



To: NextGen Iowa Allies and Supporters
From: Brit Bender, Iowa State Youth Director
Date: April 24, 2019
Re: New Voter File Data Shows Impact of NextGen Iowa on 2018 Midterms

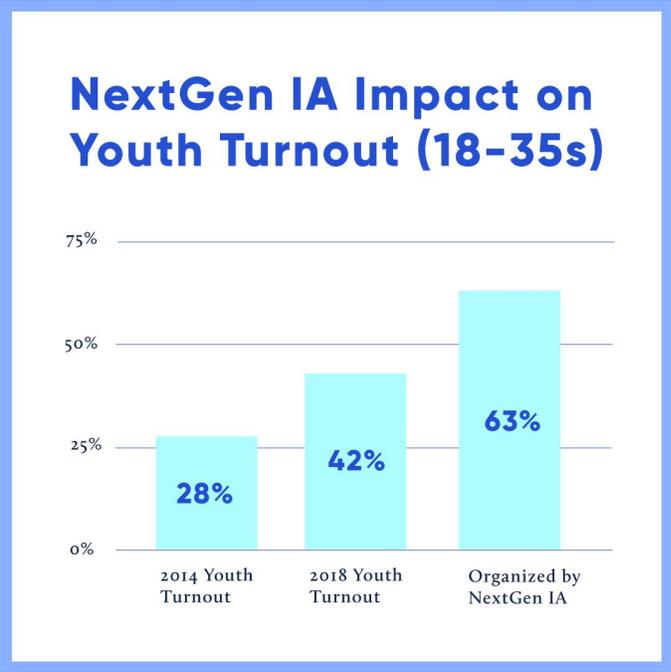
NextGen has organized in Iowa consistently since 2014, and with competitive gubernatorial and Congressional elections on the ballot in 2018, we grew our program to 58 staff and over 800 volunteers to turnout young Iowans to historic levels. Due in large part to NextGen’s program, youth turnout levels in 2018 [were the highest in any midterm in a decade](#). **41% of young Iowans (18-35) cast a ballot in November** — up 13 points from the last midterm election. While turnout was high across all ages, the turnout rate of young Iowans increased disproportionately, helping elect Cindy Axne and Abby Finkenauer as the first female members of Congress representing Iowa in Washington, DC.

	2014 Turnout	2018 Turnout	Percentage Increase
18-35	28%	41%	13 pts
All Ages	54%	61%	7 pts

NextGen America’s program was key to success
 In 2018, NextGen Iowa ran a massive face-to-face field organizing program, a digital advertising program aimed at motivating over 90,000 unlikely-to-vote young people, and an experiment-informed Get Out The Vote mail program. With Iowa’s voter file updated, it is clear NextGen’s comprehensive mobilization program helped play a decisive role in flipping key Iowa Congressional districts. If Iowa is going to flip back to blue in 2020, the lessons learned from NextGen’s program will be critical for victory.

FIELD: Talking to young people in person is the most effective tactic

Young Iowans are the ones Democrats need to win in 2020, and they are willing to show up and vote, but only if we actively engage and mobilize them. As the graph on the right shows, **63% of the young Iowans** organized¹ by the NextGen field program turned out, 22 points higher than their age cohort writ large. As shown in the table below, our year-long voter registration efforts dramatically increased turnout, as did the canvassing and pledge-to-vote programs we ran in the fall.



¹ “Organized” includes young people who were registered, canvassed, or committed to vote by NextGen’s field and mail programs.

Tactic	# of People	% Turnout
Registered to vote by NextGen	14,243	60%
Pledged to vote by NextGen	21,668	68%
Canvassed by NextGen	6,414	56%

RED-TO-BLUE: NextGen made the difference in crucial Congressional districts

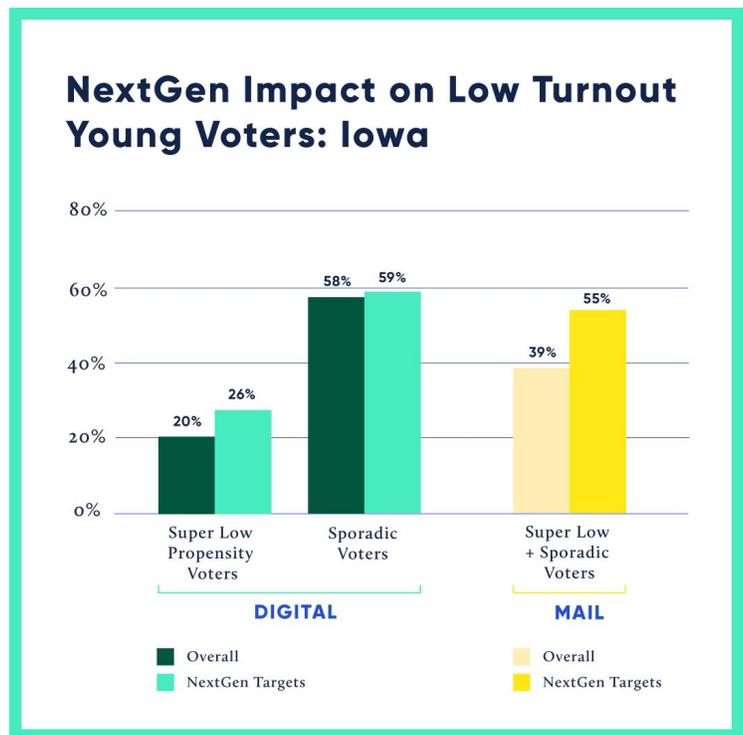
NextGen’s organizing efforts were integral to flipping crucial red-to-blue districts. In IA-03, where Cindy Axne (D) defeated incumbent Rep. David Young (R) by just 7,709 votes, NextGen registered 3,390 young people to vote, gathered 4,409 pledges to vote, and knocked on 16,109 doors. **65% of the young people** organized by NextGen in IA-03 voted, compared to 48% of young people in the district overall. Similarly, in IA-01, **62% of young people** organized by NextGen cast a ballot, sending Abby Finkenaur to DC as one of the youngest women in Congress.

District	Turnout (All Ages)		Youth Turnout (18-35)		Organized by NextGen	Increased Turnout of NextGen Targets
	2014 Overall	2018 Overall	2014 Overall	2018 Overall		
IA-1	56%	64%	29%	43%	62%	19 points
IA-3	55%	65%	31%	48%	65%	17 points

DIGITAL + MAIL: An effective youth program talks to young people where they are... and often

To get them to young people to vote, campaigns and organizations must talk to them where they are. A smart young voter program cannot be limited to face-to-face conversations, it must also include a digital, mail and texting program to reach young voters who are more difficult to reach in person.

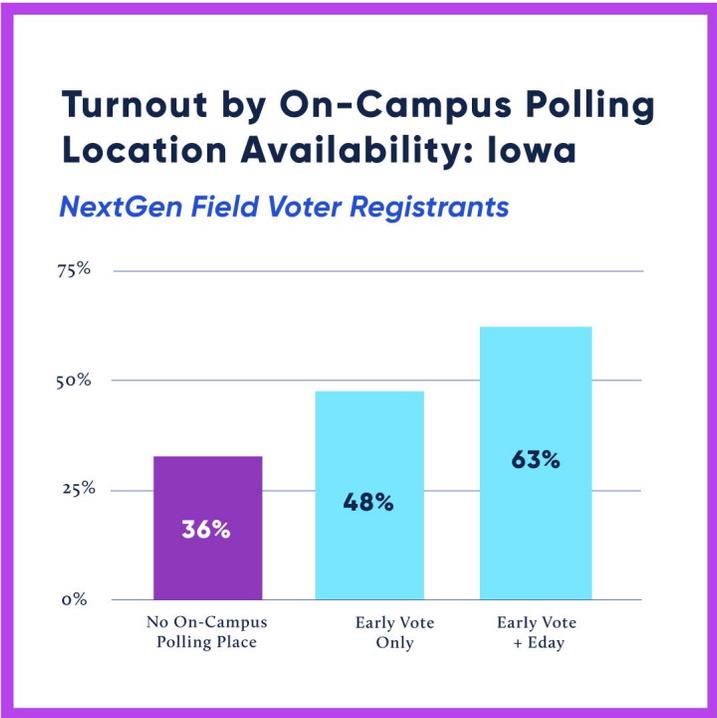
NextGen Iowa ran a 9-week digital ad program aimed at turning out young people who either have never voted before or are sporadic voters at best. Young Iowans targeted by our digital program turned out up to **6 points higher** than the young voters we didn’t target. Similarly, we sent get-out-the-vote mail to over 90,000 Iowans, and these voters turned out **16 points higher** than those we did not send mail to (read: mail works for young people!).



NEXTGEN ON CAMPUS: Making voting accessible to busy students

Necessary to any youth vote effort is a program to expand access to the ballot box. Iowa law allows organizers to petition to place early vote polling locations on campuses, and our team collected thousands of signatures to get 19 early vote polling places on campuses.

Young people registered by NextGen voted at increasingly higher rates when their colleges or universities offered an early voting site, and when campuses offered **both** early voting and Election Day polling sites, **turnout increased 27 points.**



What's Next?

Republicans have lost young voters for a generation and know they can only win if young people are discouraged or prevented from casting a ballot. Iowa Republicans have a history of voter suppression tactics. In 2017, they rushed to pass a Voter ID law and shortened early voting. Now, the Iowa GOP is trying to stifle the voices of young Iowans by introducing a bill to restrict early voting locations from being in state-owned buildings, like student centers at public universities. Last year, NextGen saw increased early voting at college campuses across the board, from community colleges to small private schools to public universities. During the five days of early voting at Iowa State University, [nearly three times as many people voted on campus compared to the 2014 midterms.](#)

With Donald Trump and Joni Ernst facing tough re-elections in Iowa, NextGen Iowa will fight back against these blatant, political ploys. With over 800 volunteers and staff on the ground, we will work with election officials and college and university administrations to ensure more young people have access to the ballot.

Democrats will need to galvanize young people to win Iowa in two years, and NextGen is already on the ground putting in the work to do so. From now until November 2020, NextGen will continue organizing young Iowans ahead of the presidential elections. This year, NextGen will not only mobilize young people to vote in special elections, like the [successful effort in Senate District 30](#), but also test new tactics to use in-person and online to get young people off the sidelines for 2020.