CASE STUDY:

EXPANDING THE ELECTORATE: HOW ACRONYM MOBILIZED + REGISTERED VOTERS OF COLOR IN THE 2020 GENERAL ELECTION

ACRONYM

THE PROBLEM:

PEOPLE OF COLOR ARE UNDERREPRESENTED IN OUR ELECTORATE.

💡 Voter disenfranchisement efforts in the US affect people of color disproportionately, leading many people in these communities to develop ingrained beliefs about the process that keep them from registering to vote or casting a ballot.

💡 Typical registration + mobilization outreach to these communities occurs close to election days, on the ground, in-person, and those efforts were stalled due to COVID-19

OUR SOLUTION

EXPAND THE ELECTORATE:

A NON-PARTISAN PROGRAM TO PERSUADE PEOPLE OF COLOR TO ENGAGE IN OUR DEMOCRACY.

💥 After running multiple digital voter registration and mobilization programs since the organization's launch in 2017, ACRONYM took its learnings and launched People's Power Grab / Expand the Electorate in 2019, targeting eligible Black and Latinx voters to register and turn out to vote.

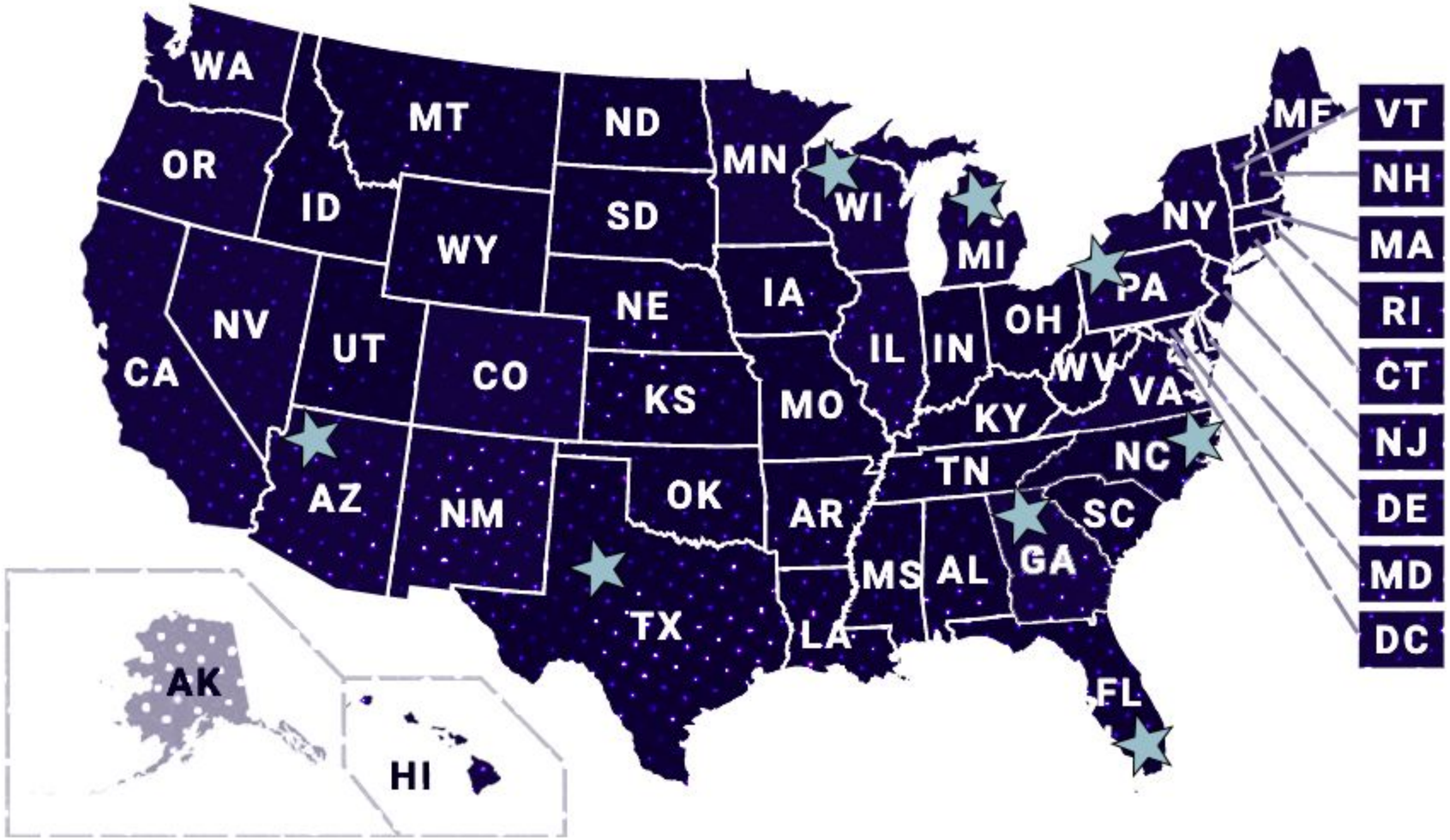
💥 We ran a pilot program in Virginia in 2019, and expanded to eight states for the 2020 cycle: AZ, GA, TX, FL, WI, MI, PA, NC

2020 GOALS:

REGISTER 40,000 NEW BLACK + LATINX VOTERS + MOBILIZE 33,333 INFREQUENT BLACK + LATINX VOTERS

STATE	TARGET AUDIENCES	REGISTRATION GOAL	REG FORM SUBMIT GOAL	MOBILIZATION GOAL	MOBILIZATION FORM SUBMIT GOAL
AZ	Latinas	3,200	4,000	1,667	2,000
FL	Latinas, African-Americans	14,000	17,500	9,667	11,600
GA	African-Americans	400	500	4,333	5,200
MI	African-Americans	4,000	5,000	2,333	2,800
NC	Latinas, African-Americans	12,000	15,000	8,000	9,600
PA	African-Americans	5,200	6,500	3,000	3,600
TX	Latinas	–	–	3,667	4,400
WI	African-Americans	1,200	1,500	667	800
	GRAND TOTALS	40,000	50,000	33,333	40,000

OUR STATES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TACTICS + STRATEGY

WE STARTED EARLY, ALLOWING US TIME TO TEST EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES

OUR PROGRAM FIRST LAUNCHED IN AUGUST 2019, BEGINNING TO TEST DURING THE VIRGINIA LEGISLATIVE RACES + SUPER TUESDAY

2019-2020 TIMELINE

- **Aug 2019** — *Original launch*
- **Nov 2019** — *VA state leg elections*
- **Feb 2020** — *Super Tuesday test*
- **Apr 2020** — *COVID impacts voter registration programs*
- **May 2020** — *VA + Super Tuesday test analysis*
  Develop COVID response
- **Jun 2020** — *Program relaunch*
- **Nov 2020** — *Election day*

💥 Our early start allowed us to test which strategies were most effective in registering and mobilizing our target audiences.

💥 Early on we found that **'informational' non-partisan content on voting drove 4x higher** online 'make a plan to vote' form completion rates.

💥 During the first phases of our program, we continued to find that 'informational' content from official looking brands were the best performing. After our testing phase ended, COVID changed that landscape of voting and in-person registration efforts.

WE STARTED EARLY, ALLOWING US TIME TO TEST EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES

BUILD TRUST WITH VOTERS ONLINE OVER TIME WITH AUTHENTIC, COMPELLING CONTENT.

Our program was designed to help break through by implementing a long-term, coordinated effort to educate and persuade voters where they get their information online, and follow up through to Election Day. Here's how we did it:

1️⃣ We speak to our targets over time using tested ads we know they will respond to on multiple online platforms.

2️⃣ Our suite of registration + mobilization tech tools – named ACRONYM Citizen – brings people into the program, collects their data, and retargets them based on their actions.

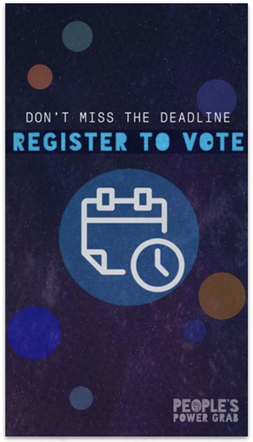
3️⃣ We collaborated with state organizing partners to engage with our audiences over time either in person or through email, texting, or phone calls, so even those who start out unregistered ultimately become engaged voters.

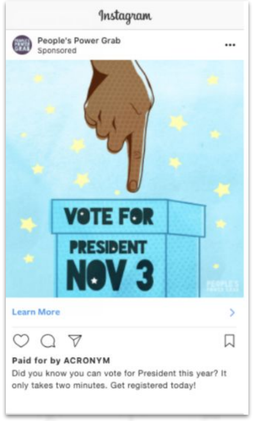
WE MET TARGETS WHERE THEY ARE WITH AUTHENTIC, RELATABLE CONTENT

THAT'S NATIVE TO THE PLATFORMS WE'RE USING

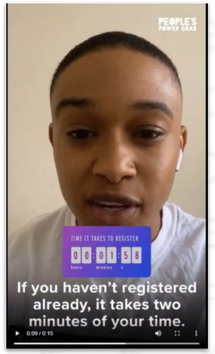
FACEBOOK NEWSFEED

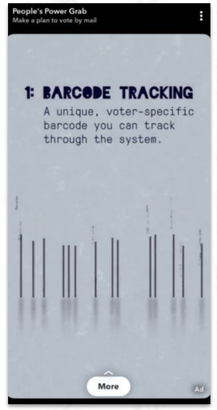
INSTAGRAM STORY





SNAPCHAT





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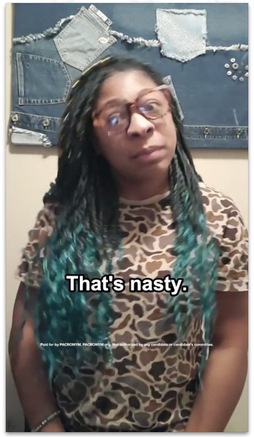
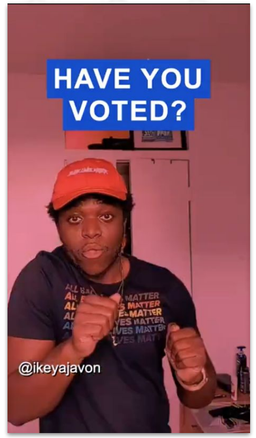




OUR CREATIVE (CLICK TO WATCH)

BUILDING A FUNNEL WITH NEW TECHNOLOGY

DRIVING HARD TO REACH AUDIENCES TO BECOME FIRST TIME VOTERS WITH ONLINE TOOLS.

➡️ Adopting commercial brand marketing best practices, we created ACRONYM Citizen – an online portal which allows us to build remarketing audiences across ad platforms to remind people to complete their online voter registration forms and make a plan to vote.

➡️For those who registered through our program, ACRONYM Citizen walked them through the entire process - from initial targeting to Election Day - ensuring there's minimal drop off.

Find out if you're registered to vote

It takes 2 minutes or less to make sure you're registered and make your voice heard

CHECK

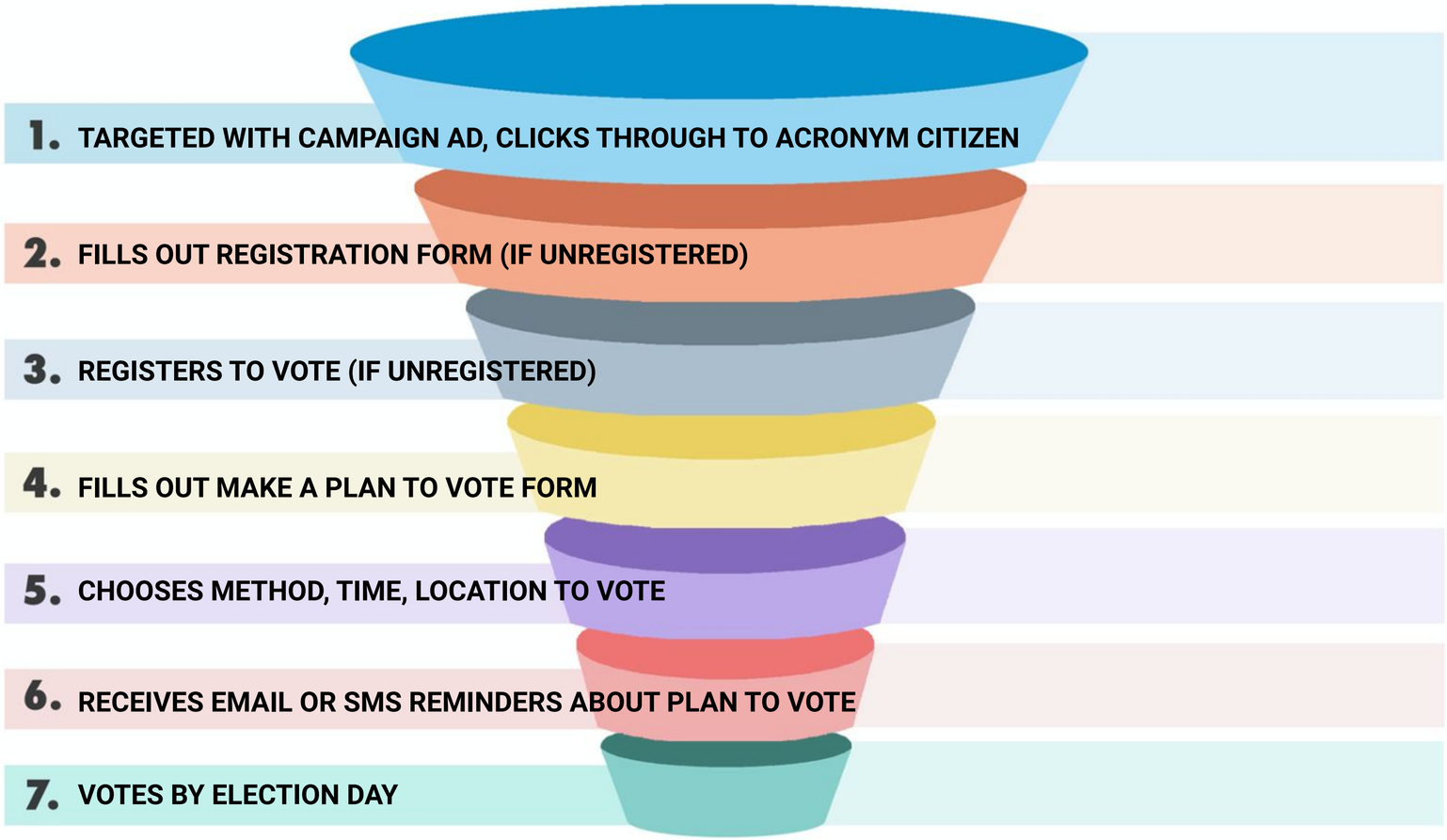
Make a Plan to Vote

Decide when, where and how you will vote, by mail or in person.

MAKE A PLAN

THE FUNNEL: FROM TARGETING TO ELECTION DAY

WE BUILT A SOPHISTICATED TECH STACK TO MAXIMIZE OUR PROGRAM IMPACT.



ADAPTING + FILLING GAPS IN THE FACE OF COVID-19

WE COULDN'T DO THIS ALONE. WE BUILT KEY PARTNERSHIPS NEEDED TO CONTINUE TARGETING VOTERS DURING A PANDEMIC

In the face of COVID-19, we began hearing from groups on the ground that they were struggling with finding quality lists of unregistered voters for digital outreach and realized that we could help fill this gap. **By supplying the leads from our form completions to the groups, they were able to chase these targets through their own registration and mobilization work** – often including phone calls, peer to peer texts, and other tactics which our program does not cover.

We passed all of our registration leads to groups in our target states with online voter registration in an effort to have the biggest impact in the face of diminished registration opportunities.

ONE ARIZONA
Peoples Movement for a New Arizona

NEW FLORIDA MAJORITY

the NEW GEORGIA PROJECT

BLOC
Black Leaders Organizing for COMMUNITIES

nextgen policy

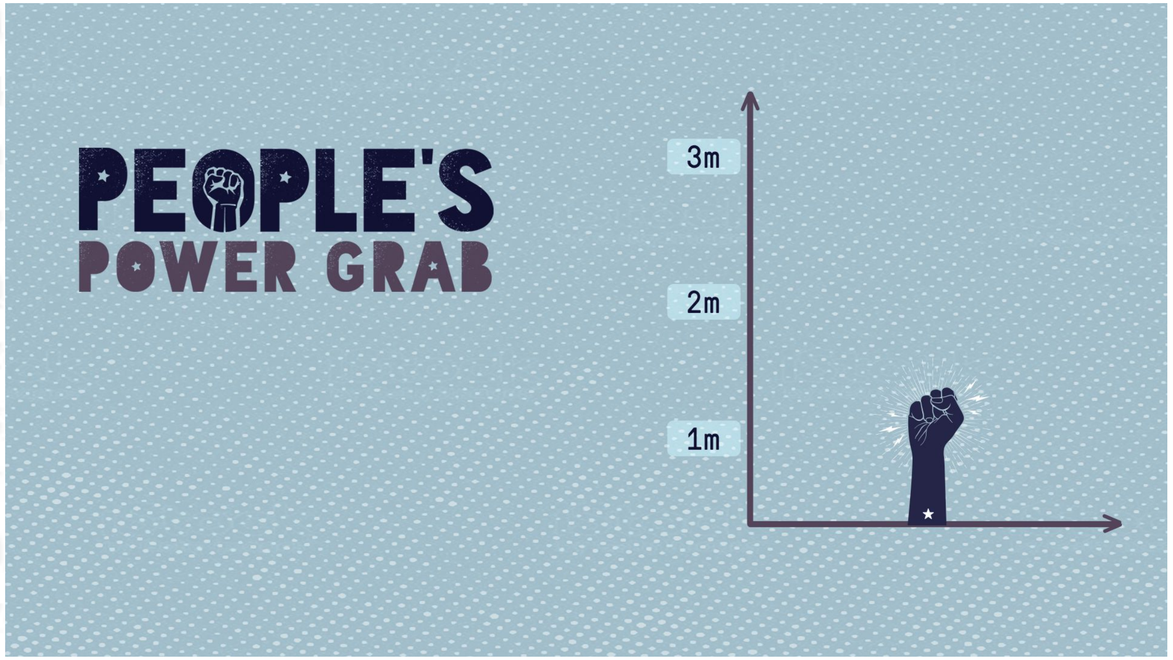
WE RAN RIGOROUS TESTING TO DETERMINE WHAT TACTICS WORKED BEST

AND WE CHALLENGED INDUSTRY BEST PRACTICES

Incorporating testing into our programs not only made them more successful, but also more cost-efficient. Some of the things we were able to identify included:

- Which brands + platforms worked best for different audiences.
- Which message tracks work + which don't.
- What was NOT working – allowing us to pivot as needed.

For example, we found that while advertising on Google was cost-efficient, we were not reaching our intended BIPOC targets through the platform. As a result, we pivoted our strategy to other platforms where we were better reaching our intended targets.



OUR IMPACT

FINAL FORM SUBMITS:

OVER 122K REGISTRATION FORM SUBMITS + 56K PLAN TO VOTE FORM SUBMITS

STATE	TARGET AUDIENCES	REG FORM SUBMIT GOAL	REG FORM SUBMIT ACTUAL	MOBILIZATION FORM SUBMIT GOAL	MOBILIZATION FORM SUBMIT ACTUAL
AZ	Latinas	4,000	8,591	2,000	3,980
FL	Latinas, African-Americans	17,500	36,991	11,600	15,712
GA	African-Americans	500	13,683	5,200	6,360
MI	African-Americans	5,000	8,819	2,800	3,910
NC	Latinas, African-Americans	15,000	23,570	9,600	9,252
PA	African-Americans	6,500	26,200	3,600	9,983
TX	Latinas	–	–	4,400	6,300
WI	African-Americans	1,500	4,527	800	1,494
	GRAND TOTALS	50,000	122,381	40,000	56,991

**We won't know the total amount of voters registered or mobilized by our program until a voter file analysis is completed, but we surpassed our form submit goals for both registration and mobilization.

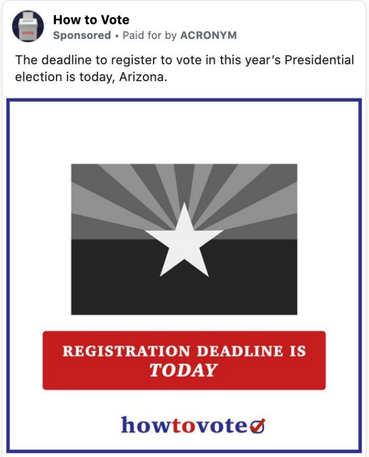
ARIZONA:

2016 - 2020 REGISTRATIONS: +15.2%

2016 - 2020 ELIGIBLE VOTER TURNOUT: +9.8%

REGISTRATION

Goal:	3,200 new registrants
Targets:	Latinas
Term:	June - October 2020
Direct Response Spend:	$499,436.25
Reg Check Form Submit:	8,591
Visited state's registration website:	3,869
% to Form Submit Goal:	121%
Total Registered:	TBD Spring 2021



MOBILIZATION

Goal:	1,667 new/lapsed voters
Targets:	Latinas
Term:	July - November 2020
Direct Response Spend:	$227,387.39
Plan to Vote Form Submit:	3,980
Finished Plan:	1,596
% to Form Submit Goal:	96%
Total Mobilized:	TBD Spring 2021

FLORIDA:

🇺🇸 **1,200,000+ VOTERS FROM OUR AUDIENCES TURNED OUT TO VOTE EARLY**

✔️ **36,991 REGISTRATION CHECK FORM SUBMISSIONS**

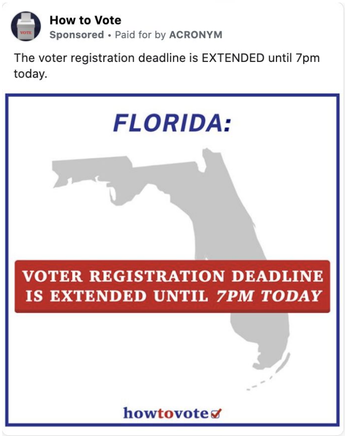
📮 **15,712 MAKE A PLAN TO VOTE FORM SUBMISSIONS**

2016 - 2020 REGISTRATIONS: + 12.3%

2016 -2020 ELIGIBLE VOTER TURNOUT: + 6.1%

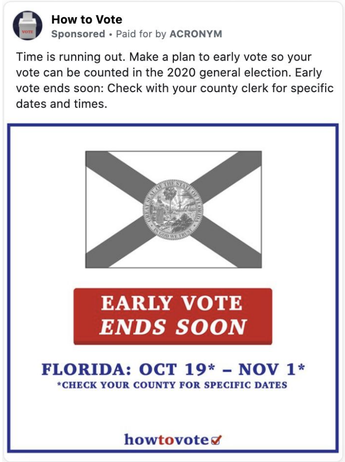
REGISTRATION

Goal:	14,000
Targets:	Latinas, African-Americans
Term:	June - October 2020
Direct Response Spend:	$1,216,708.13
Reg Check Form Submit:	36,991
Visited state's registration website:	18,854
% to Form Submit Goal:	135%
Total Registered:	TBD Spring 2021



MOBILIZATION

Goal:	9,667
Targets:	Latinas, African-Americans
Term:	July - November 2020
Direct Response Spend:	$1,174,536.30
Plan to Vote Form Submit:	15,712
Finished Plan:	5,503
% to Form Submit Goal:	57%
Total Mobilized:	TBD Spring 2021



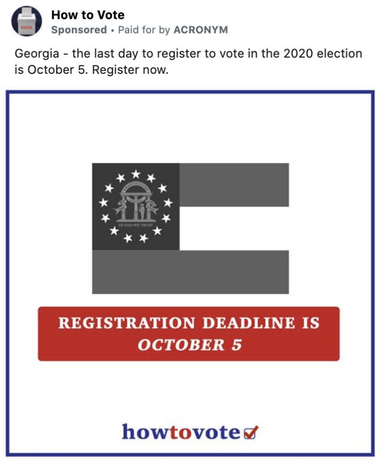
GEORGIA:

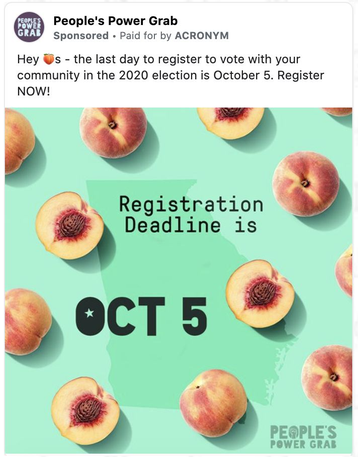
2016 - 2020 REGISTRATIONS: + 9.0%

2016 - 2020 ELIGIBLE VOTER TURNOUT: + 8.3%

REGISTRATION

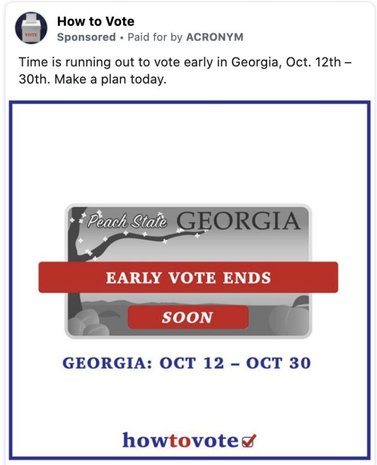
Goal:	400
Targets:	African-Americans
Term:	June - October 2020
Direct Response Spend:	$55,179.15
Reg Check Form Submit:	13,683
Visited state's registration website:	4,983
% to Form Submit Goal:	1,246%
Total Registered:	TBD Spring 2021





MOBILIZATION

Goal:	4,333
Targets:	African-Americans
Term:	July - November 2020
Direct Response Spend:	$577,674.38
Plan to Vote Form Submit:	6,360
Finished Plan:	2,289
% to Form Submit Goal:	53%
Total Mobilized:	TBD Spring 2021



MICHIGAN:

🇺🇸 OVER 253,000+ VOTERS FROM OUR AUDIENCES TURNED OUT TO VOTE

✔️ 8,819 REGISTRATION CHECK FORM SUBMISSIONS

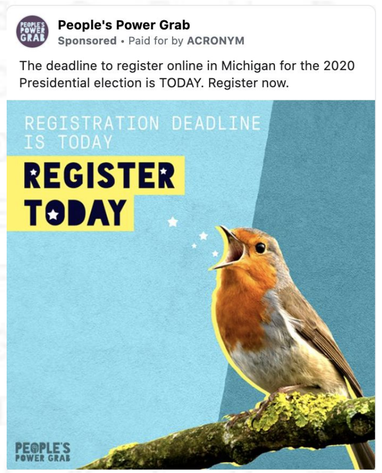
📥 3,910 MAKE A PLAN TO VOTE FORM SUBMISSIONS

2016 - 2020 REGISTRATIONS: + 8.2%

2016 -2020 ELIGIBLE VOTER TURNOUT: + 8.1%

REGISTRATION

Goal:	4,000
Targets:	African-Americans
Term:	June - October 2020
Direct Response Spend:	$336,129.63
Reg Check Form Submit:	8,819
Visited state's registration website:	4,262
% to Form Submit Goal:	107%
Total Registered:	TBD Spring 2021



MOBILIZATION

Goal:	2,333
Targets:	African-Americans
Term:	July - November 2020
Direct Response Spend:	$320,774.61
Plan to Vote Form Submit:	3,910
Finished Plan:	1,836
% to Form Submit Goal:	79%
Total Mobilized:	TBD Spring 2021

NORTH CAROLINA:

🇺🇸 OVER 258,000+ VOTERS FROM OUR AUDIENCES TURNED OUT TO VOTE

✔️ 23,570 REGISTRATION CHECK FORM SUBMISSIONS

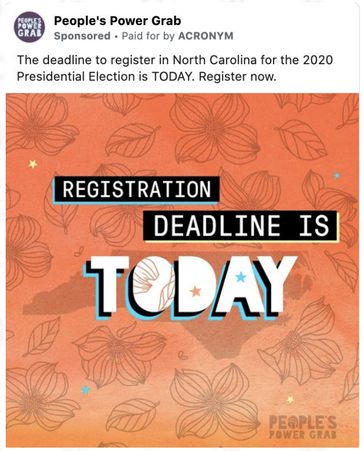
📮 9,252 MAKE A PLAN TO VOTE FORM SUBMISSIONS

2016 - 2020 REGISTRATIONS: + 6.4%

2016 - 2020 ELIGIBLE VOTER TURNOUT: + 6.5%

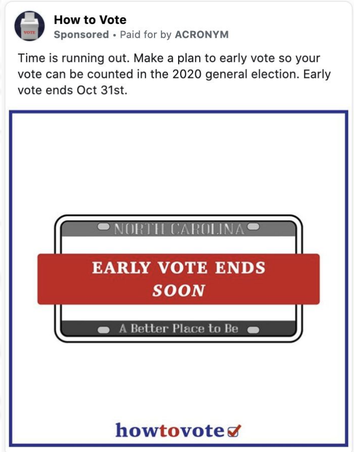
REGISTRATION

Goal:	12,000
Targets:	Latinas, African-Americans
Term:	June - October 2020
Direct Response Spend:	$954,936.62
Reg Check Form Submit:	23,570
Visited state's registration website:	11,431
% to Form Submit Goal:	95%
Total Registered:	TBD Spring 2021



MOBILIZATION

Goal:	8,000
Targets:	Latinas, African-Americans
Term:	July - November 2020
Direct Response Spend:	$909,308.71
Plan to Vote Form Submit:	9,252
Finished Plan:	4,591
% to Form Submit Goal:	57%
Total Mobilized:	TBD Spring 2021



PENNSYLVANIA:

🇺🇸 OVER 167,000+ VOTERS FROM OUR AUDIENCES TURNED OUT TO VOTE EARLY

✔️ 26,200 REGISTRATION CHECK FORM SUBMISSIONS

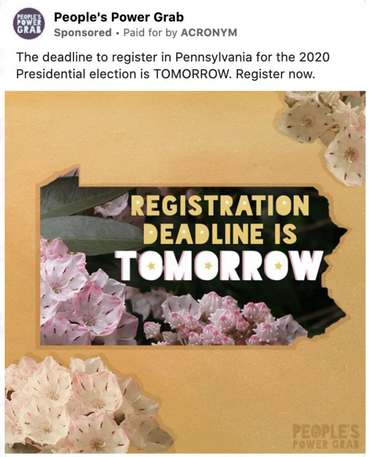
📩 9,983 MAKE A PLAN TO VOTE FORM SUBMISSIONS

2016 - 2020 REGISTRATIONS: + 4.2%

2016 - 2020 ELIGIBLE VOTER TURNOUT: + 6.9%

REGISTRATION

Goal:	5,200
Targets:	African-Americans
Term:	June - October 2020
Direct Response Spend:	$889,945.98
Reg Check Form Submit:	26,200
Visited state's registration website:	12,068
% to Form Submit Goal:	232%
Total Registered:	TBD Spring 2021



MOBILIZATION

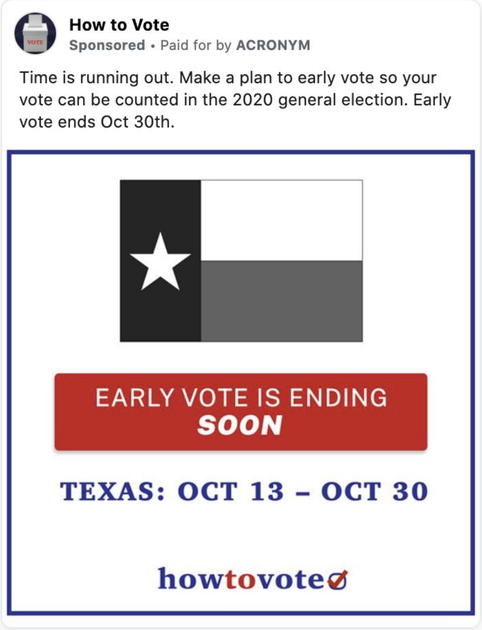
Goal:	3,000
Targets:	African-Americans
Term:	July - November 2020
Direct Response Spend:	$423,077.90
Plan to Vote Form Submit:	9,983
Finished Plan:	4,122
% to Form Submit Goal:	137%
Total Mobilized:	TBD Spring 2021

TEXAS:

2016 - 2020 ELIGIBLE VOTER TURNOUT: + 8.8%

MOBILIZATION

Goal:	3,667
Targets:	Latinas
Term:	October - November 2020
Direct Response Spend:	$350,615.42
Plan to Vote Form Submit:	6,300
Finished Plan:	3,323
% to Form Submit Goal:	91%
Total Mobilized:	TBD Spring 2021



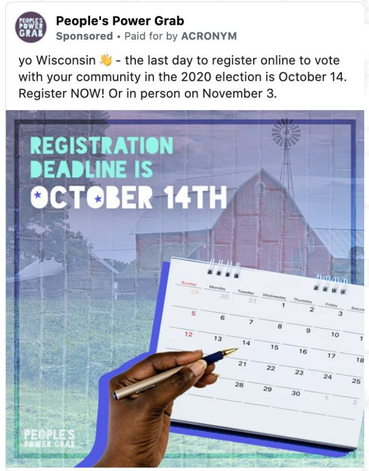
WISCONSIN:

2016 - 2020 REGISTRATIONS: + 1.8%

2016 - 2020 ELIGIBLE VOTER TURNOUT: + 6.3%

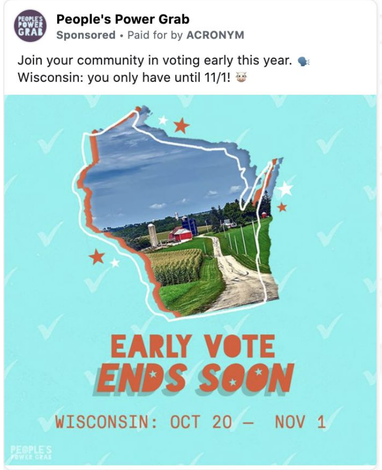
REGISTRATION

Goal:	1,200
Targets:	African-Americans
Term:	June - October 2020
Direct Response Spend:	$83,469.43
Reg Check Form Submit:	4,527
Visited state's registration website:	2,794
% to Form Submit Goal:	233%
Total Registered:	TBD Spring 2021



MOBILIZATION

Goal:	667
Targets:	African-Americans
Term:	July - November 2020
Direct Response Spend:	$83,766.08
Plan to Vote Form Submit:	1,494
Finished Plan:	548
% to Form Submit Goal:	82%
Total Mobilized:	TBD Spring 2021



KEY LEARNINGS

KEY LEARNINGS + TAKEAWAYS:

ONLINE VOTER REGISTRATION

💥 **Our "informational' narrative track was the best performing**, garnering the most conversions to registrations of the four tracks from our audiences.

💥 **'Social pressure' did not work well** for this program, resulting in very few registrations. Although there is evidence that social pressure can work well, this tactic did not translate well to digital registration with our audiences.

💥 After establishing best practices, we experimented with duration to ensure our media spending was the most cost-effective and **were able to drive our cost down by over 90 percent.**

💥 We found that both our official-looking brand "How to Vote" and our audience-focused brand "People's Power Grab" performed very differently across different platforms (ie. Facebook vs. Snapchat) indicating that **each brand has utility for converting different types of people across our audiences.**

KEY LEARNINGS + TAKEAWAYS:

ONLINE MOBILIZATION ADVERTISING

💥 Again, **our informational creative track was the most successful** at garnering plan completions, although we did see that our Security track at some points was most efficient at getting people to start their plans.

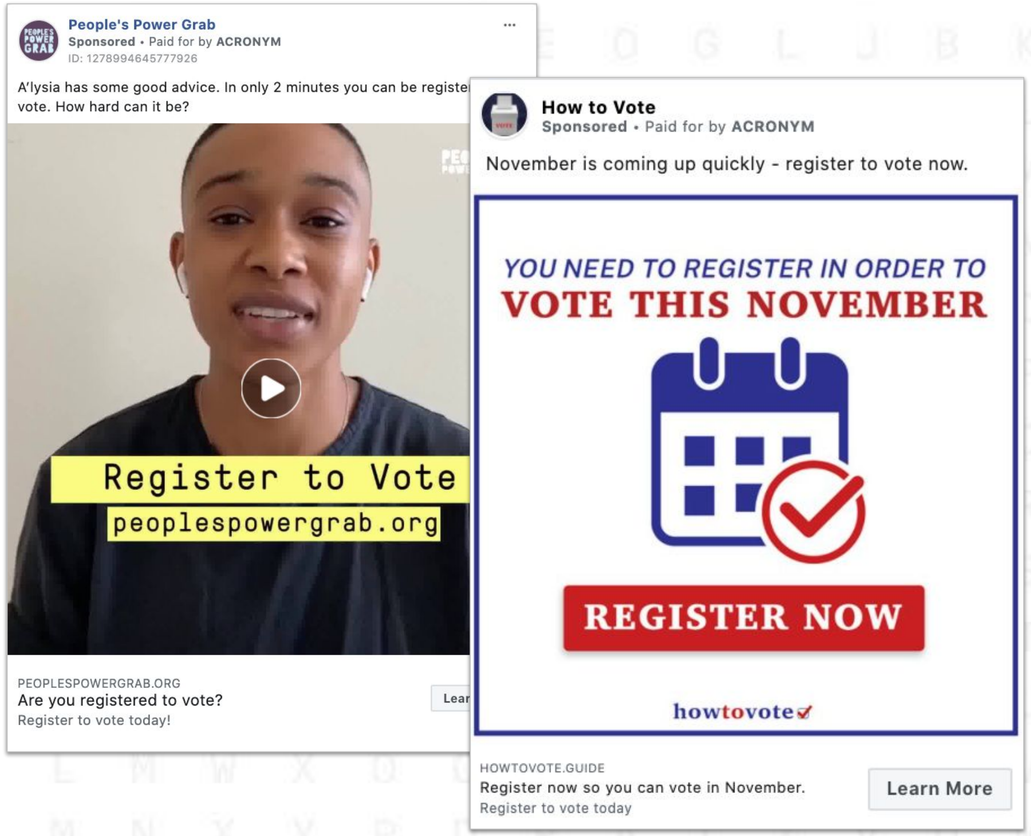
💥 We saw much **more efficiency of make a plan completions from people who had completed the registration form.** We need more research to ascertain if the page design or registration ask was the most important factor for completion.

💥 Due to COVID-19 and the very fragmented approach to absentee and mail-in voting by state, it was **imperative to educate voters about the number of different ways that they could vote** this cycle and share our target data with partner organizations ensuring a full scope of outreach.

TL;DR

TOP TAKEAWAYS

📣 It's important to start voter outreach programs early, building a narrative and trust over time.

📣 Reaching different audiences requires implementing a multipronged approach to branding and creative.

📣 To increase returns, invest in technology that allows people to move seamlessly from registering to vote to making a plan to vote.