

Motivating and Turning Out Voters of Color in 2020

[UPDATED April 2020 – During the COVID-19 Public Health Crisis]

Community Change Action’s electoral strategy is rooted in the knowledge that we can change our politics by expanding the electorate and mobilizing voters who fall outside of traditional campaign electoral targeting. This cycle we are on the ground in Presidential battleground states, working to elect Democrats in targeted US Senate and US House races, and investing in important state legislative races and other down-ballot campaigns. We are focusing our resources on states and districts where voters of color can help provide the margin of victory and places where we can build on investments from previous years.

Impact of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency

The current public health crisis requires that we adapt our voter engagement program to this new reality, prioritizing health and safety and revising our strategy to win. Our adjusted plans will engage several million voters across more than a dozen states and take into account both the advocacy and rapid response narrative needed during this crisis and the voter engagement goals to mobilize voters to turn out in November. And while the physical distancing guidelines require that we shift our energy and resources to voter engagement tactics that do not rely on in-person contacts, we will emphasize and expand programs that incorporate the quality of two-way communications and relationship-building tactics rather than only one-way transmitting of information. This scenario makes our long-term partnerships with local organizations and relationships with voters and community leaders more integral and valuable than ever before.

2020 Program: Priority States and Races

	Arizona Presidential US Senate US Congressional Districts		Michigan Presidential US Congressional Districts
	Colorado Presidential US Senate US Congressional Districts		Nevada Presidential US Congressional Districts
	Florida Presidential US Congressional Districts		Wisconsin Presidential
	Georgia Presidential US Senate US Congressional Districts		Minnesota Presidential US Senate US Congressional Districts
Additional states - key US House Races: CA, NJ, NM, OH, PA, VA, WA			

Relational Voter Programs, Direct Advocacy & Rapid Response Solidarity Networks

When Community Change Action made a big bet on relational organizing (RO) several years ago, we never imagined its potential value in a public health crisis. This investment in RO is allowing us to continue to train new leaders, forge new partnerships, and scale up our relational program even

during this period of time when we cannot continue in-person meetings. Through this program, we can maintain our ability to reach voters with effective two-way communications - through voters' own personal networks - and are confident that we can sustain that engagement from now until the election.

During this time and moving forward, our relational program will intentionally intersect with the direct actions needed to demand responsible action from our elected officials and to respond to the public health and economic crises. We are building and scaling up local networks of solidarity and rapid response that will help us both win the election and cement long-term trust among voters and community members.

- We expect our program to be the largest relational voter program in the country in 2020.
- Analyst Institute study showed that our 2018 relational voter turnout test program increased turnout by 1.3%; it was particularly effective with individuals who were only matched to the voter file *after* the initial launch; ours was also the largest relational voter turnout test in the country in 2018, according to Analyst.
- We will engage at least 250,000 people through this program with an intention to evaluate our scale and goals by June of 2020 to determine if a higher coverage of our voters is possible given growing interest and implementation by partners.
- As of today, we have trained 200+ local staff and thousands of activists. We are documenting and sharing with the movement best practices as well as tools and technology; by Election Day 2020, over 20,000 leaders and activists will be trained to use relational organizing methods.

Digital Organizing, Paid Digital Advertising, and Grassroots Digital Content Creation

As we increase the size and reach of our paid digital program, we remain committed to ensuring that a significant portion of our content creation comes from leaders at the frontlines, increasing the potential for organic reach and growth. The successful digital communication and advertising campaigns we have built in past cycles all point back to the same lesson – that authenticity and trusted messengers are our greatest assets. In addition, we need to quickly learn more about the impact of leaders utilizing their own platforms for community gatherings, from Facebook watch parties to Instagram live, and adapt our programs accordingly. Tele-townhalls with candidates and surrogates, weekly virtual gatherings and other creative digital strategies will also be taken into account with the goal of inviting new voters into the conversation.

Effective 2018 Digital Ad: [“Because voting is the most important thing!”](#)



In 2018, our best performing content was user-generated videos. We collected more than 100 videos and ran several variations of these videos as ads. This video, with our partner FLIC Votes, performed well with Black audiences, and it did something unusual for Facebook: it captured viewers' attention for more than 15 seconds.

Our 2018 digital experimentation, as part of the Win Justice collaboration, ratified what we had long suspected – that trusted and authentic messengers had greater impact and engagement with voters of color. Our early tests this year on digital engagement in primaries with voters of color is helping us refine the pathways that we create for high engagement, high impact and refined targeting of our voters. We know that scalable grassroots content with intentional data capturing and feedback loops will optimize our efforts to motivate hard to reach voters with paid and organic content.

Mail, Phones, and Text messages

MAIL: Our mail pieces will be designed using industry best practices and will include the most compelling content to motivate our target universe communities. We will also use creative “personalized cards” – where members of our canvassing teams will create and send personalized cards to a consistent targeted set of voters assigned to each of them from our universes. Through these creative mail pieces, members of our canvass team will invite voters to follow up with their point of contact through phone and/or their online community. There is much we can still learn about personalized mail, so we will test content, message, and follow up tactics to make this a truly effective process. Early, scalable learning for this strategy is high priority. In addition, we will continue to leverage past learnings and best practices for mail - social pressure, language preference, images, and more - while paying close attention to impact and response in this new environment.

PHONES: Early internal data from primary election work in WI and CENSUS engagement is showing an uptick in our contact rates for phone calls. This is promising and may be a sign of the current crisis. However, we still do not have all the voter file information we need to reach our full universe of voters in this way. Early work to clean up and improve the quality of voter data, and sustained engagement with the opportunity to stay connected through other methods (text, online), will be a priority in our program.

SMS/TEXT: This will continue to be an important dimension of our multi-layered voter engagement work. Our preferred relational organizing tool, Outvote, already integrates text messages and will provide an easy transition to continue work on the same app for volunteers, leaders and staff. From our perspective, it is best to use a text message strategy to warm lists, meaning voters we've recently contacted through other methods of engagement. Text messages will work best as a follow up to a previously identified issue, and as a two-way communication, not just as an information dump. Finally, as a progressive movement overall, we have to be careful not to overuse text messages, as it could eventually turn off our voters.

Paid Spanish Language Radio and Targeted Community Radio

For years, radio stations have been a lifeline of support and connection to grassroots local communities and organizations. For example, since the 2007 immigration mega marches, radio DJs have been part of the culture and information for immigrants and their families. This year, we will utilize radio and other ethnic media to sustain a persuasion conversation with older voters of color, who at this moment of economic uncertainty will be trying to evaluate the candidates and champions protecting their interests.

Because of their long-standing relationship with radio and ethnic media, our local grassroots organizations have strong existing relationships and often get significant earned media from Spanish language radio and other ethnic media in the form of live mentions, matched spots for PSAs and other benefits. Investment in this strategy as well as the affordable and scalable paid spots is a balance between motivation to vote and persuasion through a values/issues framework. Early spending to book Spanish language radio and ethnic media will ensure that we receive competitive prices and available airtime.

Door-to-Door Canvass Program

While nobody knows for sure what the future holds, we remain ready to build and run focused canvass programs at the most ambitious scale possible, if public health and time considerations should allow it later this year. Any decision to get back to canvass will be made in alignment with recommendations of state health departments, the CDC and health experts. Our highest

commitment is to the safety and health of our communities, volunteers and staff. If face-to-face contact becomes possible, we will be ready to quickly adapt and scale that part of our program.

2020 Program Adjustments

Pre-planned Program Attempts*	Adjusted Program Attempts*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4-6 attempts at the doors • 1-2 attempts on the phones • 1-2 text message attempts • 3-7 relational program attempts • 1-3 mail pieces • 4% - 8% of budget to paid digital & grassroots content creation • >1% of budget on Spanish language and other targeted radio, and ethnic media • >1% on direct advocacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 attempts at the doors if possible** • 2- 4 attempts on the phones • 2-4 text message attempts • 7 - 15 relational program attempts • 4- 12 mail pieces • 8% - 11% of budget to paid digital & grassroots content creation • 5% - 7% on Spanish language and other targeted radio, and ethnic media • 1%-2% on direct advocacy, rapid response solidarity networks.

* Each state plans will vary, but this picture represents the potential range and mix of multi-layered tactics.

** As noted above, any in-person work will be contingent on public health and safety considerations.

Building Permanent Infrastructure and Capacity in the States

Community Change Action is committed to leadership development and building lasting organization and infrastructure in the communities and states in which we work. Earlier this cycle, we launched “Power 2020,” a national peer learning group consisting of 20 local and state organizations’ political directors. The group met multiple times in 2019 to focus on plan writing, data analysis, and the launch of relational voter programs in their states. And we continued our year-round work with key state organizations to grow their memberships, activist bases, data/analysis/program sophistication, and in-state power to impact policies, narratives, and election outcomes.

Program Geographies and Scale

- 2020 Win Justice statewide programs in FL, NV, MN, and WI, reaching 2-3 million voters
- 2020 Additional CCA statewide programs in AZ, CO, GA, and MI, reaching 1-1.5 million voters
- 2020 US House Strategy in 8-10 Congressional Districts in CA, NJ, NM, OH, PA, and WA, reaching 10,000-25,000 targeted voters per District

NOTE ON WIN JUSTICE: We are excited to continue the Win Justice collaborative program in 2020 with Community Change Action, SEIU, Planned Parenthood Votes, and Color of Change PAC. Win Justice will work in FL, NV, MN, and WI. The balance of the work – statewide efforts in AZ, CO, GA, and MI, as well as many of the targeted US House races – will be run by Community Change Action and our local partner organizations, just as we did in 2018.

For more info, contact Deepak Pateriya at dpateriya@CommunityChangeAction.org