

## Millennials

### Who They Are:

Millennials, also called Generation Y, are generally defined as people born between 1980 and 1998. In the United States, they comprise the largest and most racially diverse generation in history.

Many Millennials have been burdened by student loan debt and a large cohort of younger Millennials live with their parents to make ends meet. They use social media at high rates, drive less than in ages past, and expect convenience from most transactions.

Millennials are a very diverse generation with different needs. They are often under-represented in civic affairs due to inexperience, demands of balancing multiple jobs with school and family, and limited opportunities.



### Best Practices:

Millennials span a large range of ages and life stages, from college students to young parents, and as such, strategies for engaging them will vary. In general outreach should be:

- **Social:** They tend to be attracted to social events or fun experiences that they can share with friends or on social media, and are more likely to attend an event if invited by a friend.

- **Appealing:** Millennials are accustomed to advanced graphic design and short, powerful messaging in marketing materials. They are less likely to engage with an organization with a wordy flyer or unattractive webpage, as it appears behind the times.

- **Brief:** Living in the information age, Millennials cannot respond to every survey that is offered to them. Surveys should be less than 10 questions and multiple-choice to maximize participation.

- **Good for Small Children:** Many older Millennials have young children. In pop-up outreach events, providing trinkets or games to attract their young children may encourage young parents to stop as well.

- **Relatable:** Even if approached by a stranger for outreach, Millennials relate better and feel less intimidated if the person is close to their age.

- **Helpful:** As with other groups, Millennials want to know how engaging will help them. Key issues of interest include transportation that will connect them to other places and finding jobs.

- **In the right format:** Millennials are likely to get information from social media, but usage varies. Older Millennials frequent Facebook, but the younger demographic prefers Snapchat. Many also use Twitter and Instagram.



## Facts about Millennials



In 2016 they became the largest generation in the US<sup>1</sup>



40% have children<sup>2</sup>



Their favorite social media platforms are Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat.<sup>3</sup>

## Recommended Strategies

- **Transit on Tap:** Host monthly talks at different local bars or restaurants to discuss transportation issues and give a presentation in a place that feels more approachable and enjoyable to many people.
- **Better Block Projects:** Millennials are drawn to experiences over material goods, and are often the drivers between place-making and tactical urbanism projects. The Better Block Foundation offers open-sourced tools and ideas for revitalizing a neighborhood block from the ground up, even when resources are scarce.
- **Instagram:** Wildly popular photo and video sharing site, which can be used to post photos and other images. It offers a more approachable way for young users to engage with agencies by commenting on photos, and can help an agency establish credibility with younger citizens.
- **Civic Dinner Parties:** Residents host or attend dinner parties with friends and engage in guided conversation on particular topics affecting their community.
- **Citizen Advisory Committee:** A group of volunteers that meets regularly to discuss issues of common concern to a specific population and the governing body.
- **Social Pinpoint:** Map-based consultation platform for transportation and land use projects, including comment capability and data analytics.

## Example

TriMet, the transit agency for the Portland, OR area, hosts monthly “Transit on Tap” events that fit with the local microbrew and pub culture. By hosting an event in a place that many people frequent anyway, the event is more approachable than a meeting at a municipal building, and even encourages friends to attend together. Many events share general information on a specific topic, such as transit history, but they also feature guest speakers, sneak peaks on new projects, or discussions on issues of relevance to transit riders.

[www.trimet.org/ontap/](http://www.trimet.org/ontap/)

1. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/04/25/millennials-overtake-baby-boomers/>  
2. <http://www.gallup.com/poll/191462/gallup-analysis-millennials-marriage-family.aspx>  
3. <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/data/q1-2017/>