

WHEN WE COUNT PROGRESS UPDATE: FIRST 3 MONTHS

Program Thesis

Problem:

The Democratic Party is facing a voter registration crisis. Democrats lost 2.1M voters between 2020 & 2024 – while Republicans gained 2.4M voters. The share of voters registering as Democrats has also declined: in 2018, nearly two-thirds of new registrants under 45 who had picked one of the two major parties were Democrats. In 2024, Republicans became an outright majority. Under the Trump administration, Republicans have been actively trying to make it harder to vote.

At the same time, there are 60+ million unregistered Americans – who are disproportionately young, people of color, and working class.

Solution:

When We Count is the DNC's answer: a national partisan voter registration initiative to train the next generation of staff and volunteers to close critical voter registration gaps nationwide. Importantly, the DNC is changing the culture around voter registration in our Party and on our campaigns. When We Count puts partisan voter registration at the center of how Democrats build power and win elections now and in the cycles to come.

The When We Count youth fellowship pilot launched first in Arizona in May 2026 to recruit, train, and empower local fellows on partisan voter registration and close registration gaps in three targeted congressional districts.

Through this pilot, we've identified the most effective messaging and tactics to register new Democrats in our current political climate – and now we're scaling those learnings nationally through our national voter registration trainings and weekends of action.

The New York Times

The Democratic Party Faces a Voter Registration Crisis

AP

Democrats Will Spend Millions to Shift Voter Registration Strategy Ahead of the Midterm Elections

THE HILL

DNC Launches Seven-Figure Voter Registration Initiative Ahead of Midterms

What does partisan voter registration mean in practice?

Legally, we must register any voter we meet who asks to register. However, conducting *partisan* registration allows us to screen for political preference from the outset, openly talk about the Democratic Party and Democratic candidates, and invite the registrant to be a Democrat. This strategy is what drives our high percentage of voters registered who are Democrats – far above non-partisan programs.

Here's what your investment has built in the first three months of the program:

38

Current Fellows in AZ

2,500+

Voters Registered

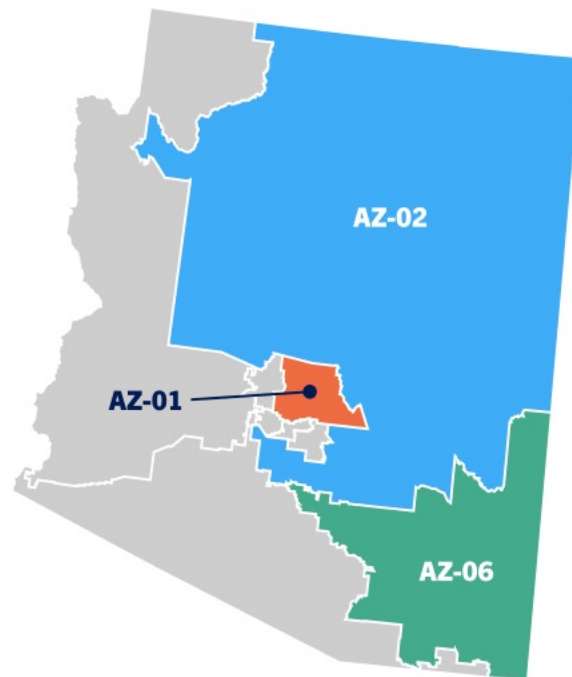
82%

% Dem Average

Our Impact

Arizona has a history of extremely close elections, and When We Count is focused on closing registration gaps in the congressional districts that could decide winning back the House. In 2024, Democrats lost AZ-06 by nearly 10,000 votes. The Arizona governor's race is currently a toss-up, and Democrats only need four seats to flip back the State House. In these races, several thousand Democratic registrations will make the difference.

When We Count is specifically targeting young, diverse voters — especially non-college youth. In Arizona, there are more than 700,000 unregistered Latino voters. As the results below show, our program is proving effective at reaching the voters we set out to target:



87%

**% of Voters We've
Registered Under
the Age of 35**

58%

**% of Voters We've
Registered Who Identify
as People of Color**

45%

**% of Voters We've
Registered Who
Identify as Latino**

Our Team Knows How to Win in Arizona

Effectively reaching our target voters is made possible by our leadership team who have deep knowledge of the state and know what it takes to win in Arizona. Two of our program leaders include:



Isha has worked two cycles in Arizona, most recently leading the presidential campaign's statewide Spanish-language voter contact and volunteer program in 2024.

**Isha Arciba De La Cruz,
Arizona Regional Manager**



Chris has worked four cycles on Arizona Coordinated Campaigns, and got his start as a campus organizer doing voter registration in 2018 when Arizona first flipped a Senate seat.

**Chris Cronin,
Arizona Program Manager**

Our fellows reflect the communities we're organizing:

21

Average
Fellow Age

40%

Fellows Who
Are Non-College

38%

Fellows Who Are Native
Spanish Speakers

7

Fellows Hired by the AZ
Coordinated Campaign

When We Count isn't just registering voters – we're building a talent pipeline of the next generation of organizers, trained on the foundational skill of voter registration. Seven of our fellows have already been hired into full-time organizing roles on the Coordinated Campaign who likely wouldn't have pursued careers in campaigns without our fellowship.

Fellow Spotlights

In 2022, Attorney General Kris Mayes won her re-election by 280 votes. Two of our fellows, Everardo and Zoe, personally registered 339 voters in their first 10 weeks – more than the margin that decided a critical statewide office. When We Count Fellows will make the difference in close races in 2026.



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When We Count has given me the opportunity to grow as an organizer, leader, and communicator. Through this fellowship, I've had the privilege of connecting with voters, especially in Latino communities and seeing firsthand how one conversation can empower someone to participate in our democracy.

Everardo Lopez, 19 | Phoenix, AZ (Registered 170 new voters in his first 10 weeks)

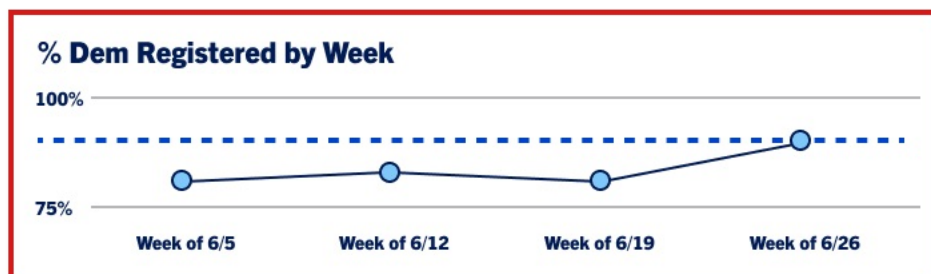
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The When We Count program has demonstrated to me that politics is not just about what's happening in Washington, D.C., but it's also about the conversations you have and connections you make in your local community. This fellowship has broadened my understanding of what it means to be involved in politics and has given me the tools to become a more effective organizer and advocate.

Zoe Chin, 20 | Chandler, AZ (Registered 169 new voters in her first 10 weeks)



Registering a majority of Democratic voters:



Key Programmatic Learnings

□ Rigorous partisan training drives output.

Consistently training our fellows to screen for partisanship, persuade voters, and make the pitch for registering as a Democrat is precisely how we've maintained an 82%+ Democratic registration rate.

□ Meeting likely Democrats where they're already gathering is critical.

Our fellows are highly strategic about targeting the places, spaces, and moments that concentrate unregistered likely supporters – from World Cup watch parties to community college orientations packed with young, diverse crowds.

□ Follow up turns registrations into votes.

Fellows reach out to voters as soon as their form is processed, and sustain relationships with the voters they register throughout the cycle to increase their likelihood of turnout.

Goals by Election Day

Now that we've refined the messaging, tactics, and strategy to run an effective partisan voter registration program, the Arizona When We Count program's focus now is SCALE. Our target is surpassing 10,000 new voters registered by the voter registration deadline on October 5th. This goal is strategic: this is approximately Biden's win margin in Arizona in 2020, and nearly the margin we lost AZ-06 by in 2024. To get there, we need:

+40

**New Fellows Hired
by September 1**

+7,500

**New Voters Registered
by October 5**

National Voter Registration Weeks of Action

We're scaling our learnings from our Arizona pilot program nationwide through our national training series and weeks of action. In July, we led a public four-part national partisan voter registration training series that trained over 1,500+ grassroots volunteers, party leadership, and organizers. In July, the DNC launched a Weekend of Action around the World Cup Final to register new Democrats across the FIFA Fan Zones and at watch parties nationwide. 80+ grassroots volunteers signed up to register voters across more than 30 states during the Final. The DNC will launch two additional voter registration weeks of action before Election Day.

1,500+
Across 47 States

**Organizers & Volunteers
Trained on Partisan
Voter Registration**

80+
Across 31 States

**Voter Registration
Ambassadors During
the World Cup Final**

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Thanks for this wonderful VR training series, which has been by far the best training of this type I've done (and I've done my share!)

- Lisa, NY