In the spring of 2016, Movement Strategy Center (MSC) and Mobilize the Immigrant Vote (MIV) initiated the YVote partnership, bringing together grassroots youth and electoral organizations across California. YVote is a civic learning community that engages young voters of color in low-income communities. In fall 2016, YVote partner organizations carried out a multi-pronged campaign, which included: (1) voter registration; (2) voter education workshops and activities; (3) mobile-to-mobile contact with voters; and (4) get out the vote activities, including getting commitments to vote. YVote also mobilized young voters through social media and Hustle, a relatively new mass text messaging platform. With significant support from the James Irvine Foundation, YVote was the first large scale coordinated mobilization effort of its kind in California to target voters under the age of 35.

This report summarizes the growth in YVote partner organizations’ capacities to engage young voters. It draws on panel survey data administered online to the 12 partner organizations who joined YVote at its inception in the spring of 2016.1 YVote partners filled out an initial survey in May 2016 prior to the first YVote convening and completed a follow-up in late November after the fall election campaign. This report highlights changes in organizations’ level of experience with: (a) voter registration; (b) education and mobilization; and (c) data management and reporting. We asked one staff person per organization to report on whether their organization had “no experience,” “a little experience,” “significant experience,” or “very experienced and can train others” with respect to the various elements of running a field campaign. Staff representatives filled out the survey in May, and then again in November after the election season. In this report, we summarize changes over this six-month period in the percentage of organizations that reported “significant experience” or claimed that they are “very experienced and can train others.” Overall, our findings suggest that the fall 2016 election cycle afforded YVote partner organizations with valuable experience that will likely increase their capacity to further engage young voters in upcoming election cycles.

VOTER REGISTRATION
YVote partner organizations possessed varying levels of funding and other resources to register young voters for the November 2016 election. Despite an unequal focus on voter registration among partners, most YVote coalition members reported an increase in proficiency in various aspects of the voter registration process. This is particularly important because YVote partner

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1 Organizations that initially joined YVote in spring 2016 include: CHIRLA-Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights, Californians for Justice, Communities for a New California Education Fund, Community Coalition, Dolores Huerta Foundation, Inland Congregations United for Change, InnerCity Struggle, Korean Resource Center, Mi Familia Vota, Mid-City Community Advocacy Network, Oakland Rising, and San Francisco Rising. Excluded from this report are two additional YVote organizations, Building Healthy Communities Coachella and Khmer Girls in Action, which joined YVote during the summer after initial data collection for this report was completed.
organizations seek to use voter registration as a base-building strategy that they can mobilize for election and other campaigns.

Partner organizations conducted voter registration drives in their communities, local community college campuses, and high schools during the fall election cycle. In May, 67% of organizations claimed “significant experience” or “can train others” in conducting voter registration drives in the community. By November, 92% of organizations made the same assertion. While YVote partners did not report much change in experience targeting high school students, the percentage with either significant experience or ability to train others in conducting voter registration drives at community colleges increased from 33% prior to the election season to 83% by the end of the election season. Meanwhile, YVote partner groups indicated increases in experience with respect to registering voters by mail and maintaining a database of newly registered voters.

![Figure 1. Voter Registration: Organizations with significant experience or ability to train others](image)

VOTER EDUCATION AND OUTREACH
During fall 2016, YVote partner organizations employed a variety of strategies to reach and educate young voters in their communities. Perhaps not surprisingly, given the focus of YVote, the percentage of organizations reporting significant experience or the ability to train others in targeting voters under the age of 31 increased from 50% in May to 83% by November. Because of young adults’ social media presence, YVote targeted young voters through Facebook, Twitter, and Snapchat. This likely contributed to the high percentage of YVote partner organizations reporting an increase in experience promoting viral distribution of voter education content through social media.
Although YVote organizations did not report increased experience in partnering with high school teachers or administrators, those claiming significant experience or ability to train others to partner with community college professors increased from 50% to 75%. Survey results also indicate decreases in some experiences relevant to voter education and outreach. Partner organizations reported declines in experience working with community college student organizations and conducting educational workshops targeting youth. These declines may be attributed to staffing changes or reevaluations of organizations’ level of experience. In future election cycles, YVote groups may consider devoting more time and resources to working with community college student groups and further developing the capacity to conduct civic education workshops for young people.

VOTER MOBILIZATION
Prior to joining YVote, partner organizations varied in the extent to which they focused resources on turning out voters to the polls. By the end of the fall campaign, partner groups, as a whole, reported increases in experience across all measures of voter mobilization measured in this evaluation. For example, in May 83% of organizations reported significant experience or ability to train others in developing a voter mobilization plan. By November, all organizations reported such experience, with two-thirds claiming the ability to train other groups in developing a voter mobilization plan. Partner groups also reported increased experience in being able to train volunteers to participate in voter outreach efforts, so that by the end of the election season all groups either claimed significant experience or the ability to train others. Additionally, by the end of the election season all YVote groups claimed high levels of experience in being able to develop a rap or script to guide conversations with voters (up from 83%).
Through the course of the 2016 election season, most YVote partner organizations gained sufficient experience to be able to train others in phone banking. While half of the organizations reported significant experience in making sure that voters turned in their mail-in ballots prior to the election season, 83% said this was the case by November. Importantly, in May only a couple of groups had much experience sending voters text messages reminding them about the election. This changed as a result of YVote’s adoption of Hustle, a non-automated mobile phone application that enabled partners to send voters individual text messages en masse. By the end of the election season, most groups reported high levels of experience in using Hustle. Despite this accomplishment, only a quarter felt that they had sufficient experience to train others. It is likely that in future election cycles, YVote will continue to refine their expertise in using a text messaging platform to help ensure that voters make it to the polls.

**VOTER TRACKING AND DATA MANAGEMENT**

Field campaigns require significant coordination, communication, and data management. To facilitate such efforts, some organizations adopted Slack, an online platform that streamlines communication. The percentage of groups with significant experience or ability to train others in Slack increased from 17% to 42% over the course of the election season. Meanwhile, the percentage of groups claiming such experience in maintaining an in-house database of voters doubled. Data management among YVote groups universally entailed using the online platform Political Data Inc. (PDI) to track voter outreach efforts. While in May only 58% of partner organizations had significant experience or ability to train others in using PDI, in November, almost all—92%—partner organizations made similar claims. Some partner groups also
reported increased experience in producing regular reports tracking the progress of their elections work.

CONCLUSION
As demonstrated in this report, the 2016 election cycle offered YVote partner organizations valuable experience in running a coordinated field campaign targeting young voters. Overall, the number of organizations with high levels of experience with voter registration, outreach and education, mobilization, and data management increased over the six-month study period. Future reports will account for the extent to which this campaign impacted the leadership development of canvassers and volunteers, and will also examine YVote’s effect on turnout among 18 to 34-year-old voters. This evaluation research seeks to inform the training and support YVote organizations receive in future election cycles.