Preparing Future Voters
The project on which this presentation is based was completed in collaboration with Ramsey County as part of the 2018–2019 Resilient Communities Project (RCP) partnership. RCP is a program at the University of Minnesota’s Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA) that connects University faculty and students with Minnesota communities to address strategic projects that advance local resilience and sustainability.

The contents of this report represent the views of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect those of RCP, CURA, the Regents of the University of Minnesota, or Ramsey County.
CHALLENGES
I feel like the people who may not be educated at high levels decide not to vote when they should. They may be the ones affected the most but something is stopping them. I wish we could figure out why they aren’t.

-Asian American, 25-35
CHALLENGES

- Poor civics education in schools
- Importance of voting is underemphasized
- Uninformed citizens OR nonvoters
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FINDINGS
FINDINGS

American citizens, young adults in particular:

- Don’t feel knowledgeable enough to contribute their vote
- Don’t know how to register and vote
- Don’t know who to vote for
- Don’t feel like their vote matters
Schools can do a better job explaining the **IMPORTANCE** of voting and **HOW** to vote. Many young people don’t vote because they don’t know how to (or why they should).

-White woman, 25-35
Lack of Civic Education

- African Americans/Asian Americans more likely to cite lack of civic education for reasons not to vote

- Corresponds to Frogtown’s demographics

1 = White
2 = African American
3 = Asian American

Pol1914 FindingsDemo
Lack of Civic Education

- Ages 18-24 more likely to cite lack of education for not voting
- Demographics of Precinct 1-9

1 = age 18-24
2 = all others
Lack of civic education - lack of information about candidates and issues

Mean scores: low importance of civic education (N=51) and high importance (N=92).
SUGGESTIONS
Teaching students outside of AP classes

- “... youth on a college track, such as those taking AP courses or attending school in more affluent districts, are more likely to be exposed to high-quality civic education practices in public schools, including being taught about voting” (Kiesa, Levine 3)
- Those not in AP classes don’t have the interest or the opportunity
In person contact with students

- “Research shows that young people who are contacted about a campaign are more likely to vote…” (CIRCLE).
- Voter registration drives
- Presentations
- Mock elections
- “All schools should show how IMPORTANT it is so when they are of age--- they are EXCITED.” White woman, 65+
- Representative visits
- Election Officer visits
- Formal discussion
High school IDs

- “...many states have made both registration and the act of voting less convenient or...quite difficult for some eligible young voters. States have implemented photo ID requirements with restrictive lists of acceptable identification...these changes are associated with lower youth turnout.” (CIRCLE)
- Current Minnesota law- College IDs
- Driver’s license in rural areas not as popular
- Improve the civics education in (high) schools
  - There’s many challenges with reforming it
    - Information closer to voting age about registration info/how to vote
    - Improve the civics test
  - Also start introducing civics education in elementary school curriculums
    - Increment in each grade
    - Teach the basics
    - Mock government, mock voting
  - All important for all schools and students, but especially for schools with large populations of people of color
Create a self-administered test that would help the anonymous respondent determine who they should vote for

- Based on values, not issues
- Primarily for young adults, but would be useful for anyone
- Link respondent to candidates for each position for reelection based on how their answers relate to the candidate’s
- Help educate on roles of different positions in local/state/national government with results
There are quizzes like this that exist already, but they ask questions that are clearly linked to partisan issues

- **Ex.** “Should the US assassinate suspected terrorists in foreign countries?"
- **Ex.** “Should the U.S. raise taxes on the rich?”
- **Ex.** “Should teachers be allowed to carry guns at school?”

Questions Source: istandwith.org
This type of quiz would ask questions without partisanship

- Ex. “On a scale from 1-5, how important is it that women have control of their own choices?”
- Ex. “Is the safety of you and those around you a value you consider significant to you?”
- Ex. “Is it plausible to you to provide help to those around you that were raised in and are in unfortunate circumstances to become better versions of themselves?”
In addition, this quiz could be linked to the candidates

- Candidates would provide a few sentences about the issues they campaign for
- Rate the importance of the same values in the quiz to them
- Get data/feedback on how respondents answer
Sample questions asked of the candidates

- Ex. “In a few short sentences, describe the main issues of your campaign.”
- Ex. “How important is it to you that women have control over the decisions they make for their bodies?”
- Ex. “What is your role as ____?”

All of this could be done and added on to Ramsey County’s website