



BUILDING BRIDGES FOR AMERICA

Organizing for Change: Civics for Change

FREE Course and Workbook for Organizers & Activists

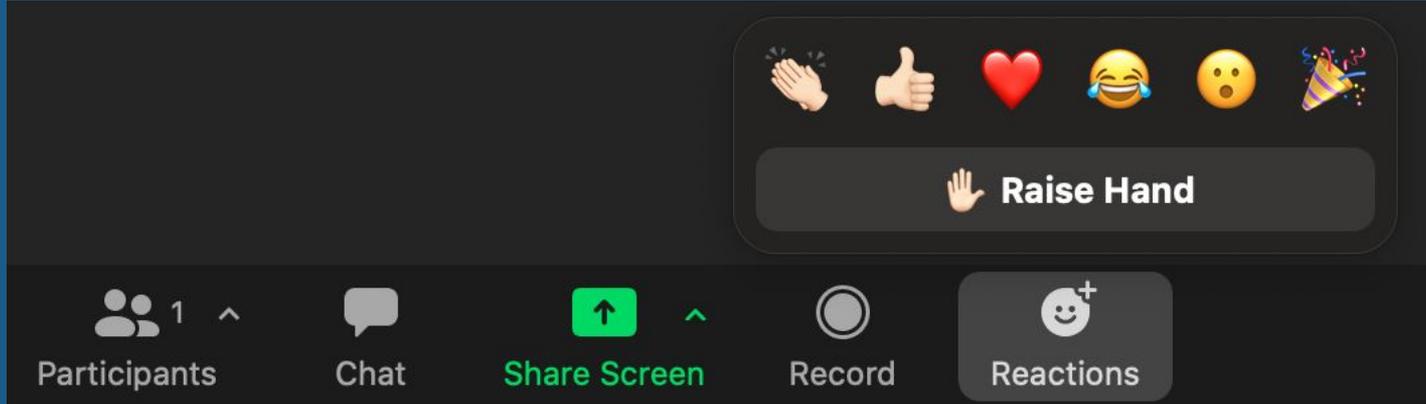
Welcome

Tonight's Hosts:
Jenny Okamoto, Caz Margenau, and Terry Mumford
Leadership Development, Building Bridges for
America

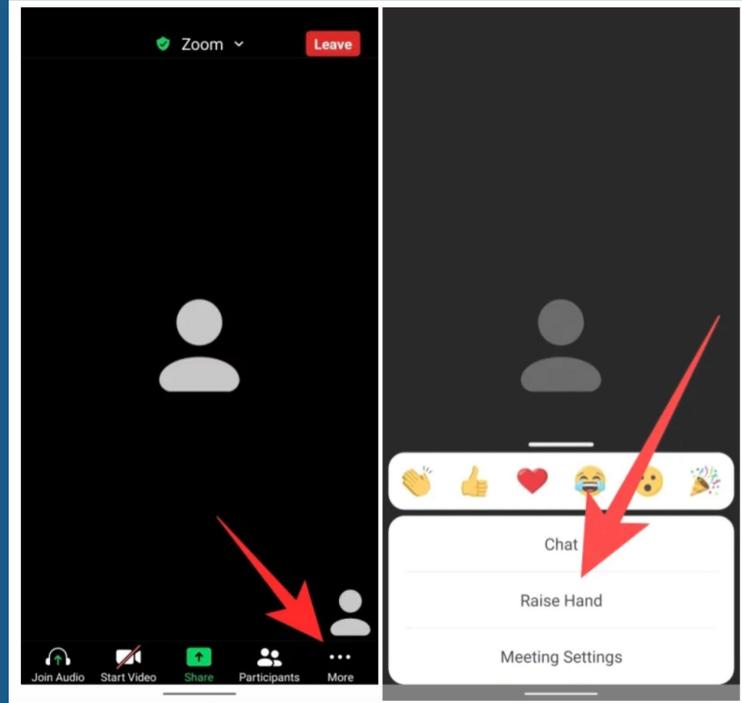
Friendly Norms

- Please keep yourself **muted** unless you are speaking
- Please introduce yourself in the chat, where are you from, and campaigns you have worked with
- Enter questions and follow-up requests on the chat
- Q & A at the end
- Meeting will be 1-hour
- Thank you for joining us!

Raising Hand on a Computer/Tablet



Raising Hand on Phone





BUILDING BRIDGES FOR AMERICA



Supporting grassroots
organizers, candidates,
and causes.

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Training Packages

POWER

Unlock Your Political Power
Conversations that Break Through
Making the Hard Ask
Pop the Disinformation Bubble



TEAM

Grassroots Organizing for Change
Say This, Not That
Events for Change
Facebook Activist to Change Maker



CIVICS

Civics for Everyone
Civics for Change



Building Bridges for America

Empower yourself & your volunteers

Build and train your team

Know the system to fix the system

BUILDING BRIDGES FOR AMERICA

**Civics for
Change**



Terry Mumford

Partner, Law Firm – Lobbyist and Governmental
Benefits

Associate University Counsel

Dep. Director, Legislative Services Agency

Legislative Director, Governor's Office

Chief Legal Counsel, House of Representatives



Let's Effectively Reach Out
to our Policy Makers!

(We will start recording now)

“The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don’t have any.”

- Alice Walker, First African-American Woman to win the Pulitzer Prize for Literature

“You can’t win the lottery if you don’t
buy a ticket”

- Lots of people

Why this topic?

Voter Contact vs. Policy Maker Contact

If you are a grassroots organizer, it's important to understand how government and politics work in order to effect change – to effectively use your organization's resources and members' efforts.

If you are an individual advocate, that same understanding will help you be effective.

Who?

- This presentation is for the more experienced organizer and advocate -- you have attended prior sessions, but you want to get to specific ways to persuade government policy makers.
- This is a presentation for optimists -- those who believe that we can make politics and government better.

For a Civics primer for your members, check out “Real Talk – Civics for Everyone”

Why don't people reach out to policy makers to express an opinion?

→ Give us your ideas in the chat

Why don't people reach out to policy makers to express an opinion?

- They are unsure about the source of the problem or about what to work on.
- They don't know whom to contact or how to reach the right person.
- They don't know what to say.
- They think “it doesn't matter.”

What's the Work Tonight?

Understand the Basics

To get everyone on the same page, we will start with a brief review of the structure of government and who are the policy makers. The primary resource is "A Governmental Cheat Sheet". We will overview the workbook. That will address how to find the right policy maker.

Identify Specific Issues

Then we will talk about narrowing your focus. The workbook helps you identify 1-2-3 issues, campaigns, and causes, that motivate action.

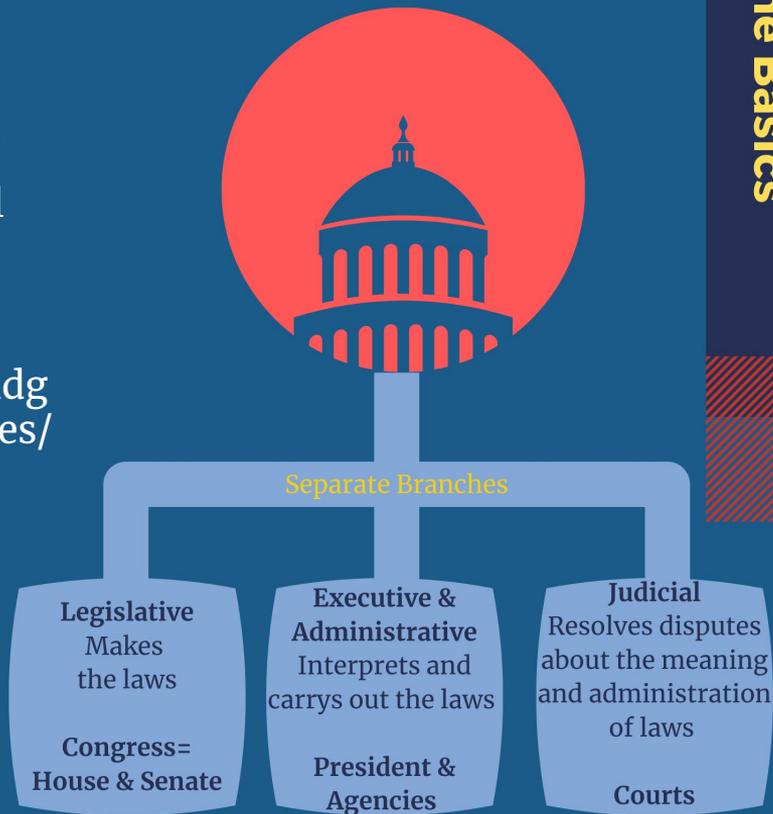
Communicate to Effect Change

Then let's address specific issues and how to communicate effectively.

Check out "Civics for Change" workbook, download at www.buildingbridgesforamerica.com. This presentation refers to the workbook.

THE GOVERNMENT

To help your members understand the basics of our Constitution, federal and state legislation, consult our materials on “Civics for Everyone”
<https://www.buildingbridgesforamerica.com/courses/civics-for-everyone>



Getting Started – Cheat Sheet

Jurisdiction

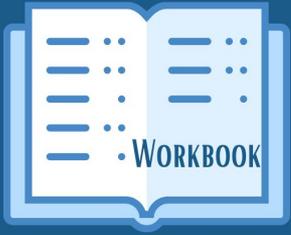
Jurisdiction refers to a geographical area or a subject matter where government exercises authority. Legislative, executive, and judicial actions are effective within specific jurisdiction. Policy makers in those jurisdictions will be the most responsive to your message/request.

Legal Responsibility

Identify the person, elected or appointed body, or agency who is responsible for the law affecting your members.

Administration

After a law is passed, focus on executive and administration agencies that administer the law(s).



Governmental Cheat Sheet – Step 1

In Your Workbook, Identify the
Jurisdiction Where You will be Advocates

Your Jurisdiction

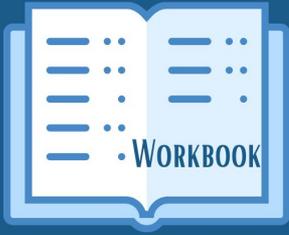
Step 1

Preparing your cheat sheet.

This sheet will help you identify the specifics about your area (jurisdiction) and will vary depending on the issue(s) you are addressing. Get started by filling in what you know and fill in the blanks later.

State	-----
County	-----
City, Town, Village or Unincorporated area	-----
School District	-----
Special Service District (sewer)	-----





Governmental Cheat Sheet – Step 2

In Your Workbook, Identify the Policy
Makers You May Contact

Your Policymakers

Step



You can search online and find this information.

U.S. Senator (1)	name, party, contact info.
U.S. Senator (2)	name, party, contact info.
U.S. Representative	name, party, district, contact info.
Governor	name, party, contact info.
State Senator	name, party, district, contact info.
State Representative	name, party, district, contact info.
Mayor	contact information
County Commissioners	contact information
City/Town Council	contact information
School Board Member	contact information

Take Note

Be Credible -- Before you begin your advocacy around an issue, make sure you have the correct information.

Is the issue addressed by legislation or the administration of a law or policy by the executive or administrative agencies that implement it?

Who are the agencies or people with jurisdiction over that issue?

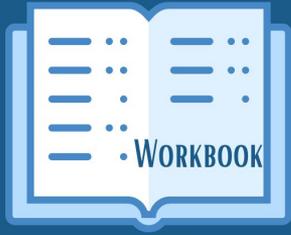
How do your members figure out who is THEIR representative?

Focus Your Efforts – Before you support or oppose a candidate.

What office are they running for?

What branch is the office in? Legislative, executive or judicial?

What is the jurisdiction (area) covered?



Issue Identification Worksheet

Step 3

In Your Workbook, Define Your Key Issues

Identify your issue(s)

Identify

Now is the time to identify the issues or campaigns that are motivating you to take action. This list will change, but it is a good exercise to plan your advocacy.

State your issue in positive terms. Avoid repeating the “opposition’s” wording.

Identify Your Issue(s)

Step



Issue Identification

Now is the time to identify the issues or campaigns that are motivating you to take action. This list will change, but it is a good exercise to plan your advocacy.

Write down two important issues in each category

Issues that affect you/your members in an immediate and practical way (examples: "The roads in my area are all broken and are causing damage to my car." "I want my son to get his COVID shot, but it is not available")

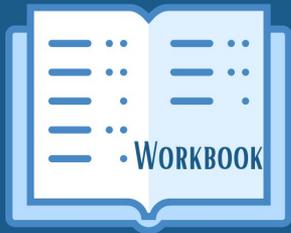
- 1.
- 2.

Issues that affects the community in which your organization operates (examples: "I think school vouchers harm public schools" "I am concerned about homelessness in my area" "I am concerned about voting rights in federal elections")

- 1.
- 2.

Are there organizations working on these issues?

What are some terms to use consistently and positively to describe your issue?



Let's Tie It All Together – Step 4

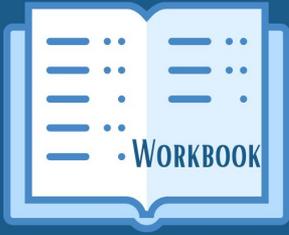
In Your Workbook, Plan Your Advocacy

Who Should You Talk To? What Should You Say? Where?

- Who is in charge?
- What is the best way to explain the issue?
- How to make your views known?

The Process

Walking your members through this step-by-step approach will help them confidently reach out about an issue or law.



Worksheet

Step



This exercise will answer several important questions:

- Who is in charge
- What is the message
- Where to deliver it

We encourage you to use your own words, make it personal and keep the message simple. See the following pages for sample issues.

Who is in charge?

-
-

Identify, frame and formulate (what we can all agree on)

-
-
-

My Message?

Where to "deliver" my message

-
-
-

Bringing it Together

Walking your members through this step-by-step approach will help them confidently reach out about an issue or law.

Who is in charge?

- For each issue identify the individual, group, or agency that has jurisdiction. **Refer to your Governmental Cheat Sheet.**
- Make sure your members know who should be contacted.
- Reach out to those who are FOR and AGAINST your POV

Identify, Frame and Formulate

At the Organizational Level --

Develop your organization's summary of the issues and positions on the issue. What is your purpose? What are your goals? How will you achieve those goals?

As an advocacy organization, you compile information -- facts, figures, status of legislation. You may work with other organizations to share resources.

“Real Talk: Unlock Your Political Power” and “Real Talk: Say This, Not That” will provide great insights on how to identify, frame, and formulate your message

Identify, Frame and Formulate

For Your Members --

Assist your members in developing communications that will connect with policy makers. Develop uniform and consistent explanations for the issue, suggest frames for the issue, encourage personal stories. Communicate positively! Here are tips for your members:

- Explain why you are concerned
- Identify the issue - “Good roads” “Fair Healthcare” “Better Schools”
- Frame the issue around your values - “Hard worker” “Family” “Democracy”
- State how you are affected personally
- Ask for a specific action

Making Your Views Known

At the organizational level, make your presence known!

- Share brief policy statements with policy makers.
- Start talking to policymakers.
- Look for opportunities to speak in person (town halls), send emails, and write letters.

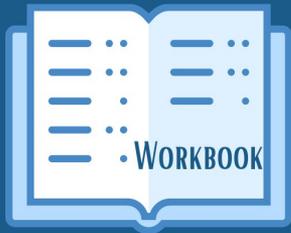
Help your members deliver their communications – email, letter, phone call, personal meeting.

- Develop specific recommendations on where/how to communicate
- Make sure your members include contact information, indicate they are a constituent

Making Your Views Known, cont'd

Consider all options for communicating with the policy maker

- Make phone calls – Be prepared to speak to a “live” person or leave a voicemail. Before the call, write down, rehearse what you will say.
- Send email, letter, and/or postcard
 - U.S. Senators and Representatives
 - Email forms on their websites
 - Postcards delivered more quickly in D.C.
 - Mail can be sent to district offices
 - Avoid form letters and postcards – or personalize them.
- Write an op-ed for local “paper”, trade publication, or blog. Mention policymaker by name
- Speak in-person – at public meeting, town hall



Example



Issue #3 Voting Rights

Who is in charge?

Federal Voting Rights = Federal Legislation

- My 2 U.S. Senators
- My Congressperson (Representative)

Identify, frame and formulate (what we can all agree on)

- Look at advocacy groups (ie Fair Fights, Let Them Vote) for talking points, look for consistency and positive messages.

My Message?

- U.S. Senators
 - I am a long term resident in our state. I have voted in every election since I was allowed to. Voting rights are the foundation of our democracy.
 - I believe in fairness, and that means that everyone should vote. Therefore polls should be open for longer hours and more days to more people can vote with out taking off work.
 - I urge your to support the For the People Act to protect voting rights.
- Congressman (Representative)
 - (if support) Thank you for supporting the For the People Act, I hope you will continue to work for voting rights.
 - (if no support) I am sorry you voted to oppose the For the People Act. I believe in fairness. The Act will protect fair elections. Please reconsider your opposition.

Where to "deliver" my message

- Send email or letter, and or write an op-ed (mention officials by name)
- Attend a town hall, speak if public testimony is permitted

Bringing it Together

Using Civics for Change

Be Present! Be Positive! Be Repetitive!

- In our representative democracy, policy makers must hear from their constituents to affect their decisions
 - Don't allow policy makers to only hear one POV
- The facts DON'T speak for themselves!
 - Explain YOUR "why"
 - Do not demonize your opponents -- understand their need for the "sense of being known and being seen and feeling felt"
- Beyond your testimony, how can you influence policy makers?
 - Reach out to reporters
 - Write op-eds for local papers
 - Organize your Facebook group
- Provide a sustained flow of information/contacts -- once is never enough

Let's Do This -The "Always" Rules - Every communication

- My name is Terry Mumford, Street Address ZIP CODE, email
- I am your constituent. I have supported you (by vote and/or donation). Mention any point of contact
- I want you to take [action] on [Bill number] or specific issue.
- [There are 3 things I want to say about this] - Topic sentence
- This affects me personally - here's my story
- Summarize and restate your request
 - ◆ Express appreciation for support
- Thank you

Let's Do This -- Never Say

- I will never vote for you!
- You are an idiot!
- I bet you won't even read this letter!
- Your capitalist masters won't let you do what's right!
- You must hate veterans!
- You don't care about people like me!

Let's Create a Strategy – State Legislation

Scenario: The Indiana Legislature passed HB 1041 to deny trans girls in public schools the right to participate in sports. The Governor vetoed the legislation. The legislature will reconvene May 24 to make technical corrections to 2022 legislation and leadership plans to override the veto. In Indiana, a simple majority in each House will override.

Let's Create a Strategy – State Legislation, cont.

- Confirm the facts – What does the legislation do? How does the veto override work? Find an organization to answer questions.
- Who should I contact? – Your state representative and your senator
 - ◆ Reinforce with others to get this right
- What should I say? – Follow the rules – Name, address, zip code, constituent, 3 reasons, personal story, request for action
- Where/how should I deliver my request -- Phone, email, snail mail, op-ed, in-person
- Tips:
 - ◆ But what about social media? – Facebook, Twitter – “Here’s what I just sent to my state rep”
 - ◆ Modify form letters
 - ◆ Petitions aren’t enough

Let's Create a Strategy -- Senate Confirmation

Scenario -- You want to support Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson's nomination for the Supreme Court

We're going to ask and answer the same questions -- You're on the clock -- Senate Judiciary vote is scheduled for April 4 with a full vote in the Senate April 7 or 8 (depending on attendance)

Let's Create a Strategy -- Senate Confirmation, cont.

- Confirm the facts – timetable
- Who are you going to contact? – your U.S. Senators
- What are you going to say? – Follow the rules – name, address, zip code, constituent, 3 reasons, personal story, ask for action, thank you
 - ◆ If Senator is a “no” – still write – ask for a change of mind
 - ◆ If Senator is “yes” – still write – thank them
- Use email or phone because of timetable

Basics – Writing an Op-Ed or LTE

Purpose of an Op-Ed or LTE – use the local media to get your message out. Policy makers and their staff pay attention!

- Pick your “paper”
 - ◆ What is your paper’s policy on op-ed or LTE?
 - ◆ How do you submit?
 - ◆ Length limit? – no more than 300 words
- Describe your issue and your views (Say 3 things 3 times)
 - ◆ Who are you? What is your personal story?
 - ◆ Why is this important to you?
 - ◆ Why is it important to the community?

Basics – Writing an Op-Ed or LTE, cont

- Request Action – What do you want to happen? Who do you want to take action?
 - ◆ If it’s a vote or other governmental action, mention the policymaker by name
 - ◆ Do you want invite others to join your organization?
 - Invite to an upcoming event
 - ◆ Do you want to encourage others to take action?
- Amplify – If your LTE is published, amplify your message by posting in social media.
- “Multi-task -- You can use your LTE and send as a letter to policy makers and vice-versa.

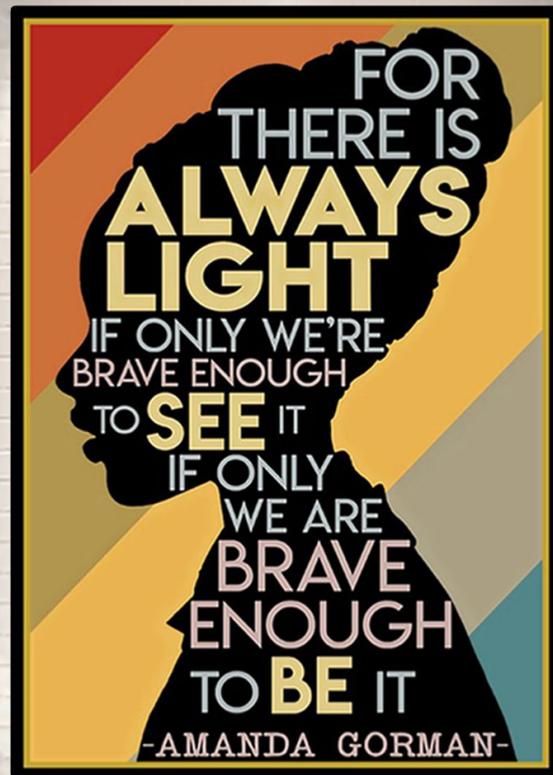
Civics for Change!

Spend time on issue identification.

Spend time assisting members on framing and explaining their point of view. Support them in creating their own communications, offer words and phrases (what to use, what to avoid). Stay positive, state what you are for and why.

Spend time determining who is in charge and let them know you are out there and keep contacting them.

Try other outlets, reporters, media, social media, op-eds and mention the policymakers by name.





Discussion Time

We'll stop the recording and hear from you!



Next Steps

Join the Building Bridges for America
Training Center @
www.buildingbridgesforamerica.com

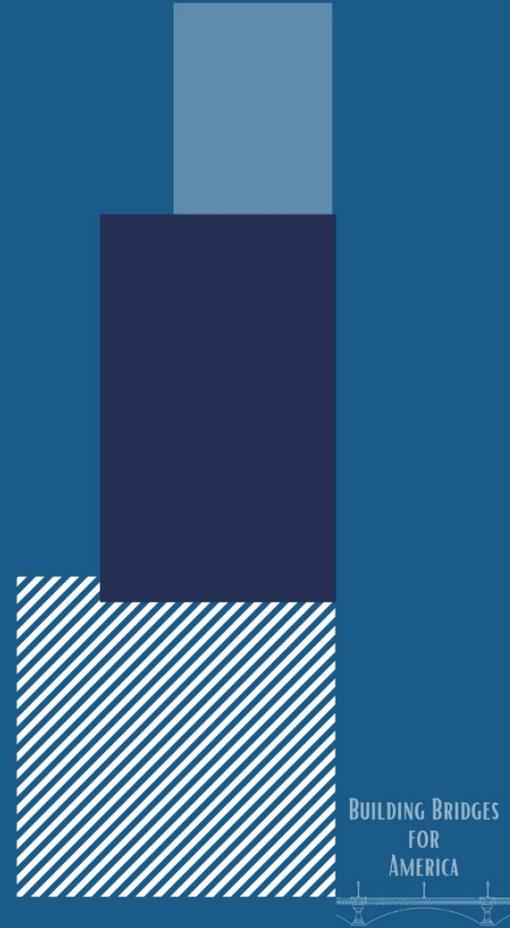
Share this resource and invite others
to effect change with you.

EMAIL

buildingbridges4america@gmail.com

WEBSITE

WWW.BUILDINGBRIDGESFORAMERICA.COM





Every week on Tuesdays & Thursdays

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Political Organizing Classes

11 free and accessible courses and workbooks for volunteers by volunteers.

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Conversations that Break Through

Making the Hard Ask

Pop the Disinformation Bubble

Civics for Everyone

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Say This, Not That: The Importance of Effective Messaging

Grassroots Organizing for Change

Events for Change

Facebook Activist to Change Maker

Local Leaders and Precinct Chairs



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We provide customized training for your community, organization or cause?



BUILDING BRIDGES FOR AMERICA

< BACK

A close-up photograph of a computer keyboard. A prominent red key with the word "TRAINING" written in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters is the central focus. Other keys like "?", "del", and "back" are partially visible around it.

TRAINING

Request a Training

Contact us so Building Bridges for America can work with you to conduct training for your group.

Meet & support local candidates

GAMES FOR CHANGE

POSTCARDS | GAMES | COMMUNITY

SUNDAYS 7:30 PM ET

MEET TERRANCE

Dr. Terrance Ruth
Mayor of Raleigh (NC)

ENDORSED

Dr. Ruth is running for Mayor because he has seen his city become divided and defensive. He wants a more inclusive and prosperous Raleigh and believes the only way to accomplish this is by working together. He said it best: "The issues ahead are not simple, but the best answers will emerge when everyone is presented at the table. When we begin with equity as a guiding principle."

Instagram Facebook Twitter LinkedIn

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION

EVERY WEDNESDAY 8PM ET

MEET LUIS

Dr. Luis Daniel Munoz
Governor of Rhode Island

ENDORSED

He is a family-centered person, medical doctor and community organizer that will fight for ALL Rhode Islanders! While growing up in Rhode Island, Luis experienced hunger and homelessness and understands the struggles in marginalized communities. He will work to ensure everyone has access to opportunity, healthcare, housing and clean environments.

Instagram Facebook Twitter

MEET JONATHAN

Jonathan Lovitz
Pennsylvania House D182

ENDORSED

Image showing a hand holding a smartphone displaying a "Text Banking" app interface with fields for "USERNAME" and "Log In".

Write letters

BUILDING BRIDGES FOR AMERICA PRESENTS

DEM-A-PALOOZA

EVERY OTHER SATURDAY 8PM ET

LETTERS MUSIC POSTCARDS

BB

Meet authors and leaders

VIRTUAL BOOK CLUB

Starts 11.29.21

THE GOOD IMMIGRANT by Jhumpa Lahiri

THE SUM OF US by Heather McGhee

DON'T JUST MARCH RUN FOR SOMETHING by Amanda Littman

STACEY ABRAMS OUR TIME IS NOW

PETE BUTTIGIEG TRUST

POLITICS IS FOR POWER by Eitan Hersh

DON'T THINK OF AN ELEPHANT! by George Lakoff

SAMPLE LETTERS

END THE FILIBUSTER

PROUD TO SUPPORT FULL FEDERAL EQUALITY FOR LGBTQ PEOPLE

EQUALITY ACT #EqualityAct

TELL CONGRESS: PASS THE JUSTICE IN POLICING ACT

Download Word Download PDF (for each item)



BUILDING BRIDGES FOR AMERICA



Supporting grassroots
organizers, candidates,
and causes.

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www.buildingbridgesforamerica.com

BUILDING BRIDGES FOR AMERICA

Our Mission

Guided by the principles of servant leadership, Building Bridges mobilizes and empowers networks of relational grassroots organizers equipped to support campaigns and causes based in progressive values.

Our Values

We recognize that the effort adds value, regardless of the result.

We are committed to the development of a broad and inclusive coalition.

We conduct our actions and are informed by the legacy of Pete Buttigieg's 2020 Campaign's Rules of the Road.

Our Vision

A just and equitable democracy, safeguarded by an informed and engaged electorate, where everyone is valued and belongs.

Respect Belonging Truth Teamwork Boldness Responsibility Substance Discipline Excellence Joy



Give us a follow on social media,
@buildbridges4america!

