

Arizona Votes

Civic Engagement in the Grand Canyon State
2002–2006

By Benjamin Spears



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Executive Summary

Arizona Votes: Civic Engagement in the Grand Canyon State provides a concise review of the population and voter participation trends of various demographic groups in the November 2006 elections. The report is based largely on the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS).

Key findings include:

- Arizona's population grew by 13 percent between 2002 and 2006, topping six million residents in 2006.
- Latinos comprised 62 percent of the state's overall population growth since 2002, but Whites still make up a majority (60 percent) of the state's population.
- Though all racial and ethnic groups' citizenship rates increased from 2002 to 2006, Arizona's Latinos were the least likely of any racial or ethnic group to be voting-eligible in each year.
- Arizonans of color were underrepresented in the 2006 electorate relative to their share of the population. Latinos, especially, were consistently underrepresented in voter registration.
- Despite composing one-quarter of Arizona's voting-eligible population, Arizonans earning less than \$25,000 represented less than one-sixth of the voters in 2006.
- Half of registered Arizonans under 30 voted in 2006; that year, close to 90 percent of registered Arizonans over 65 voted.

Introduction

This report examines changes in Arizona's population and rates of electoral participation between 2002 and 2006, and compares them to the United States as a whole. The report's major focal points include rates of eligibility, registration and turnout by race or ethnicity, income and age.

The largest survey of voting behavior is the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS). The CPS and Population Estimates Program are the primary sources of data for this report, which provides a review of the frequency tables generated from responses to the November 2006 CPS.

This report is organized by the three major cross-sections of the electorate: race or ethnicity, income and age. First, we describe the size and demographic composition of Arizona's overall population and voting-eligible population. We then show characteristics of the registered population and conclude by describing some of the disparities in the composition of the voting populations.

The data show that those Arizonans who are White, those who are older and those who are more affluent are overrepresented in the populations that are registered to vote and vote compared to their non-White, younger and lower-income counterparts.

Summary Table: Percent of Arizona Population Eligible to Vote, Voting and Not Voting, by Demographic Characteristics, 2006

Demographic Category	Voting-Eligible	Registered	Voters	Non-Voters
RACE				
White	72%	75%	79%	65%
Non-White	28%	25%	21%	35%
Latino	20%	17%	15%	23%
HOUSEHOLD INCOME				
Less than \$25,000	24%	17%	15%	30%
\$25,000–\$74,999	37%	38%	38%	37%
More than \$75,000	39%	45%	47%	33%
AGE GROUP				
Under 30	20%	15%	10%	29%
30 to 64	62%	63%	64%	60%
65 and Over	18%	22%	26%	11%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2006

Electorate by Race or Ethnicity

The U.S. population grew from 288 million to 299 million between 2002 and 2006. Six percent of the country's population growth occurred in Arizona during that time period.

Arizona's population grew by 13 percent between 2002 and 2006, more than triple the national growth rate of 4 percent. The state's population exceeded six million in 2006.

Arizona is more racially and ethnically diverse than the U.S. as a whole. Sixty percent of Arizonans were White in 2006, whereas 66 percent of the overall American population was White.

Between 2002 and 2006, Arizona's non-White population grew by close to three times the growth rate of the state's White population. Latinos comprised 62 percent of the state's overall population growth.

Table 1 shows Arizona's and the U.S. population change between 2002 and 2006.

Table 1: Arizona and U.S. Population Change by Race, 2002 to 2006

	2002	2006	2006 Percent of Total	Percent Change, 2002–2006
Arizona	5,445	6,166		13%
White	3,403	3,680	60%	8%
Non-White	2,042	2,487	40%	22%
Latino	1,460	1,803	29%	23%
United States	288,126	299,398		4%
White	196,824	198,744	66%	1%
Non-White	91,302	100,654	34%	10%
Latino	38,598	44,321	15%	15%

Numbers in thousands

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Estimates of the Population by Selected Groups for the United States and States, 2002 and 2006

Sixty percent of Arizona's population was voting-eligible in 2002; 62 percent was voting-eligible in 2006. Although the percentage of people eligible to vote increased for each racial or ethnic group between 2002 and 2006, Arizona's Latinos remained the least likely of any racial or ethnic group to be voting-eligible.

Table 2 shows Arizona's 2002 and 2006 rates of voting eligibility by race.

Table 2: Arizona Voting-Eligible Population by Race and Ethnicity, as a Percent of Population, 2002 and 2006

	2002	2006
White	73%	75%
Non-White	39%	44%
Latino	36%	41%
Total	60%	62%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Estimates of the Population by Selected Groups for the United States and States, 2002 and 2006

Although the voting-eligible population increased between 2002 and 2006, registration is a necessary first step to voting. A greater percentage of Arizonans were registered to vote in 2006 than any mid-term election in the previous decade.

However, registration rates are not uniform across demographic groups. During the period between 2002 and 2006, Latinos were consistently underrepresented in the population that was registered to vote. Whites equaled or exceeded the state's average registration rate in every election since at least 1998.

Table 3 shows the racial and ethnic disparity in Arizona's registration as a percent of its voting-eligible population.

Table 3: Arizona Registration as a Percent of Voting-Eligible Population by Race, 1998 to 2006

	1998	2000	2002	2004	2006
White	63%	65%	61%	73%	65%
Non-White	42%	47%	50%	53%	54%
Latino	42%	49%	49%	56%	54%
Total	58%	60%	59%	71%	62%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November Supplements

In addition, voting was not consistent across demographic groups and was skewed toward Whites. Latinos were less likely than their White counterparts to have voted in 2002 and 2006.

Despite lagging behind the statewide average, Latinos' turnout rate improved between 2002 and 2006 from 29 to 36 percent. Furthermore, the gap in turnout rates by race narrowed between 2002 and 2006. Table 4 shows Arizona's voter turnout by race in 2002 and 2006.

Table 4: Arizona Voter Turnout by Race, 2002–2006

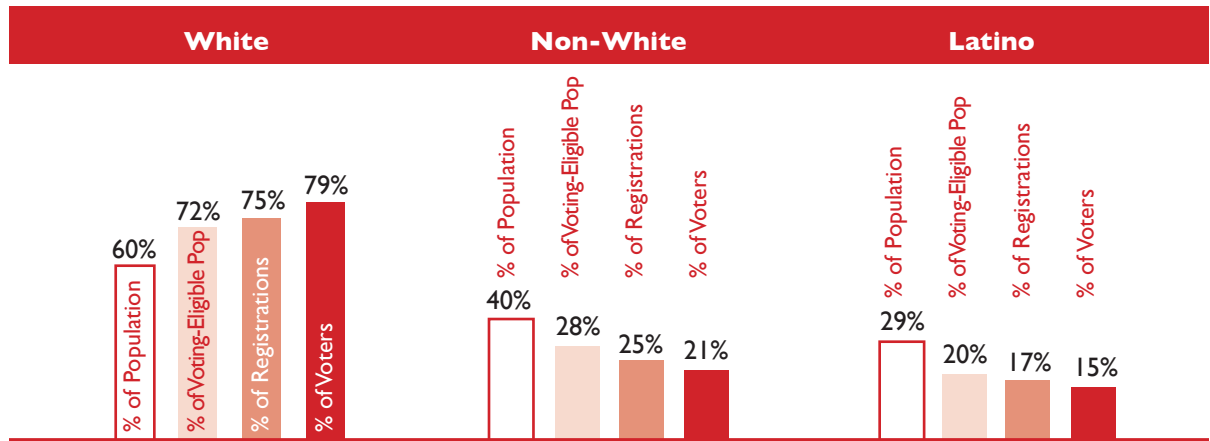
	2002		2006	
	Voted as % of Registered	Voted as % of VEP	Voted as % of Registered	Voted as % of VEP
White	75%	46%	78%	51%
Non-White	61%	31%	63%	34%
Latino	60%	29%	68%	36%
Total	72%	42%	75%	46%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November Supplements

In conclusion, non-White Arizonans were underrepresented in 2006 relative to their share of the population. Non-Whites' share of Arizona's voting population equals roughly half their share of the overall voting-eligible population. Latinos, similarly, are 29 percent of the overall population but represent merely half (15 percent) of the voting population.

Figure 1 shows the extent to which Whites are overrepresented as voters, while non-Whites – and Latinos in particular – are underrepresented as voters.

Figure 1: Arizona Racial/Ethnic Composition of Voter-Eligible Population, Registered Voters, and Voters, 2006



Electorate by Income

Consistent with the U.S. as a whole¹, the likelihood of being registered to vote in Arizona rises with income. In 2006, lower-income Arizonans were underrepresented in registration relative to their higher-income counterparts.

Table 5 shows Arizona income groups' registration as a percentage of the voting-eligible population.

Table 5: Arizona Registration by Income, 2006

	VEP	Registered	Registered as % of VEP
< \$25,000	703	310	44%
\$25,000–39,999	615	373	61%
\$40,000–59,999	490	315	64%
\$60,000 and Over	1,165	817	70%
Total Reporting Income	2,974	1,815	61%

Numbers in thousands

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2006

¹"Representational Bias in the 2006 Electorate" provides review of voter participation in the 2006 elections based on the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS). http://projectvote.org/fileadmin/ProjectVote/Publications/Representational_bias_report_2006.pdf

Voting rates also differed across Arizona's income groups. Of the voting-eligible population earning less than \$25,000, 28 percent voted in 2006. In contrast, 53 percent of voting-eligible Arizonans earning more than \$60,000 voted.

Table 6 shows Arizona's 2006 voter turnout, as a percentage of the registered and voting-eligible populations.

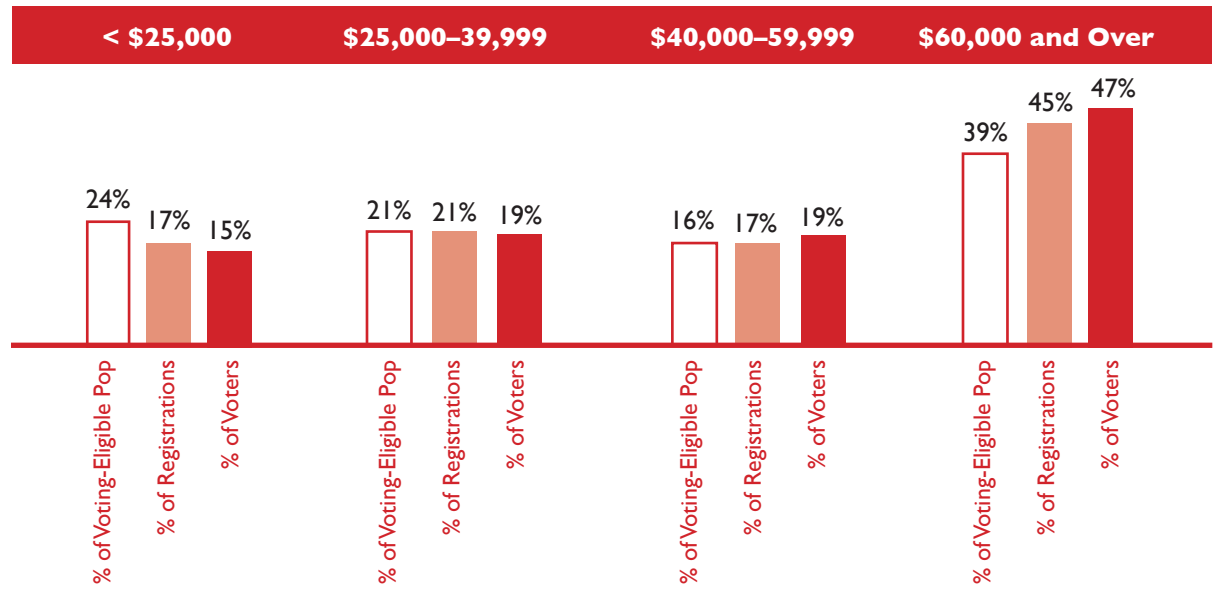
Table 6: Arizona Voter Turnout by Income, 2006

	Voted as % of Registered	Voted as % of VEP
< \$25,000	64%	28%
\$25,000–39,999	66%	40%
\$40,000–59,999	77%	49%
\$60,000 and Over	75%	53%
Total Reporting Income	72%	44%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2006

Despite representing one-quarter of Arizona's voting-eligible population, Arizonans earning less than \$25,000 constituted less than one-sixth of the voters in 2006. Figure 2 shows that Arizonans earning greater than \$60,000 were overrepresented in the populations that were registered to vote and voted relative to their share of the voting-eligible population.

Figure 2: Arizona Income Composition of Voter-Eligible Population and Electorate, 2006



Electorate by Age

Arizona's voting-eligible population grew by more than half a million people from 2002 to 2006, a 16 percent increase. The under 30 age group grew slowest.

In Arizona, the 30 to 64 and 65 and over voting eligible population groups' growth rates outpaced the under 30 growth by 6:1 and 8:1, respectively. Table 7 shows Arizona's voting-eligible population by age in 2002 and 2006.

Table 7: Arizona Voting-Eligible Population by Age, 2002–2006

	2002	2006	Change	Percent Change
Under 30	752	775	23	3%
30 to 64	1,989	2,358	369	19%
65 and Over	552	696	144	26%
Total	3,293	3,828	536	16%

Numbers in thousands

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2002 and 2006

Not all of Arizona's age groups were registered at the same rate in the 2002 and 2006 elections. Between those years, registration across most of Arizona's age groups improved.

Arizona's under 30 voting-eligible population was registered at a much greater percentage in the 2006 election than in the 2002 election. Still, the percentage of younger Arizonans registered to vote was much lower than their older counterparts.

Table 8 shows registration rates of Arizona's age groups as a percentage of the voting-eligible population in 2002 and 2006.

Table 8: Arizona Registration as a Percent of Voting-Eligible Population by Age, 2002–2006

	2002	2006
Under 30	33%	45%
30 to 64	63%	64%
65 and Over	79%	75%
Total	59%	62%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2002 and 2006

Fourteen percent of Arizona's voting-eligible population under 30 voted in 2002. That figure was almost five times greater—68 percent—for Arizonans 65 and over.

Despite improving the percentage at which they turned out to vote from 2002, barely half of registered Arizonans under 30 voted in 2006.

Table 9 shows the percentage at which Arizona's age groups in 2002 and 2006 turned out to vote of the registered and voting-eligible populations.

Table 9: Arizona Voter Turnout by Age, 2002 and 2006

	2002		2006	
	Voted as % of Registered	Voted as % of VEP	Voted as % of Registered	Voted as % of VEP
Under 30	43%	14%	51%	23%
30 to 64	73%	46%	75%	48%
65 and Over	86%	68%	89%	67%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2002 and 2006

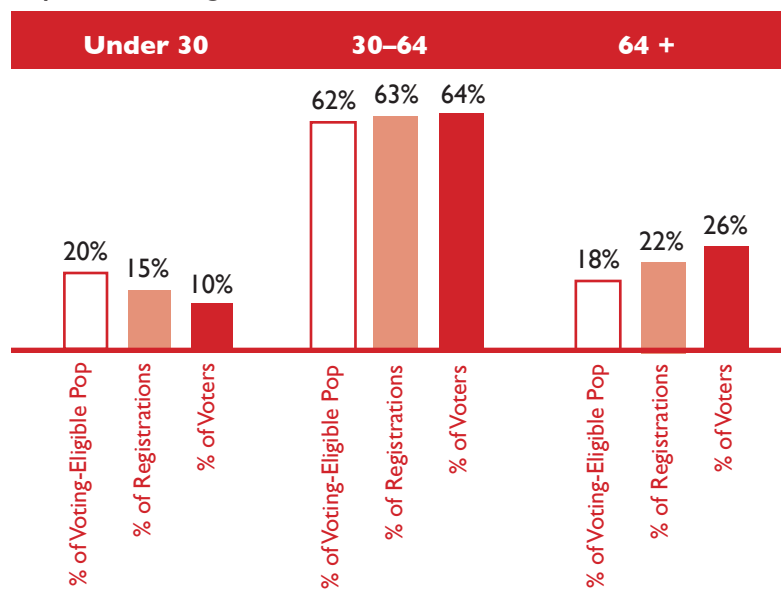
Adults aged 30 to 64 represented 62 percent of Arizona's voting-eligible population, 63 percent of the state's registered voters and 64 percent of those who voted in 2006.

The registered population under 30 represents only three-quarters of that age group's voting-eligible population. The voting population represents only two-thirds of the registered population, compounding the under representation of young Arizonans.

Older Arizonans, on the other hand, are overrepresented in the electorate. Though Arizonans over 65 comprise less than one-fifth of Arizona's voting-eligible population, they represent more than one-quarter of the actual voting population.

Figure 3 shows the composition of Arizona's electorate by age in 2006.

Figure 3: Arizona Age Composition Voter-Eligible Population, Registered Voters and Voters, 2006



Conclusion

This report presents participation data on Arizona and the United States between 2002 and 2006, with a focus on disparities by race and ethnicity, income and age. Each of those categories was compared through the lenses of eligibility, registration and voting.

As the report shows, Whites represented a smaller percentage of the state's population than that of the nation as a whole. Whites are, however, still a majority of the state's population. The non-White population grew at a relatively high rate between 2002 and 2006. Latinos made up a much greater percentage of Arizona's population than of the overall nation; furthermore, Arizona's Latino population grew faster than the state's general population.

The data indicate that more of state's population is eligible to vote compared to previous years, and that the percentage of Arizonans who are registered and who voted has increased. Still, consistent with decades of data from the U.S. as a whole, registration and voting rates were lower among younger and less affluent Arizonans. In addition, Arizonans of color were underrepresented in the 2006 electorate.

Public agencies, community organizations and the general public should take note of the disparities in participation and work to engage young people, low-income people and new citizens.

About Project Vote

Since its founding in 1982, Project Vote has been a leading provider of strategic and management services to the voter engagement and civic participation community.

About the Author

Ben Spears has been a research assistant with Project Vote since September 2006. He graduated in 2005 from the George Washington University in Washington, DC, where he was active on hunger and homelessness issues. While in the nation's capital, Ben interned with Congressman John Lewis (GA-5) and participated in dialogues with other student leaders as part of the National Student Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness. Before joining Project Vote, Ben served as researcher and project assistant at multiple international humanitarian organizations in Atlanta, Georgia, including CARE USA.



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