A national, nonpartisan research center focused on young people in the US, especially those who are marginalized or disadvantaged in political life.

CIRCLE’s scholarly research informs policy and practice for healthier youth development and a better democracy.

Our Approach to Youth Civic Engagement

- Early engagement increases the likelihood of lifelong engagement
- We are concerned with **HOW MANY, HOW, and WHICH** young people participate
- Participating in civic engagement can support civic and other types of youth development
- Research is a tool to help reduce **SYSTEMIC GAPS** in youth civic opportunity
How do we make those entry points... 

VISIBLE

ACCESSIBLE

MEANINGFUL

...TO ALL YOUTH?
A paradigm shift . . .

FROM

“Mobilizing” Voters

TO

“Growing” Voters
They bring unique & critical perspectives to conversations about a range of public issues.

OF THE ELIGIBLE YOUTH ELECTORATE WILL BE UNDER AGE 40 IN 2020
Youth participation ...boosts engagement

Starting early builds broad civic engagement for everyone is all communities.

33% of youth 18-29 will be eligible to vote for the first time in 2020.
Youth participation...builds equity

2016 YOUTH TURNOUT

- 75% College Degree Turnout
- 29% No H.S. Diploma Turnout

Race and education gaps among youth must be addressed to increase turnout overall.
Youth participation ...is undermobilized

Registered & Voted | “Lost Votes”
--- | ---
2010 Midterm | 48% | 52%
2012 Presidential | 78% | 22%
2014 Midterm | 42% | 58%
2016 Presidential | 79% | 21%

Millions of “Lost Votes” occur in the youth population each election.
Civic deserts have a lack of belief in civic engagement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Civic deserts</th>
<th>Modest Access</th>
<th>High Access</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 resources</td>
<td>1-3 resources</td>
<td>4-5 resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>people like me have a legitimate voice</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m interested in politics</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>organized citizens can affect public policies</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strong institutions are essential for society</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Civic deserts have a lack of belief in civic engagement.
barriers to engagement may start before age 18

Lack of local opportunity structure
Negative Perception of Political Leaders
Low Exposure to Civic Practices
find opportunities to build engagement in all parts of young people’s lives
Opportunities in Different Parts of Young People’s Lives

Local conditions: resources and culture

Laws and codes

Households and families
Theoretical axes based on major influences that drive participation
  • Value on civic engagement
  • Significance of inequality in society

More than 10 items for each axis/index, which lead to an aggregate score

5 clusters emerged

Used those clusters to see whether/how they predicted media consumption and other civic behaviors
“Activist Egalitarians”
Believe systematic inequalities affect society
Value collective impact of civic participation
Actively engaged in conversations

“Participatory Libertarians”
Believe that society is basically fair and hard work will bring success
Value institutions and citizen participation

“Lost and Disengaged”
Unsure about most political issues
Little exposure to civic learning opportunities

“Disempowered Egalitarians”
Believe equality will improve society
Often feel “underqualified” to participate in civic life

“Alienated Libertarians”
Believe civic participation and institutions add little value
Support for economic prosperity

Distribution of Youth Typology on Two Core Beliefs

Higher Value on Civic Engagement

Lower Value on Civic Engagement

CIRCLE www.civicyouth.org
Distribution of Youth Typology Among Millennials

- Activist Egalitarians (39%)
- Participatory Libertarians (29%)
- Disempowered Egalitarians (8%)
- Alienated Libertarians (5%)
- Lost and Disengaged (18%)
Value of Civic Participation by Typology

- Participated in demonstration or protest
- Attended a meeting where local issues were discussed
- We can work together to promote important political goals
- People like me have a legitimate voice in political process
Our economic system is basically fair to all
Hard work does generally bring success
Blacks would be just as well-off as Whites if only they tried harder
Poor people are too dependent on government assistance
Activist Egalitarians (39% of Millennials)

- See racial & economic justice the problem and believe citizens can address problems
- Civically engaged, high turnout
- Majority have college education
- Economically diverse
- Live in communities with access to civic institutions
- Active on social media and engage with diverse perspectives
Participatory Libertarians (29%)

- Believe society is fair and individual citizens should contribute to society
- Majority w/ college education and good income
- Do vote but not politically engaged
- Live in communities with access to civic institutions
- Surrounded by similar perspectives
Lost and Disengaged (18%)

- Don’t know what to think of most social issues
- Low civic knowledge and turnout - disengaged
- Mixed view of inequality
- Little access to civic opportunities
- Relatively low educational attainment and income
- Most racially diverse group
Alienated and Disempowered Millennials More Likely to Vote for President Trump

Youth Ideological Typology by Vote Choice

- Voted for Hillary Clinton:
  - Disempowered Egalitarians: 3%
  - Alienated Libertarians: 2%
  - Activist Egalitarians: 11%
  - Participatory Libertarians: 54%
  - Lost and Disengaged: 30%

- Voted for Donald Trump:
  - Disempowered Egalitarians: 9%
  - Alienated Libertarians: 21%
  - Activist Egalitarians: 32%
  - Participatory Libertarians: 33%
Engaged Groups More Likely to Have College Experience

Education and Income by Typology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typology</th>
<th>College degree or more</th>
<th>Income over $50,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disempowered Egalitarians</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alienated Libertarians</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost and Disengaged</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activist Egalitarians</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participatory Libertarians</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Disempowered, Alienated and Lost Millennials More Likely to Report Living in a Civic Desert

Youth Ideological Typology by Access to Community Institutions

- **High Access**
  - Disempowered Egalitarians: 7%
  - Alienated Libertarians: 8%
  - Activist Egalitarians: 42%
  - Participatory Libertarians: 41%

- **Moderate Access**
  - Disempowered Egalitarians: 7%
  - Alienated Libertarians: 18%
  - Activist Egalitarians: 43%
  - Participatory Libertarians: 29%

- **Civic Desert**
  - Disempowered Egalitarians: 12%
  - Alienated Libertarians: 10%
  - Activist Egalitarians: 30%
  - Participatory Libertarians: 19%
Percentage of Young People, Ages 18-24, Who Agree or Strongly Agree with Each Statement, by Party Affiliation

I understand what it means to be a member of a political party

- Democrats: 65%
- Republicans: 65%
- Independent/Unaffiliated: 58%

I would participate in party events if I knew how to do so locally

- Democrats: 36%
- Republicans: 26%
- Independent/Unaffiliated: 17%

Being a member of a political party makes my voice more powerful

- Democrats: 48%
- Republicans: 45%
- Independent/Unaffiliated: 22%

Party elites sometimes prevent my preferred candidates from running

- Democrats: 51%
- Republicans: 48%
- Independent/Unaffiliated: 40%

I've never been asked to be a member of a political party

- Democrats: 54%
- Republicans: 56%
- Independent/Unaffiliated: 51%

Source: Texas College’s CIRCLE 2016 Pre-Election Poll
Different Approaches are Necessary

- Not everyone is on social media or trust it—many rely heavily on TV
- Important to understand what/whom youth trust
- Message AND Messenger (Some react negatively to party and organization outreach)
- Family remains the most reliable way to encourage young people
- Need to invest in longer-term and multi-faceted solutions
Ask These Questions about Your Young People

- How/where do they get information?
- Whom/What do they trust?
- What do they care about?
- How can they be welcomed into community?
- Who/what can be a bridge to their community?