WITH THE PEOPLE IS WHERE THE POWER RESIDES

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

PowerCoalition.org
The 2020 Regular Legislative Session convened on March 9. Gov. Edwards issued a Stay at Home Order on March 22. The Census began being collected on March 12. \n\n**VOTE**

- **November 2020**
  - Total Voter Turnout: 70.14% of registered Black Voters VOTED
  - 30% of All Early Voters Were Black
  - 63.09% of registered Black Voters VOTED

**Black Voter Growth**

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**Increase in Voters of Color in Louisiana 2016-2020**

- Voters of Color Represented 70.1% of All New Voter Registrations

**2020 Timeline**

- **April 14**: Release of Policy Demand Document
- **June 1**: End of Regular Legislative Session and the First Extraordinary Session convened
- **July 11**: Election
- **September**: Redistricting Academy
- **Sept. 28**: Second Extraordinary Session convened
- **October**: GOTV Kickoff
- **November 3**: Presidential Election

**2020 Election Results**

- **November 2020**
  - 63.09% of registered Black Voters VOTED
  - 70.14% Total Voter Turnout

**Equity & Justice Power Coalition**

- September 9-11, 2020
- REDISTRICTING ACADEMY

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2020 has been one of the most challenging years for communities locally and globally. We have battled a pandemic that has taken countless lives, and shuttered our businesses and schools. Louisiana has experienced five hurricanes. Our nation continued to grapple with large-scale racism and police violence, and a presidential election that saw both the highest voter turnout, and some of the most volatile events leading up to it.

Through all of this, YOU have continued to show up and remind us what we love about our communities, about Louisiana, and why we don’t stop fighting for people. It is with deep gratitude that we release this end of the year executive summary. This summary highlights the passion and dedication of communities to stand up time and time again to push for the kind of leadership that is responsive and accountable to them. Power Coalition and Voice of the Experienced (VOTE) worked in deep partnership throughout the fall GOTV season to expand our reach and build capacity throughout the state. This is a manifestation of how hard work and commitment to standing in one’s power is changing our state for the better.

In November, we made 1,807,785 total contact attempts to infrequent and semi-frequent voters of color and 62.1% of contacts in our universe voted.

In the December runoff election, we made 893,473 contact attempts and 29.6% of contacts in our universe voted.

Overall, 5.6% more people turned out to vote in 2020 than in the 2016 Presidential election. That amounted to 120,000 more total votes across the state, including 25,000 more ballots cast by Black voters. The sustained increase in turnout, particularly among Black voters, proves that our work over the last three years has grown democracy, and deepened justice and equity in our state.

This base building and foundational work led to the highest early voter turnout in Louisiana history, thanks to the successful lawsuit that extended early voting. Nearly 1 million people early voted, and 30% of all Black voters early voted in November.

Since 2015, Power Coalition has been engaging with infrequent and semi-frequent voters of color, unregistered and newly registered voters, and others who have often been on the outside of the political process, as part of our campaign to build a movement for a more expansive and effective democracy in Louisiana.

People of Color Represented
70.1% of All New Registered Voters Between 2016 and 2020*

*per data available on the Secretary of State website
We led and supported 10 issue based campaigns including paid sick leave, eviction moratorium, early childhood, stopping corporate welfare, and supporting workers striking for safety measures during COVID. We worked collectively with our partners to advocate at the federal level for needed relief as the $600 unemployment insurance ended. We worked at the state level to address our depleted unemployment insurance fund and highlighted the fact that Louisiana has the lowest payouts in the country.

We will continue our work in 2021 to increase the voices of BIPOC communities, civic engagement, and to address the humanitarian crisis to raise the unemployment benefit and shore up the funding mechanism as Louisianans face growing eviction and foreclosure crises, and jobs that will not return in the hospitality industry.

We will build off of our GOTV work where we asked candidates to pledge to a fair and equitable redistricting process, given the newly elected legislative body will oversee the process. More than 100 candidates took the redistricting pledge and we hope the Governor adopts the principles of our pledge as a criteria for maps that won’t be vetoed. We have been working with Southern Coalition for Social Justice (SCSJ) to CROWD Academies to train more than 100 residents statewide, hiring organizers statewide and working with a demographer to support the overall process.

Executive Committee
Voice of the Experienced (VOTE)
Step Up Louisiana
New Orleans Workers’ Center for Racial Justice (NOW-CRJ)
VAYLA New Orleans
Families and Friends of Louisiana’s Incarcerated Children (FFLIC)
Jericho Road Housing Initiative
Louisiana Budget Project (LBP)
Women with a Vision (WWAV)
Housing NOLA
Louisiana Partnership for Children and Families (LPCF)

Partners
Louisiana Policy Institute for Children (LPIC)
Black Voters Matter (BVM)
Together Louisiana
Lawyers’ Committee
Louisiana Pan-Hellenic Council
Ready Louisiana Early Childhood Coalition
NAACP Legal Defense Fund
Churches and religious institutions
Neighborhood Associations

This work is made possible through deep partnerships with organizations across the state and a coalition of dedicated people that believe a more equitable and just Louisiana is possible.
Get Out The Vote 2020

The 2020 election season was one of the most important elections we will see in our lifetime, from the top of the ballot presidential election, to down ballot races that included new District Attorneys, Judges, Mayors, and City Council members that will set the stage for the next decade in Louisiana.

Louisiana has no shortage of elections. The presidential primary was moved from the spring at the outbreak of COVID-19 to the summer months. In addition to the presidential primaries, there were a number of local elections that were on the ballot. Power Coalition worked to make sure that people showed up for these elections, and voters of color accounted for 41% of all votes cast in the July election!

Power Coalition and Voice of the Experienced (VOTE) worked in deep partnership throughout the fall GOTV season to expand our reach and build capacity throughout the state. We began the GOTV season while still working to get people to complete the census due to the extended dates. This provided unique challenges and opportunities to spread awareness of these two very important civic duties.

We had a team of over 150 canvassers in 4 different cities—New Orleans, Baton Rouge, Shreveport, and Lafayette— that spoke to over 14,000 people in phone banks and dropped election literature at over 142,000 homes. Many of these canvassers have worked with us in previous election and many are formerly incarcerated people who have expertise in regaining voting rights.
Due to the pandemic and our lawsuit, election rules changed multiple times. We knew we needed to do everything possible to demystify the process and help people understand what was on their ballot. To help with those education pieces, we created a series of videos and hosted webinars and virtual coffee chats with partner organizations and the community.

Across the country, the November election saw unprecedented voter turnout and Louisiana was no different. 70.14% of registered voters turned out for the presidential election, a 5.6% increase in voters from the 2016 election.

In Louisiana, over 1/3 of all voters in November were voters of color.

Because of Louisiana’s jungle primary, we had a runoff election for state and local seats in December. In December, proportionately, there were more Black voters than white voters. This is a testament to the successful ground game and outreach program that Power Coalition and our partners have built for voters of color.

Over 105,000 more people voted by mail in 2020, many of them due to expanded reasons due to the lawsuit!

Our Universe

2020 Presidential Election

We made 1,807,785 total contact attempts to reach 413,338 infrequent and semi-frequent voters of color.

256,736 (62.1%) of those people voted.

2020 Runoff Election

We made 893,473 contact attempts to reach 196,276 voters of color.

58,014 (29.6%) of those people voted.
### 2020 November Election By the Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Registered Black Voters Who Voted</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2020</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bossier</td>
<td>59.7%</td>
<td>63.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caddo</td>
<td>58.47%</td>
<td>59.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calcasieu</td>
<td>59.5%</td>
<td>56.07%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Baton Rouge</td>
<td>63.23%</td>
<td>64.84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jefferson</td>
<td>61.86%</td>
<td>63.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lafayette</td>
<td>59.68%</td>
<td>62.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orleans</td>
<td>62.36%</td>
<td>62.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ouachita</td>
<td>55.76%</td>
<td>56.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rapides</td>
<td>57.89%</td>
<td>59.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. James</td>
<td>74.92%</td>
<td>77.99%</td>
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In December 2020, Black voters turned out at a higher proportion than White voters.

- Out Of 1,960,031 Registered White Voters
  - 337,562 (17.2%) Voted

- Out Of 969,584 Registered Black Voters
  - 172,455 (17.8%) Voted

December 2020 Runoff Election Proportionally:
- 17.8% of Black Voters Voted
- 17.2% of White Voters Voted

Increase in Voters of Color in Louisiana 2016-2020

- Voters of Color Represented 70.1% of All New Voter Registrations

The Louisiana Secretary of State only releases election data with the following ethnic breakdowns: White, Black, Other. We know that there are numerous ethnicities that are put into the "Other" category and we are committed to reaching Latinx, API, and other communities of color and engaging them in the political process. We strive to make resources available in different languages and do outreach in a variety of communities. When we reference "Voters of Color" in this report, we have combined Secretary of State data from the Black and Other categories and are working to have more specific data in the future.
In May, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) represented Power Coalition for Equity and Justice, the Louisiana State Conference of the NAACP, and four individual voters in a lawsuit against the state to extend voting options in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. This lawsuit challenged the need for a reason to vote by mail and aimed to provide expansion of vote by mail options for voters due to COVID-19 related reasons.

In September, a federal court heard a second lawsuit filed by NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. on behalf of Power Coalition for Equity and Justice, the Louisiana State Conference of the NAACP, and four individual voters. This time, WE WON.

The result of this lawsuit was a BIG win for Louisiana. It resulted in an additional 3 days of early voting over a second weekend, and 5 COVID-19 related reasons to vote by mail in the midst of a pandemic.

These two additional options to vote not only created more pathways to participating in the democratic process, but also extended the acceptable reasons to vote by mail. This was an integral part of expanding the vote in a COVID-19 reality because there are many in our community who have not been able to go into public due to the real fear of contracting the virus.

→ At higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 as identified by the Centers for Disease Control.
→ Subject to a medically necessary quarantine or isolation as a result of COVID-19
→ Advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to COVID-19 concerns
→ Experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and seeking a medical diagnosis
→ Caring for an individual who is subject to a medically necessary quarantine or isolation order as a result of COVID-19 or who has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to COVID-19 concerns

We brought a lawsuit against the Secretary of State to ensure they provided safe options for voting in the November and December elections.*

WE WON!

Voter protection & expanded voting access for everyone #PoweredbyPowerCoalition

What This Means For You:
• Early Voting Extended for 10 Days
• 5 COVID-19 Excuses to Vote by Mail will be available for the November and December Elections

*Plaintiffs: Jennifer Harding, Jasmine Pogue, the Louisiana State Conference of the NAACP and Power Coalition for Equity and Justice

PowerCoalition.org
Due to the decision in the Hardings vs. Edwards case, early voting was extended to include a second weekend for the November 3 elections, and there were extended reasons to vote by mail for COVID-19 related reasons. Power Coalition and our partners won this lawsuit with less than a month before early voting began.

We quickly mobilized a virtual campaign to share the extended early voting dates as well as working with press to ensure that the new dates were circulated widely.

The effect of these changes in the lawsuit was clear. Additional early voting days allowed for more opportunities to vote in person. In parishes like Caddo where the population sits at just under 200,000 but currently only has one early voting location, the increased number of days and expanded voting hours allowed the northern Democratic anchor of the state multiple weekends and evenings for people to vote. Removing the hurdles of transportation and standing in long lines gave voters vote by mail access that was commonly only granted to those who met stringent criteria.

Over 105,000 more people voted by mail in 2020, many because of reasons created by the lawsuit!

30% of All Early Voters Were Black

25,000 More Black Voters
One of the foundations of democracy is the ability to vote freely in all elections. Though the Constitution ensures all Americans this right, far too often there are barriers to casting one’s vote. This includes mis and dis information, polling stations being moved or having equipment that is not working, being removed from voter lists, or not having transportation to the polls.

To combat these barriers, Power Coalition has built a comprehensive election protection plan that involved filling poll monitor roles, deploying volunteers to check in at polling locations, manning a call center answering voter calls on election days, giving rides to the polls, and monitoring social media chatter to preemptively address problems that were emerging.

We have built relationships with the local Registrar of Voters and Clerk of Courts offices so that when challenges or problems arise we are able to fix them quickly to ensure pathways to vote for all people.

In 2020 We Had:

- Over 600 Polling Locations Checked
- Over 100 Roving Poll Monitors
- Over 480 calls responded to on voter protection hotline
- Over 271 social media instances of mis or dis information reported online
- Over 200 Election Workers Recruited
- Over 75 Rides to Polling Stations
Defending Democracy

This is a foundational piece of our democracy. My right to vote, anybody’s constitutional right to vote.

— Ashley Shelton
In addition to the challenges presented by COVID-19, we battled deep mistrust of the government, unprecedented politicization, massive natural disasters, widespread civil unrest, and unemployment. In addition to the environmental and social factors that made the 2020 Census more complicated than we had originally anticipated, bureaucratic changes repeatedly changed the goal posts for completing the Census. This included funding shortfalls, ever-shifting deadlines for when folks needed to complete the census, and nearly ceaseless litigation, to name a few. These were all of the waters the Power Coalition and our partners were navigating while doing statewide outreach to hard to count populations in effort to fair and accurate count.
The Count Me In campaign began in early 2020 before the COVID-19 pandemic related shutdowns and changes. The original campaign integrated in person events, in person canvassing, phone and text banking, as well as a robust digital campaign. With the stay-at-home order beginning in March, we quickly moved to a virtual campaign.

We used targeted ads, text messages, phone banking, mailers, and a robust social media campaign to provide accurate, reliable, and easy to understand information about the census.

This became even more important as the Census dates changed, and there was misinformation circulating online about completing the census.

Census Deadline: Sept. 30

My Count My Vote My Power

PowerCoalition.org/Volunteer

Outreach

Over 529,000 individual impressions on Facebook Ads

Over 2.6 Million Geo Fenced Digital Ad Impressions

450 Radio Ads

There were over 350,000 contacts made via text to ensure that community members had completed the census and provide information about completing the census.

$58,000 Regranted Through Census Mini Grants to 29 Community Based Organizations and Churches

50,000 Census Mailers Sent
In response to the pandemic, Power Coalition released the “Roadmap to Recovery: Powerful Policy Demands to Respond to COVID-19,” a list of specific policies and ideas for local and state lawmakers that could ensure a racially and economically equitable response and recovery after the pandemic. Built in coordination with our partners across the state, this guide serves as a foundation for equitable and just policies that could provide relief for people during the pandemic and create a better future for Louisiana, even when COVID-19 is not ravaging our communities.

At the outset of the pandemic and the resulting shutdown, Power Coalition turned the homepage of our website into a resource hub for people throughout Louisiana. It included information about unemployment, tenant rights during the pandemic, where to access COVID-19 testing, food pick up locations, and more.
COVID-19 hit Louisiana hard. In particular, group living situations were particularly susceptible to the virus, jails and prisons becoming hotspots. In honor of Juneteenth, a celebration of freedom, Power Coalition paid bail for people in East Baton Rouge jail who were awaiting trial. Cash bail disproportionately impacts low income people, and Power Coalition is dedicated to creating a more equitable system and ensuring people are protected now.

When COVID-19 started spreading in New Orleans, Hoppers, the people who work on garbage collection trucks, asked for PPE and hazard pay because they were likely interacting with infected waste. When their demands were refused, they went on strike and formed the City Waste Union, a union of hoppers dedicated to ensuring workplace protections. Power Coalition began supporting them to get their message out, build capacity, and advocate for worker’s rights during a pandemic.
Legislative SESSIONS

Louisiana had 3 legislative sessions in 2020, one regularly scheduled session and two special sessions to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Power Coalition and partners advocated at each of these legislative sessions for people centered policy that would help people through the pandemic.**

Before the pandemic, Power Coalition was advocating at the state legislature for unrestricted vote by mail, a practice that is in place in other states and makes it easier to engage with the voting process. This bill did not pass, despite the outbreak of COVID-19 which underlined the need for alternative voting methods that do not put people at risk.

In anticipation of the Redistricting Session that will happen in 2021, Power Coalition advocated this year for a Redistricting transparency website, a redistricting study and advisory commission to ensure equity when redrawing the districts, and ending the practice of prison gerrymandering. Unfortunately, these bills did not become law and we are currently working this year to ensure that there is an equitable redistricting process.

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**Over 1300 emails sent to legislators via OneClick**

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**8 Bills Advocated**

- Unleash Local
- Unrestricted Vote by Mail
- Voter List Maintenance
- Redistricting Study and Advisory Commission
- Redistricting Transparency Website
- End Prison Gerrymandering
- Institute New Ability to Pay Framework for Criminal Fines and Fees
- Repeal the 10% collection fee for people on probation and parole

On the side of workers rights, Power Coalition continued to work on our “Unleash Local” campaign, filing a bill to allow local jurisdictions to set their own minimum wage. **With the onset of the pandemic, and the resulting job losses that were felt around the country, but particularly in Louisiana, we began a statewide extend unemployment campaign**, using both our One Click capabilities, and advocating in person at the capital. **Power Coalition helped to pass HR 46 which instructed the Louisiana Workforce Commission to improve wait times for people who filed for unemployment insurance so people could get much needed relief faster.**
Power Coalition hosted 2 different Redistricting Academies in 2020.

The goal of these academies is to train people in equitable redistricting practices which will take place in a special redistricting legislative session in 2021.

Redistricting is when state legislative and congressional district boundaries are redrawn every 10 years following the U.S. Census. Districts should have equitable population distributions and allow for appropriate representation. There are methods to limit political representation, often referred to as cracking—when you split up a population into districts so they can not elect leaders that represent them, or packing—when you put an entire population into one district so that they only have one representative instead of multiple. Power Coalition is working around the state to train legislators and our communities on fair and equitable redistricting and representation so that we can hold our elected officials accountable in the 2021 Redistricting Session.

Over 100 people trained in Redistricting Academies in 2020.
Voter Registration

Voter registration is a cornerstone of Power Coalition’s broader base building and voter expansion strategy. In 2020 Power Coalition hosted over 30 voter registration drives across the state.

As of March 1, 2019 formerly incarcerated people in Louisiana who meet certain conditions had their voting rights reinstated.

A concentrated public relations and education effort alongside probation and parole offices throughout the state and communities and nonprofit organizations who focus on re-entry efforts lead to a substantial increase in registering these potential voters this year and provides an opportunity to extend the vote further in the future.

Power Coalition created a new way for groups of people to engage with the work this year: Power Clusters. Power Clusters are groups of people that are a range in sizes, from a family to a large sorority. Power Clusters are opportunities for a group of people to volunteer together to reach out to their communities by calling, texting, or posting across social media to get out the vote, encourage people to take the census, or advocate for new policies in their communities.

Power Clusters logged over 800 Power Hours texting their communities to make sure they voted!
**Community Engagement**

**Faith Leaders**

Power Coalition has engaged with the large faith community and expanded our outreach and campaigns. Beginning in August, Power Coalition engaged congregations across the state on census and GOTV work to build relationships with trusted community leaders and provide people with accurate and up to date information about civic engagement.

This work goes beyond turning out the vote. Power Coalition hosts “Red Bean Monday” every week at Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church in Baton Rouge, LA. The event was designed to serve those less fortunate and homeless. We started off by serving 250 meals, now we are doing over 700 meals every Monday!

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**One Click Campaigns**

One Click is a platform for community led email campaigns that allow people to respond to their elected officials at every level of government.

- Policy Demands for COVID-19
- Sanitation Workers
- Shreveport Early Voting Location
- Emergency Election Plan
- Veto SB 189
- Census Deadline Extension
- #SaveThe600 (Unemployment Benefits for COVID-19)
- Public Service Commission
- Special Session October 2020
- Stop the evictions!
- ITEP tax exemptions

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Power Coalition provided over 80 rides to the polls with the help of our volunteers!
Power Coalition does not just turn out voters and engage community members around election season. We are building a network of community members who have often been left out of decision making processes and giving them the tools, confidence, and ability to make decisions for their communities.

One of our central tenants is that those closest to the problem are closest to the solution. Our work this year has not only allowed people to cast their vote, be counted in the census, and engage in the political process, but is building a base of knowledge and access built on trust, communication, and opportunity.

As Power Coalition looks to the future, these are the areas that we see as opportunities to build stronger, more powerful communities.

**Redistricting**
In 2021, new lines will be drawn for political districts. These lines will shape political power for the next decade. We will be training hundreds of people throughout the state in equitable redistricting principles so that they can hold their elected officials accountable. Power Coalition will be hiring 3 Redistricting Fellows to ensure that Louisiana has districts that provide accurate and fair representation to our people.

**Workers Rights**
Power Coalition is going to continue to fight to raise the minimum wage and for unemployment insurance that can support people during an economic downturn. We will be advocating for these changes in the legislative session this year and working with our partners to support working Louisianains.

**Environmental Justice**
Power Coalition is building out capacity in 2021 to support environmental justice work in Louisiana. As one of the nation’s leading petrochemical exporters we must fight for clean air and water and make corporations pay their fair share. As a disaster prone state, the stakes are too high to not work to curb climate change.

**Expanding Early Voting Options**
In 2020, Power Coalition fought for unrestricted vote by mail in the legislature. The pandemic exacerbated the need for safe voting options, and in 2021 we will be bringing forward legislation to expand early voting while we work to create more pathways to vote for all.

**Municipal elections**
In Louisiana, every year is an election year. In 2021 we have 5 different election days with municipal and state elections. We will run statewide GOTV campaigns for each of these elections. With an evolving digital strategy and the possibility of safely getting canvassers back on the ground for fall elections, we will turn out large numbers of voters for all elections.

**She Leads** Power Coalition will be expanding our She Leads program in 2021, with an emphasis on data and building power for Black women in Louisiana.
Acknowledgements

We are deeply appreciative of our partners across the state who helped us build power in 2020. These partners worked, volunteered, and built community throughout Louisiana in 2020. Our success in 2020 is due in large part to the work of our partners across the state. **Our work is anchored by our Executive Committee which is comprised of some of the most powerful organizing groups in the South.**

Our GOTV success was only possible because of our deep partnership with **VOTE**, one of Power Coalition’s founding members. We have worked for 3 years on statewide campaigns with their team and are able to reach more people and build community across the state to create deep systemic change.

Our successful lawsuit to expand voting access was won in partnership with the NAACP Legal Defense Fund who worked with us throughout 2020 on election protection projects.

In addition to our Executive Committee, other non-profit organizations, faith institutions, churches, greek organizations, and national partners helped to provide election protection resources, provide rides to the polls, text, call, and canvass the communities to GOTV, host events, and more. We are thankful to all of these groups for their help.

Our appreciation also goes out to all of the individual donors and foundations who provided support for our work in 2020. None of what we accomplished would have been possible without your generosity and belief that Louisiana matters.
PowerCoalition.org • (504) 612-1513
Social Media: Facebook.com/PowerCoalition • Twitter & Instagram: @PowerCoEJ