



State: Pennsylvania

Core Constituency/Target Audience:

Working people from urban and rural communities



ABOUT

Pennsylvania Stands Up Institute is building a multi-racial movement of working class people dedicated to winning a Pennsylvania that works for all of us. They are Black, brown, and white working people living across Pennsylvania's towns, rural areas, and cities. They develop the capacity of everyday people to be leaders in our communities and fight for policies that work for working people. They train hundreds of leaders each year in base-building, canvassing, training, and communications. They organized for a People's Bailout and created mutual aid networks to support our neighbors during the pandemic. They organized dozens of rallies and marches in defense of Black lives. PA Stands Up contacted more than 1 million people to encourage them to register to vote and vote from home for every election.

They engage their members and leaders in regular training every year to develop skills that build the movement. Their leadership development program centers around connecting with communities and covers topics of power building, deep canvassing, effective one-on-ones, narrative, and storytelling.

WEBSITE: pastandsup.org

FACEBOOK: facebook.com/PASstandsUpInst

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LEGISLATIVE WORK

In 2021-2022, PA Stands Up engaged in co-governance with State Senator Nikil Saval to pass the Whole-Home Repairs Act and secure a historic investment of \$125,000,000 to fund it. The program was designed to help residents repair and weatherize their homes to make properties safer, accessible to people with disabilities, and energy efficient. Thanks to their relationships with elected officials, they managed to create enough pressure on their representative to secure bi-partisan support for the bill. This unprecedented investment in climate equity demonstrates what we can achieve through long-term investment in governing power for working people. Since the program rolled out, PA Stands Up has been building an unstoppable grassroots movement demanding to make the program permanent. In 2024, they partnered with Demos to research lessons learned from the campaign and construct a road map for how organizers can successfully campaign for government support for a variety of public needs.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Reflecting on 2023-2024, PA Stands Up is proudest of their work training member-leaders on how to cut issues in their own chapters. Because they work from the grassroots up, it was important to empower each of their chapters to choose and build its own campaign, supported by PA Stands Up staff. In 2023, PA Stands Up launched a Fall Field Listening campaign which helped them determine what issues working people in their communities care about and what's keeping them up at night. In the second half of 2023, their Long-Term Vision Team polled members on the issues affecting their communities and distilled the results to identify the top issues for their constituency: housing and just transition. In February 2024, PA Stands Up brought together 50 member-leaders from across their chapters for their Leaders' Retreat, where they trained intensively on issues for their counties. They followed up with power mapping sessions and issue cut retreats attended by 8-10 members in each chapter, where they began developing strategic local issue campaigns to deliver tangible wins for working people. While implementing these issue cuts and campaigns did not go as planned, the sessions laid the foundation for their chapters to research and develop local issue campaigns at the intersection of housing, climate, and labor. Beyond campaign training, PA Stands Up devoted significant resources to training members in communications skills, effective video content, compelling conversations, facilitating trainings and writing op-eds. Overall, they trained 122 leaders in 2024, and as their leadership grows, they expect to add capacity to their organizing team.

In September 2024, PA Stands Up adopted a relational organizing tool, Empower. In the two months since, they have had over 46,000 conversations with this new tool. In 2024, PA Stands Up had impactful conversations with 4,979 community members about the issues that concern them most. PA Stands Up community members completed 1,261 c3 volunteer shifts.



ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE

Housing

Over 5.6 million households pay more than 30 percent of their monthly income toward housing costs and are considered cost-burdened. This crisis disproportionately affects people of color in rural areas. They face higher rates of housing cost burden and substandard housing conditions than their neighbors, a clear marker of environmental racism.

Climate

Rural communities are often the most susceptible to climate disasters, including flooding, wildfires, drought, and the increasingly extreme weather driven by global climate change. People of color in rural areas and small towns face compounded vulnerabilities here as well. Limited access to healthcare, economic resources, and social support exacerbates difficulties in the wake of such disasters.

STATE BRIDGES SPEAKER



Carrie Santoro

Carrie Santoro is the Executive Director of Pennsylvania Stands Up, a multi-racial grassroots organization with 9 local chapters and more than 2,000 dues-paying members committed to building a Pennsylvania for all of us. Carrie was a founding member of Lehigh Valley Stands Up and chair of the PA Stands Up Delegates Assembly.

Before coming to PA Stands Up, she was the Campaign Manager for Rev. Dr. Greg Edwards' historic campaign for US Congress and she has held senior organizing and communications roles at labor, faith, and immigrants' rights organizations. Carrie grew up in a conservative, working class family in small town Pennsylvania. She is a survivor of poverty and the proud mother of two children.

PENNSYLVANIA FAST FACTS

- **Current Control:** Divided Government
- **Gubernatorial Election:** 2026
- **Length of House Term:** 2 years
- **Length of Senate Term:** 4 years
- **Redistricting:** A bipartisan redistricting commission draws Pennsylvania's Congressional and state maps

