

Engaging Young Voters In 2026

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Agenda

Who is P26PA

Youth Voter Engagement
Landscape

Navigating Youth Conversations

Tactics

Questions

Who is Project 26 Pennsylvania

Named for the 26th Amendment, Project 26 Pennsylvania (P26) is a youth-led grassroots movement that exists to promote and expand democracy by elevating youth leadership, exercising youth power through civic engagement, and organizing young voters to participate in key elections to fight for the freedoms and futures of our generation.

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Youth Voter Engagement Landscape

2026 Reality

College students were generally born between 2004 - 2008

Meaning:

- 2025 was the first presidential transition of their adult lives
- They don't know a reality outside of Trump / Biden / Trump
 - Have no real memory or attachment to the Obama years & the norms of that time
- They don't have the same relationship with institutions
- They're concerned about their future

2025 Social Listening Findings

P26PA surveyed more than
2800 college students on
16 campuses across
Pennsylvania in Spring
2025

These surveys found students:

1. Are anxious and overwhelmed
2. Are not apathetic or disinterested
3. Have lost trust in institutions, or never had it
4. See politics and politicians as failing them
5. Want impact, not entertainment from elected officials

Navigating Conversations

Message Tailoring

What works in a peer to peer conversation probably won't work in a conversation with a gen z voter

- You both have a different frame of reference
- Relationship hierarchies may play a role
- Young people resonate more with people who speak about their own direct experience
- Important to not patronize
- Acknowledge and fight back against nihilism

Tactics

The perennial “meet voters where they are” is a must

Approach conversations with curiosity - what are they concerned about

Connect their values to civic engagement outcomes

Try to have a tangible nugget or example of positive change

Remind them staying on the sidelines supports the status quo they aren't happy with

Questions?

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