

# ORGANIZING THE MIDWEST

## DISRUPTING MYTHS AND BUILDING MULTIRACIAL GOVERNING COALITIONS

### Ohio Addendum

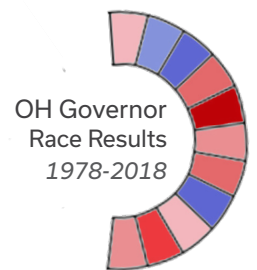
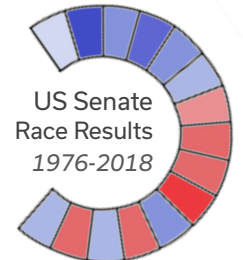
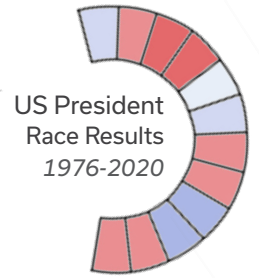
Over the past year, Ohio gained national recognition for passing significant police reform in Cleveland via ballot initiative (Issue 24) and won a set of lawsuits to overturn gerrymandered state house and congressional districts.

The state has long been a battleground for policy fights critical to win multiracial governance, including increasing Ohio's minimum wage and criminal justice reform. Ohio has struggled to develop lasting multiracial coalitions as it grapples with ongoing deindustrialization that has devastated so many communities, as well as the lasting effects of persistent racial segregation in metropolitan regions.

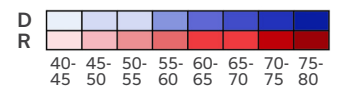
Despite difficult political dynamics, on-the-ground organizers have succeeded in moving big ideas – including universal preschool ballot initiatives in Cincinnati and Dayton, police reform and accountability in Cleveland, protection of collective bargaining rights, Medicaid expansion, and the defending voting rights.

To build on this momentum in 2022, progressives in Ohio will need to execute the four part strategy laid out in Organizing the Midwest:

- 1 Invest strategically to organize Black, immigrant, and young leaders
- 2 Organize conflicted white communities with new and proven strategies
- 3 Advance a Race Class Narrative in Ohio
- 4 Establish electoral programs through independent state ecosystems



Key: Winning Ratios Per Party



**8,073,829**

OH Registered Voters, 2020



### KEY ISSUE

#### People's Platform

Together,

community organizations and policy groups across the state have developed a comprehensive People's Platform.

This policy and narrative campaign agenda argues that Ohio must invest tax dollars to build a strong safety net and win quality education and affordable healthcare for all Ohioans.



### KEY ISSUE

#### Criminal Justice Reform

Community

organizations spurred by recent criminal justice victories are organizing to abolish the death penalty and end cash bail through bipartisan bills in the state legislature.

Organizers are developing next generation campaigns to reduce barriers that obstruct the dignity and freedom of formerly incarcerated people.



### KEY ISSUE

#### Education and Childcare

Community

organizations and labor unions are working together to improve public education, expand access to Pre-K and higher education for all students, and address the mounting student debt crisis.

These same groups are organizing childcare providers and the families they serve, exploring a county-level funding mechanism to increase access to quality care and demanding an income tax on high earners that would pay for accessible childcare for all families.

# STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INVESTMENT IN OHIO

## INVEST IN BLACK, IMMIGRANT & YOUNG LEADERS

Ohio's organizing infrastructure has long been viewed as a national model, one that brings together different approaches, builds deep alliances with labor, works across multiple geographies, and attracts both state and national funders.

At the center of this work is the Ohio Organizing Collaborative, a broad-based statewide organization with roughly 40 staff and thousands of leaders in more than a dozen counties. In addition, BLOC (a Black-led organizing effort based in Akron) has reach in Summit County, and CAIR-Ohio organizes Ohio's Muslim and immigrant communities. The Ohio Student Association has a significant presence across more than ten college campuses across the state. Each of these organizations requires long-term investment to continue to build a connected grassroots base of Black, immigrant, and young people.

## ORGANIZE CONFLICTED WHITE COMMUNITIES

In the last few years, a set of innovative strategies emerged in Ohio: each breaking ground with key sets of white voters and complementing existing faith-based organizing in-state and showing potential to engage these communities in shared policy campaigns.

New projects have emerged to organize suburban women and have been featured in the national news media for their breakthrough work. This outreach complements the long-term faith organizing in Ohio anchored by the AMOS Project, Faith in Public Life, and Undivided; these efforts that have built a broad base of clergy and church leaders across the state.

## ESTABLISH A RACE CLASS NARRATIVE IN OHIO

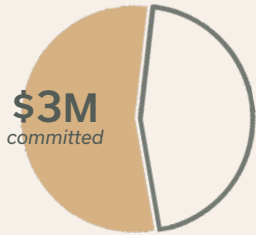
Since March 2020, a coalition of organizing, policy, and communications experts have come together to lead the development of a messaging brand that advances the [race class narrative](#) in Ohio.

All In For Ohio, initially conceived as a coalition-wide messaging response to the COVID-19 crisis, has since expanded to become the core messaging and organizing vehicle that has defined the protests and actions held in defense of Black lives and strengthen Ohio's democracy – notably, this strategy has mobilized a progressive base to participate in civic engagement activities. All In For Ohio will continue to define Ohio's messaging strategy as part of the We Make the Future effort.

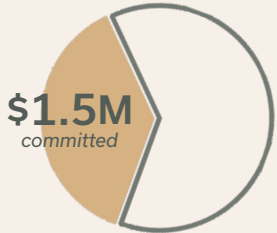
## STRENGTHEN INDEPENDENT ELECTORAL ECOSYSTEMS

Ohio legislators and Secretaries of State were early architects of so-called voter roll "purges" – activity upheld by the US Supreme Court via a narrow 5-4 majority decision.

Organizations in Ohio continue to fight the loss of hundreds of thousands of voters who are removed from the rolls every cycle. These organizations work to combat these attacks by investing in large-scale voter registration and robust GOTV programs in order to turn out newly registered voters. Donors and organizations have raised over \$1 million for voter registration in 2022 – yet face a \$3.5 million gap to execute their overall program.



**\$2.5M**  
needed



**\$2.5M**  
needed



**\$1.5M**  
needed



**\$3.5M**  
needed