

OFA



ORGANIZING



MANUAL



“Organizing teaches as nothing else does the beauty and strength of everyday people. Through the songs of the church and the talk on the stoops, through the hundreds of individual stories of coming up from the South and finding any job that would pay, of raising families on threadbare budgets, of losing some children to drugs and watching others earn degrees and land jobs their parents could never aspire to — it is through these stories and songs of dashed hopes and powers of endurance, of ugliness and strife, subtlety and laughter, that organizers can shape a sense of community not only for others, but for themselves.”

— Barack Obama, 2009

Part I: Who We Are

- OFA Mission
- OFA Culture and Expectations

Part II: Building Strategic Issue Campaigns

- How a Bill Becomes a Law
- OFA Issue Organizing Strategy
- Power Mapping
- Earned Media
- Digital Organizing
- Talking About the Issues through Personal Stories
- Crafting Your Local Strategy

Part III: OFA Chapters and Teams

- Why Chapters and Teams
- History on the Chapter Program
- Chapter Responsibilities and Phases of Development
- Chapter Structure
- Chapter Role Descriptions
- Team Responsibilities and Phases of Development
- Team Structure
- Team Role Descriptions
- Testing and Confirming Leadership

Part IV: Methods for Building Capacity

- Personal Story
- 1:1 Meetings
- Volunteer Recruitment and Retention
- House Meetings
- Trainings
- Why data is important

Appendix A: Step-by-step guides

- Event Organizing 101
- Organizing a Press Event
- Organizing a MOC Office Visit
- Blizzarding
- Getting sign-on: Petition and Pledge Card Drives
- Writing Letters to the Editor
- Pledge-to-Call Drives
- Taking Strong Photos
- How to organize a House Meeting
- How to organize a Training

This manual represents the collected best practices of Organizing for Action volunteers and staff. It is intended for OFA volunteers working in our organization in many capacities — fellows, chapter leads, data captains, statewide resource leads, and brand new volunteers, just to name a few examples. The information in this manual gives context on how OFA develops its strategy and how volunteer leaders can adapt that strategy to the local level. It provides information about best practices in issue organizing and building people-centered, metrics-driven grassroots issue advocacy campaigns. And it provides places for you to reflect on how to adapt these methods to the organizing work you're doing in your community with fellow OFA volunteers.

While this manual is intended as a resource, your greatest resource in organizing at OFA will be other volunteer leaders and the staff who support them. Every volunteer and volunteer leader should be connected to our organization through a point of contact. For you, this person may be your neighborhood team leader, chapter lead, state coordinator, or mentor. As you work through this manual, work with your point of contact on how you can implement these techniques into the organizing you are doing in your community.

The organizing that OFA volunteers are doing on behalf of the issues Americans voted for in 2012 is already changing the conversation and holding elected officials accountable to their constituents. By engaging our communities on issues that matter to our everyday lives, and organizing to persuade our Members of Congress to support us, grassroots volunteers are bringing the country closer to the change it voted for. We hope that you'll use the organizing techniques in this manual to bring your community together and make your elected representatives hear your voices, and thereby push forward making the change we voted for a reality.

Thank you for being part of the OFA family, thank you for leaning in to learn more about organizing, and thank you for continuing to propel our movement forward.

YOU

ARE

OFA

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Who We Are

OFA Mission

OFA Culture and Expectations

Who We Are

You are OFA.

Organizing for Action exists because of dedicated grassroots volunteers throughout the country who are committed to organizing their communities to help achieve enactment of the agenda Americans voted for in 2012. By bringing supporters together and crafting issue advocacy strategies that are both nationally potent and locally responsive, we are building issue advocacy campaigns that move Members of Congress to support our causes.

Our mission comprises five main aspects that describe our purpose and how we achieve it:

- 1** Organize in states around the legislative agenda Americans voted for in 2012.
- 2** Build grassroots power by training and developing volunteer leadership on the ground.
- 3** Build meaningful, long-lasting and mutually beneficial coalition partnerships in states and nationally to build the progressive movement.
- 4** Develop state organizations that grassroots fundraise to self-sustain, connecting donors to activists.
- 5** Tell the story of our work.

Every part of our mission points back to the importance of grassroots volunteers in our organization. We embrace the motto “Respect-Empower-Include-Act” as the way we interact with one another as we build a sustainable, effective organization to advocate for the issues Americans voted for in 2012.