

CIVIC POWER 2024





CIVIC POWER:

Unlocking our Democracy was held in Denver, CO in partnership with the **Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition**.

The Civic Power Convening brought together advocates, researchers and others to build on recent efforts to expand the vote. More than 4.4 million people were disenfranchised from voting in 2022, despite 26 states and Washington, DC expanding voting rights to persons with felony convictions since 1997.

We would like to thank everyone who participated: **attendees, speakers, session organizers, sponsors, and our Convening Planning Committee!**

Many lessons were learned from Civic Power 2024 speakers and attendees during several plenaries and breakout sessions. Highlights included:



Directly impacted organizers from California to Kentucky to Texas shared **strategies on relational organizing** with disenfranchised activists



Surfacing **connections** between jail based voting initiatives to expand the vote campaigns



One attendee traveled from Chile to participate in a plenary discussing the **Out of Step Report: U.S. Voting Rights in Global Perspective** to share how **democracy advocacy** helps counter punitive criminal legal practices and policies



Data and democracy advocates shared **methods and practices for collaborating** to guarantee ballot access for voters with felony convictions

We concluded Civic Power with a strategy session that identified the goals, tactics, and strategies to advance voting rights for all including all persons with felony convictions.

CIVIC POWER BY THE NUMBERS

The Convening Planning committee worked to center directly impacted advocacy organizers, foster connection between movement partners, and create an inclusive convening environment. We are happy to report that the 2024 Convening was attended by nearly 100 advocacy organizers, academics, and communications specialists, from 30 states, Washington, DC, and Chile.

Civic Power 2024 featured welcome remarks by Colorado State Senator Julie Gonzales and keynote panels featuring David Ayala of the Formerly Incarcerated Convicted Families People Movement, Kareemah Hanifah of IMAN Atlanta, and Isaisas Vazquez of Mijente. Discussions surfaced alignment between the rights restoration and immigration reform movements to strategically collaborate at the intersections of currently and formerly disenfranchised residents. Participants discussed the impact of voter disenfranchisement for persons with felony convictions and residents who are undocumented.

The event included five general plenary sessions, 10 breakout sessions, and strategy sessions that fostered self-directed discussions among convening attendees on several issues including **“Tying Jail Based Advocacy to Rights Restoration Campaigns”** and directly impacted organizing. More than 50 speakers attended to share informative perspectives on opportunities and challenges to guarantee voting rights for all persons regardless of incarceration status.

We are confident the information shared and strategies developed will help national and state partners collaborate on efforts to expand the vote and initiatives to guarantee ballot access.

CONVENING AGENDA

The Convening Planning team cultivated a diverse program focused on guaranteeing ballot access for incarcerated voters and expanding voting rights to persons in prisons and jails. Sessions surfaced collaborations between rights restoration and immigration advocacy.

We began our convening itinerary highlighting recent rights restoration wins and challenges that underscore the need to deepen national and state campaigns to continue efforts to challenge felony disenfranchisement. Throughout all of our programming, we worked to center directly impacted experts and advocates to share what true democracy is when not being undermined by the criminal legal system and other oppressive systems.

The Civic Power team will build from 2024 convening discussions to support next steps guided by the collaborative strategy chart attendees developed together.



COMMUNICATIONS TOOLS

This year's Civic Convening emphasized the intersections between criminal legal reform, voting rights, and immigrant rights in the United States. The Sentencing Project offers data-driven tools and resources to support ongoing engagement and drive advocacy efforts that aim to expand voting rights and ensure ballot access for all.

The [Locked Out](#) report offers data estimates and analysis of the number of people disenfranchised due to felony convictions across the United States, revealing that an estimated 4.4 Americans are currently banned from voting. The report highlights the significant racial and ethnic disparities in disenfranchisement, the ramifications of this broken system, and the need for reform. The Sentencing Project will publish an updated edition of the report with new estimates before the end of 2024.

The [Out of Step](#) report highlights U.S. policies on voting rights for people with felony convictions which are significantly more restrictive compared to global standards. While many democracies restore voting rights upon release from prison, the U.S. imposes long-term or permanent disenfranchisement, disproportionately impacting Black communities and undermining democratic participation.

[State Voting Rights Briefs](#) provide a detailed analysis of voting rights policies in various states for people impacted by the criminal-legal system, giving insight on varying degrees of restrictions and reforms in place, illustrating significant disparities in voting rights access and advocates for reform efforts to ensure fair and equitable voting rights restoration nationwide.

Recent state voting rights briefs include:

The [California fact sheet](#) highlights the racial disparities and calls for legislative action to restore the rights of over **97,000** Californians disenfranchised due to felony convictions.

The [Colorado fact sheet](#) provides the data backed argument for why the **17,000** citizens in Colorado who are currently disenfranchised due to felony convictions, deserve to have their rights restored, emphasizing the disproportionate impact of felony voting bans on communities of color.



Thank you so much to this year's Civic Power Sponsors



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We give a warm thank you to all the organizations that supported the development of the Civic Power:
Unlocking Our Democracy Program



Feedback is a gift! - Anonymous convening survey

