

# WINNING THE MIDWEST

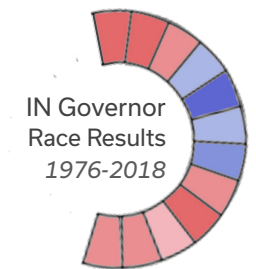
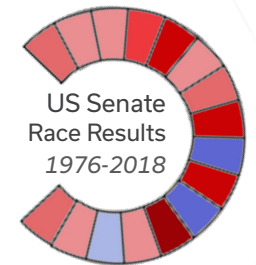
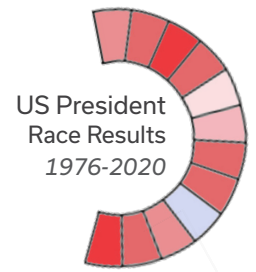
## DISRUPTING MYTHS AND BUILDING MULTIRACIAL GOVERNING COALITIONS

### Indiana Addendum

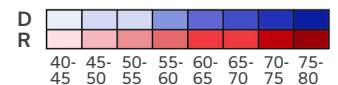
Progressives have won in Indiana and can win again. Some mainstream political analysts have written off the state, where Republicans control every position of statewide power and Democrats have not won statewide in nine years. But the victories of Barack Obama in 2008 and US Senator Joe Donnelly in 2012 demonstrate that it is still possible for Democrats to win statewide. Recent history is littered with close calls: many Democratic defeats were close enough that they could have been overcome with long-term organizing and progressive political infrastructure. Right-wing gerrymandering and voter suppression have left a political vacuum: one in three legislative races are uncontested, and one in three legislators are appointed, not elected.

In 2020, 14 state-based organizations came together to change this trajectory. They established Indiana Votes, a vehicle for progressive electoral organizing to build multiracial governing coalitions at local and state levels. Partners include [Act Indiana](#), [Hoosier Action](#), [Indiana Muslim Advocacy Network](#), and [Indiana State Teachers Association](#). The coalition has a ten-year plan to reinvigorate democracy and build multiracial power. Retaking the governor's mansion and controlling the Indiana House of Representatives will require deep investment in central and northwest Indiana (the two power centers of the state), a robust persuasion campaign, and closing the turnout gap. If Black voters, young people, and residents of Indiana's two most progressive counties voted at the same rate as the state average, it would add an additional 318,853 votes – a decisive number in a state where the predicted margin of victory for statewide races is 160,000 votes. To succeed in 2022 and beyond, Indiana progressives must execute the four part strategy laid out in Organizing the Midwest:

- 1** Invest strategically to organize Black, immigrant, and young voters
- 2** Organize conflicted white voters with new and proven strategies
- 3** Advance a Race Class Narrative in Indiana
- 4** Establish electoral programs through independent state ecosystems



Key: Winning Ratios Per Party



**4,751,370**

IN Registered Voters, 2020

Thanks to writers/editors Judith Barrish, Justin Burchard, and Shoshanna Spector for content.



### KEY RACES FEDERAL

#### House of Representatives

Congressmember Frank Mrvan (D, Northwest Indiana) is a top GOP target, and a broad slate of Republicans are competing in the primary. Though the race is listed as "likely Democratic" by pundits, redistricting makes the seat more vulnerable. Republican funding is flowing to the race.



### KEY RACES STATE

#### House of Representatives

By flipping 2,500 votes and winning four seats, Indiana Votes could break the Republican supermajority in the state House. The five most competitive legislative seats are in northwest Indiana, with margins of victory of around 350 votes per race. Three of them overlap with CD-1, Rep. Mrvan's seat, making this a critical region for investment.



### KEY RACES LOCAL

#### Precinct Captains

In 2022, Indiana Votes is running 250 grassroots leaders, mostly people of color, for precinct captain, the lowest rung on the ladder of electoral leadership. This cohort makes up 25 percent of candidates statewide. Precinct captains appoint officials to vacant seats and will determine who gets party endorsements for state and local office for the next four years.

# STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INVESTMENT IN INDIANA

## INVEST IN BLACK, IMMIGRANT & YOUNG VOTERS

Progressives cannot win Indiana without the overperformance of Black and immigrant voters in the state's two power centers: central Indiana (Indianapolis) and northwest Indiana. BIPOC voters make up 16 percent of the state's electorate and 26 percent of a winning coalition; the majority live in just two counties.

Sustained, long-term organizing in Black and immigrant communities is underway. Faith in Indiana is leading engagement of Black voters in the largest and fastest growing Black communities (Indianapolis metro region and northwest Indiana, from Gary to South Bend). The Indiana Muslim Advocacy Network is organizing one of the nation's fastest growing Muslim and Southeast Asian communities in central Indiana.

## ORGANIZE CONFLICTED WHITE VOTERS

White voters are a critical part of a successful progressive voting bloc in Indiana, including young white voters, older voters, and voters without a college education. Winning a progressive majority in the state House or statewide races is not possible without outreach to and investment in suburbs, small towns, and rural areas.

Hoosier Action has begun organizing these conflicted white voters, hosting deep canvassing conversations that engage with voters on difficult issues like racial justice and immigrant rights, while acknowledging the real economic and cultural difficulties they face and providing space for conflicting views. Act Indiana engages these white voters in Catholic and mainline Protestant churches, a crucial onramp to broader engagement in communities where progressives do not generally hold sway.

## ESTABLISH A RACE CLASS NARRATIVE IN INDIANA

Indiana was one of the first three states to participate in the Race Class Narrative project, a research-backed strategy developed by communications expert Anat Shenker-Osorio. In 2020, leaders and staff from more than 70 Indiana organizations deployed the We Make Indiana narrative, making use of shared branding, messaging, guides, and open source digital media assets. In November elections that year, Democrats won three of four targeted House races and sent the state's first Muslim lawmaker to the Indiana House. With support, Indiana Votes plans to build on this partnership to turn We Make Indiana into a RCN hub for the state, shape the narrative to win elections in 2022, and set progressives up for the state budget fight in 2023.

## STRENGTHEN INDEPENDENT ELECTORAL ECOSYSTEMS

Two years ago, Indiana began developing the infrastructure needed to support coordinated electoral campaigns. By launching Indiana Votes, progressives announced their intention to rebuild political power in the state. The coalition completed a political data analysis to assess opportunities and develop a plan for retaking the state. Through this shared foundation, Indiana Votes will establish shared data infrastructure, enabling partner organizations to collaborate in educating their members and voters.

In the coming year, Indiana Votes will join the Movement Cooperative, a collaboration designed to advance the progressive movement through data and technology infrastructure. The coalition will coordinate shared data for voter engagement, develop platforms for shared communication, build a coalition candidate pipeline, and coordinate training sessions that focus on organizing and leadership development.



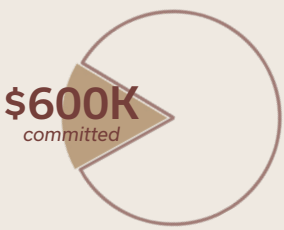
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