IN TIMES OF CRISIS, WE BUILD

ANNUAL REPORT



The Organizing Center

2025

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LETTER FROM OUR CO-DIRECTORS

Dear Community,

We don't have to tell you things are bad and getting worse. We are all feeling it. Our communities are suffering under the weight of centuries of genocidal and colonial violence the United States has inflicted upon people of the Global Majority—especially Black and Indigenous people—and on the planet, all in the name of profit. While those in power wait around as if things could ever go back to "normal" we know the truth. The overlapping crises we face will not disappear overnight. There is no reset button waiting for us this year. **The clock of the world is telling us something else entirely – it's time to build a new one.**

In 2025, we saw with terrifying clarity how quickly an authoritarian state can move. Through executive overreach, military force, and consolidated media power, those at the top are working at lightning speed to crush the people's will and determination to fight back. With militarized occupation of our cities, ICE kidnapping anyone who looks like an immigrant, bombing and invasion in Venezuela and Nigeria, millions of people cut off from food assistance and healthcare, and the criminalization and dehumanization of trans life, this administration has not reneged on the promise of Project 2025. For those of us who have spent years organizing to dismantle this system and give birth to something new from its ashes, this moment can bring deep grief, exhaustion, and even defeat. The consequences of underdeveloped base-building efforts are sadly on full display at this moment in history.

And yet, even in the midst of this, we see something else.

All around us are opportunities we couldn't have imagined a year ago – glimpses of possibility that give us real hope. The election of a socialist mayor in New York City showed us that an inspiring vision to change material reality is what can bring millions together across differences. Neighbors in LA, Chicago, Minneapolis, and many more occupied cities putting their lives on the line to protect their neighbors from ICE showed us the humanity inherent in our communities. And millions flooding the streets in mass mobilizations throughout 2025 showed us that people will not tolerate silence in the midst of destruction. These moments affirm what we've known all along: people power is not a phrase. It is still the answer.

In times of crisis, resilience is not passive endurance – it is active construction. We build power when we refuse isolation, when we practice solidarity, and when we organize with clarity, courage and love. This is how we have survived before. This is how we will survive now. And this is how, together, we will build the world our people deserve.





In solidarity and with hope,

Christi Clarise

CHRISTI CLARISE

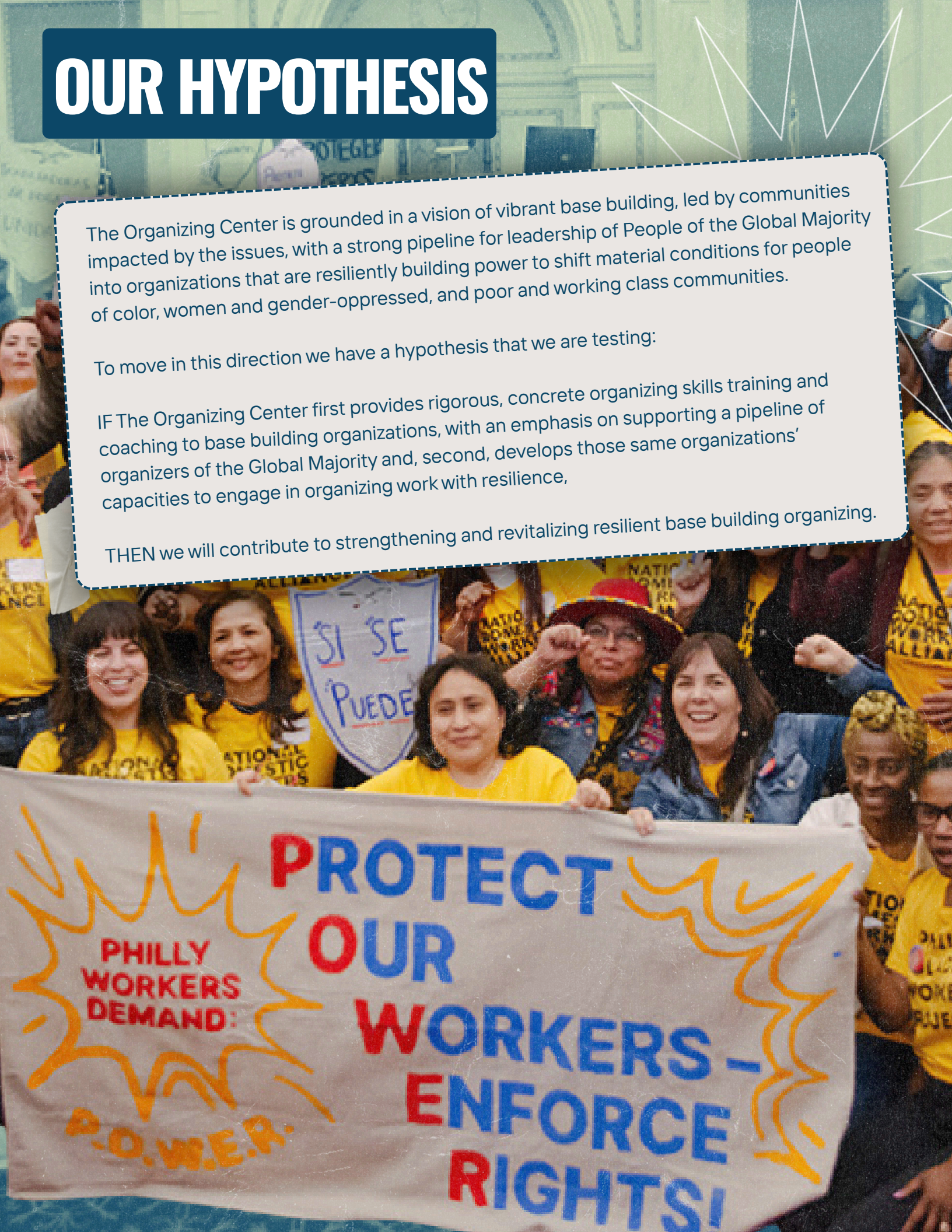
OUR HYPOTHESIS

The Organizing Center is grounded in a vision of vibrant base building, led by communities impacted by the issues, with a strong pipeline for leadership of People of the Global Majority into organizations that are resiliently building power to shift material conditions for people of color, women and gender-oppressed, and poor and working class communities.

To move in this direction we have a hypothesis that we are testing:

IF The Organizing Center first provides rigorous, concrete organizing skills training and coaching to base building organizations, with an emphasis on supporting a pipeline of organizers of the Global Majority and, second, develops those same organizations' capacities to engage in organizing work with resilience,

THEN we will contribute to strengthening and revitalizing resilient base building organizing.



PEOPLE OF THE GLOBAL MAJORITY



At The Organizing Center we are intentional about the language we use, and we adapt and change as we learn new things and conditions shift. We are shifting our language from "BIPOC", "Black and Brown", or and "People Of Color" to "People of the Global Majority" (PoGM)- a term coined by Black woman and scholar, Rosemary Campell- Stevens. We do this for a few reasons:

- People of the Global Majority encompasses identities of folks whose lineage is traced back to the Global South, which includes Black people, Indigenous people, Brown people, Latinx peoples—particularly Indigenous and Afro-Latinos —Pacific Islanders, Native Hawaiians, the Inuit communities/Alaska Natives, Native Americans, Arabs, Western Asians/Middle Easterners with dark skin, North Africans, Southeast Asians, South Asians, East Asians, Africans with dark skin, and biracial and multiracial people who are mixed with one or more of the above, and people and groups who can't access white privilege.
- People of the Global Majority also decenters whiteness and challenges the false narrative that the folks that make up PoGM are minorities, as PoGM makes up at least 85% of the global population.
- People of the Global Majority also de-centers the American context, expanding the vast and complex experiences of individuals across the globe that are affected by white supremacy culture and colonization.
- The use of People of the Global Majority, invites a shift in mentality and practice for those of us within the PoGM, forging more space for us to step into our power while resisting how the word "minority" keeps many of us small.

2025: IN TIMES OF CRISIS, WE BUILD

CELEBRATING 5 YEARS OF RESILIENCE, TRANSFORMATION, POWER

2025 marked the five year anniversary of The Organizing Center's founding, and there is so much to celebrate about what we've been able to build. At the end of 2024, we looked back at the mandates our advisory board laid out for The Organizing Center to accomplish within its first five years. And we realized we'd accomplished damn near every. single. one.









Click to watch our 5-year anniversary video & to witness the story of The Organizing Center and hear from amazing organizers we get to build and transform with.

CELEBRATING 5 YEARS OF RESILIENCE, TRANSFORMATION, POWER

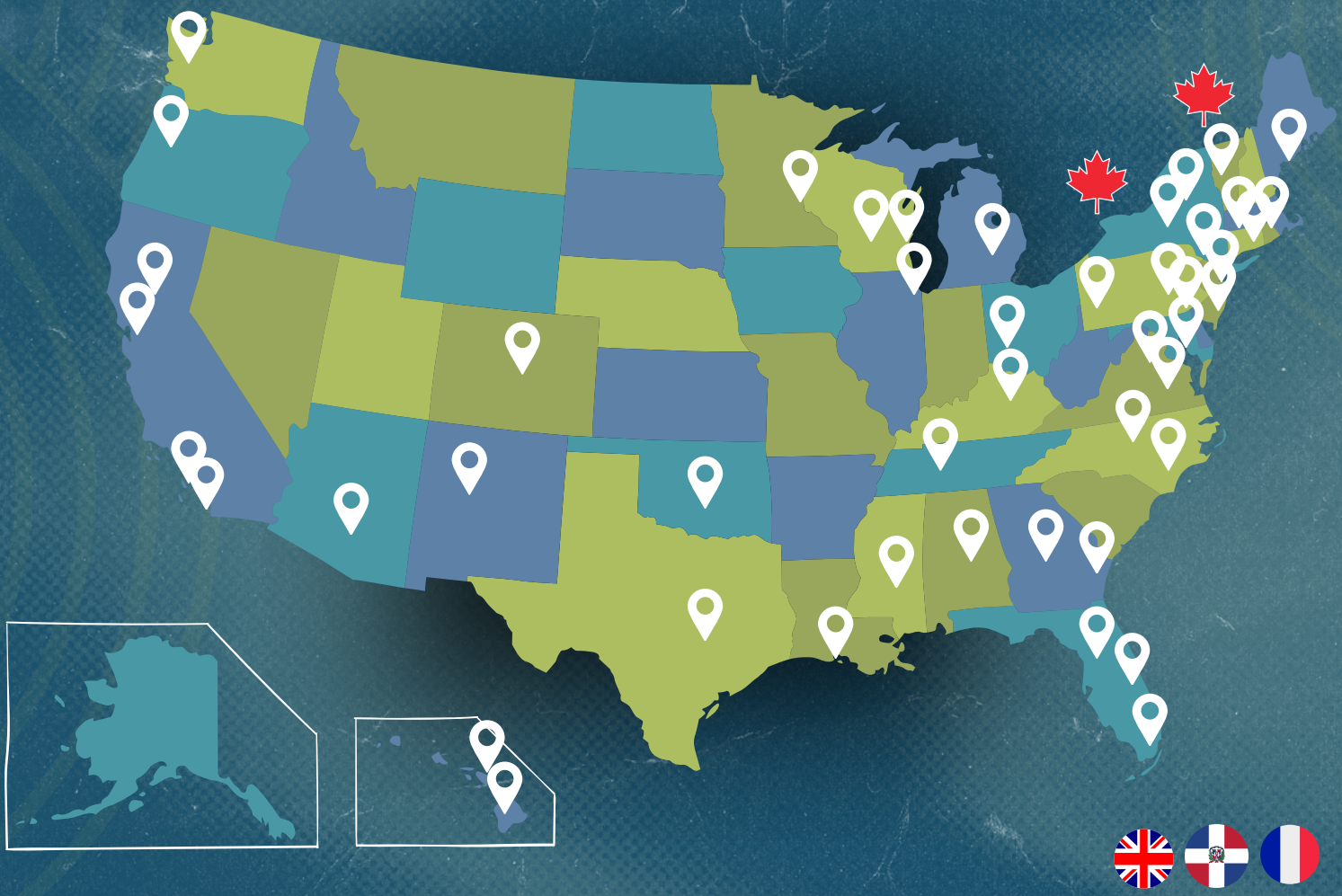
In just five years, we are proud that the Organizing Center has:

Trained or coached 1000 organizers –including over 500 who've attended our public workshops. We've supported organizations across 26 states and 2 countries outside of the United States.

Developed a beautiful culture of rigor and resilience that extends beyond our team and into the organizations we work with. When we meet new organizers, many times they've heard of us from others who told them about the intention and care in our work.

Quadrupled our organizational budget from one that could only staff its founder to a budget that could bring in a co-director and hire 5 staff.

ORGANIZATIONS HAVE CONNECTED WITH US FROM...



CELEBRATING 5 YEARS OF RESILIENCE, TRANSFORMATION, POWER

In the midst of unbelievably hard times, we knew it was essential to treat the act of gathering itself as sacred. At our anniversary party, 100 people filled OneArt Community Center in West Philly for delicious food, music, and a surprise stretch of beautiful weather. We partied, we cried, we laughed. We paused to honor all of the hard work. And we turned towards the future, claiming our vision for a liberated society made possible by everyday people finding power in each other







PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

AN EXPERIMENT IN ACCESSIBILITY: SELF-PACED LEARNING

One of our major experiments in 2025 was rethinking our public workshops. Previously, our three-hour Zoom workshops spent a large portion of time introducing new concepts, even though what organizers most wanted was space to practice. This year, we shifted to a model that shifted core concepts into a new self-paced online learning portal, with videos, readings, and reflection questions designed to ground organizers in the fundamentals. Live sessions were then shortened to 90 minutes and focused almost entirely on practice, giving organizers the chance to apply what they had learned in real time.

After a year of running this experiment, here are some of our key takeaways:

Zoom fatigue is real. Long hours online are exhausting and make it harder for people to stay focused and present. Shifting live sessions toward practice helped increase engagement, but participation in the self-paced learning portal was mixed.

Time is the biggest constraint. Organizers working under crisis conditions and within under-resourced organizations are deeply stretched. Even when they know skill-building would strengthen their work, finding time for self-paced learning remains a challenge.

There is never enough practice. Across workshops, we consistently heard that organizers wanted even more time to practice. No matter how much time we built in, organizers asked for additional space to try things out, get feedback, and build confidence through doing.

Together, these lessons are shaping how we will design our workshops going forward.

PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

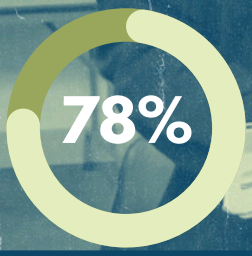
REACHING OUR PEOPLE

We take very seriously our goal to prioritize offering training to the people who need it most. We have met, or exceeded, our requirement that the overwhelming majority of our program participants and clients are building the power of, and led by, the global majority.

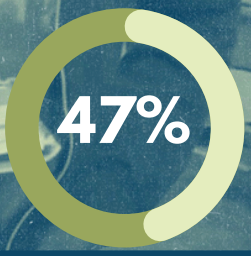
WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS BY THE NUMBERS



People of the Global Majority

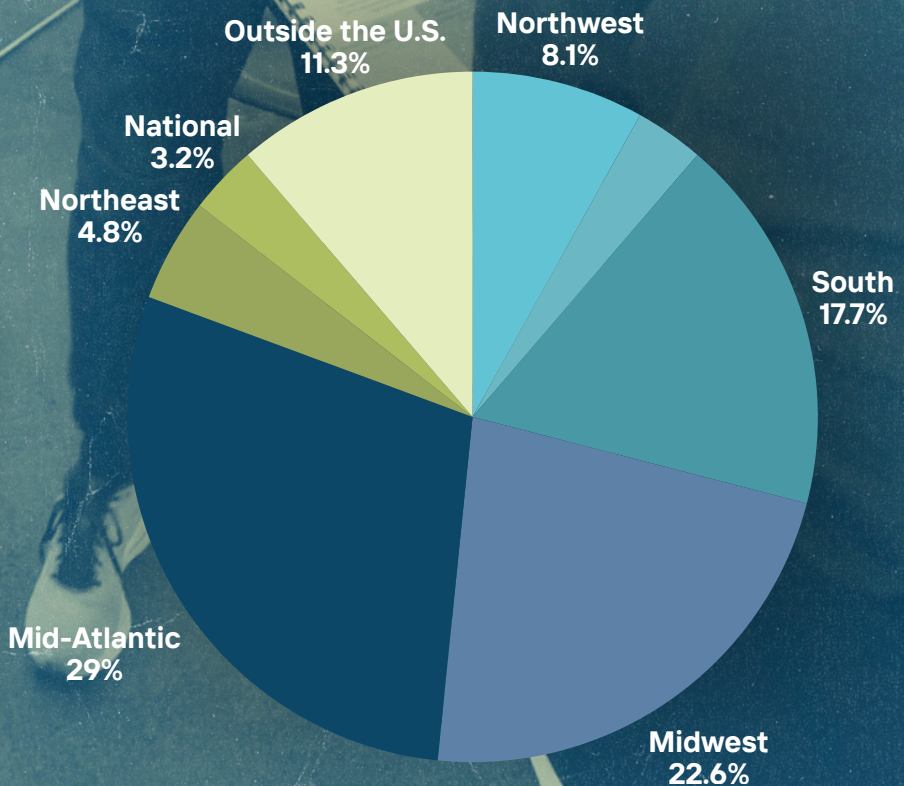


Women & Gender-Oppressed



Poor & Working Class

PARTICIPANTS BY GEOGRAPHY



"One of the most impactful trainings that I have taken as an organizer. The facilitators created a nuanced and open space for us to show up authentically and gave us the space to take ownership over our own learning. I left the sessions feeling empowered and motivated to slow down so my organizing can be more impactful in the long-term."

BUILDING STRONG & RESILIENT COALITIONS

In 2025, we worked with a number of coalitions that wanted to go deeper on the frameworks we offer in our workshops. Often coalitions can only send one or two people to an external training which makes it difficult to bring those lessons back to the full coalition. So instead of asking them to come to us, we went to them and helped them build shared understandings of our frameworks and have opportunities to apply them to their real organizing context.



TESTIMONIAL

"I appreciated the tools about resilience and understanding organizational culture that helped us learn to better articulate and surface some of the undercurrents that exist in our coalition."

BUILDING STRONG & RESILIENT COALITIONS

PHILADELPHIA LAND JUSTICE COALITION (PLJC)

The Philadelphia Land Justice Coalition is a coalition of farmers, gardeners and other green space-tenders who have been working together for years without a set structure or process for decision-making. Over the course of six sessions, with coaching in between, we supported this dedicated group to create the foundational building blocks needed for lasting coalition partnership.

SAVE CHINATOWN (PHILLY)



We worked with the SaveChinatown Coalition in Philly after their big win, stopping construction of a new arena that would put billionaire profits over the needs of Philadelphians. We supported them to debrief the campaign and ground in skills that would support them to navigate tensions in the work ahead.

HERE (HOUSING EQUITY, REPAIR, AND ELECTRIFICATION) FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

HERE for CJ is a newer coalition that is building the skills amongst its membership to be in principled struggle. Understanding that all coalitions, bringing diverse interests together for a shared purpose, require compromise and to be grounded, direct and skillful in navigating disagreement and tension.



BUILDING STRONG & RESILIENT COALITIONS

TESTIMONIALS

"The scenario we reviewed was very effective at making concrete what otherwise were abstract ideas around conflict resolution and included the exact types of themes that our coalition grapples with."



"I was struck during our session by how deeply power is tied to disagreement -the way we process disagreement has power dynamics that we need to be aware of. It is important to process our coalition's disagreements with an approach to power dynamics that is reflective of what we want to see in the world we are trying to co-create."

BUILDING STRONG & RESILIENT COALITIONS



CONVERGENCE

Beyond The Vibe: Five Conversations for Building Coalitions

What does it take to move beyond the illusion of agreement?

Convergence Magazine published a piece our Co-Director Christi Clark wrote to highlight the most important places coalitions should look to build alignment and clarity. This writing encapsulates the most essential elements of our coalition building framework participants learn in our public workshops "Building and Maintaining Strong Coalitions."
READ IT HERE

CULTIVATING RESILIENCE

TRANSFORMING ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

In 2024 we kicked off a year-long cohort, **Resilient Futures**, with grantees of the Hyams Foundation. This work was designed to support grassroots base building organizations to make assessments about their organizational culture and develop hypotheses about what shifts would make the biggest impacts. In 2025 we continued our work with this cohort, offering the coaching organizations needed to implement new experiments. We additionally facilitated live cohort sessions for organizations to continue to build relationships with each other.

"Being able to be in space to hold hard questions together combatted my feelings of burnout. I knew I wasn't alone and would have support to figure it out."

"Learning that we're all going through the same stuff changed my relationship to the movement- it has allowed me to be more open, understanding and empathetic."



"There was new work we did outside of this space only <u>because</u> we came into relationship with each other and shared so vulnerably. The result of being more connected now is that connection allowed so much more to happen"

CAMPAIGNING FOR POWER

STRATEGY RETREATS







In 2025 we ran two, in-person retreats to train organizers in stronger campaigning. Our Campaigning for Power program is designed to help organizers build clarity about what it takes to develop campaigns that break us out of the cycle of traditional campaigning- that often leaves us feeling stuck on the hamster wheel of tactics that don't move the needle on winning our demands. In this training we focused on supporting participants to:

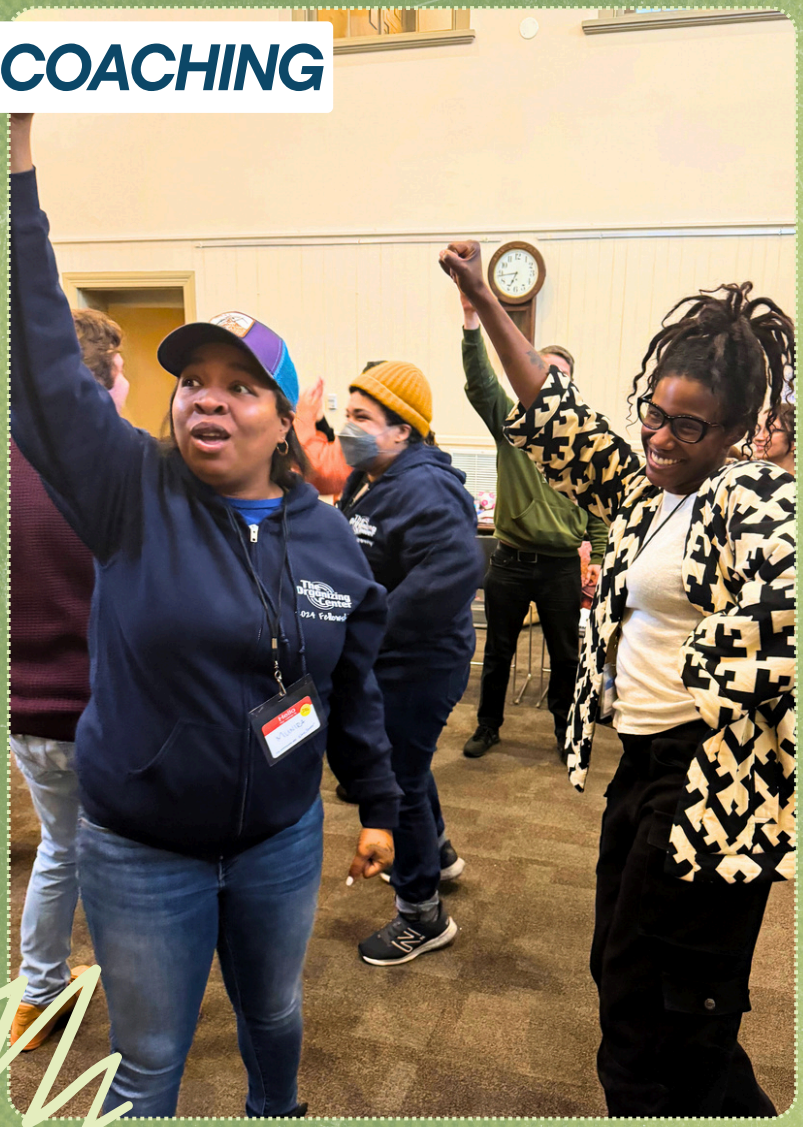
- Understand what leverage we have or can build that influences decision-makers
- Create an escalating sequence of tactics that is proactive rather than responsive
- Get clear about the common pitfalls of campaigning and how to resolve them
- Use tools right away with time to workshop existing campaigns and get direct, immediate feedback from experienced campaigners.

TAILORED SUPPORT

DEEPER WORK THROUGH COACHING

Philly Black Worker Project

For the majority of 2025 one of our coaches worked in deep partnership with the Philly Black Worker Project, supporting them to deepen their organizing practices, sharpen their approach to base building and engage in campaigns to win policy change at the City level. Our coaching work supported the Black Worker Project to carry out their campaign, with the NDWA-PA Chapter, to win the POWER Act. The POWER Act is a groundbreaking law that sets a precedent for how cities can step in where federal labor protections have fallen short. At a time when workers across the country—particularly low-wage Black workers, immigrant workers, domestic workers, restaurant and service workers, and other low-wage laborers—face rollbacks in rights and limited paths to justice, Philadelphia is leading the way.



SKILLS TRAINING THAT TAKES IT TO ANOTHER LEVEL

DRUM (Desis Rising Up & Moving)

DRUM is a powerful base building organization in NYC that was founded in 2000 to build the power of South Asian and Indo-Caribbean low wage immigrant workers, youth, and families to win economic and educational justice, and civil and immigrant rights. We supported their organizing team through a two-day in person training on organizing conversations. Despite decades of organizational experience, organizers at all levels still benefit from practice and The OC supported DRUM organizers to hone their organizing conversations to move more people to action.



MOVING OUT OF SILOS

MOVEMENT EDUCATORS CONSORTIUM GROWS

The Organizing Center was one of the founding members of the Movement Educators Consortium in 2023. The Consortium brings together U.S.-based social justice training organizations to share tools, lessons, and strategic questions. As training and education organizations, we support base-building, campaigning, and power-building groups across the country. The Consortium invites us to build outside our organizational silos and into relationships of solidarity and mutual learning. We bring different styles, strengths, traditions, and focuses in our work. The Consortium envisions a permanent space where our diversity is leveraged to strengthen our roles in the broader ecosystem, and in anticipation of political crises and movement moments where coordination will be beneficial. Since our founding, the Consortium has grown from 9 organizations to 20 organizations. This volunteer-run effort has led to increased collaboration and supported members to have more grounded assessments about movement conditions across geographies. We are excited to see where it takes us in the years to come.

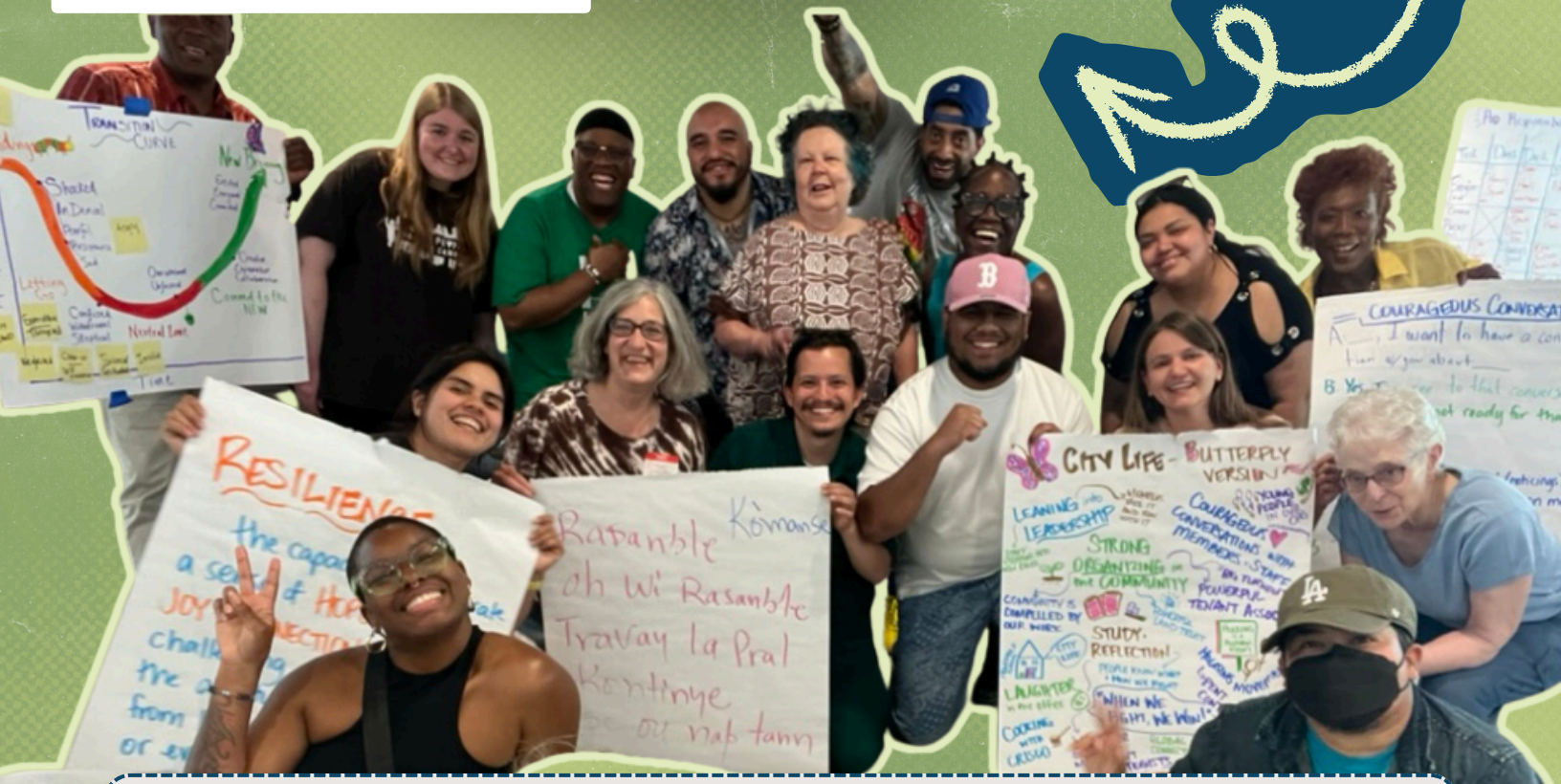


GOING BEYOND THE TRAINING

After five years of growth and experimentation, we took some time to reflect on how we can sharpen our ability to help organizations transform their practice. We kept hearing from organizing directors that they have lots of trainings they can send their team to, but not much support after the training to make sure the learnings stick.

So in 2026, we are investing more of our time into programs that support implementation: the work that happens after a training to provide more tailored support, coaching and facilitation that can help organizers turn new skills into muscle memory.

ACCOMPANIMENT



Accompaniment is how we stand side-by-side with organizations that need a deeper period of transformation to improve their organizing practices, structures, and culture to make basebuilding more successful. We will partner with organizations for at least 6 months to a full year, providing coaching, training and facilitation to help them move their entire organization into a new way of practice.

In 2025, we experimented with this new way of working with organizations and supported organizations in deeper partnership with us to develop new practices for principled struggle, have hard conversations to unearth the root of tensions, and make assessments of where to focus on strengthening organizing.

GOING BEYOND THE TRAINING

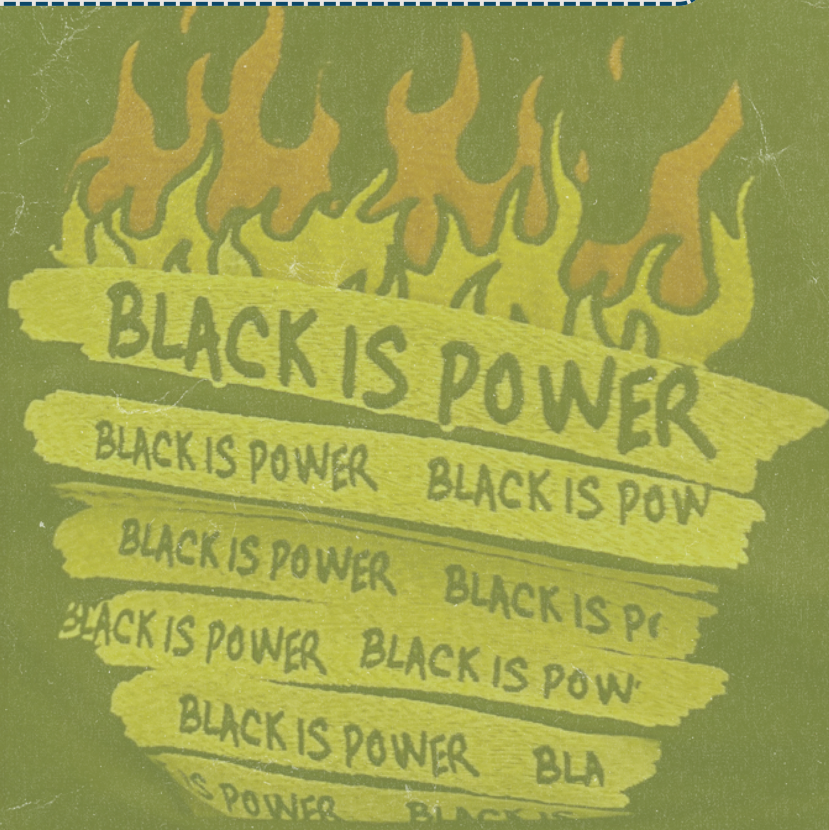
REGIONAL PEER LEARNING COHORTS

Regional Peer Learning Cohorts bring together organizations working together in a regional context to get aligned and trained on standards of base building practice, campaign strategy and/or resilient organizational culture. The purpose of these cohorts is to go beyond what a single training can do and equip organizations with the skills to tools to level up their individual practice in a way that reinforces a collective level-up in the ecosystem. Carefully selected regional cohorts also can support a key set of organizations positioned as leading forces to build relationships that can help them drive clearer strategy, organizing practice, and a culture of resilience in their regional ecosystem.

In 2025, our next round of work with the Resilient Futures cohort with the Hyams Foundation grantees brought organizations playing leadership roles in the New England movement ecosystem together. Resilient Futures 2.0 deepened their connection, alignment on standards, and supported these organizations to try out what they were learning and receive coaching support while implementing.





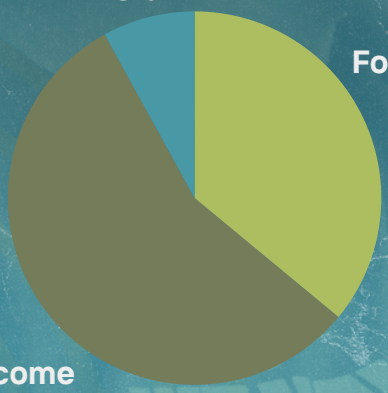


ANNUAL BUDGET

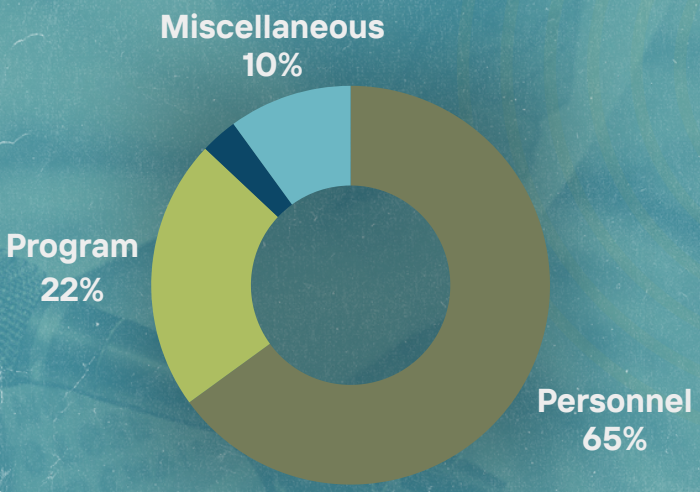
Our FY25 budget was $815,826. We had five full-time staff members. Our budget breakdown was:

INCOME

2025 Foundation Partners
Spring Point Partners- $150,000
Sunrise Project- $50,000
Samuel S. Fels Foundation- $30,000

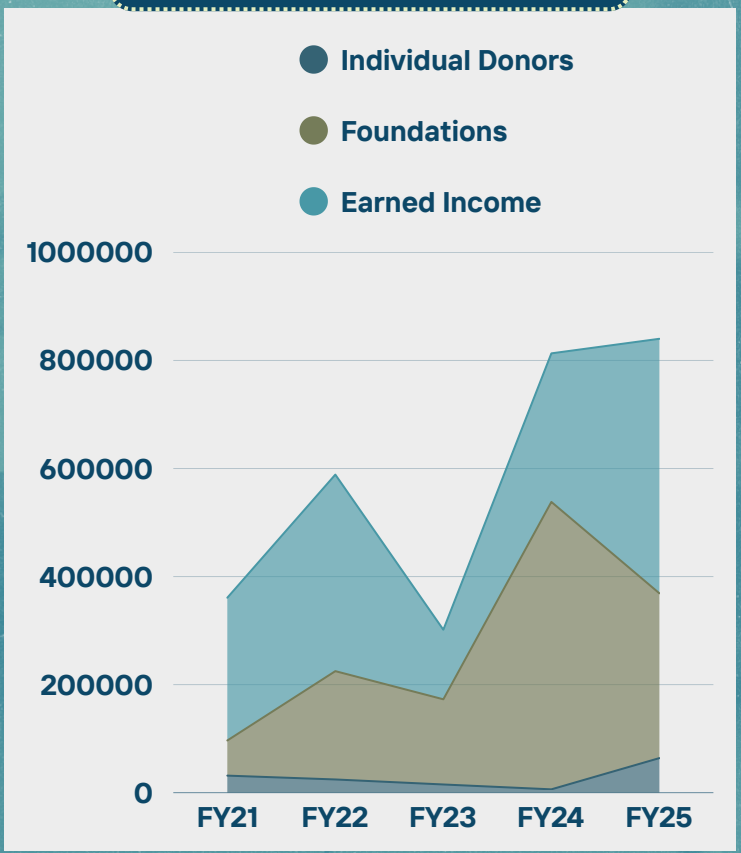


EXPENSES





OUR STABILITY OVER THE YEARS



ANNUAL BUDGET

OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTNER

In 2026, we have a $350K income shortfall to meet. To get us to the level of programming that both meets the existing needs and scales us up, we need to raise additional funds. We prioritize working with under-resourced organizations which means that our offerings are on a sliding scale and often below what comparable training organizations charge. Instead of raising our rates, we are always looking to fundraise to support the organizations that are led by, and building the power of, our priority participants.

Additional foundation partnership would allow us to sustain and scale our work by:

- **Supporting our General Operations** - relationship-centered work is what we do and it takes time to build. This slower work often happens ***before*** programs begin. With dedicated philanthropic and/or individual partners, we could build before we move and have the space to experiment with developing longer term strategy that's not on a project-by-project basis
- **Help us scale into new regions** - We have commitments to building regional relationships, skills and power in Pennsylvania, New England (MA, RI, CT), and the South. What we do not have is the staff capacity to support cohort development, and support, in each of those regions nor to expand into others. Additional partnership would ensure we can scale our work to meet the needs of this moment.





"WE HAVE THE **POWER WITHIN US** TO CREATE THE WORLD ANEW"

- GRACE LEE BOGGS

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