



**To:** NextGen Pennsylvania Allies and Supporters  
**From:** Larissa Sweitzer, Pennsylvania State Youth Director  
**Date:** April 10th, 2019  
**Re:** New Voter File Shows Impact of NextGen Pennsylvania on 2018 Midterms

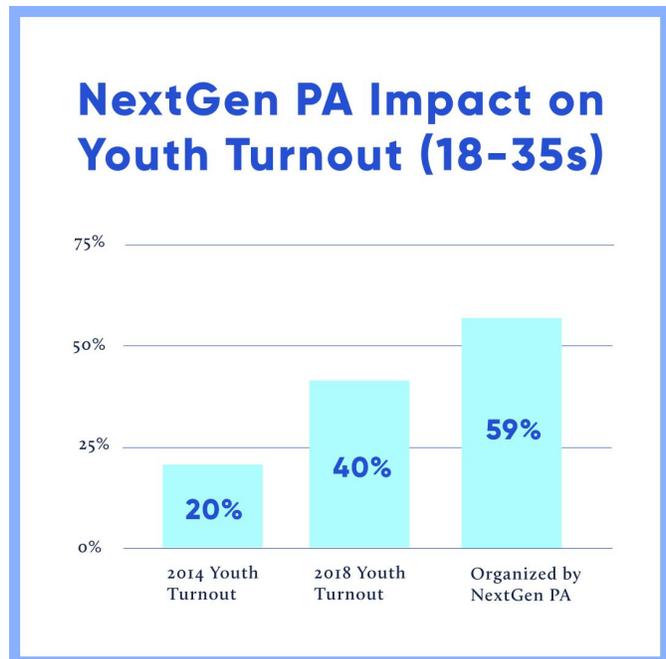
NextGen has been consistently organizing in the Keystone State since 2014. After Democrats narrowly lost Pennsylvania in 2016, NextGen recommitted to building progressive youth infrastructure in the state to help avoid another devastating Republican defeat in the midterm elections. In 2018, young voters in Pennsylvania took hold of their immense power by overwhelmingly [re-electing](#) Senator Casey and Governor Wolf, choosing John Fetterman as Lieutenant Governor, and helping to flip Pennsylvania’s Congressional Delegation [blue](#).

While Pennsylvanians of all ages turned out to vote in record numbers, young people increased their turnout disproportionately to the general public, propelling Democrats to office up and down the ticket. In November, **40% of young Pennsylvanians (18-35)** cast a ballot -- nearly double the state’s 2014 young voter turnout rate.

	2014 Turnout	2018 Turnout	Percentage Increase
<b>18-35</b>	21%	40%	19 points
<b>All Ages</b>	43%	59%	16 points

**NextGen America’s Program was key to victory**

In 2018, NextGen Pennsylvania ran a massive face-to-face field organizing program statewide, a digital advertising program aimed at motivating nearly 470,000 unlikely-to-vote Pennsylvanians, and an experiment-informed Get Out The Vote mail program. With Pennsylvania’s voter file updated, it’s clear NextGen Pennsylvania’s comprehensive mobilization program helped play a decisive role in defending Pennsylvania’s statewide leaders and sending four Democratic female members of Congress to Washington, DC. Pennsylvania is key to Democrats winning back the White House in two years, and the lessons learned from NextGen’s program will be critical for victory in 2020.



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

Young Pennsylvanians, who are not traditionally targeted by political campaigns, are the ones Democrats need to win in 2020. They are willing to show up and vote, but only if we actively engage and mobilize them. As the above graph shows, **59% of young Pennsylvanians** organized<sup>1</sup> by NextGen voted, nearly 20 points higher than their age

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



cohort writ large. This massive jump in turnout appeared possible early on in the cycle, as Pennsylvania saw young voter registration [increase by 10 points](#) in the wake of the Parkland shooting. By June, registered voters aged 18-35 [outnumbered voters 65 and over](#) for the first time ever in PA. In total, NextGen added 41,160 young people to voting rolls in 2018, and as shown in the table below, our year-long voter registration efforts increased turnout dramatically, as did the canvassing and pledge-to-vote programs we ran in the fall.

Tactic	# of People	% Turnout
Registered to vote by NextGen	41,160	60%
Pledged To Vote by NextGen	41,722	62%
Canvassed by NextGen	9,659	49%

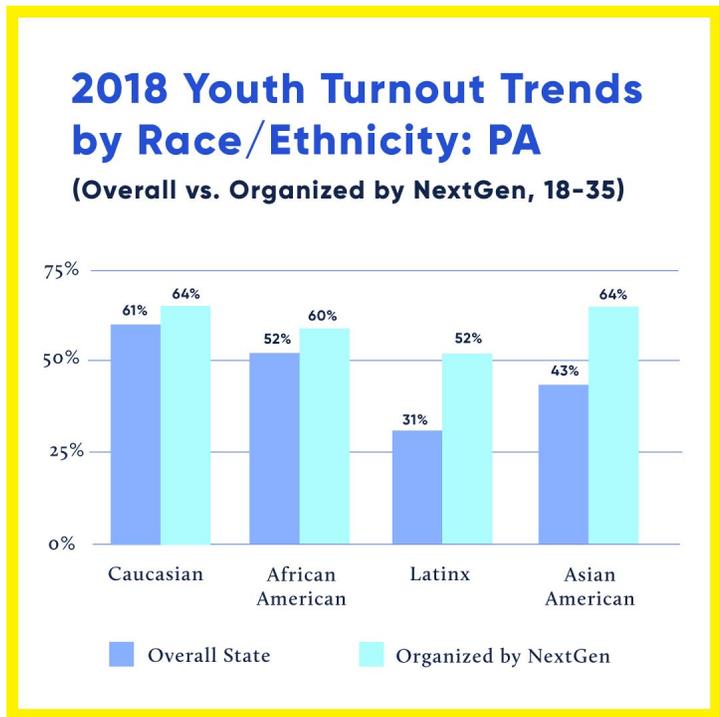
NextGen’s organizing efforts were integral to flipping newly-drawn red-to-blue districts, such as PA-07. [A record 39%](#) of 18-24 year olds in the Lehigh Valley turned out to elect Susan Wild, about three times higher than youth turnout in 2014. NextGen’s push to register over 3,700 young people to vote, knock over 22,800 doors, and roll out a digital and mail program in the district paid off. **57% of the 18-35 year olds organized by NextGen in PA-07** cast a ballot, 22 points higher than overall 18-35 year old turnout rate in the district.

Following a nationwide drop in turnout among young people of color in 2016, NextGen doubled down on its efforts to organize in communities of color across all states. In Pennsylvania, we emphasized organizing at Historically Black Colleges and Universities, like Lincoln University in toss-up district PA-06. **60% of the Lincoln University students registered to vote by NextGen cast a ballot.**

Overall, our field program had a disproportionate impact with the young people of color we organized across the state of Pennsylvania as they turned out **8- 21 percentage points higher** than the young people of color that our program did not reach.

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

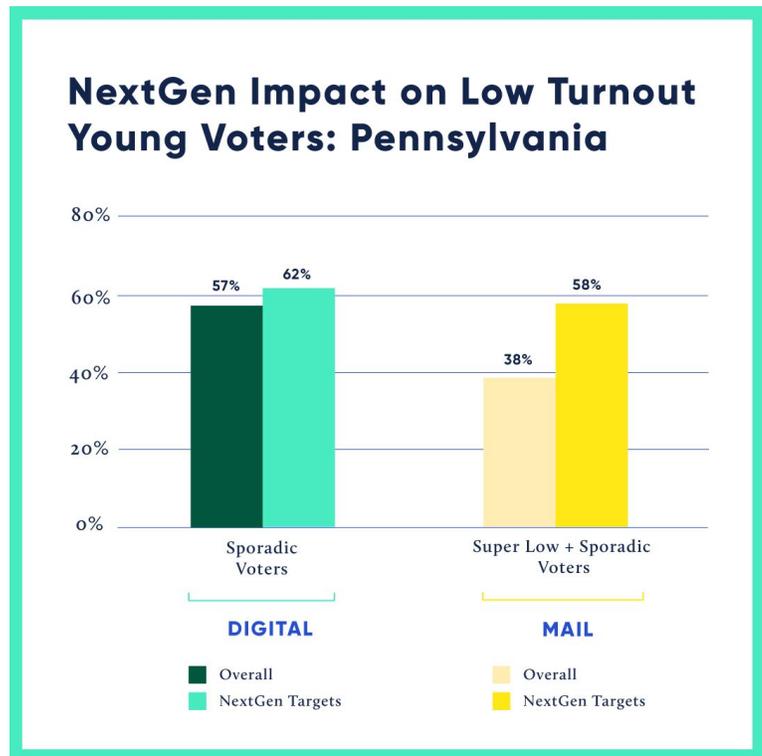
To get young people to vote, campaigns and organizations must talk to them where they are. A smart young voter program is not limited to face-to-face conversations, it must also include a digital, mail and texting program to reach young voters who are more difficult to reach in person. NextGen



Pennsylvania ran a 11-week digital ad program aimed at turning out young people who either have never voted before or are sporadic voters at best.

Young Pennsylvanians targeted by our digital program turned out **up to 5 points higher** than the young voters we didn't target. Similarly, we sent get-out-the-vote mail to over 628,000 young voters in Pennsylvania, and they turned out **20 points higher** than those we did not send mail to (read: mail works with young people!).

Analysis shows that if NextGen Pennsylvania talked to a young person through a multitude of different mediums (in person, via text, online, in the mail), they were more likely to vote. **46%** of the young people NextGen PA talked to by only one method cast a ballot, while **82%** of the young people NextGen talked to through four different channels (field, mail, digital and text) voted. It's clear -- to mobilize this crucial demographic in 2020, Democrats need to start engaging young people now and talk to them often.



**What's Next?**

Young voters are key to sustaining Pennsylvania's blue wave in 2020. Successful Democratic candidates will need to galvanize young people and people of color to win statewide, and NextGen is already on the ground putting in the work to do so.

NextGen PA will work to turn out the youth vote in a number of local and statewide elections in order to elect candidates that support progressive, inclusive ideas. Ahead of the upcoming special election in PA-12, NextGen will help students, who will not be on campus during the May 21st election, vote absentee. Through on-campus events and door-knocking pushes, NextGen will explain the urgency of this election and give students the resources they need to cast their ballot.

In addition to organizing on college campuses and in communities, NextGen Pennsylvania will continue its fight to expand access to the ballot box for young Pennsylvanians. There is currently a four-day window between the absentee ballot request deadline and the absentee ballot return deadline in Pennsylvania. To give all Pennsylvanians enough time to return their ballots, NextGen is going to push for an Election Day absentee ballot return deadline instead. Furthermore, NextGen will continue to urge university administrations and registrars to add polling locations on campuses in order to make voting more accessible. 2019 might be an off-cycle year, but NextGen Pennsylvania continues to be hard at work expanding our democracy and ensuring young people can make their voices heard.