

GRO – Grass Roots Organizing

The Grass Roots Approach to Electoral Work

GRO *is* Grassroots!

- GRO is unlike most of the organizations that participated in CCC's Community Voting Project and other intensive voting projects across the country last year. We are not a large organization, a network of faith-based institutions or a progressive voting coalition. We do not hire people to do electoral work or pay our own volunteers. Like all of our work, electoral work belongs to our members and they recruit extra volunteers to help when needed.
- Our primary objective is building power in our communities and showing power on the streets, in our state capitol, at our polling sites, etc. People get involved because it makes them feel empowered and is in their self-interest, not because they find a particular ideological home with us.

Long Term vs. Short Term Organizing

- We are looking to build up power from where it has been taken away. This is a long-term process which requires real dedication and commitment. There are no quick fixes.
- This objective requires real visioning for sustainability. It is ruined by explosive strategizing which burns out everyone in the all-or-nothing pursuit of short-term wins.

Quality vs. Quantity Organizing

- GRO is successful at voter organizing for the same reason that it is successful at all of its organizing: **the quality of our commitments, not the quantity.** GRO leaders and members have full ownership of the organization to the extent that many struggle to justify their active involvement in more conventional community organizations.
- In the same way that GRO led by example in the CVP project, GRO has taken the lead in our state and region, giving other organizations a model of organizing to learn from and an organizational voice to count on in every fight.
- Leadership development is a very high priority for us. It is at the core of all of our projects, including the MO-VIP. Our Leadership Academy track provides comprehensive and interactive training, producing long-lasting leaders and empowering everybody in the organization. GRO's people are true ambassadors for the organization and develop skills that can be incorporated into the work in many different ways.
- Ironically, even though GRO might be one of the smallest of member organizations in a given project, including CVP, we can deliver the highest turnouts for events and voting in our precincts. Sadly, our turnouts sometimes compete with those of entire coalitions! In the end, the quality of our commitments results in greater quantities as well.