

Rooting Young Folks in Their Power

Invest in the youth





The purpose of this program is to develop a safe space where youth can be in community with each other and learn the ins and out's of civic engagement and the importance of community building. In doing this we will build a base of youth we can tap into for various campaigns across the state. This will give us the opportunity to invest in the youth both monetary and educational.

This program was built on the Wheel of Power and includes most of the strategies we have developed with an emphasis on: [Engage & Educate the Voters](#), [Develop Strong Leaders](#), [Organize & Mobilize Communities](#), [Get Out The Vote](#), [Data & Research](#), and [Policy, Action, & Impact](#) while also including some of the wheel of change strategies created for the Environmental Justice Cohort. Those strategies are: [Coalition & Capacity Building](#), [Base Building](#), and [Electoral Justice](#). The 4-week program was both educational and engaging actively. The curriculum is built on educational research and philosophy. Philosophy and education are based on the concepts of wisdom, ideology, and critical inquiry.

Power Coalition for Equity and Justice sought an inaugural cohort of 10 youth in the Metropolitan area of New Orleans, Louisiana that participated in a civic engagement bootcamp for 4 weeks. We rooted young folks in their power by revisiting the history of social justice work. The curriculum is centered around four topics. This civic engagement boot camp cohort will have the possibility of learning and enhancing their skills around:

- ➔ History of Organizing and Coalition Building
- ➔ Data & Targeting
- ➔ History of Organizing and Coalition Building
- ➔ Policy & Advocacy

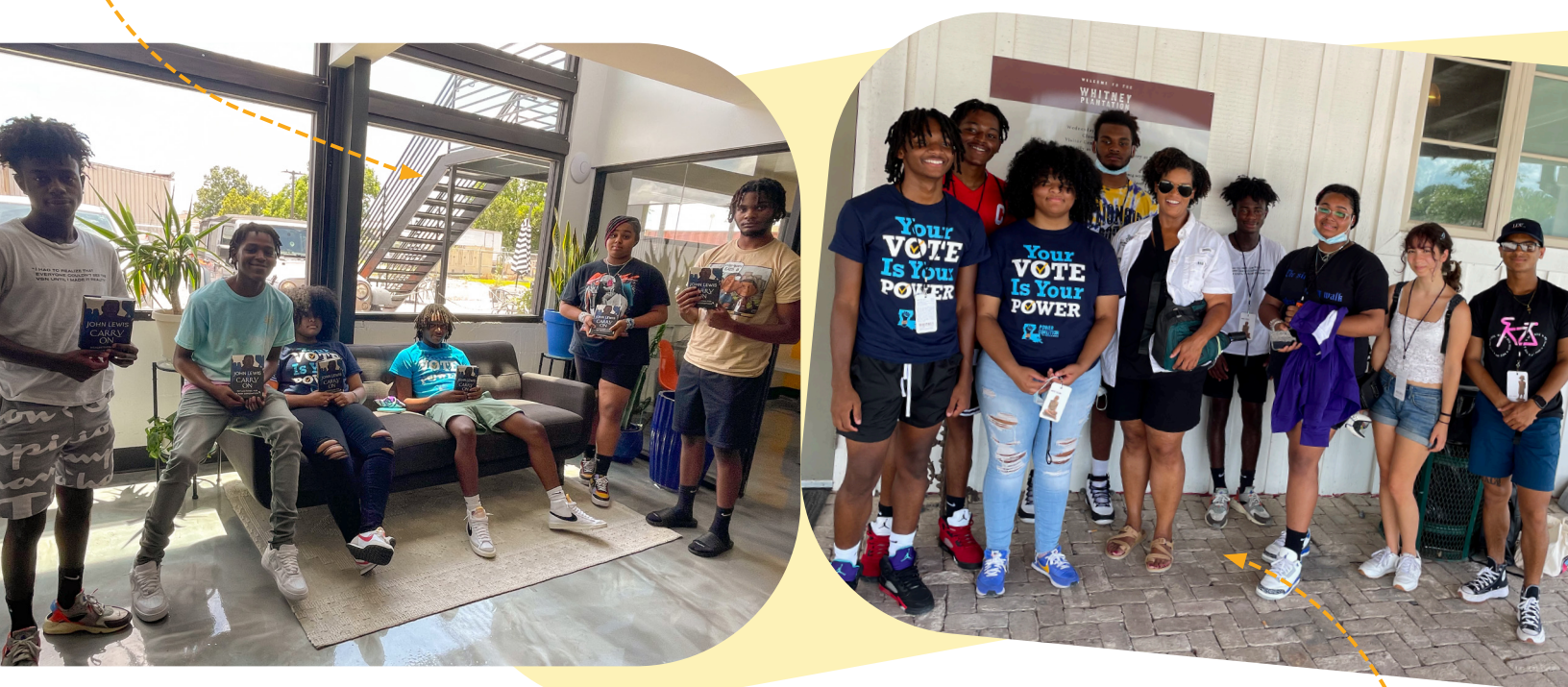
This movement is framed by a commitment to the following shared principles:

- ➔ **The People Closest To The Problem Are Closest To The Solution**
Those who are directly affected by harmful policies and inequitable systems should lead the movement for change.
- ➔ **Government Should Be Accountable To Citizens For Its Actions**
Louisiana is at its best when it fulfills its Constitution's promise to "secure justice for all, preserve peace, protect the rights, and promote the happiness and general welfare of the people."
- ➔ **Intersectionality Is Mandatory In Policy Advocacy**
Power is built by working together across issue and policy areas, and constructing a shared frame for advocacy with one voice.

Why We Did It

The idea for this program came from Carlos Pollard Jr, (Redistricting Fellow & Volunteer and Campus Coordinator). Carlos launched this program as a way to remind everyone in the community that Gen Z have been and continue to be at the forefront of social movements both nationally and locally. **Youth continue to play an important role in shaping our future.** Now, it's time to train up the next generation (Generation Alpha). This boot camp was a diverse group of Generation Alpha and Gen Z.

The strategy of this program was to get everyone in one room, build community, have a collective understanding of assignments, and execute into great leaders. Real strategy comes when we invite the ones we want more present to the table and this intensive program did just that. We trained up leaders, community advocates, and your future representatives.



How It Can Be Replicated Nationally

We invite all states to train your youth on their role in this work. It's important to note that this work did not start with you and will not end with you. At some point you will need to pass the baton, why not work with your youth now and train them up?

Most importantly, teach the youth their history. We are living in a nation where CRT is challenged locally and nationally. This boot camp was intentional with bringing our youth to the Whitney Plantation to teach the youth of Louisiana about their history. How far we have come and how far we still have to travel. But also, remembering that history is not as far away as they make it seem.

Invest in the Youth Now, Not Later.

Oftentimes, organizations expect youth to volunteer their time, but no one lives a monolithic life. No one lives a single issued life and not all people suffer with the same issues. Oftentimes our youth in our communities are either helping at home with bills or helping care for younger siblings.

It's 2022, and it's time to pay youth for their time because inflation is real, bills are real, and resources are non-negotiable.

Power Coalition for Equity and Justice invested in the Youth in Louisiana. **We had a diverse group of youth in the state ages 15 - 21 that gave us their time, commitment, and energy. In return, we awarded them a stipend.**

Takeaways

Because this was a give and take initiative, not only were we able to train and root young people in their power, but we were also able to build a base of high schoolers and college students to be more actively involved in civic engagement and community outreach. When we discuss the need for young people in this work to show up, first we must ask what each person is getting out of it. Understandably, the organization will get people that show up and help push the efforts. What will the youth get out of it? **Invest your resources and knowledge into them to retain them in this work. That way we build a base of youth that will show up all the time.**

The inaugural cohort will be activated in various ways across the state of Louisiana.

The 2022 GOTV season is heavy and it will take all of us to have a successful season. We will tap into the Power Youth Boot Camp to host Voter Registration Drives (VRD) on their college and high school campuses, they will be tagged in to help canvass, phone bank, and text bank. Tabling at community events and making sure everyone in their home and their own communities are registered to vote. That's how you build power—through the avenues you built. A good leader gets the work done through people.

37.8%
of our youth (0-17)
are Black

Data from the office of Juvenile
Justice and Delinquency
Prevention, 2020.





35.8%

of the state's student body
are Black

All colleges in Louisiana, includes students enrolled in college and grad school. Data from the American Community Survey, 2020.

Call to Action

What do the stats mean? We have masses of Black youth we can tap into in Louisiana. Once we are able to tap into them we can start to build a bigger base that will then eventually help us make substantial, long-lasting change in the state of Louisiana. My personal goal is to tap into every Black youth in the state of Louisiana. **There's so much work that can get done when we work collectively. In order to do that, we must invest in organizations and people that pledge to invest in the youth.**

To the youth in Louisiana - Find your place in this space of work, look to get involved, and speak out when you see injustice. **You can always come to Power Coalition for Equity and Justice to find your power and your roots.**

To the inaugural cohort: **Stay fired up, always speak up, and always be solution oriented.** I will always be connected to you all and here if you need anything. But I charge you with staying connected with your cohort and tagging in someone else to get involved as well. **Lift up the community as you climb yourself.**

To the youth nationwide: **Use your voices to always cause good trouble, never settle,** and I charge all of you to read John Lewis's book Carry On. Find a community of people and organizations that want to invest in you, your ideas, and your energy.

To organizations nationwide: Invest in the youth, put your resources behind them, and invite them to the table. **History shows that this work has always been led by young folks and will continue to be led by young folk.** We are the future, we are the change.

-CARLOS POLLARD, JR.



"The civic engagement boot camp **made me aware of the rights and the power we have to make change** in our government."

-Maren Antee

"This inspired me to bring back to my college campus and organize students to **get then involved in local issues.**"

-Jalen Brown



"The Civic Engagement Boot Camp was a very impactful part of my summer, that helped me to **learn the importance of African Americans in politics.** It also helped me to create a feeling to want to be apart of the change for future generations."

-Sanaa Scharpon





"I would tell the youth in Louisiana to apply to this because **it's an eye opener for young people** and we are able to learn so much."

-Jacob Dupard

"This boot camp taught be to be **aware of what's on the ballot** and who's running to represent me."

-Rusan Daniels



"We have to **stay up and stay positive**, that's what this bootcamp taught me"

-Jovan McQueen



"Politics are everywhere, and if we start learning **we can be experts when it's our time to run and vote.**"

-Zai McQueen





**POWER
COALITION**
For Equity & Justice

Voting is not
only our **right**,
it is our **Power**.

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