

2020 Priorities Overview | New Era Colorado Foundation

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Young voters are the largest voting bloc in Colorado this year, and in 2018 they cemented their place as a powerful and decisive constituency in our state by turning out in record numbers. While we look ahead to what is likely to be historic turnout again in 2020, we can't slow down. Not only has the pandemic exacerbated existing inequalities in our political, socioeconomic, healthcare, and education systems, it's also exposed how these systems fail to protect Black communities and communities of color.

Now, more than ever, we must continue organizing young people. We've adapted our current programs to keep doing what [New Era](#) does best: meeting young people where they're at through innovative tactics and organizing them to fight for the dignity and humanity of all.

Driving Record Young Voter Turnout

- **Registration:** We'll register thousands of young people to vote and stick with those registrants until they cast their ballot. Our voter registration program will—digitally, and in person as we're able—reach into at least 16 counties, 20+ campuses, and 40+ high schools across Colorado to meet young people where they are and ensure they're registered. This includes our high school program, our strongest avenue to reach more young people of color. In spring 2019, 43% of our high school program registrants self-identified as young people of color or with multiple racial identities.
- **Young voter mobilization:** In October, we'll launch a statewide voter turnout program using phone calls, text messages, door knocking, and voter education tactics to mobilize tens of thousands of young people to cast their ballots across the state. We'll target not only our 2019-2020 cycle registrants, but also our registrants from 2014-2018 to continue to build their habit of voting. We'll also plan to engage those newly registered through automatic voter registration, which comes online in July 2020. We anticipate making up to 100,000 GOTV phone calls, sending 80,000 text messages, and—pending COVID—delivering 5,000-6,000 young people directly into campus voter service centers.
- **Youth election access reform implementation:** We spearheaded the young voter access provisions of the 2019 Colorado Votes Act, which we will now implement and leverage to drive young voter turnout in 2020. We leveraged the law's provision allowing 17-year-olds to vote in both the 2020 primaries, and saw a *groundbreaking turnout rate of 45% from these first-time voters—on par with statewide turnout from all ages*. And as Colorado adds approximately 20 more campus-based 24-hour ballot dropboxes and approximately 15 Voter Service Centers (on top of an existing 6), we'll work to ensure that they are well utilized by students by ensuring the boxes and voting locations are conveniently located, well advertised, and adequately staffed.

Winning the fights we pick

- **Winning critical ballot measure fights:** This fall, ballot measures in Colorado include a ban on abortion later in pregnancy, an anti-immigrant “citizen voter” Constitutional definition change, progressive reforms to Colorado’s restrictive Constitutional tax provisions (TABOR), and a repeal of the law passed in 2019 making Colorado a member of the National Popular Vote compact. Young voters have a critical role to play in each of these ballot measures, so we’ll be incorporating ballot measure education in all the work we do and conducting extensive persuasion efforts, specifically on the abortion ban.
- **Limiting anti-abortion counseling centers’ access to campus:** Our abortion rights organizing program, Brazen, has organized for several years now on the Auraria, Colorado State University (CSU), and University of Colorado - Boulder (CU) campuses to destigmatize abortion and solidify support for abortion rights amongst students. In 2020, work to restrict anti-abortion counseling centers’ (fake clinics) access to campus and campus resources. In anticipation of a ballot measure to ban abortion later in pregnancy, we’ll also scale our organizing efforts considerably to build up our base of supporters and leaders.

Building lasting youth power

As the breadth and integration of our voter engagement, education, and multi-issue advocacy work scale to match the energy and potential of young Coloradans in this year, we’re also looking ahead to 2021 and 2022.

The greatest movements of our lifetimes—civil rights, anti-war, Black Lives Matter, March for our Lives, climate change, DREAMers—have always been catalyzed and led by young people. Young people have been on the front lines of every major movement for justice in our nation’s history, and now is the time to reimagine a more just future.

- **Post-election organizing:** After the November election, we will launch an extensive post-election organizing effort to follow up with young voters, sharing their impact on the election results and asking them to call their legislators to demand action on our issues. Re-engaging our base immediately following the election is critical to continue building trust with our base, and will solidify the power of young voters in the minds of our elected officials and media. It also allows us to continue to create a political home for young people to continue the fight into 2021 and beyond.
- **Becoming a more equitable organization:** Our organization began an equity assessment and blueprint process in 2019, and continuing this work into 2020 is one of our top priorities. We released a public accountability [equity statement](#) in August outlining our continuing process. We will also begin preparing for our 2021 strategic planning process, which will weave anti-racism into the DNA of New Era and support our work to become an anti-racist organization.

Contact

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