

Votechella 2022 VOICE Project Report
UC National Center for Free Speech and Civic Engagement
Valuing Open and Inclusive Conversations and Engagement Grant

The Associated Students of the University of California (ASUC) Vote Coalition found massive success in the 2022 edition of Votechella. We met our three core objectives: voter registration, campus engagement, and student entertainment. Organizers estimated that around 2,000 community members attended Votechella, and an estimated 200 students were connected to tools to register to vote. Our social media director estimates that our online promotional campaign reached 8,000 individuals. The reach of this event extended even further when the videos and photos taken by attendees of this event for their personal social media pages is brought into play. Most attendees were UC Berkeley undergraduate students, but we had many Berkeley community members and UC Berkeley graduate students attend as well. Based on student social media and in-person engagement, it was apparent to our team that Votechella was successful in community outreach and connecting civics with the enjoyment of a concert. Our final expense report totaled around \$58,000, including the opener and leading performer's artist fees and tech and production costs for the show.

There were many challenges that appeared along the process of completing Votechella. The largest problem was our inability to tie down any civic speakers to discuss the importance of our democracy before Votechella. We conducted extensive outreach to Congresswoman Barbara Lee and Senator Alex Padilla's offices, and despite what initially looked like a promising appearance, neither speaker came to fruition. Although we remedied this by hosting student speakers to discuss the importance of voter registration and engagement, in future programs, we hope to recruit more prominent speakers. Another problem we encountered was the artist fees for our performers. While we were ultimately thrilled by our artist choices, our initial goal of getting a larger artist to perform was quashed by the high cost of having them attend. Additionally, as with any project, the more stakeholders became involved, the harder it became to keep track of every aspect. As a result, some parts could have gone smoother, but everything ultimately worked out.

The ASUC Vote Coalition strongly believes that Votechella has and will continue to have an impact on UC Berkeley's campus community. Beyond the metrics of registering or confirming students' registration, our team has made it a goal to transform the way UC Berkeley students think about civic engagement. Based on our conversations with students, it is clear that we've had a successful start to our campaign. By connecting voting with the enjoyment students and community members received from attending an incredible concert, we were able to form a positive link between voting and enjoyment. Using Votechella as a launch pad, the ASUC Vote Coalition is turning 2022 into a civic year in which our programs and outreach will be coordinated to reach the maximum number of students.

From our team's interaction with the Center this year, we believe there is room for improvement in support and communication with the grant recipients. First, we believe there should be more continuous contact with the grant recipients to ensure their projects are being completed and they have whatever resources they need. Second, we believe that the Center should enforce its attendance and report requirements with a withdrawal of funds if the grantee does not follow through on their end of the agreement. Third, we believe that the center can improve its community of VOICE recipients by providing more opportunities for interaction and collaboration. That being said, the entire ASUC Vote Coalition team is incredibly grateful to the UC National Center for Free Speech and Civic Engagement for this grant and opportunity.