

NEBRASKA

ORGANIZING PROJECT

Quarterly Newsletter

June 2025

LET'S GO!!

South Sioux City Organizing Committee Update

Starting in 2023, an assessment of South Sioux City, Nebraska was carried out to determine whether or not it was the right community for the Nebraska Organizing Project to establish our next chapter. After countless one on one meetings, lots of road time, and the spirit of organizing, it became clear to us that South Sioux City is a community that is ripe for change and full of people who want to work across differences towards the common good.

We are excited to announce that the Nebraska Organizing Project is establishing our next chapter in South Sioux City! An Organizing Committee has been formed with Karina Pedroza, Donna Habnick, Omar Munoz, Yesica Saldana, Andrea Paret, Janet Pablo, Trisha Rivers, and Angela Harrison (not pictured) as the committee members. These members will be receiving trainings and making strategic decisions for the creation of their South Sioux Chapter.

Now that we have an established Organizing Committee, we will be hiring a new Organizer to take on the South Sioux Chapter! A job description will be posted in the near future. We believe that with time, these members will build a chapter that encourages unity in South Sioux City and forges a new path forward for change in their community.

– Grant DeFor, NOP Community Organizer





A POCO EXPERIENCE

Karina Pedroza, NE OC Member and South Sioux City Organizing Committee Member

I had the amazing opportunity to attend POCO thanks to NOP. Before going, I had only a small understanding of what POCO meant or what it was for. I had no idea it would have such a huge impact on me and my perspective on community organizing. POCO and everyone who attended this year basically threw me into the world of what community organizing could be and the impact it could have. I met the genuinely smartest people I know and felt an authentic connection with the people there. POCO provided not only specific tools to create change and agitate others, but provided a compassionate break from the reality around us. I truly felt the power within me awaken, and I felt the power to help bring that out in others.



Western Organization of Resource Councils hosts at least one Principles of Community Organizing (POCO) multi-day training every year. NOP staff and members are encouraged to attend this training to gain a deeper understanding of building collective power in our communities. The spring training was held in Rapid City, SD from April 29 - May 1. A fall POCO is planned for October 21 - 23 in Billings, MT. Any members interested in attending can contact Anneka at aramirez@worc.org.



Andrew Daughton and Tania Garcia-Rangel (NCC Members) share lessons learned from their first issue campaign experience at the fall 2024 POCO hosted in Norfolk.



NEBRASKA ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

On June 1, the NE OC met in South Sioux City for a planning retreat. This team has started to draft a 3-year organizing plan for NOP. The plan will establish a clear, actionable roadmap for the strategic growth and sustainable power-building of NOP. Members of the NE OC are: Thomas Wright, Jennifer Ippensen, Leonor Fuhrer, Karina Pedroza, Natalie Kent, and Andrew Daughton.

Reach out to Anneka if you have any questions.
aramirez@worc.org

Norfolk Community Chapter Update

It's been an exciting time for our Norfolk Community Chapter (NCC)! As we shared earlier, our campaign for a Language Access Plan was a huge success—unanimously adopted by the Norfolk City Council after months of research, community action, and collaboration with city officials. As part of that plan, Gustavo Magaña-Ortiz was hired as the city's very first Language Navigator, helping departments across Norfolk improve access to language resources.

And that's not all—Gustavo is already making waves! In June, he secured another win with the official recognition of Language Access Week (June 9–13) through a second unanimous vote by City Council. Norfolk Community Chapter members were invited to the June City Council meeting to receive the City's proclamation for Language Access Week.



Pictured (left to right): Greg Priebe (NCC Co-Chair), Julie DeFor (NCC Membership Captain), Jessica Dvorak (City HR Director), Gustavo Magaña-Ortiz (City Language Navigator), Shane Claussen (City Mayor), Tania Garcia-Rangel (NCC Co-Chair), Raquel Garcia (NCC Member), Grant DeFor (NCC Organizer)

Norfolk Listening Campaign Completed

The NCC just completed a powerful listening campaign—and wow, the community showed up! We connected with 146 community members who shared personal stories in response to one big question:

“WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT YOUR DAILY LIFE AND THE ISSUES THAT IMPACT YOUR FAMILY, WHAT CAUSES YOU THE MOST WORRY OR CONCERN RIGHT NOW?”

From those heartfelt conversations, we gathered hundreds of stories and identified 17 core themes—with top concerns around Healthcare & Public Health, Housing & Homelessness, Public Safety, Education, and Jobs/Wages/Work Conditions.

Roughly 10% of those we spoke with became new chapter members, and thanks to their support, we raised over \$1,700!

On June 25, our members approved their next issue campaign by consensus. A campaign team will now be formed and members will be invited to attend a power mapping session on July 16th to kick off their work.

-- Jody Gibson, NCC Communications Captain



BECOME A MEMBER TODAY!

Members are the individuals who align with the values of NOP and make annual contributions. Members commit themselves to take action to build collective power in their communities with the goal of achieving a just and equitable rural Nebraska. Become a member and gain: participation in your home Chapter's decision-making, eligibility to participate in Chapter committees and teams, and invitations to leadership opportunities. We recommend contributing \$5/month or \$60/year to become a member.

You can contribute at nebraskaorganizingproject.org/donate/

—\$20,000

—\$15,000

LET'S REACH
OUR GOAL
TOGETHER!

—\$5,000

NOP's grassroots fundraising goal this year is \$20,000. Contributions from everyday Nebraskans demonstrate that the work NOP members are doing is needed and wanted in our rural communities. Every dollar counts to keep us strong into the future!

SAVE THE DATE
"MAKING THE ASK"

AUGUST 2ND

12PM - 3:30PM

Join us for this in-person training with fundraising consultant, Kara Weander-Gaster. This training will help you build your fundraising skills and confidence as we grow our grassroots fundraising program. Registration and more details forthcoming.

DONATE
TODAY!

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

WORC's Grassroots Democracy Program is here to help, announcing:

CURIOUS about running for public office?

The Campaign Trail: A Summer Training Series on How to Run for Office & Govern Effectively

Online June 30, July 28, &
August 25, 2025

5:30 – 7 p.m.
(Mountain Time)

Register now.

Or learn more about the training series [here.](#)

When you are tempted to make a statement,
ask a question.

Al querer hacer una declaración,
haz una pregunta.

-- Fred Ross Sr., founder of Community Service Organization



Rural Nebraskans
for the
common good

READ & WATCH

- Inspired by Fred Ross Sr, one of the most influential grassroots organizers of the 20th century, **AMERICAN AGITATORS** is a documentary about the importance of patience and deep listening in organizing. [Watch the trailer.](#)
- *Roots for Radicals* is organizer Ed Chambers' reflection on the fundamental principles of community organizing: how, as public citizens, we can navigate the gap between the world as it is and as it should be, between self-interest and self-sacrifice and in doing so create lasting change for our communities. [Find it on bookshop.org.](#) Or, if you want to get in line for Anneka's copy that is floating around, email her at aramirez@worc.org.

A new learning opportunity offered by WORC. Leadership Lab offers space for member-leaders across the network to explore the principles of community organizing with each other and WORC staff.

LEADERSHIP LAB

A Conversation About Power

WEDNESDAY, JULY 9TH

5:00PM- 7:00PM MST

ONLINE ON ZOOM

Register Here

As grassroots, community organizations we are working to *build power with and for everyday people.*

In this training we'll explore what **POWER** is, the forms that power takes in our lives and the world around us, and talk about where we might be missing opportunities to build more power.



A Message from Grant



As of June 16th, I have been organizing in Norfolk for two years. It's surreal for me to think back to when I started by making sure there were enough water bottles stocked in the fridge for meetings. I have since grown to now be the one writing and facilitating trainings (I still make sure there are enough water bottles, too). This evolution of self captures my favorite aspect of organizing. People who work towards change together change themselves in the process.

Organizing seems largely theoretical before you've actually done it yourself. It requires hope, imagination, problem solving, compassion, and perseverance. By design, it prompts each person to consider what they truly care about and how much they are willing to do for real change to take place - this is an ongoing question we must ask of ourselves.

When we discover the deeper, more personal things we truly care about, it moves us to act in ways that are out of our comfort zone for the sake of creating real change. Imagine just how transformative this courageous pursuit becomes when it works. Everyday people learn that overcoming their fear leads to real change. Everyday people learn they are not alone. Everyday people become unstoppable. That is the power of organizing.

I was a volunteer before I was an organizer. I am an everyday person who was (and continues to be) transformed through the art of organizing. Winning issues is fun (it's really fun), but the greater gift organizing gives us is the opportunity to watch the people you've grown to care about transform in ways that give them the courage to transform their own lives.

My colleague Anneka, the Executive Director of NOP, once said, "the deeper work we're doing is teaching people they don't need to accept the way things are." Thank you, organizing, for teaching me that I don't need to accept the way things are - it has made all the difference.

MEET THE STAFF

Grant DeFor (he/him), Community Organizer, provides facilitation and support for the Norfolk Community Chapter and South Sioux City OC.

Mo Bailey (she/her), NOP Advisor, has devoted herself to ensuring a great start for the Nebraska Organizing Project. She provides support and training for organizers in the WORC network.

Anneka Ramirez (she/her), Director, was hired in October of 2024. She coordinates the Nebraska Organizing Committee and provides organizational leadership for NOP.



Chega
(the office dog)

NEBRASKA
ORGANIZING PROJECT

GET IN TOUCH!

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