What Is ColorOfChange.org?

ColorOfChange.org exists to strengthen Black America's political voice. Our goal is to empower our members—Black Americans and our allies—to make government more responsive to the concerns of Black Americans and to bring about positive political and social change for everyone.

We were heartbroken and outraged by the catastrophe that followed Hurricane Katrina. And we were devastated to realize that no African-American organization or coalition had the capacity to respond on the necessary scale.

Hurricane Katrina made it clear that our lack of a political voice has life-and-death consequences. With no one to speak for them, hundreds of thousands of people—largely Black, poor, and elderly—were left behind to die. But it wasn't just Black folks. Poor, sick, and elderly people of every color were abandoned too. We are not alone, and when we work to protect Black lives and interests, we do the same for all who have been left behind in political silence.

ColorOfChange.org is comprised of Black folks from every economic class, as well as those of every color who seek to help our voices be heard. Our members are united behind a simple, powerful pledge: we will do all we can to make sure all Americans are represented, served, and protected—regardless of race or class.

What We Do

Using the Internet, we will enable our members to speak in unison, with an amplified political voice. We will keep them informed about the most pressing issues for Black people in America and give them ways to act. We will lobby elected representatives using email, the telephone, and face-to-face meetings. We'll bring attention to the needs and concerns of Black folks by holding coordinated events in different parts of the country, running TV and print advertisements, and demanding that the news media cover our issues. We will also work with other groups—online efforts and other organizations that are doing related work—to magnify our impact.

When we come together and speak with one voice, we cannot be ignored.

How It Started

James Rucker and Van Jones came together in the wake of Katrina to use the organizing power of the Internet to give Black Americans and our allies a renewed and strengthened political voice.

James Rucker

James Rucker served as Director of Grassroots Mobilization for MoveOn.org Political Action and MoveOn.org Civic Action from the fall of 2003 through the summer of 2005, and was instrumental in developing and executing on fundraising, technology, and campaign strategies. Prior to joining MoveOn, James worked in various roles in the software industry in Silicon Valley: co-founded and leading Imana, Inc., an enterprise software company, in San Francisco, as well as providing management coaching and technology consulting for other start-up ventures. James is also passionate about school reform and issues of equity, and serves on the boards of two area schools. James grew up in Seaside, California and has a BS in Symbolic Systems from Stanford University.

Van Jones

Van Jones is the founder and executive director of the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, and was the 2008 Green Party candidate for vice president. Van has worked extensively on issues related to poverty, mass incarceration, and race relations. Van is a noted public speaker and has appeared on programs such as The Daily Show with Jon Stewart and The Rachel Maddow Show. Van has been a member of the board of directors for the Sierra Club and has been a guest on CNN, MSNBC, and numerous other news programs. Van is also the author of several books, including The Power of Hope: What the Poor Can Teach Us About Renewing America and The Liar's Ball: How the Media Mislead Us on Race.
Van Jones is the founder and executive director of the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights (EBC). Headquartered in Oakland, California, EBC is helping to lead the national fight for alternatives to the U.S. incarceration industry. Born in rural west Tennessee, Van completed his undergraduate degree in 1990 at the University of Tennessee at Martin. In 1993, he graduated from the Yale Law School. A pioneering human rights activist, Van is well-known as a steadfast opponent of police brutality and mass incarceration. He has worked with a variety of well-known organizations and initiatives in the social justice and environmental arenas. In recent years, Van has expanded his work to incorporate insights from ecology, spirituality and social entrepreneurship. He is now working to create environmentally-friendly, "green-collar" jobs for formerly-incarcerated persons. He believes the path to peaceful streets and healthy communities is through "green-collar jobs, not jails." In the meantime, Van has recently earned two important, new titles: happy husband and proud father (of a one-year-old son).