





# WHO WE ARE

**People's Action builds the power of poor and working people, in rural, suburban and urban areas, to win change through issue campaigns and elections.**

When we say “poor and working people,” we mean all of us who are hurt by corporations and the wealthy few: poor people, low-income people, working class people, professionals, small business owners and unemployed people. We mean Black, White, Latino, Asian and Native people. We

mean youth and students, and we mean retired people, elderly people and people with disabilities. We mean men, women, transgender, and gender non-conforming people. We mean straight people and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer people. We mean citizens, and we mean immigrants.

**All of us.**

# our work together is based on a number of CORE VALUES

## AN ECONOMY FOR ALL OF US

When people have power to make decisions, we put communities before corporations and people before profit. All poor and working people, whether Black, White, or Brown, should be able to live a good life where our basic needs are met and we do not have to struggle just to get by.

## WE CAN REPAIR OUR HISTORY

This country is for all of us. We commit to repairing the long-standing racial inequality that has shaped this country and divided us from one another. We want everybody in, nobody out.

## WE ARE ALL CONNECTED

The health and well-being of all people and the planet are interconnected. It is our purpose and responsibility to treat each other and the earth with respect.

## GOVERNMENT FOR THE COMMON GOOD

Truly democratic government is an essential tool for solving our collective challenges. We reclaim the value of government and our role in governing.

## WHAT'S IN THE WAY OF MAKING OUR VALUES MOVE IN THE WORLD?

### Corporate Control

The wealthy few and private corporations have taken over our economy and government. They put their own profits first. They have driven us into a period of deep economic inequality, ecological crises and state-sanctioned violence.

### Weakened Government

The wealthy few have distorted and demonized the role of government, claiming that "government is the problem." Meanwhile, they reshape our government to suit themselves. Funding for essential public programs has been taken away and given to private interests. Whole sections of our government have been put directly in the hands of the rich and powerful. This makes it harder to win solutions for our collective problems.

### We Don't Have the Support We Need to Weather Hard Times

The billionaire class has rolled back our social safety net. Our communities are expected to navigate these difficult times without meaningful social support programs or a strong public infrastructure. Our lives are being sacrificed for their profits.

### Historic Inequalities

There are deeply embedded systems of inequality - like white supremacy, sexism and the suppression of Native communities - that continue to shape


our society. These systems shape all of our lives, whether we are Black, White or Brown.

### We are Divided From Each Other

Even though our greatest hope is to join together across our differences to secure the changes that we all need to survive and thrive, poor and working people have been divided from each other by the wealthy few, who intentionally sow racism and other divisions to keep us apart.

### White Nationalism

White nationalism is a particularly dangerous political movement that is on the rise around the country. It is the sharpest front of the deeper system of racism in our society and the worst manifestation of the divisions between us. If we are going to win a better future for us all, we have to confront white nationalism directly.



and we have a  
**LONG-TERM AGENDA**  
to overcome structural barriers  
and build a new  
economy and society

..... **ALL PEOPLE, NOT THE WEALTHY FEW, CONTROL THE ECONOMY**

We will dismantle this structure in which too much money is controlled by too few, and win an economy governed democratically for the common good. Working people will finally have dignity and democracy in their workplaces.

..... **WE HAVE REAL DEMOCRACY**

We will break the control that corporations and the wealthy have over our government, our political process and our economy. Instead, communities will have the power to fully participate in the decisions that affect their lives, gaining more control over our government and the economy, and enacting policies that serve the public good.

..... **WE HAVE RACIAL JUSTICE**

We will finally address the underlying structural barriers to racial equity and opportunity. We will repair the ways in which racism was built into the foundations of our economy and society through the enslavement of African people and the genocide of Native people.

..... **WE HAVE GENDER JUSTICE**

We will value women's work, in our homes, workplaces and society, rather than treating that work as less valuable and women as invisible. We will build a world in which women and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people experience safety and self-determination, rather than violence and harassment.

..... **WE HAVE A SUSTAINABLE GLOBAL ECONOMY**

We will take bold action on a global scale to protect our planet and every one of us. As we transform our economy, we will rebuild sustainability and invest first in the communities that have experienced the most devastating effects of environmental destruction and economic exclusion.

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Today, we need a **NEW SOCIAL CONTRACT** that reorganizes wealth and power, taking power out of the hands of the wealthy few and putting it where it belongs: in the hands of everyday people.



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## ⚡ PUBLIC EDUCATION (K-12)

**THE PROBLEM IS** // Public education is a cornerstone of a democratic society, but long-standing patterns of racial and economic segregation have led to severe inequities in public education. Decades of funding cuts have eroded public education for all, while the fact that school funding is based on property taxes exacerbates inequality between communities. These

challenges are intensified by efforts to privatize our public education and to increase the presence of police in our schools. Privatizers blame teachers and teachers' unions for shortfalls in public education, but the real problem has been the widespread and intentional defunding of our public education system which has undermined our educational infrastructure.

### ↳ OUR SOLUTION

We demand that there are strong, **fully funded neighborhood public schools** in every community. Schools must meet the needs, interests, and abilities of every child – Native, rural, urban, and poor students; girls and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer students, differently abled students, immigrant students and students of color. We need more equitable systems for funding public schools that intentionally address disparities between neighborhoods, prioritizing struggling schools and repairing unhealthy learning environments. We must end policing and punishment that masquerades as school discipline and replace them with solutions that work, like restorative justice practices and investment in school counselors. We believe in communities and teachers having more say over our curriculum so that our education reflects our true history and prepares students to lead, question and think critically. Educators do some of the most important work in our society. They should be assured good pay, strong benefits, smaller class sizes and the right to organize.

## ⚡ CARE WORK

**THE PROBLEM IS** // Women's caring labor for children and the elderly has long been made invisible in our economy. Today, we are facing a crisis of care, as women have become the majority of the workforce in the United States. Society hasn't responded by developing effective ways to provide for the labor of care. The costs of childcare and eldercare are too much for most families,

who struggle to find care for their loved ones. The costs of private care have ballooned while social programs have been defunded. The burdens of this system fall heavily on the shoulders of care workers, a workforce which is disproportionately women of color and who struggle with low pay, long hours and disrespect.

### ↳ OUR SOLUTION

We recognize the value of all work, both in and out of the home. We need a caring economy with **Universal Family Care**: government programs that ensure that all families have access to paid medical and family leave, government-supported childcare and universal long-term care. People should have access to care where they choose, whether in a home or an institution. Care workers should have quality jobs, with access to government protections and full benefits.





## ⚡ HIGHER EDUCATION

**THE PROBLEM IS //** All people deserve access to quality education, but people in power continue to treat higher education as a commodity or as a luxury available only to those who are wealthy and white. Over the past 30 years, federal and state governments have slashed public education spending, and the cost of higher education has outpaced inflation by nearly 400 percent. Scholarships and financial aid have dwindled under austerity measures,

while education profiteers - private loan providers, hedge funds, and a federal government increasingly controlled by the wealthy elite - exploit low-income students, women, and students of color, who carry a disproportionately large amount of student loan debt. More and more universities are turning away from hiring tenured faculty and rely on poorly-paid adjuncts and graduate student instructors, closing the door on higher education as a viable career path.

## → OUR SOLUTION

Calls for piecemeal reforms such as tuition freezes and “college affordability” are not enough. To change our culture of education we demand **Free College for All**.

This includes undocumented students, formerly and currently incarcerated students, older students and vocational students. Free college must cover all costs, including tuition, books and living expenses, so all students get the chance to study and invest in our future. We also demand student debt forgiveness so the generation of Americans that has been stifled by outrageous loan debt can realize their dreams. We must expand public higher education, setting more explicit expectations about what it means to be “public,” including who they serve, how they are funded, the quality of education provided, and excluding institutions that reinforce racial disparities.

We support professors, adjuncts and graduate student instructors around the country who are organizing for decent workloads, adequate pay and stronger benefits.

## ENERGY AND UTILITIES

**THE PROBLEM IS //** We all need access to clean energy, air and water in our daily lives. But undemocratic and profit-driven utilities keep this out of reach. They treat our utilities as commodities and they raise our bills. Our electric grids rely on centralized dirty energy sources that pollute our air, water and climate. These impacts fall heaviest on low-income communities and on Black, Brown and Native communities. More and

more public utilities are being privatized, while public utilities struggle due to the lack of public investment. Even the transition to renewable energy is being driven by the wealthy few, who hope to control this growing new industry. The jobs that clean energy and green infrastructure can create are not currently helping the communities that need them most.

### OUR SOLUTION

Utilities – both energy and water – should be handled fully within the public sphere. This means **fully funding public utilities**, stopping the drive towards utility privatization and bringing private utilities under government control. Public utilities should be decentralized and democratically governed through local bodies representative of the communities that rely on these services. We should move away from treating utilities as commodities, even when they are owned by public entities.

We need to end government subsidies for fossil fuel and nuclear power. Instead, there should be massive public investment – from both federal and state governments - in the transition to renewable energy sources, energy conservation, and green infrastructure. While most utilities are managed at the state level, we need federal investment to support these transitions to clean energy and water infrastructure that protects people and ecosystems. The jobs that are created through this transition should prioritize low-income people and Black, Brown and Native communities.



2.

**We want to restrict corporate power and increase the power that working people have in our economy.**













3.

## We want to build equity and sustainability into our economy and society.



### RACIAL EQUITY

**THE PROBLEM IS** // Centuries of racial oppression, colonization and slavery continue to manifest in systemic racial inequities in our society today. Racial inequity shapes the distribution of income and wealth in our society today, as well as rates of homeownership. It has led to occupational and neighborhood segregation, educational inequality and

environmental and health disparities, and it manifests painfully in state-sanctioned violence and the mass incarceration of Black, Brown and Native communities. All of these impacts fall hardest on women of color. While universal solutions are an important part of the remedy to these forms of inequality, they are not sufficient.

### OUR SOLUTION

We believe in targeted programs that seek to **repair the historic inequities** that have created uniquely challenging conditions for Black, Brown and Native people, including substantial reparations and significant targeted investments in education, housing, jobs, healthcare, cultural institutions remediation of environmental injustices for each of these communities. See more on our solutions to mass incarceration and other forms of state violence in section 5 of this document.







4.

## We want to expand democratic control of government.



### REDUCE CORPORATE CONTROL OVER OUR DEMOCRACY

**THE PROBLEM IS** // Our political system is dominated by big money and special interests. This imbalance continually favors wealthy elites and routinely fails to deliver policies that address the needs and aspirations of everyday people from all walks of life. These consequences are particularly acute for working class people, communities of color, and others who are underrepresented in our political system. People don't trust elected officials to make

decisions in their interest, because we see how politicians consistently choose the interests of the billionaire class and corporations who bankroll their campaigns over the interests of working families and the public. They see the revolving door between government and corporations, with former government officials being given well-paid positions by the same companies they were meant to regulate.

### OUR SOLUTION

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5.

## We want to divest from punishment, and invest in support and social programs.



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### END MASS INCARCERATION

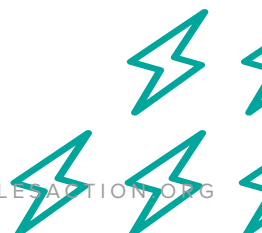
**THE PROBLEM IS** // Our current system of mass incarceration was built on racism, specifically the subjugation of Black people. Our prison pipeline disproportionately impacts Black, Brown and Native communities. Mass incarceration is facilitated by racist local law enforcement,

the unchecked power of local prosecutors, and by a racially biased judicial system. Rather than treating poverty, mental illness, addiction, and homelessness as social problems to be addressed through social programs, these conditions have been criminalized and punished.

### OUR SOLUTION

We need to **reverse** the policies that have led to the militarization of the police and the **mass incarceration** of millions of people in this country. We will organize to hold police accountable and to elect local prosecutors who will choose alternatives to incarceration over punishment.

Together, we will build truly safe communities based on restorative justice, harm reduction, treatment, and real investments in our communities. We will foster programs that can repair and restore the historic harms caused by these programs, particularly in Black, Brown, and Native communities.









**KEY ISSUES  
TO ELEVATE NATIONALLY FOR**

Based on our platform, there are several key issues that we want to focus on lifting up into the national debate in 2022 and 2023. These issues were selected based on our shared work as a national network, including both existing and emerging national campaigns.

You can find a full description of our positions on each of these issues on the "Key Issues" platform document.

**HEALTH CARE FOR ALL**

We need a **homes guarantee** that reinvests in public housing, ends homelessness, creates strong protections for renters and low-income homeowners, and pays reparations to Black and Brown families hurt by racist housing policies.

We demand **health care for all**, through the implementation of a universal, single-payer system that provides us all with the care we deserve.

**HOMES GUARANTEE**

**PEOPLE & PLANET FIRST**

**People & Planet First** is a campaign that seeks to end the use of dirty energy, ensure racial and economic equity in this transition, and move from corporate control of the energy sector to public and community control.

To address the overdose crisis, we want to **end the criminalization of drugs and drug users**, and build a public health and compassion centered infrastructure.

**NO MORE DRUG WAR**

\*We also strongly endorse DIGNITY FOR IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES. The detailed content of this section is being developed by the People's Action member organizations that organize around these issues, and will be added to an updated version of this platform document in the future.

