

## The Participation Project 2019 Voter Engagement Program

### 2019 Voter Engagement Accomplishments and Impact

This year, the Participation Project trained, coached, and provided support to **9 nonprofit service providers** across Colorado (see enclosed list). We engaged **1,681 new contacts** across **14 counties**, including **619 voter registrations** and **1,062 pledges to vote**. Our team partnered with a diverse group of human service nonprofits, training **150 staff, volunteers, residents, and constituents** on the importance of voting, voter engagement tactics, nonpartisanship, voting rights, and cultural competency. CRC hired, trained, and managed **5 canvassers** to help



supplement the work of our partner organizations.

In 2019, our program focused on building upon the findings of our work for incorporating online registration and increasing our reach and capacity to civically engage low-income people of color. We offered a range of engagement opportunities for organizations to join our program including: canvass support, event-based engagement, and fully integrated approaches.

### Participating Organizations

- Center for Work Education and Employment
- Community Partnership Family Resource Center
- HOPE Communities
- Metro Caring
- Nederland Food Pantry
- Salud Family Health Centers
- Sister Carmen Community Center
- STRIDE Community Health Center
- Sunrise Community Health

Serving Denver, Arapahoe, Boulder, Teller, Larimer, Weld, Jefferson, Broomfield, Gilpin, Huerfano, Adams, El Paso, Douglas, and Fremont counties.

## **National Voter Registration Day**

National Voter Registration Day was September 24<sup>th</sup>. We joined thousands of others across the country to promote the importance of voting and provide the opportunity for our communities to register, update their registration, and/or to pledge to vote with us. In 2019, we celebrated a successful NVRD - with **141 Pledge to Vote Cards** and **82 Voter Registration Forms** collected across our partner organizations, culminating in **223 total contacts in one day**.

## **Get Out The Vote (GOTV)**

This year, Community Resource Center conducted a robust Get Out the Vote (GOTV) campaign. All GOTV efforts provided nonpartisan information regarding methods to cast a ballot and resources for troubleshooting issues. GOTV efforts were designed to reach our entire universe which included newly engaged individuals, individuals engaged in previous election cycles, and individuals from Community Resource Center's statewide network.



In 2019, we coordinated 3,269 live, bilingual phone calls and 480 text messages to a total of **3,749 individuals** to encourage participation in the 2019 election. Additionally, all partner sites and our Canvassers distributed bilingual voting assistance about the election. We also continued our digital engagement through CRC's social media, email, and website.

**Voices from the Field** "The most valuable voting experiences are with those most disenfranchised by society. Felons who moved to Colorado are shocked they can register to vote. I often run into people convicted of crimes 20 years ago for drug offences, or things that happened before they turned their lives around. They grab the form out of my hand, often voting for the first time. About halfway through, they'll start talking about what they want to vote for, from judges to different causes they are passionate about. They leave the interaction asking about when the next election happens, with a strong sense of promise and new invigoration. It's so much more than just filling out a form. It's a sense of being a part of Colorado, taking the time to learn what's going on in local communities, and making connections." -Canvasser, Denver



## **Looking Ahead, Lessons Learned**

In this cycle, our canvassers and partners experiences increased hesitancy among some participants, particularly Latinx individuals, to register and pledge to vote, despite eligibility. This was attributed to the current political climate and a general distrust of safety of personal information. Our integrated,

partner-based approach continues to be the most effective approach to collecting all contacts, while regular posting of friendly, familiar, and culturally competent canvassers in high-traffic sites yields higher rates of voter registrations.

Additionally, we are exploring strengthening the educational focus of our materials and GOTV program. People often ask our partners and canvassers practical questions about the process of voting, such as where they need to go to get ballots, how to receive mail ballots, or vote in person. In 2020, we will equip our partner organizations and field team with additional resources to deepen our GOTV effort and expand voter participation.

This year's campaign taught us a great deal about running a productive canvass program and the complexity of adding that layer of support to our programs. Our experiences and successes in the field are a testament to the importance of employing culturally responsive canvassers who reflect the communities they serve and appreciate the significance of their work. Moving forward, the Participation Project will continue to set achievable goals and reach out to new human service nonprofits to promote voter engagement in underrepresented communities.

Each year the Participation Project continues to build best practices and streamline our processes and materials. We are proud of the hard work and enthusiasm our team of canvassers, partner sites, and staff put into this year's drive, and we are looking forward to our most impactful campaign yet in 2020.

### **Participation Project Contact Information**

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