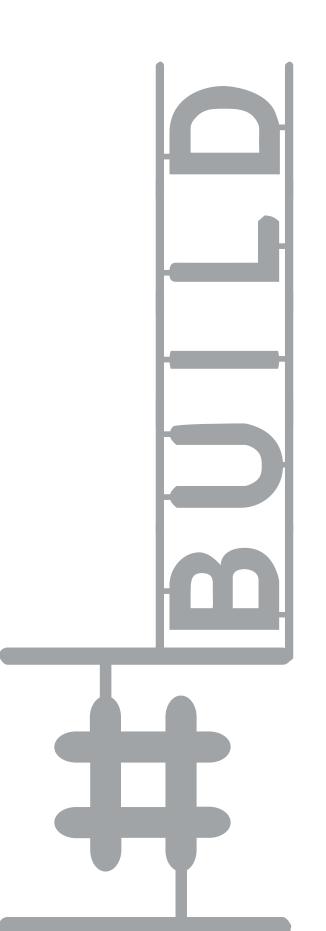
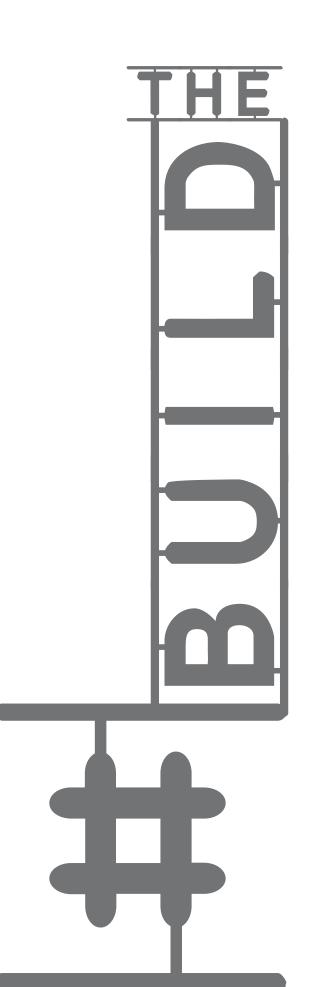
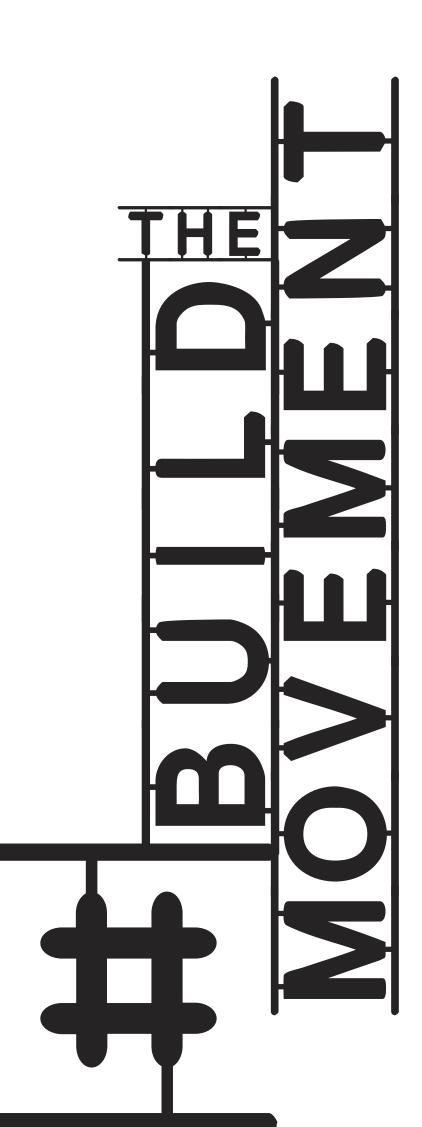


FISCAL YEAR 2019 ANNUAL REPORT





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VISION: A SOCIALLY **EQUITABLE** AND JUST WORLD.

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2019: **#BUILD**THE MOVEMENT

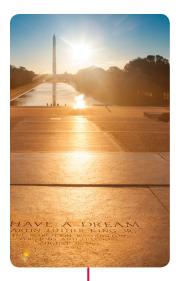
EBS (Educational Broadband Service)

In 1963 the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) reserved a spectrum band (now called EBS) exclusively to support educational institutions and nonprofit entities whose missions are educational. Spectrum, a finite natural resource, is extremely valuable – it is what fuels our wireless services and our increasingly connected lives – and it has become a crucial part of education. Voqal is a national collaboration of EBS (Educational Broadband Service) licensees that work to advance social equity by creating an educated and engaged public.

As a collective of EBS licensees, Voqal is committed to using the airwaves to benefit the public. With resources afforded by spectrum use agreements, we make grants and impact investments, expand internet access and digital equity, offer fellowships and protect the public airwaves.

Voqal's efforts focus on the education and enrichment of all, not just those who are well-off socially, economically and politically. While some of our programs serve traditional educational entities like K-12 schools, we embrace a broader view of education and aims to ensure equal access to knowledge to foster a stronger, healthier democracy.

MISSION: ADVANCING SOCIAL EQUITY BY BUILDING AN EDUCATED, EMPOWERED AND ENGAGED PUBLIC.



BUILDING THE MOVEMENT







Even though we live in a prosperous country, conservative forces have succeeded in denying certain people a quality education, a decent job for decent pay, safe and affordable housing, an equitable health and food system, a clean and sustainable environment, and legal, civil and human rights. Gaps in wealth, health, privilege and power, already enormous, are rapidly growing wider.

It is clear that we are in a situation that demands a movement. Previous social movements, including the American Revolution, the Abolitionist Movement, the Women's Rights Movement, the Labor Movement, the Civil Rights Movement and the Environmental Movement, demonstrate how, through collective and strategic action, we can win.

When we learned about these movements as a child, most of us were told a few big spontaneous marches happened and then the laws changed. In reality, structural changes to laws, policies and culture were the result of decades of extensive community organizing, massive public education, deliberate and sustained agitation, and inspired and broad multi-racial coalitions.

Integrating the buses in Montgomery was a big victory but was only the first step towards the greater goal of ending Jim Crow. There was another decade of sit-ins, freedom rides, court battles, mass marches, mass arrests, beatings, bombings, assassinations, federal troop intervention and other actions. Movements have long cycles and must be continuously protected and supported, even after the win.

In this annual report, you will read about groups, individuals and projects that are building the next movement. They have a great vision of democracy, equity, freedom, justice, peace, liberty and dignity for all. They have the strength, determination and resilience to challenge existing power structures. They are not after modest reforms but rather, seek to transform the rules of society. They understand the importance of building a base of supporters and an infrastructure before and while engaging in mass action. They have many faces, leaders and actions.

We know the arc of history will only bend towards justice when people, through collective action, pull it towards justice. It doesn't happen on its own. For Voqal, it is a privilege to partner with the people and organizations building the movement to bend history towards justice.

- Brenda Williams-Sears Director of Grantmaking, Voqal



In such a challenging political and social environment, it is tempting to focus solely on immediate impact. However, at Voqal we take a longer view. We believe that advancing true social change takes time. Over the past year, Voqal has been fortunate to support a number of organizations that share this view and are building the long-term movements needed to create a more socially equitable world.

ADVANCING RACIAL EQUITY IN RURAL MINNESOTA

According to Voqal grantee, Voices for Racial Justice, the past year continued what has been a tumultuous few years for many Americans. The political landscape has devolved into a space that makes so many people, especially the most marginalized, feel unwelcome, unsafe and uneasy about their future in our country and communities.

MAKING GRANTS: BUILDING THE CAPACITY OF OUR COMMUNITIES



In light of this reality, Voices for Racial Justice enacted an organizing model focused on ensuring the communities directly impacted by structural and institutional racism have a voice and hold leadership roles in the work to build racial justice.

Over the past year, Voices for Racial Justice enacted this model in places like Worthington, Minnesota where it engaged a team of residents in a year-long Racial Equity Organizing cohort to tackle everything from increasing educational equity to protecting the rights of immigrant communities.

As cohort member, Ivan Parga, shared, "With this cohort, we're connecting community to community. I feel like I can do almost anything because I have some of the strongest, best organizers making real impacts in our communities."

Cohort member, Leticia Rodriguez added, "This group has taught me not to ever give up on your dream or what you want to in life."

By centering leadership in the people living in these communities, Voices for Racial Justice is empowering local communities of color to lead movements that will create lasting positive social change.

BUILDING A MOVEMENT TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY IN CHICAGO

Voqal grantee, ONE Northside, works to retain the economic and ethnic diversity of its community and to stabilize the most vulnerable in the community. It believes in building strong and permanent alliances, and working with people where they are, whether that be in a tent living under a viaduct or in their high school cafeteria.

Over the past year, it brought people into the organization and the movement through local campaigns on issues that immediately affect them, using organizing and popular education curriculum to engage them more deeply in larger campaigns. And this work paid off in a big way.

It not only culminated in the election of officials at the city and state level supportive of ONE Northside's community, but also it led to one of the biggest victories for its members in years, the addition of the Fair Tax to the 2020 ballot. If it passes, this tax will provide increased revenue for the government services so many of One Northside's members rely on.

"This is a major victory for ONE Northside, our partners in Fair Economy Illinois and organizations across the state that have been fighting this fight for years. We've spent the last decade elevating the demand for the rich and big corporations to pay their fair share of taxes in Illinois," said ONE Northside economic justice organizer, Anna Gaebler.

"Our work changed the conversation in Springfield and among the public."

CREATING POLITICAL POWER FOR THE API COMMUNITY IN OREGON

The Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO) is a statewide, grassroots organization, uniting Asians and Pacific Islanders to achieve social justice. It uses its collective strengths to advance equity through empowering, organizing and advocating with Oregon's Asian Pacific Islander communities.

As it is across the nation, the stakes for communities of color in Oregon are high. Asian Pacific Islander (API) is Oregon's fastest growing demographic and many of these communities are seeing increasing disparities across various socioeconomic indicators. As a result, it became clear to APANO that API communities needed to exert their political will to begin to address some these disparities.

And what better way to build this political power, than at the local level. In the lead up to the Portland metro area's May 2019 elections, APANO endorsed several candidates running for office including three members of the API community who had never held elected office: Sumitra Chhetri (Centennial School Board Positon 3), See Eun Kim (Hillsboro School Board Position 4) and Tya Ping (Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District Position 4). Thanks to a concerted effort to engage members of the AAPI community in grassroots voter outreach, all three candidates won their races!

"Every door knocked on brought us closer and closer to our goals of building Asian and Pacific Islander, and collective people of color, power in Oregon," said Robin Ye, APANO political director.

While truly addressing the economic disparities faced by many in the API community will take time, the work by APANO and its partners in Oregon is building the movement needed to accomplish this goal.

There are many social justice challenges facing the United States in this uncertain time. Fortunately, grantees like those above give us hope that the more socially equitable world envisioned by many, including Voqal, is within our reach.





OFFERING FELLOWSHIPS: SUPPORTING CATALYST FOR CHANGE

At Voqal we believe that the one of the best ways to build movements for progressive change is by supporting the changemakers who are creating innovative tools and platforms that help these movements thrive. One way we do this is through the Voqal Fellowship, a talent and technology accelerator for change-makers and thought leaders who want to launch their next "big idea" focused on increasing equity. 2018 was a critical year for the progressive movement. Thankfully, the 2018 Voqal Fellows rose to the challenge.



EMPOWERING IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES

Alicia Nieves is a 2016 graduate of New York University School of Law, where she was a Latina/o Human Rights Scholar and staff editor for the NYU Journal of Legislation and Public Policy. Prior to her Voqal Fellowship, Nieves was a legal fellow with Justfix.nyc, a housing tech nonprofit in New York City where she helped low-income tenants use the Justfix web application to build affirmative legal cases against their neglectful and abusive landlords.

Nieves Fellowship project, Streetwide leverages technology and data for immigrant communities. Streetwide's awarding-winning software allows allies and impacted communities to work together to deliver emotional and legal support to individuals and their loved ones impacted by immigration arrest, detention and deportation. Nieves works closely with immigrant communities across the country to understand how technology and data can be used to create and sustain community-led emergency response infrastructure for the growing number of individuals and families affected by this crisis.

TRAINING THE NEXT GENERATION OF ACTIVISTS

A sought-after global speaker on the future of activism, Micah White has delivered numerous lectures at prestigious universities — including Princeton, Swarthmore, Middlebury and the University of Chicago — along with cultural festivals and private events around the world.

White's project, Activist Graduate School is an online educational institution designed specifically for the needs of experienced activists who want to take their movement work to the next level. Its emphasis is on university-caliber seminars on history, strategy and the theory of social change through collective action.

The difficulties faced by recent social movements in achieving immediate change, despite their tremendous speed and overwhelming size, is a sign that activism as a discipline must embark on a period of paradigmatic reevaluation. It recognizes that what is needed now more than ever is an educational institution that is designed specifically with the needs of experienced activists in mind: an environment where activists can collaboratively study in search of the next theory of change that will spark a successful transformative social movement.

"My hope for Activist Graduate School is, quite simply, that we create better activists," said White.

STRENGTHENING PROGRESSIVE YOUTH ACTIVISM

Nick Guthman is a progressive political organizer based in Washington, D.C. He has worked on local and national electoral races, as well as issue advocacy campaigns surrounding racial justice, health care and tax fairness. He focuses his energy on rapid response and social media organizing, with a special emphasis on youth outreach and engagement.

Guthman's project, Blue Future, strengthens progressive youth activism through a clearinghouse website, social media campaign and the infrastructure for a national coalition to coordinate, broaden and optimize the work of youth civic engagement organizations. There is a ton of youth energy as a result of our current political climate. Blue Future facilitates coordination and disseminates information to turn that energy into action.

"To build something from the ground up is a privilege," said Guthman.

Voqal believes taking risks and experimenting with new ideas is necessary to advance social change. Innovative changemakers like the Voqal Fellows, provide social and progressive movements the catalyst needed to help galvanize people around the issues and ideas needed to create a more socially equitable world for all.



PROTECTING THE PUBLIC AIRWAVES:





Public airwaves – or spectrum – are a critical resource that contribute to the public good. Spectrum provides public radio and television, weather and entertainment satellite services, and increasingly, broadband service to many Americans.

As advocates for digital equity, Voqal continued its work this year to encourage policies that help extend affordable connectivity to all Americans and to protect public airwaves for the public good. Unfortunately, many of the important programs that support affordable access, competition and education are under attack by the current Federal Communications Commission (FCC) majority.

In May 2018, the FCC initiated a rulemaking to radically change the very nature of Educational Broadband Service (EBS). As a collaboration of EBS licensees, Voqal was concerned that this rulemaking had the potential to damage this vital public resource. Rather than sit back and let EBS become yet another piece of privatized spectrum, we decided to engage in a hard fought advocacy battle to preserve EBS frequencies for the benefit of education and the public.

As director of telecommunications strategy Mark Colwell put it, "America needs more tools to ensure connectivity for all. Simply auctioning every spectrum band has not and will not close the digital divide."

Voqal worked tirelessly to help inform Congress and the public of the dangers posed by eliminating education from EBS. Voqal developed SaveEBS.org, a website of EBS education and advocacy resources meant to give everyday citizens the tools needed to advocate for keeping EBS educational. In addition, we sponsored multiple educational briefings for congressional staff aimed at letting them know about the importance of this issue. Voqal, along with its partners in the EBS community, met with dozens of members of Congress in order to ensure they were aware of how important this public resource is to everyday citizens

And all of these efforts had results.

Fourteen members of Congress wrote to the FCC to express their support for saving this valuable resource. In addition, the U.S. Department of Education sent a letter to the FCC asking them to keep EBS educational. Lastly, a movement of over 850 groups and individuals signed an EBS support letter letting the FCC know that auctioning off EBS would be a grave mistake.

Unfortunately, as often happens in the realm of public policy, the FCC chose to ignore the will of the people in favor of corporate interests. While we may have lost the battle, Voqal is dedicated to protecting public goods like EBS and will continue to work at encouraging government bodies like the FCC to recognize that our public airwaves should be preserved for the people, not corporations.



INCREASING INTERNET ACCESS: CONNECTING HOMELESS VETERANS



Texas is a big state. It has a lot of blue sky, a lot of long roads and a lot of big storms. Some storms involve thunder and lightning or rain or hail; others involve turbulence of a more personal nature.

Mike became homeless in late 2018, and since then, he's been living in his truck. He's had a stroke and has problems with his short-term memory. He's also a 100 percent disabled veteran who gets cluster headaches and receives both Social Security Disability (SSD) and Veterans Administration (VA) benefits. As military service members and their families will tell you, demonstrating eligibility for benefits is no simple matter. It involves a Texas-sized pile of paperwork, research, legal advice and advocacy and a whole lot of waiting. When Mike first struggled to show eligibility for benefits in the 1990s, he found himself driving for hours and sleeping in his truck in the parking lot of Tarlton Law Library at the University of Texas. When the library opened in the morning, he'd go in and pore over the law books and resources there, all of which were on paper. The only way to see them was to be there in person, which wasn't a sustainable practice for someone who lived a hundred-plus miles away.

Since then, a lot has changed. Most law libraries have digitized all their content. Veterans apply for VA and other benefits online. And social media has changed the world in many ways, including in how like-minded individuals connect.

Another important change for Mike has been the purchase of a new Lenovo tablet and a Franklin mobile hotspot, which Mobile Citizen makes available through resellers to people like Mike. Powered by Educational Broadband Service (EBS) spectrum, Mobile Citizen has allowed Mike to pay a very manageable fraction of his previous internet/cable bill, and he gets mobile access to the internet that works almost anywhere he goes — all from a box the size of a deck of cards.

Research, access to email and legal help are critical, and having unreliable access to the internet could cause a claimant to miss an important deadline or be unable to spend the time it takes to find the information that will make all the difference in a claim. In Mike's case, the hotspot and secure mobile access not only made overnighters at the law library a thing of the past, but also helped to make sure he didn't miss any deadlines.

There has also been another benefit that Mike didn't anticipate. Over the past 20 years, as organizations have discovered the power of social media, dozens of support groups have emerged as lifelines for veterans. "Facebook access alone changed my life," Mike notes, citing that many veterans find the community they've been looking for on social media. He described feeling "isolated and alone," like a lot of service members, with symptoms and problems that most civilians couldn't understand.

"Being able to meet people with my condition made a big difference for me."

Mike isn't sure when he's going to be able to find stable housing, but in the meantime, he can take care of business, keep in touch with family, and share his experiences with others who understand. He even drove to another state to meet up with a group of disabled veterans from an online support community. "Having access to all these resources can save lives," he said. He's really happy with his hotspot device. He says it "works just about as well" as the internet he used to have in his home, which cost many times more, and unlike a home modem and router, he can take his hotspot with him wherever he goes. It usually even works in those infamous Texas storms.



INVESTING FOR EDUCATIONAL IMPACT: A LONG-TERM VISION FOR EDUCATION

From a little office in what passes as a tall building in his hometown of Greenville, South Carolina, Joe Waters and his team are leading conversations and challenging leaders to help more children and families flourish locally, nationally and globally.

Waters, together with his co-founders Brandon Hinman and Grady Powell, founded the nonprofit ideas lab Capita in 2018 to explore how the great cultural and social transformations of our day are affecting young children, and to foster new ideas to ensure a future where children and their families flourish.

Work is changing rapidly, trust in institutions is weakening, social connections are becoming increasingly technologically mediated and the country's demographics are shifting. These changes alone offer ample evidence that the future will be unlike the past. At the same time, few social-sector organizations are grappling with the implications of those changes or preparing for their communities' future realities and emerging needs.



"We live in an age of acceleration, liquidity and fragmentation. Our interest is not simply how children and families can flourish today, but figuring out ways to help the children who won't be born for another decade and beyond flourish," Waters says.

Capita's framework for human flourishing creates a powerful new influence to shape cultures and systems in which all children and their families thrive in the midst of great social transformations, economic insecurity, political uncertainty and new technology. In Capita's view, a life of flourishing allows individuals and communities to imagine and become what they wish to be with passion, purpose and excellence. It can incorporate education, health, artistic and cultural assets, mental and spiritual well-being and the ability to contribute meaningfully as a citizen and member of society.

Capita is helping the philanthropic and public sectors mobilize for change that will benefit children and families. Systems meant to serve children and families were not built to respond to today's dawning challenges and opportunities. Capita asks leaders, planners, educators and potential investors not only to consider incremental policy changes — such as adding preschool classes in a community or state — but also across a broader picture. What are the implications of rapid change for the future of children and young families in the U.S., especially the most vulnerable ones? How can access to quality early childhood education be part of more ambitious, cross-sector goals such as better physical and emotional health for families, job opportunities for parents, the availability of childcare and the contributions of art and architecture?

These are questions that everyone who works in the political, education, social and philanthropic communities should be asking to prepare for a future that will look very different from today. It's why Voqal has invested in the **Futures for Young Children and their Families** forecast project. This pioneering work is a partnership of Capita and the nonprofit organization KnowledgeWorks — entities with the experience and systems-level understanding to identify the major trends impacting young children, and the implications of these trends on children's well-being over the next decade and beyond. Taking a deliberate look at changes on the horizon — and at the opportunities and challenges they present — opens new prospects for innovation and action that are only apparent through a future-facing lens. This approach to planning empowers leaders to shape the future that young children will inherit and to resist the notion that the future is out of their control.

Voqal believes this information is essential to reducing educational opportunity gaps. We are very pleased to support this effort and are especially excited by the potential impact of this work in the future.







Voqal by the Numbers FY19 -

MAKING GRANTS

- Amount granted: \$4,639,390
- Number of grants: 99

OFFERING FELLOWSHIPS

- Amount given to Fellows: \$240K
- Number of Fellows: 8

PROTECTING PUBLIC AIRWAVES

- Number of meetings with FCC staff or members of Congress on the EBS rulemaking: *Met with more than 70 members of Congress and their staff*
- Number of members of Congress who sent letters, comments and questions from to the FCC on the EBS rulemaking: 8 Senators and 13 House members

INCREASING INTERNET ACCESS

- Estimated value of subsidized service from Mobile Citizen: \$12.1M
- Number of organizations served:
 - * Educational Entities: 97
 - * Nonprofits: 294

INVESTING FOR EDUCATIONAL IMPACT

- Amount invested: \$250K
- Number of investments: 6







Grassroots Illinois Action Jane Addams Seniors in Action SOUL in Action ONE Northside City Bureau The Hoodoisie Free Press Action Great Education Colorado Save Our Neighborhoods Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon Color PAC Action Building Power for Communities of Color Minnesota Youth Collective Color of Change



Comunidades Organizando el Poder y la Accion Latina National Hispanic Media Coalition Jolt Action MOSES Action Advance Carolina Mothering Justice Streetwide Voices for Racial Justice

MOVING TOWARDS GREATER DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION



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Building a culture of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) is a journey. Voqal's journey began in April 2019 as a request from the Voqal boards and as a result of data collected from employee surveys. From this data, it was clear that Voqal needed to align its internal and external values.

Voqal has worked toward building a socially just and equitable world by promoting diversity, equity and inclusion in the work we do. It only makes sense to apply these same values internally, toward the mission-driven employees who do the work to support the populations we serve. Over the last four months we have researched local diversity, equity and inclusion programs; became members of a local DEI group focused on talent, equity, inclusion and diversity; completed an organization wide DEI assessment; provided DEI training to staff; and developed the Voqal DEI Committee. The intention of the committee is to propose and implement solutions toward improving Voqal DEI concerns, with the goal of cultivating a culture of DEI at Voqal.

To date, the committee has rolled out a DEI curriculum calendar intended to cover a different DEI topic each quarter and an assessment to identify where Voqal currently stands with incorporating DEI into our business operations and ways in which we can further integrate DEI into our work and culture. In addition, to highlight how important DEI is to the success of our business, we have included it in the Voqal strategic plan, the employee handbook, and now, the Voqal annual report.

As we move forward in this journey, we envision an environment in which diversity, equity and inclusion are no longer ideas we must think about, but rather are a function of our daily work and the evolving Voqal culture.

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- Julie Reinders Chief Human Resources Officer, Voqal







Vinny Badolato Cassie Bair Hazel Bolsover Kim Bubon Tricia Castillo Michele Christiansen Mary Coleman Mark Colwell Gina Dircks Melissa Edmonds Kathy Engel Molly Fohn Barbara Hunter John Kennedy Mark Leslie Adam Miller Logan Monaco John Pappas Kristen Perry Lisa Reed Julie Reinders Anita Russell Becky Schott John Schwartz Teresa Stark Annie Stoneburner Mardelle Thompson Mike Walker Jered Weber Brenda Williams-Sears

Education Program Director Chief Business Development Executive, Mobile Citizen Controller, Vogal Nonprofits **Executive Assistant** Assistant Database Administrator, Mobile Citizen **Program Officer** Grants Program Manager Director of Telecommunications Strategy Marketing Communications Director, Mobile Citizen Senior Business Analyst, Mobile Citizen Office Manager Anchor Institutions Program Manager, Mobile Citizen Chief Financial Officer Sales Manager, Mobile Citizen Network Administrator Chief Executive Officer Assistant Controller, Mobile Citizen General Manager, Mobile Citizen Chief Communications Officer Corporate Controller, Mobile Citizen Chief Human Resources Officer Accountant Director of Accounting and Office Administration President Accountant, Mobile Citizen **Business Support Specialist** Shipping and Receiving Manager, Mobile Citizen Assistant Controller Digital Engagement and Community Outreach Manager Director of Grantmaking



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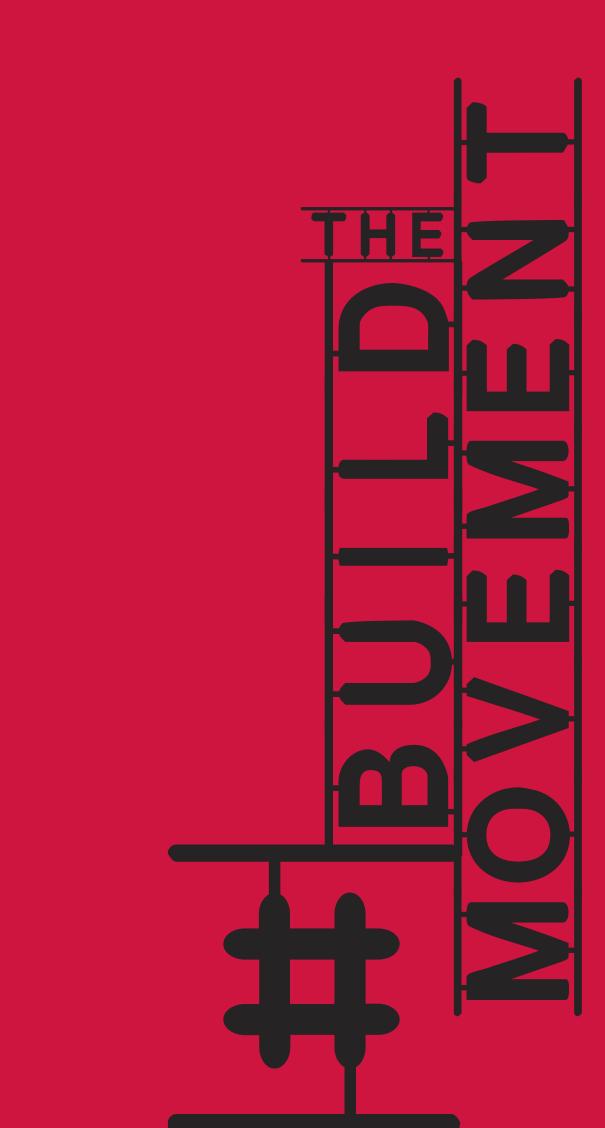


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Voqal

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TOGETHER WE ARE VOQAL: THE CALL FOR CHANGE.