

Creating a Comprehensive Field: Relational Voter Contact

2024 Program & Plans

Updated June 2024

Rising crises — economic instability, voter processes under attack, and the brink of international wars — have created uncertainty at an unprecedented scale. We know that Artificial Intelligence (AI) will be unleashed by our opposition to fuel their political fire, as apathy and disbelief in our democracy rises. In the face of this opposition, we are doubling down on what we know works: the power of organizing and the strength of relationships and trusted messengers to break through the noise, connecting lived experiences to issues, supporting voters navigating complex systems, and bringing people to the ballot box.

For the past three cycles, we've built a scalable relational voter contact program, with volunteers reaching into their hard-to-find networks — friends, family, and infrequent voters. Our programs identify trusted messengers, create a political home, and provide support, training, and tools for direct voter turnout conversations. **Relational voter programs are an essential part of building a comprehensive field, engaging voters who are either outside of or difficult to reach through traditional canvass, phone, and mail tactics.**

In the 2022 midterms, our total footprint topped 168,000 conversations — with 850+ Community Change Action volunteers tracking 51,000 conversations, and our partners generating an additional 117,000 conversations. Our analysis showed that voters reached via relational organizing turned out at higher rates than their modeled turnout at EVERY propensity level and was particularly effective in communities of color: 44% of people matched to the voter file were Black voters, and Black and Latina women saw some of the most dramatic differences. 13% of our current relational organizing leaders are Latino.

In 2024 we are investing in growing this program, both in collaboration with partners' ongoing field efforts and independently, including through state-level leadership teams in places where Black, Latino, Native, AAPI, women, immigrant, and young voters of color can change the outcome of the election. **If fully funded, our scaled program has the potential to reach 250,000 voters in six prioritized states and additional targeted geographies that align with key U.S. House and Senate races and the path to winning the presidency.** The projected impact of these conversations is the same as 6.75 million door canvass attempts.

The impact of relational voter contact reaches far beyond one election. At its heart, this is about rebuilding our democracy. After the election, this infrastructure remains activated to advance bold, popular legislation that significantly improves the lives of our voters. And, in turn, these campaigns show voters what their own power (not politicians) can make possible — finding faith in the basic function of our democracy to deliver for its people.



"After attending one of CCA's virtual events, I started attending the weekly meetings. I found a way to stay informed and fight to make 45 a one-term president. In actuality, I found my voice."

Queen Jackson, relational organizing leader

2024 Program

Combining the core principles of community organizing with new tools, our model: invites new volunteer leaders who can reach voters disassociated by the big-machine political process; creates leader-driven digital communities and a political home; mobilizes these leaders to reach into their communities, capitalizing on the power of social pressure to both mobilize and persuade voters.



Volunteers come to our program because they want to be more engaged on progressive issues that impact their lives: care, housing, economic security, immigration, and protecting our democracy. We then match volunteers, and their networks, to the voter file to confirm that we are reaching key demographics. Our recruitment strategy creates efficiency by reaching out to volunteers through digital content, texting, and in-person recruitment. We use message-tested and organic content that motivates “hand-raisers.”

Our political education and training program for our volunteers builds confidence and commitment to the goal of bringing voices together through voting. The ultimate intention is for newly identified volunteers to become relational voter leaders — creating and tracking conversations with their friends and families ahead of the election. At the same time, this also creates a dedicated base with a shared political analysis who actively disseminate a progressive narrative through online videos, digital pledge cards, and traditional voter engagement activities like canvassing and phone banking. We need this type of surround-sound engagement — digitally, in person, and in a network — to sustain enthusiasm and persuade voters. And, the feedback from this engagement can be incorporated immediately across all parts of our field and digital programs.

Through our energized leaders' 1 to 1 contact with their networks, we further expand our reach to hard-to-find voters in communities of color — voters who are not on the rolls or aren't voting frequently. The use of digital tools for these conversations allows us to track impact and match reach back to the voter file to confirm the impact of our reach, in addition to and beyond traditional field programs.

In 2022, we also conducted a pilot program to test a digital pledge card with a small group of leaders. We asked them to encourage their friends and family to vote and to sign on as well. Initially, the pledge card focused solely on voter turnout, but we are planning to include candidate preferences in the future. The participants who signed the pledge card received a text message from our organization and a physical copy of the pledge card a few days before early voting. The pilot was successful, with 91% of the participants completing the digital pledge card turning out to vote, including a significant number of voters with low propensity scores (0-39). In 2024, we are expanding this strategy, allowing individuals to engage with their contacts while also establishing trustworthy communication from the organization.

Our Approach

- **Layered reach.** Our program is expanding in areas that are not canvassable so that we can add additional layers of outreach to voters who might not be sufficiently engaged by existing field programs. We think this will ultimately lead to netting additional votes with both our volunteers and their relational networks based on past program turnout effects.
- **Tracking and matching.** Our use of digital tools and attention to matching voters back to the voter file confirms that we are successfully finding those critical to victory, connecting them to issues, and sustaining motivation through a full cycle.
- **Known, trusted messengers and voices.** Friends, family members, and peers know their networks best and are positioned to mobilize them. This includes high-propensity voters who, when targeted early and empowered, can become influencers themselves.
- **Early vote and flexible programs.** We prioritize early contact which has larger turnout effects, before candidates and their campaigns spin up to full capacity. This allows our programs to peak ahead of mailed ballots or early voting—banking votes. Then we systematically push mobilization through early voting, followed by focusing on a second window of high-impact social pressure conversations just before voting ends the days before and through Election Day.

States & Races



Arizona

Presidential: *11 Electoral College votes*
U.S. Senate
U.S. House: AZ-1, AZ-6
State Legislature: *Opportunity to flip*

Relational voter program: *1040 leaders, 29,000 conversations*



Georgia

Presidential: *16 Electoral College votes*

Relational voter program: *800 leaders, 20,000 conversations*



Michigan

Presidential: *15 Electoral College votes*
U.S. Senate
U.S. House: MI-3, MI-7, MI-8, MI-10
State Legislature: *Protect majority*

Statewide partners: *Michigan Liberation, Michigan United Action, Moses Action, and Mothering Justice Action Fund*

Relational voter program: *1100 leaders, 35,000 conversations*



Nevada

Presidential: *6 Electoral College votes*
U.S. Senate
U.S. House: NV-1, NV-3, NV-4

Relational voter program: *800 leaders, 20,000 conversations*



North Carolina

Presidential: *16 Electoral College votes*
Governor

Relational voter program: *1040 leaders, 26,000 conversations*



Ohio

Presidential: *17 Electoral College votes*
U.S. Senate
U.S. House: OH-1, OH-13

Statewide partner: *Stand Up for Ohio*

Relational voter program: *1400 leaders, 50,000 conversations*

Additional impact: California (CA-13, CA-27, CA-49), New Mexico (NM-02), New York (NY-17), Oregon (OR-05, OR-06), Pennsylvania (PA-07, PA-17), and Wisconsin. We are continually tracking the U.S. House races and other geographies where infrequent voters of color can make a difference. We will continue to narrow our geographies of interest.

As we near Election Day, our program will also include national turnout beyond these targets.