THE
FREEDOM BLOC

x

FREEDOM ROC

BLACK LED ORGANIZING COLLABORATIVE

RIGHTEOUS ORGANIZING COLLABORATIVE

IMPACT REPORT

2019 - 2024

The University of Akron
WE ARE AKRON
UNIVERSITY AVE
ONLY
uakron.edu
JUSTICE
FOR
JAYLAND
WALKER
FIRE &
ARREST

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

BUILDING POWER FOR A JUST AND EQUITABLE FUTURE 4
MESSAGE FROM REV. RAYMOND GREENE, JR. 5
OUR COMMITMENT 6
OUR IMPACT 7

WE ARE THE COURAGEOUS

CONFRONTING THE HOUSING SYSTEM 11
CONFRONTING RACISM 13
SAY THEIR NAMES 14
DEFENDING DEMOCRACY 16

ORGANIZING OUR RESOURCES

BLOC UNIVERSITY 19
EMPOWERING PRECINCT CAPTAINS 21

LEADING MEANINGFUL CHANGE

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 24
LEADERSHIP TEAM

TAKE ACTION 25

SINCE OUR FOUNDING

The Freedom BLOC/ROC has been at the forefront of building power and achieving social and racial economic justice in the state of Ohio. As we navigate economic havoc, environmental degradation and political polarization, our work has never been more pressing than it is today.

And yet, we know that when we engage in principled struggle, we bolster our collective ability to change, to heal, and to revitalize the path to a more just and equitable world.

A LETTER FROM

REV. RAYMOND GREENE JR.

FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

Since our founding in 2019, The Freedom BLOC/ROC has made history and been shaped by it. We have witnessed the world, the State of Ohio, and our communities evolve in unimaginable ways. This is why we're building today's leaders for tomorrow's Akron.

We knew early on that the impact on Black and other people of color would be disproportionate and profound. We see higher death and disease rates, higher unemployment rates, and needless barriers to government benefits. Our children find themselves undereducated and unprepared for reality.

Together, we continue to fight forward, understanding that the future of our city, state, and country cannot lead us back to the past. These times demand bold and expansive answers to the critical questions of racial and economic equity confronting our state. The collective answers that emerge will determine the conditions of our communities.

This inaugural impact report will show what we have done and will share what our future holds as we reach our five year mark. We want to share our story. It's a story of confronting racial capitalism and the oppression that exists within our communities. It's a story of how we have learned from and emulated all the great work our ancestors did. Above all, it's a story about how we have organized communities for the sake of addressing the root causes of oppression and working to create equitable futures for all.

As I reflect in this moment on our history, our courage, our power, and what it means to be Black in America, I remain hopeful. Regardless of what new challenges the future brings, I am certain that the Freedom BLOC/ROC will be a vanguard pushing for social, racial, and economic justice in every corner of our state. I invite you to continue this journey with us.

Until Freedom,
Raymond Greene Jr., *Founder and Executive Director*

Raymond Greene Jr.

We are committed to a world where Black people can thrive and enjoy equitable opportunities within their communities. We are at a place where we must collectively work together to win the ultimate prize – the government

PURPOSE DRIVEN

Our mission is to build ***Black leadership*** and ***political infrastructure*** in Black communities ***through*** civic education and engagement, leadership development and economic reinvestment.

BOLD VISIONARIES

We envisioned a society where we must collectively work together to win the ultimate prize, which is "The Government."

LIVING OUR VALUES

Our values bring our mission to life with intention:

- Unity
- Self Determination
- Collective Work and Responsibility
- Cooperative Economics
- Purpose
- Creativity
- Faith

OUR DNA

The Freedom BLOC/ROC is a Black-Led innovative statewide organization that unites directly impacted people and communities to build a transformative base of power to achieve social, racial and economic justice in Ohio.

We are an organization that builds Black progressive community and political power through healing-informed care, voter education, voter engagement and leadership development by organizing within communities around key issues and candidates.

5
YEARS OF IMPACT

64
BLACK ORGANIZATIONS AND BUSINESSES IN OUR NETWORK

350K+
PEOPLE ENGAGED

382
PEOPLE TRAINED

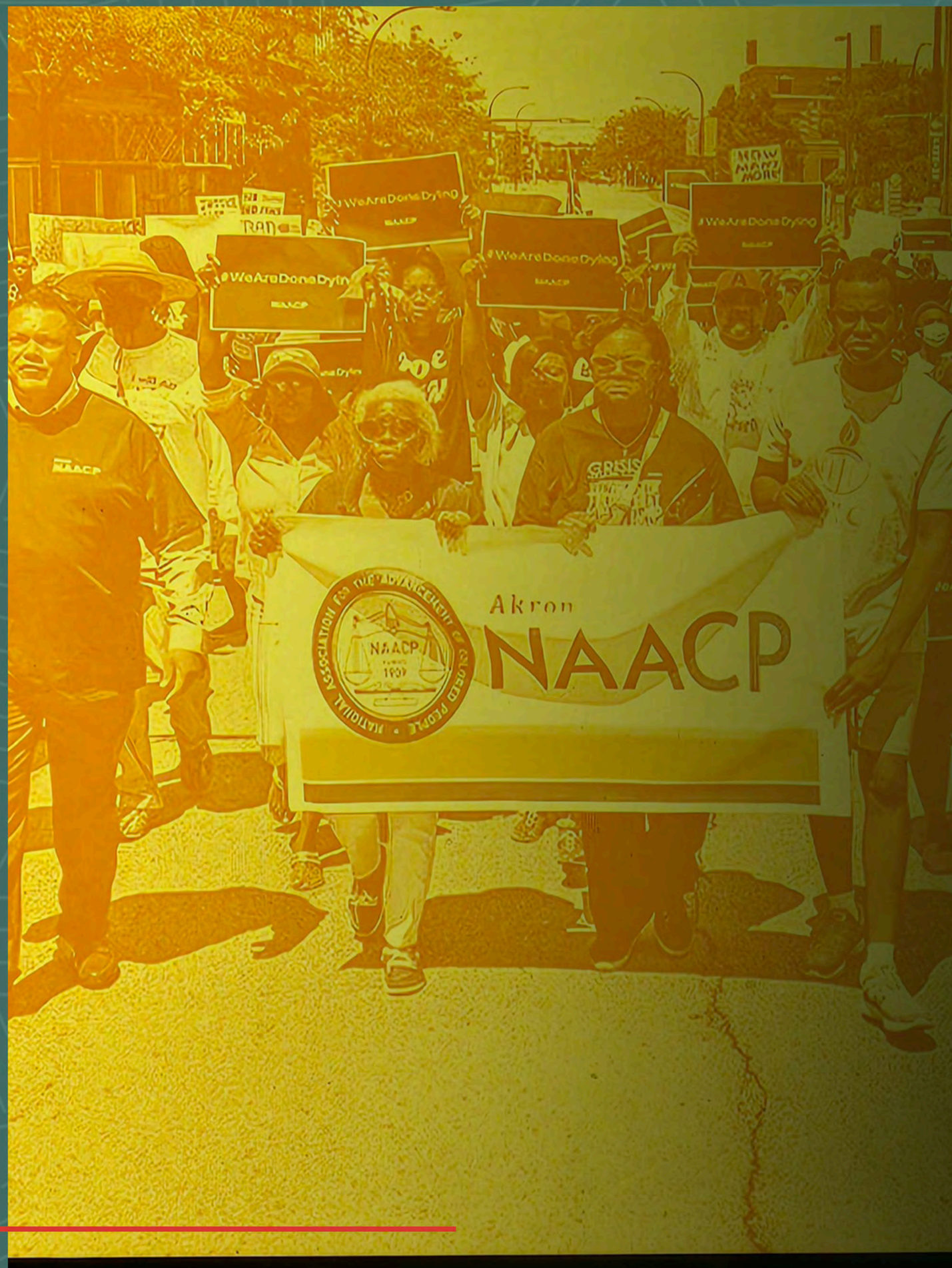
146
CONVENINGS

4
ORGANIZATIONS THAT WE ARE FISCAL AGENTS FOR

WE ARE TRUSTED GRASSROOTS PARTNERS FOR BLACK SOVEREIGNTY.

AS A STATEWIDE ORGANIZATION BUILDING LEADERSHIP IN BLACK COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT OHIO, WE HAVE A CONCENTRATION IN OHIO'S LEGACY CITIES:

AKRON ▪ WARREN ▪ CANTON



"The Freedom BLOC has been a leader in driving systemic change and meaningful dialogue. Over the past few years, they have played a pivotal role in major community initiatives, including the Jayland Walker protests, addressing police-community relations, and advancing community empowerment and education. Together, the Akron NAACP and Freedom BLOC have significantly amplified their influence, creating a stronger, united voice for positive change."

Judi Hill
President
Akron NAACP

Akron NAACP

WE ARE COURAGEOUS

Over the past 5 years, The Freedom BLOC/ROC has been at the forefront of systemic change at the national, state, and local level, pushing for the most important reforms of our time. Our work has never been more pressing than it is today.

And yet we are continually inspired and encouraged by the progress we see every day in our communities. We know that with each step, we bolster our collective ability to change, to heal, and to revitalize the path to a more just and equitable world.

Our dedicated partners and volunteers showed up alongside us. Over the past five years, your generous contributions of time, allyship and resources have contributed to fuel our mission and help us carry our work into the next chapter.

Your renewed and steadfast support makes our work possible. Thank you for being partners with us on the road to progress.

Every day we boldly embrace the opportunity to support and empower individuals and communities as drivers of change. We dare to believe people in every corner of the state can have abundance.

In this rare moment, we hope we can count on your continued commitment to The Freedom BLOC/ROC. Transformative change is possible when we take courageous action ***together.***

"In the coming days and months, ***we will continue*** to set our sights on making progress a reality for so many who are left behind. ***We will work*** in tandem with our partners, leaders, and community members to ensure that we're Building Today's Leaders for Tomorrow's Akron"

Rev. Raymond Greene Jr. *Founder and Executive Director*

CONFRONTING THE HOUSING SYSTEM

Our work builds on fighting tirelessly for a future where housing isn't a privilege but a right accessible to all, irrespective of their background or economic status. We understand the intricate connection between housing and overall well-being and strive to create a society where this understanding is reflected in every housing policy and practice.

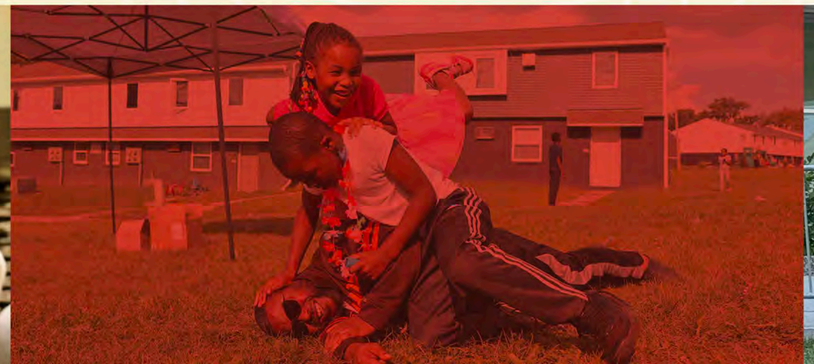
The Freedom BLOC's vision is centered on the belief that "Housing is a Human Right" and that the limited land available to us is to be collectively cared for and protected. When we say housing is a human right, we mean that every human being is entitled to housing (if they choose) that is fit for human beings, regardless of race, socio-economic status, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or any one of the number of labels we place on people. As human beings, we are entitled to housing that will enable us to live a healthy life, achieve our dreams, coexist peacefully, and thrive. The economy, in our vision, prioritizes people and the planet, not commodification and profit.

To achieve this vision, many aspects of society and our economy must be ***transformed, reformed, and reorganized.***

At its core, this "American" society was birthed from the violent theft of land, culture, and resources. Africans and Indigenous people were stripped of their land, murdered, and forced into slavery. All of which was rooted in racial capitalism, which values profits over people. We want a society that values people over profit and the collective over the individual. *Ubuntu: I am because we are.*

OUR GOALS

- Change capitalistic narrative around housing
- Develop housing/land trust
- Develop housing leaders
- Support/Build Tenant Unions and Leaders
- Develop Alternatives to Housing
- Develop a Housing Resource Guide
- Develop a Housing Bill of Rights
- Increase base by 3%



The partnership between the ***Summit County Continuum of Care for the Homeless (CoC)*** and ***The Freedom BLOC*** has driven meaningful change by combining our missions to address homelessness and empower the Black community. Our collaboration has resulted in:

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT: Aligning civic education and engagement with housing rights awareness to combat systemic barriers.

EQUITY-FOCUSED INITIATIVES: Applying a racial equity lens to homelessness programs, addressing disproportionate impacts on marginalized populations.

ADVOCACY NETWORKS: Amplifying community voices through combined resources, enabling those affected by homelessness to influence decision-making.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT: Empowering local leaders to advocate for systemic changes in housing policy through training and capacity building.

ENHANCED ENGAGEMENT: Strengthening community ties to drive collective action on affordable housing and systemic inequities.

Our partnership with The Freedom BLOC unites grassroots organizing with homelessness resources, fostering sustainable, community-driven solutions.

Mar-quetta Boddie
Executive Director
Summit County Continuum of Care

Summit County
Continuum of Care

CONFRONTING RACISM

How could a country that prides itself on being a leader of the free world, the beacon of democracy, and a champion for human rights allow Black citizens to be unjustly killed and treated as less than human by the police? How could Ohio allow a Black man to be gunned down by eight police officers shooting over 90 bullets? How could officers with a history of violence be let loose to kill and bodyslam members of our community? How could we allow a system birthed from slave patrols to still operate in that same fashion?
The answer is simple: *Racism.*

Racism is woven so intricately into the fabric of this country's structures resulting in Black people experiencing its damage when attempting common endeavors such as securing a decent job, buying a home, getting a car loan, or even starting a business. Fundamental change in our country's systems is necessary to eliminate this reality.

Since our founding we have pushed for transformative change within the systems of policing, justice, and accountability.

SAY THEIR NAMES

SINCE 2021, THE FREEDOM BLOC/ROC HAS RECORDED POLICE DEATHS AND INCIDENTS INCLUDING PEOPLE WHO DIE AS A RESULT OF POLICE CHASES. MOST LIKELY, DEATHS ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE AKRON POLICE DEPARTMENT PRIOR TO 2021 ARE SEVERELY UNDERCOUNTED.

2000

ERIC TYRONE CLEMENTS

2001

CLIFFORD MORRIS

2002

RAYMOND E HAYNES III
THOMAS JOHN TREMKO JR.

2003

RONALD A JACKSON
GARY D. BURTNETT
WILLIE ROBINSON

2004

ROBERT J MCMULLEN JR.

2005

DENNIS S HYDE
BERNARD W "SAGE" WOODS
RICHARD T HOLCOMB

2007

DEMETRUS R VINSON
ROBERT KIRK

2008

JEFFREY STEPHENS SR

2010

CALVIN A MCMAHAN JR
KELVIN PANTOJAS

2012

TIAWN ANTHONY BARHAM SR.
DAWAYNE LAVAR GRANT SR.

2013

JAMES GENDA

2014

RAUPHEAL THOMAS

2015

JORDAN MILLER
OMAR ALI
WILLIAM LEMONS
RYAN W PERKINS

2016

PHILIP HASAN

2017

EDWARD EARL TAYLOR
JOHN V BOWEN III
XAVIER MCMULLEN
WILLIAM PORUBSKY

2018

RYAN ANGERSTEIN
ROBERT J TALBERT
STACY R MCGINNIS

2019

AKIL SCOTT JACKSON
MOHAMMAD ISAIFAN

2020

PAUL COTEAT
D'ORO R MCKINNEY
NAME WITHHELD BY POLICE

2021

KEERA BRADLEY
*(DIED IN A CAR CRASH AFTER A POLICE CHASE)
JAMES W GROSS
LAWRENCE RODGERS

2022

RAYMOND JONES
*(WE ATTRIBUTE JONES' DEATH TO POLICE REGARDLESS OF WHO PULLED THE TRIGGER. THOUGH WE HAVE YET TO RECEIVE BODY CAM PROOF THAT ADDITIONAL SHOTS WERE FIRED BY SOMEONE OTHER THAN THE POLICE.)
UNIDENTIFIED UNHOUSED PERSON
*(DIED IN A CAR CRASH AFTER A POLICE CHASE, THOUGH NO REPORT WAS EVER FILED FOR THE CRASH OR THE DEATH.)
ARLO MOSLEY
ZION GRISBY
RAYMOND WANZO
*(ALL 3 DIED IN A CAR CRASH AFTER A POLICE CHASE)
JAYLAND WALKER
LAWERENCE RODGERS

2024

JAZMIR TUCKER
MIKE JONES

2025

MARCUS LEONARD SMITH

"Whether it is access to voting rights, representation in government, or the outsized influence of money in our political system, the opportunity to interact with and participate in democracy is available to some, blocked for many."

Nina Turner

DEFENDING DEMOCRACY

Black voters have long been the primary targets for voter suppression. But, since 2020, voter suppression and intimidation have constituted an explicit strategy for gaining political power.

To protect the vote, The Freedom BLOC and ROC widely distributed voter education and Know Your Rights materials, both printed and online, and trained and mobilized.

The Freedom BLOC and ROC spearheaded one of the largest voter mobilization programs in the state targeted to Black Voters.

We recruited and activated nearly 1,500 volunteers, who, together with our staff and partners, reached over 400,000 voters and registered nearly 40,000 people urging them to vote and providing information about how and when to do so.

As we reflect over the most recent election, we know that the work doesn't stop here. We're more inspired than ever before to show up and continue the work.

IT'S NOT JUST AN ORGANIZATION

IT'S A MOVEMENT

FORWARD.

"The Freedom BLOC/ROC has empowered me to grow as a leader, build the necessary infrastructure to advocate for the causes I deeply care about, and experience a sense of freedom we all strive for. it has enhanced my understanding of politics, refined my advocacy skills, and offered resources and opportunities to prioritize my personal growth in service of the community. Most importantly, The Freedom BLOC/ROC has given me a true sense of belonging and community."

Imokhai Okolo, Esq.
People Feeding People

BLOC UNIVERSITY

BLOC University is the foundational program of the Freedom BLOC. This introductory six-course program is a vehicle for our members to build containers and cohorts for continuity and continuous democratic learning.

As education is central to all freedom movements, this program is a manifestation of past and current Black liberation struggles.

"Working at The Freedom ROC/BLOC over the past two years has profoundly impacted both my personal and professional growth. The organization's culture, which emphasizes continuous development, transparency, and support, has helped me evolve in ways I hadn't expected. It has shown me that it's possible to be part of an organization that truly values people and prioritizes the community above all else. This experience has not only shaped the way I approach my work but also restored my faith in the power and effectiveness of community organizing."

CIARA VINZANT

POLITICAL DIRECTOR AND BLOC UNIVERSITY PROGRAM INSTRUCTOR

BLOC UNIVERSITY OUTCOMES:

- Participants have a transformational experience
- Participants have a better understanding of Power
- Participants understand how to create a power map
- Participants have a better understanding Government
- Participants understand how to design community projects

EMPOWERING PRECINCT CAPTAINS FOR COMMUNITY CHANGE

At the Freedom BLOC, we believe in putting people in power. Our current political landscape demonstrates that corporations and political influencers make the most vital decisions that affect our democracy, and not the everyday people who those decisions impact. We believe everyday people, people who are most directly impacted by the problems we face, should be the drivers of our democracy. That starts with challenging the current foundations of electoral politics – political parties.

Our ***Precinct Captain Program*** focuses on empowering grassroots leadership and fostering community-driven political engagement. By training and appointing interested individuals, the initiative ensures that underrepresented communities have a direct voice in shaping local governance. This effort strengthens civic participation, addresses systemic inequities, and builds sustainable political infrastructure to drive long-term change.

"The Freedom BLOC has taught me so much about the history of racial inequality and inequity in Akron. It has introduced me to incredible people I might never have met otherwise. Through this organization, I have discovered a voice I didn't realize I had for advocating for my community and city."

Acacia Reynolds
Volunteer

"I love volunteering at The Freedom BLOC because I am constantly learning and growing. The organization has taught me so much about the ongoing struggle for justice. As a white member of the community, I know I can never fully grasp the daily challenges faced by my Black brothers and sisters, but hearing their stories has given me a deeper understanding. It has also helped me reflect on my own experiences as a poor white man. The collaboration and shared purpose at The Freedom BLOC are incredibly rewarding, and I'm committed to continuing this work for a city that desperately needs change. Together, we can address and dismantle institutional and systemic racism."

Bill Reynolds
Volunteer

"The partnership with the Freedom BLOC has inspired youth engagement, with high schoolers eager to connect and contribute to community efforts alongside Brother Ray. Collecting surveys, despite challenges, amplified community voices and highlighted the importance of shared perspectives. Participants reflected on the transformative impact of their involvement, noting how it fostered hard work, meaningful connections, and exposure to new experiences. What began as a simple task evolved into a valuable opportunity to grow, make a difference, and embrace the power of community-driven change."

Brielle Davis
Youth Volunteer

LEADING MEANINGFUL CHANGE

The Freedom BLOC, a 501 (c)4 entity, is on a mission to build Black leadership and political infrastructure in Black communities through civic education and engagement, leadership development and economic reinvestment.

The Freedom ROC, the 501(c)(3) arm, advances our mission and unites directly impacted people and communities to build a transformative base of power to achieve social, racial and economic justice in Ohio.

THE FREEDOM BLOC/ROC IS GOVERNED BY A VOLUNTEER BOARD OF DIRECTORS

BLOC BOARD MEMBERS:
Jennifer Toles
Dr Bruce Butcher
Robin Turner
DaMareo Cooper
Julie Scarcella
Raymond Greene Jr,
(ex-officio member)

ROC BOARD MEMBERS;
Jennifer Toles
Dr Bruce Butcher
Teresa Johnson
Ali Coker
Raymond Greene Jr,
(ex-officio member)

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Raymond Greene, Jr.
Executive Director

Ciara Vinzant
Political Director

Jason Humphrey
Political Organizer

Marcel McDaniel
Organizer

Shamika Pullum
Operations Manager

Destiny Anderson
Civic Engagement Manager

Paul Patterson
Media Organizer

Imokhai Okolo
Organizer

Myles Johnson
Organizer (Warren)

Alec Walker
Organizing Fellow (Warren)

Sarah Thomas
Organizing Fellow (Warren)

Ron Ware
Organizing Fellow (Warren)

Laneé Foster
Organizing Fellow

Betta Deblasio
Policy Fellow

TaNita Upton
Civic Engagement Fellow

Kaila Curry
Civic Engagement Fellow

Ronald Winters
Civic Engagement Fellow

TAKE ACTION.

We know that the mission we've embarked on is a challenging one. Addressing the issues of our time, frankly, takes time. However, we know that together, ordinary people can change our world. We draw hope from the network you've just experienced and our broader community, who, despite seemingly insurmountable odds, believe in the power of lifting each other up and their own ability to effect real change for our generation and for generations to come.

INVEST

Power our mission with your donation

PASS IT ON

Share this report with your network

STAY CONNECTED

@TheFreedomBLOC
@TheFreedomBLOC
@TheFreedomBLOC

Phone: 330-992-4041
Email: freedom@thefreedombloc.org

@TheFreedomROC
@TheFreedomROC
@TheFreedomROC

Phone: 330-992-4041
Email: freedom@thefreedombloc.org

848 W Exchange St
Akron, OH 44302

THANK YOU

None of this work is possible without the care of the donors, partners, volunteers, and social media followers who are fueling our programming and helping us ***#BuildABetterAkron***