

Beyond Resistance Blueprint

5 Steps for Building Blue Power

"I'm the only Democrat in my neighborhood!"

"I'm just one person. I can't change anything."

"My town is so conservative! We'll never vote blue!"

We've heard it (and said it!) all! We created this Blueprint for every progressive who's ever felt outnumbered, outshouted, or overlooked in a conservative community—and still refuses to give up. It's for the people who believe change is possible even when the odds look impossible, and who know that building power starts with neighbors, conversations, and persistence.

Whether you're looking to join a local organization and build it up, start your own from the ground floor, or just get involved on an individual basis, what you'll find here isn't theory. It's a set of lessons, strategies, and tools drawn from real-world organizing in some of the toughest political terrain. These are the approaches that helped turn helplessness into momentum, isolation into community, and "red forever" districts into competitive battlegrounds.

Why should you take advice from us?

RECEIPTS

Jennifer Austin and Sarah Schulz are the not-yet-famous-but-fiercely-effective duo behind the Beyond Resistance Podcast, where they dish hard-won lessons on flipping red turf blue. Jennifer—a strategic powerhouse who turned the Midland County Dems into a fundraising, vote-winning machine—has the numbers and receipts to prove that organizing can reshape a Republican stronghold. Sarah—an unflinching activist, former State House candidate, and professional GOP nightmare—has led rallies, spooked incumbents, and built a movement in the reddest parts of Michigan. Together, they're building blue power in red communities—and they're just getting started.



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Build Blue Power in a Red
Community and Start Winning!

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It's Time to Take Your Relationship from Transactional to Transformational!

Building transformational relationships means investing in people, not their votes. These relationships are rooted in mutual respect, shared purpose, and long-term commitment.

- Transactional relationships are short-term and based on one-time exchanges (e.g., asking someone to donate or sign a petition).
- Transformational relationships are built on trust and mutual investment. Focus on shared goals, not short-term asks.
- Example: Instead of asking someone to phone bank, meet them for coffee and ask what issues matter to them, what skills they can bring to the movement, and offer leadership opportunities.
- Key Insight: Follow up with people even when you don't need something. Ask about their family, remember birthdays, and LISTEN!



Do:

- Meet people where they are and ask about their values and passions, but have a vision for where you want to take them.
- Follow up with personal touches (birthdays, life events).
- Invite people into leadership, not just participation.
- Be curious and listen more than you talk.

Don't:

- Only contact people when you need help.
- Focus solely on tasks and outcomes.
- Assume people's politics or identities based on stereotypes.
- Use a one-size-fits-all recruitment script.



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Read the Room, Friend: Understanding and Navigating Community Power Structures

Power isn't just held in city halls and political parties. It lives in relationships, institutions, traditions, and community norms.

- Map formal and informal power in the community: Who leads the PTA? Who organizes the block party? Who do people trust?
- Don't just partner with the loudest voice—identify connectors and culture keepers.
- Disrupt respectfully (or not respectfully): Ask hard questions in rooms where no one else will. Name the systems that need change.
- Example: If a gatekeeper dominates meetings, create breakout spaces where quieter voices are heard. Also, step back and ask yourself if you are that dominating voice and make room for others.

Do:

- Map formal (elected officials, boards) and informal (faith leaders, barbers, volunteer organizations) power.
- Build relationships with connectors and cultural leaders.
- Ask who people trust and why.
- Respect local history and dynamics, but don't be afraid to shake up norms that aren't serving the public interest.

Don't:

- Mistake loudness for influence.
- Ignore historic tensions or systemic harms.
- Assume your presence alone changes dynamics.
- Over-rely on traditional political gatekeepers.

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3

"She Doesn't Even Go Here!": Show Up in the Community

There is no substitute for real presence. You earn trust by showing up consistently—not just when it's convenient or strategic.

- Presence matters more than perfection. Attend events even if you aren't a speaker or sponsor.
- Example: Attend local high school games, farmers markets, or city council meetings consistently.
- Key Insight: Just listen, build relationships, and ask "How can I support what you're doing?"
- Example: Find someone at an event that you know who knows other people and ask them to introduce you – even give them a short script like "This is my friend Julie. She's been involved in the local rallies for safe schools. I think you should know each other."
- Courage inspires courage and creates consistency. Consistency builds trust. Trust builds power.



- Do:**
- Attend community events even if the only goal is to be seen and meet people.
 - Volunteer for local initiatives not connected to your movement.
 - Wear non-political clothing and be a listener. (Caveat: This doesn't mean NEVER wear political clothes. Figure out the time and place to make a statement!)
 - Ask: "How can I support what you're already doing?"

- Don't:**
- Only attend events during election season.
 - Make everything about politics.
 - Assume your presence is always welcome.

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Tools, digital technology, and systems may not be glamorous, but they are essential to smart organizing. Mastery here means you can scale your efforts and be strategic.

- Use voter and demographic data to target outreach: Who's been ignored? Who's influential? Who's movable?
- Adopt tools like VAN, Hustle, or relational organizing apps (digital) to track conversations and actions (traditional), marrying the best of both strategies.
- Social media is not optional—use it to tell stories, uplift local voices, invite people into your movement, and show the strength and growth of your base.
- Example: Create a weekly digital roundup of community news and events with a call to action at the end.



You Don't
Need a
Wrench

to Master
these Nuts
and Bolts

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Do:

- Use VAN or a CRM to track supporter data.
- Use demographics and interests to determine outreach.
- Use relational organizing tools (like Reach or Team).
- Share consistent, community-focused content online.
- Get contact information whenever possible. Use sign in sheets at meetings. Gather contact info from people you meet. Build an email list. Getting information creates avenues for outreach and builds the movement.

Don't:

- Rely solely on digital or traditional tactics. (USE BOTH!)
- Lose contact info or fail to follow up.
- Ignore data insights.
- Over-message or under-message. (Easy, right?!)



5 “You Can’t Win with THAT Attitude!”: Adopt Movement Mindsets

Political change is not a campaign. It’s a movement. Movements are guided by bold visions, shared values, and the deep belief that change is possible.

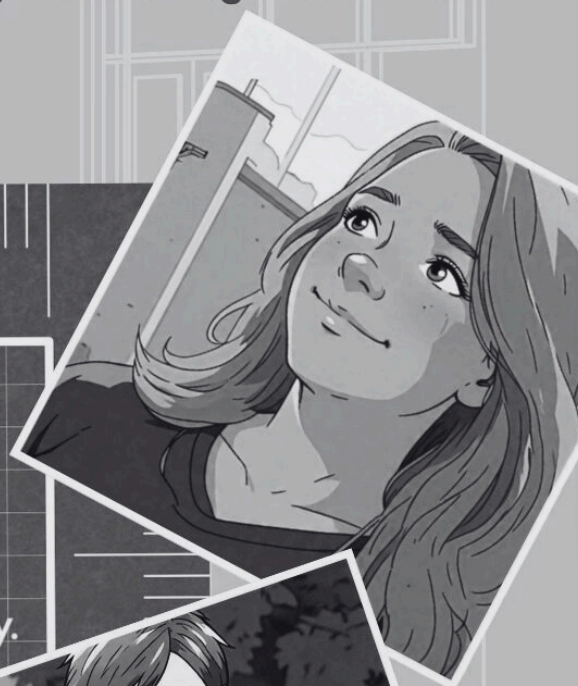
- Go big or go home: Small asks lead to small movements. Be bold. Shoot the shot. Dream big and invite others to do the same.
- Stand in your values even when it’s unpopular. People respect clarity and courage.
- Be authentic: Don’t over rehearse or over research every word or line. Be yourself. Don’t copy-paste national messages. Speak your truth, shaped by your community’s lived reality.
- Key Insight: Live in abundance, not scarcity. Believe that there is always more money, always more volunteers, always more voters to find, and winning is possible.
- Operate with a Musketeer mind-set: All for one; and one for all. Say “we” not “I”. Give credit, share resources, and leverage each other’s best magic.

Do:

- Think long-term and invite others to do the same.
- Be clear and vocal about your values.
- Operate with generosity and collaboration.
- Reflect the real voices and stories of your community.

Don’t:

- Make small asks and expect big results.
- Water down your message to avoid discomfort.
- Hoard credit or resources.
- Use generic or national language that doesn’t resonate.



	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Build Transformational Relationships	Host 10-15 one-on-one meetings with potential leaders. Identify shared values and community concerns.	Co-host house meetings with emerging leaders. Track individual goals and follow up regularly.	Create a relationship map to visualize your network. Celebrate wins and deepen ties (community dinners, shared projects).	Offer leadership roles (action captains, event hosts). Reflect with your base on what they've learned and built.
Navigate Power Structures	Conduct a power mapping session with 5-10 organizers. Interview residents about trusted voices in the community.	Host listening sessions with cultural hubs (e.g., churches, coffee shops, salons). Identify and meet with key connectors.	Test influence points (co-host a block party with a cultural leader). Provide platforms for new voices.	Evaluate which partnerships helped shift narratives. Develop community-led leadership pipelines.
Elevate Community Presence	Identify recurring community events (markets, PTA, games). Assign team members to attend weekly.	Create a shared calendar of local happenings. Develop a "presence plan" with team coverage.	Host a low-key community event (action meetings, potluck, cleanup). Highlight others' work in social media posts.	Recognize your consistent attendees. Measure community perception and relationships.
Leverage Technology and Tools	Audit your existing tech tools. Train volunteers on basic data entry and use.	Set up relational organizing campaigns. Create social media presence and organizing groups. Start a weekly community newsletter or roundup.	Analyze which segments are under-engaged. Begin to identify your "voice" in various platforms. Adjust outreach accordingly.	Reflect on data to refine strategies. Experiment with low-cost post boosting and cross-platform alignment. Celebrate digital storytellers and data wins.
Adopt Movement Mindsets	Develop a shared vision statement with your core team. Host a story circle to surface community narratives.	Share wins and challenges transparently. Invite bold actions (e.g., protests or rallies, advocacy days, art builds).	Celebrate team accomplishments publicly. Model movement values (solidarity, courage, joy).	Reflect: How have mindsets shifted? Invest in leader development for the long haul. Get a tattoo that says "go big or go home".

INVOICE
 "You are here to change the game, not just win it."
 - Hiral Nagda

YEAR ONE TIMELINE

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Build Blue Power in a Red Community and Start Winning!