#### 2018 IMPACT REPORT

# bluefuture

connecting young people to progressive campaigns





"The only youth-led political organization engaging, training, organizing and mobilizing young people directly to progressive candidates & campaigns."

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Co-Founders + Advisors - 20 Our Origin Story - 22 Blue Future is a national organizing program run out of the Youth Progressive Action Catalyst, a youth-led political action committee (PAC) focused on organizing young people around progressive electoral campaigns. We make direct investments in student leaders in key elections who create and mobilize a base of student volunteers to expand a campaign's field efforts through canvassing, phone banking, and other needs as identified by the campaign.

In 2018, Blue Future raised \$78,000 in coordinated PAC funding to support student organizers working on 20 competitive Congressional campaigns across the country. These districts were chosen based on competitiveness from Cook Political Report, Sabato's Crystal Ball, the Movement Voter Project, and fivethirtyeight.com, and coincide with the Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) research on the top 50 districts where young people could have an especially high electoral influence in 2018.

Blue Future believes that sustaining a program to support young people who want to get involved in progressive politics is a key component of the winning strategy for Democrats.

In 2019, Blue Future will continue to build relationships with students in 2020 battleground states, specifically Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin, Ohio, Florida, and North Carolina.

We aim to make grants available for students in competitive Congressional districts and Presidential states in January of 2020 so they can start registering voters, recruiting volunteers, and building youth power within the campaigns.

The fight to take back the White House in 2020 starts today.

Here's what we achieved this year:





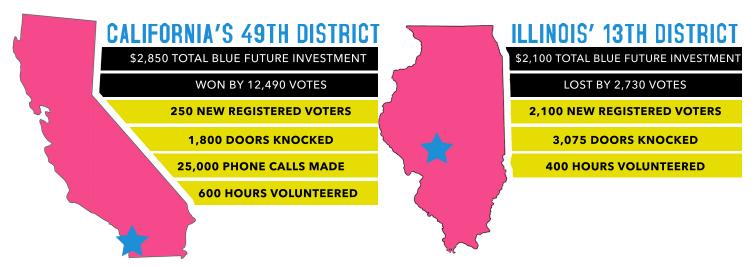


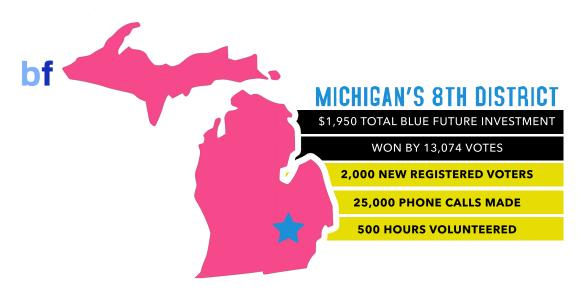


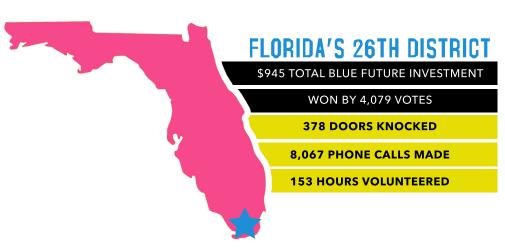
#### **IMPACT IN 2018**

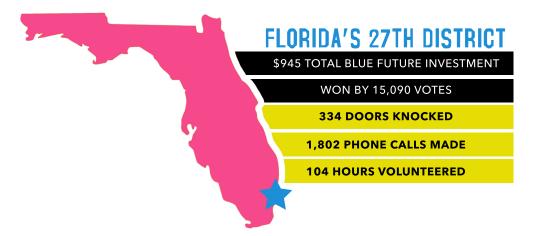








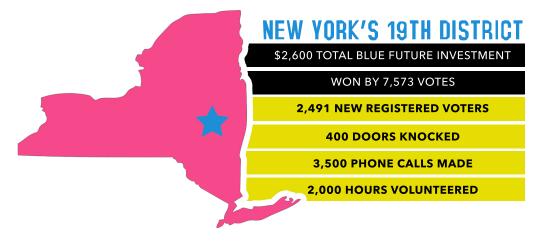




# \$2,400 TOTAL BLUE FUTURE INVESTMENT WON BY 16,408 VOTES 760 DOORS KNOCKED 1,200 PHONE CALLS MADE 120 HOURS VOLUNTEERED







#### **NEBRASKA'S 2ND DISTRICT**

\$2,250 TOTAL BLUE FUTURE INVESTMENT

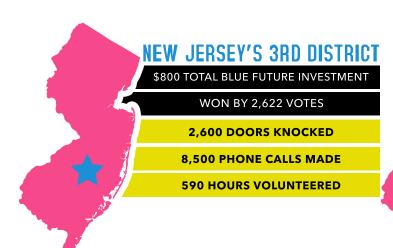
LOST BY 7,312 VOTES

**200 NEW REGISTERED VOTERS** 

14,700 DOORS KNOCKED

1,500 PHONE CALLS MADE

**618 HOURS VOLUNTEERED** 



#### NEW JERSEY'S 7TH DISTRICT \$800 TOTAL BLUE FUTURE INVESTMENT

WON BY 9,745 VOTES

1,900 DOORS KNOCKED

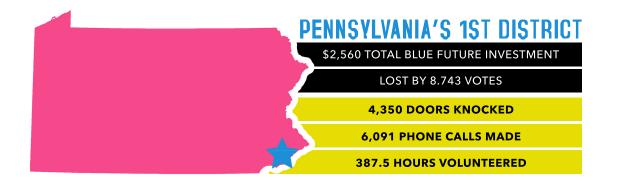
**12,700 PHONE CALLS MADE** 

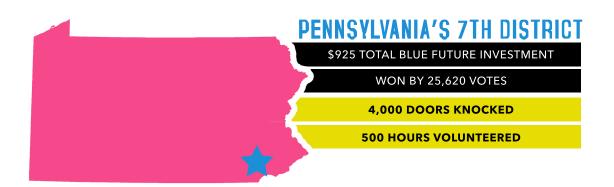
**640 HOURS VOLUNTEERED** 

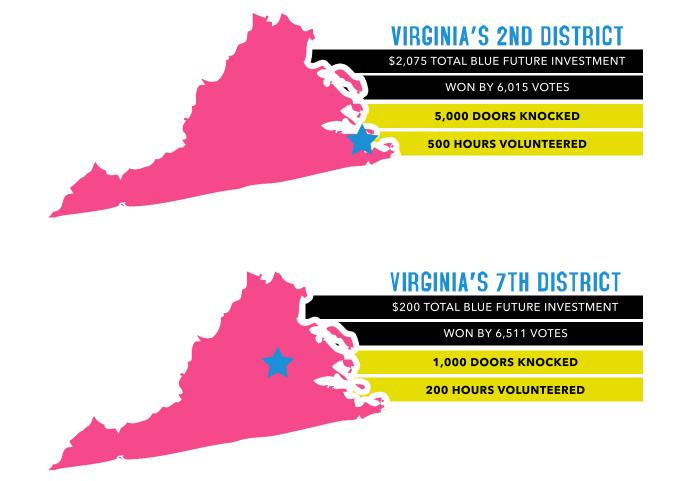


315 HOURS VOLUNTEERED

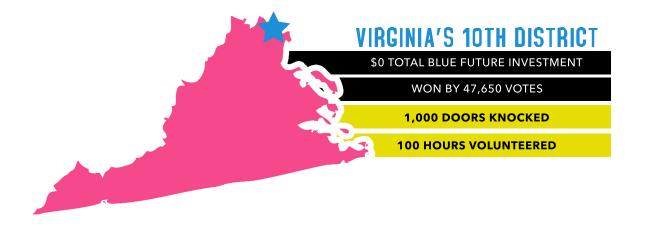
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#### A WORD FROM OUR STUDENT ORGANIZERS

This program was led entirely by students. Here are some words from our student organizers about why they are stepping up to create change in their community.

#### **Naomi Runder**



**IA-01** 

"It's time to start taking students seriously! I'm tired of the narrative that young people cannot and do not want to make a difference. The natural end point of our education is action and I'm ready to start taking those steps now. After all, this is my own own future I'm fighting for. Mobilizing around candidates who will push us closer to racial, economic, and health justice will always be worth it."

#### **Nate Johnson**



**NE-02** 

"I am motivated to organize my school and community during this election because of the competitive nature of our Congressional District, a strong candidate, the lack of prior organization, and the critical nature of this year's vote. At a University where there are more unregistered potential voters than there were votes for a rubberstamp Republican any work that we do to eliminate barriers and increase youth turnout is key. Like many young people, I am fed up with our current political situation and the way that we have been depicted. I want to help make a change and I am thankful for the incredible assistance from Blue Future."

#### **Brianna Brawley**



**CA-49** 

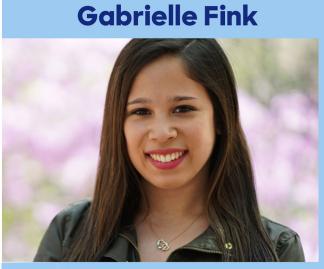
"Seeing the lack of youth engagement and involvement in San Diego County has motivated me to organize my school. With 3 major universities and various community colleges in San Diego, the Democratic Party is missing out on a key voting block of thousands of blue votes. We've been disappointed here in the past to see our candidates lose seats by such slim margins that would have been flipped had we focused more energy, resources, and efforts into our youth."

#### **Lucero Sanchez**



**CA-49** 

"The 2016 election was my biggest motivation because it was really frustrating and disappointing to see someone so unfit for office win. I never thought I'd be politically involved considering I can't vote, but by working on Mike Levin's campaign I feel like I can make a difference. In 2016, there was approximately 2,000 people at UCSD who voted for the presidential race and didn't finish the rest of the ballot. That is more than the amount of people that it would have taken to turn California's 49th congressional district blue; we have a chance to get it right this time and I will do everything in my power to make that happen."



PA-01

"Young people are an overwhelmingly large portion of the electorate, yet way too few of us vote. Our generation is the one that'll see the results of callous environmental degradation, and our classmates are those who are killed in their own classrooms and neighborhoods. I've come to know too many students of Great Mills and Parkland, brought together by tragedy, to let the same thing happen in my community. When we mobilize, when we organize, and when we vote, we can change the world."

#### KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM OUR PROGRAM

After a successful pilot year we learned so much. Here are the primary insights:

- 1. We have to design our way forward
  - a. Design thinking, a human-centered approach to solving problems, is critical to establish an effective system and structure for launching a new organizing program. Everything we did was to serve our student organizers. The structure we built to support our program was designed entirely by young people and could not have run any smoother. We had clear lines of communication and accountability to ensure organizers met their self-determined goals. Since we designed our program with students, the program ended up running itself, allowing our national staff to expand the scope of our work.
- 2. Trust young people to be civic leaders in their own communities

  This should be a given, but to make the obvious explicit, the

  movement must trust young people to lead and provide them with
  the tools, training, mentorship, and resources to reach their goals.

  In our case we were focused on fortifying field operations, but the

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same would be true for issue advocacy or any other civic initiative. Find talented students who are driven to make an impact and trust them to make it happen. They'll exceed expectations, drive impact, and remain committed to our movement for years to come.

- 3. Establish clear goals and lines of communication
  We asked our student organizers what they wanted to accomplish, and once goals were established for voter contact and volunteer recruitment, we set up clear lines of communication so we could provide guidance and support as they developed their organizing skills. Checking in frequently provides the guidance needed and creates accountability as young people balance many competing priorities in their day-to-day lives.
- 4. Follow up, follow up, follow up!
  90% of organizing is follow up. This is especially true with youth organizers and volunteers. We followed up individually and with the full cohort of student organizers multiple times per week to ensure that everyone was on track and felt supported. We pushed our organizers to reach their full potential, and asked them to do the same for national staff. As a youth-led organization, we built mutual accountability and found mutual success with our student partners in the field.
- 5. Create space for collaboration and prioritize team work
  In designing our program, several students shared the need for
  space to collaborate with other students locally and nationally who
  were doing the same work. Similarly, as a new organization, we
  wanted to lean on several organizations that have done this work
  before. We are excited to continue to develop new ways for
  students to share best practices with each other, and we look
  forward to deepening our partnerships with several progressive
  organizations in 2019 + 2020. We are stronger when we work
  together.

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# PRESS CLIPS FROM BLUE FUTURE STUDENT ORGANIZERS

#### **teen**VOGUE

NEWS AND POLITICS

#### How Being Undocumented Inspired Me to Volunteer For A Congressional Campaign

In this op-ed, student Lucero Sanchez, 20, explains how being undocumented led her to become involved in a congressional race and why it is important for others to use their voices to create change in the upcoming election.



"While working on his campaign, I have become politically involved and willing to fight for what I believe in. If I can help a single person vote who otherwise would not have, it makes me feel like I have done my part. In addition to my work with the Levin campaign, serving as a fellow for Blue Future, a national network of young people who are fighting for change, has helped me become an activist for immigrants, women, the environment, and much more."



#### Voter registration hits a deadline this week

by Steve Saunders | Monday, October 15th 2018

"UNO student Nate Johnson helps students on campus get registered.

'Making it possible for students to vote for students to register and for them to access their government is important," said Johnson, who is the president of the UNO College Democrats."

#### The Daily Pennsylvanian

# Penn Dems gets behind Susan Wild, who is looking to break Pa.'s all-male congressional delegation

**By Max Cohen** 09/09/18 11:59pm

"For Democrats nationwide, the midterm elections on Nov. 6 represent an opportunity to turn the House of Representatives blue for the first time since 2010. Closer to campus, Penn Democrats hopes to play a role in the fight for the House, planning canvassing events for candidates in tight congressional races across Pennsylvania."



#### Youth Voter Corps aims to get teens signed up to vote

by Christina Coulter / September 30, 2018

"The Youth Voter Corps, a derivative of a get-out-the-vote initiative Hudson Valley Votes, is a group made of high school students from across the Hudson Valley who've taken the task of registering young voters into their own hands. Ranging in age from 14 to 20 and hailing from 11 area high schools and college campuses, the majority of them are too young to vote themselves."



#### DAILY FREEMAN

### Hudson Valley Votes fundraising concert Oct. 20 at UPAC

Oct 18, 2018 Comments

"According to a release, Hudson Valley Votes serves to unite the people of the Hudson Valley and mobilize communities to take back pivotal political seats across the region and state during the upcoming midterm elections on Nov. 6. Proceeds will be donated to Planned Parenthood Mid-Hudson Valley, Moms Demand Action on Gun Sense in America, New York Immigration Action Fund, and Radio Woodstock Cares Foundation."

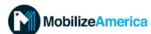


"Using a combination of digital media and on-the-ground organizing, Our Blue Future has been able to gather support for candidates that will bring new progressive representatives to Congress."

#### **PARTNERS**

Blue Future worked with several organizations to coordinate our program in the various districts. Here are some of our closest partners who provided us with funding and in-kind support.

















#### CREATING A MORE VIBRANT DEMOCRACY

We believe that democracy in the United States deserves an upgrade. So, under our 501c4 arm, The Progressive Leadership Initiative, we dove into the research to see how we could strengthen our democracy.

We believe that by implementing a series of policies aimed at expanding the voting population, the United States will become a more representative democracy that can better serve the needs of all people, not just the wealthy, white and privileged who currently benefit from our system at the expense of the rest of us. We propose a spectrum of reforms, ranging from something as simple as preregistration for 16 & 17 year-olds to universal voter registration upon the age of 18 and fines or penalties for those who fail to turn out to vote.

The complete list of policy suggestions are as follows:

#### Phase I

Improved voter education
Pre-registration for 16 to 17 year-olds
Improved transportation on election days
Improved absentee voting processes & education
Same-day registration
Felon re-enfranchisement & prison voting education

#### Phase II

Repeal/Reform voter ID laws
Challenge & reform electoral college and unfair gerrymandering
Improved accessibility to polling stations
Improved voting technology & working on building trust in the voting
system

#### Phase III

Making election day a national holiday Universal voter registration at age 18 Potential fines & penalties for those who fail to vote

We believe that if any and all of these policies are implemented our democracy will become more representative of the people, and the lives of all Americans will improve. We plan to advocate for these reforms and hold elected officials accountable to their promises to enhance our democracy.

#### THE FULL RESEARCH PAPER CAN BE FOUND HERE

REVENUE SOURCE	TOTAL SECURED REVENUE	
VOQAL FELLOWSHIP	\$30,000	
INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS	\$27,695	
LARGE DONORS	\$20,000	
VOTERIZE THE MOVEMENT GRANT (501C4)	\$5,000	
YOUTH ENGAGEMENT ACTION FUND GRANT (501C4)	\$10,000	
TOTAL REVENUE	\$92,695	
BUDGET	TOTAL EXPENSES	
STAFF SALARY	TOTAL EXPENSES \$35,000	
STAFF SALARY	\$35,000	
STAFF SALARY  DIRECT INVESTMENT IN CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS	\$35,000 \$28,050	
STAFF SALARY  DIRECT INVESTMENT IN CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS  LEGAL EXPENSES	\$35,000 \$28,050 \$5,010	
STAFF SALARY  DIRECT INVESTMENT IN CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS  LEGAL EXPENSES  PRESS CONSULTANT	\$35,000 \$28,050 \$5,010 \$6,000	

#### **VISION FOR 2019 + 2020**

2018 showed that investing in youth organizing is part of the winning strategy for the Democratic Party. According to the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, youth voter turnout was the highest it had been in the past quarter century for a midterm election—yet we still have more work to do. Blue Future's impact was felt in the districts we invested in, as can be seen by our metrics, especially in the nearly 10,000 volunteer hours we drove directly to the campaigns.

In 2019, Blue Future and the Youth Progressive Action Catalyst will continue to build relationships with students in 2020 battleground states, specifically Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin, Ohio, Florida, and North Carolina. Our goal will be to grow our base of student organizers who will be ready to mobilize for campaigns in 2020. We will also connect with progressive presidential nominees and determine the best ways to ensure young people's voices are represented in their campaign strategy and platform.

Broadly, we will focus on two major organizational goals to develop a more robust infrastructure for coordinated electoral youth engagement in 2020.

#### 1. Fundraising

- a. We will pursue a strategic and aggressive email and digital fundraising program to ensure sustainability for our program in 2020. We are seeking an initial investment of \$200,000 to seed our email list and hire a digital strategy consultant to assist in running our small-dollar email program.
- b. Email acquisition projections can be found here.
- 2. Training + Community Outreach through the Progressive Leadership Initiative (our 501c4)
  - a. We would like to host 10 regional trainings in 2019 with a target of at least 100 attendees per training, to build student leadership, resiliency, and community service.
  - b. Trainings will emphasize transferable skills on strategy, community organizing, volunteer recruitment, campaign management, fundraising, and organizational partnerships.
  - c. A key outcome of the trainings will be the establishment of Regional Hubs comprised of youth leaders from local high schools and colleges. This will:

- i. Help build community and expand civic engagement locally
  - ii. Fortify the infrastructure for 2020 coordination and mobilization.
- d. A similar hub model has been developed through the Sunrise Movement—a movement of young people uniting to stop the climate crisis.

Depending on funding, Blue Future will partner with young people for state elections in 2019. In the 2018 midterms, Democrats picked up 6 government trifectas and helped start the process of flipping local, traditionally Republican, legislative bodies. By recruiting and training organizers for state and local races in 2019, Blue Future will have an experienced team ready to take on 2020.

In 2020, we will scale our program based on our success and key learnings from 2018. We aim to make grants available for students in competitive Congressional districts and Presidential states in January of 2020 so they can start registering voters, recruiting volunteers, and building youth power within the campaigns. By making these early investments, students will be well equipped and prepared to organize in their communities well before primary season and election day as opposed to when students normally start organizing at the beginning of the fall semester in August-September.

We will support our students with funding, mentorship, organizing training, tools and tech to expand their impact, press and media support, and track our progress along the way. Over the course of 2020, we will continue to raise funds from small dollar donors and organizational partners.

#### 2019 + 2020 FUNDING PROPOSAL

Our goal is to raise \$200,000 in the first quarter of 2019 to begin expanding our impact.

Early money is critical for youth engagement, since it takes time to build authentic relationships with students and support them with training and leadership development. 2018 was a critical period to test our model and identify key areas of improvement. We are proud of our work this year, and are eager to continue driving impact.

The fight to take back the White House in 2020 starts today.

# FULL BUDGET PROJECTION CAN BE FOUND HERE

TIMELINE	GROSS SPEND	TIMELINE	GROSS INCOME
JAN 2019-DEC 2019	\$266,060	12 MONTH END INCOME	\$191,731
JAN 2020-JUNE 2020	\$400,845	18 MONTH END INCOME	\$351,059
JUNE 2020-JAN 2021	\$594,544	24 MONTH END INCOME	\$602,279

#### **CO-FOUNDERS**

#### NICK GUTHMAN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FULL TIME, PAID STAFF

Nick Guthman serves as the Executive Director of Blue Future + the Youth **Progressive Action** Catalyst. He manages full development of the organization through fundraising, partnerships, campus organizing, training, digital and social media. For the past six years, he has worked on local and national electoral races, as well as issue advocacy campaigns surrounding health care & tax fairness. Nick focusses his energy on electoral youth outreach and engagement, rapid response field activities, and social media + digital organizing.

#### SYDNEY HIBBS DIGITAL LEAD

PART TIME, VOLUNTEER

Sydney manages our social media presence across Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram and leads our Digital Organizing internship program. She is a recent New York University graduate and in college, Sydney was a field organizer for the Hillary Clinton Campaign and an OFA Fellow. Her digital career started as a digital intern on the Kamala Harris for Senate Campaign. She currently works at Bully Pulpit Interactive, a digital marketing and advertising agency in Washington, DC.

#### DEVONTAE TORRIENTE TRAINING LEAD

PART TIME, VOLUNTEER

Devontae designs our training curriculum that prepares our generation to work on progressive electoral campaigns. At American University he served as student body president and used his role to center progressive values and uplift the voices of marginalized folks in our communities both on and off campus. He's worked for various progressive organizations and campaigns, both electoral and issue advocacy, over the past several years. Devontae currently works as a digital organizer and communications professional.

### BEN DAVIS CAMPUS ORGANIZING LEAD

PART TIME, VOLUNTEER

Ben strategizes on how Blue Future can best reach and organize college campuses. A native of Kansas City, has been based out of Washington DC since 2015, where he is a full time student in his junior year at American University. Ben began organizing in 2012, joining the field team for Barack Obama's reelection bid. Since then, Ben has worked the field in local, state, and national races. In 2016. Ben worked full time for the **Democratic Party of** Virginia as an Organizer on the Hillary Clinton presidential campaign.



## MORGAN STAHR CAMPUS ORGANZING + DIGITAL LEAD

PART TIME, VOLUNTEER

Morgan works with Ben on developing our campus outreach program and leads our mentorship program. She is a recent graduate from **American University** and originally from a small town in PA. Back home, she was able to see firsthand the importance of local politics and community organizing During her time in DC, she has served as President of College Democrats at AU and worked with the DNC to help elect progressives in surrounding states. Most recently, she campaigned with Blue Future in Florida for the 2018 Senate and Gubernatorial races.

#### LEELA NAJAFI EVENTS LEAD

PART TIME, VOLUNTEER

Leela coordinates fundraising and networking events for Blue Future. She is a Bay Area native and a student at American University. Her interest in politics sparked in high school where she registered students to vote and started their first political science club. Soon after, she became the secretary of the Marin County Young Democrats and a member of California Women's List. Previously, Leela volunteered with city council, supervisor, and judge races across Marin County, as well as with the Clinton campaign in 2016. She is the vice president of **AU Student** Government and is a research assistant at

#### SHADI NASAB EVENTS LEAD

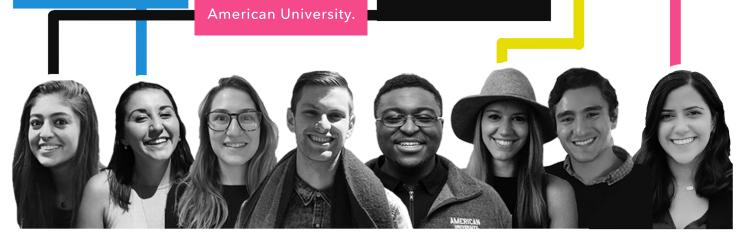
PART TIME, VOLUNTEER

Shadi co-leads our fundraising & networking events to raise awareness and build community around the Blue Future brand. She is a British-American-Persian in her sophomore year at American University. She grew up in the swing state of Colorado, and as a result, Shadi's interest in politics grew after she worked on a national congressional campaign in high school. Now in DC, Shadi has served on the executive board of the AU College Democrats for the past year and has campaigned for Hillary Clinton in 2016 and down-ballot elections in 2017.

# ANDREA HAVERDINK DESIGN LEAD

PART TIME, VOLUNTEER

Andrea leads our design and creative efforts to substantiate our online presence and drive people to take offline action. She grew up in rural Michigan and (improbably) found her passion in both art and progressive politics. She works as a Associate Producer for Mike Lux Media, and is an Associate at Democracy Partners, a political consulting firm in Washington, DC.



#### **OUR ORIGIN STORY**

Like many great ideas, Blue Future started with friends. What began as a casual Sunday night gathering among a close group of young people turned into a passionate discussion over the current political climate in the U.S, and what could be done about it. These conversations spread beyond the group in the weeks following that first gathering, and when the group of friends met again they shared their conversations and realized many young people were feeling exactly as they did.

These friends, all who had met as college students at American University (AU), would then became the founders of Blue Future, with the goal of encouraging young people across the country to become more involved with progressive politics. Nick, Devontae, and Morgan had all been active in politics throughout their college years. They organized protests, set up phone banks for AU students, and held positions such as Student Government President and AU College Democrats President. They enjoyed leading and engaging their peers but upon graduating, realized that there was no infrastructure in place to sustain their efforts and others like theirs around the country. Their experience with local and regional politics revealed to them the



inefficiencies and flaws of running a campaign, and the challenges faced by students wanting to get involved.

During one campaign in 2016, students from AU traveled to Pennsylvania's 10th Congressional District to campaign for a young progressive female candidate. When they got there they realized that the campaign office was only a few blocks away from yet another university, but the campaign had no way to contact that school and the students had no way to help them get involved. It was baffling to the AU students who had just traveled 3 hours to be there, that the campaign office was in such close proximity to another group of students but failed to connect with them. Blue Future realized this wasn't only a problem in PA-10, but all across the country. Students were energized and motivated, but did not have the resources to make their voices heard and be part of the change they wished to see.

After the disappointment and frustration of the 2016 election, the original group of friends decided that it was time their ambitions and ideas became a reality. Blue Future was founded on the belief that every person is capable of making change, and that together, the young people will win. Like John F. Kennedy said, "One person can make a difference, and everyone should try." In October of 2017, the co-founders submitted a grant proposal to the Voqal Foundation requesting seed funding to build an organization dedicated to supporting students as they realize their own power to organize for social change. In December of 2017, the co-founders received the grant from Voqal and started to design the organization.

After talking to over 70 progressive national organizations and 40 student leaders from around the country in early 2018, Blue Future and the Youth Progressive Action Catalyst (YPAC) identified a key gap to unleash youth engagement and mobilization for the 2018 midterm

elections, and glean critical insights to build a robust plan for 2020.

As the Youth Engagement Action Fund's 2016 Youth Civic Engagement and Recommendations report highlights, most youth engagement groups do important non-partisan voter registration and mobilization, however, very few organizations do coordinated PAC work. As a result, national progressive groups that run PACs have trouble aligning their program and coordinating with youth-led groups, since they don't exist. Further, young people's voices and values are not always represented in a candidate's vision, and, as a result, young people are left out of the political process.

Unfortunately, the pernicious cycle of civic disengagement and political marginalization feeds off each other. Too many candidates and elected officials do not reflect the views of young people because our block doesn't vote reliably, and our block doesn't vote reliably because too many candidates and elected officials don't reflect our views. By building a politically powerful body, we hope to solve this issue at both ends. Organizing around our candidates, young people will be encouraged by the tangible difference they can make for real progressives. These candidates who benefit and see first hand the brilliance of young people, once elected, will understand the political importance of giving our generation proper attention.

In several of our interviews with organizational and student leaders, we realized that there is a significant need for PAC funding specifically allocated for capacity building and volunteer mobilization to fund:

transportation to key districts; data, communication and volunteer management tools; organizing trainings; and mobilization tools (texting programs, virtual phone banks, etc.). Other PACs tend to max out their contributions directly to candidates, and therefore cannot provide in-kind contributions—especially transportation—that have the power to catalyze youth mobilization.

In 2018, Blue Future managed fundraising and expenditures for our fellows' for key needs to optimize their campus organizing. We directly provided stipends to 17 students in key districts because students shouldn't have to choose between developing their organizing skills to expand their impact, and taking a part-time job to help pay for their education.

Blue Future helped sustain the growing youth-energy sparked by the gun violence prevention movement in February 2018 and we mobilized young activists to help elect progressive candidates who will advocate for policies that lead to real improvement in people's lives.

Blue Future hopes to expand on our impact in 2018 and continue to be a youth-led organization dedicated to progressive priorities, with a robust field organizing program to back it up and ensure candidates are accountable to the current generation of progressive political leaders.

Today, Blue Future believes that sustaining a program to support young people who want to get involved in progressive politics is a key component of the winning strategy for Democrats.

Find out how you can get involved and support us in creating a blue future.

#### Change is coming. Are you ready?