IGNITE the Vote Report Card 2026

IGNITE played a pivotal role in the 2026 Midterm Election cycle at both ends of our theory of change: from bringing in first time gen z voters to celebrating our alumni winning their races across the country. Election cycles are built on off-election years - where we build community, create partnerships and work to create strategies. IGNITE is incredibly proud of our contributions and the impact we made in this election cycle.

Nearly **50 million Gen Zers** were eligible to vote in the 2026 midterm elections, with **8 million first time voters**. Early data shows that young voters (ages 18-29) voted at 27% in the 2026 midterms, second only to the first time Gen Zers who started voting in the 2018 midterms.

The United States is seeing historic shifts at both the state and federal level: welcoming its first Latina governor to serve the people of Texas, the first Black woman to serve the people of Georgia, and the first Indigenous woman to serve the people of New Mexico. Melat Kiros, who will be representing Colorado's 1st Congressional District, will serve as the **first Gen Z woman to hold office in Congress.** California is celebrating that it has achieved gender parity in the state legislature going into 2027. These are monumental changes happening across the country.

Ready To Lead: Coalition Building Two Years Apart

In 2024, we faced a problem: voter turnout was lower than in 2020. Despite this, IGNITE saw an important bottom line: while turnout was low, we saw 98% of our community cast their ballots — many for the very first time, and many in their first presidential race. Now, two years later, we continue to witness an extraordinary level of community engagement across our participants and alumni.

Ahead of the 2026 election, IGNITE worked with CIRCLE on their existing data from a survey they conducted with When We All Vote. IGNITE received analysis of Gen Z women independents and through the data, we uncovered the obstacles young women faced, including unclear voting processes, confusion around absentee ballots for college students, locating polling places, and more.

We also learned that:

- Women independents are the least registered group in the sample —**55% registered.**
- **Cost of living and inflation is the top issue for every group—63% of women,** 69% of men
- ***Women overall are statistically significantly more likely than men to believe their vote matters***



To address the core beliefs around how their vote matters and registration, IGNITE focused on a clear strategy for our 2026 campaign: clear messaging through trusted messengers.

Clear Messaging from Trusted Messengers

Research showed that key messages from trusted non profits were a key source of information for young women, specifically Gen Z independents. IGNITE focused on delivering these key messages digitally: from January 2026 through Election Day, IGNITE ran a year-long digital campaign across Instagram, LinkedIn, and email. It met Gen Z women where they get their information and moved them from awareness to action.

All resources around key messaging were available through the

IGNITE Action Resource Library

— a free and accessible tool for our participants to meet their organizing goals, reach their communities, and ensure they have the tools to communicate effectively. This included resources on Voter Registration, how to check someone's Voter Status, Requesting Absentee Ballots, Pledge to Votes, and information for voters to Know their Rights at the ballot box. This was used widely by in-network and out-of-network community members — and were utilized by first-time and veteran IGNITE members.

Additionally, the following resources ensured our messaging reached our Gen Z participants effectively, in order to empower them to engage meaningfully in the electoral process:

- Messaging guide for Gen Z Organizers
- How to talk politics with your friends and family
- 3 things you didn't know about voting
- Messaging guide for Partner Organizations
- My vote doesn't matter: falsehoods about voting
- Mistakes That Can Disqualify Your Ballot



Trusted Information Through Our Digital Campaign

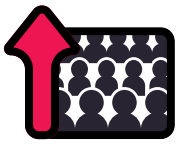
To further amplify our messaging, IGNITE launched a digital campaign utilizing peer-to-peer and influencer videos, memes, and infographics across major social media platforms, with a focus on Instagram. Recognizing that Gen Z consumes news primarily through social media, we prioritized combating misinformation by delivering trusted content, and by platforming the work that our community members were doing to engage their campuses in their own rights.

89 campaign posts with over 72,000 views and impressions.

IGNITE channels published 77 posts: 39 on Instagram and 38 on LinkedIn.

63,000+ views & impressions and 2,600+ interactions,
including likes, comments, shares, and saves.

Our audience grew more engaged as Election Day got closer.



Most-viewed posts = practical, action-oriented



In Person Voting 101 post reached 3,100+ views.

Election Day post reached 2,786 views and 1,801 unique accounts, *the widest reach of any post this cycle.*

July through November

2/3 of the year's views.

ITV Countdown Email Series

50,000+ deliveries.
10,000 subscribers/send.
5,600 unique opens.

Engagement: ~ 13%.
ITV content: nearly 9,500 impressions.
ITV Sticker Announcement = 42% engagement rate.

Additionally, staff amplified the campaign through their own networks. Staff shared ITV content on their personal accounts and in partner groups. This added more than 9,300 views and impressions. Staff posts on LinkedIn reached more than 1,600 members.

Gen Z spends an average of 5.1 hours a day on social media, and more than half of Americans now get their news there. Research shows that Gen Z women turn to their trusted non-profits for information for civic engagement. IGNITE understood that we were not immune to the issues around misinformation and disinformation. From training IGNITE leaders directly to boost the truth and react thoughtfully - we equipped participants with the tools they needed as they engaged online. All of these skills are available in our toolkits. These resources were available to our high school and college chapters and organizers throughout the campaign as they led voter outreach on their campuses could share accurate information and correct falsehoods when they appeared.

Mobilization Events Across the United States and Online

IGNITE has a large presence on campuses across the country and we trained key student leaders on the key messages to lead on campus events along with large-scale events nationally.

IGNITE kicked off the 2026 election season on January 31 in Dallas, bringing together 56 Gen Z changemakers from across Texas for a full-day summit. Participants learned about relational organizing, countering misinformation and disinformation, and storytelling. These sessions gave them the skills to reach their peers, correct false information about voting, and make the case for why their voices matter at the ballot box. Every attendee left with a plan to mobilize her friends and community ahead of the midterms.

IGNITE hosted **three large-scale in-person events in Dallas, Texas; Columbus, OH and Sacramento, CA** reaching 273 young women. These events were focused on training student leaders on key messaging to support their peers in voter registration as they were centered around the midterm primary schedule. Two of the events were in conjunction with our IGNITE the Capitol events where participants had the opportunity to take the voter engagement and advocacy tactics they learned across IGNITE's workshops directly to their elected representatives at the Capitol, focusing on areas such as abortion access, integrated access to menstrual products in public universities, improved civic education curriculums in public schools, and efforts to recognize Gen Z's power at the polls by integrating legislation to increase polling locations.

IGNITE hosted a **five-part virtual Spring Training Series** with young women from January through May. It prepared organizers to register voters, explain the ballot, and mobilize their campuses before the primaries.

To ensure that we supported our leaders nationally, we held a **virtual Young Women Vote Summit** for chapters, fellows, and program participants — where they got to hear from speakers well-versed in the voting process, and who understood the need for civic education in our communities. This 90-minute event equipped participants with a personal voting plan, a challenge to mobilize one or more peers in the forty-eight hours after the event.

IGNITE's Chapters and Community Members organized two **IGNITE the Vote (ITV) Week of Action events** in the spring and the fall, reaching over 1,300 young people. The spring Week of Action was during an active primary season. ITV Ambassadors hosted 20 events focused on voter registration and encouraging people to vote in the primaries. The second Week of Action was held in alignment with National Voter Education Week. With 50+ individual events, students on high school and college campuses were given the tools they needed to engage their campuses — and did so with overwhelming success. From Akron, Ohio, to Pharr, Texas, all the way to Albany, New York and Huntington Beach, California, our chapter leaders took the opportunity to spread awareness and engage their communities through in-person and virtual events, social media campaigns, and on-campus and community-focused events.



- Chapters at schools like Crofton High School hosted voter pre-registration and registration events, voter information systems focused on procedure, and rights at the polls. The events were centered on the importance of the youth vote.
- Our Fellow at the University of North Texas at Dallas organized community meetings to dtermine issues that mattered to young voters while building partnerships with other local organizations, hosting class chats, and canvassing.
- The University of Akron hosted a creative event where participants created vision boards to help them visualize the types of leaders they wanted to see--and to be--in their community.

IGNITE Partnerships: Expanding Impact

IGNITE collaborated with a myriad of partners — all who helped contribute to the expansion of our programming, our messaging, and our reach. These partnerships significantly boosted IGNITE's capacity to engage Gen Z voters, leveraging the influence of trusted brands and organizations to drive awareness and action.

Students Learn, Students Vote: IGNITE has been awarded the **2026 Students Learn Students Vote Award for Centering and Trusting Local Leaders.** Throughout our partnership, SLSV helped promote IGNITE's messaging through their coalition toolkit, increasing engagement and reach within college communities.

The Civics Center: With an increased interest in voter engagement from high school students, IGNITE joined the **The Civics Center Ready to Vote Coalition.** The data and resources from this organization were helpful in supporting students in the IGNITE the Vote Summer Leadership Academy and with high school pre-registration drives.



Rock the Vote: RTV provided essential voting resources (voter registration tools, status checks, polling location finders) used by hundreds, driven largely by IGNITE's social media outreach and event activations.

Golden State Valkyries and Golden State Warriors: We partnered with the the orgainization to register and educate students and community members across California's Bay Area as the Valkyries' Civic Education Partner. Throughout our partnership, we helped promote the importance of IGNITE's messaging to our California community, while targeting groups not often civically engaged.

The Road to 2028 and Beyond

The path is clear: cement voting access through legislation and continue to prepare Gen Zers to register, vote, and mobilize their peers. IGNITE will focus on:

Refined Campaign Tactics: By investing in ongoing research to understand Gen Z engagement and sentiment, we use tailored messaging, data-driven and nimble strategies, and on-campus activations to expand our reach. IGNITE will partner with New York University to continue research on Gen Z and IGNITE participants The research is designed to understand civic engagement and political leadership. We will also continue to work with CIRCLE on data analysis and participate in the national voter survey.

Continuous Mobilization: IGNITE will continue integrating voter education and registration into year-round programming to ensure that Gen Z women are prepared to vote as soon as they are eligible. Expanding civic education opportunities enables them to understand how to advocate for issues and identify their local, state, and federal representatives.

Strengthened Partnerships: Working with organizations and brands that align with our mission amplifies IGNITE resources and outreach.

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Where We Go From Here: IGNITE-ing The Path Forward

Coming off a monumental and history-making midterm season, we recognize that the work is not done. By 2028, Gen Z and millennial voters are expected to make up more than half of the electorate in the U.S. — and they're paying attention. If these midterm results have shown us anything, it's that the work is not done yet.

Thank you for being a loyal and generous partner as we continue to inspire, educate, and mobilize a generation of young women who will lead with conviction and transform democracy for years to come. We appreciate you for believing in the power of Gen Z and trusting IGNITE to champion their voices. Together, we will build a democracy that fully reflects their strength and vision.

How Can You Join the Movement?

The power of young women doesn't end at the ballot box. Neither does our work.

From classrooms to boardrooms to legislative chambers, IGNITE equips Gen Z young women with the skills, confidence, and connections to turn their voices into action and their political influence into lasting change. Together, we can ensure more young women have the opportunities and support to lead.

Find Your Voice. Take Action.
For Students and Young Women: Your voice matters, and your leadership can make a difference. Join or start an IGNITE chapter, participate in our training programs, mobilize your peers, and advocate for the issues shaping your future.

Find Your Voice

Invest in the Next Generation.
For Donors and Supporters: Help more young women discover their political power and put it into action. Your investment expands access to leadership training, civic engagement, and opportunities for young women to drive change in their communities.

Make a Gift to IGNITE.



Stay Connected. Lead Together.
For Alumni, Elected Officials, and Partners: The IGNITE community doesn't end when a program does. Join our growing networks of alumni, elected officials, and changemakers to build connections, share opportunities, mentor emerging leaders, and strengthen the collective influence of young women in politics.

Connect with the IGNITE Network.

IGNITE is a nonpartisan 501(c)(3) organization and does not support, oppose, or coordinate with any candidate for public office or political party. IGNITE is for all cis and trans women, as well as nonbinary people who are comfortable in a space that centers the experiences of young women.