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CITIZENACTIONWI.ORG



State: Wisconsin

Core Constituency/Target Audience: Individuals and organizations committed to achieving racial, economic, and environmental justice.

Website: citizenactionwi.org

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Citizen Action of Wisconsin is dedicated to economic, racial, and environmental justice, and to achieving a Wisconsin and an America where every human being has an equal opportunity to live a meaningful and fulfilling life. Citizen Action believes that organizing is a critical pathway to unlocking the true potential of democracy to fundamentally transform our society in the human interest and overcome structural racism, sexism, xenophobia, corporate domination, and other forms of oppression. Citizen Action's theory of building power in Wisconsin is to work on big issues that can be the basis for creating a community of interest across the state. The pathway to progressive power in Wisconsin is multiracial organizing that bridges the urban/rural/suburban divide.

Citizen Action's **Organizing Co-op** innovation, where members who make monthly sustaining donations play a deeper democratic role in leading their work, is considered a national model for making organizing more sustainable. They currently have built six organizing co-ops, and are launching an African-American centered organizing co-op in 2021.

STATE LEGISLATIVE WORK

Citizen Action's work is laser-focused on state government, particularly the Wisconsin state legislature. They were involved in many of Sister District's 2020 target races, providing candidates at the state and local level with grassroots support. In 2020, Citizen Action layered grassroots organizing with paid electoral strategies and united their work for Joe Biden and Kamala Harris at the top of the ballot with targeted legislative races at the bottom.

Citizen Action executed a large-scale direct voter contact field program that targeted over 200,000 critical swing and motivation voters in rural, small and medium metros, and suburban areas in 27 legislative districts.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Citizen Action worked in 2020 to help elect Joe Biden President and Kamala Harris Vice President of the United States. Due in part to their work, the Biden/Harris ticket won Wisconsin by 20,535 votes. Citizen Action also helped elect five new state legislators and protect four fragile incumbents through their direct voter contact programs.

ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE

Climate Equity

Citizen Action believes in protecting Wisconsin citizens from environment-related risks to health, safety, and well-being, and securing natural resources. They work to:

- Enact a transition to a low-carbon economy that is less reliant on fossil fuels.
- Transition from an extractive economy to a more prosperous and resilient circular economy by dramatically increasing the use of renewable and recyclable resources.

Healthcare

Citizen Action believes that healthcare is a fundamental human right that must be guaranteed by our democratic government. They work to:

- Set a vision to achieve Medicare for All in Wisconsin, and in the United States, by moving away from corporate healthcare and toward a progressively public system.
- Guarantee comprehensive medical care, including the full spectrum of acute and chronic health services, preventive care, mental health, women's health, substance use treatment, dental, and evidence-based alternative treatments, for everyone.

Education

Citizen Action believes we must give each generation the education they need to succeed in an ever-changing world. They work to:

- Guarantee and fund a great education for everyone, from preschool through college.
- Expand public college education access.
- Control hyperinflation in the cost of public colleges and universities.
- Guarantee equality of educational opportunity for every Wisconsin family, regardless of the zip code in which they live.

Criminal Justice Reform

Citizen Action believes we must end the system of mass incarceration and biased policing, and instead invest in harm reduction, restorative justice, and mental health treatment. They work to:

- Strengthen and protect the Constitutional rights to a fair and impartial judiciary.
- Establish due process of criminal and civil law.
- Guarantee equal rights across the gender spectrum in housing, employment, public accommodations, and education.
- Create a juvenile and a criminal justice system that protects the public through equitable and rational practices.
- Reduce the incarceration rate by half within four years.

Democracy

Citizen Action believes we must shift power back to the people, and away from the corporate and big money interests, by creating a vibrant democracy where voting rights are expanded and the public interest drives public policy. They work to:

- Expand voting rights.
- Establish a fair process for drawing election maps that restores power to the voters to choose their elected officials.
- End the domination of corporate money in elections.
- Close the revolving door between government and corporations.

STATE BRIDGES SPEAKERS

Dr. Robert Kraig, Executive Director



Dr. Robert Kraig serves as the Executive Director of Citizen Action. Robert took the helm in September 2009 at the height of the Great Recession, when Citizen Action was in virtual bankruptcy, and has led a dynamic team of organizers in rebuilding it into one of the leading progressive forces in Wisconsin. Robert is a leading strategist in the Wisconsin progressive movement, and is especially known for developing innovative approaches to strategic communication and issue campaign design and implementation. He has also appeared on major national and international media outlets such as MSNBC, Fox News and Al Jazeera, and has been quoted in national

newspapers and magazines such as the New York Times, Washington Post and The Atlantic. Robert is the author of several major academic articles on American political rhetoric in Rhetoric & Public Affairs and other academic journals and collections. His book, *Woodrow Wilson and the Lost World of the Oratorical Statesman* (Texas A&M Press), topped a Wall Street Journal list of the five best books on presidential rhetoric.

Robert is the former Wisconsin State Council Director for SEIU, where he helped develop and win the passage of several policy innovations which enabled over twelve thousand low-wage workers to form unions. He is also the former Policy Director for the Wisconsin Blueprint Project, where he cut his teeth on devising strategies to build out progressive infrastructure.

JoAnna Bautch, Movement Politics Director



JoAnna Bautch serves as Citizen Action's Movement Politics Director. JoAnna is passionate about the growth of her community. She was born and raised in Milwaukee, WI, and loves everything the city has to offer. Raised by a single mother, JoAnna knows the importance of a strong work ethic, and coming from a matriarchal family, she knows the power of the Latina voice. Although JoAnna struggled through high school, she is a proud MPS graduate, and in May of 2017, she earned a Bachelor's degree in Communication from Alverno College.

JoAnna stays active with her community as a board member of Young Nonprofit Professionals Network (YNPN) Milwaukee Chapter, the Milwaukee Water Commons, and TRUE Skool. She is also a member of the 88Nine Cultural Commons/Community Stories Live Steering Committee and the Alverno College Latinas Con Fuerza Ceremony committee, a ceremony she helped found during her senior year at the college.

IN THE NEWS

- [Democrats kick off call to action for Gov. Evers' healthcare plans](#)
- [Citizen Action: Supports the right of Wisconsin Voices workers to organize](#)
- [See all of Citizen Action's earned media](#)

WISCONSIN FAST FACTS

- **Current Control:** Divided Government (since 2019)
- **Gubernatorial Election:** 2022
- **Length of Assembly term:** 2 years
- **Length of Senate term:** 4 years
- **Redistricting:** The Wisconsin State Legislature draws Congressional and state maps; Democratic Governor Evers has veto power
- **Sister District Target:** Blue Inroads