



**ORGANIZING  
FOR  
ACTION**

## ORGANIZING DIRECTOR SUMMIT | October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015

*OFA hosted its first ever Organizing Director Summit, which convened great organizing minds from across the country to collaborate on how to keep our movement strong.*

### About the Summit

Last Friday, Organizing Directors from organizations large and small met in Chicago for a day of discussion and collaboration on the challenges they face every day. No matter where they came from - from Denver to DC - all attendees strategized about how to use real community-based organizing to build the power of the progressive movement for years to come.

Most advocacy organizations have someone in their senior management team who helps manage all of the staff and volunteers that power the work--this person is typically called a Grassroots Director, Organizing Director, or Field Director. Although many of them spend hundreds of hours coaching staff and volunteers, it can be a very lonely and unsupported role. There are barely any opportunities in progressive politics for these crucial organizational leaders to cross train each other and build meaningful coalition relationships and partnerships

The day centered around collaborating on solutions to organizing challenges. Attendees worked in groups to identify a specific challenge the progressive organizing community faces, hypothesized possible solutions to make progress on that challenge, and designed a series of next steps that attendees could test in the field. "I feel like I'm coming away today with really concrete ways to test and implement organizing ideas," Virginia Shannon of Green Corps said.

The Summit was designed to facilitate conversations between people facing similar scenarios across the country. "Today what I found most valuable was connecting with other organizing directors like myself and getting reinvigorated to solve some of the problems that we all face," said Patty Dillon of Equality Illinois.

But the conversations did not end when the Summit did. Every working group left the training with next steps to report back to the larger group. "We got down to really concrete, measurable ideas that we could put into practice - it wasn't just all ideas," Marianne Rutter of Massachusetts said. "We took the problems from idea to solution."



*Callie Bruley of Impact discusses a big idea during the Organizing Director Summit.*



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## ORGANIZATIONS PRESENT

Enroll America

Educators 4 Excellence

Human Rights Campaign

Impact

Stronger U.S.

Organizing for Action--MD

MoveOn.org

Organizing for Action--MA

Green Corps

50+1 Strategies

City of Chattanooga

Center for Neighborhood Technology

Match Beyond

## ORGANIZING DIRECTOR SPOTLIGHT: What was your biggest takeaway?



LEANNE TOWNSEND | Human Rights Campaign

*"For me, the most valuable thing that came out of today was being in a room full of other people that are invested in long-term organizing. Doing this work in the south, sometimes we feel very isolated - so having conversations with people that are doing the same type of work, and having the opportunity to learn from them, is always valuable."*



BURRELL POE | Center for Neighborhood Technology

*"Discussing the key differences and outcomes of organizing versus simply mobilizing."*



SARA SANCHEZ | Educators 4 Excellence

*"Today was awesome for learning about data and resources that other organizations are using that could be absolutely essential to me."*



MEREDITH SEGAL | Match Beyond

*"The most incredible thing about today was just meeting other great leaders around the country across a whole array of issues, a whole array of types of organizations, and covering what people are doing, and making connections with folks with whom I hope to continue to collaborate."*

