

Contact: Debbie Mesloh, [debmesloh@gmail.com](mailto:debmesloh@gmail.com), 415-867-2243 cell

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## **IGNITE Harnesses Energy and Ambition of Women Millennials and Gen Z Leading up to 2020**

### ***Seventy six percent of IGNITE's participants are young women of color***

OAKLAND, CA -- As the largest class of women in the nation's history prepare to take the oath as members of the United States Congress on January 3, 2019 and as women throughout the country prepare for national Women's March on January 19th, IGNITE is building on the momentum to harness the energy, ambition and participation of young women -- specifically Millennials and Gen Z women of color.

IGNITE is the largest nonpartisan political organization that works with young women ages 14 - 22. Seventy-six percent of IGNITE's participants are young women of color. IGNITE's largest membership is comprised of Latinas (33%), followed closely by African American girls and women (22%).

Participation in the IGNITE program has tripled since the 2016 election, with more than 10,000 young women across party lines being trained by the end of this academic year. Leading up to 2020, IGNITE will train 100,000 young women across the country.

**IGNITE will kick off 2019 with a series of Young Women Run events** to bring together hundreds of young women who share political and leadership ambition. The conferences will be held **New York, NY** (January 26, 2019); **Dallas-Fort-Worth, TX** (February 9, 2019); **Atlanta, GA** (February 9, 2019); **Oakland, CA** (March 2, 2019); **Seattle, WA** (April 27, 2019); **Houston, TX** (Date to be announced) and **Washington, D.C.** (June 24-26, 2019).

"The youth movement is stirring the nation," said Dr. Anne Moses, IGNITE's founder and president. "From March for Our Lives to United We Dream, young people in this country are speaking truth to power," she said. "The campaigns and elections of younger women such as Representatives-elect Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Katie Hill, Ilhan Omar and Ayanna Pressley are powerful symbols to young women that they too can aspire to political leadership and win," Dr. Moses said.

"With their numbers and their power at the ballot box, younger women will shape our future. And IGNITE is uniquely poised to train and mobilize them," said Dr. Moses.

Dr. Moses has been training and organizing young women since 2010, when she launched IGNITE after seeing an acute gap in the recruitment and training efforts younger women.

IGNITE women were active in the 2018 midterms, putting in more than 10,000 volunteer hours on campaigns to mobilize voters, including the victory of Ocasio-Cortez to Congress, the groundbreaking campaign of Stacey Abrams for Governor and national, local and state races throughout the country. The young women of IGNITE say the campaigns and elections of 2018 have had a significant impact upon them:

“I am so excited to see what the new women of Congress will do,” said Andrea Duarte-Alonso, 22 and a college student from Saint Paul, Minnesota. “Their platforms continue to be inspirational to many womxn across the nation because they are authentic and passionate about justice that needs to be done in their communities. Social media is widely used by politicians but there is an educational and community focused way that the younger women use. For example, Ocasio-Cortez uses her Instagram to help educate those who don't know how government works or use it in different ways that keep her followers captivated in politics. I aspire to use my social media platform like these women, and continue to educate others about my interests in social justice,” said Duarte-Alonso, who joined IGNITE as a sophomore in college and now serves as IGNITE’s Twin City Fellow.

“Seeing people in leadership roles who look like you do shows that the dream is attainable. They did it, so if you work hard then you could do it as well,” said Jessica Rosario, 20, a student at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in Queens, New York. “Volunteering recently on the campaign trail, I learned a lot about politics but also about myself. One thing I learned would be that it is a lot of work, especially being a woman. You are constantly being picked apart and a lot of the judgment comes from gender roles. You will be questioned about your views and tested by everyone about everything. You are working to gain someone's faith in you and your abilities,” said Rosario, who joined IGNITE last year.

IGNITE’s model is unique:

- IGNITE works with young women ages 14 - 22. The organization provides curricula for youth in K through 12th grade teaches young women how government works and why it matters, as well as discussion guides for parents to talk with their daughters about how to help build their civic and political leadership.
- IGNITE’s programs operate in schools and communities where low-income young women of color live and work. The program is the only one in the country that provides sustained political leadership training and engagement to high school, college, graduate school women in their home communities.
- IGNITE also recruits college-age Fellows who are on the path to becoming the next generation of political leaders. The Fellows create regional college councils on their campuses, now on 80 campuses throughout the country.
- IGNITE also works to shift culture around young women and political ambition through social action campaigns such as the 2018 #VoteTwice campaign, a partnership with Cosmopolitan Magazine and Rock the Vote to mobilize tens of thousands of first-time voters across the country.

Data collected by IGNITE on the program shows it is having an impact:

- According to an internal poll, 99% of eligible IGNITE women voted in the 2018 midterms, compared to 59% nationally in the 2016 elections, as reported by the Center for American Women in Politics
- 37% of IGNITE women ran for office on their campus, and 79% of those who ran for office won their elections
- 93% of IGNITE women feel driven to run for office
- Eleven IGNITE alumna ran for office for the first time, five won their campaigns this past fall and dozens more are planning campaigns in 2019 and 2020.

While there is much to celebrate from the recent gains of women’s leadership, IGNITE will continue to train and mobilize young women until there is political parity in America.

“We want to make sure every year is a Year of Women,” said Dr. Moses. “ Even with the recent wins in the 2018 midterm election, women only gained 2% of seats. Women are half the population but hold only 24% of the 520,000 elected offices in the United States. Research shows that at the rate we are electing women we will not reach parity for at least 100 years. This is unacceptable,” she said.

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*About IGNITE:*

*IGNITE is a national movement of young women who are ready and eager to become the next generation of political leaders. As a nonpartisan 501c3, IGNITE builds political ambition in high school and college-aged young women in their own communities. IGNITE provides civic education, exposure to women in political leadership, hands on training, work opportunities, and a peer network of women who support and nurture each other’s aspirations for civic and political leadership. [www.ignitenational.org](http://www.ignitenational.org)*