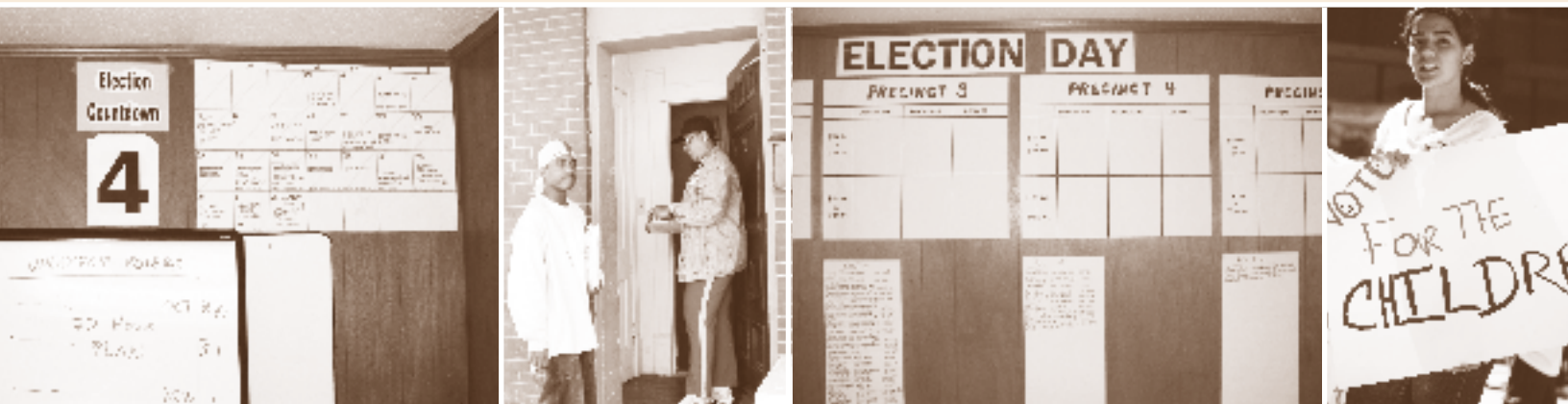




Community Voting Project: A survey of general sites

Through the *General Program* of the Community Voting Project (CVP), the Center for Community Change provided mini-grants and some limited training and technical assistance to 37 grassroots organizations in 19 states to expand their non-partisan voter efforts. A complete list of General Program sites is included at the end of this document. Brief highlights from four organizations illustrate the impact that the CVP had on its grantees.



Indian People’s Action (IPA)

Indian People’s Action (IPA), a project of Montana People’s Action, organizes and builds the voice and power Montana’s urban Indians. While IPA has been engaged in nonpartisan voter work since 1988, the CVP mini-grant allowed the organization to hire a full-time voter registration coordinator. This individual did a tremendous amount of community outreach that netted 15 core volunteers who plan to stay with the organization. Through intensive canvassing efforts, Indian People’s Action registered 2,136 new Native American voters.

According to Janet Robideau, Executive Director, the coordinator was particularly crucial because he helped IPA strategize about civic participation as well as ways to engage these new voters in IPA’s ongoing issue work around living wages, health care, welfare reform, affordable housing, and education. The voter database that they created from their new registrants captures information about which individuals had the most enthusiasm about these policy issues so they can

be contacted after the election to stay involved. In addition, all 2,136 people will be invited to provide input into IPA’s strategic plan for the coming year.

Ms. Robideau states, “Working with the Center boosted our credibility. We made sure folks understood that we had a tie to a national group and that the things we work on have a national effect. Our ties to the Center now enable us to sit at the table on national discussions that affect Montanans.”

Ohio Empowerment Coalition

The Ohio Empowerment Coalition is a statewide welfare rights coalition of TANF recipients, former recipients, and advocates based in Cincinnati. The organization works to change Ohio’s welfare policies for the better. Through a very intense and systematic door-knocking campaign, volunteers and staff registered 582 new voters.

The coalition focused its registration and outreach efforts on two neighborhoods: Over the Rhine, a low-income neighborhood representing

the Coalition's traditional membership; and North College Hill, a suburban community with a working-class population that shares many concerns with the Over the Rhine neighborhood.

By knocking on doors of both neighborhoods, the Coalition learned about the issue priorities of local residents. Katy Heins, Director of the Ohio Empowerment Coalition, explains, "The state lawmakers assume that everyone in this district is of a certain income level and belief system. We think that is not true and we uncovered the stories in North College Hill to prove it." Armed with this knowledge—and the voter registrations to provide credibility about their power—the Coalition plans to educate lawmakers about the need to focus on economic improvement issues.

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Project H.O.M.E.

Project H.O.M.E. is a community-based organization in Philadelphia working to empower persons to break the cycle of homelessness and poverty. The organization works with disadvantaged communities through neighborhood revitalization programs, social advocacy, and voter engagement. Capitalizing on the training provided by the Center for Community Change, Project H.O.M.E. trained more than 150 volunteers who then canvassed homeless and low-income Philadelphians in shelters, transitional housing, and low-income neighborhoods, registering new voters and conducting intensive Get Out the Vote efforts.

Several volunteers were people experiencing various stages of homelessness. They embraced the project, registered voters, spoke publicly on its behalf, and worked tirelessly on Election Day. Project H.O.M.E. also successfully used the Center's lessons on media outreach to generate print and broadcast media coverage of the voter registration project's kick-off rally.

Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition

Founded in 2002, Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition (TIRRC) is a state-wide, immigrant and refugee-led collaboration

based in Nashville whose mission is to empower immigrants and refugees throughout the state. Through volunteers and staff, TIRRC registered 1,258 voters at a multitude of sites all around Nashville, including traffic court, churches and temples, grocery stores in housing projects, bus stops, and retirement towers.

The Center's mini-grant was used to help TIRRC improve their visibility and garner new organizational members. Canvass Director Emily Hall explains, "I met a Laotian man during voter registration work at a Buddhist temple. He is a leader of two Laotian organizations and was really interested in joining TIRRC. There are about 12,000 Laotian immigrants in Nashville, so making this connection could be very beneficial

to both our organizations. It might not have happened without the Community Voting Project."

Community Voting Project General Sites

9 to 5, the National Association of Working Women, (<http://www.9to5.org>) based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, was founded in 1995 by a group of Milwaukee-area women on welfare. The organization has been registering, educating, and mobilizing low-wage voters since 1996.

The California Partnership

(<http://www.california-partnership.org>) is a statewide coalition formed to fight against poverty in California by building local, grassroots bases of low-income community organizations that work together to advocate for policies and programs to help people climb out of poverty. Through the California Partnership, the Community Voting Project is supporting an additional 13 electoral projects in California (see below).

CASA de Maryland, Inc. (<http://www.casademaryland.org>)

is a community organization in Takoma Park, Maryland that serves Latino and other immigrant communities by providing direct services and widening civic participation and activism in the low-income Latino community.

Community Voices Heard (<http://www.cvhaction.org>) is an organization of low-income individuals, mostly women with experience on public assistance, working together to improve their communities in New York City. Its multi-pronged strategy includes community organizing, public education, public-policy work, coalition building, and leadership development.

Indian People's Action (<http://www.mtpaction.org/ipa.htm>) is a socially and racially diverse organization of low and moderate income Montanans based in Missoula, Montana working to empower local residents to achieve lasting change for social and economic justice using direct action.

Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement (Iowa CCI) (<http://www.iowacci.org>) is a nonpartisan, community-based membership organization in Des Moines, Iowa that empowers low and moderate-income residents working on social, economic, environmental justice issues and voter education in urban and rural areas.

Maine People's Resource Center (MPRC) (<http://www.mainepeoplesalliance.org/mprc.htm>) with offices in Portland, Lewiston, and Bangor, Maine, was created by the Maine People's Alliance in 1984 to build a citizen movement for a stronger democracy. Over the past 20 years, their work has resulted in nationally heralded campaign finance reform, increased voter registration, expanded health care access, toxic waste reduction and cleanup, strengthening consumer protection, and preserving citizens' rights.

Michigan Organizing Project (<http://www.ntic-us.org/issues/jobs/mop.htm>) is a faith-based organization in Western Michigan working for social and economic change in Muskegon, Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo. Their membership is primarily comprised of Latino migrant workers and African American factory workers.

Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA) (<http://www.miracoalition.org>) is a membership organization based in Boston, Massachusetts that actively involves hundreds of grassroots immigrant organizations, human services agencies, legal service providers, religious groups, and human rights groups in cooperative efforts to improve the lives of immigrants and refugees.

My Mississippi Eyes is a program at Lanier High School in Jackson, Mississippi that teaches primarily African American high school students how to organize around issues that affect them as individuals and their communities, through public empowerment seminars, community workshops and voter registration and education projects.

National Korean American Service and Education Consortium (NAKASEC) (<http://www.nakasec.org>) is a non-profit, non-partisan organization in Los Angeles, California that promotes political and civic participation among Korean Americans. Together with their affiliates, they have been coordinating a multi-faceted voter empowerment project for a number of years.

Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition (NWBCCC) (<http://www.usccb.org/cchd/povertyusa/success2.htm>) in New York City is a consortium of neighborhood associations and churches that works with low and moderate-income residents of the Bronx to develop local leadership and address affordable housing, education and environmental concerns.

Ohio Empowerment Coalition (<http://www.overtherhine.org/contactcenter/projects.html>) is a statewide welfare rights coalition of recipients, former recipients and advocates based in Cincinnati, Ohio working to change Ohio's punitive welfare policies for the better.

Oregon Action Research And Education Fund (<http://www.oregonaction.org>), an affiliate of the Northwest Federation of Community Organizations (NWFCO), is a statewide community organization based in Portland, Oregon working to create economic and social justice for all through leadership development, voter engagement and community organizing.

People Acting for Community Together (PACT) (<http://www.miamipact.org>) is a faith-based membership organization in Miami, Florida composed of schools, community groups, churches and other religious institutions combating poverty and building justice for low-income people, working in part with Latino and African-American communities.

Philadelphia Unemployment Project (<http://www.philaup.org>) is a membership organization of low-wage workers and the unemployed in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania fighting for jobs, healthcare and economic justice in Latino, African American and low-income communities.

Project H.O.M.E. (<http://www.projecthome.org>) is a community-based organization in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania working to empower persons to break the cycle of homelessness and poverty through neighborhood revitalization programs, social advocacy, and voter engagement.

Sunflower Community Action (<http://www.sunfloweract.com/index.asp>) is a non-profit grassroots organization in Wichita, Kansas developing individual and collective power to create social and economic change in Latino, African American and Caucasian communities.

Tenants' and Workers' Support Committee (TWSC) (<http://www.twsc.org>) is a progressive grassroots organization based in Alexandria, Virginia committed to winning social and economic justice and power for Latinos, African Americans, immigrants and low-income people.

Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition (TIRRC) (<http://www.tnimmigrant.org>) is a state-wide, immigrant and refugee-led collaboration based in Nashville, Tennessee whose mission is to empower immigrants and refugees throughout Tennessee to develop a unified voice, defend their rights, and create an atmosphere in which immigrants and refugees are viewed as positive contributors to the state.

United Congregations of Metro East, a member of the Gamaliel Foundation (<http://www.gamaliel.org>) organizing network, is a faith-based membership organization in Madison, Illinois working to transcend and transform differences of race, faith, economic status, culture and education, in part through voter registration and education.

Virginia Organizing Project (<http://www.virginia-organizing.org>) is a non-partisan, statewide grassroots organization in Charlottesville, Virginia dedicated to challenging injustice by empowering people in local communities to address issues that affect the quality of their lives, in part through participation in voter education and registration projects.

VOICE-Buffalo, a member of the Gamaliel Foundation (<http://www.gamaliel.org>) organizing network in Buffalo, New York is a network of congregations working to create the political will to aggressively pursue long-term, substantive solutions to the problems plaguing low-income neighborhoods in the Buffalo region, to strengthen congregations, and to bring about economic, social and environmental justice.

Washington Citizen Action Education and Research Fund (WCAERF) (<http://www.wacitizenaction.org>), an affiliate of the Northwest Federation of Community Organizations (NWFCO), is a statewide grassroots organization based in Seattle, Washington working on a range of issues, including civic engagement through voter registration, education and GOTV campaigns, with the broad aim of bringing about greater economic justice in Washington State and the country.

Additional organizations supported through the California Partnership:

- 9 to 5 Working Women, Bay Area Chapter
- Central American Resource Center (CARECEN), San Francisco
- Chinese Progressive Association, San Francisco
- International Institute of San Francisco
- Korean Resource Center, Los Angeles
- Los Angeles Coalition to End Hunger and Homelessness
- Madera Coalition for Community Justice
- Northern California Citizenship Project/Mobilize the Immigrant Vote
- Parent Voices Contra Costa
- Parent Voices Oakland
- Parents Organized for Westside Renewal (POWER), Los Angeles / Santa Monica
- PUEBLO, Santa Barbara
- South Asian Network, Los Angeles