

## Mobilizing Young Voters and Empowering Young People

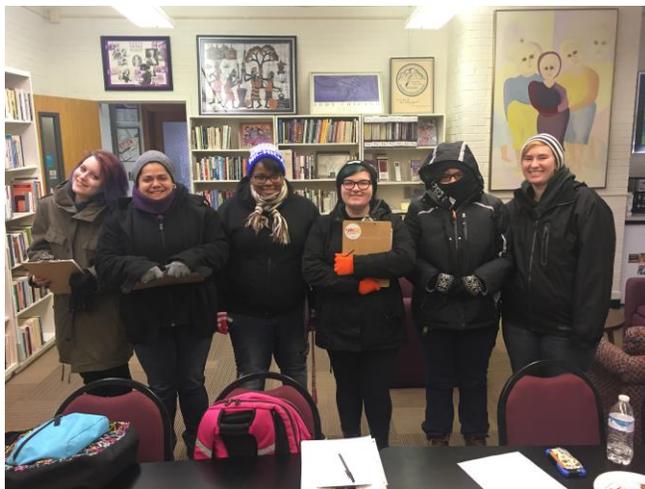
Written By: Allie Lahey, Ohio State Organizer, Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity

URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity has been hitting the ground running with its voter engagement work with young people over the last 2 years. URGE launched its first integrated voter engagement program in fall of 2014 in Bowling Green and Toledo, Ohio, anchored by their university chapters at Bowling Green State University and the University of Toledo. This innovative strategy has allowed URGE to expand their base of young activists from solely chapters on college campuses to all young people within these communities through door-knocking and phonebanking.



Through this voter engagement work, URGE is engaging more and more young people in activism. Every fall and spring, a team of 15 young people register hundreds of voters, talk to thousands of young people about comprehensive sex education in their communities, and mobilize young voters to the polls.

URGE envisions a world where all people have agency over their own bodies and relationships, and the power, knowledge, and tools to exercise that agency. URGE builds this vision by engaging young people in creating and leading the way to sexual and reproductive justice for all by providing training, field mobilization, and national leadership for a youth-driven agenda.



One of the ways that URGE builds leadership on the ground is by providing paid opportunities for young people to organize in their communities, and further training to move up in leadership within the team. One of the canvassing managers, Emily Philibert, who started as a canvasser says, “being a canvassing manager is such a fulfilling position. Going from being a canvasser to helping develop other canvassers has been incredibly rewarding. It is so great to watch others come into URGE and grow

and develop throughout the campaign, and it's an honor to be able to help with that process. It has also helped me grow and develop as a leader as well, as not only am I in a position I'm familiar with, but I'm also a leader within that position.”



URGE continues to make investments in local communities by providing organizing jobs to young people, opening up local offices, providing trainings on reproductive justice and other opportunities to become plugged into the broader movement. To learn more, check out <http://www.urge.org>