

# **NEW ERA COLORADO**

**2024 Annual Report**

# A Note from the Executive Director

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**Friends,**

This year, we set out to win big on the Youth Agenda by enshrining our right to abortion, passing housing policies to protect renters, and electing Youth Agenda Champions to the state legislature through record youth turnout. We gave it everything we had, and are proud to say we did it all and then some.



New Era was essential in turning out young voters for Amendment 79 to enshrine the right to abortion, free from government interference, in our state constitution. This ballot measure is the only one in the country that not only protects the legal right to care, but expands access and affordability to nearly a million Coloradans by overturning a decades-old funding ban on state-provided insurance. We also helped pass Occupancy Limits and Cause Required for Eviction at the state legislature—to support chosen families who live together to afford the rising costs of housing and protect renters from unjust evictions. In order to keep passing Youth Agenda policies, we elected two Youth Agenda Champions to the state legislature: Yara Zokaie in HD-52 (Fort Collins), and Katie Stewart in HD-59 (Durango).

Colorado was an outlier in many ways this election. We defied national trends by turning out young voters at 69% — 27 points higher than the national average. Young voters were essential in maintaining our state's leftward trajectory — but given the national results, the work is just beginning. The election results pose an opportunity for Colorado to be a national exemplar in resistance and rebuilding that we cannot pass up. Losing CD-8 and the state house supermajority are signals that we must rebuild our movement and deliver results for young people. New Era is meeting the moment by passing policies that show young people how democracy should work; offering a political home for young people, particularly young people of color; and bringing young men back to our coalition, who are disproportionately targeted with misinformation. Our work ahead is to elect true Youth Agenda Champions to the state and local levels in order to protect against the federal administration's attacks and deliver on meaningful progress. Now more than ever, young people will lead us into the future where we demand our rights are protected, our freedoms are secured, and we all have what we need to thrive.

**Onward,**



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Nicole Hensel".

**Nicole Hensel, Executive Director**

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# About New Era Colorado

At New Era, we harness young people's political power to co-create a better Colorado for everyone. We believe that change is possible through a combination of inside- and outside-system forces: grassroots organizing, electoral campaigns, civic engagement, leadership development, policy change, and accountability. We create opportunities for young people to make change by working at the grassroots and grassroots levels to build toward the Youth Agenda, ultimately creating the world we want to live in.

## OUR MISSION:

New Era Colorado harnesses young people's political power to create a Colorado that serves **all people**.



**New Era Colorado Foundation** organizes young people to participate in the political process, develop as leaders, and find a political home.\*



**New Era Colorado Action Fund** organizes young people to win on the Youth Agenda through elections and policymaking.

*\*New Era Colorado Foundation does not participate in any partisan activities.*



## THE NEWEST MEMBERS OF OUR FAMILY

**Young People For All People** is our independent expenditure committee that mobilizes young voters to elect Youth Agenda Champions.



**New Era Colorado AF** is our small donor committee that endorses and helps fund Youth Agenda Champions.



# 2024 At a Glance: Our Goals



## INSTAGRAM GOALS



## REALITY OUTCOMES



Young people turn out at 70% statewide and young BIPOC voters turnout at 60% statewide.

Young people turned out at 71% this year and young BIPOC voters at 55%. Considering national youth voter trends, we did exceptionally well.

We win two out of three of our endorsed primary races and one out of two of our endorsed general election races.

We won one of our endorsed primary races and one of our general election races. The general election race we lost was separated by three votes.

We develop and collectively understand a base building and power building philosophy across all departments.

Our staff engaged in a power building session this summer and the organizing department graduated from organizing bootcamp.

We develop a ladder of engagement with defined volunteer roles and strategies to move our base through levels of leadership at New Era.

The ladder of engagement is launched, the point system is implemented in our database, and our team is trained in how to track volunteer engagement. Our base now has more opportunities than ever to engage in our work across departments!

We raise \$2,328,000 for New Era Colorado and \$597,000 for New Era Colorado Action Fund, including \$10,000 into our small donor committee.

We out-fundraised all of our goals, allowing us to scale up our programs and spend down our entire 2024 budget. Thanks to our grassroots donors, we raised \$15,000 to our small donor committee.

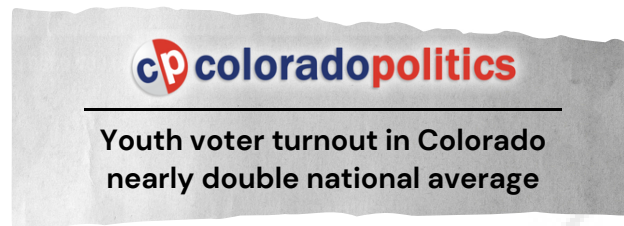
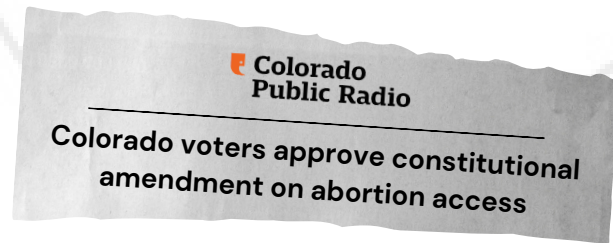
By mid-year 2024, 80% of staff at the organization strongly agree they have the information they need to do their jobs.

Ninety-six percent of staff agree or strongly agree they have the information they need to do their job.

# Winning Big at the State & Local Level

## Major Wins:

- ✓ An overwhelming majority of Colorado voters (62%) turned out to vote yes on Amendment 79 to enshrine the right to abortion, free from government interference, in our state constitution. New Era took on the entire universe of 18–34-year-olds for the campaign and reached over 1 million young voters to vote yes.
- ✓ We supported the campaign to help pass Amendment J, which overturned Colorado's constitutional ban on same-sex marriage in anticipation of SCOTUS overturning federal protections.
- ✓ We surpassed all of our Get Out the Vote goals, helping Colorado's young voters defy national odds and turn out at record levels. Youth turnout in Colorado is at 69%, a full 27 points above the national average for young voters (42–44%). New Era's base of young people turned out at 86%, 17 points above the state average and at least 42 (!) points ahead of the national average for young voters.



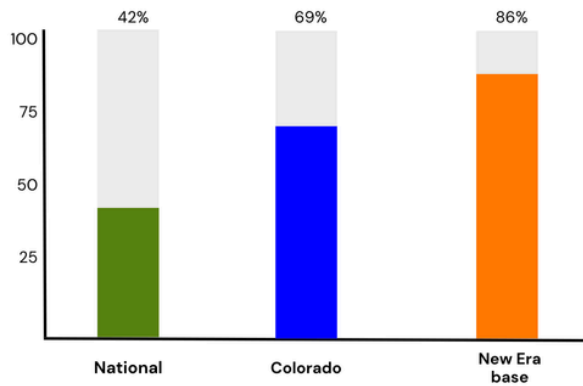
- ✓ Young Colorado voters who identify as Black, Indigenous, and people of color turned out at 55 percent, also far above national averages and a testament to our outreach efforts. Our c3 GOTV program targeted young BIPOC voters specifically.
- ✓ This was our first ever election running a Small Donor Committee and Independent Expenditure to help elect endorsed Youth Agenda Champions to state office. We raised \$15,000 to our SDC and won our endorsed races in HD 52 to help elect Yara Zokaie, a first generation Iranian-American and tax attorney, and Katie Stewart in HD 59, a fourth generation Durangoan and a Durango School Board member. These endorsed Youth Agenda Champions are ready to go to bat for young people at the Capitol.
- ✓ During the June state primaries, our Young People for All People Independent Expenditure turned out 18–34-year-olds at 25 percentage points, triple the state average of 8%.



# By the Numbers

**NEW ERA**  
**COLORADO**  
Action Fund

## General Election Youth Turnout Results 2024



**64,379**  
doors knocked



**1.8 million**  
phone calls made



**98,185**  
texts sent



**290,790**  
mail pieces sent



**5,862**  
pledge to vote cards



**156**  
new volunteers



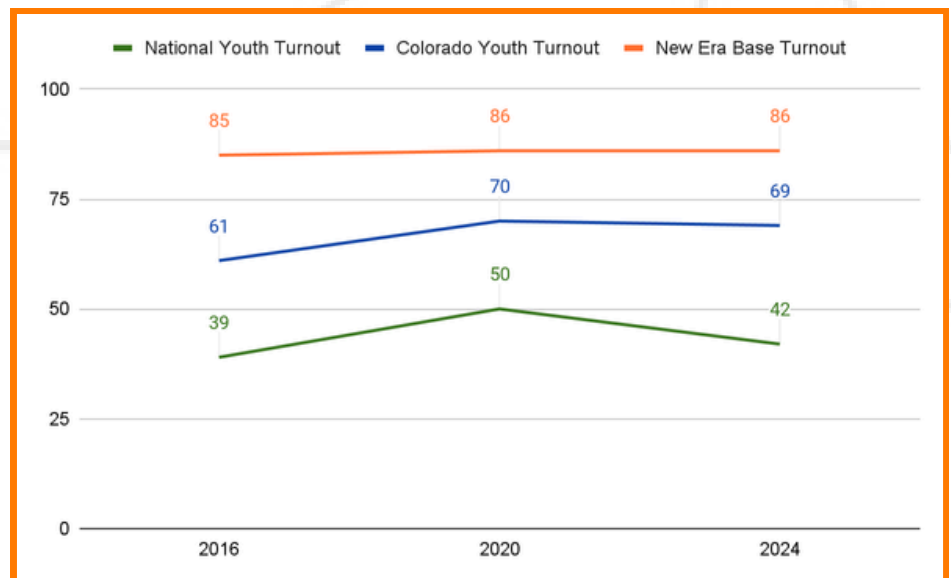
**2,374**  
young people  
walked to the polls



**490,000**  
young people engaged  
through digital ads



**52,073**  
New Era Voter  
Guide views





# Winning on the Youth Agenda

Colorado remains a hotspot in the nation's housing crisis and young people are bearing the brunt of not being able to afford to live where they call home. New Era surveyed over 1,000 young people across the state and we found that access to affordable housing is the number one issue young people want to address; in fact, there is bipartisan support amongst young people for more radical policies to address the housing crisis. We even made this map to better understand how high rents impact young people in different communities across the state, and the results are clear: rent in Colorado is unaffordable for most young people.

That's why this legislative session, alongside our partners at Keep Coloradans Housed Coalition, we successfully passed **Occupancy Limits and Cause Required for Eviction**. These bills respectively 1) support chosen families who live together to afford the rising costs of housing, and 2) protect renters from unjust evictions (last year alone Denver saw nearly 13,000 evictions, a record high).



Just last year, these same bills died on the Senate floor, but we did not give up. We have fought back against occupancy limits in Fort Collins called the U+2 campaign that states only three unrelated individuals can live together in a home, and we've successfully won this fight in Boulder with the Bedrooms Are For People campaign. We took this local initiative statewide to support the chosen families navigating the rising costs of living in Colorado. Knowing the cost of living was the number one concern for young Coloradans based on our research, New Era mobilized 215 patch-through calls from young people to target votes, emailed our legislators, recruited 20 testifiers, and called for action in the press. We knew it was going to take serious people power to go up against powerful corporate landlords and win—and together, we did it.





# New Era's Three Year Policy Plan

We believe in co-governance between young people and elected officials in order to achieve justice and equity within our democracy, and our three-year policy plan was centered around this vision. This plan allows us to put our energy into specific, winnable goals and give our organizers, communications, policy and development teams the ability to focus their efforts on supporting these wins over time.



We worked with Generation Lab, a youth-centered polling firm, to conduct initial polling of young people across Colorado about their priorities within reproductive rights and economic justice. The data shows us that young people want expanded access to reproductive healthcare services, and overwhelmingly support rent stabilization. To gain a better understanding of what kinds of policies we could run to make these a reality, we piloted focus groups to hear directly from impacted young people on their lived experiences. We received an overwhelming 1,497 respondents and conducted our first round of six focus groups this summer.

“Reproductive health care means the well-being of a person throughout their stages of life and in all aspects of it, including social and mental.”

“Cost is the biggest hurdle. Finding a place that's safe and comfortable within my budget is nearly impossible.”



After compiling the results from the focus groups, our team analyzed the governmental, political, and financial landscape of the policy solutions young people want us to prioritize and met with state and national partners to design solutions, and create plans for policy implementation at different levels of government. We have developed a strategy for bringing the policies to life through political, ballot, and organizing strategies.

Our policy plan builds on the legacy of our 2021 Youth Agenda Listening Tour, where we interviewed 1,200+ young people across Colorado about their hopes, dreams, and vision for our state. This process led us to create the Youth Agenda policy platform which is the backbone of our organizing and advocacy work. This project honed our skills at user-centered design and qualitative data analysis — so young people who are most impacted are involved in the defining of the problem and designing of the solutions for the policies we need to live dignified lives.



“Discrimination against people of color is hard in Colorado. I was turned down several times because of race and sexual identity.”

“The closest reproductive clinic is quite a distance from me. It felt like a hazard to get there. I had to use public transportation and it was exhausting.”

# Looking Ahead: 2025 & 2026



Now more than ever, we have to win big at the local and state level to protect our freedoms and futures. Colorado can lead the way in defining a new path forward with a movement led by young people. We have already done so much to make Colorado a better place to live, but if we want to keep up the progress, we need significant state investments. Our state budget is broke AF and we need more revenue in order to deliver meaningful progress on the Youth Agenda. It's past time we make our tax system more fair and get rid of TABOR. In order to do that, we need to conduct education on our state's current inequitable tax system, and fight for a fair tax code on the ballot in 2026.

## We've got big plans for 2025:

- We win on the Youth Agenda at the state legislature and city councils to advance our three-year policy agenda around reproductive rights and economic justice.
- We elect Youth Agenda champs to local office, specifically city council races to win power in Aurora, Boulder, Fort Collins, Colorado Springs, and Greeley.
- We build youth political power with an engaged base of members and move our members deeper through our ladder of engagement.
- We prepare for key campaigns in 2026 like a fair tax measure and contentious state primaries: we need a governor and attorney general who will fight against attacks on our freedoms, a secretary of state who will defend democracy, a CD-8 candidate who can flip back the House, and state legislators who will pass policies that excite young people.
- We maintain a healthy and sustainable organization despite renewed attacks on nonprofit organizations.

*We know we have an opportunity to chart a new path forward here in Colorado. Together we can bring back our coalition and build a movement led by young people. **Support a future young people dream of by investing in New Era Colorado today!***

**Onward,**

*The New Era Team*