OCCORD Strategic Plan
2022-2027

Developed by Deborah Phares Consulting and Coaching
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Introduction

In its 17 year history, OCCORD’s work has been critical to key progressive victories in Anaheim and Santa Ana, leading to dynamic shifts in power. Over the past few years, OCCORD has weathered a season of disruption and change. Many Orange County partners and funders who have been introduced to OCCORD in the last five years have a narrow view of its role that represents just a fraction of OCCORD’s legacy and potential. After this period of disruption, OCCORD has regained its footing and is poised to rebuild trust and renew the legacy of grassroots leadership development and cutting edge policy research and organizing achievements.

OCCORD is now under new leadership, with several new staff, and continued growth on the horizon. OCCORD is embracing the opportunity to fill current gaps in areas where they have a strong past record: neighborhood leadership development, regionally-based policy research, and broad-based coalition building. The organization's role must be clearly defined in the Orange County movement eco-system for both staff and partners. The emerging role builds upon OCCORD’s old legacy while incorporating new strategies relevant to a post-pandemic world and increasingly digital reality. This plan represents OCCORD gradually rebuilding its capacity while continuing to reinvent and embrace new strategies.

This planning process began with an articulation of the unique values that guide OCCORD’s work and internal culture and policies. The values then became a touchstone for reflection for each of the other parts of the plan. A holistic Theory of Change ties together the broad list of strategies and platforms that OCCORD uses to achieve its vision. With so many pressing issues impacting neighborhoods, it is important that OCCORD is clear about expectations and what opportunities it will pursue. OCCORD can rely on the policy expertise of partners for the broad issues that impact neighborhoods and schools (housing, education reform, good jobs, safety) while leaning into its role as an organizational leader in creating research and policy advocacy that leads to an inclusive and responsive democracy. Inclusive and responsive government will lead to tangible gains and improved equity and quality of life for our communities. In order to provide clarity and a shared understanding among staff, leaders, and partners, this strategic plan includes three frameworks: policy, leadership development, and growth. These frameworks are intended to provide high level guidance on OCCORD’s role and expectations moving forward. The goals and strategies then flow out of the groundwork established by a clear set of values, the Theory of Change, and frameworks.
OCCORD Guiding Values

OCCORD is guided internally and externally by these values.

- Community Independence
- Inclusive Power
- Integrity
- Transformational Strategy
- Radical Awakening
OCCORD envisions an awakened and organized community with responsive local government, building systems and policies that lead to a community-centered economy, neighborhoods, and schools.

Government working for communities and aligning with the needs and values of residents above the interests of corporations.

- An economy where workers/employees are treated with respect, dignity, and equity. They have access to training, resources and opportunities to grow.
- Housing and neighborhoods that are equitably resourced and provide an environment where people can thrive.
- Community-driven education that is just and accessible for all.
Our Mission is to bring workers, families and community partners together to organize and advocate for good jobs, community-driven education, strong and equitably resourced neighborhoods with an inclusive democracy in Orange County.

Orange County Communities Organized for Responsible Development (OCCORD) combines community organizing, civic participation, strategic research, communications strategy, and advocacy to engage residents, workers, and stakeholders in local government decisions that impact economic opportunity, community health, and overall quality of life.

OCCORD promotes inclusive public decision-making in a region where a profound civic disconnection exists between our region’s governing class and the increasingly diverse constituent base it seeks to represent. We concentrate our efforts in communities such as Anaheim and Santa Ana where working families and immigrant communities have not fully participated in government decision-making processes and long-standing community needs have gone unaddressed.
Mission Drafts

1. Our mission is to bring together residents, families, and partners from historically marginalized communities to organize and advocate for an inclusive economy, community-driven education, equitably resourced neighborhoods, and responsive democracy in Orange County.

2. Our mission is to cultivate civic leadership in historically marginalized communities to advocate and organize for responsive government that leads to an inclusive economy, community-driven education, and strong, equitably-resourced neighborhoods.

3. Our mission is to redistribute power and advocate for responsive government so that historically marginalized communities gain improved quality of life through access to good jobs, community-driven education, and equitably-resourced neighborhoods.
OCCORD Neighborhood Organizing Committee

Strategic partner and campaign stakeholder development

Citizenship: Increasing the number of active citizens in impacted neighborhoods.

Voter Engagement: Increasing engagement of disenfranchised voters of color in impacted neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Unions: Development of independent and awakened neighborhoods with capacity to identify and advocate for unique vision and needs.

Local policy change leading to responsive government accountable to the community.

Community organizing for an awakened and organized independent leadership and communities, building and redistributing power for long-term social and economic justice.
OCCORD’s work begins with strengthening the foundation of a strong democracy through organizing communities to develop an awakened and empowered populace with capacity to organize and redistribute power for long-term justice. OCCORD utilizes three of it’s programs to build the awakened community.

**Citizenship:** to increase the number of citizens in impacted neighborhoods and funnel new citizens into active participation in their democracy as voters and leaders. **Neighborhood Unions:** Building or partnering with existing neighborhood groups to develop independent leadership with the capacity to identify their neighborhood’s unique vision and interests and then to navigate local democratic structures to advocate for that vision. **Voter Engagement:** to increase the voting power of disenfranchised voters of color in impacted neighborhoods.

Community organizing for an awakened and organized independent leadership and communities, building and redistributing power for long-term social and economic justice.
In response to the interests and vision emerging from Neighborhood Unions, OCCORD brings together the Neighborhood Organizing Committee. The NOC is a city-wide committee with representatives from active neighborhood unions where leaders set priorities and strategize for broader community change. OCCORD will also provide training for both OCCORD leaders and strategic partners to develop a shared analysis of how local democracies function, the impact of current policies, and drivers of injustice. Based on the identified common interests and analysis, OCCORD will establish Broad Based Community Collaboratives for policy change with the dual impact of strengthening democracy while also delivering on tangible improvements in the lives of low-income residents.

Strategic partners include organizations and individuals who are aligned with OCCORD’s values, vision, and analysis of historic drivers of inequity, and who share a commitment to transformational strategy. Campaign stakeholders are short-term partners who find alignment around the outcomes of proposed policy change.
There are three community organizing strategies that flow throughout all of the programs and activities that OCCORD pursues. **The Civic leadership pipeline:** OCCORD works to support the placement of neighborhood leaders and strategic partners in positions of influence where they can represent the interests and vision of their community. **Communications Strategy:** OCCORD provides support for neighborhood leaders, trainings, policy research, and campaigns to harness the power of communications to organize and build support. **Local policy research and analysis:** OCCORD supports local Neighborhood Union leaders to understand how their city works and what levers to pull to increase investment in their disenfranchised neighborhoods as well as cutting edge research and policy analysis to support ground-breaking policy change at the regional level.
Theory of Change:

Local policy change leading to responsive government accountable to the community.

Community Organizing for Broad Based community collaboratives for policy change.

Strategic partner and campaign stakeholder development.

Training and analysis on local democracies, current policy, and drivers of injustice.

OCCORD Neighborhood Organizing Committee.

Citizenship: Increasing the number of active citizens in impacted neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Unions: Development of independent and awakened neighborhoods with capacity to identify and advocate for unique vision and needs.

Voter Engagement: Increasing engagement of disenfranchised voters of color in impacted neighborhoods.

Civic Leadership Pipeline.

Communications Strategy.

Local Policy Research and Analysis.

Thriving Jobs, Schools, Neighborhoods.

Community organizing for an awakened and organized independent leadership and communities, building and redistributing power for long-term social and economic justice.
Policy Framework

OCCORD will lead policy campaigns that:

- Are grounded in an analysis of issues identified by community members
- Address root causes of injustice and inequity
- Land on the intersection of good governance and community needs that results in:
  - Tangible community benefits
  - Redistributed power
  - Expanded community autonomy
  - Inclusive decision making & resident participation

OCCORD will support policy campaigns that:

- Are grounded in issues and vision identified by community members
- Intersect with OCCORD policy goals/vision
- Build the collective power and autonomy of low-income communities of color in Orange County

Roles to determine which campaigns OCCORD will lead on:

- OCCORD leaders (as defined in the OCCORD Leader Framework on slide 14) will identify and prioritize community concerns and participate in root cause analysis of those issues, consult on policy campaigns, and approve neighborhood union participation in campaigns
- OCCORD partners will consult on policy campaigns
- OCCORD staff will initiate and research policy opportunities and make a decision after engaging with OCCORD leaders and partners.
OCCORD Leadership Framework

Vision: To develop autonomous organized neighborhoods with a local vision whose leadership can serve as co-conspirators to identify common interests and pursue policies that redistribute power and lead to better governance and tangible improvements in the lives of community members.

- **Definition of OCCORD Leaders**
  - Leaders who have proven skills in neighborhood unions, citizenship, or voter engagement
  - Committed to the vision and values of OCCORD
  - Have completed OCCORD leadership trainings and embraced OCCORD’s values and root cause analysis
  - Have a clear understanding of root causes of community concerns
  - Represent OCCORD in a way that is consistent with OCCORD vision & values
  - Actively listen to their own communities and neighborhoods and bring forth new leaders

- **Commitment from OCCORD to Leaders. OCCORD will:**
  - Engage as co-conspirators in identification and implementation of policy campaigns
  - Support neighborhood campaigns with technical assistance and policy analysis
  - Create a space for OCCORD leaders to participate in strategic decisions for OCCORD (Neighborhood Organizing Committee)
  - Provide information about local issues and policies that will impact them
  - Communicate regularly
  - Provide cutting edge & innovative leadership trainings
  - Recognize the diversity of contributions made by different community members
OCCORD Framework for Growth

OCCORD seeks to develop community infrastructure in order to leverage power in a majority of districts in the cities it serves (currently Anaheim and Santa Ana) through: neighborhood unions, engaged voters, strategic partnerships, and potential allies (temporary, issue-based).

- **Anaheim** has a greater need for investment in development of neighborhood unions.
  a. Prioritize development of neighborhood unions.
  b. Determine priority districts important for moving city-wide policy.
- **Santa Ana** has more existing neighborhood leadership infrastructure.
  a. Prioritize strategic partnerships through development of policy analysis.
- **Growth into new cities:**
  a. Should be contingent upon reaching the above goal for Anaheim and Santa Ana first.
  b. Should use the same framework
    - Identify cities where there is potential to have influence in a majority of districts/ or with a majority of council members through development of neighborhood unions, engaged voter lists, strategic partnerships.
    - Identify cities where there is potential to grow influence in a majority of supervisorial districts.
Citizenship Goals

- Increase the number of new citizens in target neighborhoods/districts.
- Demystify and increase access to citizenship for eligible residents across Orange County.
- Integrate citizenship work with OCCORD's power-building and community organizing efforts.
Neighborhood Unions

- Support the establishment of autonomous neighborhood unions in strategic locations to increase OCCORD's influence within Anaheim.
- Strengthen local neighborhood leadership.
- Establish a reciprocal, interdependent relationship between OCCORD and Neighborhood Unions.
Voter Engagement

- Transform the local electorate through the engagement of recently naturalized citizens and disenfranchised people of color.

- Increase voter turnout in strategic neighborhoods/districts in Santa Ana & Anaheim.
Coalition Building

- Lead a broad based campaign for housing justice in Anaheim.

- Reestablish OCCORD's unique role in Orange County's eco-system as a leader in community-driven policy research.

- Establish strategic capacity in a majority of the districts in Santa Ana and Anaheim through establishing neighborhood unions, voter lists, or strategic partners.

- Lay the groundwork to achieve strategic capacity in a majority of supervisorial districts in Orange County
Staff Culture

- Develop a collaborative and transparent staff culture where all staff are committed to each other’s success, respect personal boundaries, and understand each other’s leadership/work styles, and diverse backgrounds.

- Create a staff culture where proven strategies are respected and staff have freedom and flexibility to adapt strategies to different and changing populations and are accountable for outcomes.

- Develop a staff culture where leadership is supportive and moving workers on a trajectory from heavy involvement towards greater freedom and autonomy.
## Strategic Plan Cost

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Link to Detailed Spreadsheet

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