

UCLA Young Black Changemaker Study

Who are we? We are a multiracial group of professors and students working together to better understand the civic engagement of Black youth. [We define civic engagement broadly](#) to include many ways youth enact social and political change.

Why are we doing this research?

- To challenge dominant narratives about Black youth in research, the media, and public discourse.
- To learn from the voices and experiences of young Black civic leaders.
- To inform and support organizations that serve Black youth.
- To strengthen local and national investments in communities of color.

Who are our research participants? Between February and August 2020, we interviewed 43 Black youth ages 13-18 in the LA area who described themselves as being highly civically engaged. Youth attended a range of public and private schools across LA County and were civically engaged in many different ways.

What have we found so far in our research?

Many important themes have emerged as we analyze the interview data. We have centered three areas of findings below. For each finding, we share ideas for how organizations can build on these findings to facilitate Black youth's civic engagement.

Youth's Journey to Civic Engagement

1. Youth develop their purpose and passions through experiences of engagement.
2. Some youth seek out opportunities that align with their passions.
3. Families and peers often encourage youth to get engaged and connect youth to opportunities.

What can organizations do?

1. Create opportunities for empowering moments that sustain engagement.
2. Get youth involved early and stay engaged through adulthood.

Black Identity and Civic Engagement

1. Youth have strong feelings of pride and love for the Black community that drives their engagement and desire to do things for the culture.
2. Youth wanted to be heard and recognized as Black and wanted their whole identities to be welcomed.

What can organizations do?

1. Create opportunities to celebrate and learn about Black identity.
2. Create opportunities to connect with other Black people.

Making Lasting Change for the Black Community

Improving conditions for the Black community and achieving racial and economic equity drive youth to be engaged in:

1. Correcting misconceptions about Black people.
2. Educating non-Black people about racial injustice.
3. Challenging systemic inequities.
4. Creating lasting change for future generations.
5. Lifting up the Black community.

What can organizations do?

1. Support critical dialogue about coalition building.
2. Be a place of shelter & joy.