

Building an Electoral Powerhouse: Relational Voter Turnout & Digital Organizing

2022 Updated Program & Plans

Our relational voter contact programs are a critical component of the infrastructure we need to have in place to ensure that in the lead up to the 2022 midterm elections, voters can successfully navigate the new landscape for early vote, vote by mail, and Election Day processes in their states.

Community Change Action's theory of change is rooted in the knowledge that we can change our politics by expanding the electorate and mobilizing voters who are not directly engaged by traditional campaigns. But in order to sustain the attention and engagement of these voters, we have to provide them with multiple touchpoints. Relational voter contact offers us a reliable way to engage people in conversations with their network and to provide opportunities for collective action — which not just leads to individual adjusted voter behavior, but which also influences those voters' close-knit communities.

First piloted in 2018, our [relational voter turnout and organizing](#) model trains voters to reach out to their friends and family. While this outreach is an element of all good organizing, what makes our model unique is the integration within a larger digital engagement program, the connecting of relationships online and offline, and the creation of a space for leaders to learn together.

Our Model & Deepened Program in 2022

Combining the core principles of community organizing with new tools, our model creates digital communities, cultivates leaders, and reaches friends and family members who are politically invisible to the traditional campaign apparatus.



Community Change Action’s **digital acquisition strategy** relies on message-tested content and organic content from our influencers that motivates our intended audience to become “hand-raisers.” To date, we’ve been able to identify a little over 50,000 new digital acquisitions. The success of our collaboration depends on extending an invitation to the newly generated leads to step onto an intentional ladder of engagement.

While the ultimate intention of this engagement ladder is for newly identified volunteers to become relational voter leaders — creating and tracking conversations with their own friends and families ahead of the election — the process also results in many leadership exercises. Newly engaged members are invited to participate in a variety of opportunities online and in person. The result is a dedicated base of people with shared political analysis of the current political environment who have a menu of options to disseminate that narrative: online videos, digital pledge cards, and of course traditional voter engagement activities like canvassing and phone banking. We need this type of surround-sound engagement — digitally, in person, and in network — to sustain enthusiasm and persuade voters.

Giving people alternatives to sustained action was part of the winning formula for 2020, and is part of our commitment for ramped up engagement in the final weeks of 2022.



“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, current relational organizing leader

Our partners are well-equipped to drive culturally competent in-person engagement. And we believe we can dramatically increase the pace at which we **scale and integrate relational voter turnout with other forms of voter contact** by supporting a hybrid model that pairs digital and online activity with the door knocking and canvassing staples of existing electoral organizing. We see an opportunity in 2022 to support partners as they expand their hybrid in-person and online digital organizing footprints.

And we are committed to scaling our relational program in a way that allows us to sustain conversations with the right audience at a scale to impact the margin of victory in our states. Across our priority states and congressional districts, Community Change Action along with our partners will have over 140,000 canvassed conversations while building a durable volunteer base for ongoing powerbuilding.



Hallmarks Of Our Approach

Our relational voter turnout and organizing approach builds on key lessons and insights from past elections to guide us as we expand our structure:

- **Relational voter turnout contributes to progressive victories:** In 2020, our program showed a 20-point bump when outreach came from a friend versus a peer-to-peer text message to a similar demographic pool of voters. Gains were largest for Black, Latino, Native, low-information, young, and immigrant voters. Among Democrats and likely Democrats, Black men displayed the greatest increase in turnout at +21pp, followed by Hispanic women at +17.7pp. *Note: This data is based on A/B testing and therefore it serves broadly as a leading indicator for programmatic impact.*

- **Relational programs can drastically increase the number of conversations ahead of Early Vote and Vote by Mail:** By encouraging contacts to join a relational organizing tactic, not only are voters converted to volunteers, but we also sustain relationships with them long after we've had that first touch point, whether online or in person. This level of sustained contact will be necessary to overcome voter suppression, disinformation, and apathy.
- **Relational voter organizing both mobilizes and persuades:** Our relational voter turnout programs are successfully finding, persuading, and turning out voters in target universes on the voter file and reaching voters who are outside the traditional voter files. Volunteers can filter their personal contacts to focus on personal contacts who overlap with an America Votes universe, contacts who need to update their registration, or contacts who have not yet voted as we near Election Day. And in times of chaos, uncertainty, and disinformation, friends and family can be critical voices. Our volunteer training centers deep conversations and provides space for peer learning around hard topics. Volunteer leaders can find the leverage to move their contacts when they are supported by a community of people standing beside them.
- **Relational programs deliver critical voter insights and shape narratives:** Our programs are a real-time barometer of voters' moods and a pulse of voter opinions that can identify and shape narrative trends. This is especially critical for Black and Latino voters, whom the progressive movement struggled to effectively listen to and mobilize in 2020. Feedback from our relational leaders and contacts is incorporated immediately across all parts of our field and digital programs.
- **Relational voter organizing builds a base of volunteers not only to win elections but also to organize for policy change:** After the election, this infrastructure remains activated. For example after November 2020, we mobilized relational organizing leaders on issue advocacy campaigns to advance bold, popular national legislation that significantly improves the lives and communities of our voters — including immigration reform, child care justice, recovery relief, and an expanded child tax credit — and to create favorable conditions for the midterm elections.

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Community Change Action is a 501(c)(4) advocacy organization — with Community Change Voters (PAC) its connected organization. These entities share a common mission and vision for the world, and work in full compliance with state and federal campaign finance laws.