



SEED THE VOTE

WIN ELECTIONS, BUILD OUR MOVEMENTS

***It took all of us.
Organizing works.***

*A Report on Seed the Vote's 2020
Elections Experiment to Help Defeat
Trump and Build Our Movements*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are deeply grateful to the people and organizations who engaged with us during the 2020 elections. Thank you to all who spoke with us about your experiences and recommendations for Seed the Vote. We know this report only shares a glimmer of the power and wisdom you hold.

Local Partners

Asian American Advocacy Fund PAC, Georgia
Asian Pacific Islander Political Alliance (APIPA), Pennsylvania
Care in Action, Georgia
Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights (GLAHR) Action Network & Mijente PAC, Georgia
Living United for Change in Arizona (LUCCHA), Arizona
Dream Defenders, Florida
Florida for All, Florida
New Florida Majority (now Florida Rising), Florida
New Georgia Project Action Fund, Georgia
Pennsylvania Stands Up, Pennsylvania
Pennsylvania Working Families Party, Pennsylvania
Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ), Georgia
UNITE HERE, Local 11, CASE (Central Arizonans for a Sustainable Economy) Action, Arizona & Georgia

National Collaborators

Center for Popular Democracy Action
People's Action
The Frontline
Mijente PAC
United Against Trump Table

Volunteer Leaders

Branch leaders
Canvas leads
Finance Team
Phone Bank Captains
Pod Leaders
Support Team for In-Person Volunteer Programs

Committees

- Communications Committee
- Cultural Organizing Committee & all the artists who collaborated with us
- Fundraising Committee
- Political Education Committee
- Volunteer Recruitment & Engagement Committee
- Technology Committee

We also want to acknowledge all other volunteers who gave their time to reach voters, recruited more people into the effort, did grassroots fundraising, and supported the collective effort to defeat Trump and flip the Senate in a myriad of ways. Lastly, thank you to *reimagine collective* for their many hours spent crafting and leading the evaluation process, and for helping us articulate and share out what we learned from this election experiment.



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MOVING FORWARD

OPENING LETTER

Dear Friends,

We are grateful for our partnerships, volunteers, and the vibrant movements fighting for a better world every day. We are proud of everything we've accomplished together. We helped beat Trump, flip the Senate, and build long-term people power. And, we did all of this during a global pandemic.

Defeating Trump in the 2020 elections was about more than the presidency. Our communities were under relentless assault from a white nationalist, authoritarian administration. Together we made a commitment to help win at a scale that mattered. We created a great convergence of people, donors, and organizers to defeat Trump and build our movement. The fight against trumpism and white nationalism continues, and we hope this reflection on our lessons learned will help us keep winning for our communities.

To our volunteers: we are blown away by the collective power of your time and heartfelt dedication. With razor-thin margins in each of the states we partnered with, each of the calls made and doors knocked by nearly 9,000 of you were critical to victory. During the pandemic, 1,250 of you still felt called to volunteer in person — some leaving your home state for weeks. This is not lost on us. Thank you for your passion and dedication, and for doing the unglamorous, sometimes unnoticed, work that was essential to win.



Art by Kate Deciccio. Source image thanks to Ryan Nicole and Brooke Anderson.

To our grassroots partners, your community and political expertise laid the strategy for winning in your states: you are anchors of your communities who build lasting power for our people. This election is a result of your years-long work to engage and organize our communities on the issues, and build political power over many election cycles. Thank you! Our entire country owes you a deep debt of gratitude. The victories we saw during the 2020 elections are

proof that when we build multiracial community power through long-term organizing, we win.

To our donors, funders, and national partners: together we are building a multiracial movement resplendent with opportunities to win transformational change across the country. We are grateful for your continued partnership to defend and expand our democracy and fight for our freedom dreams.

This report is the culmination of an intentional evaluation process to listen, reflect, learn, and improve. We are indebted to *reimagine collective* for guiding the evaluation and helping us hone in on and document our lessons learned with staff, leaders, volunteers, and local and national partners.

There is still so much more to do to defeat trumpism and white supremacy and build the interdependent, just, sustainable world our children deserve. We offer this report as a resource to learn more about our work during the general and runoff elections of 2020. We hope the lessons will be useful to our community, movement leaders, and funders as we work together to build political power for working-class people and communities of color.

It's an honor to be in the movement across the country. What started as a Bay Area project to help defeat Trump grew into a national electoral volunteer program in support of long-term organizing in communities of color. We were able to make a meaningful and unique contribution in 2020. We have decided to keep building on that success, stronger for all the lessons learned and relationships built (more on that at the end of the report).

With love and deep appreciation,

The Seed the Vote 2020 Coordinating Committee

Emily Lee, Le Tim Ly, Jason Negron-Gonzales, Jill Shenker, Rose Mendelsohn

WHO WE ARE

As Seed the Vote, we mobilize volunteers to defeat trumpism by supporting the electoral work of grassroots organizations in swing states who are building long-term power for working-class communities and communities of color.

We are a project of Everyday People PAC, a grassroots, social justice political fund.

OUR ORIGIN STORY

Defeat Trump. Build our movements.

After the 2016 election, a number of Bay Area movement leaders regrouped and realized that we needed to pay attention to national work in a way that we never thought was necessary before. Trump and his politics were an existential threat to the communities and causes important to all of us. We built Bay Resistance to counter Trump's hateful policies by activating individuals and families committed to loving, defending, and standing up for each other, and to defend our communities, our movements, and our planet.

In 2019, we coalesced around the strong belief that the Left and social justice movements needed to prioritize defeating Trump. By supporting the strategies of grassroots organizations rooted in communities of color we knew we could win. By the fall of 2019, we had already recruited over 150 organizers and activists to volunteer with Living United for Change in Arizona (LUCHA) in Arizona for 2 weeks in October 2020. This was just the beginning.

We grew into an enormous volunteer powerhouse that mobilized activists to join grassroots groups in battleground states, knock on doors to help defeat Trump (and later flip the Senate in Georgia), and grow skills and relationships to bring back to their local movements. In the end, we created a convergence of people, donors, and organizers to help defeat Trump and build our movement.

“Seed the Vote, from a scrappy small place, was able to play a role in galvanizing people to participate in a really meaningful and transformative way.” - Staff

*“We believe in us, in the voice and dignity of all people.”
- Coordinating Committee Member*

RELATED PROGRAMS

Generation Rising, our sister organization and project of Everyday People PAC, is a national network of young people building power with Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) for the long-term. Generation Rising's goal is to build the electoral organizing power of young people of color to shift the balance of power and seed the wins yet to come. Generation Rising also partnered with our local partners, New Florida Majority (now Florida Rising), Dream Defenders, Pennsylvania Stands Up, LUCHA, CASE Action/UNITE HERE Local 11 in Arizona, and Arizona Students Association and Student Action.

Everyday Power is a non-partisan platform for organizers, activists, and community leaders to participate in the elections and empower youth, working-class people, and people of color for the long-term. In partnership with Generation Rising and Everyday People PAC, Everyday Power, a 501(c)4 organization, trained BIPOC youth to work in historically disenfranchised neighborhoods with historically low voter turnout. In addition, Everyday Power supported volunteers and organizers to participate in election defense work and post-election mobilizations.

WHO WE WORKED WITH

We partnered with organizations in battleground states that have deep roots in their communities. These are the MVPs of the movement, building long-term political power through purposeful organizing of working-class communities and communities of color. Their work year-round and between election cycles led to the historic turnout in 2020 and is the basis to pressure the Biden administration to deliver for our communities and defend a Senate majority in 2022. Our work depended on the efforts of these organizations and we are so grateful for their partnership.

ARIZONA

In Arizona, we partnered with Living United for Change in Arizona (LUCHA), a membership-led, grassroots organization that continues to build the power of Latinx communities. Prior to the 2020 election, LUCHA mobilized their communities to fight SB1070 (the 2010 racist, anti-immigrant, “show me your papers” legislation) and took down Sheriff Arpaio. We also partnered with UNITE HERE Local 11/CASE Action, who ran the largest single canvass in Arizona. Our volunteer power made it possible for the progressive coalition in Arizona to make calls and knock doors. These efforts were critical to the margin of victory of just 10,457 votes.



GEORGIA

We sent 450 volunteers to Georgia to support in-person canvass programs with our local partners. Partners included New Georgia Project Action Fund (NGPAF), Asian American Advocacy Fund PAC (AAAF), Showing up for Racial Justice (SURJ), UNITE HERE, Care in Action, and Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights Action Network (GLAHR Action) and Mijente PAC. Volunteers made calls and participated in door-to-door canvassing to get out the vote ahead of the Senate run-off elections. The leadership of these organizations was integral to the victories of Raphael Warnock and Jon Ossoff for U.S. Senate, not only their efforts in this election, but their long-term work registering and turning out voters over many years.

New Georgia Project Action Fund is leading the way to a new Georgia by growing a lasting, independent, and progressive organizing movement. They are on a mission to increase civic participation of underrepresented and underserved communities of color. For the Senate runoff, they reached voters across 46 counties, with a particular emphasis on Black voters.

Asian American Advocacy Fund PAC (AAAF) is building a politically-conscious, engaged, and progressive Asian American base in Georgia. During the Senate runoffs, AAAF and their volunteers conducted outreach to Asian Americans in 11 different languages which helped to nearly double Asian American voter turnout.

Showing up for Racial Justice (SURJ) organizes white people to act as part of a multiracial majority for justice. Their project, Southern Crossroads, focused on voter outreach in rural white communities. These communities are too often ignored by the Democratic party, but are frequently targeted by the Right, who stoke white rage and direct it away from those in power and towards communities of color.

UNITE HERE, a union representing 300,000 mostly hospitality sector workers, organized the largest union door-to-door canvassing operation in the U.S. Seeing the strategic importance of the Senate runoff, they mobilized staff and members from across the country to add to the capacity of Local 23 and the progressive Independent Expenditure table (groups not working directly with the candidate campaigns or Democratic Party).

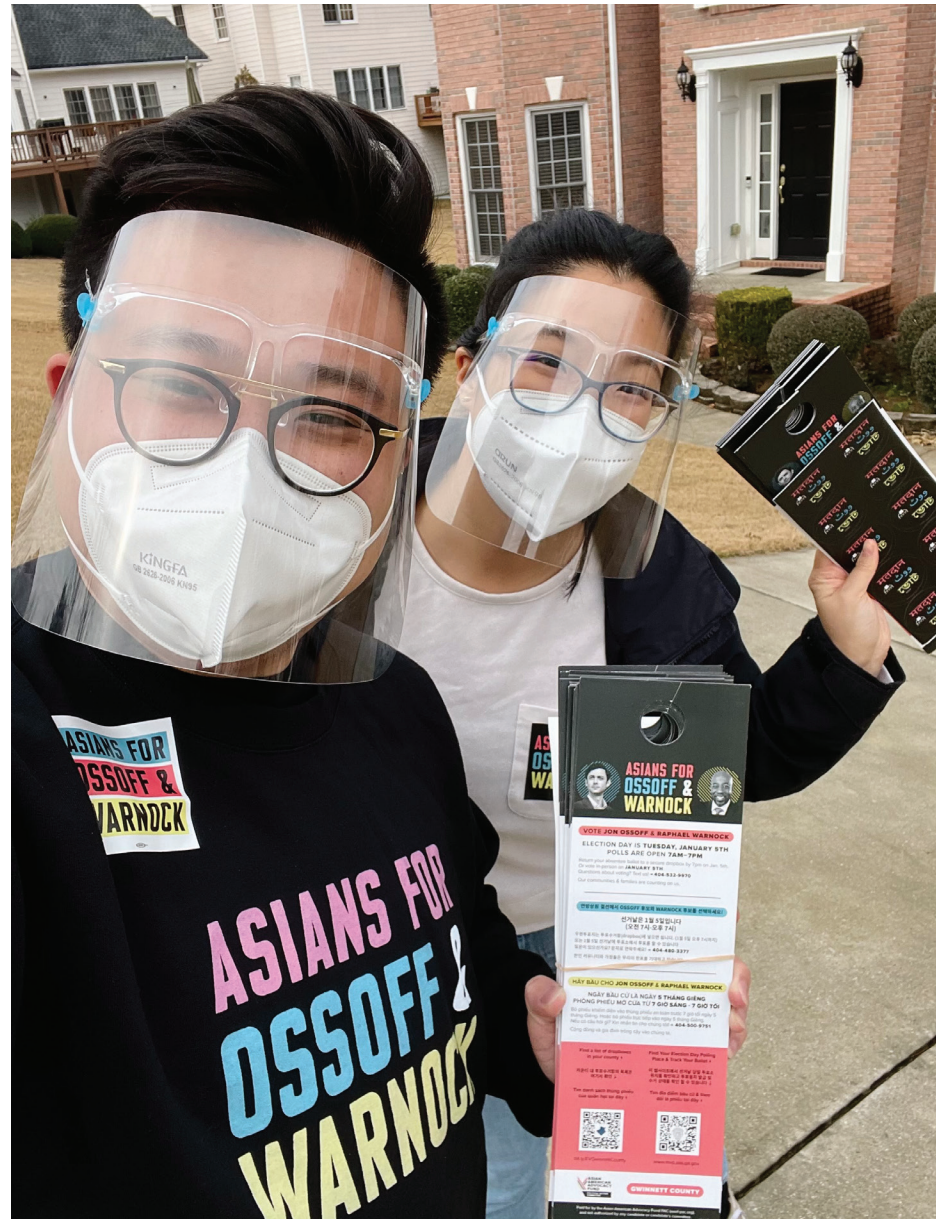
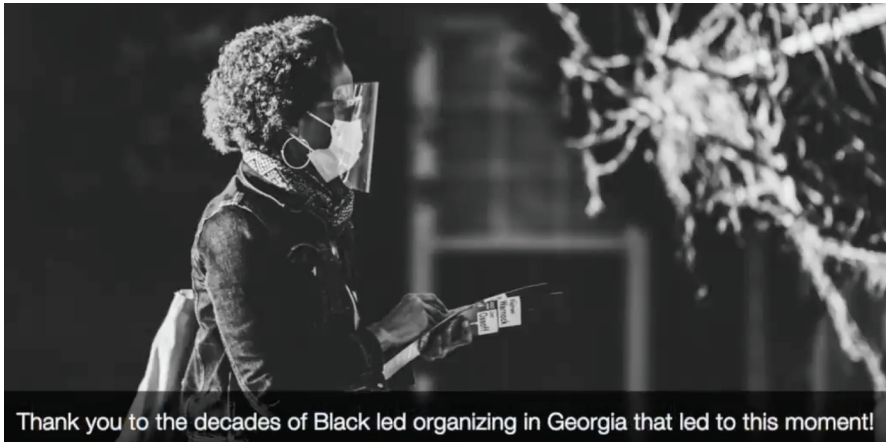


Image by Wayne Yeh



Thank you to the decades of Black led organizing in Georgia that led to this moment!

Image by Marc Klockow

For years, Care in Action has been organizing around caregiving issues in the state, primarily with—and on behalf of—home health aides, house cleaners, and child-care providers, most of whom are women of color and immigrants. For the Senate runoff election, Care in Action reached voters in and around Atlanta and in the state’s rural “Black Belt.”

The Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights Action Network (GLAHR Action) and Mijente PAC ran the largest political campaign engaging Latinx voters in the history of Georgia. GLAHR Action works to cultivate the culture of voting among the Latinx community, and to demonstrate that the Latinx electorate is powerful and crucial for local and national change. Mijente PAC is building the political power of Latinx communities for racial, economic, gender, and climate justice. Together, these organizations called, texted, and knocked on every Latinx voter’s door in the state — yielding an enormous increase in Latinx voter turnout.

FLORIDA

In Florida, we partnered with the New Florida Majority (now Florida Rising) and their partners to continue building the foundation to flip the state in 2024 and beyond. New Florida Majority, along with the Florida for All Coalition mobilized Black and Latinx voters to the polls. Dream Defenders organized Black and Brown youth across Florida to build power to advance a vision of safety and security – away from prisons, deportation, and war – and towards healthcare, housing, jobs and movement for all. Both organizations are part of a statewide effort called Florida for All—a coalition of Florida based progressive organizations delivering votes for progressive candidates in races up and down the ballot.

NEW FLORIDA MAJORITY

SEED THE VOTE
DEFEAT TRUMP, BUILD OUR MOVEMENTS

What's going on in Florida?

Political context and what's at stake.

WEDNESDAY 9/23 5-7 PM PT

PENNSYLVANIA

In Pennsylvania, where Biden won by 80,555 votes, our volunteers filled phone bank shifts with Pennsylvania Stands Up. Volunteers employed “deep canvassing,” a process that emphasized inquisitive conversations with voters to defeat Donald Trump in 2020, and build a multiracial, working class movement fighting for a better Pennsylvania for all.

We also sent remote phone bank volunteers to Asian Pacific Islander Political Alliance (APIPA), which builds the long-term power of API communities in Pennsylvania by coordinating political, electoral, and legislative campaigns. APIPA engages in culturally competent and linguistically accessible direct voter contact and aims to build solidarity with other aligned communities of color.

Pennsylvania Working Families Party (WFP) is a multi-racial, working class movement fighting for a better future for all. During the general election, we organized nearly 600 volunteers to work with WFP in-person in Philadelphia. Together, volunteers mobilized Pennsylvanians by distributing voter materials, talking to people about the election, and by getting them out to early vote centers. They also provided entertainment, chairs, and shade to voters waiting in long lines at the polls. Volunteers in Pennsylvania also coordinated people-powered actions, before, during, and after the election.



Seed the Vote's cultural committee solicited designs to create these posters and postcards. Posters were used in early voting outreach in Philadelphia in collaboration with WFP. Seed the Vote sent packages of 10 beautiful postcards as a thank you to donors and volunteers. Artists: Melanie Cervantes (based on photos by Joe Brusky and Victor Buell), Alizarin Menninga-Fong, the San Francisco Poster Syndicate, Michelle Collado, and Sydney Medina (via 195essential.com)

WHAT WE DID (AND HOW WE DID IT)

We built Seed the Vote as an experiment to defeat Trump and trumpism in the 2020 election and to do so in a way that strengthened social justice movements. To do this, we oriented our work around 3 main goals:

1. Motivate people in our movements to prioritize the presidential election.
2. Add capacity to the electoral campaigns of BIPOC led grassroots organizations in key swing states.
3. Do the work in a way that strengthens our movements.

We became an enormous volunteer powerhouse of organizers, activists, and community members coming together to build progressive turnout and win—up and down the ballot. We recruited and engaged nearly 9,000 volunteers to reach voters, help protect their vote, and persuade them that the 2020 election was important.

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT

We created a structure rooted in relational organizing to recruit volunteers and organize people through their existing networks. Seed the Vote emerged from conversations among Bay Area organizers, and as we grew, we intentionally sought out one-on-one and group conversations with more movement leaders who are powerful influencers in our communities to guide and drive our work.

Movement and cultural “influencers” helped to promote Seed the Vote by creating and amplifying short videos, setting up Instagram Lives, and asking their followers to cross-promote us on their platforms.

Everyone involved was encouraged to recruit additional friends, family, and movement colleagues and leaders were supported in their efforts of targeted, consistent outreach with clear, specific, and ambitious asks. Through the pods and branches organizational structure, volunteers were motivated to participate and benefited from working with a consistent group of people. Pods helped volunteers stay engaged and motivated while also providing support and accountability.

“We need to be asking everyone we know, and not be shy about asking for a lot, because there’s nothing more important that we can do in 2020. Make people say ‘no’ 3 times.” - Staff

Though we did not set out with this intention, we became a “political home” for people who were looking for opportunities that aligned with their values and not necessarily with a candidate or a party. Volunteers resonated with our strategy of investing in local organizations led by people of color. By conducting volunteer engagement and outreach nationally, with a tighter focus on recruiting people in social justice organizing communities, we were able to attract more of the volunteers local partners needed.

“This is absolutely the best experience I’ve ever had working with a political organization! It renewed my faith in the possibilities for this kind of work.” - Volunteer

“Canvassing in [state] was my highlight of the year, and probably a highlight of my life. Much of that was because of the solid organizing done by Seed the Vote leadership.” - Volunteer

In our evaluation survey, volunteers reported that...



They learned about Seed the Vote through their friends and family (69%)



Pod participants shared that “knowing people in the group helped motivate [them] to show up more regularly.” (83%)



Pods (73.5%) and Branches (85.7%) also worked well because of the “ability to be in a community with this specific group of folks.”

SEED THE VOTE

DEFEAT TRUMP, BUILD OUR MOVEMENTS

POD TOOLKIT



What is a Seed Pod?

In many plants, seeds grow together in a group, enclosed by a pod. At [Seed the Vote](#) we know we are stronger if we engage in our work to defeat Trump and build our movements together. Especially now, staying connected with our loved ones will help us hold onto the energy and commitment we need to make 1,000,000 calls with our partners in AZ, PA and FL, defeat Trump, and make our future organizing dreams possible.

Steps to forming a pod:

1. Recruit people to join you!

- » Think about **why** you are committed to this work and be ready to share with others
- » Be persistent!
- » Map your network: ask your friends to ask their friends
- » Ask people you aren't sure will say yes. If you're only hearing "yes," you aren't asking enough people.

2. Set a goal for how often you will make calls together (Once a week? Twice a week? Three times a week?)

3. Decide whether you'll join an existing (public) phone bank or, create a (private) phone bank of your own.

4a. If you decide to join an existing phone bank, everyone can [sign up individually](#). This option is simpler and requires less coordination than planning your own phone bank. [Here](#) are some ideas for staying connected with your pod members if you join a public phone bank.

4b. If you have 8+ people and want to host your own phone bank, [use this guide](#) to get your first one set up. Get familiar with the materials. We highly encourage you to join one of our public phone banks before hosting your own, so that you are familiar with the tech and script before you support others.

5. Join our Slack workspace to stay connected with other pod leaders in the #pod-leader channel, and to receive real-time troubleshooting support if you are leading your own phone bank.

Resources

- » [Join our Pod Leader Office Hours \(every Friday at 12 pm PT / 3 pm PT\)](#)
- » [Intro powerpoint you can use at your first pod meeting](#)
- » [Social media and email templates for pod outreach](#)
- » [Political education curriculum for seed pods](#)



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SEED PODS

A (Seed) Pod is a group of 8 + people who committed to work together as a group. This could be as simple as asking friends to set up a group chat so the pod leader could coordinate availability and then sign up for Seed the Vote phone banks together. Pods could host their own phone banks, use our political education curriculum to have conversations about the presidential election and how it connects to long-term movement building goals, and more.

By the end of the general election we had about **80 active pods**, with between **6 and 80 people** in each!

In October, Pods & Branches organized about **35 self-hosted phone banks per week**.

BRANCHES

Branches were a way for people who were already connected through an organization, network, or community group to do presidential electoral work together. Each branch assigned a Branch Coordinator(s) who would take a lead in organizing their networks to engage in our activities. Branches hosted their own phone banks as a way to engage in electoral work together. In doing so, branches built and deepened the relationships in their group. Branches were provided access to a set of tools to manage and track the participation of their members and to help scale their efforts.

Branches included Bay Rising Action, Catalyst Action Fund, Chinese Progressive Association Action Fund, Liberation Road, Leftroots, Seedlings for Change and Water for Grassroots.

"I loved how the Pod model helped friends and family who've never volunteered or done organizing for a political campaign get involved. It was a good way to bring more people in and feel supported/in community." -Leader/ Volunteer

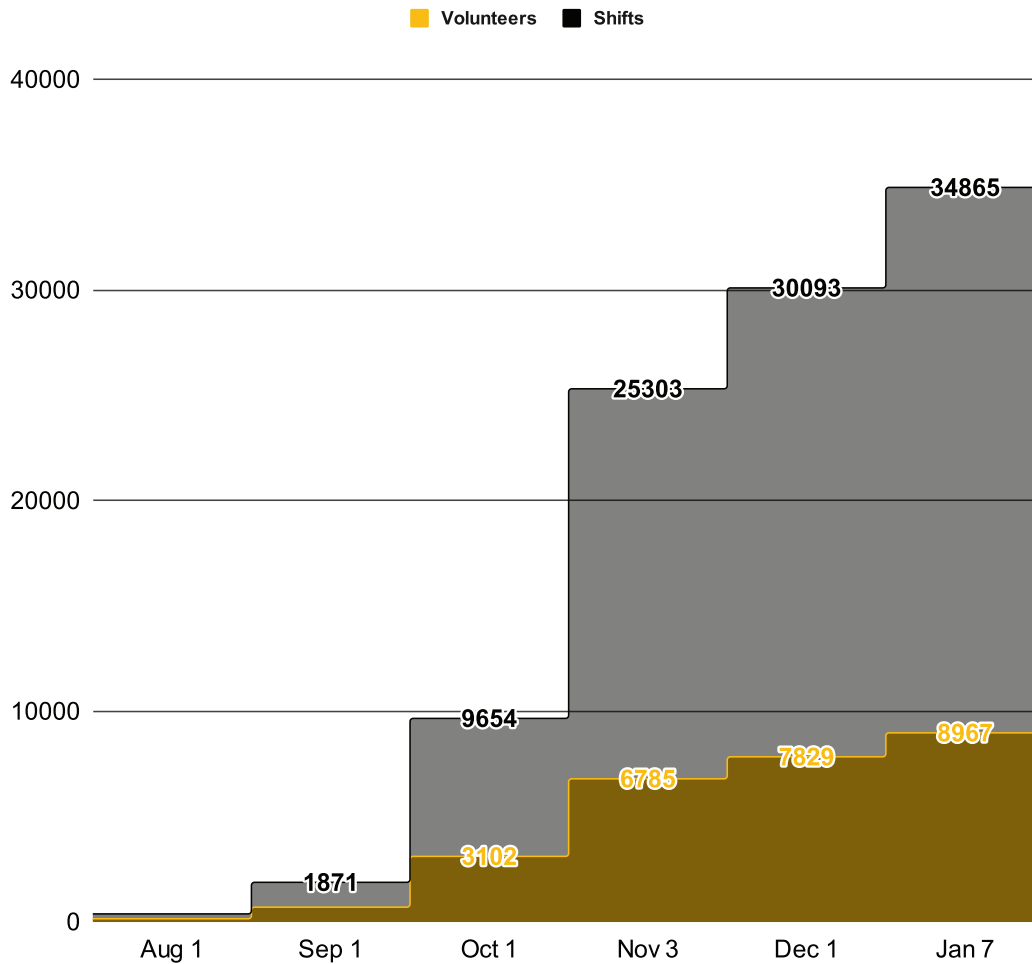
Handout for people interested in being pod leaders.

VOTER OUTREACH

We collaborated with local partners to provide volunteer capacity to support their voter contact work. We prioritized phone banking and in-person voter outreach (where possible), while also sharing text banking opportunities. For the General Election, most volunteers worked in Arizona, Florida, and Pennsylvania. Our volunteers also participated in the special elections in Georgia.

By November 3rd, we mobilized nearly 7,000 volunteers who signed up for over 25,000 phone banking, texting, or door knocking shifts with our partners.

Total Number of Volunteers and Shifts



While most of our volunteers participated in phone banking, we were able to mobilize an impressive number of highly committed volunteers to do in-person door-knocking and voter outreach, who had a huge impact.



230 in-person volunteers
Most stayed for a week or more



448 in-person volunteers
4,159 days of canvassing



592 in-person volunteers
1063 days of in-person outreach

We were successful in keeping our volunteers engaged and motivated as most volunteers returned for additional volunteer shifts.

Of the General Election volunteers¹:

- ▶ **3 of 4 volunteers** participated in multiple shifts.
- ▶ **1 of 5 volunteers** participated more than **10 hours per week**

Of the Georgia Senate Runoff Election volunteers²:

- ▶ **4 of 10 volunteers** participated with us during the general elections.
- ▶ In-person volunteers spent an average of **10 days canvassing in GA.**

One strategy for volunteer retention was to offer political workshops and discussions to deepen political analysis and involvement and increase the motivation and sense of connection among volunteers. Using a collective learning model, the political education committee developed presentations, webinars, and resources on movements and elections, voter suppression, and the stakes of the election.

“I felt like the overall idea of having political education integrated with Seed the Vote was crucial to our success – gave us legitimacy with people on the Left who were hesitant to do federal electoral work.” -Political Education committee member

VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

We played a critical role in volunteer outreach and management by helping 11 local partners in 4 states reach new levels of volunteer engagement. Based on the needs of each partner, we provided structure and volunteer management.

While we sometimes sent volunteers to phonebanks hosted by local partners, we largely trained pod and branch leaders, and phonebank captains to independently run phone banks without needing anyone from the local organization present. In some cases, we collaborated and co-led phone banks with local and national partners such as New Georgia Project Action Fund and People’s Action & Center for Popular Democracy.

Our role for in-person programming also varied based on the local partner’s needs. Our roles included one or more of the following: outreach, hosting information sessions and orientation trainings, coordinating and providing financial assistance, managing reimbursements, overseeing logistics support (i.e. car rentals, hotel recommendations, flight reservations, etc), building out of technology infrastructure, and helping run on-site training and canvassing.

We worked from a solidarity mindset and partnered with local organizations from a peer’s perspective. Local groups consistently shared that our approach was special because we worked from a place of trust, respect, and listening.

“[Seed the Vote] really built trust and made it easy to see them as a resource and never tried to have influence in how we moved and how we approach the work...They just came with their resources and said you’re doing this really cool thing.” - Local Partner³

1 From the 2020 Seed the Vote Volunteer Survey. Out of 708 survey participants, which was about 10% of the volunteers. Data is based on the number of participants who answered the specific question on the survey.

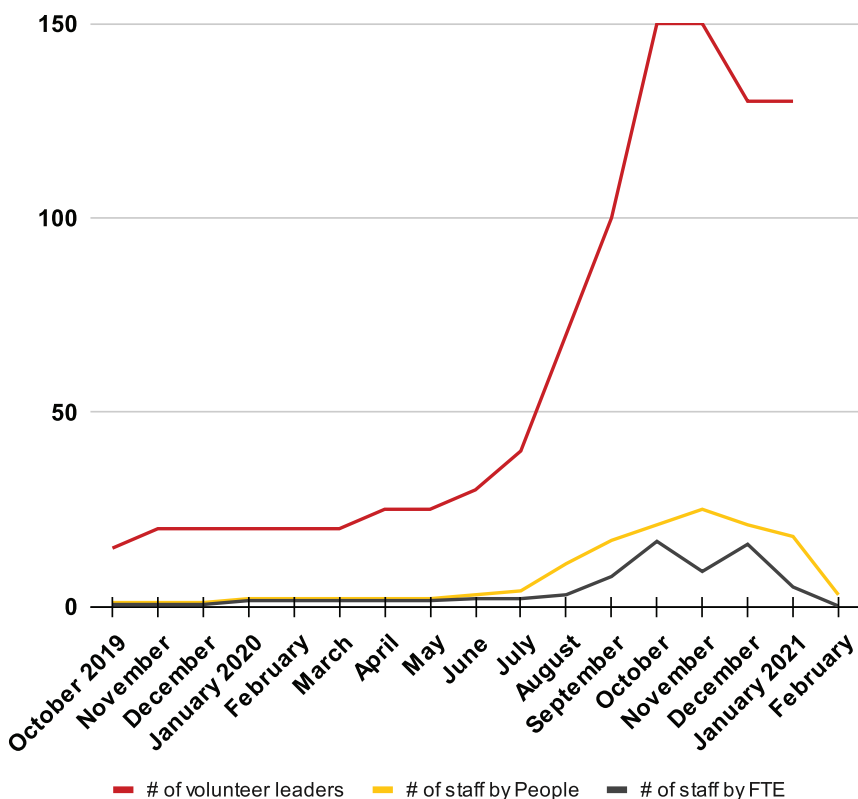
2 From the 2021 Seed the Vote GA Volunteer Survey. Out of 149 survey participants, which was about 37% of the GA volunteers, data is based on the number of participants who answered the specific question on the survey.

3 One-on-one interview with independent evaluators from *reimagine collective*.

DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

We relied on and supported our volunteer leaders. **We recruited and were driven by over 150 volunteer leaders who played essential leadership roles in all aspects of the work** — They recruited volunteers, served as phone bank captains, fulfilled administrative and infrastructure needs, and served as members of the Coordinating Committee. While we were able to hire a substantial number of temporary and part-time organizers during the height of election season, volunteer leaders played a critical and essential role in building and sustaining the work.

STV Staff & Volunteer Leaders Over Time



We formed volunteer led committees to divide up the work into clear and manageable tasks. Committees included: Communications, Cultural Organizing, Finance, Fundraising, Political Education, Volunteer Recruitment & Engagement, Technology, and the Coordinating Committee. These committees provided the overall direction and coordination of Seed the Vote. In addition, many **people were recruited to play specific roles such as pod and branch leaders, phone bank captains, in-person canvas leads, and as support team members for in-person volunteer programs.**

We also provided leadership opportunities that were accessible and celebrated. There were many levels of participation and types of leadership opportunities, which allowed people to get involved in varying capacities and time commitments. In reflection, leaders shared that they appreciated the opportunity to share their talents and get involved in a range of ways, and that they felt supported and celebrated in whatever roles they took on.

“As a community organizer for over two decades, I appreciated the way STV made it possible for both long-time and brand new organizers to get involved. It felt great to know that I was making a contribution without having to be responsible for creating and holding the whole project. Knowing that I was just one of many people coming together enabled me to identify a clear role and purpose during election season.” - Volunteer Leader

“There was a pretty unique combination of support and flexibility — which made it possible to move with direction, while having the ability to take leadership, be creative in the work I was doing.” - Staff, leader, volunteer

- ▶ About two thirds (n=42) of the leaders shared that they were offered additional responsibilities with us and took them.
- ▶ About a quarter (n=114) of the volunteers shared that they knew how to get more involved (e.g. more hours, additional roles) with us and they did.
- ▶ Most (n=58, 97%) of staff and leaders shared that “Seed the Vote’s work environment and culture were helpful in the development of their leadership.”

Volunteers shared the following about the leadership development opportunities with Seed the Vote:

“When someone from Seed the Vote reached out with a direct ask, it was always easy to say yes because the ask was clear and tangible.” - Communications and Cultural Organizing Committee Member

“Being trusted to make decisions, having high expectations for me, those are things that have helped me feel more trustworthy and competent. And it’s been a wonderful experience to see that I am capable and have skills and abilities that are useful and effective.” - Staff

“It was really great watching several people in my Pod step up to take on leadership roles — co-leading training with me, leading debriefs, acting as hype people on our private Slack channel during phone banks.” - Pod Leader



STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

When we started Seed the Vote, we knew that strategic communications would be essential. The primary purposes of our communications work were recruitment at scale, engaging and motivating our base, and intervening in the narrative about the election within social justice circles. Our communications strategy became even more essential when most of our organizing moved online in the wake of pandemic.

Because our core work was about mobilizing support for the work led by grassroots organizations in swing states, our communications orientation was to both lift up our partners and offer Seed the Vote as a way to get involved. We focused on social media, rather than news media, and on distributed communications. These approaches created buzz from trusted sources (organizations, movement and cultural online ‘influencers’, our volunteers’ own online networks, etc.) by disseminating creative and substantive content and toolkits.

Our public messaging was different from a lot of other electoral messaging in that it framed our efforts to defeat Trump and flip the Senate as being elements of building movements. Also significant, our message about taking collective action to defeat Trump started over a year before the election and never wavered, even through the primaries season. We strategically emphasized the need to throw down to beat Trump no matter who became the nominee. Ultimately, we saw that our communications had an important role in engaging key audiences within the Left in the 2020 election.

INCORPORATING ART AND CULTURE

Art and culture can inspire participation, from voting to volunteering. We used art and culture to motivate participation, make volunteer activities engaging, and to inspire voters. Eventually, a Cultural Committee formed to bring specific focus to this aspect of the work. Here are a few examples of the ways art strengthened the organizing:

- We worked to make phone banks more fun and meaningful by incorporating music and poetry. On several occasions, members of the band Las Cafeteras kicked off volunteer phone banks by asking volunteers why they were there and then freestyling based on what they wrote in the Zoom chat.



- The art and culture committee created a joyful playlist as part of a community-care toolkit for volunteers during the final two weeks, so they could listen while mass texting, taking a break from making calls, or driving to their canvas location.
- In Philadelphia, we worked closely with the Working Families Party, which led a strategy called Joy to the Polls that used visual art, musicians, and performance artists to motivate early voting and entertain voters while standing in long lines. Our local Philadelphia team brought out 12 DJs and over 50 local performing artists to all 8 early voting sites in the last 5 days of early voting, when lines were up to 5 hours long. They also brought out food trucks to 3 locations to hand out free meals to those standing in the longest lines.
- Volunteers in Georgia brought their artistry to the work. One wrote an original song and produced a music video, another sent out dance videos, and another created individual image collages for nearly 100 volunteer canvassers to send to voters and to use in their own social media to inspire their friends and family to volunteer and donate.
- We worked with cultural influencers to leverage their platform to motivate their followers to vote against Trump and to volunteer with us. Some hosted Instagram Live interviews with our volunteer canvassers, one did a comedy sketch, and others reposted and continued to call on their followers to act. We worked with Las Cafeteras — a popular Chicax band from East Los Angeles — to organize hundreds of Latinx artists in coordination with the United Against Trump Coalition. On this day, Las Cafeteras released a single and, collectively with the other artists, they amplified the hashtags, #FueraTrump, #ChaleConTrump, #PalCarajoTrump (Hell nah Trump), with posts pointing to the United Against Trump website.

The day-to-day work of voter outreach can be grueling, but art helped volunteers keep their spirits up, re-ground them in their purpose, and feel part of a vibrant community working together towards a collective goal.

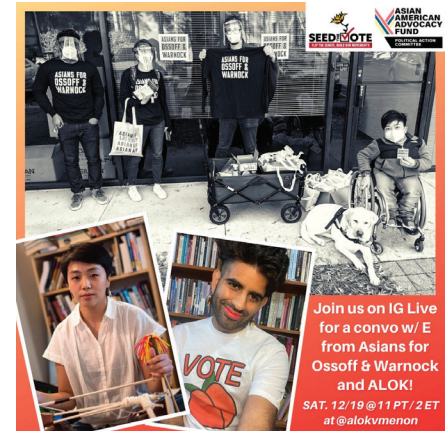
“I loved...how art and music were centered with regular breaks. It was much more of a community-centered space.” - Volunteer

“My instinct is that our partnerships with artists and IG influencers really paid off.” - Communications and Cultural Organizing Committee Member

“You feel like you’re part of something bigger when artists and influencers talk about [our work].” - Committee Member



Artwork by Micah Bazant



“Vote AND” by the Golden Butterfly Band, Oakland, CA.

ARTISTS, ENTERTAINERS, INFLUENCERS

SEED THE VOTE IS GRATEFUL FOR THE MANY CULTURAL WORKERS WHO COLLABORATED WITH US THROUGHOUT THIS CAMPAIGN.

195 Essential
AADuo
Alekssei Wagner
Alexandra Nikolchev
Alicia Garza
Alizarin Menninga-Fong
Almanac Dance Circus
Theatre
Alok
Amanda Cooper
Andres Guzman
Andrew Scharff
Archana Saghal
Bethany Woolman
Brian Bazemore
Caleb Thomas
Cali Mucho
Caroline Choi
Carsie Blanton
Cecilia Gentili
Chana Rothman
Chani Nicholas
Chase Strangio
Chris Tan
Cotton Candy Circus
Dan Blacksberg
Dan Zanes
Daniel Robelo
Deborah Messing
DJ Aura
DJ Dame Luz
DJ Delish
DJ Dentana
DJ Kuhn
DJ Neeek Nyce

DJ NA\$H
DJ Osagie
DJ Precolumbian
DJ Rekha
Donna Oblongata
Dorie Byrne
Dr. Gabriela Spears-Rico
Dylan Mckeever
Elliott LeClaire
Emmanuel Ortiz
Erick Boustead
Erin Gleeson
Favianna Rodriguez
Francesca Fiorentini
Galine
Galine Tumasova
Hector Flores
Hollis
Icon Ebony Fierce
Into Fields Live
Entertainment
Irene Rojas-Carroll
Jacob Kebeleman
Jacobs Students
Jakeya
Jeff Lewis
Jefferson Berry
Jenee Halstead
Jesse Ehrensaft-Hawley
Jesse Hamrah
Jesus Villalba
John Jarboe
Joel Robinow
Julianna Schinnick
Julie Be

Justin
Kang & Kraines
Kait Balfe
Karen Smith
Katie Kaplan
Kennedy Chung
Ken Ulansey
Kevin Devine
Khary Jackson
Kiki Lipsett
Kimmy Gatewood
Kristen Hall
Las Cafeteras
Layla Cooper
Leila Mesdaghi
Lisa Pradhan
Lizza-Actor
Lola Kirke
Luis AlvarezSchacht
Madhis Keshravaz
Madeleine Bell
Maurice the Authentic
Meghan Cary
Music Over Matter
Marc Koklow
Marcelo Perez
Marcy Rein
Max Elbaum
Maya McCoy
Meghana Nallajerla
Melanie Cervantes
Meredith Fenton
Micah Bazant
Michael Kleber-Diggs
Muriel McDonald

My Gay Banjo
Nate Mendelsohn
Nina Macintosh
Ollin Yoliztlalmecac
Orkesta Mendoza (point person Sergio Mendoza)
Pacita Rudder
Pat Koren
Paul
Philly Elmo
Positive Movement
Drumline
Poster Syndicate
Producing Blue
Project Positive
QVLN
Rebecca Zimmerman
Robert Farid Karimi
Rosa Clemente
Ryan Stopera
Sam Chenkin
Sandi DuBowski
Sarah and the Arrows
Sareanda Lourdes
See More Perspective
Seth Bogart
Seth Newton Patel
Sha Cage
Shadow Trax
Sharmin Hossain
Shreya Shah
Soniya Rene Taylor
Sophia Blistein
Spiral Q
Tahiel Jimenez

Talia Cooper
Than(ushka)
The Golden Butterfly Band
The Linda Lindas
True Diversity
Una Osato
Unidos da Filadelfia
United We Move
Vanessa
Wayne Yeh
West Powelton Steppers
Will Lex Ham
Xiaolu Wang
XIXA / Brian Lopez
YaliniDream
West Philly Orchestra

FUNDRAISING

We launched fundraisers, recruited people to host virtual house parties and fundraisers, and cultivated major donors to raise significant resources to run an effective campaign. The over 200 volunteers who solicited grassroots donations, deepened their own commitment to the work and inspired many others to get involved and prioritize work on these elections. Grassroots fundraising has many more positive impacts beyond the money it brings in. For example, many of the 5,000 individual donors also became volunteer phone bankers.

- ▶ **5,000** individual donors
- ▶ **200** volunteers did grassroots fundraising (personal fundraising page, hosted a virtual happy hour, made asks of their networks)
- ▶ **4,406** donations of **\$100 or less = \$221,960**

Still, over half of our money raised was from major donors who gave amounts ranging from \$1,000 to \$50,000. Without the initial seed investments from a few major donors and from the TrustWeb, a new community giving project, we would not have been able to launch Generation Rising. By the summer, Seed the Vote and Generation Rising were able to show groups on the ground and national partners that we could run a robust program during COVID-19 with very little resources. Through the Solidaire Network and the Movement Voter Project, we were able to raise enough resources to confidently deploy over 1,250 in-person volunteers to Pennsylvania, Arizona and eventually Georgia. We were also able to hire staff while grassroots fundraising continued. Overall we raised over \$875,000 from major donors.

NATIONAL COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION

We coordinated with national movement forces to align and collaborate on a shared strategy to defend and expand our democracy, defeat Trump and flip the Senate. National movement partners included People's Action, Center for Popular Democracy, Working Families Party, and Mijente, as well as coalition spaces including United Against Trump, Democracy Defense Coalition, Protect the Results, and The Frontline.



WHAT WE LEARNED

APPROACH



01. Get in formation - move people and resources to where it's needed.
02. Prioritize trust - earn trust by showing up and doing the work.
03. Center racial justice to shift the balance of power.

STRATEGY



04. Mobilize volunteers for electoral work by tapping into their commitment to justice and organizing.
05. Make big, bold asks of volunteers, while inviting participation at multiple levels.
06. Door knocking gets the goods.

INFRASTRUCTURE



07. Start early to scale and win.
08. Build strong and sustainable relationships with donors to help scale in critical moments.
09. Build a nimble organizing infrastructure that enables strategic action.
10. Build technology capacity - it's essential.



Harris Is First Woman Elected
Vice President

APPROACH

01. Get in Formation - move people and resources to where it's needed

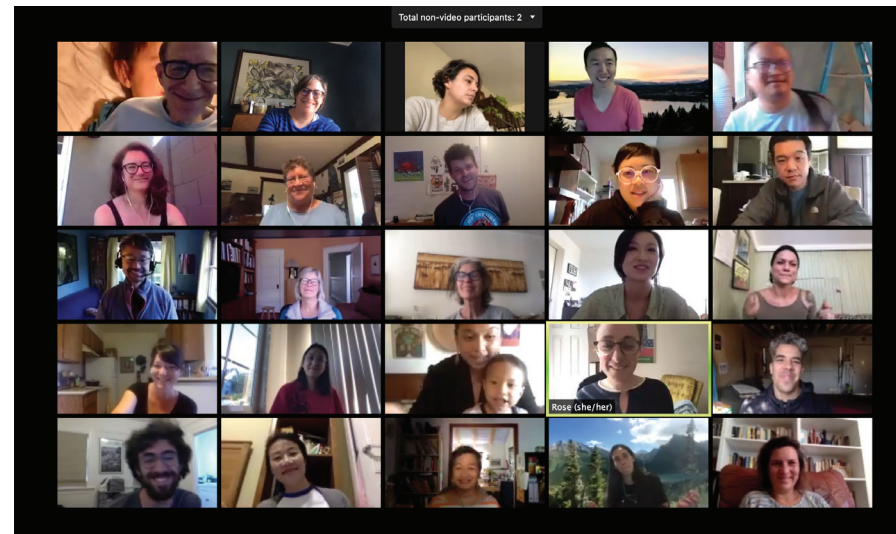
Seed the Vote was created by a group of Bay Area movement leaders who saw the existential threat of four more years of Trump and were determined to put in the work to help win for our side. Communities in California had so much at stake in the election, but given the undemocratic structure of the electoral college, there wasn't strategic local work to be done to defeat Trump. Two things were needed to "get in formation:" 1) figure out how to bring meaningful capacity to the frontlines of the fight to defeat Trump in a way that long-time organizations in the swing states would want and benefit from, and 2) figure out how to create and shift movement capacity for work on the presidential election. Seed the Vote is a powerful example of what is possible when different parts of the progressive movement coordinate and cooperate.

In 2019, nobody in our local Left movement community had a plan to harness our collective resources to help defeat Trump even though we felt it was the most important intervention in 2020. It took a few key leaders determined to make something happen, years of relationship and trust building, some time to build political alignment, and a commitment to see the bigger picture and make choices to prioritize work outside of our ongoing local organizing efforts. We urged movement leaders from existing work to invest in electoral organizing. Prioritizing this work meant tapping experienced people to take leadership on specific pieces of the project which at times required organizations to allow people to take leave. One reason we were able to accomplish so much with limited funds was that we could hire exceptional people part-time, for a short period of time, who were able to jump in and contribute at a high level of capacity quickly. We relied on and worked to encourage movement leaders to reshape their personal and organizational commitments to make room for work on the election, and we sought to provide a politically-aligned way for them to make strategic contributions to defeating Trump.

This approach emphasized building power over the long-term. In the spirit of solidarity and driven by our stake in the fight, we reached out to explore collaborations with long-term organizations in battleground states. Our work would not have been possible without the flexibility of our partners and their willingness to work with us. We weren't part of their initial field plans, but they made room for us to play a role and adjust that role as we went along. This was no small thing, since they were already working at capacity and running large field programs.

"They are the real deal and a clear example of what nationally needs to be done to authentically build up local and state campaigns. Being conscious of what a national organization should look like in relationship to local and state work versus... [taking] leadership in that space [and] more like national folks listening to local and state." - Local Partner

"We just really built off each other. One of the motivations for working with Seed the Vote was it just seemed like they had a lot of knowledge, a lot of expertise and had a really good strategy that would fit right in with our work and then we could also learn and grow." - Local Partner



Leaders Meeting, Fall 2020

02. Prioritize trust - earn trust by showing up and doing the work.

We relied on trust at every level - in the core leadership, in our partnerships, and in our volunteer program.

Our leadership consists of individuals who have extensive experience in movement building and have been doing this work for decades as colleagues and friends. These long-term relationships and experiences allowed them to move quickly, take risks, respond to needs and changing conditions, draw others into the work, and have the trust of the many people involved in the project.

“While we wished more movement leaders got involved earlier, I think that we did get enough people who had clout/relationships to support the project to give us the legitimacy we needed. That was crucial to us building momentum.” - Staff

Beyond the Coordinating Committee, many of the volunteer leaders were people who have worked together in movements for many years. We embraced a distributed organizing model which depends on trusting many people with important responsibilities and allows the work to grow in scale and reach.

“I was given a great deal of responsibility and permission to move forward quickly, with people to check in with but without a lot of red tape or management, which meant I had to just go with it and trust my best thinking. That was awesome for my leadership development.” - Staff

Trust was also critical in our organizational partnerships. In some cases, we had long-term relationships with people at the organizations, but in most cases, we did not. It was important that we were organizers, not political consultants or from one of the parties. There were times when the newness of the relationships created limitations. Building the relationships as early as possible, and ideally over years, will yield the strongest collaborations.

Often, we would do the work and hope that showing up with capacity would create trust. The majority of the time, it did. Local and national partner organizations shared that they were able to build trust with us because we “threw down.”



We were cognizant of the complex local context and provided the type of support when and how it was needed. Local partners consistently shared that our approach was special in that we did not work from a traditional, hierarchical relationship between a local and national organization. Rather, we were keen to each local partner’s context and capacity and tried to play an appropriate support role. The quotes on this and the following page are examples of how local partners experienced working with us:

“We came to them with a plan and they were just ready to throw down and had very few questions. They were very thorough... and then they would just put their resources, their funding behind it. It was really helpful in a situation that was moving way too quickly for it not to have such efficiency. They understood that we’re trying to make a thing work and that it will not be perfect.” - Local Partner

“They were able to come into a city that is largely used to working with themselves and not typically as easily convinced to work with outside organizations. [Seed the Vote] really built trust and made it easy to see them as a resource and never tried to have influence in how we moved and how we approach the work...They just came with their resources and said you’re doing this really cool thing. We’d like to help this is what we got.” - Local Partner

“They really respected our organizational culture, really respected the way we’re doing things, and adapted to that. We’ve had national and other partners that will be like “Hey, we have all these people. Why are we doing it this way? We need to be doing it like this. This is wrong.” But Seed the Vote was always like, “All right, that makes sense. Let’s do it.” [Seed the Vote] would offer some help [to] improve it not in a way that was overbearing or made us feel like we were doing things wrong.” - Local Partner

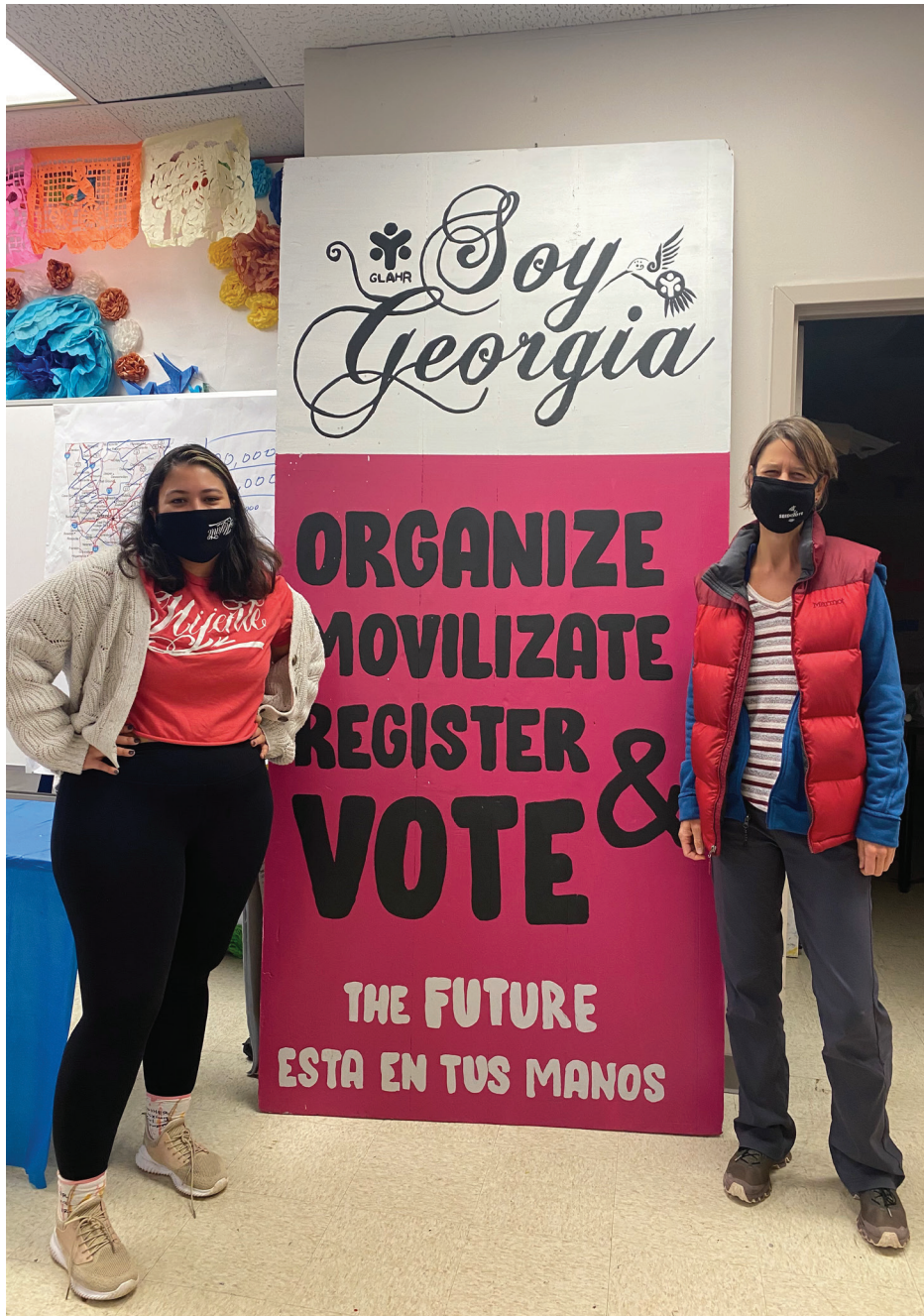
03. Center racial justice to shift the balance of power.

It was important to the organizers that our work centered racial justice and built the long-term power of working class communities and communities of color. Our goal was more than to defeat Trump. Rather, our larger goal is to seed the wins to come by shifting the balance of power in favor of communities of color, social justice, and labor organizations.

Central to building this multiracial democracy is addressing white supremacy. Critically important is who is leading the work, who we are partnering with, and how we can make deeper investments in the participation and leadership of people of color. While the majority of our volunteers were white, people of color made up a larger percentage of leadership and staff roles. And, from the beginning, Everyday People PAC invested in the parallel program, Generation Rising, which had a specific focus on developing the long-term leadership of young BIPOC organizers while working on the election. It was important to create specific space for young BIPOC fellows and volunteers, especially since Seed the Vote spaces ended up having a larger percentage of white people.



Image by Mark Klockow



Seed the Vote and Mijente volunteer at the GLAHR Action Network & Mijente campaign headquarters in Atlanta, GA.

STRATEGY

04. Mobilize volunteers for electoral work by tapping into their commitment to justice and organizing.

Seed the Vote became a “political home” for people who were looking for opportunities that aligned with their values and not necessarily with a candidate or a party. 8 out of 10 survey participants shared that the reason why they volunteered in the 2021 elections was because they “cared about the issues impacting their community such as racial and economic injustices.” About 6 out of 10 said they “shared a commitment to organizing in communities of color and working class communities.” many of the volunteers were distrustful and uninspired by the Democratic Party or candidates, but could be mobilized when the entry point was long-term organizing for working-class communities and communities of color. We emphasized the importance of investing in the organizations that are going to be there after the election is over, who will build off the momentum, and hold candidates accountable. Recruiting with this message also brings in people that are more likely to be a good fit for volunteering with grassroots people of color led organizations. The following sentiments were shared by the participants about creating a “political home:”

“They were filling that gap of both helping on the ground groups get more capacity to reach voters and giving more radical or more progressive volunteers somewhere where they could feel more home.” - National Partner

“I was so grateful to hear about Seed the Vote, which aligned with my values much more: investing in [organizations] that are led by the people most impacted!” - Volunteer

“I really liked being a part of grassroots movement building in partnership with local [organizations] rather than working specifically on a candidate’s campaign as it felt more aligned with my values as an organizer. - Volunteer

05. Make big, bold asks of volunteers, while inviting participation at multiple levels.

Volunteers were the driving force of our work. They not only knocked on doors, made phone calls, or sent text messages, they also led and implemented most aspects of our work. Volunteers played critical roles in everything from fundraising, political education, setting up technology, recruitment, running phone banks, etc. We created many ways for people to participate and make meaningful contributions. Critical to all of this was a practice of making big asks for people's time and leadership, asking multiple times, and working to find the right role and fit for someone. Given the stakes of the fight, no ask was too big, and we encouraged, invited, and celebrated volunteer contributions at every level. In addition, our strong and competent leadership helped build trust among volunteers and kept them engaged.

Volunteer leadership was necessary for us to bring our work to scale. As Blueprints for Change describes, distributed organizing, “when it is done properly, it can help a movement or campaign scale rapidly and channel huge amounts of collective power.”⁴ The following were shared by the participants about the leadership development opportunities with us our culture, and our leadership:

“Seed the Vote leaders did such a great job encouraging volunteers to ease into participatory roles which was empowering.”

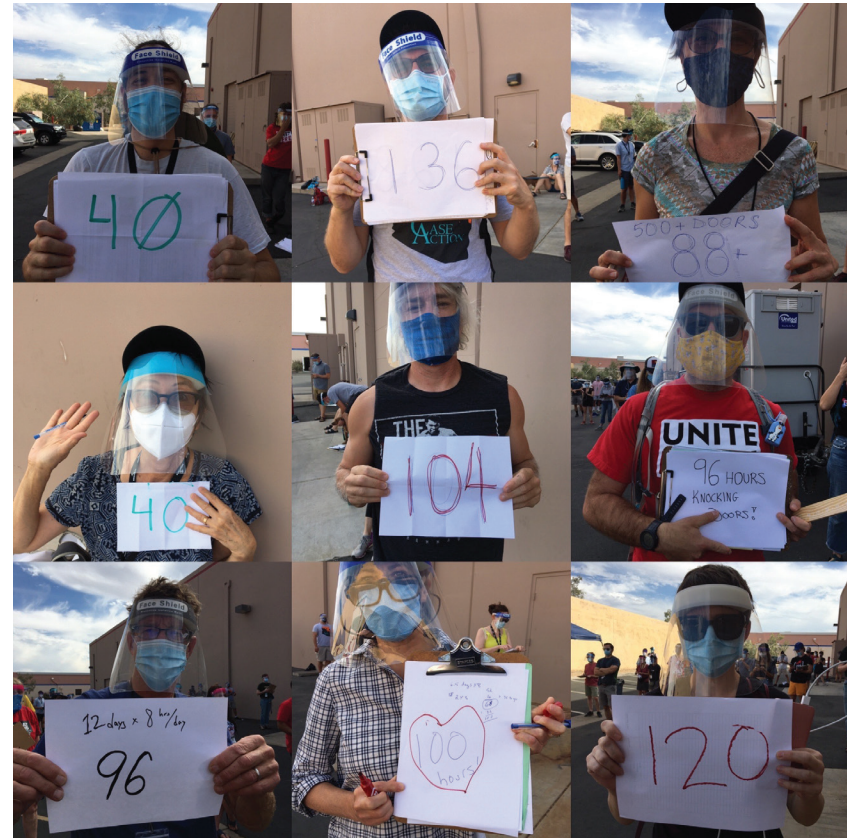
- Pod Committee Member

“Being trusted to make decisions, having high expectations for me, those are things that have helped me feel more trustworthy and competent. And it's been a wonderful experience to see that I am capable and have skills and abilities that are useful and effective when I have support and willing participants.” - Staff

“There was a pretty unique combination of support and flexibility—which made it possible to move with direction, while having the ability to take leadership, be creative, etc. in the work I was doing.” -

Volunteer, Leader, then Staff

⁴ Distributed Organizing. Blueprints for Change. Retrieved from <https://blueprintsfc.org/guide/distributed-organizing/> on April 28, 2021.



Volunteers in Arizona sharing the number of hours they spent knocking on doors.

06. Keep knocking on doors. It works. Door Knocking gets the goods...

While we initially started with a focus on door knocking, we pivoted to remote strategies when COVID-19 hit and looked to our partners to assess whether or not to do in-person canvassing. At the last minute, we mobilized in-person volunteers to Pennsylvania, Arizona, and later to Georgia. Our experience proved, once again, just how impactful face-to-face conversations and rigorous follow-up can be.

We learned from UNITE HERE's intensive door knocking strategy, such as high expectations, in-depth training, setting up a team structure with team leads, and providing ongoing coaching and support for volunteers. We also saw huge impact from doing rigorous follow-up with voters after they made a plan to vote - our volunteers did not stop texting and calling a voter until their vote was in, often confirmed with a selfie photo sent to the canvasser.

Many volunteers extended their trips because they could feel the difference we were making. We had people who signed up for a week and stayed for a month; people who negotiated complex family plans to extend their trips; even someone who drove home from Arizona to California and then turned around and came right back to stay until the election. The same thing happened a few months later in Georgia. The average volunteer length of stay in Georgia was 10 days.



Art by Kate Decicco

Emily Lee, from our coordinating committee reflected on the importance of in-person canvassing:

The realities of the digital divide and the racial injustice of our economy has shown up more starkly during the pandemic, with people of color disproportionately affected. While many sectors of the tech world thrived and increased profits during the pandemic, our communities were shut out even more, yet we gave up the unique edge that defines organizing and how we build power. In the organizing world, most sectors simply stopped the activities and programs that were directly connected to building power and advancing a social justice agenda: unions stopped doing house visits; community members could no longer testify at City Hall, they had to navigate complicated remote conferencing; electoral campaigns simply stopped all in-person doorknocking operations and only did phoning. This made sense at the time, given how little we knew about COVID-19 and the desire to err on the side of caution.

However, after taking a leave of absence from my day job and going to Arizona in October with Seed the Vote to lead an in-person delegation of volunteers to doorknock with Unite Here and LUCHA, it was abundantly clear that we had unnecessarily ceded one of our most valuable strengths in the last year: our ability to organize in-person. My month in Arizona showed me how a massive 400 person canvassing operation could be run with safety as the priority, without a single outbreak of COVID-19 via community spread, and result in the razor thin victory that was part of Trump's defeat nationally.

Two campaigns, in San Francisco (Prop G) and in California (Prop 15), lost by less than 2 percentage points in November. These campaigns did not do any in-person voter outreach work and relied on phoning, texting, and paid ads. However, our opponents' massive spending against Prop 15 confused our voter base just enough for people to vote against their own interests. If our campaign had actually mobilized a door knocking program in our key geographic areas, I believe we would have won by that same narrow margin.

If we seek to win and advance a racial justice agenda in the next 4 years, we should continue to integrate digital and remote organizing techniques, but we cannot relinquish what sets us apart and gives us our edge to victory - and for electoral work, that's in-person doorknocking.

WIELDING WORKER POWER AS POLITICAL POWER THROUGH RIGOROUS CANVASSING

UNITE HERE, a union representing 300,000 mostly hospitality sector workers, organized the largest union door-to-door canvassing operation in the U.S. in spite of the COVID-19 pandemic, which at its peak put 98% of the union's members in the country's hotels, airports, restaurants, and casinos out of work. The union was among the first groups in the country to begin door-to-door canvassing in 2020, a year in which many groups initially abandoned in-person field work—a cornerstone of Get Out The Vote (GOTV) electoral work—in the face of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

They developed comprehensive “COVID-19 safe” door-to-door canvassing protocols to minimize risk, and dispatched 400 to 500 canvassers, 8 hours a day, to knock on doors and talk to voters in Arizona, Nevada, and Georgia. They hired out of work hotel and restaurant workers from their membership to engage in this fight. With hundreds of working class member organizers turned paid canvassers operating out of multiple campaign offices, Unite HERE was hitting huge numbers, having compelling conversations, and pushing people to the polls, all while diligently tracking what worked and what didn't.

Our partnership with UNITE HERE highlights the necessity and power of unions in this movement, as well as the opportunity for future fights ahead.

INFRASTRUCTURE

07. Start Early to Scale & Win!

A lot of electoral work was activated within 3 to 4 months of the election. Yet, we formally launched 13 months before the general election with exploratory and planning conversations happening long before that. We became an “advance team,” a small group who prepared the infrastructure for others in the movement to join after the primaries. By preparing early, we were able to be nimble and adapt to the realities of the pandemic more quickly.

While most of the volunteer voter outreach did not start until 3-4 months prior to the election, there was some important work done earlier: building local and national partnerships, fundraising, building a core group of leaders (including pod & branch leaders), communications work to influence the narrative, volunteer recruitment, getting buy-in from movement leaders, and establishing relationships and coalitions with national movement partners.

“[Seed the Vote was] a critical part of the margin of victory to defeat Trump. They did it in a way that built movement organization. They saw a thing that would not have gotten built... and built it. And, that's pretty cool.” - National Partner



Photo by Jill Shenker. Volunteer canvasser training led by a Seed the Vote leader with the UNITE HERE Local 11 canvas in Phoenix, AZ

08. Build strong and sustainable relationships with donors to help scale in critical moments.

Without the initial seed investments from a few major donors and from the TrustWeb, a new community giving project, we would not have been able to scale in critical moments, including launching Generation Rising, expanding staff, and trusting we could grow our national field programs. More importantly, with more support earlier, we would have been better able to build out capacities, engage more people, and have an even greater impact. Looking ahead to 2022 and 2024, we need long-term investments in movement building projects like Seed the Vote.



Virtual House Party, Summer 2020

09. Build a nimble organizing infrastructure that enables strategic action

Starting in 2018, the Center for Empowered Politics began to build out Resilient Strategies LLC, a consolidated back office and staff sharing system to be more nimble and adaptable to meet various movement needs. The consolidated system provided ready capacity to support our financial, legal, human resources, staffing, operations and technology needs. The high level of expertise and capacity, combined with the ability to bring in staffing for key roles from different organizations quickly and seamlessly, provided tremendous value to our fledgling organization.

It allowed us to scale up quickly. As an organization in its infancy, to have such a strong system to build off of was critical in our success. As a staff member shared, “it wouldn’t have been possible if we had to build this from scratch.” The following also provide shared thoughts from staff on the infrastructure:

“The infrastructure that exists and is built in the [Center for Empowered Politics] and [Everyday People PAC] orbit was crucial to this whole thing. We pulled in so much capacity from there - it wouldn’t have been possible if we were to build this from scratch in isolation of that ecosystem. That is a fairly unique situation and something very important to make visible and to put forward in terms of recommendations about how we build out movement infrastructure long-term.” - Staff

“Seed the Vote seemed like they had a lot of tools, they had a lot of infrastructure, they had a lot of knowledge. We learned a lot from Seed the Vote and that partnership about how we can improve our programs as well. Just because it was run so well and really incredibly organized.” - Local Partner

10. Build technology capacity - It's essential.

We depended a lot on a volunteer tech committee to meet the many needs of Seed the Vote, especially as we went into remote operations — and even more so when we had to coordinate volunteers to go in person.

When the “shelter-in-place” order was placed in March, 2020 due to the global pandemic, we quickly had to switch to a remote (i.e., virtual) work environment. We had to learn new technology and support local partners and volunteers through troubleshooting. In addition, we needed to learn the different interfaces and data systems that the local partners used. Additional capacity was needed when the project scaled way up and we had to develop systems to manage thousands of volunteers. Thus, more investment is needed to build out organizational technology capacity.

We launched with the specific purpose of defeating Trump and building our movements in the process. Given our success and the niche we filled to facilitate large scale volunteer engagement in the electoral work of grassroots organizations in key battleground federal elections, we've decided to sustain and build Seed the Vote to impact future critical federal elections while building the electoral capacity of the Left.



MOVING FORWARD

The 2022 midterm elections will be a huge defensive fight to maintain a Democratic Senate majority. There will also be a need to defend and win House seats, especially with the 2020 Census results leading to changes in seat allocations that favor Republican-held places, and voter suppression bills moving through many state legislatures. Together with the massive efforts of groups across the country, we defeated Trump. But we did not defeat trumpism, nor overcome all of the political gains and attacks on democracy of the Right. If we don't put continued time and resources into supporting the groups fighting electoral battles & for voting rights in battleground states in 2022, we will continue to see our movement wins rolled back and be stuck on the defensive in many of our fights for years to come.

Based on our analysis of the seats at play and our existing relationships, we propose moving forward on plans to work on Senate and House races in at least 3 of the following states: Pennsylvania, Arizona, Georgia, Wisconsin, North Carolina, and Nevada.

By 2022, we imagine being able to have a primary focus on in-person canvassing, while also providing remote volunteer opportunities, especially through phone banking. Our door knocking plans in 2020 came together at the last minute, due to shifting conditions during a global pandemic. The outsized impact of our canvass operations, even with so little time to prepare, reinforced the importance of in-person conversations. We are looking forward to seeing how we can build on and strengthen these canvass programs for the next cycle.

Some of the ways we hope to further develop and improve our work for 2022 include:

- **Build out “nodes” in other blue strongholds that expand our geographic reach** (ex. Chicago, Seattle, DC, Boston). Identify and support core leaders in these places who will anchor volunteer outreach and leadership development in their area. This expansion of recruitment and engagement capacity will be critical, as the 2022 races will not be as galvanizing as the 2020 races were.
- **Ongoing work to build Left engagement in federal elections**, with a concrete ask around forming pods & branches for the 2022 battleground races.
- Between elections, do **ongoing work to continue to engage & develop our volunteer leaders**, including ongoing political education spaces between election cycles to maintain engagement and deepen political analysis of our volunteer base.



seedthevote.org | info@everydaypeoplepac.org