



2023 IMPACT REPORT



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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LETTER

2023 was a year of new opportunity. For the first time in nearly four decades, *Michigan had a progressive governing majority*. We knew that our partner organizations were eager to begin checking things off of our collective wishlist like repealing Right to Work, protecting and expanding reproductive rights, expanding the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act to include LGBTQIA+ people, gun violence prevention, and expanding voting rights.

In order to make this “wish list” into a “reality list,” *Michigan Voices prioritized building relationships with elected leaders and our partner organizations*. As there are no off years in our year-round organizing model, we spent part of 2023 preparing our partners so that they were ready for 2024. We conducted various trainings, secured capacity building grants,

and worked closely with in-state groups to plan our 2024 election protection program.

We’ve entered 2024 knowing what it takes to win and armed with the resources needed to do it.

In 2023 we set out to examine both where we’ve been and where we’re headed in order to route our trajectory going forward. We knew that having a clear direction, clear goals, and clear plans *would be crucial for our success in 2024*. With input from our staff and our partners, we developed an extensive strategic plan that clearly marks our path through 2024 and beyond.

While much has been accomplished legislatively, there is still so much on the table: passing Drive Safe legislation, repealing remaining abortion restrictions,

holding corporations accountable, addressing racial disparities in maternal health, paid family leave, and more. If we are to see further progress, *we need to continue to elect people who share our progressive values* and actually care about the people they are running to serve.

2024 includes the first year Michigan voters have rights such as early in-person voting and a simplified process for applying to automatically receive absentee ballots for all future elections. 2024 also brings new challenges, such as a redistricting process we did not anticipate. *There are also six elections over the course of 2024 and all of the work that goes into protecting those elections and reaching voters*. It also reignites familiar challenges such as mis- and disinformation, the targeted harassment of election officials, and political platforms that are diametrically opposed to our values.

That said, MV is prepared to handle any challenges that come our way and will *continue to support our partner organizations* by providing funding, trainings, data support, and the tools and technology to ensure that they, too, can confidently handle the challenges 2024 poses. We are innovating how we run our programs by launching the Targeted Impact Project and developing a voter registration app that will allow us to check registrations, register voters, and sign voters up on the permanent AV list. *We know that Michigan is crucial to the path to 270*. We’ve laid the groundwork and we are committed to doing our part by continuing to invest in the strategic leadership and the participation of BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ people as well as continuing our work with our partners that are led by and engage BIPOC people to help build capacity, membership and power on our journey to collective liberation. **THE POWER IS IN US.**

Signed,
Sommer Foster





INTRODUCTION

Michigan Voices is determined in our mission to cultivate thriving communities across Michigan. Our remarkable ecosystem of partners throughout the state is built on a foundation of collective strength. We are unwavering in our commitment to amplify the power of our partners, providing the infrastructure and support needed to align and unite their efforts.

STRATEGIC PLAN

In March of 2023, we began working with Jennifer Epps-Addison of Synergy Strategies to develop a five-year strategic plan. This plan is a comprehensive roadmap for what our work looks like moving forward. We celebrated our successes, looked at upcoming opportunities and challenges, and determined where we need to strengthen our organization. We worked with our staff, our board, and over 60 partners to create a meaningful document that lays out who we are and where we want to be in five years. This eight-month process produced an ambitious plan, marking a significant milestone for Michigan Voices. It positions us to take purposeful action, engage in continuous learning, and strategically adapt as we navigate the path through 2024 and beyond.

HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR 2023 PROGRAMS

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP & TRAINING

In 2023, our membership grew to **135 table partners** and we continued to highlight the impact BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and immigrant leadership have had on our shared success in building power statewide. We utilized our strategic planning process, analysis of 2022 and previous programs, and goals for 2024 to **recruit organizations in underrepresented communities**. The Native Justice Coalition, Nation Outside, Coalition to End Mass Incarceration, and Voting Access for All Coalition all target Indigenous, incarcerated, and returning citizens. Michigan Voices also made intentional investments in partners organizing in geographic areas that have seen an **increase in the density of communities of color** or areas where we can improve turnout.

Michigan Voices assessed the training needs of partners early on in the year. We developed a year-long training calendar **hosting over 50 trainings** covering areas such as voter registration, organizing and issue advocacy, compliance, fundraising, non-profit management, communications, equity, and grassroots lobbying.

MV partnered with many coalitions and organizations to **make available training from the experts**, including State Voices, MI United, Michigan League of Public Policy, Progress Michigan, Detroit Power Network, LGBT Detroit, ACLU and GLPA. The Democracy, Integrated Voter Engagement, and Reproductive Justice Workgroups also **regularly hosted skill-building trainings during their monthly meetings**. These trainings were recorded and made accessible to all MV partners.

MV hosted monthly VAN trainings as well as data deep dive trainings to promote data-informed campaigns and the use of tools to run efficient programs. The data deep dive trainings built upon the skills introduced in the Integrated Voter Engagement Workgroup and moved participants through a curriculum **designed to address timely topics throughout the overall election cycle**.



DEMOCRACY & ELECTION PROTECTION

MV's Democracy and Election Protection Department is the epitome of "stay ready so you don't have to get ready." Our team spent 2023 cultivating relationships with partners, educating voters and our partners about Prop 2-2022 implementation, and showcasing our work at state and national conferences.

Although 2023 did not see any statewide elections, partners engaged their communities in municipal elections, stressing the importance of local elections and continuing to build their community impact in a strategic, long-term, and sustainable way.

HIGHLIGHTS:

ELECTION PROTECTION PROGRAM PLANNING

- + Co-launched the College & Youth Vote Workgroup with Campus Vote Project and All Voting is Local.
- + Co-led and coordinated the Partner Election Protection Program Planning.
- + Co-led and coordinated the 2023 Rapid Response Workgroup with Promote the Vote and Progress Michigan.
- + Hosted Monthly Statewide Democracy Meetings alongside America Votes.
- + Poll Worker Recruitment: Along with the ACLU, MLCV, and AVIL, MV led a statewide poll worker recruitment program and connected partners with Democracy MVP, the State's process for assisting clerks to recruit poll workers.
- + Poll Monitor Program: Partner organizations recruited, trained, and deployed 158 poll monitors for the August and November elections. MV coordinated the poll monitor program which not only monitored targeted polling locations and directed issues to the 866-OUR-VOTE hotline, but also engaged clerks and used social media to disseminate voter education materials.

COALITION BUILDING

With the changes in election laws and the **importance of the 2024 elections in mind**, Michigan Voices began working early in 2023 with six other in-state Election Protection Program coordinating organizations: ACLU of Michigan, All Voting is Local Michigan & America Votes Michigan, Michigan League of Conservation Voters Education Fund, Progress Michigan, and Promote the Vote. We held an **in-person partner meeting** in May to begin to write our 2024 EPP plan. By August, our plan was fully drafted with our partners' input and our partners **fully understanding expectations, roles, and goals**. The 2024 EPP plan is unprecedented in its size, timing, and level of coordination. It allows us to hit the ground running in 2024 and is **essential to meet the challenges that 2024 will undoubtedly present**.

NEW VOTING RIGHTS IMPLEMENTATION

Prop 2-2022: MV has seen **voting rights expanded** through this proposal passing in 2022, to the legislative process in 2023, and to its implementation in 2024.

We've collaborated with partners about **how best to disseminate the education around all these new and expanded voting rights** that are now law, including a minimum of 9 days of early voting, pre-registration for 16-year-olds, an increase in access to ballot drop boxes, enrollment in a permanent absentee ballot list, and prepaid postage for ballots.





ELECTION PROTECTION REGRANTS

From July to November 2023 (August Primary & November General Elections), MV regranted \$60K to 10 partners to recruit and train poll monitors, educate voters, engage with local clerks, and provide rapid response in the cities of Dearborn Heights, Detroit, Ferndale, Grosse Pointe, Hamtramck, Harper Woods, Inkster, Melvindale, Oak Park, Pontiac, Riverview, Warren, Royal Oak Township, Southfield, and Trenton.



INTEGRATED VOTER ENGAGEMENT

CAPACITY BUILDING REGRANT

In early 2023, Michigan Voicces regranted \$225,000 to 19 civic engagement organizations across the state to invest in their leadership and organizing infrastructure. The purpose of this capacity-building grant was to invest in Michigan Voices partner organizations to prepare their staff, members, supporters, and volunteers for scaled civic engagement programming in preparation for and building into the 2024 election cycle. With this investment, partners were encouraged to be creative and innovative in their approaches to expanding their reach and depth of organizing as well as strengthening and expanding their programs for 2024.

CAPACITY BUILDING REGRANT

- + 482Forward
- + APIA VOTE-MI
- + Arab American Heritage Council
- + Detroit Disability Power
- + Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation
- + Emgage-Michigan
- + LGBT Detroit
- + Metropolitan Organizing Strategy Enabling Strength (MOSES)
- + Michigan Education Justice Coalition
- + Michigan Interfaith Power & Light
- + Michigan Organization on Adolescent Sexual Health (MOASH)
- + Nation Outside
- + Native Justice Coalition
- + Oakland Forward
- + PIRG New Voters Project
- + Rising Voices
- + Student Advocacy Center of Michigan
- + Warriors on Wheels of Metropolitan Detroit
- + Wisdom Institute

Partners pursued a wide range of capacity-increasing strategies, including new membership recruitment, deepening relationships with collaborators and fellow stakeholders, expanding into new constituencies, identifying issues and priorities motivating to voters, updating communication platforms, building digital programs, launching fellowship and leadership academies, pursuing additional training/development, and either purpose dedicating or hiring new staff. The programs all addressed implementing solutions to organizational needs in a sustainable way with a commitment to leadership development by equitable, inclusive means.

VOTER REGISTRATION

Michigan Voices received funding from the Everybody Votes Coalition to design, implement, and support a voter registration program with four partners: League of Conservation Voters, APiA Vote MI, Detroit Change Initiative, and Oakland Forward. During the 10-week program, partners and staff participated in intensive training and rigorous quality control processes.

Overall, the program was able to register or update the registrations of 6,218 voters in Michigan.



REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE

In January, Michigan Voices Reproductive Justice Workgroup partners prioritized the implementation of Prop 3-2022 (Reproductive Freedom for All) and the expansion of abortion access in Michigan.

After the 2022 ballot initiative, our collective efforts were pivotal in addressing the disproportionately harmful impact of restrictive laws on BIPOC and low-income communities. Our RJ workgroup educated the community about the harms of barriers to care, including TRAP laws, 24-hour waiting periods, and prohibiting private insurance or Medicaid coverage for abortion. In September, when a package of bills removing unnecessary barriers to abortion care were introduced, our partners participated in the Reproductive Health Act Day of Action in Lansing.

They shared personal stories, advocated for reproductive access, equity, and justice, and celebrated the strides we've made in reproductive rights in Michigan, fostering a sense of unity and purpose. Michigan Voices partners advocated tirelessly for the removal of unnecessary barriers to reproductive health care, particularly around abortion services, and MV spent over \$125,000 on digital programs to push for access to care.

Then, on Nov. 21, 2023, Gov. Whitmer signed the Reproductive Health Act, which repealed many politically motivated and medically unnecessary statutes that existed only to impede access to abortion. While the Reproductive Health Act that was signed into law does not include everything that we hoped for, we have made considerable progress that will make abortion more accessible and more affordable for many. Our work continues. The RJ Workgroup identified several priorities to carry our work into 2024 including:



Increased support of partners' policy platforms, including black maternal health, health equity, and comprehensive sex education



Building youth engagement/youth empowerment



Building our reciprocal advocacy framework



Working on community-driven policy advocacy



ON APRIL 5, 2023, GOV. GRETCHEN WHITMER REPEALED MICHIGAN'S 1931 ABORTION BAN.

MV regranted a total of \$122,500 to 15 partners to support their reproductive justice work. These regrants made the following possible for our partners:

- Partners built relationships with over 20 legislators, educating them on the mission and work of their organizations and advocating for policies important to their communities.
- MOSES's work on the Detroit Health Equity Council/Taskforce.
- Rising Voices's AAPI held a successful reproductive justice event, which included an Asian American OB-GYN and reproductive justice expert.
- LGBT Detroit produced a podcast on the unnecessary barriers to accessing abortion care.
- Mothering Justice led a coalition advocating for paid leave policies and issues relating to pregnancy and parenting.
- Wisdom Institute attended the Reproductive Justice National Summit.
- Michigan United continued organizing programs advocating for driver's licenses for undocumented Michiganders.
- MOASH educated their members and faith communities on the continued harm of forced parental consent laws and the need for comprehensive sex education.

CAPITOL DAY

In May, we co-hosted Capitol Day 2023: The People's Agenda/Dia de Capitolio 2023: La Agenda de la Gente with Michigan United in Lansing.



OVER 200 ATTENDEES PARTICIPATED IN A DAY OF ACTION



ATTENDEES MET WITH ROUGHLY 40 LEGISLATORS

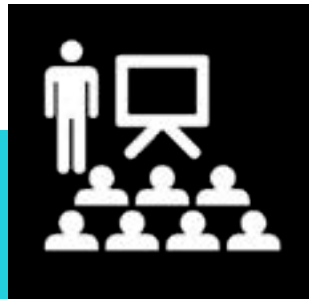


Attendees met with legislators to **address our communities' needs** and convey strategies and solutions in the areas of reproductive justice, democracy, and immigrant rights. Elected officials and experts from partner organizations **also participated in a panel discussion on the implementation of Prop 2-2022** (expansion of voting rights). Capitol Day was a successful day of advocacy, education, and inspiration for Michigan Voices and our table partners.



DATA DEPARTMENT

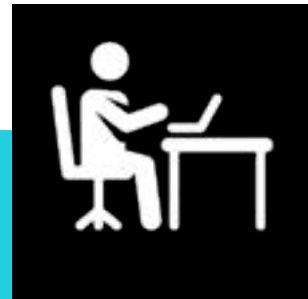
Promoting data-informed programs and running efficient and effective campaigns, MV *hosted monthly VAN training* as well as data deep-dive training. The data deep-dive training built upon the skills introduced in the Integrated Voter Engagement Workgroup and moved participants through a curriculum designed to address *timely topics throughout the overall election cycle* including tracking leadership development, voter registration follow-up, universe creation, evaluating the success of a program, and utilizing and administering tools, including predictive dialers and peer to peer texting platforms. Also, during 2023, MV's Data Department focused on training and skills development for partners to *increase partner comfort and independence when administering voter outreach tools* including the predictive dialer, peer-to-peer texting tools, relational organizing platforms, and tools to support event management and volunteer recruitment.



**116 TRAINING
ATTENDEES**



**144 OFFICE HOURS
ATTENDEES**



**31 OFFICE
HOURS HELD**



PARTNER OUTREACH FOR 2023 ELECTIONS: 191,685 CONTACTS



PHONES: 63,472



DOORS: 28,141



TEXTS: 95,975



MAIL: 4,032



RELATIONAL: 65

Using the racial demographic shift report that compiled ACS (American Community Survey) data over the last ten years, our data team was able to analyze Michigan's growing diversity and to **geographically map the fastest-growing BIPOC communities in the state** to identify opportunities for expanded organizing in areas not historically a focus. Similarly, utilizing census data and active voter registration numbers, MV was able to assist partners in **micro-targeting municipalities with pockets of unregistered voters and coming of age voters** in preparation for pre-registration for 16-year-olds, part of Michigan's expanding voting rights laws.

The Data Department is looking forward to our impact turnout project, where historical data was used to **measure the impact MV had on contacted voters in 2022**, to inform partner program goals for 2024 with the coordinated goal of increasing turnout by 2% for our targeted universe in 2024.

CONCLUSION

Certainly, no off year, 2023 saw Michigan Voices continuing our work in democracy and election protection, voter outreach, and reproductive justice. As always, we are so grateful for our partners. Together we stand ready to take on whatever challenges might emerge in the way of social justice in our communities. The fight for justice never stops. Thank you to everyone who fights for us, and with us.



UNAPOLOGETIC

UNRELENTING

UNSTOPPABLE

ONWARD...

