POWER Building Activate

2021 ANNUAL REPORT
In 2020, our nation faced a crisis when the COVID-19 pandemic stopped life as we knew it. In 2021, though much of the conversation had changed, we continued to face the same challenges with deepening inequities, devastating storms, and with many people in worsening economic conditions than before the pandemic. Power Coalition’s goal is to ensure that Black and Brown people can fully engage in democracy and stand in their power. This is not possible when basic needs are not being met. Luckily, Power Coalition’s team and partners are able to quickly pivot, do the work that needs to be done, and make sure that our people have what they need and are okay.

As a Black woman led organization, we know that civic engagement and community building is not either/or but both/and. At Power Coalition we work daily to change systems while feeding families, ensuring that people are vaccinated, and people have access to the ballot box.

When it matters most, we come together and take care of each other. We got into vaccine outreach not because we have a history of working on health campaigns but because of our contacts and the trust we have built in the community, we knew we could reach communities that have typically been left out of federal recovery efforts.

We know that these last two years have been hard and I hope that communities of color remain hopeful. We must continue to fight for the change that is necessary for more economic opportunity, elected leaders that are accountable, and leaders who will use the infusion of federal funds to prioritize people and real solutions to the pain being felt throughout our state.

I want community to remember that the fight is always hardest right before a breakthrough. Those that seek to maintain the status quo want to wear us down, make us feel like our voices do not matter. Please know that your voices are having an unbelievable impact because things are getting better...your voice has manifested system change on criminal justice, early childhood education, maternal health and voting rights. Please keep fighting, standing for what is right, and having your voice heard!

We are looking into 2022 with renewed optimism. We are hoping for an end to this pandemic in the coming months, have exciting advocacy opportunities for the legislative session, and know that our people will turn out to vote in the fall midterm elections.

In Solidarity and With Deep Gratitude,

Ashley Shelton
Founder, President, & CEO
Power Coalition for Equity & Justice
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Letter from the CEO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2021 Timeline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Building Power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Powerful Partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Get Out the Vote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Get Out the Vax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Legislative Session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Disaster Relief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Redistricting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Environmental Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Gun Violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>She Leads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Community Reach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Looking Forward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Get Involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Press Hits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2021 was a challenging year for Louisiana, Power Coalition, and our partners.

We have faced seemingly insurmountable challenges of a year that started out with an attack on our nation’s capital, continuing to battle COVID-19, devastating storms, and continued economic downturns that have impacted all of our lives. Despite all of this, we have seen our community members come together to care for each other and find moments of joy as we work to build a more equitable, sustainable, and just Louisiana.

Through all of this, YOU have continued to show up and remind us what it is what we love about our communities, about Louisiana, and why we continue to fight for people.

It is with deep gratitude that we release this end of the year report. The passion and dedication of what we have been building is evident in this work. The manifestation of hard work and commitment to creating new Power in the state speaks for itself.
Building POWER

We made over 3.6 million contacts across Louisiana in 2021.

We advocated in all three state legislative sessions this year.

We registered people to vote. We turned out voters in 5 elections this year.

We jumped into action after Hurricane Ida—granting more than $300,000 to community organizations, in addition to providing direct cash assistance.

Over 500 people trained in equitable redistricting practices.

Over 50 COVID-19 Vaccination Events with Bring Back Louisiana.

2021 Highlights

- Power Coalition ran statewide GOTV campaigns for all five Louisiana elections in 2021
- Jumped into action after Hurricane Ida
  - More than $300,000 in grants to over 20 community organizations
  - This included $150,000 in direct cash assistance within a week of the storm
  - Worked with partners in the government’s office to move the election so that community could actively participate
- Louisiana expanded democracy while much of the country was going in the other direction
  - Act 22 extends the amount of time you can spend in the voting booth
  - Act 365 extends early voting for presidential elections
  - VOTE’s leadership passed Act 127 that will make registering to vote easier for people with prior convictions.
- Over 50 COVID-19 vaccination events with Bring Back Louisiana!
- Louisiana was the first state to reach vaccinating a higher rate of Black people against COVID-19
- 14 new She Leads Civic Engagement Fellows
- Over 500 people trained in equitable redistricting principles
- Amendment 1 voted down by Louisiana voters!
Power Coalition is building power across Louisiana with our partners. We are proud to stand beside our partners as we build a more equitable state.

### 2021 Community Wins

- **Power Coalition and Partners** advocated for community members in the Louisiana Legislative Session in 2021.
- **VOTE** advocated for Act 121 to end the lifetime jury service ban on people with felony convictions.
- **VOTE** advocated for Act 271 to require that a person is informed about how a felony conviction will impact their lives before they plead guilty to a crime and Act 122 will restore parole eligibility to people after completing 20 years of a sentence and reaching 45 years old.
- **Act 406** prohibits employers from discriminating against people with a criminal history and will help our community access quality jobs!
- **Companies** will be required to provide reasonable accommodations for pregnant workers thanks to Act 393, and health insurance can cover doula and midwife services due to the passage of Act 182.
- **Act 123** eliminates the court costs, fines, and fees on children in the juvenile system.
- **New Orleans** elected its first Black female sheriff due to the dedication of community partners holding candidate forums, talking to communities, and making the issue of justice clear to voters.
- **Bring Back Louisiana** hosted hundreds of COVID-19 vaccine events across Louisiana, vaccinating thousands of community members and protecting our state from COVID-19.
- **Rise St. James** is pushing back against the petrochemical industry and the development of the Formosa Plant has been put on pause.
- **Women With A Vision** in partnership with the Columbia University, Mailmen School hosted a convening to draw the connections between environmental justice and reproductive justice.
POWER is built by working together across issue and policy areas, and constructing a shared frame for advocacy with one voice.
Get Out The Vote 2021

There are no off years for elections and there is nowhere this is more true than in Louisiana. In 2021, between a presidential election and a midterm election, Louisiana had 5 rounds of local and state elections.

At Power Coalition, we know that all politics are local and that there are real implications for our communities when we show up and vote in every election.

In 2021, there were a number of historic wins at the ballot box. Louisiana voters rejected Amendment 1, keeping taxes locally controlled. New Orleans elected its first Black woman sheriff, a campaign championed by our partners VOTE and OPPRC, and voters continued showing up for local elections.

Following the 2020 presidential election, many voters in Louisiana felt like we had been focusing on elections, that the election season was unending, and that it was hard to keep showing up at the ballot box. Power Coalition and our partners continued to make voter contacts, register voters, and remind people that a democracy works best when we all stay active and engaged.

Field Strategy

Over 925,000 Texts Sent

Over 138,000 Call Attempts

56,000 Doors Knocked

10 Candidate Forums Hosted

Over 2 Million Digital Ad Impressions
Our GOTV work is data driven and uses the state Voter File to identify new voters and people who have not voted in the last election so that we can reach out and encourage them to engage with the process. By using texts, phone calls, door-to-door outreach, and events we are able to reach more voters of color to make sure that they know how to cast their vote.

-Dynisha Hugle
Data & Targeting Director
Get Out the Vax

In the last weeks of 2020, The United States saw a glimmer of hope to end the COVID-19 pandemic when vaccines were granted emergency FDA approval and started immunizing healthcare workers. As Louisiana and the nation battled a deadly surge over the holidays, it was exciting to see an opportunity to protect ourselves, our loved ones, and our communities.

In March 2021, Power Coalition joined the Bring Back Louisiana campaign, with support from Made to Save, to get communities vaccinated. In particular, we were reaching Black and Brown populations that were not getting vaccinated at the same rate for a variety of reasons.

Our data team identified community members in low vaccination areas and we reached out via text, phone calls, and mobilized our canvassing team to go into neighborhoods and speak with people about any questions they may have had about COVID-19 vaccinations.

Canvassers connected people with vaccine locations, shared their own experiences getting vaccinated, and provided accurate information about the vaccine and the importance of getting vaccinated to curb the spread of the virus and end the pandemic.
When you have people from your own community that you know, it definitely makes a difference when it comes to making a decision about getting vaccinated. A lot of the messaging about the vaccine was not geared towards our communities and we know that we can reach people who typically are left behind by other systems.

"-Candice Battiste
Community Organizer

Louisiana became the first state to have a higher rate of vaccination in Black populations than White populations.
Legislative SESSIONS

What happens in the state legislature greatly impacts our day to day lives. Power Coalition and our partners advocated for a number of bills that became laws while pushing back against policies that would not create a more equitable state. We were excited to continue to bring people to the capital to speak with legislators, testify, and stand in solidarity with other community members to demand legislation for a fair and equitable Louisiana.

Power Coalition is lucky to stand in deep partnership with a variety of subject matter experts while maintaining our commitment to expanding access to democratic institutions.

The Power Coalition team successfully advocated for multiple democracy expanding laws, a large challenge following the 2020 election season. Act 365 extends the early voting period for presidential elections and Act 22 doubles the amount of time a person can spend in the voting machine.

Our partners were incredibly active in this legislative session as well, advocating for and passing legislation to decriminalize small amounts of marijuana, extend healthcare coverage for doulas and midwives, create a Fair Chance in Hiring Act, end fines and fees in the juvenile justice system, restore jury eligibility for formerly incarcerated people, and more.

1470 Messages were sent by community to legislators to support or oppose proposed policies.

3 Democratic Expansion Laws Were Passed

1 Special Veto Session held where NO vetoes were overturned!

Power Coalition for Equity and Justice engages in advocacy and policy work in accordance with all 501c3 regulations. Our policy work is centered around education and community engagement to ensure equity in the process. Any lobbying work is done through our c4 partner organization, Power Coalition for Electoral Justice and is funded separately.
We are proud to work with our coalition partners every legislative session to make lasting change in Louisiana. For too much of our history, the voices of people of color were left out of the decision making process, and now we are advocating for legislation that centers equity and justice.

-Ashley Shelton
Founder, President, & CEO

Legislative Wins

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- Act 365 extends early voting for presidential elections
- VOTE’s leadership passed Act 127 that will make registering to vote easier for people with prior convictions.
- Act 121 ended the lifetime jury service ban on people with felony convictions.
- Act 271 requires that a person is informed about how a felony conviction will impact their lives before they plead guilty to a crime
- VOTE worked to move Act 122 which will restore parole eligibility to people after completing 20 years of a sentence and reaching 45 years old.
- Act 406 prohibits employers from discriminating against people with a criminal history and will help our community access quality jobs!
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**Disaster Relief**

Louisiana is a disaster prone state. As a gulf state we face hurricanes, with increasing regularity and strength, flooding, and other natural disasters in addition to man made disasters such as infrastructure failure.

Disasters intersect with every part of our lives, interrupting jobs and school, damaging or destroying homes, disrupting supply chains, and unfortunately, even causing injury or deaths in our communities.

**Often labeled a resilient state, Louisiana citizens consistently face these challenges with little support, instead relying on each other to rebuild what has been lost.** Though it is with admiration that we see our community be there for each other time and time again, we also wish that our federal and state governments could move resources faster to get into communities and make an impact.

Power Coalition continues to show up ahead of and immediately following disasters to fill that gap and ensure that people have resources that they need to survive and find safety after a disaster.

This year, Hurricane Ida devastated the River Parishes and left parts of New Orleans without power for over a week. **Power Coalition and partners quickly mobilized resources and used community connections to help people and make communities whole again.**

**Community Outreach**

In the first week after Hurricane Ida, **Power Coalition gave over $200,000 in direct aid to communities across Southeast Louisiana.**

During the recovery process, **Power Coalition gave more than $300,000 and is continuing to support communities**

**Over 140 Volunteers Distributed 700 Meals and Mucked, gutted and tarped 55 homes**

**Over 50 Cleaning Kits Distributed**
In the first week after Hurricane Ida, Power Coalition gave over $200,000 in direct aid to communities across Southeast Louisiana. During the recovery process, Power Coalition gave more than $300,000 and is continuing to support communities.

20 Organizations received disaster grants from Power Coalition to carry out disaster response work.

20 Community Meetings with FEMA and community to help people apply for federal assistance.

15,000 Texts Sent To Connect People With Resources

"Time and time again we have seen our communities failed during and following disasters. We know that in order to really uplift our communities we must work on building communities year round and being a trusted voice and resource center for our people. As a Black women led organization we know that our communities are powerful and that our voices matter. We are dedicated to ensuring that no one is left behind—particularly in their time of need.

-Morgan Shannon
Director of Strategic Partnerships"
**Redistricting**

Redistricting has been one of the areas we have identified as a point of power for years. Redistricting happens only once a decade and is when new political districts are drawn to reflect the updated population collected by the census.

In 2020, Power Coalition ran our statewide Count Me In Campaign to get every person and community counted so that Louisiana could get every federal dollar we deserve and that political districts would be closer to representing the communities.

**Despite Black people making up over 33% of the population, only one of the six Congressional districts are majority-minority, and only one of eight in Louisiana’s federal delegation is a person of color.**

Districts are drawn by our state legislators who traveled through Louisiana speaking with communities about how they want their districts to be drawn.

Over 1000 people trained in equitable redistricting principles

To prepare communities for these conversations, Power Coalition trained community members in the redistricting process. In partnership with NAACP LDF, the ACLU, and other partners across the state, hundreds of people learned about how political districts “crack” and “pack” voters, how redistricting can limit voter power, and how to testify for their communities.

Power Coalition has been providing material, financial, and planning support for organizations who are organizing for redistricting in their own communities.
Redistricting is critical to us having full political power. This is why we have been strategizing, organizing, and working with community members to make sure we reach every part of this process.

-Carlos Pollard, Jr
Redistricting Fellow

Redistricting Outreach

5 CROWD Redistricting Academies Hosted
2 hosted in 2020 and 3 hosted in 2021

12 Organizations Received Redistricting Mini Grants

$44,000 Regranted to Community Organizations for Redistricting

350 people brought to Baton Rouge for Redistricting Days of Action
Environmental Justice

Power Coalition, in partnership with the Louisiana Bucket Brigade, has been building power across Louisiana to increase the capacity and work of environmental justice organizers. The impacts of Climate Change are visible in our communities and in a state that has historically relied on the oil and gas industry, we have a long path ahead to change our economy, build climate resilient infrastructure, and protect our communities from daily environmental harms, and the larger disasters.

There is an intrinsic link between the environment, our health and safety, and regional opportunities.

Louisiana is a resource rich state but unfortunately this has been taken advantage of by corporations that have polluted our water ways, our air, and paid limited taxes.

Communities are fighting back and WINNING. We are proud to stand in deep partnership with organizations around the state, most of which are led by Black women, to fight against corporate interests and protect communities.

Organizations in the Cohort

RISE St. James
Concerned Citizens of St. John
Louisiana League of Conscious Voters
Greater New Orleans Interfaith Climate Coalition
Coalition Against Death Alley
Inclusive Louisiana
Residents for Air Neutralization
Power Coalition for Equity and Justice
Louisiana Bucket Brigade
Descendents Project
Vessel Project

3 Media Trainings With Environmental Justice Organizers to Expand Their Reach
Louisiana faces the impacts of huge polluters’ AND the climate impacts of the pollution--sea-level rise, flooding, extended and deadlier hurricane season, heat waves, and more. This is why the environmental justice organizing here runs so deep. This isn’t about gardening or picking up trash—it’s about families losing their roof and their uncle to cancer in the same year. It’s about fighting companies who put toxic facilities on graves of enslaved ancestors to pollute their descendants. It’s no surprise that grassroots Environmental Justice (EJ) groups were some of the first to respond to the devastation of Hurricane Ida. It’s an honor to work with our EJ cohort to support their missions, while reinforcing our own: that the people closest to the problem are closest to the solution.

"--Taylor Hodge
Program Coordinator
Louisiana has one of the highest rates of gun violence in the country including the 2nd highest rate of gun homicides in the nation.\(^1\) Gun violence has permeated many communities and has become the leading cause of death among children and teens in Louisiana, and Black children and teens are 4 times more likely to die from guns than white children.\(^2\) Any death from guns is one too many. Power Coalition, in deep partnership with Faith in Action and a variety of other partners, is working to slow this epidemic, particularly in Baton Rouge.

**Power Coalition and partners are proposing using a public health approach to violence prevention—addressing trauma, mental health, and the effects of poverty—and implementing some of the best strategies recommended by criminologists throughout the country to ensure public safety for all of Louisiana.**

We hosted more than 20 listening sessions in 2021, connecting with hundreds of people to hear directly from community members about their experiences with gun violence and their solutions to reduce violence in their communities.

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We are committed to reducing violence in our communities by engaging in meaningful public safety initiatives such as ensuring people have access to resources, meaningful jobs, educational opportunities, and more.

**Kaitlyn Joshua**
Community Organizer
She Leads

Investing in women and women-led activism is one of the most powerful levers we have to change the trajectory of communities. In 2021, Power Coalition welcomed our second cohort of She Leads Fellows and have been supporting their civic engagement work through leadership and empowerment training, financial support, and cultivating a network of dedicated women of color in Louisiana.

The She Leads Fellowship is building a statewide network of women activists who are disrupting the current power structures and realizing change in their communities. In 2021, Fellows were working to combat housing insecurity, grow voting access organizations, advocate for reproductive justice, and write children’s books about current topics.

She Leads’ creates space for women of color and provides the resources necessary to succeed. Implementing a Race and Gender analysis to social justice work is pivotal in fighting for justice moving forward-- this requires not only diversity but equity and ensuring folks who experience different lives can benefit and participate fully.

“—Janea Jamison
Director of Programs

By the Numbers

14 Cohort Members

Over $50,000 in Leadership and Program Development Grants for Fellows

Fellows in 7 Different Parishes
Community REACH

Power Coalition was founded to expand democratic access and boost civic engagement in Black and Brown populations in Louisiana but in the face of repeated and constant disasters we know that we can not make systemic change if our people and communities are not whole. For this reason, we thread community programming, resource distribution, and community building into all of our work and are committed to providing a variety of services in times of need.

Since the inception of this state and nation, policies and programs were not made to support the wellbeing of people of color, and even less the intersectionality of our communities.

While we dedicate our work to tearing down barriers and systems of oppression, we also show up for the day to day lives of our neighbors and communities.

This work is not achieved in a single day or week, but Power Coalition remains dedicated to the transformative power of community building, systemic change, and radical community care.

- Hundreds of pounds of baby supplies donated after Hurricane Ida
- Pallets of ice distributed after Hurricane Ida
- Direct cash assistance provided for participants in Power Coalition programs
- Thousands of dollars spent on investments in community events
- Hundreds of bikes rented to get people to vote in a fun and healthy way
Looking Forward

The work is far from over. 2022 is already shaping up to be one for the books with a Special Redistricting Session to draw new political districts, a large legislative session when legislators can propose an unlimited number of bills, and a contentious midterm election, all while we continue to live in a pandemic world.

Power Coalition and partners are looking towards these challenges with optimism because we know our communities are ready for change.

We have educated thousands of people about the importance of redistricting, in 2021 more people than ever contacted their legislators through our tools, and Black and Brown voters continue to show up at the ballot box and elect candidates to represent them.

Check Us Out in 2022

**FEBRUARY 1-20, 2022**
Redistricting Special Session

**MARCH 14-JUNE 6, 2022**
Regular Legislative Session

**MARCH 26, 2022**
Open Municipal Primary Election

**APRIL 30, 2022**
Municipal General Election

**NOVEMBER 8, 2022**
Open Congressional Primary Election

**DECEMBER 10, 2022**
Open Congressional Primary Election

- **Follow Power Coalition’s Environmental Justice Cohort members** as they fight back for our safety!
- **Power Coalition is a member of Baton Rouge’s Equal Pay Commission!**
- **She Leads Fellows are finishing their fellowship** and working in communities across the state!
- **Power Coalition will be working on a slate of democracy expanding bills this legislative session.**
- **We will be hosting voter registration drives** to ensure our communities VOTE in the midterm election this year!
- **We will continue to get our community vaccinated** with giveaways, events, and more!
- **Join our Powerful volunteer team** to remind your people to vote, contact their legislators, distribute resources and more!
Get Involved!

In 2022 it is more important than ever that community members get involved in this work at all levels! Wondering where to start? Here are some ideas:

- **Check your voter registration status and vote in EVERY election**
  - [QR Code]

- **Follow Power Coalition and our partners on social media** to watch for action alerts during the legislative session.
  - [QR Code]
  - Facebook: PowerCoalition
  - Twitter: @PowerCoEJ
  - Instagram: @PowerCoEJ

- **Contact your legislators** and ask them to support bills that increase equity.
  - [QR Code]

- **Start a Power Cluster in your area to organize volunteers.**
  - [QR Code]

- **Sign up to text community members** to remind them to vote.
  - [QR Code]

- **Host a voter registration drive using our resources.**
  - [QR Code]

- **Share our posts on social media** to ensure that your contacts have accurate information.
  - [QR Code]
  - Facebook: PowerCoalition
  - Twitter: @PowerCoEJ
  - Instagram: @PowerCoEJ

- **Sign up for our newsletter** to stay up to date on all things Power Coalition!}
  - [QR Code]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grassroots Groups in the South’s least vaccinated states take on hesitancy.</th>
<th>Civil rights groups push for redistricting to increase chance of second Black Louisiana lawmaker.</th>
<th>New Orleans could see Entergy bill hike to cover company’s Ida recovery costs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Word in Black: Why Redistricting Is Important</td>
<td>Partner Spotlight: Power Coalition for Equity and Justice Delivers the goods</td>
<td>Louisiana judge rejects request to resume $300-a-week federal benefits for jobless residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disaster Recovery: A System That Continues to Fail Its People</td>
<td>Resiliency Politics &amp; Mutual Aid in the Wake of Hurricane Ida</td>
<td>How door-to-door canvassing became the ‘heartbeat’ of Louisiana’s COVID-19 vaccination campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On Hurricane Ida, COVID-19, and trauma: Resilience cannot be a permanent state</td>
<td>Stop Asking Us to Be Resilient: On Hurricane, Ida, COVID-19, and Trauma in Louisiana</td>
<td>Voting to Determine Your Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana has a voting access problem; expanding the number of voting days could help</td>
<td>‘It’s always urgent when it’s about vote, voice and power.’</td>
<td>Additional early voting days nearly secured in Louisiana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staging Nov. 13 election has been tough.</td>
<td>12 organizations directly helping Black, brown victims of Hurricane Ida</td>
<td>La.’s GOP lawmakers now support COVID-19 accommodations for upcoming elections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are 4 constitutional amendments on Louisiana ballots Saturday. Here’s what they mean.</td>
<td>Black Southern Women’s Collective Urges Candidates to Focus on needs of Marginalized People and Not Police Budgets</td>
<td>Louisiana Power Coalition seeks to reach immigrants who avoided 2020 Census</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For Equity & Justice

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