

Press 1-Pager

225 First Time Staffers. 40 interviews.

One Year *in* Politics

A Politics Project by Morgan Searcy

All were directly involved
in the 2020 election cycle.

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About the project

In 2020, the United States saw one of the most anticipated elections in recent history. The Democratic Party felt open to new ideas and voters. The next generation of campaign staffers eagerly started their careers during the 2020 election cycle.¹ These young people brought new ideas and energy across the largest Democratic Presidential primary while adjusting to COVID-19 in March 2020. As the cycle progressed, staffers greatly benefited by gaining knowledge from working on multiple campaigns² across primaries to the general election and January Georgia Senate runoffs.

One Year in Politics is an inside look at first-time staffers in the 2020 election cycle through interviews that represent both opportunities and challenges of cyclical campaign work. Short-term approaches to election-based campaigns prevent efforts to build upon past knowledge and benefit from prior experiences.

Morgan Searcy, former 2020 campaign staffer, analyzes trends throughout 200+ first-time staffers to help add transparency for future campaigns and electoral-focused organizations. The report presents data and experiences during the 2020 cycle to support more transparency and equity within campaign-based work.

Why recently graduated, first-time staffers?

Focusing on the youngest demographic entering political Democratic and progressive spaces allows for a deep analysis of workplaces from the ground up. Young adults also lend to a better understanding of the Party's future leaders. In this project, when referring to "first-time staffers," the term refers to individuals who have recently graduated and entered the workforce and politics. While electoral spaces include and thrive from many people who have switched industries or professions into politics, narrowing the focus for this study allows for some consistency of past experiences when approaching the benefits and struggles of the campaign and electoral work.

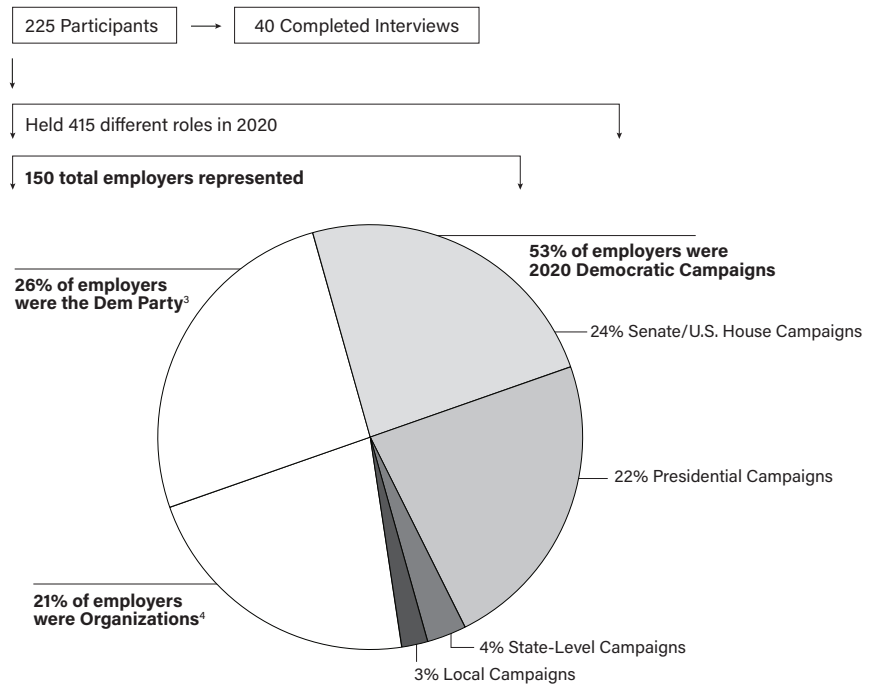
Project touchpoints:

Motivations of young adult staffers, Diversity and equity, Political ideological alignments, Takeaways from COVID-19, Extreme burnout rates, Compensation, Unionization of campaigns, Young voter engagement, The campaign environment, Large presence of women first-time staffers, BIPOC staffers' experiences differed from white counterparts.

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Project breakdown



Motivations for First-Time Staff's Involvement in the 2020 campaigns cycle

Top 5 reasons cited from interviews for their employment in 2020.

Graduation Year Aligned



'High Stakes' of the Election Cycle



A Specific Candidate



Prospects for a Better Future



The Results of 2016 Cycle/Present Administration



1. The 2020 election cycle includes primary efforts starting in mid-2019 to January 2021 with Georgia Senate runoffs.
2. During the 2020 cycle, some first-time staffers had up to 5 consecutive roles with different campaigns and organizations.
3. 'Employers with the Democratic Party' is defined as state and national Democratic Parties and efforts such as 'Texas Democratic Party' and 'Maine Democratic Party Coordinated Campaign'.
4. 'Employers were Organization' includes any group that is not directly related to a campaign or the Democratic Party. The staffers a part of included Organizations were working directly with voter turnout or other aspects of the election cycle. E.g., 'One Campaign for Michigan' or 'When We All Vote'.