

## IMPACT NOTE

# 2020 Programs

## VPC/CVI MET THE MOMENT

2020 was unprecedented in a number of ways. The COVID-19 pandemic reshaped all aspects of life and the high-profile presidential election was no exception. For VPC/CVI, large-scale program planning—such as voter registration—were well underway by early 2020, and the arrival of the pandemic came as an external shock that dramatically reshaped the organization's strategy. Specifically, the pandemic brought three issues to the foreground:

1. Deep concerns that people would not vote in-person due to health risks;
2. Worry that voters would not understand new, and rapidly changing, voting procedures;
3. The possibility that the election system would buckle under stress (e.g., a lack of poll workers and closed polling places limiting voting options across the country)

Given this context, an extensive network of partners and donors entrusted VPC/CVI to increase its outreach and programming. Recognizing the stakes of the 2020 Election, VPC and CVI invested to maximize voter registration, vote by mail, and GOTV in five key ways:

1. Focusing on mobilizing voters to cast ballots before Election Day through vote by mail and early vote
2. Broader targeting of voters and states
3. Increasing voter contact intensity
4. Quick testing and innovation as the on-the-ground picture changed
5. Expanded digital programming

The organization's previous work showed opportunities to run a broad voter outreach program, increase intensity through multiple contacts, find additional voter targets through data and modeling investments, and expand digital efforts—this was the foundation on which VPC/CVI approached 2020 and built its successful registration and mobilization efforts.

# Our Impact

**Figure 1** illustrates the distribution of VPC/CVI's overall net impact in states across the country. The organization's overall net impact for its 2020 program was **272,443 net votes**. Note that this figure shows net impact estimates calculated using VPC/CVI's standard methodology, which includes all state-level estimates when the overall program-level (or experiment-level) treatment effect is statistically significant, and includes only significant state-level estimates when the overall effect is not significant. Using an alternative approach—i.e. Including all state-level estimates regardless of statistical significance—the VPC/CVI's overall net impact from the 2020 programs was **286,287 net votes**.

These are votes that would not have happened without VPC/CVI's efforts. These estimates do not include the impact of most of VPC's digital efforts or downstream impacts from previous programs, and thus is likely an undercount of the true effect of the organization in driving 2020 turnout. An analysis of the previous programs indicates that **44,691 net votes** were generated as a result of the 2018 outreach; and at least **54,254 net votes** were generated as a result of the 2016 programs. This brings the overall 2020 impact to at least **371,658 net votes** according to the standard methodology and **385,502 net votes** according to the alternative methodology.

**FIGURE 1**

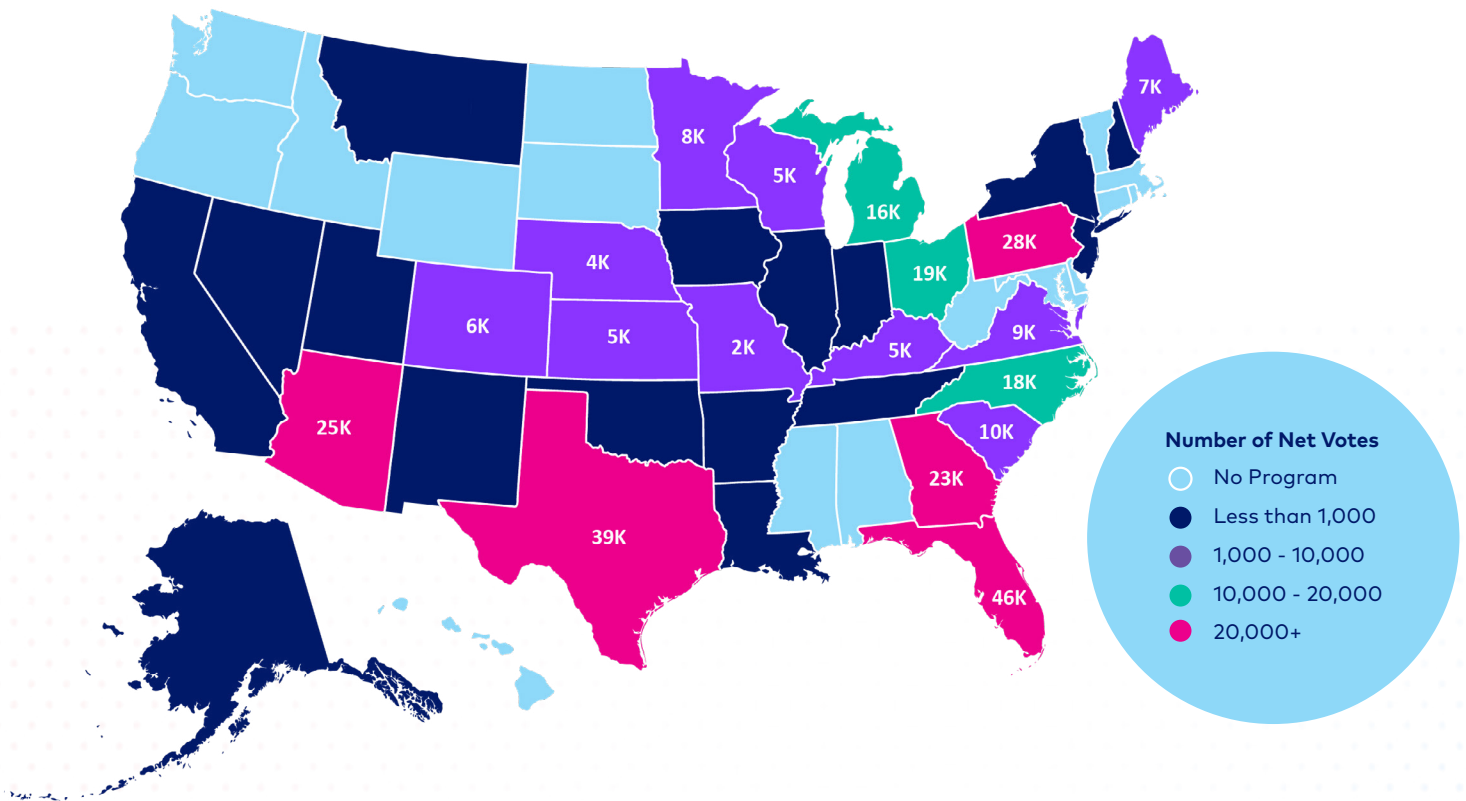


Figure 1: The distribution of net votes across states with VPC/CVI 2020 program outreach

## IMPACT WHERE IT COUNTS

The organization saw significant impact in states important to the presidential election such as Arizona, Georgia, and Pennsylvania. **Table 1** details the size of VPC/CVI's net impact relative to the final Presidential and Senate margin in different states. We saw strong net impacts in states with close margins for these offices. In Arizona, VPC/CVI's program generated net votes that were more than double the presidential election margin. Similarly high impact was seen in Georgia.

**TABLE 1**

	Presidential Margin	Senate Margin	Net Vote	Net Votes (% of Pres. Margin)
<b>Arizona</b>	10,457	78,806	24,825	<b>237%</b>
<b>Georgia</b>	11,779	93,550 (runoff)	23,436	<b>199%</b>
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	80,555	N/A	28,930	<b>36%</b>
<b>North Carolina</b>	74,483	95,633	17,605	<b>24%</b>
<b>Wisconsin</b>	20,682	N/A	4,760	<b>23%</b>
<b>Florida</b>	371,686	N/A	45,580	<b>12%</b>
<b>Michigan</b>	154,188	92,335	16,027	<b>10%</b>
<b>Maine</b>	74,335	70,422	6,624	<b>9%</b>
<b>Texas</b>	631,221	1,074,219	38,887	<b>6%</b>

Table 1: VPC/CVI had strong net impact from the 2020 programs in states with close margins<sup>1</sup>

In addition to increasing turnout, the organization also successfully shifted votes before Election Day—helping to reduce the strain on election systems during the pandemic and helping New American Majority voters navigate a confusing election landscape. **Figure 2** shows the magnitude of this shift.

As seen in **Figure 2**, vote by mail, ballot chase, and early in-person turnout efforts in 2020 drove 330,073 net early votes (net early votes speaks to the total number of votes VPC/CVI programs were able to shift earlier, and is a separate calculation than net votes). Of those net early votes, **192,478 votes shifted from Election Day votes**, and **137,594 votes** would not have happened at all without VPC/CVI efforts (i.e. the total net votes bar in the figure).

**FIGURE 2** *Pre-Election Day Programs: Mobilization and Vote Shifting*

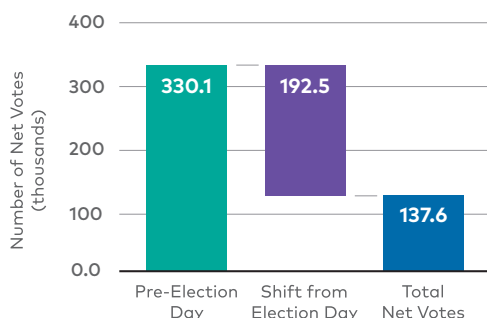


Figure 2: VPC/CVI's 2020 turnout programs from mobilizing voters and shifted vote mode

**Figure 3** shows that VPC/CVI's impact came from a comprehensive 2020 program supporting voters in multiple aspects of the voting process across all modes of voting and registration. We were successful in reaching voters at every stage of the pipeline, from voter registration, to informing voters about voting by mail to combat uncertainty stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic, encouraging early voting where it was available, to chasing mail ballots when voters had a ballot in hand, and mobilizing voters for Election Day turnout.

**FIGURE 3**

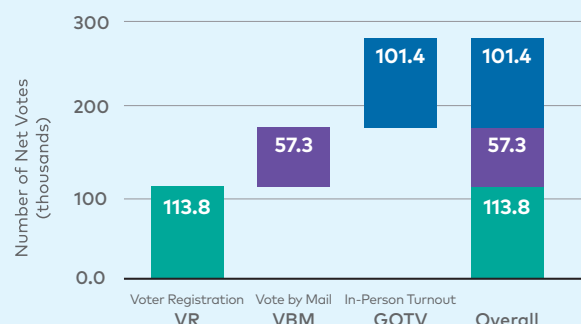


Figure 3: VPC/CVI's net impact from comprehensive and diverse mobilization and registration mail programs in 2020<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The margin of victory is the difference between the share of votes cast for the winning candidate and the second-place candidate in an election; in Table 1, we show the margin of victory for the Presidential race and the key Senate race in important 2020 states. Net votes are our standard methodology.

<sup>2</sup> As mentioned previously, the net votes shown in Figures 1, 2, and 3 represent a cautious estimate of impact; please see the Methodology appendix for details on how net impact is calculated for 2020 programs.

# Key Accomplishments from 2020 Programs<sup>3</sup>

- ◆ **Voter Registration:** VPC and CVI's expansive mail and digital voter registration programs helped more than 935,200 voters successfully register in the 2020 cycle. The voter registration mail program generated approximately 113,800 net votes—people who would otherwise not have voted in the 2020 election—at a cost of \$277 per net vote.
- ◆ **GOTV:** Despite the crowded election environment, VPC/CVI still saw substantial impact as a result of the GOTV program. The organization generated nearly **100,000 net votes** (votes that would not have happened without VPC and CVI's efforts) across Early In-Person and Election Day states.
- ◆ **Digital Programs:** VPC's digital voter registration program generated more than 157,000 new and meaningfully changed registrations, and the digital GOTV program had a significant impact on turnout, creating 4,305 net votes. VPC also ran tests across a wide range of digital platforms and experimented with different targeting options. By not limiting its efforts to a single platform or medium, VPC found untapped audiences and successfully engaged members of the NAM, especially younger people, through its digital advertising.
- ◆ **Vote By Mail:** VPC/CVI generated **4.6 million vote by mail ballot applications** as a result of the mail and digital VBM recruitment program. At the peak, September 10-18, 2020 we successfully encouraged nearly **1.2 million voters** to request their mail ballot weeks earlier than would have happened otherwise. Pushing ballot requests earlier gave election officials plenty of time to send ballots to voters and for voters to complete and return their ballots. VPC/CVI also encouraged **466,579 voters** to vote by mail, most of them shifting from voting in person. This means more voters who voted safely at home and did not stand in line at the polls.
- ◆ **Ballot Chase:** In 2020, VPC/CVI ran a robust program to reach out to voters who had a mail ballot in hand, but had not yet returned it. The Ballot Chase program successfully shifted voting earlier in time—more than **38,000 ballots** were returned to election offices two weeks before the Election Day—which reduced stress on the election system overall. Ultimately, we generated more than **11,000 net votes** as a result of the Ballot Chase program.
- ◆ **Downstream:** While 2020 was a landmark year for the scale of VPC/CVI's program efforts, the organization has honed its experience in running voter outreach over several cycles. An analysis of the downstream effects of VPC/CVI's 2018 and 2016 program efforts—i.e. votes in 2020 that are attributable to these previous years' programs—shows that **44,691 net votes** were generated as a result of 2018 programming and **54,524 net votes** were generated from 2016 programming. These are **99,215 voters** who voted in 2020 because they were mobilized via our previous programs and continued to participate in democracy.

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<sup>3</sup> Again, the net vote figures cited as key accomplishments reflect our standard methodology, and may be somewhat cautious estimates that understate impact.