

To build a more inclusive democracy, we need to create civic and democratic ecosystems that bring under-represented communities to the table

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INTRO— DUCTION

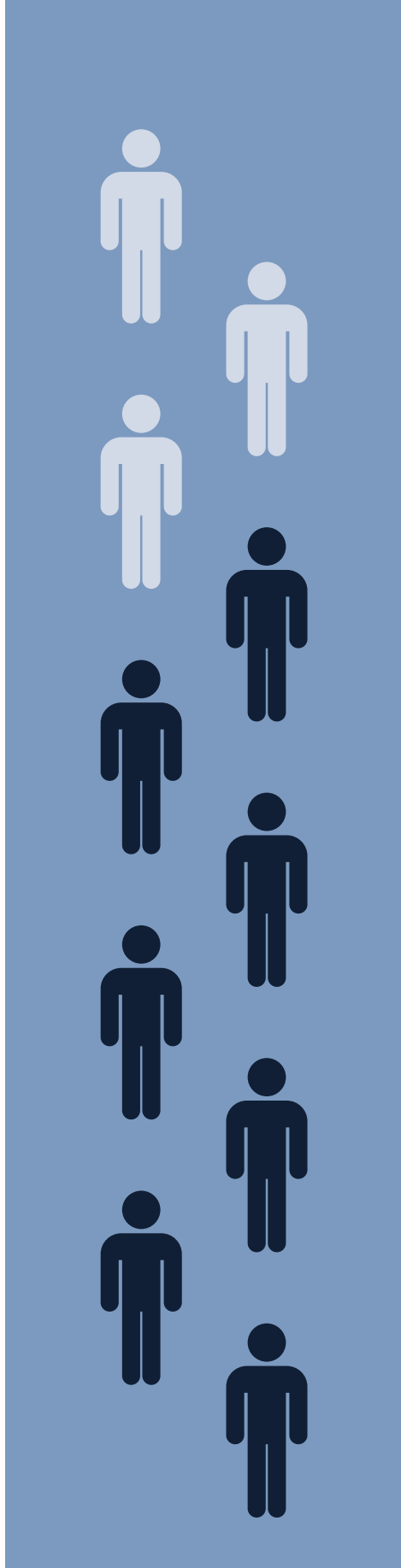
Nonprofits can be found in every city and local community across the nation. They tackle a wide array of critical issues, from healthcare and education to environmental conservation and disaster relief, bridging gaps unmet by the private sector or government. They are vital to our nation’s civic and social fabric as community institutions with a deep well of relationships and long-term roots in the communities they serve. And as this report shows, nonprofits can and do also foster a more inclusive electorate and in turn a healthier democracy for all of us.

The law is clear: nonprofits can engage the communities they serve in voting and elections. As long as they remain nonpartisan, they can talk to their staff and communities about the importance of elections, educate voters about the electoral process, communicate election reminders, and more. In fact, **7 in 10 voters say they think it is a good idea for nonprofits to offer voter support services** like voter registration, election reminders, and election day transportation.¹ This report documents the effectiveness and broader impact of those nonprofit voter engagement strategies.

7 IN 10 VOTERS BELIEVE NONPROFITS SHOULD OFFER VOTING SERVICES ¹

¹ Fall 2021 survey commissioned by Independent Sector

independentsector.org/resource/new-poll-voters-want-nonprofits-to-be-engaged-and-resourced/



60,000+ VOTERS

WERE ENGAGED THROUGH THE PROGRAM

During the last midterm election, Nonprofit VOTE worked with 120 nonprofits across 9 states to engage the communities they serve in voting and elections as part of a field program managed by our team. These nonprofits ranged widely in size and program focus, including community health centers, food pantries, housing organizations, family service agencies, job training centers, and more. These nonprofits engaged voters in many ways, like helping voters register, collecting voter pledges, conducting voter education, and sending election reminders. In all, **over 60,000 voters were engaged through the program** over the course of the 2022 election cycle. We gathered data from a subset of those across 8 of the 9 states for voter file matching and subsequent analysis.

The findings of this analysis make clear that voters who were engaged by nonprofits about voting were much more likely to cast a ballot than comparable voters – 10 percentage points more likely (56% vs 46%). The turnout boost was even higher among historically underrepresented groups. Younger voters (18 to 24) engaged by nonprofits were 14 percentage points more likely to vote than comparable young voters. People of color engaged by nonprofits were 12 percentage points more likely to vote. Low-income voters also saw double-digit boosts in turnout. These findings provide a compelling case for more nonprofits to engage the communities they serve in voting and elections.

Indeed, in boosting voter participation among historically underrepresented voters served by nonprofits, we can work toward a more inclusive democracy where all voices are heard. And as the communities served by nonprofits vote in greater numbers, the ability of those nonprofits to deliver results and achieve their goals will also grow.



NONPROFITS HAVE THE POWER TO FOSTER A MORE INCLUSIVE DEMOCRACY

After analyzing the voter file records of about 7,000 voters engaged by nonprofits across 8 states during last midterms, clear patterns have emerged both as to whom nonprofits reach, but also on the positive impact they have on voter turnout, particularly among those historically underrepresented in our elections and democratic process.

NONPROFITS REACH VOTERS MOST LIKELY TO BE OVERLOOKED BY CAMPAIGNS AND UNDERREPRESENTED IN OUR DEMOCRACY

2.4X

more likely engage people of color

Clients engaged by our nonprofits were 2.4x more likely to be people of color compared to the registered voters in our program states (64% vs 27%) and half as likely to be white (36% vs 73%)

2.5X

more likely engage low income voters

Clients engaged by our nonprofits were 2.5x more likely to be earning less than 20K compared to the registered voters in our program states (9.3% vs 4.7%)

1.3X

more likely to be younger voters

Clients engaged by our nonprofits were 1.3x more likely to be 18 to 24 years old compared to the registered voters in our program states (13% vs 10%)

PEOPLE ENGAGED BY NONPROFITS ARE **MUCH MORE LIKELY TO VOTE** THAN COMPARABLE VOTERS

 **10 PP**
more likely to vote


People engaged by nonprofits were 10 percentage points (pp) more likely to vote than demographically and geographically matched registered voters (56% vs. 46%) which we refer to as comparable voters throughout this report

56%
turned out to vote
in 2022 election


Among the 7,000 voters engaged by nonprofits in the program that we matched to the voter files, 56% of them turned out to vote in the 2022 elections.

By comparison, 46% of comparable registered voters in the same localities turned out to vote in 2022.


THE BOOST IN TURNOUT WAS GREATEST AMONG VOTERS OTHERWISE UNDERREPRESENTED IN OUR DEMOCRACY, HELPING TO NARROW HISTORIC VOTER TURNOUT GAPS

 **12 PP**
people of color were
more likely to vote

People of color engaged by nonprofits were 12 percentage points (pp) more likely to vote than comparable demographically and geographically matched voters with the biggest turnout advantages among Black voters (13 pp) and Asian voters (12 pp).

 **15 PP**
low income voters were
more likely to vote

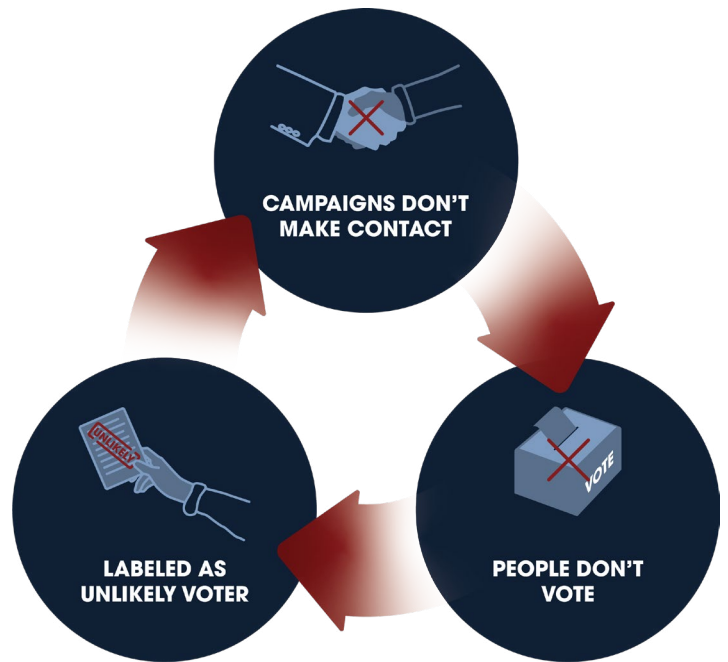
Low-income earners saw a turnout boost significantly above the average, with the largest turnout boost of 15 pp shown among voters earning between \$20K and \$30K

 **14 PP**
younger voters were more
likely to vote

Younger voters saw a significant turnout boost, 14 pp for 18 to 24 year olds (45% vs. 31%) and 17 pp for 25 to 34 year olds (51% vs. 34%), over comparable young registered voters.

WHY WE NEED NONPROFITS

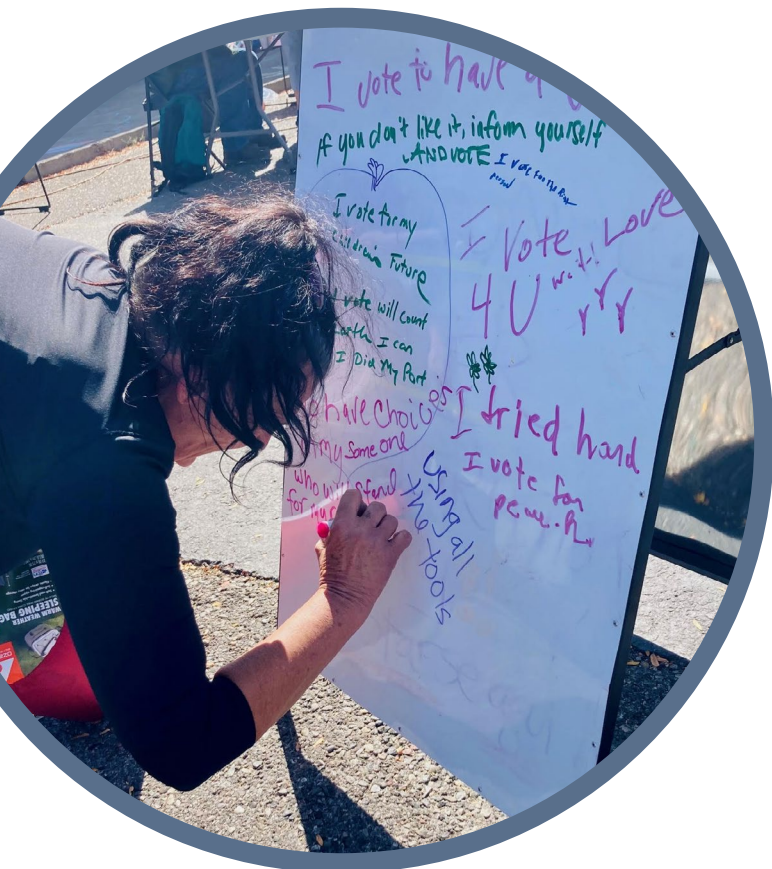
Our communities are stronger when democratic institutions reflect the full diversity of their citizens. Gaps in voter participation, often drawn along the lines of race, income, age, and education level, are a barrier to this full and inclusive participation. Communities with track records of low voter turnout don't get the attention of lawmakers when key policy debates come to the fore, even when those policies directly impact the communities themselves. Additionally, the ability of nonprofits that serve those communities and affect change is reduced.



While restrictive election rules may worsen the gaps, they are not the primary cause. Participation gaps, which are present in even the most voter-friendly states, are a reflection of deep historical patterns, gaps in political alienation, and most immediately actionable, gaps in who is and is not contacted about elections. With limited resources and a win-or-lose election, political campaigns understandably focus their outreach on contacting “likely” voters. The result however is that unlikely voters are not contacted, thus don't vote, and are once again labeled as unlikely voters. This fuels a negative feedback loop.

To build a more inclusive democracy, we need to create civic and democratic ecosystems that bring under-represented communities to the table. Unlike political campaigns, nonprofit-driven voter engagement is focused on ensuring that communities they serve participate and vote, regardless of previous voting history or partisan lean. In addition to providing contact from a trusted messenger, these nonprofits can engage in deeper discussions that help break down political alienation. As the data in this report shows, this voter engagement has a significant impact on overall voter turnout.

By tapping the vast reach of America's nonprofits, who have the motivation, long-term roots, and established community trust, we can engage communities at scale and foster a more inclusive democracy.

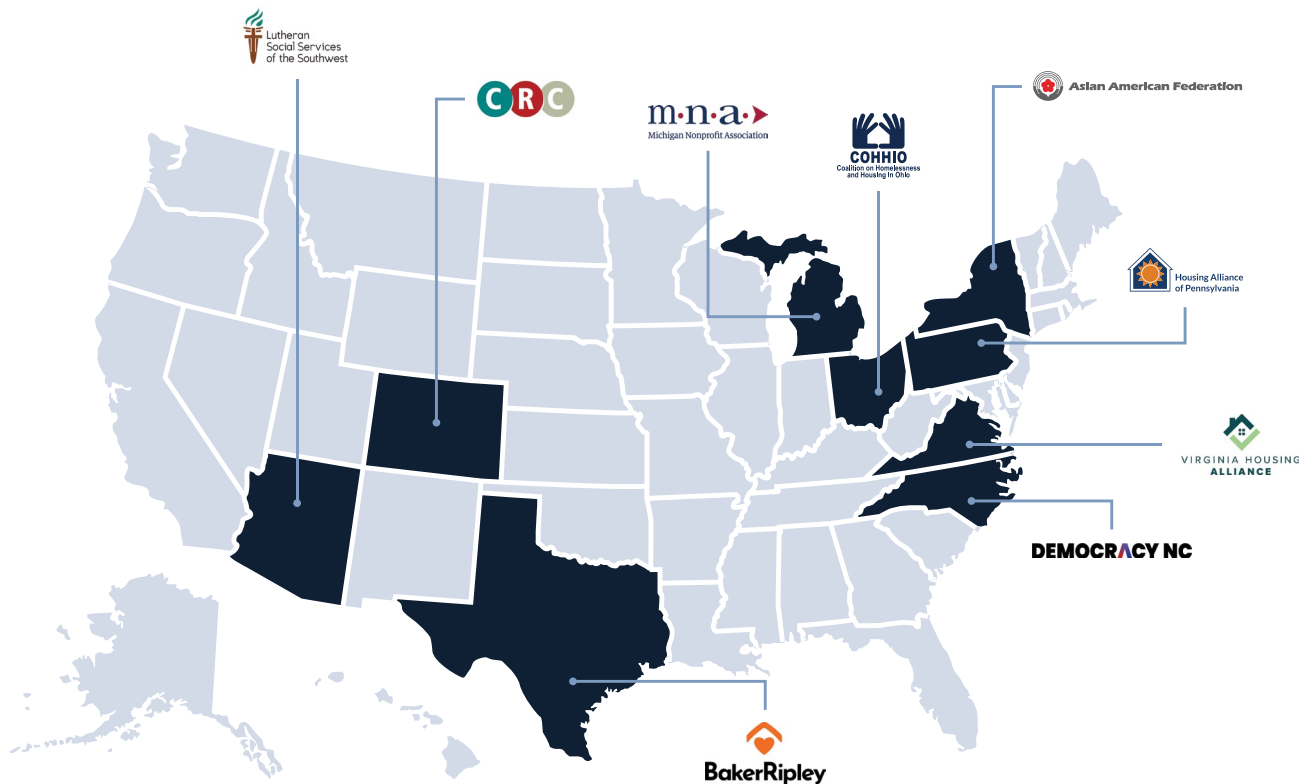


THE NONPROFIT VOTE FIELD PROGRAM

Through our multi-state field program, Nonprofit VOTE partners with regional anchor organizations, who in turn support a cohort of smaller, local sites to run nonpartisan voter engagement efforts. These local sites include community health centers, food pantries, housing clinics, and other nonprofits that can leverage the community trust, long-term relations, and cultural competency they have into effective nonpartisan voter engagement.

Through this hub and spoke model, we were able to engage 120 sites across 9 states in the 2022 election cycle that collectively reached over 60,000 voters - voters who are often left out of the democratic process. This engagement includes voter registration forms collected, voter pledges, GOTV communications, as well as one-on-one conversations, and action taken via digital tools. We have full contact info for 12,000 of the 60,000 total, which comes mostly from voter pledge cards and voter registrations collected by either paper or digital means in 8 of the 9 states (all but TX). About 7,000 of these same voters were matched to the voter file and are included in the following analysis.

WHERE WE WORK



AZ - Lutheran Social Services of AZ
CO - Community Resource Center
MI - Michigan Nonprofit Association

NC - Democracy NC
NY - Asian American Federation
OH - COHHIO

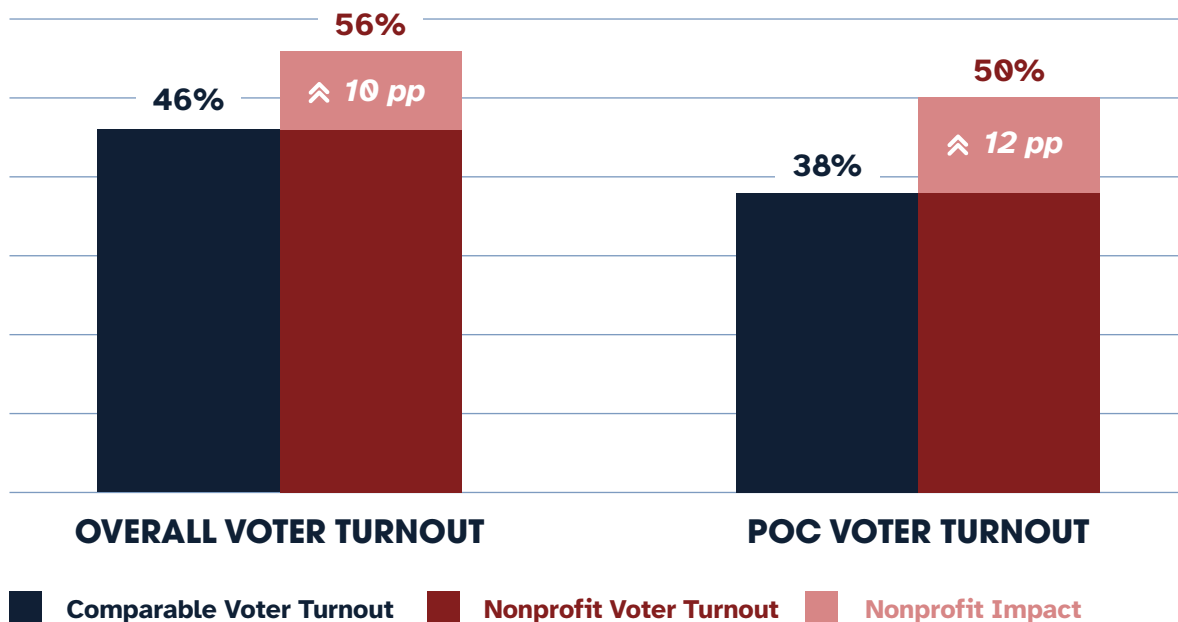
PA - Housing Alliance of PA
TX - Baker Ripley
VA - Virginia Housing Alliance

THE FINDINGS

NONPROFIT ENGAGEMENT BOOSTS TURNOUT

America's nonprofits are trusted messengers with deep roots in the communities they serve. They have missions and values of community empowerment that transcend the politics of the day. This gives them an unmatched advantage at engaging voters typically overlooked by partisan groups and campaigns who have very short-term goals focused on a day in November. Americans largely view their food pantries, public libraries, and other neighborhood nonprofits as unimpeachable local voices that aspire only to be mission-oriented servants for community members of every stripe.

As the data sets below will make clear, the power of these nonprofits to meet their constituencies where they are with effective voter engagement helps boost voter turnout among historically underrepresented communities, build power and influence for those communities and the nonprofits that serve them, and lay the groundwork for a more inclusive electorate.



HOW TO UNDERSTAND THIS NUMBER

Nonprofit Voters: Actual turnout of voters engaged at one of the participating nonprofit sites or data partners.

Comparable Voters: We assume that each voter contacted through our program would have, absent our contact, voted at the same rate as a demographically-matched set of registered voters within the same county. As such, we factored in state, county, sex, race, age, and marital status in calculating the 2022 turnout of comparable voters. See methodology for additional detail.

Assessing Impact: We look at the difference in percentage points (pp) between the Comparable Voter turnout and the Nonprofit Voter turnout. All numbers are rounded to the nearest whole.

NONPOWER POWER

ENGAGING A NEW GENERATION OF VOTERS

Younger people have historically voted at rates much lower than those of seniors, leaving a large and disproportionately unactivated block of voters. According to Census data, **the voter turnout gap between 18-24 year olds and those 75 and older in 2022 was almost 40 percentage points (28% vs 65%).**

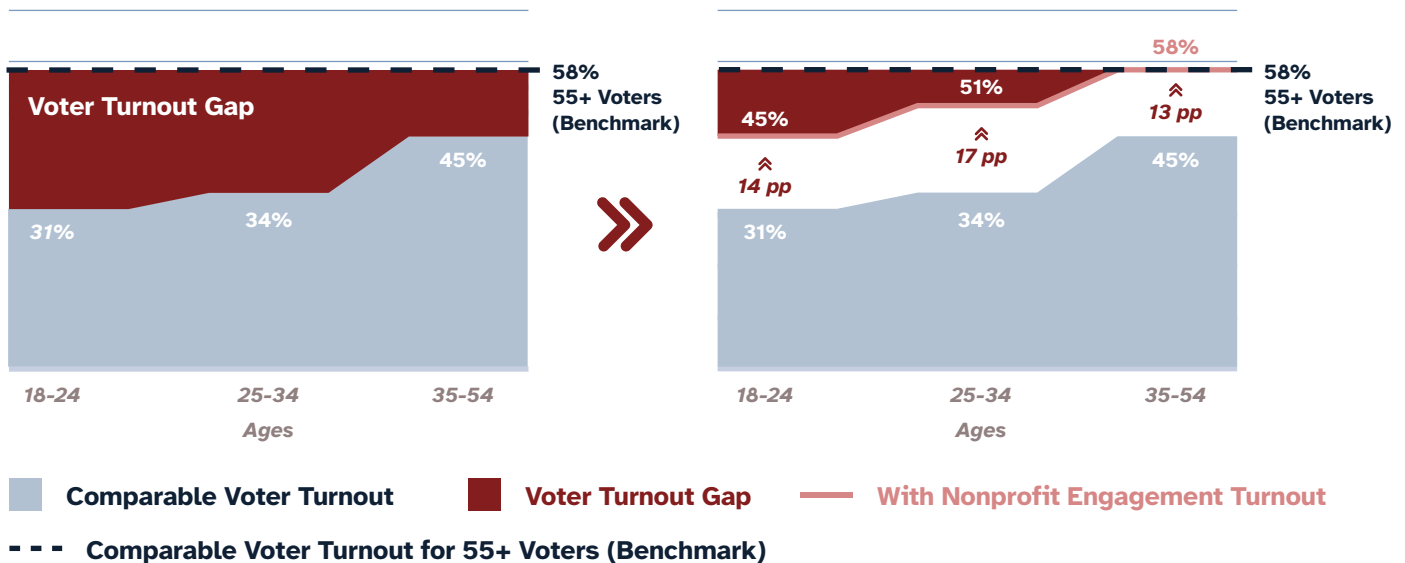
THE VOTER TURNOUT GAP WAS NARROWED BY AROUND HALF BETWEEN YOUTH AND OLDER VOTERS

COMPARABLE VOTERS

in the same states counties and with the same demographics as our nonprofit voters
**see methodology for full definition*

WITH NONPROFIT ENGAGEMENT

Narrower Gap is Better



Why this matters: When nonprofits engage young voters, they significantly narrow the turnout gap. The 14 pp boost to turnout for 18-24 year olds narrows the turnout gap between them and 55+ year olds by around half and we see similar shifts across age groups below 55+ years old. By voting at higher rates, younger voters are less likely to be labeled as an unlikely voter, which encourages more outreach from campaigns and helps increase their representation in our electorate.

ENGAGING A NEW GENERATION OF VOTERS

“The newspaper is really big with our older generations. It’s definitely a different demographic, but if their older generations are reading this, so are the younger ones and they’re discussing it. And if the younger ones are seeing these things on TikTok, Facebook, whatever, they’re more likely to be bringing that up to the older ones. So there’s two different ways to approach ‘em and we have to figure out the angles for both.”

- MJ, CRC Organizer
Pueblo, CO

CLIENTS ENGAGED BY OUR NONPROFITS WERE 1.3X MORE LIKELY TO BE 18-24 COMPARED TO THE REGISTERED VOTERS IN OUR PROGRAM STATES (13% VS 10%).

NONPROFIT VOTERS



REGISTERED POPULATION



Each person represents ten percent*

1.3X

more likely to engage
younger voters



NONPOWER POWER

BRINGING LOW-INCOME VOTERS INTO THE PROCESS

Lower income voters have historically voted at rates lower than those of higher income voters, leaving a large and disproportionately underrepresented group of voters. According to Census data, **the voter turnout gap between those earning under 20k and those earning 100-150k in 2022 was about 30 percentage points.**

THE VOTER TURNOUT GAP WAS NARROWED BY AROUND A THIRD BETWEEN LOWER AND HIGHER INCOME POPULATIONS

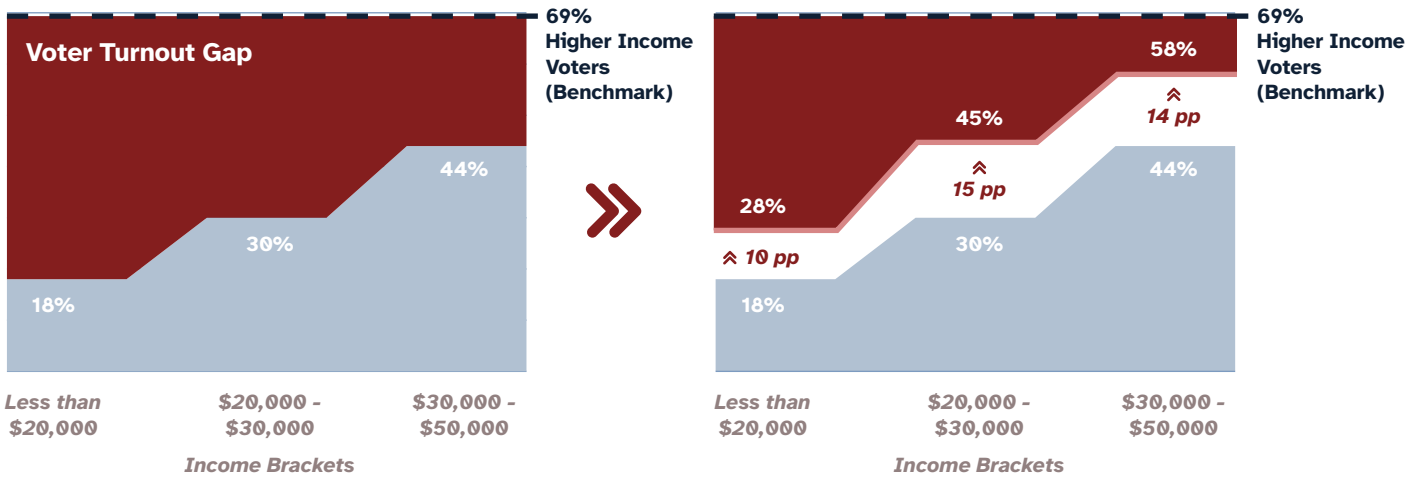
COMPARABLE VOTERS

in the same states counties and with the same demographics as our nonprofit voters

**see methodology for full definition*

WITH NONPROFIT ENGAGEMENT

Narrower Gap is Better



- Comparable Voter Turnout
- Voter Turnout Gap
- With Nonprofit Engagement Turnout
- - - Comparable Voter Turnout for Higher Income Population \$75,000 - \$100,000 (Benchmark)

Why this matters: When nonprofits engage lower income voters, nonprofits significantly narrow the turnout gap. The 15 pp boost to turnout for those earning 20-30k narrows the turnout gap between them and 75k-100k earners by around a third and we see similar shifts across income groups earning below 75k. By voting at higher rates, lower income voters are less likely to be labeled as an unlikely voter, which encourages more outreach from campaigns and helps increase their representation in our electorate.

BRINGING LOW-INCOME VOTERS INTO THE PROCESS



Nonprofit VOTE visited Duane who runs the **Small Town Project** in Rocky Ford, CO. Their mission is to “enhance economic and social vitality in Rocky Ford and improve the quality of life for residents of our community by achieving health equity.” They run the Rocky Food Food Share Project, a food share that opens twice a month. In some towns, 85% of the population comes to food distribution or gets food deliveries every 2 weeks.

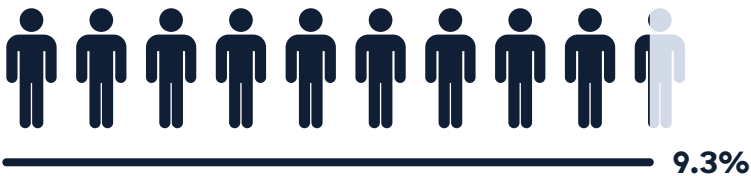
Over 75% of their clients are low-income earners with the median household income of the city about \$29k, compared to the median income of \$80k in the state of Colorado.

Source: Policymap

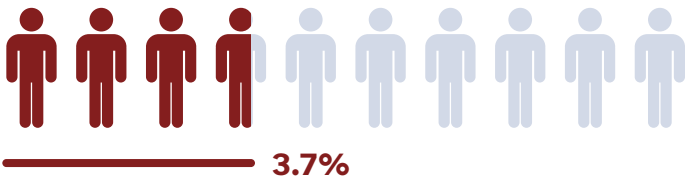
Read more about Small Town Project: smalltownproject.org/food

CLIENTS ENGAGED BY OUR NONPROFITS WERE 2.5X MORE LIKELY TO EARN LESS THAN 20K COMPARED TO REGISTERED VOTERS IN OUR PROGRAM STATES (9.3% VS 3.7%)

NONPROFIT VOTERS



REGISTERED POPULATION



Each person represents **one percent***

2.5X

more likely to engage people earning less than \$20,000

Read more about Duane and others unlocking the power of small town and rural communities in our Nonprofit Power Installments



NONPOWER POWER

PROMOTING RACIAL EQUITY AT THE POLLS

The turnout for people of color continues to be lower than those of white voters, leaving out a large and disproportionately underrepresented group of voters from the electorate. According to Census data, the **voter turnout gap between Asian, Hispanic, and Black voters and those White voters in 2022 was about 14 percentage points (33% vs 64%)**.

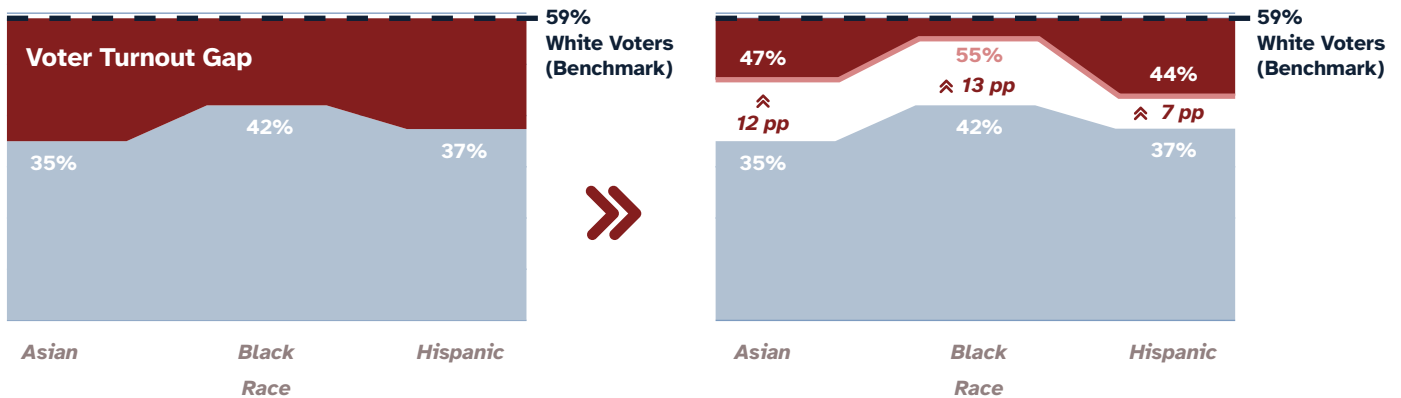
THE VOTER TURNOUT GAP WAS **NARROWED BY AROUND HALF** BETWEEN PEOPLE OF COLOR AND WHITE POPULATIONS

COMPARABLE VOTERS

in the same states counties and with the same demographics as our nonprofit voters
**see methodology for full definition*

WITH NONPROFIT ENGAGEMENT

Narrower Gap is Better



Comparable Voter Turnout
 Voter Turnout Gap
 With Nonprofit Engagement Turnout

 Comparable Voter Turnout for White Voters (Benchmark)

Why this matters: When nonprofits engage people of color, the turnout gap is significantly narrowed. The 12 pp boost to turnout for Asians narrows the turnout gap between them and White voters by around half and we see similar shifts across Black and Hispanic voters. By voting at higher rates, voters of color are less likely to be labeled as an unlikely voter, which encourages more outreach from campaigns and helps increase their representation in our electorate.

PROMOTING RACIAL EQUITY AT THE POLLS



Nonprofit VOTE visited Peggy who is the Executive Director of the **Association of Chinese Americans** in Detroit, MI. Their mission is to “advance the social, political and economic well-being of Asian Pacific Americans in the United States. Founded at Detroit in 1972.” They run cultural activities, culturally competent discounted senior meals, help navigate citizenship and other government programs, and host classes at their center.

“If we don’t register to vote, **who is going to represent the Asian Americans’ best interest?** We need to get our voices out and we need to let people hear us.” - **Peggy Du, Executive Director of ACA**

Read more about the Association of Chinese Americans: acadetroit.org

CLIENTS ENGAGED BY OUR NONPROFITS WERE 2.4X MORE LIKELY TO BE PEOPLE OF COLOR COMPARED TO THE REGISTERED VOTERS IN OUR PROGRAM STATES (64% VS 27%)

NONPROFIT VOTERS



REGISTERED POPULATION



Each person represents ten percent*

2.4X

more likely to engage people of color

Read more about Peggy and others unlocking the power of immigrant communities in our Nonprofit Power Installments

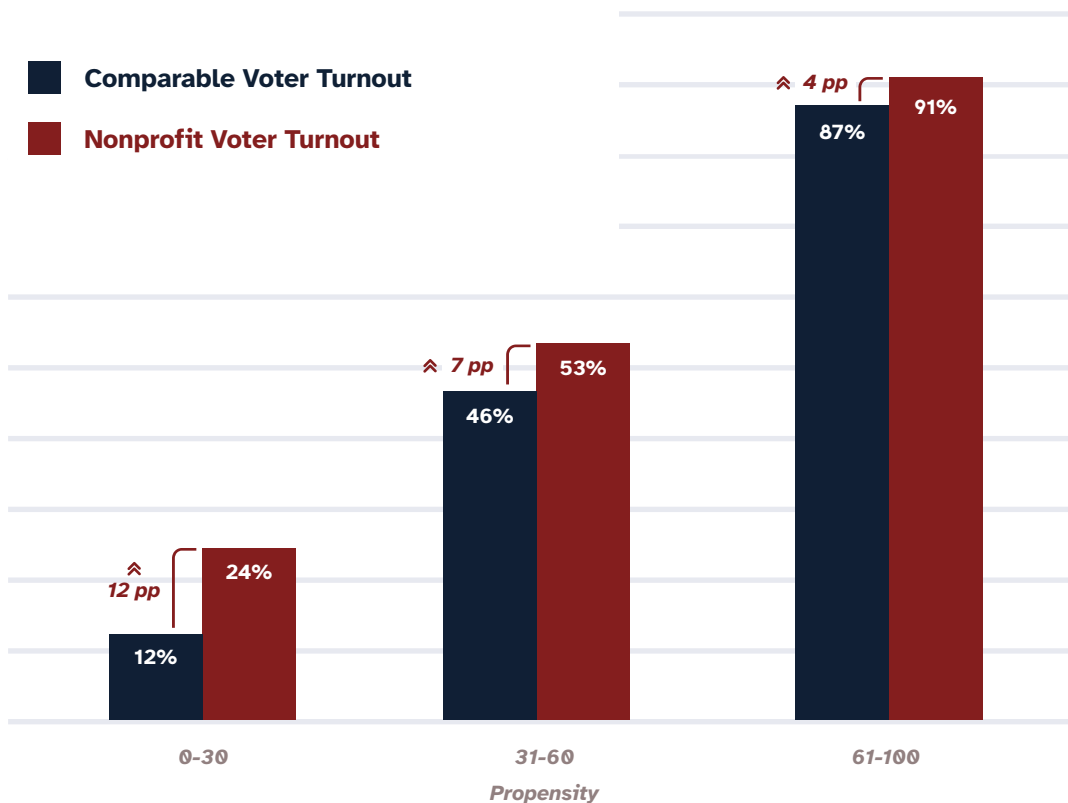


NONPOWER POWER

TURNING UNLIKELY VOTERS INTO LIKELY VOTERS

Campaigns often use a “voter propensity” score to target who to reach. Voters with lower propensity scores are those that models project are least likely to vote. Because campaigns are trying to win an election, they typically target higher propensity voters with scores of 60+. Low propensity voters, or “high potential” voters as we like to call them, have the most to gain by being contacted by nonprofits. This often applies to younger voters, people of color, and/or those with lower incomes.

NONPROFIT ENGAGEMENT BOOSTS TURNOUT AMONG THOSE LEAST LIKELY TO VOTE



Why this matters: When nonprofits engage those least likely to vote, they vote at higher rates. As a result, these voters are less likely to be labeled as an unlikely voter, which encourages more outreach from campaigns and helps increase their representation in our electorate. Nonprofits, which disproportionately work with these same low propensity or “high potential” voters, show remarkable potential to inform, engage, and turnout these chronically overlooked populations.

TURNING UNLIKELY VOTERS INTO LIKELY VOTERS

With training, materials, and support our sites were able to increase the likelihood of their communities voting

“We provide voter information cards, messaging, and training with key information like transportation, dates, and voting rights. And because we have longstanding relationships and are seen as a trustworthy source, we were able to work with the Secretary of State’s office to help address misinformation about voting dates spread in our area.

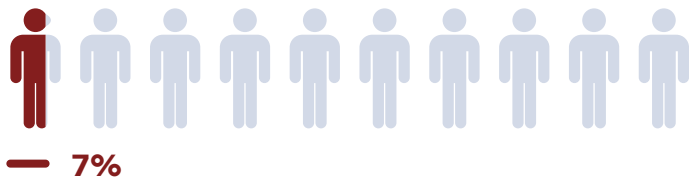
- **Katie Curnow, The Disability Network**
Flint & Genesee County Area, MI

VOTERS ENGAGED BY OUR NONPROFITS WERE 2.3X MORE LIKELY TO HAVE THE LOWEST PROPENSITY SCORES (0 TO 30) COMPARED TO THE VOTERS IN OUR PROGRAM STATES (16% VS 7%)

OUR NONPROFITS



REGISTERED POPULATION



Each person represents **ten percent***

2.3X

more likely engage voters with a propensity of 0-30

Read more about Katie and others unlocking the power of communities with disabilities in our Nonprofit Power Installments



THE **POWER** OF US — GET INVOLVED

At Nonprofit VOTE, we're committed to equipping our nation's nonprofits with tools and resources to help the communities they serve participate in our democracy through nonpartisan voter registration and engagement.

WHAT WE DO FOR **NONPROFITS**

Public Training

Our team hosts free webinars with expert guest speakers to bring the best in nonprofit voter engagement practices to nonprofit and community leaders across the US. We cover topics such as staying nonpartisan, hosting voter registration drives, making a plan for voter engagement, hosting candidate forums Getting Out the Vote, and much more.

Partnerships

We collaborate with nonprofits addressing food insecurity, affordable housing, physical and mental healthcare, and others on nonpartisan customized toolkits, staff and volunteer training, and planning resources to meet their unique needs. We also partner with local, state, and federal government agencies to ensure we're amplifying accurate resources to build a more accessible and equitable democracy.

Tools

We provide printable one-pagers, develop comprehensive toolkits, and design template planning materials to help you get the most impact out of your voter engagement initiatives.

Research

We partner with organizations across the country and learn alongside them what's working to highlight the impact and outcomes of their nonpartisan voter engagement initiatives.

Sign up to get notified about upcoming webinars and resources



WHAT WE DO FOR FOUNDATIONS

Philanthropy, through its words and actions, can either stifle or boost a nonprofit's capacity and interest in engaging communities in voting and democracy. With that in mind, in 2024 Nonprofit VOTE launched the Philanthropy for Voter Engagement initiative and its microsite toolkit as a living hub of resources, in-depth case studies, common strategies, and best practices tailored for foundations seeking to engage their communities in the voting space. Built in partnership with the Council on Foundations, United Philanthropy Forum, and Independent Sector, the toolkit serves as a roadmap for foundations seeking to support nonpartisan voter engagement among their grantees and community networks. See the Philanthropy for Voter Engagement microsite to learn how you can support voter engagement in your networks in 2024 and beyond.



Read more about our Philanthropy for Voter Engagement initiative to help foundations support nonpartisan voter engagement and a more inclusive democracy



METHODOLOGY

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

NONPROFIT VOTERS AND TURNOUT

Voter data was collected by the nonprofits in our study states which includes CO, MI, NC, PA, VA, NY, AZ, and OH. The aggregated voter data includes data from paper and digital sources of voter registrations (new and updated), checked registrations, and pledge to vote cards. In total, nonprofits submitted about 12,000 individuals for analysis with information through these channels, and about 7,000 of those were matched successfully to the Catalist voter file. By matching to the voter file, we are able to determine turnout and Catalist modeled demographics like race, age, income, and vote propensity. Demographics are sourced from a variety of places including state files, census data, and proprietary models. Particular measures to anonymize data sources were taken for Federally Qualified Health Centers to ensure confidentiality of data as required by HIPAA.

COMPARABLE VOTERS

To model the expected turnout of comparable voters with matching geographic and demographic characteristics, we sourced data from Catalist's registered voter file. For each voter in our dataset we estimated their expected turnout percentage based on the turnout (total # voted/total# registered) of the comparable group in Catalist's database by *county, sex, race, age, and marital status*. Using this data we were able to compare the turnout of our voters to the turnout of a demographically similar group of voters.

For income and vote propensity voters were matched by the characteristics above and then each of the individual demographics separately. For example the comparable voter group was matched on *county, sex, race, age, marital status, and income* OR *county, sex, race, age, marital status, and vote propensity*.

TURNOUT BOOST

Boosts were calculated by finding the percentage point difference between the average turnout of nonprofit voters themselves and the average turnout of comparable voters (the expected turnout of a demographically and geographically similar population, as noted above).

DEMOGRAPHIC COMPARISON

We analyzed the composition of the voters our nonprofits engaged on race, income, age, and voter propensity. We compared each composition with the registered voters in our program states. The difference in percentages is represented by the multiplier.

CATALIST VOTER FILE

Federal law requires all states to maintain publically accessible voter rolls that include name, address, and whether they voted in past elections. Catalist, using additional data to model voter demographics, supplements the state rolls to create their voter files.

PROPENSITY SCORE

Propensity is a likelihood of voting score modeled by Catalist. Its use is popular among campaigns to target high-likelihood voters. Values closer to 0 are less likely to vote and closer to 100 are more likely to vote. This is calculated based on prior vote history, census data, and other factors proprietary to Catalist.

CENSUS DATA

Census voter turnout gaps were calculated based on 2022 voting and registration data [census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/voting-and-registration/p20-586.html](https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/voting-and-registration/p20-586.html) . Turnout was determined by the total number of reported voted over the total number of Citizen Voting Population



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Released *March 2024* by *Nonprofit VOTE*

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SPECIAL THANKS TO

Emily Jacob and the Data Team at *Catalist*

MJ, Community Organizer for *Community Resource Center* in **Pueblo, Colorado**

AND FEATURED NONPROFIT SITES

Association of Chinese Americans, supported by *Michigan Nonprofit Association*
Detroit, Michigan

Small Town Project, supported by *Community Resource Center*
Rocky Ford, Colorado

The Disability Network
Flint, Michigan





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