



# ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

# 2024

ONE VILLAGE. ONE VISION. ONE VOICE.



# GREETINGS

We are thrilled to share this snapshot into another turbulent, yet significant year for One Voice. Twenty-twenty-four was significant in so many ways: elections, natural disasters, and decisions in key litigation that will have a lasting impact. As usual, our work begins and ends in love for people and community. So, while the world may look like it's falling apart around us, we know that if we keep investing in families and grassroots leadership, Mississippi will always win.

Thank you for taking the time to read our annual report. This document shares what we've done over the past year, highlighting our achievements and challenges, and discussing our future plans. We want to ensure that everyone is informed about our work and its impact on the community. Your support means a lot to us, and we know that we cannot do this work in isolation. We want to thank all of our partners, volunteers, and funders; again, we couldn't do this work without you. We hope that this report gives you a clear picture of our vision and goals. Together, we can continue to build a better Mississippi!

Thank you to the One Voice Staff. You show up every day and go above and beyond the call of duty. Your love for community shows, and One Voice will continue to thrive with your support. Thank you to the One Voice Board of Directors. You are a stabilizing force that guides this growing organization. We have been through a few transitions in the past two decades, and you have stayed with us, united and strong.

In 2027, One Voice will celebrate twenty years of service. This twenty-year milestone marks the end of a significant period in the Gulf South. Please join One Voice and other organizations as we reflect on the growth and ongoing challenges that exist in our states as we continue to struggle with climate incidents and economic distress.

Again, thank you for staying on this journey with us, and we look forward to continuing this work to see a Mississippi where ALL families thrive.



# MISSION AND VISION

Guided by principles of self determination, One Voice ensures historically silenced communities have representation and influence in spaces of power.

We envision a Mississippi where WE ALL thrive.

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# OUTREACH

In Mississippi, the right to vote is a sacred honor that has been fought for and protected by ordinary heroes who sacrificed for this privilege. Today, One Voice continues to do the work. During the last presidential election, One Voice had overwhelming success in our voter empowerment efforts throughout the state, fighting for social justice at the voting booth. On November 5, 2024, thousands of voters exercised their right to vote by casting their ballots at polling locations across the state. Despite their determination to vote and have their votes counted, many voters faced the same issues that marred the last election, including long lines, ballot and poll worker shortages, malfunctioning voting machines, erroneous voter purges, and absentee ballots that were never received. While these issues linger, One Voice continues to strive for improvements and hopes to restore the people's trust in our electoral processes.

One Voice operates an extensive grassroots voter empowerment campaign targeting underrepresented communities throughout the state. The "My Life. My Vote." campaign included voter registration, voter education, Get-Out-The-Vote (GOTV) efforts, and Election Day protection and monitoring. This work was accomplished through voter empowerment workshops, as well as listening and training sessions held throughout the state.



# One Voice in the Community!



# REDISTRICTING

Mississippi has long faced challenges with unfair electoral maps that limit voters' ability to choose leaders who truly represent their communities. Throughout 2024, One Voice continued its commitment to empowering communities through trainings and educational workshops that demystify the redistricting process and equip residents to advocate for fair maps.

Mississippi has a history of drawing unfair maps that don't allow voters to select candidates who best serve their communities. One Voice has consistently supported communities through training and educational workshops, enabling them to grasp the mapping process.

On July 2, 2024, a federal panel found that the 2022 maps unlawfully diluted the voting strength of Black residents, ruling that multiple new Black-majority districts should have been created, with at least two in the state Senate and one in the state House of Representatives. The absence of Black-majority districts, combined with racial polarization and a history of racial discrimination in the state, denied Black voters their right to participate equally in the political process, in violation of Section 2. As a result, the ruling required the creation of new Black-majority Senate districts in the areas around DeSoto County in Northern Mississippi and in and around the city of Hattiesburg, as well as a new Black-majority House district in Chickasaw and Monroe counties. One Voice was actively involved in finding plaintiffs to bring the lawsuit while continuously educating community stakeholders about these new districts and helping them understand the implications of the new map.

## Redistricting

Throughout 2024, One Voice collaborated with communities to submit alternative plans for several local municipal and county redistricting processes, resulting in significant changes. In DeSoto County, a lawsuit was filed against the Board of Supervisors and Election Commissioners, challenging a racially discriminatory map that diluted the voting power of Black voters in DeSoto County and denied them a fair chance to elect representatives of their choice. Black residents make up more than 30% of the DeSoto County population, but there is zero representation on the board. Alternative community plans have been submitted in other municipalities, such as the city of Jackson, where frustration arose for many as redistricting started behind closed doors in Pearl, MS. After several community meetings, residents were able to provide testimonies and the board was forced to return the meetings to Jackson, allowing for public input.



# ERASED AT THE POLLS

Following the passage of House Bill 1310 during the 2023 Legislative session, the law now requires counties to review their voter rolls during each presidential election cycle. The new law requires that anyone who has not participated in an election since the previous primary election four years prior must be moved to inactive status. One Voice investigated this change and found that thousands of voters had been purged from county voting rolls. In Hinds County alone, 40,000 voters were removed.

In response, One Voice launched the “Erased at the Polls” campaign, which aimed to educate stakeholders about voter purging and encourage them to help qualified individuals regain their voting status. Between 2023 and 2024, organizers collected thousands of records from Circuit Clerk offices, which included the names of voters who had been purged for various reasons, such as death, disenfranchisement, relocation, and other reasons. The “Erased at the Polls” campaign was a crucial effort to restore the voting rights of those who have been unfairly purged. In fact, voter purging was identified as the number one issue on the Election Protection hotline.

## Erased at the Polls

In a powerful, week-long volunteer session, One Voice mobilized over 40 volunteers to combat the purge. Volunteers meticulously reviewed the purging list from several counties, identifying and re-registering 450 voters across the state. This critical effort ensured that hundreds of previously inactive citizens could cast their ballots in November.



# ERASED AT THE PILLS

**Check your voter status before it's too late!**

### What is voter purging?

Simply put, voter purging is the process of removing names from the voter rolls or the list of registered voters.

### What is the problem with voter purging if it is routine?

- What was once a form of "voter list maintenance" can become overly aggressive and arbitrary.
- Voter purging has become one of the most restrictive forms of voter suppression in Mississippi.



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## CHECK YOUR VOTER STATUS

Check your voter registration status before every election deadline!

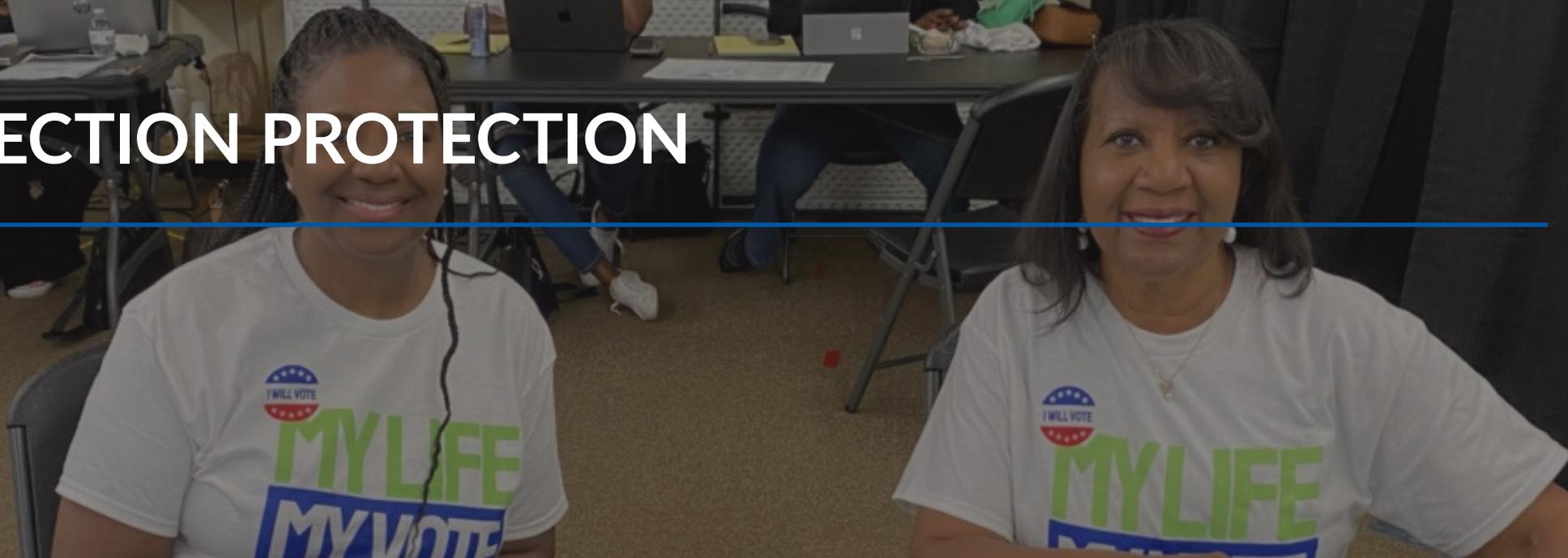
## ERASED AT THE P<sup>ILL</sup>S

Every vote counts, and we need yours now more than ever to make a difference. Call our Election Protection Hotline at 1-888-601-VOTE if you have any voting questions or concerns.



SCAN QR CODE TO LEARN MORE

# ELECTION PROTECTION



Since 2008, the Mississippi Election Protection Program, led by One Voice, has been tirelessly working to address voter suppression tactics, which discourage people from participating in the electoral process. One Voice operates on a non-partisan Election Protection Hotline (1-888-601-VOTE) to provide voters with information, direction, and assistance, as well as responding to complaints or problems related to voting. The hotline also serves as a resource for voters to check their registration status, locate their polling place, or report issues or concerns with the voting process before Election Day.

The Election Protection Program is convened during every election cycle, as Mississippi holds elections annually. This program was staffed by approximately 90 trained volunteers, including legal experts from organizations such as the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law and the NAACP. At the call center, these volunteers and attorneys were responsible for monitoring and tracking voting issues. In-house volunteers worked in groups of eight, each serving a three-hour shift on Election Day.

The volunteers represented various groups, including members of the Mississippi NAACP branches, the Mississippi Black Women's Roundtable, members of Greek letter organizations, and other community members. Additionally, volunteers were stationed on the ground in 53 counties, ready to assist throughout the day to protect the vote and ensure every ballot was cast.

## Election Protection

In a powerful, week-long volunteer session, One Voice mobilized over 40 volunteers to combat the purge. Volunteers meticulously reviewed the purging list from several counties, identifying and re-registering 450 voters across the state. This critical effort ensured that hundreds of previously inactive citizens could cast their ballots in November.

Calls from voters across Mississippi were documented using Our Vote Live (OVL), an online system that allows users to input data from answered calls and monitor them. OVL serves as a repository for all calls and data. The Lawyers Committee led the answering of incoming calls, and volunteers were able to see and respond to calls in real-time using laptops. Voters raised questions and concerns, including voter registration status, names not on the voter roll, acceptable forms of identification, malfunctioning machines, changes in polling place locations, voter intimidation, candidates' names appearing on the wrong ballot, and misinformation from election day workers.

One primary concern leading up to Election Day was the availability of absentee voting. Some voters did not receive their ballots by Election Day and were unsure if they could still cast their votes. While some were turned away and left, others were encouraged to vote by affidavit ballot. Overall, the call center received 183 calls from 44 identifiable counties and 56 calls from unidentified counties in Mississippi. The majority of questions and issues came from Hinds County, with almost 30 calls from voters, followed by Jackson County with 11, Rankin County with 10, Madison County with 8, and DeSoto County with 7.

Leading up to Election Day, One Voice also conducted extensive voter outreach, hosting over fifteen election education workshops in more than 45 counties with various community groups. This effort included the intensive Power of the Sister Vote bootcamp-style workshop. The organization also hosted three candidate forum events. GOTV (Get Out The Vote) and voter education material, including information on who was on the ballot, were strategically distributed during college football games and tailgating events.

In addition to its Election Day activities, One Voice works to hold lawmakers accountable and address the barriers voters experience. The next step is to focus on the upcoming Mississippi Legislative Session, where we will continue to advocate for change through policy and engagement with lawmakers.



# ENERGY DEMOCRACY

## Energy Democracy: The Power of The Light

Energy Democracy is rooted in the belief that the people most impacted by energy decisions should have a voice in how those decisions are made. Our efforts have focused on increasing engagement and transparency within electric cooperatives, which are intended to be member-owned and community-centered. Many member owners remain unaware of their rights or feel excluded from key decisions. To address this, we held community conversations with members of various Electric Power Associations and other cooperatives, listening to concerns about high electric bills, the removal of payment kiosks, the shutdown of local EPA offices, and a broader lack of accountability, particularly within the Coahoma EPA. We also collected over 600 “DID YOU KNOW” surveys from Twin County members, representing just 5% of the 12,600 households canvassed. These one-on-one engagements were vital in building relationships and pushing for policies that reflect the needs of the communities being served.

The concerns voiced by member-owners grew louder when the only candidate who sought to run for the board of Twin County Electric Power Association, Mr. Melvin Sias, was disqualified due to a last-minute by-law change citing geographic representation. This left many questioning the cooperative’s commitment to democratic governance. In response, Representative Hines, a supporter of energy equity and cooperative reform, submitted a formal letter to the Twin County EPA, outlining the concerns raised by constituents.

## Energy Democracy

The Electric Power Association attorney responded by ensuring that no practices were being undermined and expressed awareness of the issues at hand. We encouraged continued community involvement and transparency. In the meantime, we are actively seeking legal counsel and addressing all concerns raised by member-owners to ensure that fair and equitable governance remains at the forefront of our cooperative's daily operations.

Our 2024 Electric Cooperative Leadership Institute played a crucial role in advancing these efforts further by developing the next generation of energy justice advocates. The institute brought together participants, including ages ranging from 25 to 50. The first intergenerational cohort for the Electric Cooperative Leadership Institute focused on how to lead and organize energy efficiency, cooperative governance, and climate justice.

We provided a platform for dialogue on the impact of electric power associations on economic opportunity and public health, as well as the role of energy disparities in contributing to chronic health issues such as asthma and heat-related illnesses. This past year's institute also expanded conversations with advocacy groups from states like Georgia and Tennessee to explore shared challenges and strategies for progress. Through this work, electric cooperative partners have built strong coalitions within their communities, creating safe havens where member-owners can voice concerns, share experiences, and explore the best methods to address the issues facing their communities.



# ECONOMIC JUSTICE

At One Voice, we remain steadfast in our commitment to advocating for policies that improve the lives of Mississippi’s working families. As we continue to prioritize equal pay, comprehensive health coverage, and reliable emergency assistance, our work in 2024 has made significant strides toward a more equitable and just Mississippi.

Through our partnership with the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities State Priorities Partnership (SPP), a coalition of over 40 nonprofit research and policy organizations, we have advanced critical policy initiatives aimed at fighting poverty and reducing inequality. As members of SPP, we contributed to the development of economic justice analyses that inform policies aimed at addressing systemic disparities. We worked to elevate the voices of Mississippi’s traditionally silenced communities, ensuring that their needs are reflected in state policy decisions.

Here’s how we made a difference in 2024:

## **Advocating for Budget and Tax Policies**

In 2024, we continued to advocate for budget and tax policies that adequately fund essential government services and programs, ensuring they benefit all communities. Our efforts focused on promoting fair and equitable resource distribution while advocating for policies that reduce poverty and advance economic justice for all, regardless of race or socioeconomic status. Our campaigns helped raise public awareness about the importance of fair resource allocation and policies that promote racial and economic justice.

[Submitted Testimony for Mississippi Tax Hearings](#)

[Income Tax Elimination Toolkit](#)

Our work in 2024 also included advocating for tax policies that help reduce the disparities in wealth and opportunity that persist across the state. We fought for changes to the state budget that prioritize funding for services that directly benefit working families, particularly those in underserved communities.

[Child Tax Credit Implementation Toolkit](#)

[Grocery Tax Reform Toolkit](#)

## **Advocating for Budget and Tax Policies**

Our advocacy efforts led to securing additional funding for emergency assistance programs that provide support for working families facing unexpected crises. By ensuring that these funds are accessible, we have helped reduce financial instability for many in the state.

[SNAP](#)

[TANF Toolkit](#)

[Sunbucks](#)

## **Advancing Healthcare Access**

In 2024, we advanced our efforts to ensure working families have access to comprehensive healthcare coverage. In partnership with CARE for Mississippi, a coalition of 66 organizations, we authored reports highlighting the healthcare coverage gap in the state and underscoring the critical need for expanding affordable healthcare access.

[Medicaid Expansion Report](#)

[Medicaid Coverage Gap in Mississippi Report](#)

In 2024, we achieved a significant policy victory with the expansion of postpartum healthcare coverage from 60 days to a full year. This win was a critical step toward ensuring that mothers in Mississippi have access to the comprehensive healthcare they need during the crucial first year after childbirth. This policy change was part of our ongoing efforts to address healthcare disparities and improve maternal health outcomes, ensuring that families receive the necessary support for both physical and economic well-being.

## **Advancing Fiscal Equity in Education**

In 2024, our Economic Justice team continued to champion fair and adequate public school funding across Mississippi. Grounded in our belief that every child deserves a high-quality education—regardless of zip code, race, or income—we focused our advocacy on ensuring public dollars remain in public schools.

[Mississippi's Use of ESSER Funds: A Closer Look at the Challenges, Opportunities, and District Spending](#)

Our team conducted a closer analysis of how Mississippi school districts allocated their final round of Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds. With these one-time federal dollars set to expire, it was critical to understand how districts invested in recovery and resilience—and where gaps remain.

## Economic Justice

As Mississippi faced the looming “ESSER cliff,” our work highlighted the urgent need for stable, equitable state investment in public education—especially in high-poverty and rural communities that were most impacted by the pandemic.

Furthermore, our Economic Justice team played a critical role in preventing the expansion of school voucher programs in Mississippi. Vouchers siphon public dollars away from public schools—where the vast majority of Mississippi children learn—and redirect them to private institutions that are not held to the same standards of accountability, access, or equity.

[Privatization: A Dangerous Path to Inequality in Education](#)

[The Case Against Universal Vouchers in Mississippi](#)

[Protecting Public Schools: Private School Vouchers are a Waste of our Tax Dollars](#)

[Protecting Public Schools Toolkit](#)

[Supporting Public Schools Toolkit](#)

Through sustained policy analysis, coalition building, and grassroots mobilization, we helped defeat multiple legislative efforts aimed at implementing universal vouchers. These proposals threatened to further drain public education budgets and exacerbate racial and economic segregation in our school system.

We worked in deep partnership with public education advocates, parent organizations, rural superintendents, and community leaders to raise public awareness and engage lawmakers directly. Together, we made it clear: Mississippi’s public funds must stay in public schools.

This victory was a testament to what’s possible when data, organizing, and values-driven policy advocacy come together in defense of equity and opportunity.

As we look ahead to 2025, One Voice will continue to push for a fair and just economic system that works as hard as Mississippi’s working families. Through our advocacy, we are building a state where all residents have access to the resources they need to thrive.



# PUBLIC SAFETY

## Advancing Community Safety and Justice

We believe that true community safety comes from ensuring that every resident has access to opportunity, stability, and a voice in shaping the laws that govern them.

In 2024, One Voice continued its work to create safer, more just communities by addressing the systemic barriers that prevent full civic participation and fair treatment under the law. Our efforts centered on restoring voting rights, expanding access to expungement, and advancing policy reforms that promote rehabilitation rather than perpetual punishment.

## **Felony Disenfranchisement**

### *Restoring Voices, Restoring Votes*

Mississippi's 1890 constitution includes a lifetime voting ban, which disproportionately affects the state's Black population, who make up about 38% of residents. This ban has resulted in the disenfranchisement of nearly 60,000 people. To regain their voting rights in Mississippi, individuals convicted of a disenfranchising crime must either receive a pardon from the governor or obtain permission from two-thirds of the state's House and Senate. However, in recent years, very few people have had their voting rights restored through this process.

Since our founding, One Voice has worked diligently to confront the long-term effects of mass incarceration, particularly the unjust disenfranchisement of returning citizens. In Mississippi, 23 laws continue to bar individuals with felony convictions from exercising their right to vote, perpetuating cycles of exclusion and economic hardship.

In January of 2024, One Voice sponsored a bus trip for returning citizens and community activists to attend the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals oral arguments. The hearing would determine whether the permanent loss of voting rights for individuals amounts to cruel and unusual punishment and a violation of the Constitution.

### *Disenfranchisement by the Numbers*

In 2024, 16% of Mississippi's voting-age population was disenfranchised. In Jackson, that number climbs to 25%, highlighting a deeper systemic issue within urban areas heavily impacted by incarceration. Since our founding, One Voice has worked diligently to confront the long-term effects of mass incarceration, particularly the unjust disenfranchisement of returning citizens. In Mississippi, 23 laws continue to bar individuals with felony convictions from exercising their right to vote, perpetuating cycles of exclusion and economic hardship.

Our "Erased to the Polls" campaign has mobilized and identified significant numbers of disenfranchised voters across Mississippi. In Jackson (Hinds County) alone, there are over 5,000 disenfranchised voters, underscoring just how outdated and punitive Mississippi's voter restoration laws remain. These figures are not just statistics; they are living proof of the urgent need for systemic change.

### *Legislative Action & Outcomes*

In 2024, One Voice took direct action to restore the rights of returning citizens, submitting 44 suffrage applications on their behalf. To amplify this effort, on March 14, we organized a direct action and press conference at the Mississippi State Capitol. This event was a collaborative effort, held in partnership with organizations including the Mississippi Re-entry Coalition and MS Votes, among others, with the core request that all senators and representatives sign the applications for residents in their districts.

Despite this powerful mobilization, only nine applications were ultimately successful. While this outcome may seem small, it was particularly inspiring when considering the history of similar efforts over the past decade. Building on this momentum, One Voice began the process of submitting over 40 additional applications in 2025. The hard-won support from these lawmakers underscores the urgent need for continued advocacy and accountability on this crucial issue.

### *Why This Matters*

Denying returning citizens their right to vote has profound and real consequences. This disenfranchisement contributes directly to employment discrimination, exacerbates housing instability, and results in a tragic loss of civic identity and community trust. Our advocacy is not just about sending citizens to the ballot box; it is fundamentally about ensuring their sense of belonging and granting them a meaningful second chance at life.

## **Criminal Justice Convening: My Vote Matters**

As part of our ongoing commitment to challenge mass incarceration and support returning citizens, One Voice hosted a Criminal Justice Convening focused on the widespread issue of voter disenfranchisement and its profound impacts on Mississippi communities. This gathering brought together advocates, returning citizens, legal experts, faith leaders, and grassroots organizers to engage in critical dialogue around one central question: How do we restore justice for communities impacted by incarceration?

The conversation highlighted that 23 disenfranchisement laws remain active in Mississippi, having a disproportionate effect on Black communities. These laws create significant barriers to reentry due to the loss of civil rights, specifically affecting access to employment, housing, and voting. Speakers also addressed the emotional and generational toll it inflicts on families and entire communities.

To overcome these barriers, One Voice advocates for a multi-pronged approach that includes Rights Restoration, pushing for legislation that establishes a clear path to restoring voting rights for all returning citizens. This is coupled with Civic Education, ensuring impacted individuals are equipped with essential knowledge about the electoral process and their rights before re-entering society. The strategy also involves Community-Led. Accountability, building strong coalitions to hold local sheriffs, judges, and lawmakers accountable for practices that perpetuate systemic harm. Finally, Policy Reform at the State Level, lobbying aggressively for the repeal of outdated disenfranchisement laws while simultaneously pushing for comprehensive sentencing and parole reforms.

This convening was more than just a conversation; it marked the first step in our call to action. It reaffirmed our conviction that the voices of those most directly affected by injustice must lead the way in transforming the system.

## Justice for All Campaign: Rankin County

In 2024, One Voice joined forces with the Rankin County NAACP to confront a disturbing and deeply rooted pattern of police brutality and abuse of power within the Rankin County Sheriff's Department. At the center of this crisis was a corrupt group of deputies infamously known as the Goon Squad.

### *Who Are the Goon Squad?*

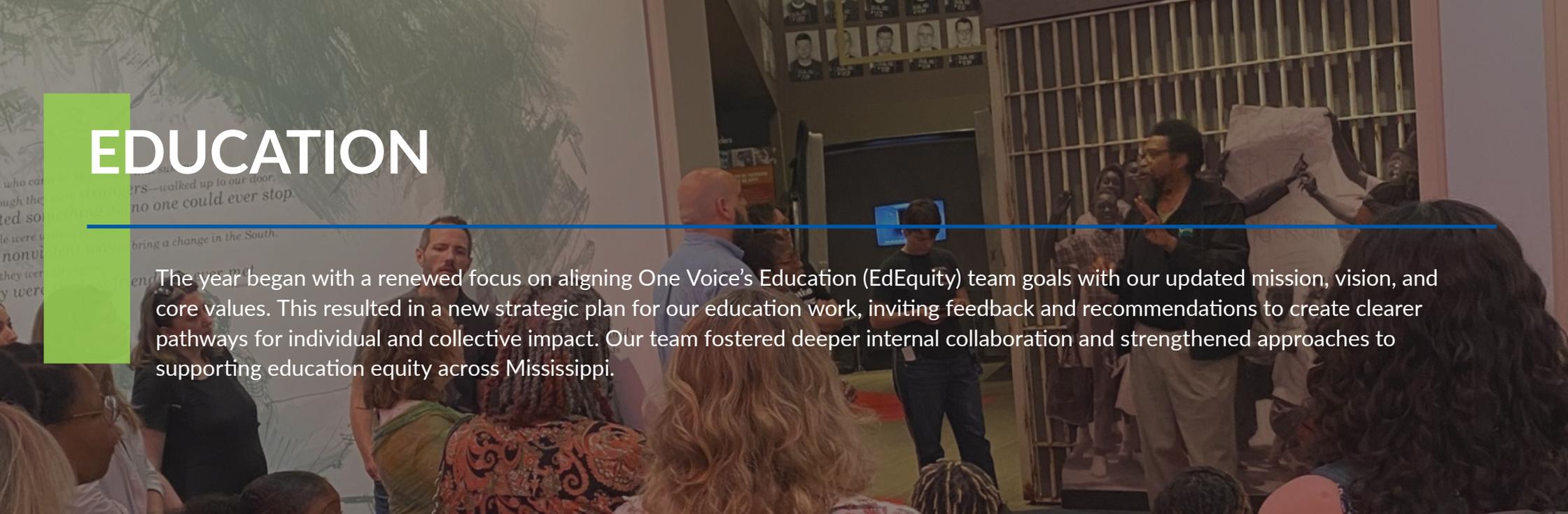
The "Goon Squad" was a nickname given to a group of Rankin County sheriff's deputies who engaged in a pattern of unlawful raids, torture, abuse, and terror tactics primarily targeting Black residents and families. These officers operated under the guise of law enforcement while violating constitutional rights, committing physical and emotional violence with impunity. Their actions represented one of the most egregious modern examples of state-sanctioned horror in Mississippi.

The agony they inflicted was not isolated; it reflected a broader culture of unchecked power and racial injustice within the department. The sheriff's office not only failed to hold them liable but also enabled these abuses through policies and a lack of transparency that made oversight nearly impossible.

### *Community Response and Organizing*

In coalition with the Rankin County NAACP and other grassroots allies, One Voice supported the community in response to the abuses of the Rankin County Sheriff's Department. This response included launching petitions to remove the sheriff responsible for allowing these actions, hosting community town halls and forums to amplify the voices of impacted families and providing legal aid connections alongside public awareness campaigns to demand justice and systemic reform.

We stood firmly with the terrorized families and the people demanding that Rankin County no longer be a haven for lawless policing. One Voice is committed to dismantling systems of oppression and building structures of accountability and justice in communities that feel powerless against police force, especially now that the Department of Justice is investigating the abuse by the Rankin County Sheriff's Department.



# EDUCATION

The year began with a renewed focus on aligning One Voice's Education (EdEquity) team goals with our updated mission, vision, and core values. This resulted in a new strategic plan for our education work, inviting feedback and recommendations to create clearer pathways for individual and collective impact. Our team fostered deeper internal collaboration and strengthened approaches to supporting education equity across Mississippi.

## Advocacy and Legislative Engagement Advocacy and Legislative Engagement

A key achievement was monitoring the Mississippi Legislative Session and educating community stakeholders about education policy. Our Policy Director presented [The Case Against Vouchers in Mississippi](#) to the MS Black Legislative Caucus, offering critical insight into legislation under debate. Communications launched blogs and opinion pieces focused on public education funding, supporting the larger Miss Education Campaign. Support for public schools is high: families overwhelmingly support their schools, and many teachers and other advocates for public education oppose vouchers. In Mississippi, 90% of students attend public schools, while 10% of students attend [private schools](#). Instead of school voucher programs, the state should focus on strengthening investments in public schools, which are the only institutions capable of educating Mississippi's large and diverse population.

The campaign blended outreach, communication, and research efforts. It encompasses the One Voice Education Equity team's work to illuminate the misconceptions, misconduct, missed opportunities, and misunderstandings in the Mississippi Public Education system. In 2024, we enter the state legislative session in collaboration with our Policy Research, Communications, and Outreach teams to develop a robust campaign highlighting current hotbed issues

## Education

The team produced toolkits to defend public education and a voucher estimation tool to model the impact of voucher legislation. Through an Action Alert Tele-Town Hall, over 250 registrants joined a statewide event to mobilize advocacy and inform about education bills. This initiative built a segmented list for regular updates and calls to action for Mississippians to voice their opinions to Legislators about how School voucher programs divert money away from public schools, sometimes by directly re-routing education funding to private schools and other times indirectly by making it harder to pay teachers, buy new textbooks, and provide quality after-school programming.

### **Research, Messaging, and Community Impact**

One Voice participated in discussions with the communications consultant RALLY, sharing resource materials and creating an MS-based Messaging Guide tailored for elected officials and communities. With attacks on public schools through privatization, “school choice”, and consolidation efforts growing throughout Mississippi and across the country, effective messaging was essential to pushing back against carefully crafted narratives.

Voters decisively demand that taxpayer funds prioritize public education. Recognizing this absolute mandate, our strategy critically linked every response to core, value-based principles. Our primary strategic action was the planning and immediate establishment of a statewide education funding coalition. This initiative was rigorously supported by a comprehensive landscape analysis and targeted stakeholder mobilization. The coalition promptly convened, and over a focused six-month period, cemented shared priorities and a unified, aggressive strategy for decisive progress.

The rollout included:

- Landscape Analysis - including the identification of potential partners, existing needs, strengths, and interests of the field.
- Strategy Development – development of a comprehensive strategy for engaging and mobilizing diverse stakeholders that is inclusive of base metrics and evaluation intervals.
- Formal coalition launch – host initial coalition meeting.
- Stakeholder Engagement – identification, engagement, and relationship building with community leaders, organizations, parents, students and other relevant entities throughout the grant period.

EdEquity team members fostered partnerships with Black superintendents and administrators to develop agendas and legislative priorities supporting children of color statewide.

## Highlighted Initiatives and Campaigns

We successfully executed the Brown v. Board mini-campaign and significantly expanded our digital footprint, reaching hundreds through targeted social platforms. Concurrently, we produced a critical education legislative update featuring Chauncey Spears and Erica Jones. The “Why Your Vote Matters” presentation was strategically refined, transforming it into a high-impact community engagement tool emphasizing the undeniable power of civic action. This momentum was sustained by the successful delivery of multiple grant proposals and reports, which directly secured ongoing advocacy and boosted team capacity.

To further fortify our statewide framework, a key team lead attended the IEL Community Schools and Family Engagement Conference, immediately incorporating best practices into our core initiatives. Furthermore, the Hollis Watkins Muhammed Leadership Institute (HWMLI) Selection Committee strategically appointed an intern, maximizing our capacity to drive summer projects. These coordinated actions delivered tangible, measurable progress across our campaigns, legislative efforts, and funding goals, establishing an accelerated and robust foundation for future initiatives.

In a landmark effort, the Public Safety team (formerly Criminal Justice), in partnership with Communications, published the impactful report, “Education Equity: Ensuring Every Student’s Success in Mississippi.” This comprehensive analysis drills down into the critical connections between school funding, student performance, graduation rates, and overall school quality, ultimately proposing essential reforms to guarantee a quality education for every Mississippi child.

Our strategic work with the Ed Funding Coalition was highly focused, involving detailed surveys of the core planning team and rigorous review and editing of the REFC proposal. Simultaneously, the team dramatically expanded our community footprint, scheduling vital workshops and trainings across key communities throughout August and September.

Crucially, these substantive efforts were bolstered by securing two significant new grants by tapping into previously untapped funding sources, setting the stage for even greater future impact.

## **Solution-Driven Planning and Community Engagement**

One Voice is fueling solution-driven change through key strategic initiatives. We advanced the People's Plan for Jackson Public Schools (JPS) by participating in the Spatial Futures Fellowship Institute. This critical work focuses on addressing policy-driven inequalities within the school system, laying the groundwork for equitable reforms.

Team member Sherry Wright has taken a leadership role by joining the JPS Facilities Repurposing Advisory Committee. Working alongside experts in urban development, finance, and related fields, the committee is guiding the strategic redevelopment of surplus school sites. This committee is tasked with identifying viable repurposing opportunities, assessing feasibility, directing the planning process, and executing effective public communication and engagement.

Our team prioritized deep community engagement as the foundation of this work. We conducted more than 15 in-depth interviews and successfully identified and contacted over 30 qualified Jackson residents for the initial interview phase. Using this vital input, we established clear, prioritized education initiatives, categorized as high, medium, and low priority, to focus and accelerate our efforts for the remainder of the year.

## Education

### **Broadening Our Reach and Celebrating Leadership**

The foundational work in education equity and community mobilization was amplified through key external efforts. Our Education Equity, Communications, and Economic Justice teams collaborated to release critical analytical and legislative reports, which were met with strong engagement. Further solidifying our influence, team members presented at the 2024 Equity for All Conference and actively participated in regional alliances to observe and shape evolving community school models.

### **Celebrating Frank Figgers' National Impact**

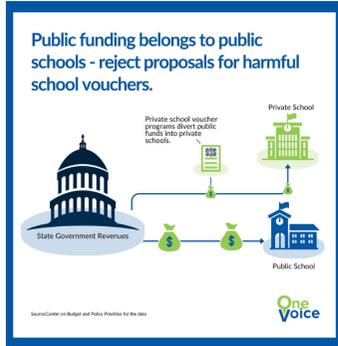
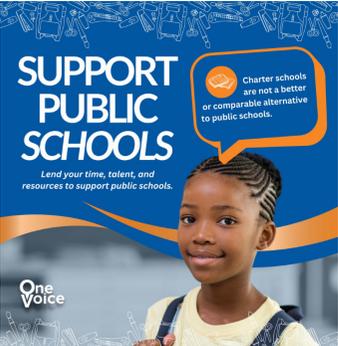
This commitment to impactful advocacy is reflected at the highest levels of national policy. We are proud to congratulate One Voice's esteemed Frank Figgers on his appointment as a Board Member of the National Center for Youth Law (NCYL).

For over 50 years, the NCYL has been a driving force for youth justice across the U.S., leveraging law, policy, research, and deep community partnerships to ensure every child, regardless of their background, has the power and freedom to thrive. Mr. Figgers has agreed to join NCYL's 13-member governing board, where his wealth of knowledge, insight, and extensive background in advocacy will be instrumental in guiding the national organization's strategic work. His appointment will directly help NCYL bolster its impact and further advance justice for youth nationwide.

### **Looking Forward**

Building upon the significant milestones achieved in 2024, from securing national partnerships and driving policy research to deepening grassroots advocacy and celebrating key leadership appointments, One Voice is uniquely positioned for the future. The Education team will not just continue its work, but will aggressively accelerate coalition efforts, lead a powerful surge in statewide advocacy, and rigorously expand our research and community engagement. We are committed to translating this momentum into meaningful, systemic, and lasting improvements in educational equity, ensuring a brighter, more equitable future for every child across Mississippi.

# A Peek at Our Campaigns in 2024



# One Voice Leadership and Staff



**Nsombi Lambright Haynes**  
*Executive Director*



**Shirley Mock**  
*Chief Operating Officer*



**Ashley Wilson**  
*Program Director*



**Sherry Wright**  
*Program Director*



**Kyra Roby**  
*Senior Policy Analyst*



**Christin Calloway**  
*Policy Analyst*



**Catherine Robinson**  
*Program Director*



**Shaughny Rickmon**  
*Advocacy Coordinator*



**Monica McInnis**  
*Program Manager*



**Nicholas McDaniels**  
*Advocacy Coordinator*



**José Rodriguez**  
*Advocacy Coordinator*



**Frank Figgers**  
*Program Manager*



**Ayana Kinnel**  
*Communications Director*



**Crystal McDowell**  
*Communications Manager*



**Deanté Morgan**  
*IT Specialist*



ONE VILLAGE  
ONE VISION  
ONE VOICE

# Annual Impact Report 2024

[www.onevoicems.org](http://www.onevoicems.org)