

About Relational Organizing



What is relational organizing and why should we use it?

Relational organizing is a tactic of organizing anyone who is within the organizers (your) existing network. Multiple experiments and tests have shown that relational organizing provides a net boost to turnout of 2.5%¹. The strength of relational organizing is based on a central principle of organizing, the 1:1. The organizer has a preexisting history with their network discussing a wide variety of topics from the weather to the latest movies, as a result the network will be more receptive to any propositions from the organizer.

Relational Organizing in a COVID moment.

During the last few months our lives have been fundamentally disrupted and altered by the COVID-19 epidemic which has been especially difficult on communities of color. Our communities have been disproportionately affected by the epidemic and its economic fallout. The disruption prevents us from engaging in the most basic of human interactions like hugs and handshakes. It is in this environment that both the 2020 Census and the November 2020 general election are taking place, and it is highly unlikely that it will be safe to conduct in person and door to door 1:1 this fall or for the foreseeable future. As a result we need to use alternative methods of engagement such as texting, digital and phone banking in order to continue organizing our communities this fall.

Organizing Trajectory Overview.

Federations have for the past several months been engaged in the Season of Activation in which federations are organizing their membership and congregations through a series of virtual actions to turn people out in Hard to Count census tracts for the 2020 census. During this and subsequent seasons the goal has been to utilize relational tools such as OutVote to engage individual networks. Two categories have been identified for organizers in developing organizational capacity and structure. The first of these are “Super-leaders” who would be responsible for building out a team of 10 leaders. The goal is that each of these 10 leaders on the team will build out teams of 10 people of their own. Through this organizing structure federations who are able to cultivate 5-10 “Super-leaders” will be able to wield the collective power of between 500-1,000 people.

During the last few months, federations have been building out their capacity and team infrastructure. The first phase of the 2020 trajectory occurred from January through March, and was known as the Season of Activation. The primary goal of the Season of Activation was to increase participation by communities of color in both the electoral primaries and the census. A secondary goal was to help develop teams and provide them with the tools they would need and utilize during the Fall of 2020.

The second phase of the trajectory, Season of Activation II occurred between April and June. The focus of this period was to utilize teams to conduct wellness checks of organization and community members in order to respond to rapidly changing events throughout the country as the epidemic spread. Another event to occur within this timeframe was the death of George Floyd which acted as a catalyst for a focus on both racial inequity and police accountability. The Organizing Trajectory was revised as a result to also incorporate the Summer of Rebellion and Reckoning with the focus on defunding all racist cops, reforming remaining police practices, and shifting most police functions to community based organizations.

The third and current phase of the 2020 Organizing Trajectory is the Season of Souls to the Polls starting in July and concludes after the November 2020 election. The purpose of this season is to have teams civically engage their networks to increase turnout and participation in the general election. July through September will focus on voter registration activities and converting registered voters to vote by mail wherever possible. October and November will be used to focus directly on GOTV efforts in order to increase voter turnout among communities of color. Federations will be encouraged to share election information, non-partisan voter guides and Election Day reminders.

The fourth and final phase is the Season of Delivery which will occur from December 2020 until March of 2021. During this phase networks will be engaged in meeting with newly elected officials in order to convey organizational strength and priorities with elected officials. The purpose of these meetings will be to encourage elected officials to focus on organizational priorities in developing and implementing their legislative agendas.

Relational Organizing using OutVote.

Faith in Action is providing access to affiliates to the relational organizing tool OutVote. The tool is available by federations at no cost to them for use as both a mobile application and a desktop interface. Admins are able to setup a series of “actions” that can then be distributed to their respective networks. The primary and strongest action on OutVote is Friend-to-Friend texting/emailing in which the action is distributed among a network’s relationships. Currently , federations have engaged utilized the friend to friend functionality to conduct:

- **Census actions and participation:** Federations developed and distributed actions which encouraged recipients to pledge to participate in the census and directed them to the census website in order to complete the census.
- **Wellness checks:** Actions were developed and distributed to check up on community members during the current epidemic and to refer people to appropriate resources for support.
- **Increasing civic participation:** Friend to friend actions focusing on voter registration, registration status and commit to vote pledges have been distributed to networks to increase participation in statewide primaries.
- **Social sharing:** Organizations have also effectively utilized OutVote to amplify important and urgent social media content. Additionally, another use case of the social sharing feature has been to invite and engage people around important meetings.

- **Other types of actions:** OutVote has other types of actions which can be used during other phases of the Organizing Trajectory. The action to submit a testimonial will be put to use during the Season of Delivery in order to collect personalized stories to submit to elected officials in order to explain the importance of organizational priorities.

Resources.

Several resources have been developed in order to assist in the utilization and training of users. The links to these resources are included below:

[OutVote quick reference one-pagers](#): A variety of single page how-to guides for both admins and end-users.

[OutVote Powerpoints](#): Powerpoints have been created for the training of admins and end-users on the mobile application.

[Census phone and text scripts](#): Scripts focusing on census participation and engagement.

[Congregational relational organizing script](#): Scripts to be utilized for wellness checks and moving congregations up the ladder of engagement.

[2020 FIA Voter Targeting Memo](#): An overview of 2020 target universe definitions and voter contact methods.