

## Community Power

### Definition

Strengthening the ability of residents, especially those most impacted, to influence decisions, shape narratives, and secure resources that affect their lives.

### What This Means

Community Power Building helps local people have a stronger voice in decisions that affect their lives. It focuses on leadership, partnership, and shared control over change.

### Key Steps

- Build relationships by bringing neighbors together around shared goals and values.
- Develop leaders by training residents to speak up and take action.
- Form partnerships among community groups, organizations, and policymakers.
- Change the story by lifting up real community experiences.
- Plan for the future with funding and structures that keep the work going.

### How Do We Achieve This

- **Leadership Development** - Building skills and confidence so community members can lead meetings, analyze data, testify, and negotiate.
- **Partnerships and Alliances** - Purposeful relationships between grassroots groups, service providers, schools, faith communities, and agencies.
- **Narrative Change** - Centering lived experience to reshape public understanding and policy frames.
- **Sustainability** - Maintaining people power and infrastructure over time with diversified funding and leadership pipelines.

### Examples

- In Newark, NJ, local residents, many with lived experience, were trained as outreach workers and “violence interrupters.” They mediate conflicts, support trauma recovery, and strengthen police-community trust.
- In Camden, NJ, parents organized to have a voice in school decisions, joining boards and forming parent councils to improve learning conditions and resource access.
- In Bronx, NY, community members, youth groups, and city agencies partnered to clean and restore the Bronx River, turning a polluted area into a public green space.
- In Detroit, MI, residents organized to ensure new city developments included affordable housing, local hiring, and fair wages.
- Faith in Action National Network trained clergy and community leaders to advocate for justice in housing, policing, and healthcare.

### In Short

Community Power = Voice + Action + Ownership

*It's when communities move from “we've been left out” to “we're leading the way.”*

*“Nothing about us without us!”*