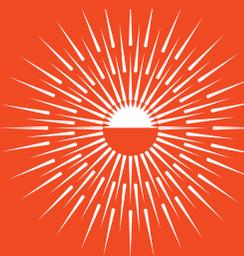


The Rise of A New Florida

2021 IMPACT



**FLORIDA
RISING
TOGETHER**

OUR MISSION

FLORIDA RISING TOGETHER is a 501c3 organization dedicated to advancing economic and racial justice across the state by building power in historically marginalized communities. Our organization develops leaders that will help shift power so communities get to determine their own destinies.

Dear friends and supporters,

One year ago, Florida's grassroots powerhouses New Florida Majority Education Fund and Organize Florida Education Fund united as one to advance our ability to build power that centers Black and Brown communities. Today Black and Brown communities continue to face grave disparities exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. In recent years we have witnessed protests in defense of Black lives met with state violence; white supremacist insurrectionists' attempt to overtake our democracy; and voting rights, reproductive justice, and climate action constantly under attack. Together with other grassroots organizations across the country, we carried out robust voter registration efforts, get out the vote programs and made them focus here, playing a critical role in changing the political conditions of the nation.

The ongoing pandemic and the economic fallout continues to plague our communities. The inaction from Florida's legislature has caused great harm to our families. At a time when children should be safe in their homes, they are being faced with the threat of eviction due to skyrocketing rent. We are seeing the highest eviction rates and some of the most unaffordable housing in the nation. It is critical that we hold landlords and rental corporations accountable as well as the elected officials who instead have focused on restricting our access to reproductive health care, attacking LGBTQ+ kids, and banning our history in schools.

Florida Rising Together remains grounded in community while diligently amplifying the needs of working people across the state. With new beginnings comes fertile soil, and we are devoted to growing together to make the changes our communities deserve. Thank you for believing in our mission and joining us on a journey to a more equitable and just Florida. We envision a future filled with hope, health and harmony for all Floridians. We will succeed because together, we rise!

With new beginnings comes fertile soil, but we are devoted more than ever to grow together and make the progressive changes our communities deserve.



Andrea Cristina Mercado
Executive Director



OUR WORK

We rise to lead as the new majority.

TWO MOVEMENT POWERHOUSES CAME TOGETHER

New Florida Majority Education Fund and *Organize Florida Education Fund* - two leaders for justice - merged last January becoming the largest grassroots powerhouse in the state. As we celebrate a year of incredible progress as the new *Florida Rising Together*, we stand strong in our nearly doubled capacity and reach. This merger was about the progressive expansion needed to transform the state by building political and economic empowerment for Black and Brown communities.

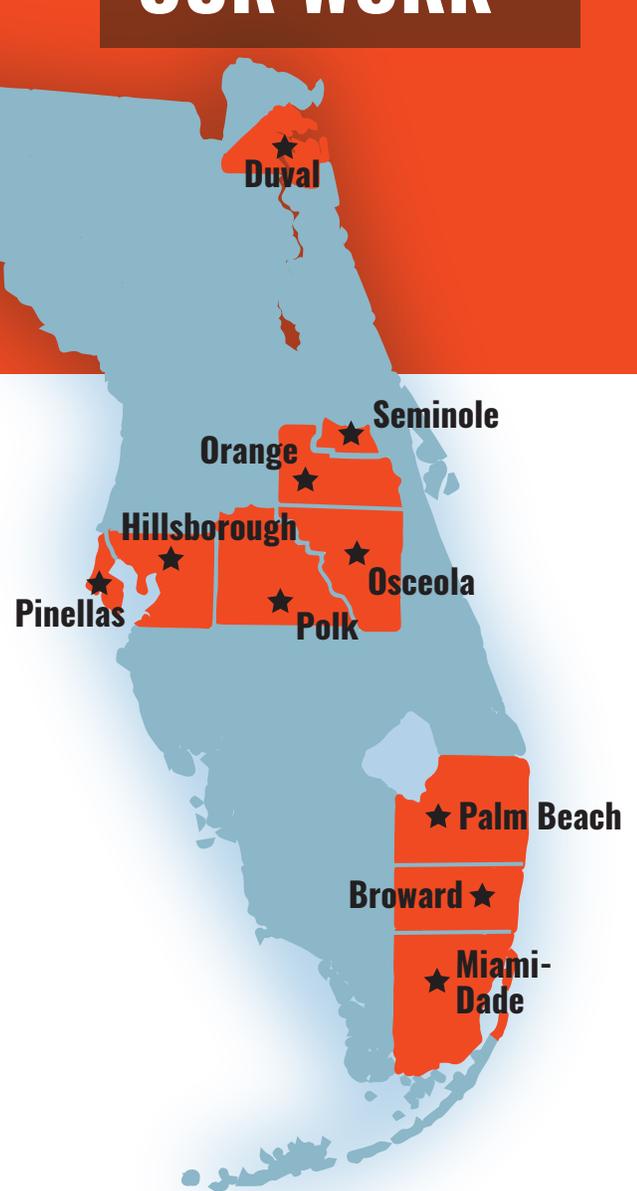


Florida Rising Together is a statewide organization in Florida that seeks to build broader multiracial movements with individuals from historically marginalized communities to win elections and campaigns at the local, state, and federal levels that will improve the lives of people in the communities we serve. Our organization seeks to develop leaders to shift power to our communities to decide our own destinies.

We organize multi-racial movements to win elections, change laws, and create a state where everyone can be safe, happy, healthy and whole.

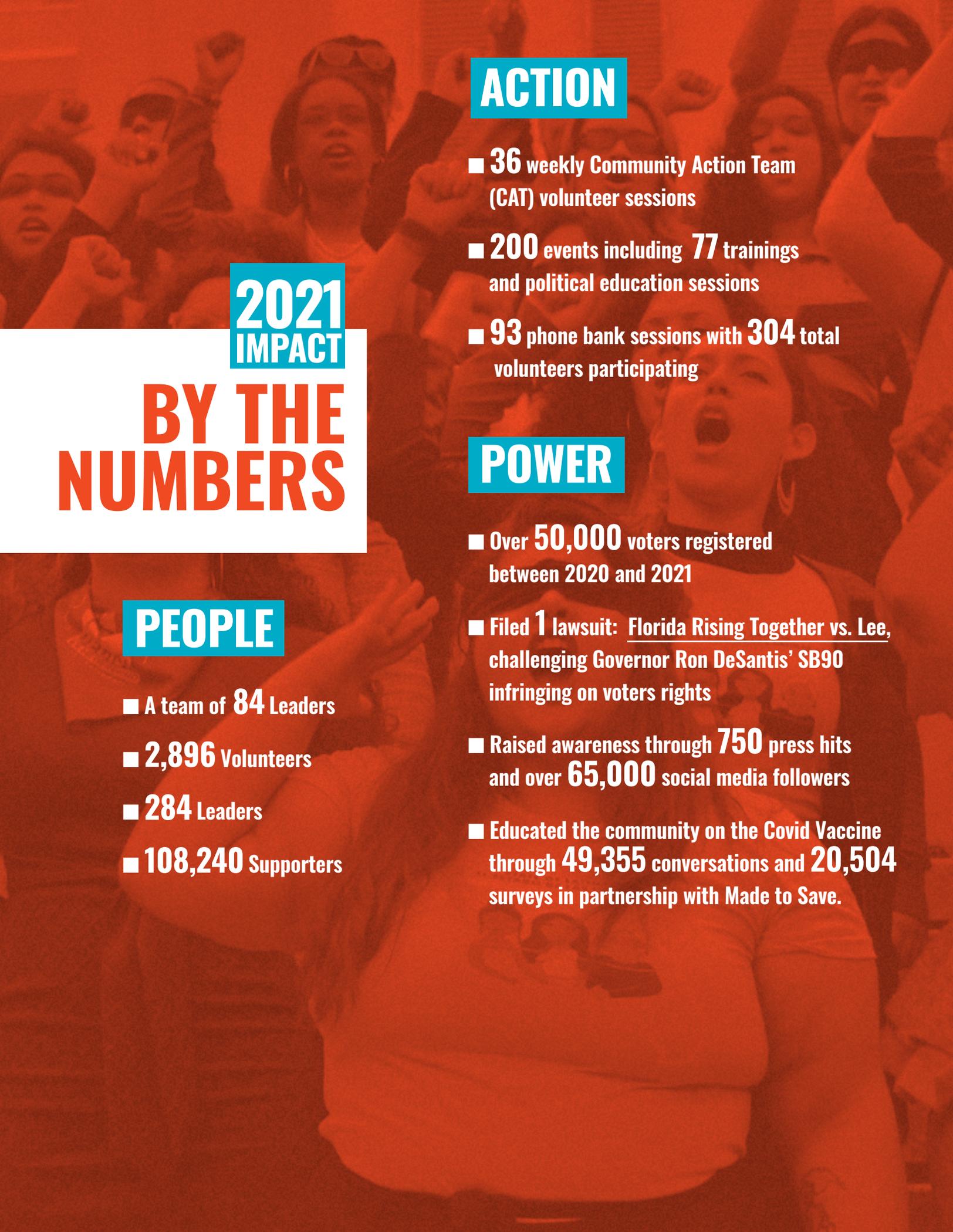
WE BUILD JUSTICE FOR ALL AROUND THESE KEY ISSUES:

- Climate Justice
- Community-Led Safety and Criminal Justice Reform
- Housing Rights
- Expanding Democracy
- Gender and Reproductive Justice



BUILDING POLITICAL POWER IN PREDOMINANT COMMUNITIES OF COLOR

Florida Rising Together's presence now spans four regions, with 11 year round offices, organizing in 12 counties across the state. In this important election year, our work is critical to build political empowerment ensuring bold and transformative policies in the sunshine state led by our members, allies, and partners like you.



**2021
IMPACT**

BY THE NUMBERS

PEOPLE

- A team of **84** Leaders
- **2,896** Volunteers
- **284** Leaders
- **108,240** Supporters

ACTION

- **36** weekly Community Action Team (CAT) volunteer sessions
- **200** events including **77** trainings and political education sessions
- **93** phone bank sessions with **304** total volunteers participating

POWER

- Over **50,000** voters registered between 2020 and 2021
- Filed **1** lawsuit: Florida Rising Together vs. Lee, challenging Governor Ron DeSantis' SB90 infringing on voters rights
- Raised awareness through **750** press hits and over **65,000** social media followers
- Educated the community on the Covid Vaccine through **49,355** conversations and **20,504** surveys in partnership with Made to Save.



DEVELOPING COMMUNITY ORGANIZERS

Florida Rising Together developed community leaders who mobilized folks both virtually and in person for a statewide day of action in nine counties across the state via press conferences, sign waving, canvassing, and caravans to raise awareness about these threats and attacks against communities.

Our Policy Team & Membership Team hosted three Legislative Priorities Training opportunities with nearly 200 registrants and 126 active participants.

Our past legislative session was filled with repressive bills that reversed decades of progress. Legislative leadership leveraged convenient excuses to ban the public from the Capitol, amplified voter suppression instead of uplifting the needs and demands of the people, criminalized peaceful protest, discriminated against transgender kids, erased local laws protecting the environment, and raised our taxes to fund kickbacks for corporations. We will continue to push a people-powered agenda and organize to advance the progressive movement forward in Florida.

**2021
IMPACT**

ADVOCACY

Florida's 60-day legislative session, from January through March, is a critical time for the people to voice their views and needs on policy that impacts their lives. Our members lobbied to protect democracy, ensure economic and racial justice, and hold elected officials accountable to their platforms and promises from recent election campaigns.

Together, the Florida for All Coalition organized members for virtual lobby days with emphasis on in-district actions, digital campaigns, and mobilizing at the Capitol.

WHAT WE FIGHT AGAINST:

- Attacks on marginalized communities
- Corporate tax cuts and deregulation
- Anti-worker and corporate preemption laws attacking fundamental rights
- Abortion bans
- Voter suppression and anti-democratic policies
- Greenwashing that overlooks frontline communities impacted by climate change
- Corporate landlord corruption and eviction of vulnerable residents

Florida Rising members moved on these lobbying priorities centered on community:

Participate in our Democracy and End Voter Suppression:

Committed to ensuring every eligible voter can vote and that no one is illegally denied their right.

Stop the Attack on Abortion:

Fighting policies and practices that seek to control and restrict our bodies and the resources that serve us.

Housing is a Human Right:

Demanding that everyone have the right to live with dignity in healthy, safe, quality, affordable housing.

Fight the Climate Crisis in Florida:

We want a regenerative future and a just transition that puts frontline communities at the center of energy policy, disaster response, food policy, and all climate initiatives.

Fight for Racial Justice:

Working to end mass incarceration, defend immigrants, and discriminatory laws.

EXPANDING DEMOCRACY

2021
IMPACT

In line with our mission to expand democracy and uplift justice, our electoral program has moved forward in prioritizing education for municipal and local elections that affect the day-to-day lives of our constituents.

VOTING RIGHTS

During the past legislative session, a series of bills were passed that undermine our democracy and infringe upon our fundamental voting rights. These bills disproportionately impact Black and Brown communities and Governor DeSantis showed complete disregard for their wellbeing by signing them:

HB1

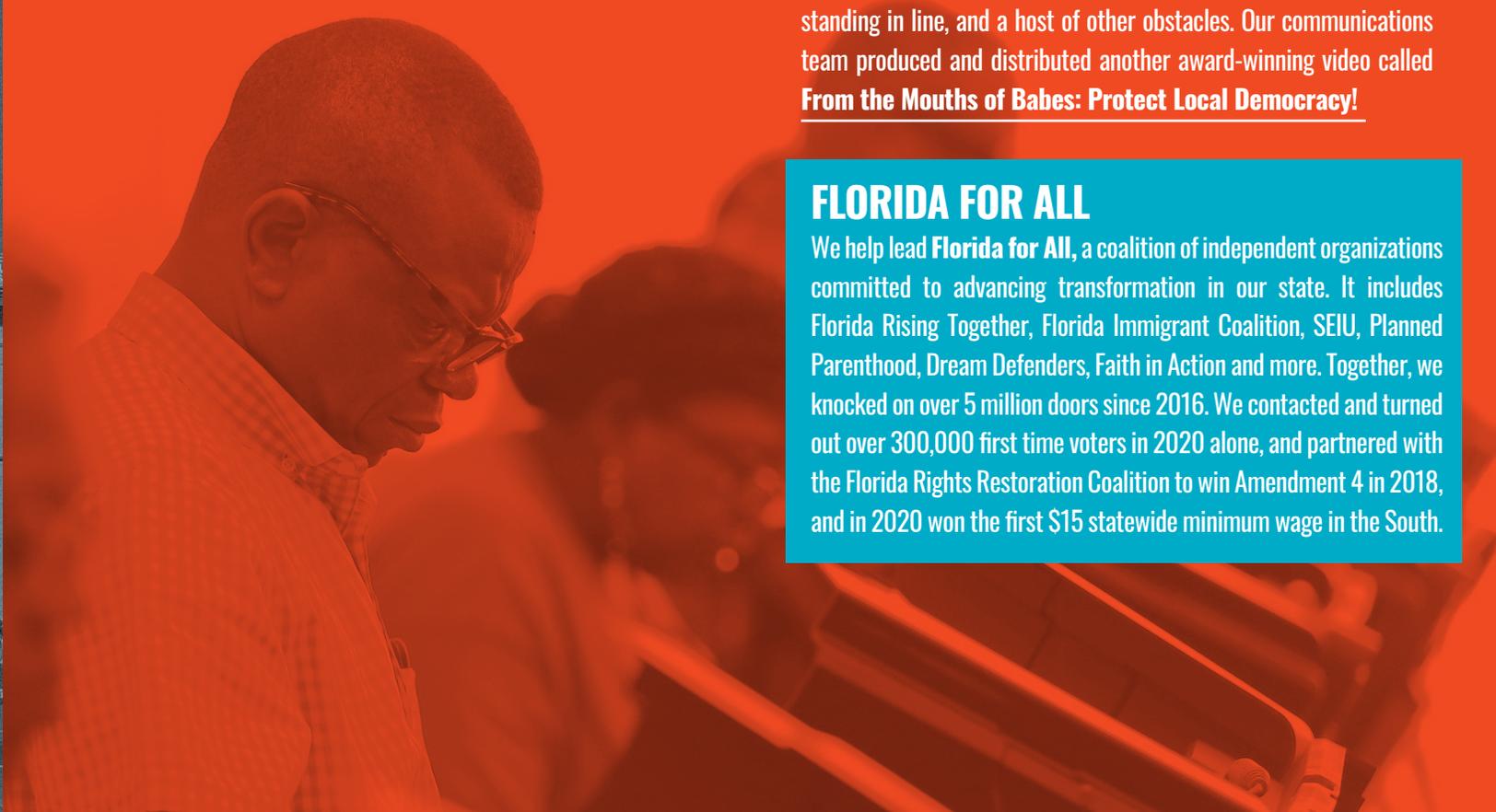
Despite powerful debate from the Democratic Caucus, Governor DeSantis passed his Censorship and Repression bill that attacks peaceful assembly. This anti-protest legislation specifically targets racial justice movements and the Movement for Black Lives, and in practice, will undermine everyone's constitutional right to hold our government accountable. Florida Rising worked with its partners to create briefings and resources on what the passing of this bill means and how to safely continue exercising constitutional rights while litigation is ongoing. An award winning video was produced called [Say NO to Florida's Anti-Protest Bill.](#)

SB90

Florida Rising Together is part of a class action lawsuit in partnership with LatinoJustice, Advancement Project, Demos, and others to stop the state's most controversial voter suppression attempt since Jim Crow (Florida Rising v Laurel Lee). With this bill, Governor DeSantis is dangerously undermining democracy with tighter restrictions on vote-by-mail, access to drop boxes, the ability to hand out water to voters standing in line, and a host of other obstacles. Our communications team produced and distributed another award-winning video called [From the Mouths of Babes: Protect Local Democracy!](#)

FLORIDA FOR ALL

We help lead **Florida for All**, a coalition of independent organizations committed to advancing transformation in our state. It includes Florida Rising Together, Florida Immigrant Coalition, SEIU, Planned Parenthood, Dream Defenders, Faith in Action and more. Together, we knocked on over 5 million doors since 2016. We contacted and turned out over 300,000 first time voters in 2020 alone, and partnered with the Florida Rights Restoration Coalition to win Amendment 4 in 2018, and in 2020 won the first \$15 statewide minimum wage in the South.



ADVANCING A BLACK AGENDA

2021
IMPACT



Black liberation can only be achieved by building and sustaining Black political power. We recognize we must dismantle systems of racism and oppression that prevent Black people from being in positions of leadership in government, higher education, and non-profit institutions that service our communities.

We leverage the momentum that surfaces during election cycles to build long-term, sustainable Black political power and infrastructure. Our Black-led strategy aligns key progressive sectors including civil rights, labor, feminist, Black men, environmentalist, and millennials to counter right-wing efforts to dilute the power of our collective vote.



2021
IMPACT

MOBILIZING LATINX COMMUNITIES

SHIFTING THE NARRATIVE

The dangerous effects of disinformation is a year-round strategic imperative and is critical to protecting the integrity of our democracy. To combat rampant disinformation, especially in Spanish media, we published a groundbreaking study related to the January 6th insurrection. We partnered with *Miami Freedom Project*, *Prospero Latino* and *Latina Communica* on a media monitoring case study to collect concrete evidence of the disinformation spread in Spanish-language radio stations in Miami [NoMasDisinfo.com](https://www.nomasdisinfo.com).

After our report was released, Univision's Radio Mambi host Lourdes D'Kendall was removed from the programming schedule. We also partnered with *Luz Collective*, a Latina-led organization, to leverage WhatsApp groups in the Latinx community to combat disinformation compelling digital content and culturally resonate messaging. Our organizing centers culturally competent events, leadership development and joyful resistance. We convene Latinos organizers, unions and organizations to build towards a *Florida Para Todos*.

With support from our funders, we are growing *Latinas en Marcha*, and training a cohort of Latinas rooted in their communities to be *Promotoras de la Verdad* to spot and stop disinformation in its tracks and promote our messaging in their spheres of influence throughout our communities.

CLIMATE JUSTICE

2021
IMPACT

Florida Rising Together leaders are building the foundation for climate justice programs that will make change for years to come. We aim to shift the narrative around climate change utilizing a racial equity lens uplifting the effects on frontline communities while mobilizing and engaging people to take action.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS ARE DIRECTLY ENGAGED AND LEAD ON:

- Disaster preparedness, response, and planning
- Climate justice as an equitable framework
- A just transition to clean and renewable energy

ORGANIZING

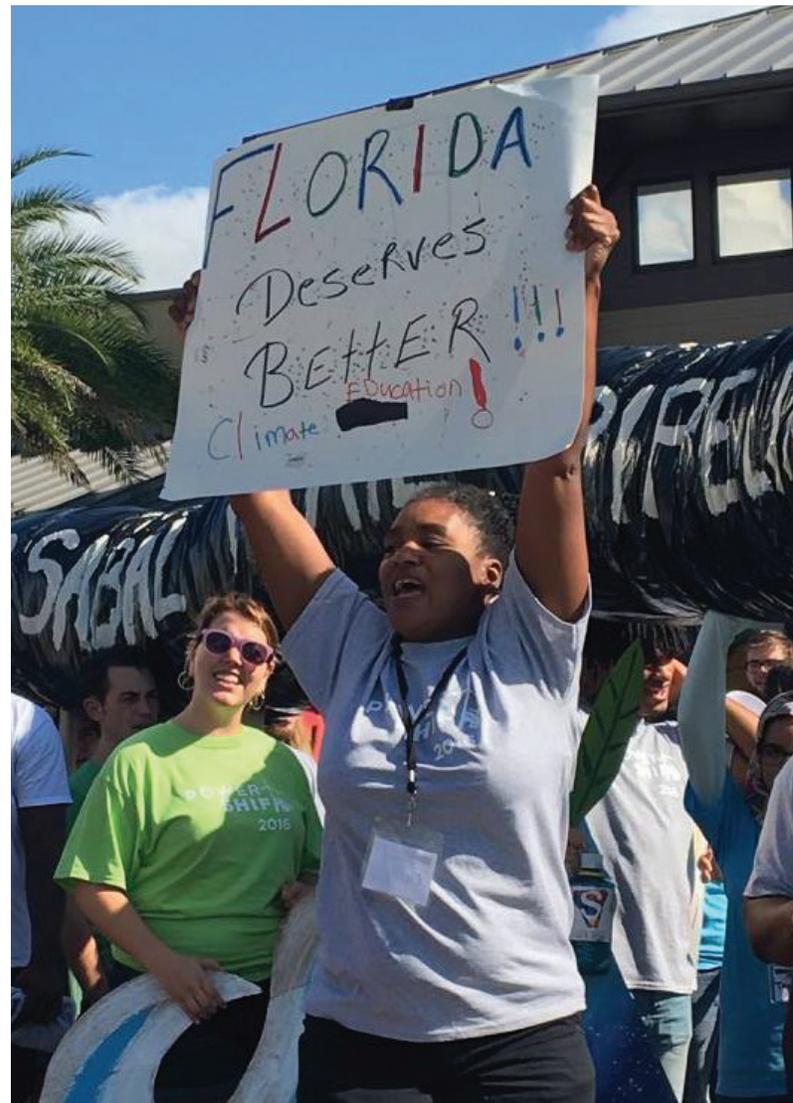
We are fighting corporate influence at the state's utility regulating agencies, bad corporate profit-centered climate legislation, and establishing relationships within the Florida State Senate and House for alignment on climate-justice centered bills. We're also organizing to hold corporations accountable for large-scale waste production and toxic waste facilities like the Doral landfill and incinerator. We're mobilizing community to meet with elected officials and filing a lawsuit in partnership with Earth Justice. Together we can advance a clean energy future.

COALITION BUILDING

Florida Rising Together sits in several climate coalition spaces including the Miami Climate Alliance (MCA), a coalition of 100+ organizations. Our work in this space specifically centers on clean energy solutions and against bill increases from the power monopoly, Florida Power & Light (FPL). We have also joined Organizing Resilience, a cohort of state-based power-builders across the U.S. running disaster resilience pilot projects. Moving forward, we plan to expand our Climate Justice Steering Committee program, currently based in Miami, Broward, and Orange counties into a statewide vehicle for climate equity. In addition, we increased statewide coordination forming three Climate Justice Community Groups including a Spanish-speaking group holding 65 members.

EDUCATION & DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Power-building, co-governance, and culturally relevant community education are core components of our disaster resilience programming. In addition to building member capacity to withstand the devastating impact of storms, this initiative is an important on-ramp to the long-term work of putting people and planet over profit. To help our communities, we developed county-specific Hurricane Preparedness Checklist available [our website](#) in Spanish, English, Haitian Creole, Mandarin, and one centering the local Indigenous Community made in collaboration with the Seminole nation. In addition, our Central Florida team led disaster education by hosting three role playing events to prepare families for a worsening climate crisis. Florida Rising also distributed complete hurricane kits in rural areas in Osceola, Orange, Seminole, and Broward counties.



**2021
IMPACT**

HOUSING JUSTICE

Florida Rising Together believes everyone should have a safe place to rest their heads and raise families. We believe housing is a human right and not a profit tool for greedy landlords. We work to ensure for safe affordable homes, rent control, and development that does not displace historically marginalized communities who have been here for generations. Last year's legislative session produced policies that worsened the crises that many Floridians still face as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

PROTECTING RENTERS

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we saw heightened landlord retaliation. Throughout summer 2021, we focused on ensuring Floridians facing eviction knew how to access federal funding for rental assistance, and partnered with local governments to get these resources to families in need. With only 5% of rental assistance funds disbursed, we helped tenants apply for rental assistance and are holding cities and counties accountable to improving their housing processes and policies so that families remain safe in their homes.

In partnership with a group made up of directly impacted Puerto Rican households and supporters with a mission of building power through grassroots action to create empowerment, equity, and justice, we work to bring awareness to housing justice for hardworking families after Hurricane Maria. Throughout May and June, Central Florida organizers and members [led and won a campaign](#) enabling Caribbean Isle residents in Kissimmee to fight a water shut off and unsafe conditions caused by an absentee landlord.



CRIMINAL SYSTEM REFORM

**2021
IMPACT**

INVESTING IN OUR COMMUNITIES, NOT POLICING THEM

A prison and police-only approach does the opposite of creating real safety in our communities. We work to end mass incarceration, protect immigrants, and eliminate laws that take away the vote from people with felony convictions.

**2021
IMPACT**

REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE

Florida Rising Together works to protect the freedom of our bodies and recognition of our full existence. We push back against policies and practices that seek to control and restrict women and femmes' bodies, to abortion, and the resources that serve that choice. In 2021, we joined a growing cohort of reproductive justice organizations across the state, and were able to fend off legislation including:

Anti-Abortion

- [HB 351 / SB 744 - 20-week Abortion Ban](#)
- [HB1221 / SB 1664 - "Disability Abortions"](#)
- [HB 1437 / SB 1984 - Fetal Remains](#)
- [SB 1986 - Medical Ethics and Diversity Act](#)

Anti-sex education

- [HB 545 / SB 410](#)

Anti-trans student athlete ban

- [SB 1028](#)

**We're proud to be a part of the Floridians for
Reproductive Freedom Cohort including:**

- Commonsense Childbirth
- Florida Student Power Network
- Florida Access Network
- Florida Now
- Latina Institute
- Lantana Language Collective
- QLatinx
- Planned Parenthood
- SisterSong



**2021
IMPACT**

FLORIDA RISING IN THE MEDIA

Shifting the narrative is a primary strategic imperative for our mission as Florida Rising Together, particularly in the era of mass disinformation. Our communications team elevates and centers Black and Brown voices to reimagine Florida. We are an influential political voice in the media. We amplify the progressive agenda from a racial equity perspective to shape political attitudes in order to win elections and to serve as a trusted messenger in the communities we serve. In 2021, Florida Rising Together garnered over 750 press hits nationally and across the state.

Some of our top national and statewide press hits include:

In the Wake of Georgia Election Law, Democrats Say the Next Phase is Aimed at Latino Voters

Newsweek, April 22, Senior Political Advisor Dwight Bullard

Latest lawsuit to challenge new Florida election law calls it racist, asks for federal oversight

USA Today, May 18, Senior Director of Advocacy and Programs
Moné Holder

Opinion: A clear attack on Floridians

Washington Post, May 31, Co-Executive Director Stephanie Porta

Black Lives Matter demonstrators march through downtown Fort Lauderdale

Sun Sentinel, February 1, 2021, Florida Rising mentioned

Censura, represión y corrupción, de la Florida para todo el país

Univision, May 4, 2021, Co-Executive Director Andrea Mercado

'It's time for us to fight back' say residents of Kissimmee apartment complex facing water shut off

Orlando Sentinel, May 14

BLACK
WOMEN
ARE THE
MOTHERS
OF THE
REVOLUTION



JUSTICE ON EVERY BLOCK

Join us in a vision for what is possible when community and elected officials take meaningful policy action for people and the planet over corporate profit.

WE BELIEVE EVERY BLOCK HAS THE RIGHT TO:

- Use Our Voice and Vote
- Control Our Bodies
- Community-Led Safety
- Affordable Housing & Health Care
- Clean Air, Water, Energy & Transit
- Healthy Food

IN 2022

WE WILL EDUCATE, ORGANIZE,
AND ACTIVATE OUR COMMUNITIES
BLOCK BY BLOCK!



No two communities are the same - we will work with local leaders to advance County and City policy statewide!

HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF OUR PRIORITIES ACROSS THE STATE:

- Acknowledge housing state of emergency and vote on a one-year rent freeze statewide
- Provide Spanish-language interpretation in eviction court
- Expand vote-by-mail ballot submission options in majority Black neighborhoods
- Adopt a zero waste plan by 2025 and deny waste plant permit renewals
- Increase funding for youth programs
- Pass a resolution affirming resident's right to access affordable abortion care
- Fund community gardens in low-income schools to increase access to healthy food

Visit www.floridarising.org to read our local platforms by region

**WALK THE BLOCK WITH US! TAKE YOUR STEP TODAY
BY GIVING AT: [FLORIDARISINGTOGETHER.ORG/#DONATE](https://www.floridarisingtogether.org/#donate)**

TEAM FLORIDA RISING TOGETHER

Florida Rising Together has more than 84 dedicated employees across ten departments, working together to sow the seeds to decolonize our state's destructive systems to advance racial justice and expand democracy. We aim for our staff to be reflective of the new majority, including racial diversity as well as centering women in leadership.

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

- **Andrea Cristina Mercado**, *Executive Director*
- **Chevalier Lovett**, *Chief Operating Officer*
- **Victricia Simmons**, *Chief of Staff*
- **Moné Holder**, *Senior Director of Advocacy and Programs*
- **Sheena Rolle**, *Senior Director of Strategy*

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

- **Dwight Bullard**, *Senior Political Advisor*
- **Amy Busefink**, *Director of Movement Politics*
- **Charles Douglas**, *Data Director*
- **Ivanna Gonzalez**, *Director of Campaigns*
- **Letitia Harmon**, *Policy and Research Director*
- **Sarai Portillo**, *Organizing Director*
- **Serena Perez**, *Membership Director*
- **Cheryl R. Waide**, *Statewide Communications Director*

FLORIDA RISING TOGETHER BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- **Alphonso Mayfield**, *President*
- **Deborah Soto**, *Vice President*
- **Coy Jones**, *Secretary*
- **Alana Greer**, *Treasurer*
- **Wanda Ramos**, *Member at Large*

In reflecting on the possibilities that our new statewide organization can achieve, we identified regional opportunities to build upon our existing program and improve our campaign strategies with a focus on sustaining the advancement of a progressive movement.

REGIONAL LEADERSHIP

- **Sebastian Caicedo**, *Miami Regional Director*
- **Bertisha Combs**, *South Florida Regional Director*
- **Christian Gonzalez-Obregoso**,
North Florida Regional Director
- **Shakea Hinton**, *Central Florida Regional Director*
- **Robin Lockett**, *Tampa Bay Regional Director*

DEPARTMENTS

- **Political & Electoral** - Strategizes regional and statewide programs to win issue and electoral campaigns focusing on political goals that center on the collective needs of Black & Brown communities
- **Communications** - Ensures strategy of messaging is compelling and effective to raise profile of Florida Rising
- **Finance & Accounting** - Manages organizational budget and expenses to ensure seamless operations
- **Data** - Ensures correct systems and tools to manage data for effective internal program work and collaboration
- **Operations & IT** - Ensures all organizational operations run smoothly across departments
- **Organizing** - Drives collaboration with member base and allies to identify priorities and run grassroots-led campaigns
- **Membership** - Grows and deepens the organization's base and member leadership development trainings
- **Strategic Campaigns & Programs** - Develops and implements in partnership with other departments, Florida Rising's expanding democracy, housing, community-led safety & criminal systems reform, climate justice, and reproductive justice strategies and programs
- **Development** - Builds relationships with individual donors and institutional funders to secure funding and sustainability
- **Talent & Equity** - Builds staff professional development, learning, growth and building a pipeline of potential future hires from outside of the organization while ensuring economic and racial equity and inclusion at the center of the work

THE FUTURE OF FLORIDA DEPENDS ON US TO TAKE ACTION NOW

Your support is critical in our power-building movement to shift the narrative and ensure people's priorities including decent living wages, health care, education, and access to adequate public health services. Florida has dire needs and it is imperative that we take action to build a people-centered government that is representative of the communities it serves, including yours!

We are on the ground utilizing our statewide collective power to ensure a Florida where we all can thrive – but it will take all of us to get there!

FLORIDA RISING TOGETHER IS COMMITTED TO:

- Advancing the People's Budget and expanding Florida's electorate to build power that yields a fair and progressive democracy that puts people and planet first
- Listening, organizing, educating, and activating communities block by block to lift up priorities and needs
- Building coalition to strengthen our statewide strategy to advocate for policies centering Black and Brown communities

As our communities continue to experience the detrimental effects of the pandemic, rent and gas prices soar, greedy corporate landlords take advantage of predatory tactics, and climate change impacts daily life in Florida, we MUST employ our collective power to win justice and secure a better future for all!

FLORIDA RISING TOGETHER WILL
CONTINUE TO STRENGTHEN
ITS WORK TO PROMOTE
PROSPERITY AND ADVANCE
EQUALITY FOR ALL FLORIDIANS



WILL YOU
JOIN US?

A DONATION TO FLORIDA RISING TOGETHER THIS VERY IMPORTANT ELECTION YEAR WILL HELP US:

- Organize Black and Latino members block by block!
- Register 100,000 people to use their voice and vote
- Advocate for housing, criminal, reproductive, and climate justice
- Lead a multi-racial movement to advance social change
- Create inclusive messages, lift our stories and fight misinformation
- Respond to the needs of Florida communities in times of crisis

THE ROAD AHEAD

Looking at 2022 and beyond, we must respond to the damaging legislative session and prevent a supermajority in the Florida legislature by getting folks out to vote in the November midterms.

GIVE TODAY AT
FLORIDARISINGTOGETHER.ORG/#DONATE



BLACK LIVES MATTER

BEFORE THE POLICE
NEW MAJORITY



**FLORIDA
RISING
TOGETHER**
we rise to lead as the new majority



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floridarisingtogether.org



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