On October 6, 2018, when Brett Kavanaugh was sworn in as a Supreme Court judge after weeks of right-wing attacks on Dr. Christine Blasey Ford for daring to publicly say that Kavanaugh had sexually assaulted her years before, the movement for reproductive freedom saw what it was up against. As reproductive justice leader and Groundswell Fund board member La’Tasha D. Mayes summarized, “If this is what the current system will do to an upper-class, highly educated white woman with significant social status when she speaks out against rape with the backing of so many supporters and survivors, what is this system already doing to Black women, femmes, and girls?”

It would be easy to be discouraged by these events and the countless other assaults on decades of progressive wins and vulnerable communities since 45 took office, but we know that the backlash we are experiencing is in fact a reaction to progress — evidence of the Right’s growing unease in the face of an unstoppable demographic shift and expanding progressive base that pose a real threat to the interlocking systems of white supremacy, patriarchy, and transphobia. Social justice movements are engaging more people than ever before and there is more vocalization of the negative impacts of the current system on women and people of color, as seen through Black Lives Matter and #MeToo. As with any dying system, there is a last surge from regressive forces — a surge that can be far more dangerous and overtake us if we are not clear and well-equipped.

We need to approach this moment not by retrenching or retreating, but by pushing harder. Groundswell Fund grantees are leading the way. They are stepping outside their comfort zones, experimenting with new models, and taking risks — sometimes succeeding and in some moments not, but always moving forward.

This forward momentum is encapsulated in the intersectional approach of participants in Groundswell’s
capacity-building programs. They understand, by necessity, that reproductive justice (RJ) touches all aspects of the lives of women of color, low-income women, and transgender people.

Groundswell understands that to win policy and systems changes, protect hard-won victories, and win again, the reproductive justice movement must have a strong and organized grassroots base with the power to compel decision-makers to do the right thing. Our capacity-building programs were born from this perspective and in response to requests from our grantees that Groundswell provide them with additional support to scale up their grassroots power. These programs add value to the field by connecting groups with experts (coaches) and a unique toolbox of resources to help strengthen the ability of grassroots power to force attention and accountability, hold gains, and move forward.

This moment shows that the RJ movement and Groundswell Fund are on the right path toward building a better future. We must continue building grassroots power to force concrete reproductive justice policy and systems change.

At Groundswell, as we witness and support the powerful work of the organizations led by women of color, low-income women, and transgender people detailed in this report, we know that the tide will change, and that the strength of the next surge toward justice will only be as strong as the work we have done in this critical moment to prepare. These grantee organizations know what is best for their people and how best to reach their communities because they are deeply connected to what is happening on the ground. As they

COMMUNITY-DRIVEN CHANGE

Groundswell grantees focus on and are winning material improvements for communities on many interrelated issues, including abortion access, sexual harassment, parental leave, comprehensive sex education, adoption for same-sex couples, the right to update one’s birth certificate to reflect a nonbinary gender, the rights and privacy of trans and gender nonconforming people, access to reproductive health services that center youth voices and needs, Medicaid expansion, labeling cosmetics to protect consumers against reproductive toxins, the right of domestic violence survivors to break their leases without penalty, ending the shackling of pregnant people who are incarcerated, access to healthcare products for incarcerated women, family separation, sanctuary cities, welfare rights, migrant rights, paid sick time, teachers’ pay, workplace protections, and toxic chemicals and pesticides, among others.
In 2018, participants in Groundswell’s Integrated Voter Engagement (IVE) program scaled up in dramatic ways, organizations in Groundswell’s Grassroots Organizing Institute (GOI) doubled down on grassroots organizing mechanics, and participants in Groundswell’s Ecosystem Initiative (ECO) expanded their partnerships to strengthen the movement. Grassroots organizing and integrated voter engagement have proven to be critical for capacity building. Reproductive justice organizations and aligned organizations, and specifically those outlined in this report, bring a unique approach to this work, guided by a deep understanding of intersectionality — a term Kimberlé Crenshaw coined “to deal with the fact that many of our social justice problems like racism and sexism are often overlapping, creating multiple levels of social injustice.”

Although this intersectional approach has often been under-resourced or ignored, it is essential for building power in our movements to effect policy change. As a foundation created and largely staffed by women of color who come out of community and labor organizing, Groundswell’s unique relationship to our grantee organizations and the depth of our understanding of the issues has enabled us to help organizations bring that approach to scale through comprehensive capacity-building support and tools that are culturally competent and have an integrated race, class, gender, and decolonization analysis.

As funders, we must ask ourselves: How can we better invest in the power-building strategies — organizing that leads to people engaging with policymakers, becoming civically active, and voting in elections — that we know bring about change? We are in a moment when more people understand the depth of challenges we face. With that comes a unique opportunity to build in ways that we have never been able to do before. This is a time for us to dig in deeper, to build wider, to lock arms across sectors, and to move not out of fear but with purpose and clarity, resolution and hopefulness.

We invite you to join us.


A STORY FROM THE FIELD

Alaska Community Action on Toxics (ACAT) works for reproductive justice using an environmental health lens, specifically on the issue of exposure to toxic chemicals in air, water, food, or household goods that affect reproductive health.

ACAT empowers Alaska Native communities to eliminate exposure to harmful chemicals in mostly small, isolated rural villages where residents are Alaska Native and English is not the first language spoken. ACAT provides education about the legacy of toxic contamination from abandoned Cold War-era military sites (700 active and abandoned, many of which are co-located with Alaska Native villages) that has led to elevated rates of cancer in Alaska Native communities. A participant in the IVE program since the program began, ACAT uses a power-building approach with core values such as community right to know, environmental justice, rights and sovereignty of Indigenous peoples, and a culture of caring and wellness. ACAT organizes tirelessly to ensure that rural Alaska Native votes matter in the largest state in the United States — three times the size of Texas.

Over the last five years, ACAT has achieved strategic wins in advancing reproductive and environmental justice in Alaska. Its signature bill is the Toxic-Free Firefighter and Children Act, introduced in 2015, which would ban four classes of toxic flame-retardant chemicals in children’s products and furniture that have a range of health effects, including learning and developmental disabilities, cancers, and reproductive harm such as miscarriages. In 2018, ACAT was able to pass an ordinance substantively aligned with the state bill that will help protect Anchorage residents and make a stronger case for passing the state legislation. By adding integrated voter engagement to its toolbox through participation in Groundswell’s IVE program, ACAT continues to lay the path to winning this bill by achieving strategic wins along the way that will protect Alaska’s environment, especially for Alaska Native peoples, for the long term.

For example, ACAT successfully mounted a campaign to defend the Environmental Protection Agency’s budget from devastating cuts proposed by the Trump administration and worked to kill the nomination of Michael Dourson, a chemical industry-backed toxicologist. They were able to get their senators to commit to resisting cuts to programs that would disproportionately affect rural communities, and moved senators to publicly indicate their reservations about Dourson, who eventually withdrew his nomination due to lack of votes needed for confirmation. ACAT’s leadership also led to the Pesticide-Free Anchorage Ordinance being passed by the Anchorage Assembly in 2017. Other policy wins include holding the military accountable for...
cleaning up the Northeast Cape for a total of $123 million and helping to pass global bans on pesticides and industrial chemicals that harm Arctic communities.

ACAT, in collaboration with allies, played a significant part in convincing AK Senator Lisa Murkowski to oppose the nomination of Brett Kavanaugh to the U.S. Supreme Court. Murkowski was the only Republican to break ranks and oppose the nomination. That is the power of grassroots organizing. ACAT staff members met with Murkowski in Washington, D.C., as part of a delegation of women of the National Asian Pacific American Women’s Forum and mobilized its members to contact Murkowski through action alerts. ACAT’s board and staff also issued an open letter to Murkowski that said in part:

“Our board of directors is comprised primarily of Alaska Native women that represent Yupik, Inupiaq, Gwich’in Athabascan, Kaagwaantaan Tlingit, and Sugpiaq communities; women whose vision and leadership guide our work to eliminate exposure to toxics and protect the health of vulnerable populations of women and children. As an organization that represents Alaska Native women and fights against environmental degradation, we reach out to you with urgency and alarm, to express our strong opposition to the confirmation of Judge Brett Kavanaugh to a lifetime seat on the United States Supreme Court. Given Judge Brett Kavanaugh’s record and views, we believe his nomination to the U.S. Supreme Court poses a major threat to the rights of Indigenous peoples. Specifically, we fear that his nomination would: further the disenfranchisement of Alaska Natives and American Indians from the political process and broader society; exacerbate the exposures of our communities to toxic chemicals in our land, water, fish, food and medicinal plants, berries, wildlife, and people; exacerbate the impacts of climate change on communities, food security, and vulnerable ecosystems; and fundamentally threaten the cultural importance of endangered species to our communities.”

Groundswell thinks what happened in Alaska with Murkowski could easily have happened with senators of all stripes in other states if grassroots organizing were stronger. Groundswell is investing in building that strength across the country.

BELOW: Some of the participants in ACAT’s Indigenous Women’s Leadership Gathering at Bethel, Alaska
“Coaching support effectively pairs organizations with practitioners to open up what’s possible in terms of innovations, including in particular the ability to advocate for and ultimately introduce policy legislation. The genesis of a lot of the policy wins for ACAT was believing it was possible and working with someone who understands how the system functions. I think even more important was the support and encouragement to run large-scale field campaigns that I was able to provide as their coach, including for electoral and legislative campaigns. We worked together to develop legislative advocacy campaigns that reached out to constituents of particular city assembly members who were on the fence. ACAT heard back from several elected officials that they got hundreds of calls into their offices asking them to support this bill and that’s why they are voting for it.”

— TOMÁS GARDUÑO
IVE COACH FOR ACAT

“Women of color leadership is important to social justice movements today because we are the people that are most impacted by health disparities, wage disparities and many other disparities. We should be the architects for the solutions to that injustice.”

— YAMANI HERNANDEZ
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL NETWORK OF ABORTION FUNDS (A GROUNDSWELL CATALYST FUND GRANTEE), AND PAST EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ILLINOIS CAUCUS FOR ADOLESCENT HEALTH (A GOI PARTICIPANT ORGANIZATION)

*This report was assembled by Anna Lee-Popham with extensive input from Groundswell staff, including Angella Bellota, Xiomara Corpeño, Vanessa Daniel, Alexandra Del Valle, Janet Favela Sonneman, Naa Hammond, Krystal Kwong, J.F. Lyles, Lanita Morris, Jennifer Parrish Taylor, Bré Rivera, Charlene Sinclair, and Quanita Toffie, as well as Groundswell coaches and consultants, including Tanzila “Taz” Ahmed, Lisa María Castellanos, Tomás Garduño, Fran Hutchins, Xavier MaatRa, riKu Matsuda, Rob McGowan, Wilnelia Rivera, Mari Ryono, Eugenio Smith, Emma Tramble, and Chinyere Tutashinda. Their knowledge and wisdom were instrumental to this content.
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WHY SUPPORT CAPACITY BUILDING?

Only two percent of global funding is directed toward organizing.\(^4\)

This is largely because of the elitist idea that social change trickles down from academia, think tanks, and large Beltway organizations. But we know that surmounting the opposition at the scale facing reproductive justice — particularly for communities of color — has never happened through trickle-down strategies. While think tanks and professional-level policy shops are important, major progressive social change that has happened throughout U.S. history, from winning women’s suffrage to beating back elements of Jim Crow in the South, has always necessitated mass base organizing that is led and driven by the people most impacted.

This is also the reason why the political Right has deliberately, methodically, and systematically attacked grassroots organizing infrastructure across the country, whether through the erosion of labor unions, the takedown of ACORN, or the incarceration or assassination of many Black organizers in ‘60s and ‘70s. The Right knows that organizing is the way that people gain power to transform the policies and systems that affect their lives.

Progressives cede huge ground when we do not commit to building our grassroots power. At Groundswell, we understand the central importance of grassroots organizing in systems change.

Groundswell’s capacity-building programs draw from this understanding to support groups that are building the base of the movement for reproductive freedom and forcing policy change through grassroots organizing, integrated voter engagement, and coalition-building across sectors. We focus on providing support that is culturally competent and holds an integrated race, class, gender, and decolonization analysis, because we know that is what moves people for the long term. This is the path forward to protecting and advancing a different world.

“Of almost all the organizations we support or that we would consider supporting, they [Groundswell Fund] have the most sophisticated approach, knowledge, and expertise on organizing and voter engagement. They’re a head above everybody else in terms of their level of sophistication and rigor in the way they go about it.”

— ANONYMOUS DONOR TO GROUNDSWELL FUND

“Groundswell’s theory of change is supporting and building up women of color leadership and communities of color to move the needle on our issues. We believe 100 percent in their theory of change: that we need to be investing in leadership and opportunities for the communities that are most impacted by these issues and by the policies that are being passed.”

— CHRISTINE CLARK PROGRAM OFFICER, GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT AND POPULATION, WILLIAM AND FLORA HEWLETT FOUNDATION

“I trust Groundswell. I’m inspired by the way they work with base community members — those who have been most oppressed who have the best answers to the solutions of how to transform oppressive systems into environments of liberation. I’m inspired by how Groundswell looks and builds from the root up. They’re also people-of-color–led and trans-led. Grassroots organizing by those most affected is what has made changes in this country over the past decade and we need a whole lot of change. I’m excited to see Groundswell supporting those in the best place to make change.”

— SAM VINAL DONOR

“We continue our support [of Groundswell] because of their influence in terms of growing the grassroots base and continuing to widen and strengthen the power of the constituency they represent.”

— JOANNA LAUEN SENIOR PROGRAM OFFICER, IRVING HARRIS FOUNDATION

“Even if it weren’t happening in this hostile context, it would be impressive. We’re in a situation where the majority of the good news stories and successes are coming from women-of-color–led groups, trans-led groups, and others who have the toughest fight but are also demonstrating that they have an approach. That can’t always overcome the bigotry and hostility, but they seem to have much better odds of success than some of the more-traditional methods that have been used in these current times.”

— ELISA SLATTERY SENIOR PROGRAM OFFICER, OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS
PROGRAM OVERVIEW

In 2018, Groundswell dedicated $5.6 million in resources (including grant dollars, skill building, database access and support, and staff and coaching consultations) to build the organizing and civic engagement infrastructure needed to power the reproductive justice movement.

Through our three program areas, the Integrated Voter Engagement (IVE) program, the Grassroots Organizing Institute (GOI), and the Ecosystem Initiative (ECO), we moved $3.2 million in grant support to 36 organizations whose local, regional, and national activities engaged more than 50,000 people in the movement for reproductive justice. The constituencies of our grantees span many communities, including immigrant, youth, incarcerated or previously incarcerated, gender nonconforming or intersex, Indigenous, and LGBTQI+ community members.

Of the 36 organizations in Groundswell’s capacity-building programs, 33 (92 percent) are led by women of color and 11 (31 percent) are led by trans or gender nonconforming people; the primary constituencies of 33 of the groups (92 percent) are either women of color or trans people of color; and 33 (92 percent) work on reproductive rights issues such as abortion access, access to contraception, and comprehensive sex education. Of the 36 organizations, 33 engage youth (92 percent) and 33 (92 percent) identified their base as including LGBTQI+ people.

Most grantees participating in the capacity-building programs are reproductive justice organizations, but given the urgency of this political moment, the programs also include aligned organizations, that is, organizations that address RJ issues, but identify primarily with a different sector, such as immigrant rights or economic justice. The participation of these organizations helps us achieve an ancillary goal: supporting organizations that are infusing RJ values into broader social justice movements.

At Groundswell Fund, we recognize that communities know how to approach the issues and how to develop solutions. By extension, we take pride in not prescribing answers. We trust the wisdom of organizations on the ground doing the work. The organizations we support are using unique and innovative approaches and techniques to engage communities to meet and surpass their base-building and organizing goals.

THE IMPACT OF GROUNDSWELL’S CAPACITY-BUILDING PROGRAM

Organizations know best what is needed by their communities.

Organizations resources and connect them with people with expertise and a toolbox of resources.

Organizations are able to scale up their operations and increase their impact.

Organizations’ work changes people’s material conditions.
Integrated Voter Engagement

Groundswell Fund launched the Integrated Voter Engagement (IVE) program pilot in 2012 in response to a request from grantees. Since its inception, Groundswell’s IVE program has cultivated a new generation of civic engagement leaders who not only use an RJ lens, but also bring an intersectional race and gender analysis to civic engagement tables across the country. The integrated voter engagement approach exemplifies the RJ framework of grantees, as it blends community organizing and nonpartisan voter engagement to boost the scale, power, and ability of grantee partners to win systems change. The approach goes beyond just mobilizing voters to the polls during an election year, but rather, centers on intersectional organizing that is year-round and transformational by utilizing traditional civic engagement tools in culturally competent ways. Grantee IVE efforts have attracted the attention of elected officials, and the organizations involved in the cohort are developing new and innovative collaborations through inviting nontraditional allies to take on RJ issues. The efforts have paid off — as one example of many, the total number of conversations with voters by Groundswell grantee organizations by phone and at the door in 2018 (151,178) was almost twice that of 2017 (78,792).

Recognizing that a comprehensive approach is necessary for organizations to exercise their power-building muscles in ways that are sustainable, the IVE program includes training, coaching hours, legal support, and funding. In 2018, the program supported 20 organizations. Several organizations have participated in the program since 2014 and now have three election cycles under their belts as part of the IVE cohort. They will enter in the general election of 2020 able to leverage the deeper relationships they have developed with voters because of their year-round engagement strategies and the resulting deep levels of trust they have built with constituents.

“[The combination of] grant support, coaching, convenings, site visits, and hands-on support [through Groundswell Fund’s IVE program] create a synergistic effect that allows us to be increasingly successful in our IVE work, in mobilizing larger numbers of people, and [as] an effective force in creating policy change.”

— PARTICIPANT IN GROUNDSWELL’S IVE PROGRAM

[5] This quote was taken from an anonymous participant survey conducted by an external evaluator. Anonymity has been maintained as part of that evaluation structure to solicit honest feedback.
Grassroots Organizing Institute

Rooted in the belief that an organized and robust grassroots base is fundamental to people gaining power over the decisions that impact their lives, the Grassroots Organizing Institute (GOI) is an intensive, year-long training program that builds the grassroots organizing skills and capacity of participating grantees. In 2018, the Grassroots Organizing Institute marked its third year with an expansion of six new organizations, for a total of 15 cohort organizations.6

Groundswell believes that the greatest win for reproductive justice in the United States is an organized grassroots base powerful enough to advance RJ for the long haul. Thus, through GOI, Groundswell Fund provides grants, training, convenings, and coaching to support organizations in deepening their understanding and practice of the fundamentals of organizing and advocacy, including how to identify issue priorities and demands, analyze the political landscape, and run effective organizing campaigns for systems change.

THE WOMEN IN PRISON PROJECT

The Women in Prison Project (WPP), a program of the Correctional Association of NY (CA), uses a multifaceted strategy to engage their base, with priority on strengthening the leadership and agency of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people, their family members, and their allies in the community who are excluded from shaping policy. Through their involvement in the GOI, the Women in Prison Project worked with their coach on leadership development within the organization, strengthening opportunities for members to take on greater levels of leadership, and deepening the engagement of formerly incarcerated women directly impacted by domestic violence.

WPP members often begin their leadership while incarcerated. Women in prison participate in the Coalition

BELOW: Coalition leadership/survivors and the New York State Senate in Chambers as the DVSJA passed. L-R: Senator Velmanette Montgomery; Anisah Sabur-Mumin, Coalition Coordinator and GOI grantee; Lady Kathryn Williams-Julien, Coalition leader/survivor; LaDeamma McMoore, Coalition leader/survivor; New York State Attorney General Letitia James; Senator Rochelle Ritchie, DVSJA lead sponsor; Senator David Carlucci, DVSJA cosponsor.

[6] In addition, in 2018, one organization that had been in the GOI program, the National Asian Pacific American Women’s Forum (NAPAWF), transitioned into Groundswell’s IVE program.
for Women Prisoners (CWP) by meeting with Coalition members who come inside the prisons, by letters and surveys mailed to and from them, and through collect phone calls. Incarcerated survivors of domestic violence were central to shaping the provisions of the Domestic Violence Survivors Justice Act (DVSJA) through the Coalition’s Violence Against Women committee members at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility. This was a 10-year campaign led by women of color, both inside and outside of prison. WPP sent updates and information to them inside and, when able, facilitated their participation in CWP meetings. Women in Rikers Island Jail participated in the bimonthly Violence Against Women Committee meetings by speaker phone and engaged in committee discussion, asked questions, and commented on the legislation and strategy.

The DVSJA focuses on two things: Firstly, it gives judges discretion to look at an individual’s history and take experiences of abuse into consideration during sentencing, allowing for individuals to get an alternative to jail or a shorter prison/jail sentence. Also, individuals who have already been convicted and who have a long sentence will have an opportunity to apply to the courts to have their case reopened and possibly receive a new sentence, if they have already served eight years of their sentence and can pass the three-part test showing that domestic violence played a significant role in their incarceration.

As part of their work to get the Domestic Violence Survivors Justice Act passed, Anisah Sabur-Mumin, an organizer with the Women in Prison Project and a formerly incarcerated woman who was involved in advocating on this issue from the start, and two other women who are leaders in the fight were invited to the Senate floor for the historic vote. Once on the floor, they approached a Republican legislator and one of the women shared her story. She talked about how domestic violence affected her and how jail was not the way to help women who are survivors of domestic violence. The legislator was in tears and voted YES for the bill.

On Tuesday, March 12, 2019, the NY Senate passed the Domestic Violence Survivors Justice Act (DVSJA). At the time of printing this report, the bill was waiting for the governor’s signature. This bill was also in the Governor’s 2019 Executive Budget, however, the bill passed through both houses on March 12, 2019, and was removed from the budget.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOI NEW PARTICIPANTS AND TOTAL PARTICIPANTS 2017-2018</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NEW PARTICIPANTS</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2,200</td>
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<td>TOTAL PARTICIPANTS’</td>
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[7] Total participants is the total unique number of people who participated in the activities of the organization over the year.
Ecosystem Initiative

In 2016, Groundswell Fund launched the Ecosystem Initiative to address the long-standing problem of RJ organizations being marginalized from the larger progressive movement because of the perception that intense backlash might result from addressing RJ issues. This sidelining leaves RJ organizations supporting economic and racial justice issues, for example, but receiving little to no support for RJ-specific efforts.

Groundswell’s Ecosystem Initiative aims to accelerate RJ policy and systems change in particular cities and states by deepening support for existing grantees and their key allies (e.g., economic justice organizations in local and state “ecosystems”). Groundswell is supporting RJ organizations in creating strategic alliances on their terms, while assisting partner organizations in deepening their understanding of RJ and integrating it into their work. The goal is to catalyze power-building, movement-building, and policy change in an intersectional way.

Currently in Florida, the Ecosystem Initiative deepens support for grantees in Groundswell’s Catalyst Fund and their key allies in linked movements in specific local and state “ecosystems,” to help infuse RJ more deeply into local progressive agendas and support participating groups in taking their work to scale. The three participating organizations (Miami Workers Center, Power U Center for Social Change, and the New Florida Majority-Education Fund) have formed the South Florida Reproductive Justice Ecosystem. This Ecosystem has given rise to important strategic alliances on fights for comprehensive sex education in Miami-Dade County Public Schools (which has the highest HIV rate nationwide), led by Power U; statewide unemployment benefits for survivors of domestic violence, led by the Miami Workers Center; and a statewide Dignity policy to ensure incarcerated women have access to feminine hygiene products, led by the New Florida Majority.
### CAPACITY BUILDING GRANTEE ORGANIZATIONS

#### Integrated Voter Engagement
- ACT for Women and Girls (Visalia, CA)
- Alaska Community Action on Toxics (ACAT) (Anchorage, AK)
- Black Women for Wellness (Los Angeles, CA)
- California Healthy Nail Salon Collaborative (Oakland, CA)
- Centro Por La Justicia (San Antonio, TX)
- Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights (COLOR) (Denver, CO)
- El Pueblo, Inc. (Raleigh, NC)
- Freedom, Inc. (Madison, WI)
- Khmer Girls in Action (KGA) (Long Beach, CA)
- Mothering Justice (Royal Oak, MI)
- National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF)* (Atlanta, GA)
- National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health (NLIRH)* (Miami, FL)
- New Voices for Reproductive Justice / New Voices Pittsburgh (Pittsburgh, PA)
- Power U Center for Social Change (Miami, FL)
- Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity* (Washington D.C.)
- Washington Community Action Network (Seattle, WA)
- Western Native Voice (Billings, MT)
- Women Engaged (Atlanta, GA)
- Women With A Vision (WWAV) (New Orleans, LA)
- WV FREE: WV Focus Reproductive Education & Equality (Charleston, WV)

#### Grassroots Organizing Institute
- Access Reproductive Care (ARC) – Southeast (Atlanta, GA)
- ACCESS Women’s Health Justice (Oakland, CA)
- Cabrini Green Legal Aid (CGLA) (Chicago, IL)
- Carolina Youth Action Project (CYAP) (Charleston, South Carolina)
- Correctional Association of New York (New York, NY)
- Gender Justice Nevada (GJNV) (Las Vegas, NV)
- Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health (ICAH) (Chicago, IL)
- Miami Workers Center (Miami, FL)
- Positive Women's Network-USA* (Denver, CO)
- SisterSong* (Atlanta, GA)
- Sylvia Rivera Law Project (New York, NY)
- The Afiya Center (Dallas, TX)
- The Audre Lorde Project (New York, NY)
- Transgender, Gender Variant and Intersex (TGI) Justice Project (San Francisco, CA)
- Trans Queer Pueblo (Phoenix, AZ)

#### Ecosystem Initiative
- Miami Workers Center (FL)
- Power U Center for Social Change (FL)
- The New Florida Majority (FL)

* indicates a national organization
Thirty-four pro-RJ policies were passed and 29 harmful policies were blocked or reversed with the contribution of Groundswell’s capacity building grantees’ work in 2018. These include policies related to a broad range of RJ issues.

- Abortion Access
- Reproductive Healthcare Access
- Other Healthcare and Service Access
- Environmental Health and Justice
- Criminal Justice Reform / Prison Abolition
- Parenting Rights, Birthing Rights, and the Rights of Pregnant People
- LGBTQ, Transgender, Gender Non-Conforming and Intersex Rights
- Economic Justice / Workers’ Rights / Access to Public Services and Support
- Domestic Violence / Sexual Violence
- Comprehensive Sex Education
- Racial Justice / Immigrant Justice
- Legal Advocacy / Judicial Wins

[8] Lobbying activities referred to in this report were conducted using permissible funds, within the limits allowed by the IRS for Section 501(c)(3) organizations.
The Integrated Voter Engagement (IVE) program has grown significantly since its inception six years ago. In January 2018, five new organizations joined the program, for a total of 20 participating organizations — a goal articulated in Groundswell’s five-year Blueprint.

By the end of the pilot in 2012, the first IVE cohort had made a total of 1,000 voter contacts; the 2018 cohort contacted more than 150,000 voters, up 92 percent from the 78,792 contacts made by 15 grantees in 2017. While each participating organization averaged about 5,000 voter contacts in 2017, each averaged more than 9,000 contacts in 2018.

In 2018, the following 20 organizations participated in the Integrated Voter Engagement program, including five new organizations.9

1. ACT for Women and Girls (Visalia, CA)
2. Alaska Community Action on Toxics (ACAT) (Anchorage, AK)
3. Black Women for Wellness (BWW) (Los Angeles, CA)
4. California Healthy Nail Salon Collaborative (Oakland, CA)
5. Centro Por La Justicia** (San Antonio, TX)
6. Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights (COLOR) (Denver, CO)
7. El Pueblo, Inc. (Raleigh, NC)
8. Freedom, Inc.”” (Madison, WI)
9. Khmer Girls in Action (KGA) (Long Beach, CA)
10. Mothering Justice (Royal Oak, MI)
11. National Asian Pacific American Women’s Forum** (NAPAWF) (Atlanta, GA)
12. National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health (NLIRH) (Miami, FL)
13. New Voices for Reproductive Justice/New Voices Pittsburgh (Pittsburgh, PA)
14. Power U Center for Social Change (Miami, FL)
15. Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity (URGE) (Washington, DC)
16. Washington Community Action Network** (Seattle, WA)
17. Western Native Voice** (Billings, MT)
18. Women Engaged (Atlanta, GA)
20. WV FREE: West Virginia Focus Reproductive Education & Equality (Charleston, WV)

To measure progress, the IVE program tracks five areas:

- Voter Contact
- Base-Building
- Leadership Development / Mentoring
- Ally / Partnership Development
- Public Official Relationship Identification & Cultivation

Each organization in the IVE program received more than $150,000 in direct funding and professional training and support, including:

- A one-year **$70,000 general support grant** to support staffing and infrastructure needed to implement a successful IVE program.

- A field grant of **$40,000 to make direct voter contacts using door-to-door canvassing and phone banking**, including **$10,000 for access to voter contact technology**. Organizations have used this technology funding for autodialers, tablets, or app-based canvassing systems; upgraded database systems; or equipment that allows for live patch-through calls to elected officials.

- **120 hours of coaching with an IVE coach** to develop and implement a strong IVE work plan. In 2018, the IVE program contracted 11 IVE experts as coaches who visit grantees twice during the year, facilitate trainings for staff and/or volunteers, support staff as they implement IVE plans, and meet with allies of the organization to better understand the local landscape.¹⁰

- **Two three-day convenings** focused on hands-on skill building with a diverse set of IVE practitioners and peers. All 20 organizations attend both convenings. Local organizations are invited to bring two participants, and national organizations could bring up to four staff people.

- **Canvassing and phone banking support**, including on-site technical assistance to run effective field operations.

- **Data support** that ensures ongoing training and technical support to access and maintain clean voter data. Groundswell Fund pays subscription fees for access to a voter database for all grantees. This includes support with the voter file databases Voter Activation Network (VAN) and Political Data Incorporated (PDI), as well as the MiniVAN and other app-based canvassing technologies that streamline data management and reduce environmental impact.

- **Access to legal counsel to ensure full 501(c)(3) compliance** for IVE activities. All materials and phone and canvass scripts are vetted by Groundswell’s legal counsel.

- **Evaluation support** to develop bold yet achievable goals, along with systems for tracking progress and impact.

- **Mind-body practice opportunities both during and outside convenings.** Groundswell contracted with the Movement Strategy Center’s Dana Ginn-Paredes to lead Forward Stance to support participants in developing practices that promote resiliency and well-being.

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¹⁰ A roster of the 2018 IVE coaches can be found in the Appendix, p. 54.
Coaches, Convenings, and Webinars

The centerpiece of the comprehensive technical assistance Groundswell offers includes 120 hours of coaching from a matched expert IVE practitioner per organization. The IVE coaching team consists of the most-seasoned people of color, women of color, and transgender and gender nonconforming IVE experts from across the country. Our coaches have all worked in the trenches in the same types of communities our grantees are organizing, which accelerates trust-building needed for organizations to shift culture and praxis to bring grassroots power-building to the next level. Coaches assist grantee organizations with building an IVE work plan with key annual benchmarks, and they coach organizations during implementation and after for debrief and assessment to integrate new learnings.

COACHES’ CORNER

EMMA TRAMBLE (she/her) is a leading data and public engagement practitioner in the field who helps people develop strategy, so they can use information to harness power to improve their lives. Her experiential workshop about purpose-driven data at the convening in 2018 enabled groups to think about how to use data to strengthen impact.

“Most people make decisions from the heart, so when groups are training people and talking to voters, I work with them to understand that they have to first get at the heart and then move to the head. This is what purpose-driven data is about — marrying compassion with a long-term strategy that is driven by data and systems so we can replicate it and the work keeps going long after an election cycle.”

WILNELIA RIVERA (she/her) is a social justice movement leader and consultant who was the chief strategist for Ayanna Pressley’s successful 2018 congressional campaign. She is also the president of Rivera Consulting, a movement-building firm that inspires and enables social change while operationalizing solutions for the 21st century. As a woman of color political operative steeped in social justice values, she is at the top of her game and rooted deeply in the work.

“As a coach, I can’t come in with overly prescribed notions of where an organization needs to be. What I enjoy about that process — and Groundswell creating that expectation — is that I can be going through a journey with the organizations I’m partnered with. What motivates me most as a coach is developing staff to stay in this work in the long run. As someone who started in this space, you see so much burnout, especially for younger professionals.”

ABOVE: Emma canvassing the Bayview neighborhood in Madison, Wisconsin, with Freedom Inc. Community Power Builders.

ABOVE: Women With A Vision (WWAV) staff and their coach, Wilnelia, planning WWAV’s first-ever grassroots lobbying and base-building campaign focused on decreasing Black maternity death.
The 20 participating organizations gather twice a year at the IVE convenings, which feature a combination of peer learning exchange and more-traditional hard-skills training. The 2018 workshops included:

- Integrated Communications
- Canvass Team Management
- Excel-erate Your Organizing
- Issue Integration and Base-building
- GOTV (Get Out the Vote) Planning and Implementation
- Counting Our Efforts, Strengthening Our Impact
- Taking Full Advantage of 501(c)(3) Status
- Developing Effective Scripts
- VAN Crash Course
- Sustain the Momentum: Planning to Integrate New Supporters
- Campaign Planning: From (Work) Plan to Canvass (Implementation)
- Train the Trainers: Door 2 Door
- State Voices Presentation

Groundswell organized a How the 2020 Census Impacts Our Communities webinar that was offered to participating organizations in both the IVE and GOI programs. Recognizing that other shops were providing timely and relevant workshops, Groundswell also partnered with Social Movement Technologies and RoadMap, two leading movement resources, to offer participating organizations webinars about how to use CRM databases to save resources and build power, and how to combat sexual harassment in social justice organizations, respectively.

Base-building and Leadership Development

Base-building and leadership development are essential components for successful IVE implementation. Without a robust base of leaders, organizations cannot have the reach and power needed to win on RJ issues. In addition, when an organization has a base membership of grassroots leaders, voter engagement programs can provide opportunities for staff and grassroots members to create a stronger shared political analysis and vehicles to hold decision-makers accountable and move that analysis into policy. Voter engagement campaigns can also provide opportunities for improving hard skills such as public speaking, recruitment of new supporters, and presentation and facilitation. This, coupled with campaigns to advance dignity, respect, and liberation for women of color, low-income women, and transgender people, builds the legitimacy of the organization in the community, which increases its ability to influence decision-makers.

“The way [the] IVE program is designed provides a roadmap to align base-building work and campaign work. It provides ways to connect our membership to an issue-based campaign and helps organizational members see short-term concrete wins that keep them connected long-term.”

— PARTICIPANT IN GROUNDSWELL’S IVE PROGRAM

[11] This quote was taken from an anonymous participant survey conducted by an external evaluator. Anonymity has been maintained as part of that evaluation structure to solicit honest feedback.
In 2018, a majority of our grantees saw growth in the number of new community members taking action in their organizations and communities.

- There was a 41 percent increase in community members who expressed interest in running for office, serving in a policy-making role (board, commissions, etc.), serving on the board of an allied organization, and/or serving as a spokesperson for the issues. (The overall goal was 322 community members across the organizations — 453 community members expressed this type of interest.)

- The largest gains were with the “very engaged” category of members — people who were already taking action and participating in the organizations’ initiatives. Throughout all grantees, the IVE cohort outperformed their engagement goals for this category by 155 percent. (The overall goal was 1,210 individuals engaged in Level 2 of the leadership development scale — the actual was 3,091 individuals.)

A Story from the Field

Khmer Girls in Action

Khmer Girls in Action (KGA) is a premier youth organizing group and reproductive justice organization based in Long Beach and led by young Southeast Asian women. KGA has a multi-issue approach that includes a strong track record in defending abortion rights. One of the keys to its base-building success has been structuring campaigns around top-priority issues for Southeast Asian youth.

KGA joined Groundswell’s IVE program in 2017 with some experience in civic engagement and reproductive justice wins, but without access to its own voter database to capture the work it had already accomplished. Like many smaller

[12] People who are actively involved are those who respond to an organization’s outreach, take concrete action to engage with the activities of the organization, and can be mobilized in a campaign.

[13] Very engaged leaders are those who attend trainings, engage in policy fights (legislative or institutional), meet with public officials, represent the organization with allies and in other venues, and facilitate meetings of the base.
nonprofits, KGA relied on access to voter lists and databases from larger organizations, which kept the information that KGA entered as its members contacted voters. Building infrastructure to support operations was the overarching goal for KGA. Providing access to PDI (the California-based voter database) with training and ongoing support through IVE coach Tanzila "Taz" Ahmed allowed KGA to hit the ground running in its first year in the program, making 6,340 voter contacts in eight months. The following year (2018), KGA almost doubled this total, making 10,385 voter contacts. Not only did they reinforce and scale operations, KGA experienced a huge win on their long-standing Invest in Youth campaign, which is led by youth in their program. The militarization of communities of color through overpolicing and mass incarceration looms large for the neighborhoods where KGA organizes, with large numbers of youth and their families affected. KGA successfully organized to divert city funds away from punitive approaches to crime and into positive investments in youth services. In September 2018, the Long Beach Children and Youth Fund was established with seed funding of $200,000 for a city-wide strategic planning process for children and youth development services.

The commitment of KGA to reproductive justice manifests not only in how they are centering reproductive healthcare in the negotiation that will happen in healthcare services for youth (including advocating to include contraception, comprehensive sex education, and other reproductive health services and information), but also in how they, like other reproductive justice groups, put reproductive health issues in a broader RJ context, acknowledging that unintended pregnancy, STIs, and poor reproductive health outcomes do not exist in a vacuum but are tightly linked to the degree to which youth have access to opportunity and upward mobility generally (for example, education, employment, skill building, leadership development, etc.).

“People think that you need to have older people registering voters, but KGA has shown that there are great ways to include young people. Many policies affect them and they want to have a voice, but they can’t vote — but they can go door to door and do phone banking. KGA has consistently been working with under–18-year-olds to do electoral work. It’s important not just to build up youth — they are also talking about policies that affect them. Young people today are future voters, and this is the best way to create a new generation of civically empowered people."

— TANZILA “TAZ” AHMED
IVE COACH, KGA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KHMER GIRLS IN ACTION VOTER CONTACTS 2017-2018</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VOTER CONTACTS</td>
<td>6,340</td>
<td>10,385</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
IVE Impact

Given that 2018 was a major election year, the IVE program focused on preparing groups to help their communities surmount rampant voter suppression efforts. By leveraging the attention that the national election generated in the media and among the public, IVE organizations focused on turnout of their communities. To position organizations to maximize momentum of the election year, adjustments to the annual work plan were made. These changes, such as requiring groups to run at least one dedicated issue-based campaign and one or two nonpartisan Get Out the Vote campaigns, enabled groups to focus on GOTV planning and implementation. The IVE work plan is the guiding document that IVE coaches and organizations create together. It includes their baseline numbers from which to project new goals as they enter the following year.

There were two opportunities to implement nonpartisan GOTV programs in 2018 — for the primary and general elections. The purpose of GOTV campaigns is to ensure maximum voter turnout of a targeted group of historically underrepresented voters by utilizing specific nonpartisan tactics, such as encouraging voters to vote early and providing information about how and where to do so, walking voters through a vote plan for Election Day, providing polling location information, and focusing strictly on getting voters to polls. Issue education that includes getting voters to pledge to vote happens throughout the year and in the weeks leading up to GOTV. The operation then shifts gears to mobilization only, to ensure that voters have all the information and encouragement needed to get to the polls.

As trust and relationships with voters grow with year-round engagement, IVE organizations leveraged the urgency of the election year to turn out their communities at high rates. To assess the efficacy of participating IVE organizations’ GOTV operations, we instituted an internal metric called “program impact,” which is the percentage of people contacted who were identified to vote and actually turned out to vote. Program impact is calculated only after election results are certified and made available to organizations in the Voter Action Network (VAN).

At the time of writing this report, only 10 participating IVE states had election results available in the VAN and PDI, and we can demonstrate that half of the IVE cohort made a 72 percent impact in targeted communities where they contacted voters multiple times. As comparison, some communities of color turned out at or below an average rate of 30 percent during the last midterm election in 2014. This clearly demonstrates that year-round civic engagement and focused GOTV operations are effective at dramatically increasing voter turnout; it also shows the efficacy of the technical assistance that our capacity-building program provides. IVE organizations are building year-round operations that are increasingly agile at strategically organizing, motivating, and turning out historically underrepresented voters.

Voter Contacts
In 2018, the IVE cohort nearly doubled the amount of voter contacts from the previous year. This indicates that organizations are honing their operations and fully utilizing the coaching hours, training, and other technical assistance we provide to build upon their baselines each year. Over time and with consistent practice, evaluation, and planning, IVE organizations are gaining the experience and know-how to build their organizations at a different scale. It takes multiyear investment and at least three cycles of practice to realize the level of organization needed to make greater impact, leverage additional funding, and engage many thousands more community members and voters.

We can proudly state that the current IVE cohort is positioned to take on even-greater fights and build their capacity to the next level. We have identified needs and requests of organizations who are ready for expanded capacity building, as shown in the IVE Evaluation (see p. 27).

### Issue Organizing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISSUE AND ACTION IDs</th>
<th>RJ ISSUE SUPPORT IDs</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>72,682</td>
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Recognizing the need to grow the RJ movement, organizations use the systematic approach required to do voter engagement for education on intersectional issues. Canvassers and other participants engage historically underrepresented community members and encourage them to vote regardless of whether they are supportive of, or even understand, reproductive justice. When talking to people on the phone, at their homes, or on the street, canvassers provide all election-related information before even mentioning issues such as reproductive justice. Then, after registering the person to vote or encouraging a voter to cast a ballot, they ask whether the voter supports the organization's reproductive justice issues.

These issue identification numbers show that support for reproductive justice issues skyrocketed from 2016 to 2018. For example, during Women With A Vision’s GOTV campaign in the fall of 2018, workers asked voters on the phones and at the doors if they would support efforts to address health concerns of incarcerated women — and 75 percent said yes. This year, WWAV will follow up with these supportive individuals to build relationships, do more education about this issue, and potentially activate them to attend a meeting or rally in support of their campaign.

The progress in RJ issue support is due, in part, to grantees integrating voter engagement more effectively throughout an organization. IVE groups continue to use a robust year-round organizing and voter engagement strategy with clear benchmarks to engage people in more in-depth conversations about abortion access, comprehensive sex education, healthcare access, and reproductive care for women in prison and to increase support for their organizations’ respective issues. The next step will be for groups to determine the leadership development pathways for these newly identified people.

Because Groundswell does not prescribe certain messaging, organizations are able to experiment with messaging and work with coaches to concentrate on what resonates with a given community. These data also show an increased maturation of the groups in the IVE program and indicate an increased understanding of the tools and confidence in their abilities.
Relationship Development

From 2017 to 2018, IVE organizations increased their numbers in each of the relationship components that are so vital to the IVE model as a whole: leadership development, partner/ally development, and elected official engagement. Partnerships are especially key to the IVE work that our organizations do, since it cannot be done in a vacuum. For El Pueblo in North Carolina that meant working with SisterSong North Carolina and NARAL Pro-Choice America on an IVE door canvass in support of a campaign being led by SisterSong North Carolina (a GOI participating organization), to raise awareness of the problem of incarcerated pregnant people being shackled. The team had a strong, intergenerational group of canvassers and was able to partner Spanish-dominant leaders with leaders who were more comfortable in English. Although it was challenging to put together the script, El Pueblo canvassers reported that they felt very comfortable with raising awareness about this issue and actually preferred having more repro-focused conversations at the door rather than on the phone, because that approach felt more accessible.

[14] Base supporters are people who are actively involved in the activities of the organization. They are the people who are responsive to outreach, take concrete action to engage with the activities of the organization, and can be mobilized in a campaign.
External Evaluation

The reproductive justice field is in a period of constantly navigating attacks and conservative attempts to remove access and rights. Because of this, and because we recognize that the organizations we support know best how to move forward in ways that build power for their communities, Groundswell seeks to be responsive to the needs surfacing in the field and being expressed by grantee organizations. In 2018, Groundswell worked with Mari Ryono, an organizational development consultant, to conduct an anonymous evaluation of the capacity-building programs. The evaluation focuses on collecting feedback from grantee partners on the training, coaching, and overall capacity building provided through the Integrated Voter Engagement program and the Grassroots Organizing Institute. The goal of the evaluation is to learn how the offerings are matching the needs of the grantees to inform and help staff adjust programs as needed to support the field better.

Overall, groups provided high ratings for the IVE program, especially for grant support, hands-on support, in-person convenings, and coaching via phone or video chat with coaches.

IVE PROGRAM ELEMENTS EVALUATION

Grantees emphasized Groundswell’s transformational IVE approach for how it honors the wisdom of women of color-led and trans people of color-led groups and their knowledge about what works on the ground. They talked about how meaningful it is that Groundswell Fund is a different kind of funder and supports them to do integrated voter engagement in ways that are comprehensive and rooted in their values and visions for social change.

Two areas did not score as highly as other components: mind-body practices and webinars. Groundswell made mind-body supports such as Forward Stance available to interested grantees in the IVE program but only three elected to access these offerings. Grantees also said they wanted a larger menu of options from which to choose. Therefore, the scoring for this component does not accurately reflect the experience of mind-body support because it was unevenly accessed by groups in the cohort. Secondly, webinars did not score as highly because organizations were inundated with webinar options and election year activities. Attendance at webinars was low compared to very high turnout rates to our bi-annual convenings, for example, in which training, planning, and peer-sharing in person were most successful.

Overall, groups were very proud of the degree to which they have been able to integrate IVE in their organizations.
Organizations commented specifically on the special and powerful energy they feel when they are able to share their successful models with their peers.

Grantee organizations specifically highlighted Groundswell’s general grants and field support, Groundswell’s support to expand their programs, and coaching as areas they benefitted from greatly. They talked about having grown or developed through the policy victories they experienced while involved in the IVE program, as well as their increased influence over elected officials.

Grantee organizations offered suggestions in areas they want to strengthen in their work through the IVE program. Here are the key takeaways:

- **Organizations receive support with voter file databases, strategic use of data and technology, measuring impact, and additional data office hours for real-time assistance with VAN or PDI during campaign periods.** As they learn to understand the critical importance of data to overall strategy, organizations have expressed the need to go deeper and build more-lasting data infrastructures for future work. For many organizations, hiring a year-round data coordinator/manager position is not financially possible but is needed.

- **Without dedicated data and organizing staff, year-round engagement with voters and community members after an election year is a daunting task that requires creativity and resources to maintain momentum through base-building activities.** Organizations expressed the need to reinforce base-building work that takes place during off-election years, including resources to do necessary leadership development, civic education, and organizing to bring many thousands more voters and community members into the process of building the organization at a new scale.

- **As RJ organizations are actively building their IVE muscle, opportunities to engage in more-consistent movement-wide strategy conversations with other grantees and peer power-builders become essential.** In 2018, we offered the IVE Program Exchange, which pairs reproductive justice IVE organizations with seasoned power-building organizations in the larger social justice sector on the ground to learn best practices and observe firsthand how organizations at different scales implement the work. As part of the exchange, IVE organizations provide training on reproductive justice to the organizations they visit. Organizations on both sides have requested more of this type of leadership exchange.

- **Organizations also expressed the need for more strategy support to take on integrated voter engagement in a way that builds power for the RJ movement as a whole.** Organizations want their IVE operations to reflect RJ values at every level, and to ensure that the leadership development and civic education they have always prioritized are part of the integration process. Doing this on a larger scale requires that organizations reconfigure the methods they have been using and adjust for the capacity needed to implement. While learning and practicing IVE, they are meeting the challenge of doing leadership development with equal intensity as scale grows and capacity thins. Through the evaluation process, we have found that RJ organizations need organizational
development support to be in full power of the integration process, to be able to better direct their strategy.

- **Peer learning and sharing are key to the learning process.** Grantees requested more opportunities for peer-to-peer learning through various modes, including both in-person and virtually.

- **Organizations want to maximize their 501(c)(3) status to further strategy and to do so in ways that are legally compliant.** We recognize the need for legal coaching to understand the ways in which organizations can engage on highly politicized issues year-round, in and out of election years.

### Growth and Challenges

#### Increased Staff Operational Capacity

For some IVE groups, 2018 was a year of growth that brought new challenges. These organizations not only increased their programs and voter contacts; many also expanded either core staff or canvassing operations, hiring temporary or part-time staff from their communities. While expansion and growth of organizational power is integral to the vision of the IVE program, it comes with its own set of difficulties. Groundswell provides participating organizations with general support grants as well as field grants, but many organizations have little to no support to manage the infrastructure expansion and contraction that happens in key electoral cycles. For some of our grantees, this is further exacerbated by an influx of canvassing staff in their organizations and in the community at large. (This expansion/contraction is felt across the civic engagement field and is not unique to Groundswell grantees.)

#### Data Management

Participating organizations faced the ongoing challenges with voter file data in 2018, which is notoriously poor for communities of color and filled with inaccurate phone numbers and addresses. Groundswell has been working with data vendors to address these issues in time for the 2019 cohort work.

In addition, the systematic disenfranchisement of Black and Native peoples, as well as naturalized citizens, can render target communities (those with high numbers of infrequent voters) invisible. For Western Native Voice, which joined the IVE program in 2018, the goal was to turn Native Americans living on reservations out to vote. However, the voter database available to target voters does not include voters who live on reservations. Additionally, reservation residences do not have formal addresses, making the process of targeting voters nearly impossible. To meet this challenge, Western Native Voice used Facebook and Facebook Messenger as a way to meet potential new voters and conducted personal visits to voters living on the reservation.

#### Innovative Use of Technology

Groundswell focuses on being responsive to the field by providing groups with opportunities to innovate and use new strategies to reach their communities. Many participating organizations face particular difficulties in contacting youth and hard-to-reach communities. Based on a request for support from a grantee organization, Groundswell ran a three-month pilot program (from October–December 2018) to test the use of Hustle, a text-to-text messaging tool, as a supplement to traditional voter engagement strategies. This technology enables groups to make contact with those who no longer use landlines or who have been forced to relocate because of gentrification or other economic forces.

Four organizations participated in the pilot program (Black Women for Wellness, California Healthy Nail Salon Collaborative, National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health, and WV FREE). The four organizations sent direct text messages to 7,999 members during the pilot period, with an engagement rate of 15.8 percent. Of the members who responded, 29.2 percent took a positive action, such as agreeing to vote or volunteering to phone bank or canvass. In general, the organizations found that people were much more responsive when they were contacted via text-to-text messaging with information about the organization than they were when contacted by phone or at the door.
Groundswell recognizes that this digital tool is not a replacement for door-to-door contact but rather, an innovative addition to traditional organizing. We will continue tracking the positive reception and response rates.

Lessons Learned

Since its inception, Groundswell’s IVE program has understood that organizations on the ground know best how to engage and organize their communities. This is proven again and again. As one example from 2018, several IVE participating organizations recognized the importance and effectiveness of conducting field work either intergenerationally or in the language of those communities they were working in — approaches that are often overlooked by more-conventional voter engagement campaigns.

Also, 2018 proved again that experimentation and innovation are key to building power. Our groups need the space and time to see which tactics are effective and what method of issue messaging resonates with their communities. Grantees also need the flexibility to recalibrate based on what they are hearing from their members, taking the time to reassess and improve with each iteration of their campaigns. For example, the National Asian Pacific American Women’s Forum (NAPAWF), a multistate organization focusing on reproductive health and rights, economic justice, and immigrant rights, said that when gathering petition signatures in support of funding comprehensive sex education in schools, the script language they were using was not resonating with individuals in the field. They decided to switch tactics — a change in approach that was informed by conversations in the field where it became apparent that their members were increasingly responsive to language about the renewal of the Violence Against Women’s Act (VAWA). In talking about VAWA, canvassers were able to express the connection between the Violence Against Women’s Act, funding comprehensive sex education, and the broader importance of fighting for reproductive justice rights.

Lastly, with growth in capacity comes the need to ensure that there is continued and in-depth training for field staff. Many of our grantees ran field canvasses that were the largest they had seen to date; with that came some logistical challenges that they were able to learn from and incorporate into their training plans moving forward.

With an eye on both short- and long-term wins, Groundswell’s IVE program looks forward to continuing to support the organizations moving this important work in the field.
GRASSROOTS ORGANIZING INSTITUTE

The Grassroots Organizing Institute (GOI) provides grants, training, convenings, and coaching to support reproductive justice organizations and aligned organizations seeking to build grassroots power for systemic change.

Through the GOI, organizations deepen their understanding and practice of the fundamentals of effective grassroots organizing and advocacy, including how to develop grassroots leaders and a grassroots base, identify issue priorities and demands, conduct community asset mapping, develop campaigns, and analyze the political landscape.

Now in its third year, the GOI supported a cohort of 15 organizations, including six new organizations, in 2018. There was a dramatic increase in the number of participants involved in grantee organizations from 2017 to 2018 — from 9,822 to 18,230. Organizations made contact with 17,127 new people, an increase of 119 percent from the previous year. Participating organizations also surpassed their base supporter goals. In 2018, of the new people engaged, 5,726 became base supporters — individuals who consistently helped drive the work of these organizations forward by giving donations, volunteering their time to make calls to legislators, recruiting others to join the organization, leading fundraising efforts, and more. These base supporters are people who come together in their communities to learn from each other, connect their personal stories to develop policy agendas, and take action.

Organizations that participated in the GOI program achieved a number of important policy wins — from ensuring access to abortion and calling on the government to repeal the Hyde Amendment, to securing access to parental leave for young parents and requiring that school districts provide comprehensive sex health education and HIV prevention education, to emphasizing students’ right to control their own bodies and identities and ensuring that people can self-determine their gender identity and expression, to protecting sanctuary city policies and upholding the rights of people receiving welfare and preventing the shackling of pregnant women who are incarcerated, among others.

“We have used the GOI models to help us do work planning, define levels of engagement, create a leadership pipeline, and balance organizing work with direct service provision ... so many things!”

— PARTICIPANT IN GROUNDSWELL’S GOI PROGRAM

[15] This quote was taken from an anonymous participant survey conducted by an external evaluator. Anonymity has been maintained as part of that evaluation structure to solicit honest feedback.
The 2018 GOI cohort included the following organizations, including six new organizations.\[^{16}\]

1. ACCESS Women’s Health Justice (Oakland, CA)
2. Access Reproductive Care (ARC) – Southeast (Atlanta, GA)
3. Cabrini Green Legal Aid (CGLA) (Chicago, IL)
4. Carolina Youth Action Project (CYAP)** (Charleston, SC)
5. Correctional Association of New York (New York, NY)
6. Gender Justice Nevada (GJNV)** (Las Vegas, NV)
7. Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health (ICAH) (Chicago, IL)
8. Miami Workers Center (MWC) (Miami, FL)
9. Positive Women’s Network-USA** (PWN) (Denver, CO)
10. SisterSong (Atlanta, GA)
11. Sylvia Rivera Law Project (SRLP) (New York, NY)
12. The Afia Center** (Dallas, TX)
13. The Audre Lorde Project** (ALP) (New York, NY)
14. Transgender, Gender Variant and Intersex (TGI) Justice Project** (San Francisco, CA)
15. Trans Queer Pueblo (Phoenix, AZ)

In addition to an expansion of organizations supported in the GOI program, 2018 also saw a 100 percent increase in the dollar amount of general support grants (resulting in a total outlay of approximately $400,000 in direct funding and support to GOI participants) and almost double the investment in general operations, field grants, and coaching hours. Each organization received:

- A one-year general support grant of $30,000 to support the staffing and infrastructure needed to implement a successful grassroots organizing program — an increase of 100 percent compared to $15,000 provided in 2017.

- A field grant of $10,000 to implement new recruitment field drives — doubled from $5,000 provided in 2017. Field plans include goals such as new RJ issue supporters and the number of people mobilized into action as a result of their engagement with the participating organization. As part of the 2018 learning, organizations were required to conduct two recruitment drives, with a focus on rigorous follow-up strategies and tactics.

- 100 hours of coaching with a designated GOI coach to develop and implement a strong work plan — an increase of nearly 100 percent compared to the 55 hours received in 2017. These hours also include two in-person site visits to provide coaching opportunities for deeper training and engagement with organizational leaders, staff, and volunteers.\[^{17}\]

\[^{16}\] Two asterisks (**) identify a new GOI organization in 2018.

\[^{17}\] A roster of the 2018 GOI coaches can be found in the Appendix, p. 58.
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• Two three-day convenings, which provide a space for a cohort to collaborate with expert grassroots organizing practitioners and peers to deepen alignment and integration of grassroots base-building theory and practice in their work. All 15 organizations attended both convenings, with two participants from each organization.

• Two webinars for continued learning about organizing theory and practice.

• Resources to improve data management effectiveness, including coaching and training with data management experts, and support to upgrade or invest in customer relationship management (CRM) systems.

• Mind-body practice offerings during convenings. Groundswell contracted with the Movement Strategy Center’s Dana Ginn-Paredes to lead Forward Stance to support participants in developing practices that promote resiliency and well-being.

Coaches, Convenings, and Webinars

A signature feature of the Groundswell GOI program is our commitment to 1:1 coaching with seasoned organizers. Coaches work directly with up to two key staff members in the grantee organization to develop and implement a year-long organizing work plan. Each work plan includes benchmarks for new outreach and recruitment, leadership development, and relationship-building with ally organizations and elected officials. Coaches and organizations are matched based on the organization’s goals for capacity building, key challenges, and the expertise and experience of the coach. It is rare that coaches and grantee organizations are located in the same city or region of the country, so most coaching happens remotely. This reality is one of the reasons that we provided almost twice as many coaching hours in 2018 as in 2017: to increase the number of in-person site visits and one-on-one training opportunities. In-person site visits have proven to be a critical component of the program structure, giving coaches the ability to provide a broader range of technical assistance for deeper infrastructure and capacity building, including facilitation of strategic planning with staff and boards, and opportunities to observe organizers and grassroots leaders in action, give feedback, and model core organizing skills. Tailored, individualized coaching support provides the foundation for groups to engage in deeper civic education to understand organizing theory and collaborate with their peers to develop and refine strategies for practical application of the tools shared in GOI.

In 2018, each of the two three-day convenings and the webinar contained a learning component connected to the three strategies of social change that lead Groundswell’s framework for organizing: shifting power relationships so historically marginalized groups have the ability to act and improve conditions in society; systems change through law and policy; and changing the dominant narratives — that is, winning hearts and minds. The winter webinar, Grassroots Campaigns for Social Change, focused on how to plan and execute campaigns that center grassroots power. An overview of the three strategies was used to contextualize the importance of shifting power relationships and how that shift could be leveraged to win policy

[18] This quote was taken from an anonymous participant survey conducted by an external evaluator. Anonymity has been maintained as part of that evaluation structure to solicit honest feedback.
or legal changes. Groups also engaged in small group discussions to assess how each strategy applies to their work, learn about their peers’ experiences in applying them, and share the challenges they face with integration. At the spring convening, a general session offered an opportunity for groups to use the framework to analyze two campaign case studies and how each strategy was deployed or could have been used to strengthen the success of the campaign.

Finally, recognizing that progressive groups are often unable to use these strategies fully because they are caught in a cycle of waging reactive, defensive fights, a one-day collaborative workshop session at the fall convening supported participants in taking a step back and thinking more critically about the bigger purpose of what organizing can be within their communities and organizations. Groups were encouraged to practice using strategic thinking skills for visioning, living their values, and developing higher purpose in the long term. Facilitator Dana Ginn Paredes led the cohort to envision what social change would look like in 50, 30, and 10 years from the current moment and what organizing would need to look like for those changes to occur.

Other convening workshops included:

- Intro to Power Analysis
- Storytelling for RJ Impact
- Healing Justice
- The Power and Practice of 1:1s
- Tracking and Developing Movement Leaders
- Member/Activist Recruitment Drives

COACHES’ CORNER

EUGENIO SMITH (they/them) was trained as a coach in their early days as a field organizer in statewide equality groups. As part of the GOI coaching team, Eugenio has supported the Audre Lorde Project (ALP) to reaffirm grassroots base-building as one of the organization’s core strategies and create systems for tracking and managing their organizing work more clearly across multiple programs. Eugenio built ALP a tracker sheet that works with the organization’s database to help evaluate and record organizing relationships and progress in real time. The tracker has also been a useful tool for ALP to track organizational capacity and base-building in a new, more user-friendly way.

“My approach to coaching is always focused on asking: What do you want to get out of this? How can I support you best? I love helping other people shine. As a coach with Groundswell, not only are we helping other people shine, but you know they are sharing the shine back and essentially elevating the entire community with shine.”

“Groundswell is the safest place I have ever worked as a trans person who is a white-passing person of color in terms of being seen for my full identity. I think that is also true for the groups that share those identities and represent those identities — trans or gender nonconforming people of color. My groups and I talk about this a lot. This is a big win for Groundswell.”

ABOVE: GOI and IVE coach Eugenio Smith explaining the important parts of successful deeper engagement asks.
• Winning Progressive Laws and Policies for RJ
• Database Systems and Protocol
• Deepening Our Understanding of Authentic Member Engagement

GOI participants also joined the IVE cohort for a webinar entitled How the 2020 Census Impacts Our Communities.

Data Management

A functioning database is critical for tracking and communicating with leaders and community members. Although organizations collect information from possible supporters year-round, many do not have a centralized database system. Without such a system, many organizations not only miss opportunities for activating supporters; they also lose the ability to deepen the education of their communities through regular communication. Without effective databases, it is also difficult to track trends in supporter participation, which hinders the development of strategic and targeted base-building field plans.

Groundswell’s GOI program has attempted to bridge the gap between need and access by providing database access and support for organizations ready to upgrade their current database systems or invest in their first customer relationship management (CRM) system. Five organizations received one-on-one coaching from a data management consultant to support them in becoming more effective in technology strategy, planning, and use.

GOI Exchange Experience

Based on an understanding of the importance of learning among organizations to ensure that we are building on each other’s successes and avoiding pitfalls, GOI hosted its first-ever exchange in 2018, where groups in the cohort visited an organization with strong grassroots organizing capacity and experience. Six groups (ACCESS Women’s Health Justice, the Afiya Center, Carolina Youth Action Project, Gender Justice Nevada, Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health, and SisterSong) were funded to travel to Long Beach, CA, and spend two days with Groundswell Fund grantee Khmer Girls in Action, to learn more about their efforts to use a grassroots campaign strategy to pass a more-equitable Long Beach city budget that prioritizes the needs of young people.

The cohort members gained a deeper understanding of KGA’s strategies for organizing and leadership development through hands-on experience. During the visit, they worked alongside KGA’s leaders and staff to mobilize grassroots activists for a budget hearing and campaign action to move a local council person to support their demands. The GOI cohort stood with KGA leaders at the hearing, where local community members learned about the city budgeting process through popular education theatre and shared input to refine the campaign demands.

“The coaching provided by Lisa Jervis[19] gave our finance and operations manager both theoretical and pragmatic tools for data management and analysis. Those six months have been foundational, not only for her as a new staff member at ACCESS, but for ACCESS as an organization. With Lisa’s support, we now have a comprehensive IT inventory, are in the midst of a database update, and are using the strategic planning process to inform the architecture of our new website. We’ve only just begun, and thanks to her, there is so much on the horizon. We only wish there were more sessions so we could continue to use her guidance throughout the optimization process for all these exciting new changes.”

— ACCESS: WOMEN’S HEALTH JUSTICE

[19] Lisa Jervis provided coaching to grantee organizations on data management strategies.
Field Grants

In addition to the staffing and infrastructure grant, the GOI field grant provides resources for groups to conduct two field outreach drives to boost recruitment of new supporters. Each GOI participating organization must articulate clear goals for reaching and engaging new RJ issue supporters, as well as goals for the number of people they will mobilize into action as a result. As we iterate the GOI, we have realized the need to encourage clear, targeted activities in the field plan as additional benchmarks. Therefore, coaching for these efforts focuses on the science of setting realistic benchmarks and targeting a critical mass of a key constituency group, how to identify strong potential activists or leads, and methods for systematic follow-up.

Stories from the Field

Positive Women’s Network

The Positive Women’s Network (PWN) seeks to prepare and involve women living with HIV, in all their diversity and at all levels of policy and decision-making, to improve the quality of their lives. PWN, which came into the GOI program in 2018, has focused on advancing important legislative advocacy at the state and federal levels and organizing a base. In 2018, PWN took the lead to organize the HIV community to elevate their activity in the midterm election cycle. Through this work, they learned that many HIV organizations, especially service providers, were reluctant to get involved with electoral organizing for fear of compromising their 501(c)(3) status. In addition to running their own electoral organizing project through state-based chapters, PWN created a webinar series and toolkit to help the HIV community understand what civic engagement activities are permissible under 501(c)(3) guidelines, such as voter education, voter registration, and disseminating candidate questionnaires.

They also created a national HIV Get Out the Vote day, on October 24, in which they called on HIV organizations and advocates to demonstrate their commitment to the 2018 election cycle. They were floored by the response. Partners took this on in different ways: Some registered voters and organized phone banks; at least two organizations created their own memes; and many organizations sent emails to their lists about the importance of the elections, voting, and checking their voter registration status.

PWN’s Colorado chapter worked with their coach, Lisa María Castellanos, to connect their legislative wins to an organizing strategy by using organizing as a year-round methodology (more than a set of approaches). This included examining how to assess their most-engaged leaders and create opportunities for their members to develop leadership, and focusing on expanding their organizing strategy beyond their demographic. The organization increased the number of leads identified (people who want to get involved in the organization) through their field outreach by

“Although our team had wanted to shift our work to become more organizing-focused, we needed support and guidance to make that vision a reality. Our GOI coach has challenged and encouraged us to envision how we could use our civic education efforts to center organizing into our work. Thanks to our coach, our team has now structured our youth initiatives around two youth-developed campaigns and solidified multiple points of entry for young people to get involved.”

— PARTICIPANT IN GROUNDSWELL’S GOI PROGRAM

This quote was taken from an anonymous participant survey conducted by an external evaluator. Anonymity has been maintained as part of that evaluation structure to solicit honest feedback.

INSET TOP: PWN member Mary Jane Maestas educating State Senator about Medicaid Work Requirement impacts on their base.
INSET BOTTOM: PWN member Davina Conner answering questions about polling locations and giving out water and snacks for voters waiting in line on November 6, 2018.

[20]
342 percent (from 60 in 2017 to 265 in 2018). They also increased their total number of grassroots leaders by 236 percent (from 55 in 2017 to 185 in 2018) and significantly strengthened relationships with elected officials and allied organizations.

In total, PWN's chapters and leaders reached well over 10,000 voters, many from underserved and low-turnout communities, ensuring they knew their rights as voters, what issues and which candidates were on their ballots, and how to make sure their votes counted.

PWN's South Carolina chapter launched and is leading a statewide HIV decriminalization coalition led by people living with HIV. In California, their work contributed to ensuring that CA AB 2601 passed, which requires that all students in grades 7 to 12 (including those in charter schools) receive comprehensive sexual health education and HIV prevention education.

“Originally, nobody from the Colorado chapter really wanted to knock [on] doors. We were afraid and also didn’t really understand it as a strategy of community organizing not connected to candidate outreach, so we were reluctant, especially during the initial web-based coaching. However, through the support of our amazing coach Lisa [María Castellanos], and by starting to actually knock on doors, we came to understand that people were actually starving to have meaningful conversations about the issues affecting them. We started to see it not as bothering someone, but rather, as giving them an opportunity to share their concerns and get involved. Once Lisa was able to come and do an in-person training with us and we shared our successes in connecting with folks, there was such enthusiasm for door knocking as a strategy.”

— POSITIVE WOMEN’S NETWORK-COLORADO

LISA MARÍA CASTELLANOS (she/her/they/them) is a Xikana senior organizer with extensive organizing experience. Through her coaching relationship, she has helped the Positive Women’s Network Colorado chapter build up a monthly door-knocking campaign to reach rural communities in Colorado as part of a year-round organizing strategy.

“Because there are more people they [PWN-Colorado] want to recruit through door knocking, we set up monthly trainings to engage more door-knockers. In 2018, we had one mega door-knocking training online. In 2019, we’ll do a tailored online door-knocking training once a month just prior to their Saturday door knocking outing every month until June; then in August, they will do a three-week door-knocking blitz in Southern Colorado, because they want to engage more of rural Colorado. Throughout this time, we will practice follow-up tools. We’ll get into how you do a personal visit, and how you establish and consolidate a group of people in a rural area as a way to build outside of State legislative sessions.

“I’m an old-school organizer — I was trained in the ’80s. I’m excited about the technical tools we have to scale up our work now. But that doesn’t mean you sacrifice the need for relationship-building. In my coaching I emphasize our collective need to move away from extractive models toward models that embrace relationships and radical hospitality. Over the years our base-building models have become models that extract labor in order to move a campaign forward. I believe that as organizers working in radical accompaniment with communities we must model relationship-building for others so we are replicating an approach that is treating people with dignity.”

COACHES’ CORNER
Miami Workers Center

The Miami Workers Center (MWC) was very successful in expanding its base of domestic and home-care workers in 2018 — increasing its base supporters from 300 to 500 in one year. Through extensive canvassing operations in neighborhoods with high concentrations of housecleaning and care workers, they made more than 4,500 new contacts in their canvassing (more than doubling their numbers from 2017) and collected nearly 700 phone numbers. As part of these efforts, they trained domestic worker canvassers in how to identify survivors and victims of wage theft and other workplace abuses. They estimate that nearly 1,000 domestic workers participated in at least one MWC event or activity in 2018, and nearly 75 workers emerged as very active members and leaders in multiple activities and events. These represent substantial gains in their active base from the previous two-year period.

MWC continued outreach, legal assistance, and rights training with workers through its new Valiente Worker Rights Program. In partnership with the Community Justice Project (CJP) and others, MWC created a Wage Theft Toolkit, a booklet that will be printed in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole to help workers identify wage theft at a glance.
“[A] highlight of leadership development within our organization was that of a domestic worker, Bertilda. Earlier in the year, she approached us after what she felt was a wrongful termination after 17 years of working with one family. As Florida is an at-will state, we quickly realized that she didn’t have a legal case for wrongful termination, but definitely had a strong wage theft case. We supported her through this legal process and resolved her case fairly quickly. Since resolving her case, she’s become one of our most-dedicated and involved members, attending multiple trainings and conferences on our behalf, educating herself in this movement, and empowering herself to make a change for domestic workers.”

— MIAMI WORKERS CENTER

Overall, MWC trained and/or assisted a total of approximately 50 domestic workers on wage theft, retaliation, trafficking, and other workplace abuses in 2018. CJP also submitted a wage theft complaint to the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), on behalf of an MWC domestic worker member, and performed research after the DOL issued a refusal to investigate. This case and MWC’s research-supported advocacy, highlighting the need for a county certification policy, led to a significant victory in 2018.

MWC has been advocating for a county-level policy change to improve the process of certifying domestic workers for U/T visas. They learned in spring 2018 that the Miami-Dade Department of Labor office would no longer investigate domestic worker workplace abuse cases as part of a decision to focus on 13 other sectors where the department determined that widespread abuse is occurring. Despite MWC’s objection that domestic workers are a class that is most at risk due to the isolated nature of the work, the DOL closed out all pending cases MWC had for U/T visa certification. In response to this misguided decision, MWC intensified its efforts to have the mayor appoint a U/T visa certifier to a nonlaw enforcement agency within the county. Through a coalition of organizations, MWC was able to gain funding in the 2019 Miami-Dade County budget for a staffer in the Wage Theft Program of the county’s Consumer Protections Department to certify U/T visas, a significant local policy advocacy victory.

The next step in the process of expanding this practice at the county level is to ensure that a highly qualified person is hired for the new position. In addition, as a result of MWC’s advocacy, the Wage Theft Program will update its questionnaire to include questions about labor trafficking, including but not limited to passport/visa and other document withholdings by the employer.
Gender Justice Nevada

Gender Justice Nevada (GJNV) is a 501(c)(3) created by sex/gender-diverse people for sex/gender-diverse people. They provide direct clinical services, school advocacy, outreach and education, and policy advocacy addressing the identities and issues faced by Nevada’s diverse communities. They offer free therapy groups weekly, including no-cost individual and family therapy services, document change services, advocacy/outreach/training, and a new Youth Empowerment Project.

In 2017, they achieved a significant victory when the Nevada Legislature passed SB 225, which requires all schools in Nevada to implement policies that protect sex/gender-diverse students. During the implementation, however, they were faced with another round of challenges: The Nevada Department of Education wrote a regulation that would require only the bare minimum implementation of the policy.

GJNV joined the GOI program shortly after winning the passage of SB 225 and, through involvement in the program and work with their coach, realized that they had to develop a grassroots organizing strategy to hold the win, force change, and make the victory real in the lives of their constituents. They focused on recruiting people to expand their base and have pressure at the local level to ensure that the feet-dragging and narrowest interpretation of the law didn’t undermine the learning rights of the student community. They mobilized youth and family members to show up at Clark County School District Board hearings in support of creating a local policy for SB 225. The board was forced to meet in bigger venues and even provide “overflow rooms” because of the people GJNV contacted through outreach and activities. Youth testified and gave firsthand accounts of how SB 225 would provide a safe and affirming educational environment for them, and now those sex/gender-diverse youth are empowering other sex/gender-diverse youth to stand up and be heard.

Through their involvement in the GOI program, GJNV has been able to more than double their numbers of leaders. The organization had been interested in integrating service provision and base-building more effectively, but had been uncertain about how to do so. During the week-long exchange with Khmer Girls in Action, Gender Justice Nevada had the opportunity to see grassroots organizing with youth in action, including phone banking for meetings with decision-makers. The experience fundamentally transformed the direction of GJNV. In KGA, they saw an organization also focused on working with youth, but one that built power through grassroots organizing.

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**GENDER JUSTICE NEVADA LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT 2017-2018**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVEL 3</th>
<th>LEVEL 2</th>
<th>LEVEL 1</th>
<th>TOTAL LEADERS</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>BASELINE 2017</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ACTUALS 2018</strong></td>
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<td>123</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>28</td>
<td><strong>212</strong></td>
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“We are excited to report that the Exchange inspired the staff of GJNV to think in new ways about our base membership — especially our youth. The Exchange experience was transformative for our organization on several levels. Most significantly, it inspired our staff to restructure/reallocate our finite resources in support of base-building and leadership development. This critical change has reinvigorated our staff and brought greater clarity to the programming mission of our organization.”

—GENDER JUSTICE NEVADA
On returning to Nevada, GJNV participants in the exchange spoke with their board and decided to reorganize the focus of their work to more effectively integrate service provision and base-building and determined a strategy for grassroots organizing, advocacy, and leadership development with young people.

GVNV has made great strides, both locally — with the Clark County School District implementing its own sex/gender-diverse policy — and at the state level with this bill. The next phase of their work will focus on implementation and compliance, to ensure that all schools are following the law. They will focus on education in the community, to raise awareness and build community collaboration via targeted outreach.

**GOI Impact**

The impact of Groundswell’s work, and that of our grantees, can be seen at local, state, and federal levels. Groundswell understands that consistent base-building and leadership development efforts are a cornerstone for grassroots organizations to build the power that is needed for broader systemic change. An active, politically conscious base of grassroots leaders skilled in the nuts and bolts of organizing can create significant leverage for organizations. The GOI cohort has surpassed its base-building and leadership development goals in leaps and bounds — contributed to by both an expansion of number of organizations in the cohort and an acceleration of the work among returning organizations.

The work of many GOI participating organizations has contributed to ensuring progressive bills, laws, and policy were passed or preventing regressive ones. These are wins for reproductive healthcare access, including abortion access; parenting and birthing rights and the rights of pregnant people; LGBTQI+, transgender, gender nonconforming, and intersex rights; and comprehensive sex education, as well as for movements for racial and immigrant justice, criminal justice reform, and prison abolition.

Federally, SisterSong’s work helped block S 2311, the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act, which would have amended the federal criminal code to make it a crime for any person to perform or attempt to perform an abortion if the probable post-fertilization age of the fetus is 20 weeks or more. Thanks to the efforts of SisterSong, North Carolina prison officials updated their policies to prohibit shackling during labor and limit it during pregnancy. Also in North Carolina, SisterSong contributed to advancing the resolution against the Hyde Amendment, passed by the Durham County commissioners, which calls on the federal government to repeal the Hyde Amendment, passed by the Durham County commissioners, which calls on the federal government to repeal the Hyde Amendment, passed by the Durham County commissioners, which calls on the federal government to repeal the Hyde Amendment, passed by the Durham County commissioners, which calls on the federal government to repeal the Hyde Amendment, passed by the Durham County commissioners, which calls on the federal government to repeal the Hyde Amendment, passed by the Durham County commissioners, which calls on the federal government to repeal the Hyde Amendment, passed by the Durham County commissioners, which calls on the federal government to repeal the Hyde Amendment, passed by the Durham County commissioners, which calls on the federal government to repeal the Hyde Amendment, passed by the Durham County commissioners, which calls on the federal government to repeal the Hyde Amendment, passed by the Durham County commissioners, which calls on the federal government to repeal the Hyde Amendment, passed by the Durham County commissioners, which calls on the federal government to repeal the Hyde Amendment, passed by the Durham County commissioners, which calls on the federal government to repeal the Hyde Amendment, passed by the Durham County commissioners, which calls on the federal government to repeal the Hyde Amendment, passed by the Durham County commissioners, which calls on the federal government to repeal the Hyde Amendment, passed by the Durham County commissioners, which calls on the federal government to repeal the Hyde Amendment, passed by the Durham County commissioners, which calls on the federal government to repeal the Hyde Amendment, passed by the Durham County commissioners, which calls on the federal government to repeal the Hyde Amendment. Thanks to the efforts of SisterSong, North Carolina prison officials updated their policies to prohibit shackling during labor and limit it during pregnancy. Also in North Carolina, SisterSong contributed to advancing the resolution against the Hyde Amendment, passed by the Durham County commissioners, which calls on the federal government to repeal the Hyde Amendment, passed by the Durham County commissioners, which calls on the federal government to repeal the Hyde Amendment. Thanks to SisterSong’s antishackling efforts, NC prison officials updated their policies to prohibit shackling during labor and limit it during pregnancy. Senator Elizabeth Warren called to thank SisterSong personally because this will assist efforts to pass a federal antishackling policy.

**SISTERSONG NORTH CAROLINA**

SisterSong formed a statewide coalition devoted to ending the inhumane practice of shackling incarcerated people during pregnancy, labor, and delivery. Their antishackling campaign uplifted the stories of two NC women who were recently shackled during labor, drew media attention and outrage, and quickly spurred NC prison officials to make a public statement that they would review their shackling policies. The campaign’s earned media hits included two short Now This Her videos of one of SisterSong’s staff members talking about shackling and her own pregnancy experience; both combined have drawn a total of 1.468 million views. Thanks to SisterSong’s antishackling efforts, NC prison officials updated their policies to prohibit shackling during labor and limit it during pregnancy. Senator Elizabeth Warren called to thank SisterSong personally because this will assist efforts to pass a federal antishackling policy.
LARC (long-acting reversible contraceptive) methods to welfare recipients with substance use issues, thus crossing the line from providing access to pressuring or potentially coercing certain forms of birth control for specific populations. SisterSong also created a statewide alliance to join the #TimesUp and #MuteRKelly movements by protesting a Greensboro concert of R&B star and known sexual predator R. Kelly, who has preyed on Black women and girls. This large, cross-sector collaboration and effective use of the media were key to the success. The #MuteRKelly work used in-person protest outside the concert venue to draw media attention and won more than 40 media hits featuring SisterSong, plus many more featuring the partners in the campaign.

In California, ACCESS Women’s Health Justice — along with ACT for Women and Girls, Black Women for Wellness (two organizations in the IVE program), and California Latinas for Reproductive Justice (a Groundswell Catalyst Fund grantee) — cosponsored AB 2289, the Young Parents’ Right to Education Act, which passed. This bill ensured that pregnant and parenting students in junior high and high school would be guaranteed eight weeks of parental leave after giving birth, managing a miscarriage, or having an abortion.

The Positive Women’s Network contributed to the passing of CA AB 2601, which amends the California Healthy Youth Act (CA AB 329), requiring school districts provide all students in grades 7 to 12 comprehensive sexual health education and HIV prevention education by extending this requirement to charter schools.

Gender Justice Nevada’s organizing contributed to the passing of the Clark County School District’s Policy 5138, Addressing the Rights of Students with Diverse Gender Identities and Expressions, which emphasizes a person’s right to control their own body and identity. The policy includes requirements to develop a Gender Support Plan to protect T/GNCI (trans, gender nonconforming, and intersex) students and protect their privacy.

In New York, the Sylvia Rivera Law Project (SRLP) was involved in work to pass A. 588A/S 6176, which increases access to free menstrual products to people incarcerated in New York State prisons. SRLP also worked to advance the amendment to Article 207 of the New York City Health Code, which allows T/GNCI people to update their birth certificates to accurately reflect their gender identities by offering “X” as a gender marker option for nonbinary New Yorkers who do not identify as male or female.

**GROUNDSWELL’S LEADERSHIP LADDER OF ENGAGEMENT**

**Groundswell Fund designed a Leadership Ladder of Engagement to support groups as they track and assign leadership development.** An individual needs to do only one of the activities named in a given category to be assigned to that category. For example, if Janette attends a rally, but also gives testimony at a public hearing, she would categorized as a level 1 leader.

**Level 1: MOST ENGAGED LEADERS:** Run for office, serve in a policymaking role (board, commissions, etc.), serve on the board of an allied organization, serve as a spokesperson for the issues.

**Level 2: VERY ENGAGED LEADERS:** Attend trainings, engage in policy fights (legislative or institutional), meet with public officials, represent the organization with allies and in other venues, facilitate meetings of the base.

**Level 3: ENGAGED LEADERS:** Recruit others to get involved with the organization, participate in door-to-door canvassing, attend events to show public support for RJ issues, make phone calls/send emails to others on the organization’s behalf to gain support, donate personally and move others to donate to the organization.
In Illinois, Cabrini Green Legal Aid’s work contributed to the passing of Public Act 100-0776, a bill that prohibits courts from denying sealing relief due to unpaid fines and fees from past criminal cases. When people are sentenced, they are usually saddled with insurmountable criminal debt. This was a barrier to sealing records, a particular problem after expanding the sealing law in 2017, because people were locked out of accessing relief. Allowing for people to successfully reintegrate and support themselves and their families is a win for the reproductive justice movement and the movement to dismantle the prison industrial complex.

The Miami Workers Center was able to block FL SB 308/HB 9, which would have prohibited sanctuary city policies in Florida and required state and local governmental agencies to comply with and support enforcement of federal immigration law.

The GOI cohort dramatically increased their base-building and leadership development numbers from the previous year. They spoke to 17,127 people (a 119 percent increase since 2017), of whom 5,252 said they were interested

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[21] Base supporters are people who are actively involved in the activities of the organization. They are the people who are responsive to outreach, who take concrete action to engage with the activities of the organization, and who can be mobilized in a campaign.

[22] Total participants is the total unique number of people who participated in the activities of the organization over the year.
in getting involved in the grantee organization (leads). Of the new people engaged in 2018, 5,726 became base supporters — people who consistently take action for reproductive justice.

Organizations also showed significant increases in leadership development at all levels of participation. (For an explanation of leadership levels, see p. 42.) Leadership Level 2, which indicates very engaged leaders, who will attend trainings, engage in policy fights, meet with public officials, represent the organization with allies and other venues, and facilitate meetings of their base, saw an increase of 239 percent.

These dramatic increases in numbers by participants in the GOI program were in part because of the addition of six new organizations to the cohort, which brought the total to 15. In addition, 10 organizations have been in the program since its inception in 2016 and have had the opportunity to improve their outreach, targeting, and communication with constituents. These groups have benefited from the training at the convenings, including how to talk to new contacts, conduct a strong 101 grassroots organizing training, and establish a community-based organization. As a result, the organizations are identifying the issues they are working on more effectively, getting more people engaged in the work, and setting up the necessary infrastructures to increase their power.

**External Evaluation**

Organizations involved in the GOI program highlighted the importance and value of the support they received from coaches in integrating grassroots organizing into the work of their organization. They underscored that the general operating funds allowed them to hire additional staff and compensate community leaders as they should be. In addition, a majority of the groups (eight of the 12 organizations that responded to this question in the evaluation) have been able to leverage the Groundswell partnership for additional funds. Groups mentioned the site visit to learn about Khmer Girls in Action’s organizing model as a particularly important learning opportunity. Grantee partners also highlighted the effectiveness of specific tools and resources, including the science of numbers, S.M.A.R.T. goals, Daring to Be Powerful, triangle of campaign-building, Ladder of Engagement template, questions to develop individual definitions of organizing, power analysis and power-mapping, and the RoadMap webinar.

**GOI PROGRAM ELEMENTS EVALUATION**

[23] In 2018, one organization that had been in the GOI program, the National Asian Pacific American Women’s Forum (NAPAWF), transitioned into Groundswell’s IVE program.
Organizations mentioned that the program could improve through greater variety in workshops at convenings and more opportunities for organizations to learn from each other. The groups also mentioned that they deeply valued their time with their coaches and would like to have more contact with Groundswell staff. Only five groups decided to participate in the database training, so the lower rating may be explained by other groups not seeing any effects for this category. We will work with grantee organizations to determine how best to continue to provide database training in the future.

Growth, Challenges, and Lessons Learned

In year three of the Grassroots Organizing Institute, the impact and effectiveness of groups involved, as well as their understanding of organizing strategies, have grown tremendously. They are proud of the ways that they were able to integrate GOI into their organizations and are enthusiastic about their grassroots organizing strategies. Many organizations articulate the ongoing tension they experience in a context of limited resources, because much available funding directs them toward service provision. Although many organizations continue to see service provision as essential work, especially in the current political context, they experience an ongoing tension in having to decide how to allocate the necessary resources to organize for power in their communities. As long as funders continue to invest only a small percentage of support towards organizing, organizations will not be able to develop the deeper capacity necessary to win long-term strategies for change.

Organizations require increased capacity and resourcing to enable staff to focus on base-building and other organizing strategies, which in turn will lead to bigger and more effective wins. At Groundswell, we are all too aware that a deeper and multiyear investment is needed for organizations to reach the scale of power that this moment requires.

“We’re proud of our growth. Individually and organizationally, we have taken the skills and knowledge we’ve gained through GOI and applied them to our work and strategy. We’re excited about taking our organizing to the next level and engaging in campaigns that we previously didn’t have the capacity to do. We explicitly name economic justice and immigrant justice as areas we want to support more deliberately and we are thinking strategically about making the connections between them and reproductive justice.”

— PARTICIPANT IN GROUNDSWELL’S GOI PROGRAM

[24] This quote was taken from an anonymous participant survey conducted by an external evaluator. Anonymity has been maintained as part of that evaluation structure to solicit honest feedback.
The reproductive justice movement, because of its intersectional analysis, can readily come out in solidarity for many other struggles, such as the Fight for $15 or immigrant rights. Recognizing that this can be one-sided, Groundswell wanted to work locally to help infuse RJ into a broader social justice/progressive agenda, and provide resources for both reproductive justice and social justice organizations to come together, build relationships, and ultimately grow a collective base that can protect and advance RJ alongside a broader agenda.

In 2015, Groundswell began exploring a small number of ecosystems to accelerate reproductive justice policy and systems change in specific cities and states where there are already strong Groundswell grantees and the climate is ripe for base-building and alliance-building with broader social justice organizations.

Groundswell Fund launched the first Ecosystem in 2016 in Florida. Currently, Florida is the largest recipient of federal funding for abstinence-only education. Young people in the state are denied access to safe and accurate information about their sexual health and contraception, as well as information about sexual orientation, gender identity, and other knowledge regarding their bodies and their rights. In 2017, the four initial grantees (National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health, Power U Center for Social Change, New Florida Majority (NewFM), and Miami Workers Center (MWC)) launched a joint campaign to win comprehensive sex education in Miami. That year, they developed and released a joint document outlining what reproductive justice is, which was part of launching their sex education campaign (and can be viewed in Groundswell Fund’s Capacity Building Report of 2017). The values they articulated through the development of this document and the process of working together to create it have extended to greater alignment in much of their other political work. It has also created relationships of trust in their other activities beyond their comprehensive sex education campaign.
The South Florida Reproductive Justice Ecosystem

In 2018, the Miami Workers Center, Power U Center for Social Change, and the New Florida Majority-Education Fund formed the South Florida Reproductive Justice Ecosystem, which seeks to build the collective social and political power of each organizational entity for transformational reproductive justice in Florida.

The three organizations respect and support each other’s leadership in different spaces — Power U in engaging the school board in their budgeting process and together pushing for comprehensive sex education; the Miami Workers Center in leading on statewide unemployment benefits for survivors of domestic violence; and the New Florida Majority in leading on a statewide Dignity policy to ensure incarcerated women have access to feminine hygiene products. Both of these bills are bright spots in a challenging legislative session for our communities and the issues we care about. The organizations’ mutual support and coming together regularly to analyze, strategize, and move forward creates momentum, develops more leaders, and advances their shared agenda and vision for gender justice.

Over the past several years, the Miami Workers Center has been a leader in the development of a Femme Agenda for Florida. To ground that work, the center has supported initiatives focused on Black women organizing a Black Women’s Assembly conference and the March for Black Women (MBW), which is expanding into its second year of dedicated activism; Power U and NewFM have actively supported this strategy as part of the ecosystem. NewFM played a leadership role in expanding it from Miami to Jacksonville and Broward County. NewFM founded and convened a new organizing space, Latinas en Marcha, in partnership with the Florida Immigrant Coalition and the Miami Workers Center, as an unapologetically intersectional platform that launched with more than 80 progressive Latina women in Miami, combining politics and culture, panels, and live performances and movement by sheroes Dolores Huerta, Ana Maria Archila, and Maria Urbina, and local luminaries Aja Monet, Ariana Lint, and more. Shortly after this, 200 people in the heart of Little Havana welcomed Latina celebrities América Ferrera, Gina Rodríguez, Zoe Saldaña, Eva Longoria, and Rosario Dawson and engaged Latina sisters in a march to the polls.

Miami Workers Center is also supported through Groundswell’s GOI program and Power U Center for Social Change is also supported through Groundswell’s IVE program.

LATINAS EN MARCHA

“Latinas en Marcha is a formation that advances democracy and sisterhood by calling Latinas fully into their leadership and collective power. We amplify Latina voices and power, and forge an inclusive and multiracial coalition to assert justice and expand democracy. We highlight some of Florida’s fiercest Latina leaders, champion social movements, and engage in collective action. We are committed to strong representation from our under-25, low-income, immigrant, LGBTQI+, indigenous, and Afro-Latina [cohorts] and to prioritizing culturally resonant events.”

INSET: Latinas en Marcha, an unprecedented convening of progressive Latinas in South Florida

[25] Miami Workers Center is also supported through Groundswell’s GOI program and Power U Center for Social Change is also supported through Groundswell’s IVE program.
This work culminated in a Black and Latina women’s nonpartisan voter engagement canvass with the Ecosystem — another opportunity to build bridges and expand civic engagement. The Black and Latina Women’s Canvass covered Allapattah, Little Haiti, Liberty City, and other neighborhoods, knocked on 10,370 doors, and made 2,558 contacts. Of those contacts, 2,143 answered survey questions, some of which focused on reproductive justice issues — a completion rate of 83.7 percent. Of the people who answered questions, 1,372 filled out a pledge card as well — a completion rate of 64 percent.

Many of the canvassers have been solid canvassers for the organization for years and participated in a leadership development program during the grant period — a vital experience in civic education that the organization will continue from now on.

**Ecosystem Initiative Impact**

**Deep Partnerships**

While the organizations initially came together around a narrowly focused comprehensive sex education campaign, their collaboration has helped them dive deeper into how to be in community and political alignment together on many related issues. The groups have shown a lot of overlap and intersection in their work. Some of the organizations have expanded to include comprehensive sex education campaigns in their ongoing activities or have used the comprehensive sex education campaign to highlight their existing programming. The organizations have also developed ways to be in better partnership together, such as through bringing members into each other’s organizations or assisting with a communications push.

**Expanding Range of Stakeholders**

The comprehensive sex education campaign has given the organizations the capacity to relate to other organizations and stakeholders they don’t normally work with. As an example, they organized a Sex Education Summit, which allowed them to expand their stakeholders by creating an opportunity to bring students, parents, educators, administrations, and health professionals together. While each individual organization’s active membership remains generally consistent (e.g., the Miami Workers Center largely works with Black and Latinx women and femmes, and Power U’s active base is mostly Black and Brown youth), they are expanding their range of stakeholders through the campaign and through their collaborations.

**Increased Ability to Experiment**

The Ecosystem has given these organizations bandwidth as organizations on the ground to lose to win — to experiment with different things to see if new approaches work or not, without feeling the pressure of having to deliver. Initially they planned to launch a policy campaign in the first two years. The Ecosystem allowed them to take a step back and first align their organizations with each other. Policy change is a key goal, but they also have a larger goal of changing hearts and minds.

Groundswell’s original goal was to have Ecosystem Initiatives running in three states by 2019. However, the political landscape has changed dramatically since we set this goal in 2015. In that time, several other national funders have increased their giving to state-based work and are advancing similar approaches in other states. This is an exciting development, and Groundswell does not want to duplicate efforts or overburden organizations that are participating in other initiatives. In addition, the current federal administration’s actions and policies have helped more mainstream organizations understand the need to come out of their sector or issue boxes and take on RJ issues collaboratively. We are reassessing the Ecosystem Initiative as part of our current Blueprint planning process for work that will take place from 2020–2025.
CONCLUSION

The reproductive justice movement and specifically the grantee organizations outlined in this report have developed strategies to move toward a vision for a different world.

Groundswell’s hypothesis — that helping groups to accelerate their grassroots power puts this vision more within reach — is bearing out. Organizations in Groundswell’s capacity-building programs have made incredible leaps and bounds with even modest investment. Imagine the impact that they, and other organizations across the country, could make with support from Groundswell at greater scale.

We invite you to join us.
# APPENDIX

## 2018 IVE PROGRAM OVERALL RESULTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017 Baseline</th>
<th>2018 Goal</th>
<th>2018 Actual</th>
<th>% to 2018 Goal</th>
<th>% Change from 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total voter contacts(^{26})</td>
<td>78,792</td>
<td>182,329</td>
<td>151,178</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commit to vote IDs</td>
<td>19,915</td>
<td>44,554</td>
<td>37,393</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RJ issue support IDs</td>
<td>37,385</td>
<td>85,347</td>
<td>72,682</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activist leads</td>
<td>14,510</td>
<td>21,445</td>
<td>32,652</td>
<td>152%</td>
<td>125%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base supporters(^{27})</td>
<td>32,097</td>
<td>31,621</td>
<td>32,464</td>
<td>103%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaders</td>
<td>5,852</td>
<td>5,632</td>
<td>8,432</td>
<td>150%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partners/allies</td>
<td>682</td>
<td>767</td>
<td>1,244</td>
<td>162%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elected official cultivation</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>468</td>
<td>135%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(^{26}\) Unique number of voters contacted by phone, door, and on-site.

\(^{27}\) Base supporters are people who are actively involved in the activities of the organization. They are the people who are responsive to outreach, who take concrete action to engage with the activities of the organization, and who can be mobilized in a campaign.
2018 CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM STAFF

Xiomara Corpeño, Director of Capacity Building

Xiomara was born and raised in Los Angeles, the daughter of Salvadoran immigrants. She grew up in a politically conscious household and brings to Groundswell 19 years of organizing experience and a strong track record of building power for communities of color through grassroots organizing, leadership development, and civic engagement. She cut her teeth in electoral organizing at UC Riverside, where as a Students for Social Justice Fellow she got out the vote in support of affirmative action for the No on Proposition 209 campaign. She then went to work for SCOPE in Los Angeles, where she learned first-hand how electoral organizing can lead to policy change.

A long-time movement leader, Xiomara spent the next 11 years at the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA), where she developed the organization’s first in-house electoral program and organizing department. Surmounting the challenge of a membership base composed primarily of people who are not citizens and thus cannot vote, Xiomara created powerful voter programs that paved the way for an array of state and local laws that support the rights of immigrants, such as drivers’ licenses for undocumented people, the state’s Domestic Worker Bill of Rights, and the One California program, which provided $2.4 million in funding for citizenship and DACA services throughout California. Under Xiomara’s leadership, CHIRLA joined the statewide campaigns to oppose three different parental notification ballot measures, as well as the campaign to oppose Proposition 8, the ban on gay marriage. While some questioned why an immigrant rights group would get involved in these two issues, CHIRLA used its clout in the Latino community to educate voters and their loved ones about these propositions, recognizing that Latino voters were being targeted to vote yes at their places of worship. Xiomara is also the mother to two funny and creative children, who in their spare time like to dance and sing to pop music.

Quanita Toffie, Director of Civic Engagement and Electoral Organizing

Quanita supports women of color leaders in 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) integrated voter engagement strategy to create a more inclusive and equitable environment for all. She played a leading role in Groundswell’s Integrated Voter Engagement (IVE) program, which equips reproductive justice groups with innovative voter engagement skills and technology, and has transitioned to build out Groundswell Action Fund’s grantmaking and capacity-building programs. During her tenure as lead of the IVE program, RJ groups grew their scale from making just 1,000 voter contacts during the pilot program to over 150,000 voter contacts in 2018.

Quanita began organizing for social and racial justice alongside her parents in her native South Africa during the transition from apartheid to democracy. She joined her parents as they voted, for the first time in their lives, for Nelson Mandela in 1994, and this defining moment sparked a lifelong passion for electoral organizing. Quanita and her family immigrated to Miami, FL, in 1997. She was a scholar-activist in the fight for housing justice with the Miami Workers Center from 2005–2008, and then became the founding staff member of the New Florida Majority where from 2009–
2014 she led the creation of statewide, data-driven 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) electoral organizing campaigns. Quanita holds a B.A. in Political Theory, Economic Development, and African Studies from Hampshire College. Her thesis was on the antigentrification movement in Miami and the global fight against neoliberal privatization of basic human rights like housing in South Africa.

Lanita Morris, Program Manager, Grassroots Organizing Institute

Lanita Morris brings more than 15 years’ experience leading grassroots organizing training and capacity building to increase power for workers, students, and communities of color. Lanita grew up in South Los Angeles and was an Irvine Scholar at Occidental College when she was introduced to community organizing while interning at SCOPE in 1999. Through her work on SCOPE’s cutting-edge campaigns for progressive policy and electoral change, she honed her skills in community organizing and developed a passion for using popular education and strategic facilitation to ensure that poor people and communities of color have the power necessary to win social and economic justice.

In 2006, Lanita joined the UCLA Labor Center. As its Project Manager, she developed and implemented multiple leadership development and education programs for movement building. Her accomplishments include coordinating the African American Union Leadership School, the Student Leadership Academy, and the first Black Immigrant Youth Cohort of the national Dream Summer fellowship program. Her leadership at the Labor Center led to the incubation of the LA Black Worker Center (LABWC). As a founder of the LABWC, Lanita led the creation of the membership and leadership development structures, inspiring a national organizing model to address the crisis of unemployment and underemployment in the Black community. Lanita directed the LABWC’s first Train the Trainer program, through which grassroots member leaders deepened skills for effective organizing and direct action campaigns, and developed their capacity to train new organizational activists. The LABWC was recognized by the Obama Administration and the U.S. Department of Labor for its successful challenge of the LA construction industry’s historic exclusion of Black workers. Thanks to LABWC, Black worker employment on one of the country’s largest light rail construction projects jumped from zero percent to nearly 20 percent. Under Lanita’s leadership and direction, Groundswell’s Grassroots Organizing Institute is developing a powerful training model that will be implemented in the RJ movement for years to come.

Jennifer Parrish Taylor, Program Manager, Integrated Voter Engagement

Jennifer Parrish Taylor is the Program Manager for the Integrated Voter Engagement program at Groundswell Fund. Jennifer brings over a decade of community and political organizing experience in communities of color. Jennifer grew up in Portland, Oregon, an experience that shaped and informed her outlook and served as the catalyst of her passion to commit herself to issues of social justice. Upon her graduation from Smith College, Jennifer parlayed her interest in social justice and her penchant for speaking up into working for a number of nonprofits (NARAL Pro-Choice America), political candidates (then Senators John Kerry and President Barack Obama), and unions (Working America, SEIU, and AFT-OR). Jennifer would later serve in the Obama Administration as a Special Assistant at the Peace Corps. As an organizer with Working America, she was part of an effort to advance both Paid Sick Leave and raising Oregon’s minimum wage to $15/hr. As the State Affiliate Political Organizer for AFT-Oregon, she worked closely with members and local union leaders to advance their political programs. Additionally, Jennifer served on the board of the Oregon Labor Candidate School where she worked with other members to identify and recruit labor-friendly candidates to run for office.
Janet Favela Sonneman, Capacity Building Trainer

Janet Favela Sonneman is the Capacity Building Trainer at Groundswell Fund. Janet was born as the product of immigration and the love shared by a Salvadoran mother and a Mexican father. She credits her upbringing in the communities of Pico Union and South-Central Los Angeles with her greatest lessons in injustice and resilience. As an undergrad, her commitment to fights for educational access, racial and economic justice, antiwar efforts, and the empowerment of Chicanas, taught her the basics of activism and set her on her path towards community organizing. Janet started her professional career as a community organizer in East L.A. where she built a base and led campaigns for almost ten years. One of her greatest accomplishments was having developed and implemented a grassroots strategy to develop a street vendor and community-based policy incorporating hundreds of vendors and thousands of allies. While fighting alongside informal workers, Janet became more invested in fights for public space and the criminalization of people of color.

Krystal Kwong, Program Associate

Born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area, Krystal has 10 years of administrative and customer service experience in the private sector. Her educational studies focused on environmental studies and learning different ways to help people. She is a firm reproductive justice supporter and believes women should have a choice regardless of their status or income. She spends her free time and energy with her family and godson exploring the Bay Area and California.

Bré Rivera, Program Fellow

Bré Rivera is a program fellow at Groundswell Fund. She lives her life boldly and unapologetically advocates for issues most impacting the lives of Black and trans people. Prior to joining the Groundswell Fund team, Bré served as the executive director of Trans Sistas of Color Project, a grassroots organization ran by trans women of color in Detroit, Michigan. Before becoming an executive director, Bré worked as research assistant at University of Michigan School of Public Health and as a HIV tester and counselor and intervention specialist at Wayne State University School of Medicine. Bré is currently on the board of Positive Women’s Network-USA, a fierce group of diverse women living with HIV. She is a national Advisory Board Member of Positively Trans as well as a Greater than AIDS Ambassador.
2018 INTEGRATED VOTER ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM COACHES

Tanzila “Taz” Ahmed is an activist, storyteller, and politico based in Los Angeles. An electoral organizer by trade, she’s mobilized thousands of Asian American and Pacific Islanders to the polls in over 17 different languages over the past 15 years. At the age of 25, she founded South Asian American Voting Youth (SAAVY), a national organization that organizes South Asian American youth to have a political voice and get involved in the electoral process. An experienced campaign trainer, Taz has led workshops for the EnviroCitizen, the League of Young Voters, and Campus Camp Wellstone. An essayist, poet, and now podcaster, her writing developed around creating a counternarrative for the communities that she belonged to, whether youth, Muslim, South Asian or counterculture. She can be heard monthly on The #GoodMuslimBadMuslim Podcast and can be read monthly in her Radical Love column at loveinshallah.com. She was a long-time writer for Sepia Mutiny and is published in the anthology Love, Inshallah: The Secret Love Lives of American Muslim Women. Her writing has been featured in The Aerogram, The Nation, Left Turn Magazine, Angry Asian Man, MTV Iggy, Taqwacore Webzine, Mideast Tunes, The SAALT Spot, Wiretap Magazine, AlterNet, IMOW, PopandPolitics, Kahani, Falling Star Magazine and more. Her personal projects include writing about Desi music at Mishthi Music where she coproduced Beats for Bangladesh, making #MuslimVDay Cards and curating images for Mutinous Mind State. A mixed media artist, her artwork was recently featured in the group show Rebel Legacy: Activist Art from South Asian California. Taz also organizes with Bay Area Solidarity Summer and South Asians for Justice – Los Angeles. You can find her rant on twitter @tazzystar and at tazzystar.blogspot.com.

Emma Akpan is her mother’s daughter and a wayward church girl, and her heart rests with Black girls everywhere. She loves organizing because we get to connect the stuff that our people and community care most about with the powers that can tangibly address our concerns. She developed a passion in women’s reproductive health policy by volunteering at Planned Parenthood and frequently speaking at rallies and at the state legislature on reproductive health policy. In her work life she’s worked at the North Carolina state table, been an organizer at Planned Parenthood, and a data director at NextGen Climate. Currently she’s on the team at Hustle. Emma Akpan is a member of Echoing Ida, a women’s writing collective that seeks to raise the voices of Black women in the media and is a project of Forward Together. Emma has been published in Rewire News, Huffington Post, Ebony, Bustle, Women Advance and the Raleigh News and Observer, writing on the intersections of race, religion, and reproductive justice. She’s not just an organizer, she loves working out at the gym, reading books written by international women of color, and gaming, especially games with post-apocalyptic narratives. Or sometimes it’s not that deep. She likes shooter games. Especially Mass Effect Andromeda.
Dawn Boudwin has over a decade of experience in campaigns, organizing, and coalition building. She is the Director of Program and Partnerships at the Alliance for Youth Action. In this role, Dawn manages the Alliance’s talented and awesome program team and spearheads the Alliance’s “incubation” process to expand the network of state-based youth organizations. Dawn also leads partnership work with national, state, and local organizations, companies, and brands to elevate the Alliance’s affiliates and youth organizing partners to further the organization’s electoral and issue campaign goals.

Prior to joining the Alliance, Dawn served as the Deputy National Political Director at America Votes (AV). Dawn was with AV for more than five years where she cultivated and maintained coalitions. These coalitions focused on both electoral and issue-based work. In addition to the coalition work, Dawn served as a liaison between state and national AV and executed AV’s election modernization work at the national level. Dawn has also held positions at AFSCME, DCCC, and the Atlas Project. Dawn currently resides in Washington, DC, but is a born and bred Tar Heel. She has a B.A. in Psychology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Victoria Cepeida-Mojarro is a seasoned electoral and issue-based campaign professional. She found her passion for social justice organizing at New York University where she organized seven students in support of adjunct professor unionizing efforts. She furthered her social justice appetite by working with a variety of community-based organizations focusing on student organizing, domestic violence, and immigrant rights. She organized with United Students Against Sweatshops before her electoral debut in New Mexico in 2008. Previously, Victoria worked with the Democratic National Committee in Los Angeles, and was successful in saving a competitive congressional seat as the New Mexico-District 1 Field Director in 2010. She recently finished her tenure with the United Farm Workers as their CA political director where she worked on a number of elections as well as migrant farm worker policy issues. Victoria trains with Wellstone Action and Democracy for America in electoral campaign strategies. Victoria holds a B.A. in Metropolitan Studies from New York University. She currently serves as a consultant for down ticket electoral races and serves on a formation committee to develop a California progressive, women of color, political action committee (PAC) in Los Angeles.

Diana Colin and her family immigrated to the United States from Mexico City when she was two years old. She began working at the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA) as a student volunteer in 2009, and became a statewide campaign organizer in 2013. In 2014, she was named CHIRLA’s director of civic engagement, and under her leadership, CHIRLA participated in statewide elections for the first time in the June 2014 primary. In 2016, the statewide CHIRLA #InmigrantesEnAccion Electoral Campaign registered 11,297 voters and contacted 127,355 voters and achieved 82 percent voter turnout. Diana graduated from California State University Fullerton in 2011 with a B.A. in Political Science.
Tomás Garduño is a Native New Mexican Chicano, born and raised in Albuquerque. He lived in Portland, OR, for seven years where he graduated from Lewis and Clark College, and did student and antiracist organizing in the antiglobalization movement, culminating in the WTO protests in Seattle. He has been doing social justice work ever since. He has worked for Western States Center and Community Alliance of Tenants, cofounded ROOTS! Reclaiming Our Origins Through Struggle, and worked as a campaign organizer with the Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice. His most formative experience was his seven years as a statewide organizer, political director, and ultimately codirector of the SouthWest Organizing Project (SWOP), a 35-year-old grassroots social justice movement organization in New Mexico. After SWOP, Tomás took a nine-month sabbatical from professional organizing to focus on personal development. In November 2013, he moved to New York City to serve as field director for ALIGN: Alliance for a Greater New York. In January 2014, he began consulting with Groundswell Fund as an IVE coach, helping reproductive justice organizations build their year-round civic engagement efforts and grow to scale. Since September 2015, Tomás has been an independent consultant. In addition to coaching Groundswell Fund grantee organizations, he also consults with the Asian American and Pacific Islander Civic Engagement Fund. He is also working on a civic engagement project with the Partnership for Working Families. He is honored to be a member of the Strategic Leadership Institute of New Mexico, as well as alumni of the Rockwood Leadership Institute’s Leading from the Inside Out year-long program. He is currently a board member of Art of Revolution and Movement Strategy Center. He is also a traditional organic farmer, a yoga and meditation practitioner, working on developing a deeper spiritual practice, and is an avid bicyclist and soccer player.

Fran Hutchins is an optimist and believes that we can achieve progress on our most challenging social issues when a committed group of people organize, strategize, and act together. For the last decade Fran has worked in partnership with leaders in the immigration, housing and homelessness, antipoverty, racial justice, and LGBTQ equality movements across the country. Fran’s specialties include organizing and advocacy, message development and testing, leadership coaching and training, financial and strategic planning, facilitation, executive search and transition, and diversity and racial justice trainings. As a mixed-race queer person working in the progressive space, they are passionate about helping organizations integrate gender and racial equity into their work and workplaces.

Timmy Lu has 13 years of experience in political organizing and grassroots activism. He is State Organizing Director at Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN) and Field Director of APEN Action where he builds the political power of Asian American immigrant and refugee communities to win environmental and economic justice. Timmy serves on the boards of Oakland Rising and Chinese Progressive Association Action Fund and is a frequent volunteer on campaigns for progressive local candidates. Raised in a family of ethnic Chinese refugees from Vietnam, Timmy is also a sci-fi nerd, dedicated Dungeons and Dragons player, and basketball fan.
**Wilnelia Rivera**, founder of Rivera Consulting, Inc., seeks to unlock hearts, hands, and minds of people to collaborate on transformative public policy, deep democracy, and planning projects. Her firm works with the urban public sector (small to mid-sized nonprofits, labor unions, and local and state government) in addition to political and social justice organizations. Before her consulting practice, she was the former organizer and political director of Neighbor to Neighbor Massachusetts, senior staff member to former Governor Deval Patrick, and founding director of RoxMAPP (Roxbury Massachusetts Post-Secondary Pathways). She leverages her political campaign (501(c)(3), 501(c)(4), partisan), urban planning, and project management experience to help deliver strategic results that position her clients for success. Her approach enables progress and transformative change by focusing on continuous political power-building from the grassroots to the grass tops, while coaching, designing, and facilitating systems of collaboration, shared learning, decision-making, and engagement. She holds both a B.A. in International Relations and Women's Studies and an M.A. in Urban and Environmental Policy & Planning from Tufts University, and is a past Mel King fellowship recipient at Massachusetts Institute for Technology's Co-Lab.

**Eugenio Smith** brings over 11 years of organizing and facilitation experience to the IVE program. Eugenio was formerly the Capacity Building Manager at Western States Center and worked with social justice-minded organizations to expand their work to be inclusive for all and to become reproductive, LGBTQ, immigrant and racial justice champions. Prior to Western States, Eugenio was Program Director at Equality Utah, where they worked on LGBTQ nondiscrimination policy. Before moving west, Eugenio worked for Equality Maryland, focusing on coalition building, management, education, and organizing for transgender inclusive nondiscrimination policy, the DREAM Act, and marriage equality in the legislature and at the ballot box. Eugenio has facilitated many inclusivity and skill building trainings, worked to find and get out the stories of the most impacted in communities, and built leadership programs for transgender organizers. Eugenio believes strongly in inclusive community empowerment and engagement, and that there are many ways to change hearts and minds to experience true liberation for all.

**Emma Tramble**, a West Philadelphia native, has more than 15 years of experience implementing solutions that produce measurable and seamless client/voter interactions in grassroots, non-profit, and electoral arenas, particularly in organizations with limited resources. Emma has helped activists determine operational bottlenecks and service gaps, weave data-driven strategies throughout their work, and build strong coalitions between different cultural communities and organizations. Emma also specializes in combining VAN models and other data with language framing to create messaging that moves intended audiences to action. Prior to returning to independent consulting in 2015, Emma served as the data and targeting manager for Pennsylvania Voice, a State Voices affiliate. At Pennsylvania Voice, Emma advised and trained grassroots organizations, as well as large, well-established national progressive organizations during IVE and issue advocacy campaigns. Emma's long career includes being a paid staffer or community organizer on projects that focused on antifracking, Medicaid expansion, criminal justice reform, reproductive rights, LGBTQ rights, homelessness advocacy, and antivoter ID. She's currently winding down a 10-month grassroots initiative she founded called My Family Votes, which centered on building power within the African American community through informed, issues-based voting during Philadelphia's 2017 District Attorney's race. Emma earned a B.A. from the University of Pennsylvania, a Six Sigma Green Belt (process improvement methodology) from Villanova University, and an M.A. from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. Her master's capstone focused on the impact of policies and practices surrounding family caregiving and seniors with Alzheimer's disease on the lives of younger people, particularly women.
2018 GRASSROOTS ORGANIZING INSTITUTE COACHES

Lisa María Castellanos is a Xikana born and raised in California by way of México and the Arizona Sonora desert. Lisa has over 25 years of organizing, membership, leader development, political education, policy work, grant writing, and movement-building experience as an independent consultant, coach, and advisor with local, national, and international organizations. Lisa is a graduate of the Center for Third World Organizing’s Minority Activist Apprenticeship Program. Since her time as a single mother during the welfare reform years of the mid-1990s, Lisa has worked with communities on various issues, including immigrant rights, food stamp access, welfare rights, education justice, antiprison work, affordable housing, transportation, food justice, transnational economies, and environmental justice, as well as gender and reproductive justice, including the family rights of incarcerated loved ones. Lisa currently serves on the Leadership Circle of Mijente, a national network for Latinx/Chicanx changemakers, and sits on the Advisory Committee for the Transnational Villages Network, a human rights network of Mexican indigenous communities and their diasporas in the United States. As a member of Essie Justice Project, an organization for women with incarcerated loved ones, she has facilitated the Healing to Advocacy Series and sits on the research committee. Lisa graduated magna cum laude and received her B.A. in Feminist Studies with an emphasis on Social Movements and the Law from the University of California at Santa Cruz. Lisa finds great joy (and challenge) in helping to build leader-ful organizations, and is especially interested in membership models that can scale up and build political homes for frontline communities through organizing, campaigns, and cultural work. In her spare time, she runs with her dog, swims in the SF Bay with her partner during warmer months, and screen prints in her home studio.

Karissa Lewis is a Black Radical Farmer from Oakland, California. She is the Interim Executive Director at the Center For Third World Organizing, a national training institute building the next generation of organizers. Karissa also directs People’s Grocery’s programs where she brings her love of land and her race analysis to the table. She has organized around issues ranging from gentrification to environmental racism, gang injunctions, and police brutality. Karissa believes that the movement for social justice has to be led by the people most affected, by building leadership in communities of color. She became politicized during the rebellions fighting for justice for Oscar Grant and through CTWOs MAAP program, from which she is a graduate. She is an active member of the BlackOUT collective and the Bay Area Black Lives Matter chapter.
Xavier MaatRa is a community organizer and activist from southern New Jersey currently thriving in Chicago, IL. For over a decade, he has traveled the country as a labor organizer, social justice workshop facilitator, and youth advocate. While in the Midwest, he’s appreciated his time working with LGBT youth through the Drop in Program at the Broadway Youth Center and helping to build a coalition of youth agencies to strengthen youth programs on Chicago’s Southwest side. In his free time, DirtyArtBoi is a self-proclaimed music fiend, poet, farmer in training and student of Pan African Studies.

Throughout his career as a grassroots community educator he has impacted thousands of people from across the United States, including students from the UK, Iraq, and various countries across South America. Since 2013 as the Training Coordinator at the Chicago Freedom School, he has consulted with hundreds of organizations creating innovative popular education trainings on a range of social justice and youth development topics. In 2016 Xavier launched DAB of Consulting, which specializes in innovative and interactive sessions in the areas of nonprofit management, youth development, organizing skills, and issues in social justice. Workshops and trainings can be customized for youth, organizers, and professionals of various backgrounds. DAB of Consulting services are rooted in popular education or education for critical consciousness-raising techniques and are designed to empower people who feel marginalized socially and politically to take control of their own learning to effect social change.

My name is riKu Matsuda and I’m from Southern California. I was born in Garden Grove, California (Orange County) and raised in the Antelope Valley in the Mojave Desert of north LA County. I grew up isolated as a mixed Japanese kid with white privilege who was pretty queer and gender nonconforming. I did two things every day: played basketball and fantasized about people who shared my identities. My high school mascot was a confederate soldier. Well, it was until my senior year when a coalition of students of color won a campaign to remove it. That campaign marked my first racial justice campaign and the start of my identity as an activist.

At community college and university, I grew my activism working on campaigns for educational justice, economic justice and worker’s rights, LGBTQ rights and ending racial discrimination in higher education. In 2000, I started organizing at a reproductive justice organization centering Cambodian young women. There I worked as a youth organizer on a campaign to end sexual harassment in Long Beach Unified School District and a national campaign against deportation. I was also privileged to participate on a number of local, statewide and national coalitions for reproductive and sexual rights including the Ford Foundation’s Women of Color Initiative.

My commitment to reproductive justice remained steadfast with a shift in focus from cisgender to transgender bodies after I came out as a transgender man of color. I was part of a small group starting a radical multi-issue organizing collective of queer and trans youth of color called qteam. I organized with qteam and worked as a substitute teacher before starting my current position with the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations. Once I aged out of qteam, I began to focus on youth leadership development and violence prevention at a county level.

For over a decade, I’ve been committed to trans justice and trans rights issues that include reproductive justice, gender justice, racial and economic justice, disability justice and, broadly, social justice. Campaigns have involved fighting the prison industrial complex, immigration system, healthcare system, state violence, street harassment and domestic violence.
Rob McGowan is a husband of almost 20 years and a father of four. Rob was an organizer in the social and racial justice movement for over 14 years. Recently, he transitioned from being the Associate Director of Organizing at Community Asset Development Redefining Education (CADRE) in Los Angeles to launching, with his wife Emilee, a coaching practice called Diving Within that supports people of color in the social/racial justice movement, the nonprofit sector, foundations, and the private sector. As a Transformational Life Coach, Rob helps clients reach clarity about their vision, life purpose, and goals. His personal and professional experiences have led him to believe in the power of people, and that everyone has the solutions they are seeking within them.

Saúl Sarabia has worked for more than 25 years to strengthen the self-determination and power-building efforts of people who are stigmatized by the law and by society. In 2012, he established Solidarity Consulting to partner with people who are fighting for racial justice and social change. A Queer Raza cis-man living in the Van Nuys neighborhood of Los Angeles, he is the youngest son of Mexican immigrants from the state of Durango in northern México. Born in Los Angeles, he grew up in the northeast LA, where he attended public schools. He graduated from UCLA with a B.A. in Communication Studies in 1993 and a law degree (J.D.) in 1996. He committed to using his formal educational training and personal skills from overcoming adversity to support social movement-building, joining the staff of the Community Coalition, where he organized both people on welfare and social service providers to strengthen the social safety net. In 2000, he pioneered a campaign called Family Care, not Foster Care, designed to build an organized base of relatives caring for children removed from their homes by the foster care system and also began to do leadership development with formerly incarcerated people, especially women with addiction. From 2005-2012, he served as the director of the UCLA School of Law’s Critical Race Studies Program, where he counseled a new generation of civil rights lawyers and social justice advocates. These efforts created the largest expungement clinic in Los Angeles and produce a new team of lawyers and residents using litigation and policy advocacy to challenge discrimination against people with criminal records. Saúl is currently an advisor to Legal Services for Prisoner with Children’s Los Angeles chapter of All of Us or None, which organizes formerly incarcerated people to change laws and policies that discriminate against them. He also serves on the boards of Action Civics LA, which teaches middle school and high school students the fundamentals of community organizing; the University Muslim Medical Association Community Clinic, which provides health care inspired by Islam; and the Clear Passage Educational Center, which creates alternative educational opportunities for students not served by the traditional education system.

Eugenio Smith brings over 11 years of organizing and facilitation experience to the IVE program. Eugenio was formerly the Capacity Building Manager at Western States Center and worked with social justice-minded organizations to expand their work to be inclusive for all and to become reproductive, LGBTQ, immigrant and racial justice champions. Prior to Western States, Eugenio was Program Director at Equality Utah, where they worked on LGBTQ nondiscrimination policy. Before moving west, Eugenio worked for Equality Maryland, focusing on coalition building, management, education, and organizing for transgender inclusive nondiscrimination policy, the DREAM Act, and marriage equality in the legislature and at the ballot box. Eugenio has facilitated many inclusivity and skill building trainings, worked to find and get out the stories of the most impacted in communities, and built leadership programs for transgender organizers. Eugenio believes strongly in inclusive community empowerment and engagement, and that there are many ways to change hearts and minds to experience true liberation for all.
Chinyeré Tutashinda’s philosophy is, “Educate, motivate, inspire — change the world!” With 15 years of organizing, media production, and training and facilitation experience, Chinyeré is a founding member and codirector of the BlackOUT Collective, a Black direct action and training collective that believes action and organizing are healing and transformative acts. She has a B.A. in Journalism from the University of Northern Colorado and an M.A. in Media Activism from California State University East Bay. Chinyeré uses her education and dedication to the community in all that she does.

Etobssie Wako has over a decade of experience working with grassroots, national, and international organizations addressing reproductive health, rights, and justice issues. As an independent consultant, she has worked with nonprofit organizations, government agencies, UN bodies, and foundations in supporting social justice movement-building, strategic planning, leadership development, program management, and evaluation design and implementation. Etobssie believes systems change and social justice are seeded and nurtured in communities, and as such is committed to strengthen grassroots organizations through building practices of informed decision-making, process evaluation, capacity development, strategic communication, intersectional collaboration, and fostering compassionate work environments. She upholds her ancestral teachings that communities are architects of their own solutions, and believes in the power of community-centered, creative, collaborative, and futuristic ideas in informing transformative and sustained change.
Groundswell supports a stronger, more effective U.S. movement for reproductive justice by mobilizing new funding and capacity building resources to grassroots organizing and policy change efforts led by low-income women, women of color, and transgender people.

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