

FACT SHEET: Participation and Mobilization

As part of the Mobilization, Change, and Political and Civic Engagement Project, the Election 2008 and Beyond Survey (Wave 1, fielded October 17–November 3, 2008) asked 3,180 Black, Hispanic, Asian, and White respondents about their attitudes and behavior related to voting and mobilization, political and civic participation, and political information sources.

Key findings include:

- Black respondents were the most likely to report plans to vote in the historic 2008 election and were generally engaged in more activities tied to the election.
- When asked for whom they planned to vote, Black respondents were the least likely to say they were undecided, and they were twice as likely as White respondents to say they would vote for Obama.
- White respondents were more likely to be contacted and encouraged to vote by political parties or a political campaign or candidate, while Black respondents were more likely to be contacted by people in their neighborhood, community groups, and people at their place of worship.
- Hispanic respondents were slightly more likely than Black respondents and much more likely than Asian respondents to consume media specific to their racial/ethnic group.

Voting and Political Mobilization

When asked who they planned to vote for, Black respondents were the least undecided of any group. Moreover, they were more than twice as likely as White respondents to say they would vote for Obama. The percentage of respondents saying they planned to vote for Obama are:

- 40% of White respondents
- 87% of Black respondents
- 61% of Hispanic respondents
- 54% of Asian respondents

Hispanic and Asian respondents were half as likely to be contacted as Black and White respondents by an organization, group, or campaign to ask them to involve other people in the election. The percentage of respondents contacted for this reason are:

- 45% of White respondents
- 53% of Black respondents
- 21% of Hispanic respondents
- 20% of Asian respondents

Among those who contacted others to get them involved in the election, White respondents were twice as likely to contact people outside of their city and state. The percentages of respondents contacting others outside of their state to get involved are:

- 11% of White respondents
- 4% of Black respondents
- 4% of Hispanic respondents
- 5% of Asian respondents

White respondents were much more likely to report being contacted by political parties, political campaigns or candidates, veteran's organizations, and organizations promoting the interests of women. The percentages contacted by these groups and encouraged to vote in the election are:

Political parties

- 34% of White respondents
- 21% of Black respondents
- 19% of Hispanic respondents
- 21% of Asian respondents

Political campaign or candidates

- 34% of White respondents
- 22% of Black respondents
- 16% of Hispanic respondents
- 16% of Asian respondents

Veteran's organizations

- 46% of White respondents
- 24% of Black respondents
- 24% of Hispanic respondents
- 20% of Asian respondents

Organizations promoting the interests of women

- 59% of White respondents
- 23% of Black respondents
- 34% of Hispanic respondents
- 33% of Asian respondents

Black respondents were much more likely to report being contacted by people in their neighborhood, community-based groups, and places of worship in efforts to get them to vote in the election. The percentages are:

People in their neighborhood

- 13% of White respondents
- 23% of Black respondents
- 17% of Hispanic respondents
- 11% of Asian respondents

Groups working in their neighborhood to improve their community

- 5% of White respondents
- 14% of Black respondents
- 9% of Hispanic respondents
- 5% of Asian respondents

Place of worship

- 14% of White respondents
- 24% of Black respondents
- 9% of Hispanic respondents
- 7% of Asian respondents

While few individuals of color report being mobilized to vote by a racial/ethnic organization, Asian and Hispanic respondents were half as likely as Black respondents to report being contacted and told to vote by an organization promoting the interests of their racial/ethnic group:

- 10% of Black respondents
- 5% of Hispanic respondents
- 4% of Asian respondents

Of those who reported being contacted by groups/organizations or individuals, a much greater percentage of Black respondents were asked to *register* to vote:

- 37% of White respondents
- 70% of Black respondents
- 55% of Hispanic respondents
- 51% of Asian respondents

Hispanic respondents were the least likely to be asked to vote for Barack Obama when contacted by an organization:

- 45% of White respondents
- 47% of Black respondents
- 29% of Hispanic respondents
- 41% of Asian respondents

White respondents were much more likely than other groups to be asked to vote for John McCain:

- 40% of White respondents
- 14% of Black respondents
- 14% of Hispanic respondents
- 22% of Asian respondents

Black respondents were more likely than White respondents and much more likely than Hispanic and Asian respondents to report that the groups/organizations or places of worship of which they are a member made announcements about, discussed, or encouraged members to vote or otherwise participate in the election:

- 22% of White respondents
- 38% of Black respondents
- 15% of Hispanic respondents
- 15% of Asian respondents

Political and Civic Participation

Black respondents were more likely to have volunteered for a political campaign, candidate, or political cause than White and Asian respondents and twice as likely as Hispanic respondents:

- 7% of White respondents
- 10% of Black respondents
- 5% of Hispanic respondents
- 7% of Asian respondents

Black respondents were more likely than White respondents to report wearing a campaign or political button, putting a campaign or political sticker on their car, or placing a sign in their window. They were twice as likely as Hispanic respondents and three times more likely than Asian respondents to participate in these ways. The percentages are:

- 18% of White respondents
- 31% of Black respondents
- 16% of Hispanic respondents
- 10% of Asian respondents

Asian respondents reported the highest rate of sending an article or letter through the mail or phoning the editor of a newspaper, magazine, or a television station about a political issue or candidate. No Hispanic respondents reported engaging in these activities. The percentages are:

- 6% of White respondents
- 9% of Black respondents
- 0% of Hispanic respondents
- 12% of Asian respondents

The percentages of Black and Hispanic respondents who called in to a radio or television talk show to express their opinion on a political issue or candidate are twice as high as those of Asian and White respondents. The percentages are:

- 4% of White respondents
- 8% of Black respondents
- 8% of Hispanic respondents
- 5% of Asian respondents

Black respondents were half as likely as other groups to engage in a *boycott*—that is, buying a certain product or service based on liking the social or political values of the company that produces or sells the product:

- 13% of White respondents
- 5% of Black respondents
- 10% of Hispanic respondents
- 10% of Asian respondents

White respondents were more likely to report being a member of an organized group, such as one run through school, church, the park system, or a fraternity/sorority. The percentages are:

- 37% of White respondents
- 25% of Black respondents
- 21% of Hispanic respondents
- 27% of Asian respondents

Political Information and Media Sources

Black respondents were more than twice as likely as White and Hispanic respondents and four times as likely as Asian respondents to report getting their political information from their place of worship. The percentages are:

- 5% of White respondents
- 12% of Black respondents
- 5% of Hispanic respondents
- 3% of Asian respondents

Hispanic and Black respondents were five times more likely than Asian respondents to report receiving a great deal of information about the election from media sources specific to their respective racial groups:

- 14% of Black respondents
- 16% of Hispanic respondents
- 3% of Asian respondents

More Black respondents reported paying a great deal of attention to news about the campaigns for President than respondents from any other group, while Asian respondents reported the lowest rates of attention to these campaigns. The percentages are:

- 25% of White respondents
- 31% of Black respondents
- 21% of Hispanic respondents
- 12% of Asian respondents

Hispanic respondents were half as likely as Black and Asian respondents and three times less likely than White respondents to report having written or forwarded an email, signed an email petition, or posted a comment to a blog about a political issue, candidate, or political party. The percentages are:

- 27% of White respondents
- 21% of Black respondents
- 10% of Hispanic respondents
- 19% of Asian respondents

Asian, White, and Hispanic respondents were more likely than Black respondents to report using internet sites such as YouTube or campaign websites to see the candidate debates, interviews with candidates, campaign commercials, or a candidate's speech or announcement. The percentages are:

- 26% of White respondents
- 18% of Black respondents
- 23% of Hispanic respondents
- 27% of Asian respondents

Asian respondents were far less likely than Hispanic and Black respondents to consume media sources specific to their racial group:

Listen to a (Black/Hispanic/Asian) radio program

- 48% of Black respondents
- 55% of Hispanic respondents
- 7% of Asian respondents

Watch a (Black/Hispanic/Asian) TV show

- 53% of Black respondents
- 67% of Hispanic respondents
- 22% of Asian respondents

Read a (Black/Hispanic/Asian) newspaper or magazine

- 36% of Black respondents
- 45% of Hispanic respondents
- 21% of Asian respondents