

2016

#PARTYATTHEPOLLS

REPORT



## connecting through civic engagement

With the Angeleno community, LA2050 has outlined a goal to make Los Angeles the best place to **connect** - making our region one where every resident is empowered to contribute to our civic processes.

We believe if all Angelenos are empowered and encouraged to use their civic voice to make change in their community, LA would be a better place to thrive.

However, we know that **voter participation** as a measure of civic engagement is at a low in LA, and the voter population is not representative of the region. We asked ourselves, how can we change that?

### let's party!

For the June 7th primary election in 2016, the Goldhirsh Foundation awarded eight **\$3500** grants to host a #PartyatthePolls event that promoted voter engagement.

### we asked organizations:

- 1 Are there barriers to voting in your community that you can help overcome?
- 2 Can you help improve outreach and increase awareness of the election in your neighborhood?
- 3 Do you have a fun idea to encourage civic engagement that you're excited to test?

### Los Angeles by the numbers (2016)

**4.9M**

Population of registered voters in LA County

**41.26%**

Of registered LA County voters voted in 2016 June primary election

## what are the benefits of partying at the polls?

A recent study by Columbia University professor Donald Green found that organizing community festivals and activations near polling sites can create a significant increase in voter turnout. Compared to other resource-draining and expensive efforts such as direct mail or door-to-door canvassing, events driven by local interest and community building can be as affordable as they are effective in increasing turnout.

Funded by the Knight Foundation, Civic Nation worked with local partners to organize festivals at nine sites in 2016. Costs for each voting activation ran between \$700 and \$3000. Green found that the 2016 festivals boosted voter turnout by about 4 percentage points. He also calculated the cost per vote was between \$30 and \$40 per additional vote, which falls into the range of even the most cost-effective tactics. "It's certainly better than a lot of common tactics like direct mail or robo-calls," Green says.

As efforts to increase voter turnout head toward a more digital, streamlined process, Green is afraid that we will lose the opportunity to invoke and utilize community spirit in our civic process.

Source: New York Magazine

**These #PartyatthePolls events sparked conversation about civic engagement among thousands of members of our Los Angeles community.**

**The winning proposals represent a sample of the truly creative voter engagement ideas we received, ranging from using **comedy to communicate about elections** to **conducting direct outreach to first-time voters** and **immigrants** to encourage them to head to their polling locations.**

## COALITION FOR HUMANE IMMIGRANT RIGHTS OF LOS ANGELES (CHIRLA)

CHIRLA recruited more than **100 volunteers** to participate in a day-long **canvassing party** on June 7th to educate the immigrant community in **Pico-Union** about the importance of their vote and to provide information about participating in the elections. With their grant, they were able to focus on both voter appreciation and volunteer mobilization, and create a campaign office experience for their grassroots volunteers.

“ Resources need to be put to all elections, not just the presidential one, until voting becomes a part of our culture. –CHIRLA

## THE SEWING REBELLION

Through monthly workshops of The Sewing Rebellion, participants received training and materials to **handcraft reusable, unique banners, shirts, tote bags, and other wearables** to help inspire continuous civic participation in their neighborhoods.

Providing people the capacity to be creative and work with their hands is a model other community groups can embed into their civic engagement programs.



## THE UNIQUE SPACE

The Unique Space hosted a **block party** on election night at their pop-up marketplace in the **Arts District** celebrating those who voted.



## UNITED WAY OF GREATER LOS ANGELES

The United Way organized a **"March to the Polls" for students** participating in their L.A. Youth Vote campaign, a yearlong effort to position local high schools as centers of youth engagement and advocacy. Students utilized their end-of-the-year senior year activities to engage with their peers on the importance of voting, resulting in pizza parties, conversations, and a lot of selfies. At least 160 people voted as a result of the activations.

“ There needs to be a more intentional and robust outreach to young, first-time voters. A school-based model makes civic participation relevant and urgent for young people.



## KPCC 89.3

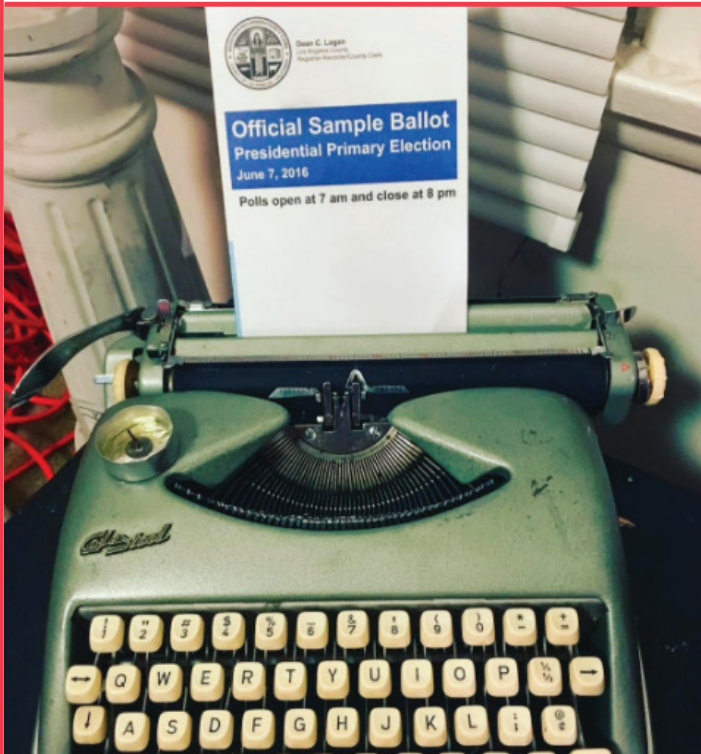
Southern California Public Radio (KPCC 89.3) hosted a **#WhyIVoted primary party** at the La Plaza de Cultura y Artes in downtown Los Angeles. 270 participants from across the county came to enjoy food and music as well as to share with KPCC journalists what inspired them to vote this year. KPCC continued their #WhyIVoted series into the November general election.

### KPCC asked attendees to share #WhyIVoted:

- “To exercise my right as an American and make my voice heard.”
- “Being a millennial Latina, I need to be heard.”
- “This is a pivotal election with a lot on the line.”

## MELROSE POETRY BUREAU

Melrose Poetry Bureau brought **typewriter poets** to write and perform for voters at four **polling places** throughout Los Angeles County, as well as on the steps of LA Central Library preceding the election.



## VENICE ARTS

Venice Arts served as a polling place for the primary election and set up a **photobooth** at their gallery to engage voters in the VeniceVotes Photo Project. Voters helped to create a **gallery and visual story** about why voicing their opinion and participating in the election is important.



## GREEN DOT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Green Dot Public Schools launched **"Get on the Bus,"** building on their registration of more than 1,000 students. Green Dot provided transportation and celebrations for 250 graduating students who took their **first act as adults** by voting in a national election.

Students received personalized invitations to attend a pizza party in celebration of their registration. A month later, the culminating "Get on the Bus" celebration transported **South LA students** to the polls on the day of California Presidential Primary election.