also included a voter registration drive at Francis Polytechnic High School in Sun Valley on September 26, 2016. As part of their commitment to student engagement in the elections, the school board passed the “LAUSD Voter

Registration & MyVote Student Mock Election Days” resolution declaring September 27, 2016, as LAUSD Voter Registration Day, urging the district to direct resources for student voter registration and mock elections. Over the course of 2016, LA Youth Vote conducted voter registration in several LAUSD schools and continued to develop adolescent leadership and civic identity.

Notably, in mid-2016 the LA Youth Vote transitioned from being a project of the United Way and became a project of what is now Power California, a non-profit agency that coordinates statewide organizations seeking to promote electoral participation among young people of color across the state. Under Power California’s leadership, the LA Youth Vote scaled up efforts, developed new curriculum, incorporated new partners, and deepened the commitment of some stakeholders.

Benefiting from Power California’s expertise in voter outreach and voter data tracking systems, the LA Youth Vote operated two 2017 campaigns. With more LAUSD school board seats up for election in May 2017, LA Youth Vote organizers hosted volunteer student phone banks at San Fernando High School and Francis Polytechnic High School, which are both in LAUSD School District 6. In the fall, LA Youth Vote deepened relationships with teachers involved in previous voter registration efforts and launched a pilot service-learning project.

In 2018, the Secretary of State and Los Angeles County Registrar and Recorder helped expand the LA Youth Vote program’s reach. Leading up to the 2018 midterm primary and general elections, LA Youth Vote intensified its voter registration and education efforts. Building on the momentum created by March for Our Lives efforts, LA Youth Vote and partner agencies—including Communities for a Better Environment, InnerCity Struggle, Community Coalition, and CHIRLA—leveraged the national attention on gun reform to emphasize the importance of voting to hold local government officials accountable and persuade them to invest in violence prevention strategies in high-poverty communities of color.



Leading up to the June primary and fall general elections, Power California worked with LAUSD and the Los Angeles County Registrar and Recorder to co-host a series of Early Vote Events, detailed later in this report. Additionally, there were significant efforts made to turn out voters, particularly for the 2018 general election.

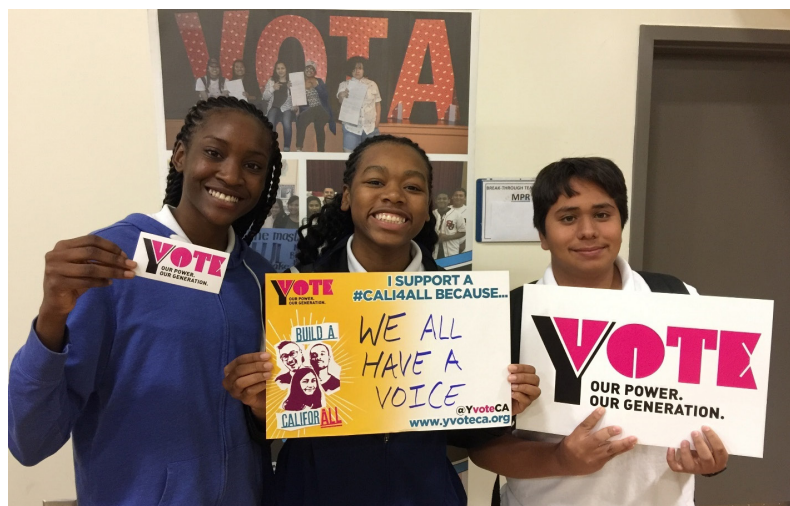
In spring 2019, the LA Youth Vote, now completely folded under Power California's statewide efforts, continued its voter registration, outreach to new high schools, and civics education. This civics curriculum included information about how commercial taxes impact funding for schools, parks, libraries, and social services. High school students were also invited to Our Future Fest, a Power California-sponsored culture and arts festival in November 2019 that celebrated student leadership in voter registration and education. These efforts also became aligned with the advocacy of LAUSD Student Board Representative Tyler Okeke, who sought to enfranchise 16- and 17-year-olds in school district elections.

In early 2020, Power California continued LA Youth Vote outreach, but when schools were shut down as a result of the pandemic, voter registration efforts went on a hiatus. At the time this report was written, Power California was planning to work with partner agencies and other stakeholders to launch an online voter registration and education program.

While LA Youth Vote programming has evolved since its inception and is now fully incorporated into Power California's statewide programming, it represents a model for multi-sector collaboration that contributed to the fourfold increase in voter turnout. Aside from the initial leadership of the United Way and stewardship of Power California, the LA Youth Vote involved commitments from the County Registrar of Voters, Secretary of State Alex Padilla's office, the Los Angeles Unified School District, individual schools and educators, and partner non-profit agencies. We elaborate on their roles in Appendix A, and also discuss school-site partners in Appendix B.

**“We created a program that is ongoing year after year, that we can let go of and somebody will keep it going there.”**

**-Phillip Verbera, Los Angeles County Registrar and Recorder**





# CRITICAL CIVICS EDUCATION

As a program of Power California, the LA Youth Vote incorporated critical voter education workshops that extend beyond registering young people to vote by explaining the electoral process and political contexts. The program has been a success because it helps students, particularly those from historically marginalized backgrounds, understand the ongoing struggle for voting rights, as well as what is at stake in any given election. Power California's critical civics education workshops paired well with 12th grade government curricula in schools. Students come away with an understanding that government decision-makers have been and continue to be selected by an electorate that is not representative of young people and people of color. Because adolescents are at a stage of cognitive development where they tend to take an interest in assessing the legitimacy and fairness of institutions around them, these workshops tend to resonate and can inspire youth to exercise their voice. Some of these interactive workshops and activities that were well received by high school students are briefly described here. For more information or examples of curriculum, contact Power California.

## Voting Rights Timeline

By walking through a gallery that showcases important moments in voting rights history, students learn about how different populations have been excluded from the voting process since this country's founding. Students also learn about instances where different groups of people have fought for the right to vote.

***"I remember doing the voting rights timeline for them and we would talk about present day and ways that people are still disenfranchised to this day... They'd be like, 'Oh yeah, people are incarcerated.' Or they start critically thinking of the way that the system is set up currently and making [those] connections too."***

***-Ana Godoy, Power California Youth Organizer***



### Literacy Test

Prior to being registered, students learn about historic and contemporary voter suppression through an interactive activity that begins by asking students to take a literacy test that was once administered to Black voters in the Jim Crow South as a requirement to vote. Students are initially told that they cannot register if they do not pass the test, although that outcome is not enforced. This activity typically angers students, who are invited to express their feelings. The workshop leader then guides them through a discussion about the history of voting rights and contemporary voter suppression.

***“We did the literacy test as a warm-up... We’d hand out the paper and be like, ‘Okay, you’ll have 10 minutes, if you don’t complete it, you won’t be able to register today’ ... They all used to be mad like, ‘What do you mean? This is not going to judge if I’m going to vote or not.’ And some kid was like, ‘I didn’t know you had to do this to register to vote,’ ... It changed their way they viewed things and [they] appreciated they had that right [to vote] without having to do all [those] racist things.”***

***-Jackie Cruz, Power California Youth Organizer***

### Proposition 187 Mock Elections

Students learn about the stakes of voting and the implications of low voter turnout through an interactive activity that prompts students to compare California residents’ attitudes and voting patterns with respect to Proposition 187, the 1994 ballot initiative that sought to prevent undocumented immigrants from accessing health care, education, and social services. Students learn about the implications of unequal turnout among groups of residents with different perspectives on an issue.

### Elected Representative Quiz

Students learn about various levels of government, who their elected representatives are, and recent turnout among young voters. The activity begins with a quiz or gameshow-like activity.



# YOUTH-LED PRE-REGISTRATION AND REGISTRATION EFFORTS

Drawing on Power California's expertise in youth organizing, the LA Youth Vote trained high school students to help implement these workshops, register and pre-register thousands of voters, and conduct outreach more broadly. To reach large numbers of students, stakeholders deputized over 500 students by training them on the proper way to pre-register and register their peers. Many of these students also received formal guidance on how to implement the civics curriculum.

Deputized students learned the ins and outs of voter registration, starting with how to fill out an affidavit registration form. In spearheading the LA Youth Vote, Power California organizers recruited invaluable help from the Los Angeles County Registrar and Recorder to assist in training students on each step of an affidavit card. Additionally, the training provided an in-depth workshop on why voting is critical for a healthy democracy. Organizers then assisted deputized student leaders in developing plans for voter registration drives on their school campuses. At the end of the deputization process, students would commit to registering their peers in good faith and ensuring that they treated the collected information with integrity. In some cases, students received a certificate for their commitment to voter registration.

Power California and LA Youth Vote stakeholders—including school administrators, teachers, deputized students, and other community allies—pre-registered and registered over 15,000 young voters.

## Large Group Trainings

The LA Youth Vote frequently hosts large group workshops across high schools, typically engaging 50 to 100 students. School staff or student leaders secure locations and recruit attendees through teacher outreach. Lasting approximately 40 minutes, these trainings typically registered students and educated them about the importance of voting, using the critical civics education curriculum described here.



### Associated Student Body (ASB) Leadership Class Trainings

Through its ASB Leadership classes, the LA Youth Vote trained students to conduct voter education workshops and host peer-to-peer outreach activities at their school sites. The training included keeping tallies on how many students were registered as a way to measure the success of their efforts. This training enabled ASB Leadership students to take responsibility for voter registration at their schools.

### School Assemblies

At 10 schools, ASB Leadership students, with guidance from LA Youth Vote organizers, planned assemblies in school auditoriums, gyms, or other spaces where the entire 11th and 12th grade student body gathered for an interactive voter registration presentation. Assemblies included student speakers, voter education workshops, and volunteers registering eligible young voters.

### Classroom Presentations

Coordinated classroom presentations at over 50 schools proved to be successful in registering high school youth to vote. Leadership or ASB classes spearheaded these classroom presentations. Student leaders worked in teams, visiting 11th and 12th grade classrooms in a class period to pre-register and register all eligible students to vote. Importantly, students coordinated with teachers, who agreed to give up instructional time for student presentations.

### Lunchtime Drives

Teachers and ASB students coordinated lunchtime voter drives to register high school students. These drives included setting up a table in a public area of a school, along with students registering their peers across the campuses.

### Debriefs

After completing a major voter registration drive or event, Power California organizers hosted debriefs with the participating students. The purpose of these debriefs was to celebrate accomplishments and identify ways to improve outreach efforts for the upcoming election cycles. At these debrief sessions, students shared the total numbers of peers they registered. These sessions were important for planning upcoming outreach events and sustaining excitement for future election cycles.



# VOTER MOBILIZATION

As a project of Power California, the LA Youth Vote incorporated programming aiming to motivate young people to become lifelong voters. This section highlights Early Vote Events during the 2018 election cycle and an ongoing campaign to expand voting rights to 16- and 17-year-olds.

## Early Vote Events in the 2018 Election Cycle

Preceding the June 5th primary and November 6th general election, several Early Vote Events were spearheaded by Power California and received significant support from the LA County Registrar and Recorder's office, LAUSD school board members Monica Garcia and Kelly Gonez, LAUSD local superintendents, individual schools, and the Power 106 radio station. High schools that worked directly with LA Youth Vote to register voters were bussed to the LA County Registrar and Recorder's office in Norwalk for a daylong civic engagement event. At these gatherings, youth who had pre-registered and were eligible to vote in the primary or general elections were able to cast a vote. Those who were not eligible to vote because of age or citizenship status participated in a mock election. In total, over 600 students participated in these Early Vote Events and experienced voting as a collective experience among their peers.

The daylong events included rallies—where youth spoke to their peers about the importance of voting and getting involved in the community—as well as games, dancing, and food trucks. The Early Vote Event for the June 2018 primary involved three high schools (South East High School, Nava College Prep Academy, and Mendez High School). The November 2018 Early Vote Event scaled up efforts, attracting students from 11 schools (Garfield High School, Esteban E. Torres High School, Nava College Prep Academy, Felicitas & Gonzalo Mendez High School, Francis Polytechnic Senior High, Diego Rivera Learning Complex, Panorama High School, West Adams Preparatory High School, South East High School, Miguel Contreras Learning Complex, and Downtown Magnets High School).

## Expanding Voting Rights to 16- and 17-Year-Olds

The LA Youth Vote is connected to other efforts to lower the voting age across the state. For example, Oakland and Berkeley have granted or are considering granting young people an opportunity to cast a ballot in certain elections. In November 2016, voters approved Measure Y1 in Berkeley allowing 16- and 17-year-olds to vote in school board elections for the 2020 cycle.<sup>2</sup> The Oakland City Council, responding to demands by a coalition of youth organizing groups, agreed to a measure on the 2020 November ballot that would allow 16- and 17-year-olds to vote.<sup>3</sup> LAUSD may follow suit.

On April 23, 2019, LAUSD unanimously passed a resolution establishing a task force to investigate expanding voting rights to 16-year-olds in LAUSD school board elections. Tyler Okeke, LAUSD Board of Education's Student Representative, was the original author of this resolution and helped spearhead the subsequent "Vote at 16" campaign. His effort was backed by Power California, along with other grassroots youth organizations involved in the LA Youth Vote, namely Community Coalition, InnerCity Struggle, Communities for a Better Environment, and SELA (Southeast LA) Rootz. These groups conducted teach-ins about the resolution and spoke in front of the school board to make the case for expanding voting rights to 16-year-olds in Los Angeles. The Department of Neighborhood Empowerment, LA County Registrar and Recorder, and Los Angeles City Clerk also weighed in regarding the logistics of this resolution, as well as the possibility of expanding the voting age for city council elections.

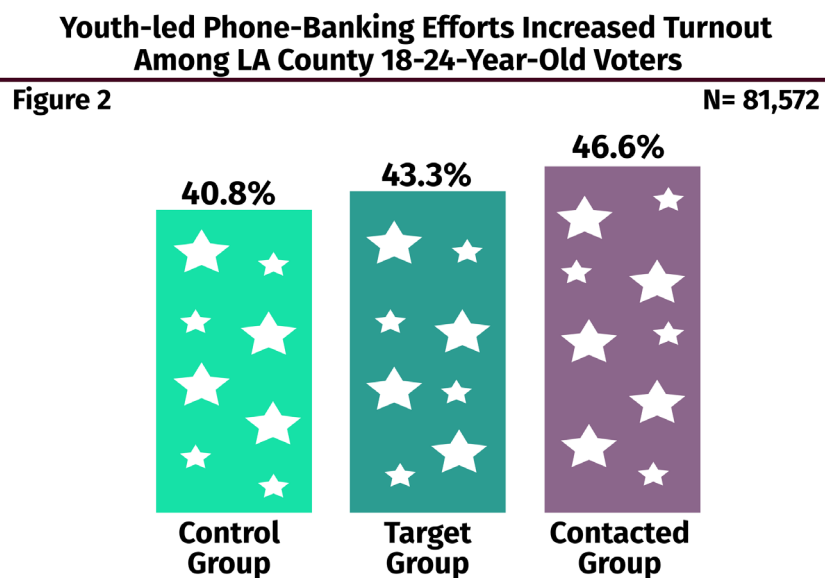


In line with the LA Youth Vote and Power California partners' statewide youth-led efforts, Assemblymember Evan Low introduced legislation, ACA 8, to include 17-year-olds as eligible voters in statewide elections in February 2019. Power California-affiliated youth organizations joined with other groups across the state to support ACA 8 on August 13, 2019. While Low's legislation has not passed the Assembly, Proposition 18 on the California November ballot will allow 17-year-olds who will be 18 at the time of the next general election to vote in the primary and special elections leading up to it.

### Peer-to-Peer Outreach to Registered Voters

Our research shows that youth-led efforts to mobilize young voters in their own communities contributed to the extraordinary increase in voter turnout during the 2018 election. Crucially, Power California and some of its LA County-based partner organizations (namely California Native Vote Project, Californians for Justice, Community Coalition, Khmer Girls in Action, and InnerCity Struggle) capitalized on the LA Youth Vote's collaborative efforts by conducting individual outreach (via phone, text, and social media) to voters across the county to turn out the vote.<sup>4</sup> They let voters know about the importance of voting, asked voters about their plans to vote, and reminded them of their polling location, as appropriate.

Our experimental research demonstrates the extent to which peer-to-peer outreach efforts successfully increased turnout among young voters. We compared voter turnout between a randomly selected "control group" of voters aged 18-24 who were not targeted for outreach and those of the same age who received a phone call. Results shown in Figure 2 indicate that compared to the control group's estimated turnout of 40.8%, those who were targeted for outreach (regardless of whether they answered the phone) averaged an estimated turnout of 43.3%. This means that peer-initiated phone conversations resulted in an estimated 2.5 percentage point overall increase in turnout. Meanwhile, those who answered the phone averaged an estimated turnout of 46.6%. Thus, regardless of any other voter outreach efforts occurring during the 2018 general election, peer-to-peer outreach by members of Power California-affiliated groups increased the likelihood of voting by 5.8 percentage points among young voters who answered their phone.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, a separate experiment showed that outreach via Facebook and Instagram modestly increased turnout.



Source: Power California and PDI

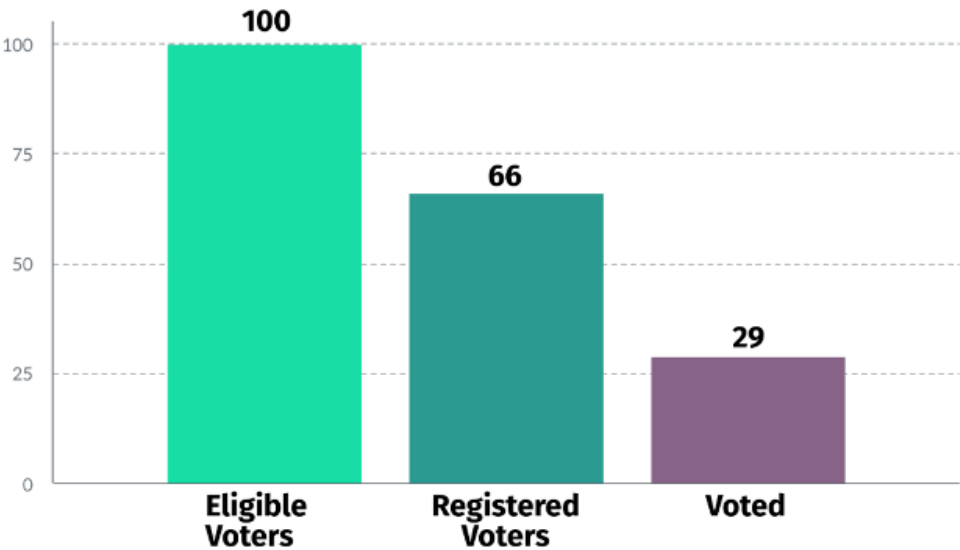
# OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWING THE ELECTORATE

While voter registration and outreach efforts effectively contributed to the increased turnout among young voters during the 2018 election, many young adults remained unregistered or did not submit a ballot. To demonstrate the potential for growing the electorate, we highlight here the Civic Engagement Gap Ratio for Los Angeles County, which shows the proportion of voters who registered and voted as a share of U.S. citizens in this age group. As illustrated in Figure 3, this ratio shows that for every 100 eligible voters aged 18-24 in Los Angeles County, approximately 66 were registered, and only 29 turned out to vote. In other words, about one third of U.S. citizens in this age cohort were not registered, and over 7 out of 10 did not exercise their right to vote.

The Civic Engagement Gap Ratio for Los Angeles County suggests that much work remains to ensure that eligible young voters fill out and submit their voter registration forms. Additionally, this highly mobile population needs to be reminded to update their registration if they have changed residential addresses. Once registered, they will need reminders to vote via social media, texts, and community events. Communication with young voters is essential, given that voting processes have changed and may continue to change as a result of the pandemic or other emergencies. It is also worth noting the important role played by schools, community organizations, and religious institutions in reaching these young voters.

**The LA County Civic Engagement Gap Ratio, 2018  
Voters Aged 18-24**

**Figure 3**



Data Sources: American Community Survey 2018 and Political Data, Inc.

# LEARNING FROM THE LA YOUTH VOTE

**“LA Youth Vote has created life-long, civically engaged, highly educated voters because it challenged youth to not only register and vote but to become active participants.”**

**-Elmer Roldan, Former United Way Director of Education Programs, Founding Staff of the LA Youth Vote**

In the course of researching collaborative efforts to expand the number of young, informed Los Angeles County voters, we identified valuable lessons from this multi-sector collaboration that could inform similar efforts.

**1**

**A critical civics education helps inspire investment in the elections.** Young people are motivated by a sense of fairness and justice. Explaining the history of voting rights and how voting can lead to more equitable representation can help young people understand the implications of voting. Additionally, providing them information about the voting process, the different levels of government, and the impact on their local communities can enhance the civics curriculum offered in schools.

**2**

**With proper guidance and support, high school students can register and educate their peers.** Organizers trained hundreds of high school students across Los Angeles County and witnessed their ability to run large-scale voter registration and education drives. While organizers may be tempted to control or micromanage the process, our observations show that youth leaders can be trusted to run their own program.

**3**

**Enlisting the support of the County Registrar can facilitate registration and education efforts.** The County Registrar and Recorder can provide resources, materials, and training to support voter registration and education in a non-partisan way.

**4**

**District and school officials and personnel can be allies in supporting voter registration and education.** School board members, district staff, administrators, and teachers can facilitate and enhance voter registration efforts. Gaining their buy-in early can be helpful, especially since district and school representatives can be very busy and may not be able to devote enough time to community-led efforts.



5

**Partner with community-based organizations dedicated to developing young leaders.** Civic engagement and voter education efforts can enhance programming in youth leadership and organizing efforts. While a single agency will likely need to spearhead efforts, partner organizations can broaden outreach to emerging and young voters.

6

**Fund school-based voter engagement programs similar to the LA Youth Vote.** Collaborative initiatives rely on staffing to coordinate collaborations among different stakeholders and to train youth leaders. The United Way, Power California, and partner grassroots youth organizing groups played a critical role in driving the initiative discussed in this report. Supporting similar initiatives requires funding from private philanthropies, individual donors, and/or government agencies.

7

**Focus on building infrastructure in community colleges.** The LA Youth Vote did not adequately set up an infrastructure that would allow community college administrations, instructors, and leaders to adopt their registration and education model. Community colleges remain undermobilized, and therefore future initiatives should seek to build relationships with community college leaders, professors, and student organizations.

Now folded under Power California's statewide programming, the LA Youth Vote represents a successful multi-sector effort that contributed to a remarkable expansion of young and informed voters participating, and becoming invested in, the electoral process. While relying on a strong community partner to drive efforts, this initiative's success demonstrates what is possible when agencies collaborate and train young people to engage their peers. This initiative will likely have a lasting impact on the democratic processes in Los Angeles County and beyond, because as research shows, voting can be habit forming. If young people turn out to vote in early adulthood, they may stay engaged throughout their lives, contributing to a stronger democracy.



## APPENDIX: KEY LA YOUTH VOTE PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

The success of the Los Angeles Youth Vote was possible because of multi-sector support. State, county, school district, philanthropy, and community-based organizations championed the effort and networked the civic infrastructure in order to reach thousands of high school students.

**United Way of Greater Los Angeles** – As the initiators of the #LAYouthVote campaign across LAUSD high schools, the United Way of Greater Los Angeles’ Student Leadership Program hosted and mobilized their base of students for the first years of the LA Youth Vote program.

**Power California** – As a statewide network of youth organizing groups, Power California seeks to make the California young electorate more reflective of the state’s population. Power California absorbed the LA Youth Vote program, incorporating it into larger efforts to register, educate, and mobilize young voters across the state. Importantly, Power California devoted significant resources to coordinating partner community groups and school district and county agencies.

**Power California affiliated youth organizing groups** – Over the years, Power California has closely partners with Los Angeles County-based organizations including the California Native Vote Project, Californians for Justice, Communities for a Better Environment, Community Coalition, InnerCity Struggle, CHIRLA, and Khmer Girls in Action, among other groups across the state. These groups have conducted voter registration and outreach efforts, reaching different constituencies of young voters across Los Angeles County and beyond.

**Los Angeles County Registrar and Recorder, Office of Community Outreach** – The Los Angeles County Registrar and Recorder’s Office of Community Outreach Director, Phillip Verbera, expanded his county-wide voter education efforts to include high school students and pre-registration of 16- and 17-year-olds. This community outreach involved large scale trainings, presentations in high school classrooms, staging community events, and deputizing high school students across Los Angeles to register their peers. Additionally, the Office of Community Outreach co-hosted Early Vote events.

**California Secretary of State Alex Padilla** – Secretary of State Alex Padilla is responsible for building a database to support the influx of voter pre-registration across California. Padilla hosted mass assemblies to conduct voter registration and pre-registration for High School Voter Registration Weeks. In LA County, he invited LA Youth Vote organizers to press conferences and community events to showcase their work. His office provided student leaders, in LA and elsewhere, with tool-kits on conducting mock elections, social media outreach, and registering their peers in their high schools.

**LAUSD Student Involvement, Development, and Engagement Unit** – The director of the LAUSD Student, Involvement, Development, and Engagement Unit, Dr. Brenda Manuel recruited school principals, student leaders, and community members across the district to become involved in LA Youth Vote. Following the 2016 LAUSD School Board Resolution promoting voter registration and mock elections for high school students, she conducted outreach to LAUSD high school principals to identify schools interested in LA Youth Vote programming. Additionally, Dr. Manuel shared a presentation about the importance of voter registration to Associated Student Body leaders throughout the district. She then trained them to lead voter registration efforts at their schools.

Finally, Dr. Manuel hosted several conferences across the district at which LA Youth Vote organizers registered and pre-registered voters.

**LAUSD School Board President Monica Garcia and Board Member Kelly Gonez** – These two LAUSD school board members were particularly strong vocal advocates of voter registration inside of high schools. They secured buy-in from local superintendents to coordinate school officials for Early Vote events, and their offices also funded bus transportation for students to attend these events.

### Other Key Community Partners

**The League of Women Voters** was an early partner of LA Youth Vote, supporting young voter outreach efforts since the program's inception.

**South Central Council District 9** trained several youth members in South Los Angeles high schools in 2018.

**South Bay Counseling Center's I Heart Wilmington Club** received voter registration training and organized voter registration drives in 2018.

**Brenda Barragan, South East High School teacher**, piloted a service learning project that integrated LA Youth Vote's critical education and training with LAUSD's U.S. government-mandated standards. The 11th and 12th grade students spent a significant amount of time with LA Youth Vote organizers in voter registration training, education workshops, check-ins, and debriefs. As a result of this intensive training, students in Barragan's course were invited to apply for paid positions conducting non-partisan voter outreach. Ms. Barragan played an important role in supporting SELA (Southeast LA) Rootz, a new youth organizing group coordinated by Power California.

**Dana Brooks, John H. Francis Polytechnic High School teacher**, helped facilitate numerous voter pre-registration and education activities targeting students in the San Fernando Valley.

**Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.**, a historically Black women's organization, visited classrooms in select schools alongside LA Youth Vote organizers. In order to motivate students' investments in elections, volunteers provided personal insights into the history of voter suppression and voting rights.





This research was generously funded by the James Irvine Foundation. It is published by the Equity Research Institute at the University of Southern California and the Institute for Social Transformation at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

**Dr. Veronica Terriquez** is currently an Associate Professor of Sociology at UC Santa Cruz and fellow at the Stanford Center for Advanced Behavioral Sciences. In Fall 2021, she will begin an appointment as the Director of the UCLA Center for Chicano Studies and will hold a joint faculty position in the UCLA Chicana/o and Central American Studies Department and Urban Planning Department.

**Steven Carmona Mora** graduated from UC Santa Cruz in 2017, with a B.A. in sociology. He currently works as a Movement Training Specialist at The Movement Cooperative based in Washington, D.C.

**Photo credits:** Power California

**Design:** Jonathan Sanchez, UC Santa Cruz Sociology Major, Alexander Hamilton High School, LAUSD class of 2017.



- <sup>1</sup> National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2019. *The Promise of Adolescence: Realizing Opportunity for All Youth*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.
  - <sup>2</sup> Nouriani, Olivia. 2018. "BUSD Will Retain Attorney to Implement Voting for Minors in School Board Elections" in The Daily Californian. Berkeley, CA. Available at: <https://www.dailycal.org/2018/10/26/busd-will-retain-attorney-to-implement-voting-for-minors-in-school-board-elections/>.
  - <sup>3</sup> Ruggerio, Angela. 2020. "Oakland Voters to Decide If Youth Should Vote in School Elections." In *The Mercury News*. San Jose, CA. Available at: <https://www.mercurynews.com/2020/05/19/oakland-voters-to-decide-if-youth-should-vote-in-school-elections/>.
  - <sup>4</sup> For more detailed information about these outreach efforts, see Terriquez, Veronica and Jiayi Xu. 2020. *Mobilizing Young Voters to the Polls: Lessons Learned from the Power California Network*. Los Angeles: USC Program for Environmental and Regional Equity. Available at: <https://dornsife.usc.edu/assets/sites/242/docs/MobilizingYoungVoters.pdf>.
  - <sup>5</sup> These percentages are based on the results of OLS and two-staged least squares regression analyses that control for age, gender, prior voting history, Democratic Party registration, age, number of registered voters per household, voting method (poll vs. mail), and zip code characteristics.
- Coppock, Alexander and Donald P. Green. 2016. "Is Voting Habit Forming? New Evidence from Experiments and Regression Discontinuities." *American Journal of Political Science* 60(4):1044-62.