

2024 Youth Poll: Young Californians in Los Angeles

Power California (PoCA) and partners seek to mobilize young voters in their political campaigns in 2024. This geographic profile outlines the attitudes of Young Californians living in Los Angeles (LA), focusing on their perceptions of and experiences with the housing crisis, their identities, and outlook heading into an election year.

Young Californians living in the greater Los Angeles area are civic minded and engaged. They perceive voting, running for office, and volunteering as crucial forms of participation that can improve their communities. They are also optimistic about their future and believe in the American dream. This positive outlook stands in stark contrast to the fact that Young Californians in LA are among the most impacted by housing disparities. They are being displaced by high rents. Many are unable to make the necessary deposits to secure housing and report moving for new job opportunities. Many Young Californians in LA have taken on a second job as well as seriously thought about leaving the state. These realities and lived experiences also shaped personal identities and policy attitudes about housing.

- **37% identify as Caretakers because they are the main money maker or caretaker in their household.**
- **33% identify as Hustlers because they are working multiple jobs or side gigs.**

TOP ISSUES AND THE HOUSING CRISIS

Young Californians in LA want the government to address issues related to housing. Young Californians in LA were more likely to name housing affordability as an issue relative to other geographic regions of the State.

- **43% want the government to address affordable housing.**
- **31% want the government to address homelessness.**

Young Californians in LA attribute responsibility for the housing crisis to corporate landlords (48%), banks and financial firms (39%), and elected officials (36%). When asked to choose the primary factor responsible, 22% blamed banks and financial firms and 19% blamed elected officials.

- **Young Californians in LA were more likely to blame banks and financial firms compared to residents in all other geographic regions.**

The housing crisis has had severe consequences for Young Californians in LA, who are economically insecure and facing many barriers to finding housing.

- **57% reported that high rents were a housing barrier.**
- **35% reported they are living paycheck-to-paycheck.**
- **30% do not have money for a down payment.**

Other economic barriers and insecurity are affecting the lives of Young Californians in LA.

- **36% have taken a second job or side hustle.**
- **17% are accumulating credit card debt to pay basic bills.**
- **16% have postponed medical and/or dental care.**

Young Californians in LA have been displaced because they can no longer afford to live in their communities. Many have reported moving in the last two years for new jobs and better work opportunities and to live closer to their families and support networks.

- **54% have moved to live closer to work or for a new job.**
- **27% could no longer afford their rent or lease cost.**
- **26% moved for better pay and work opportunities.**

These patterns are different from residents in other geographic regions. For example, in the Bay Area, 29% of people have moved recently for a new job and only 11% have moved for better pay or opportunities. LA residents were twice as likely than Bay Area residents to report they could no longer afford their rent. Since both places have a high cost of living, this suggests that Young Californians in the Bay Area might be working in higher paying jobs in Silicon Valley.

SOLUTIONS TO THE HOUSING CRISIS

LA residents' experiences with economic insecurity and the housing crisis have influenced their policy attitudes.

- **87% support state and local laws making housing affordable and protecting those at risk.**
- **73% support rent control laws.**

In short, Young Californians in LA perceive government action as the solution to the crisis.

COMMUNITY, RACIAL, AND POLITICAL IDENTITIES

This research shows that young Californians are motivated by issues, not partisanship. Although that is the case, Young Californians in LA are more partisan than residents in other regions. 48% of LA residents in PoCA's research were registered with the Democratic Party compared to 36% who were registered under the "decline to state/no party preference" (DTS) label. 11% are Republican. LA stands out as the singular region where rates of Democratic Party registration are greater than DTS registration. We do not anticipate that this would undermine an issue-based campaign around the housing crisis, but organizations should be mindful that messages about political independence may be less likely to resonate with Democratic partisans.

Many young Californians have role-based identities that are salient. Among LA residents, 47% described themselves as Hustlers and 47% described themselves as Caretakers. These identities are important to people's self-perceptions.

- **28% perceive their role identity as important to who they are.**
- **28% perceive their racial and ethnic identity as important to who they are.**

These identities are also politically important. 92% of Young Californians in LA rated their identity as somewhat or very important to their politics.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This research shows that Young Californians in LA are a constituency that can be mobilized around housing issues. They are disproportionately impacted by the current housing crisis, and many are experiencing economic insecurity and displacement. This further suggests that LA is a region where advocacy efforts might be most successful. Campaigns should draw on positive messaging that taps into young people's optimism while also making salient their lived experiences. The importance of role-based and racial identities among Young Californians in LA offers a promising set of themes to use for messaging.