

Orange County Justice United

2022-2023 Annual Report

*Celebrating Wins in Mental Health,
Affordable Housing, and
Criminal Justice*



Who We Are

Orange County Justice United organizes to build power for making change, through a coalition of 21 congregations and organizations in Orange County. We are a non-partisan, multi-racial, multi-lingual, multi-issue group. We harness two universal sources of power -- organized people and organized money -- to put our vision and our ideals into action.

We're dedicated to the formation of community leaders who want to make change. We connect individuals and organizations, across divides, multiplying their power. We take on overwhelming problems and carve out specific, measurable, winnable issues. We organize people by the hundreds to change the power balance, so that those traditionally in power are accountable to the community. We set high goals, design innovative strategies, and stick with issues until they are fully addressed.

Most importantly, **we challenge people to imagine the changes they can create together**, to make our community more just for all.



Membership

Binkley Baptist Church
Chapel of the Cross Episcopal Church
Chapel Hill-Carrboro NAACP
Church of the Holy Family, Episcopal
Chapel Hill Friends
Church of Reconciliation
El Centro Hispano
EMPOWERment, Inc.
Episcopal Church of the Advocate
Habitat for Humanity of Orange County
Hillsborough Presbyterian Church
Inter-Faith Council for Social Services
Kehillah Synagogue
Lattisville Grove Missionary Baptist Church
Newman Catholic Community
Piney Grove Missionary Baptist Church
St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church
St. Matthew's Episcopal Church
St. Thomas More Catholic Church
United Church of Chapel Hill
Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Hillsborough

Pictured below, L-R: Mental Health campaign leaders celebrate commitments for \$1.5 million in bilingual mental health services. Over 100 leaders trained in the fundamentals of building relational power to make change.



BY THE NUMBERS

Investing in our community leaders...

350+

Leaders attended the District Attorney Candidates' Assembly, to win transparency and diversion commitments

50

Leaders formed **three Research Teams** and held **80 research meetings** to turn huge problems into winnable, specific, measurable issues

365

Leaders turned out to **two Mental Health Assemblies** to call for action on our mental health crisis -- and ensure follow-through

60

Leaders attended **five Affordable Housing actions:** for the property tax relief program for low-income homeowners, St. Paul Village's 350-unit affordable and workforce housing development

100

Leaders trained in organizing fundamentals of Power, Relational Meetings, Core Teams, and Listening Sessions



...wins real change!

\$1.5 Million

For mental health services for Orange County's Spanish-speaking community

350

Units approved for St. Paul Village's low-income and workforce housing and mixed-use development

6

Commitments from DA Jeff Nieman to prioritize data tracking for racial disparities, economic equity, and diversion (mental health and substance use treatment)

\$500,000+

For property tax assistance for low-income homeowners

240

Clients per year able to receive bilingual mental health intervention from newly-hired Community Health Workers



Affordable Housing

Fighting Gentrification: \$500K+ in Property Tax Relief

To preserve existing affordable housing and make sure that rising property taxes don't push homeowners out of their neighborhoods, leaders organized to win the current version of the Orange County property tax assistance program, for homeowners making low-incomes. The program, won in collaboration with the Marian Cheek Jackson Center and EMPOWERment, Inc., currently provides the **most funding per household of any program in the state.**

St. Paul Village Moving Forward:

350 Affordable + Workforce Housing Units

Justice United members joined founding member congregation, St. Paul AME, to ensure that the visionary St. Paul Village can move forward with the necessary Conditional Zoning Permit. Over 50 members attended two Chapel Hill Town Council meetings to emphasize the critical importance of St. Paul Village in addressing our affordable housing crisis. The **20-acre project will include 88 affordable rental units, 100 units for residents ages 55+, 100% of units affordable as workforce housing,** retail space for small business ownership, 10 acres of permanent green space, and indoor and outdoor recreation.

St. Paul Village was launched by local leaders whose predecessors literally built our community. Leaders took action when they saw that legacy being erased, with longtime Black residents involuntarily displaced through discrimination, lack of affordable housing, and lack of economic opportunity. The project's goal is to directly address this longstanding inequity with a multi-faceted plan that will benefit the entire community.





Mental Health

Addressing a Crisis: \$1.5 million for bilingual mental health

After learning that Spanish-speaking and uninsured community members had essentially no access to mental health services, with stories of parents taking their children to the ER in crisis, **over 365 Justice United leaders organized for a solution. Justice United won a \$1.5 million investment** over three years from Alliance Health, the company that controls Orange County's public mental health funds. Investments include four Community Health Workers (now hired and in training!) to provide no-cost, bilingual, culturally appropriate mental health intervention to 240 clients a year.

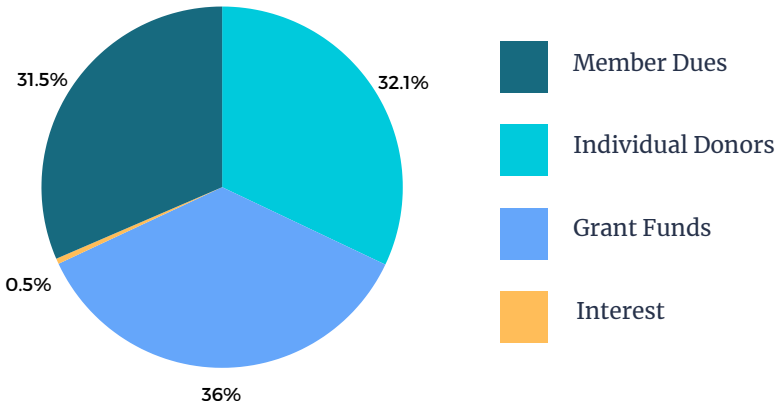


Criminal Justice

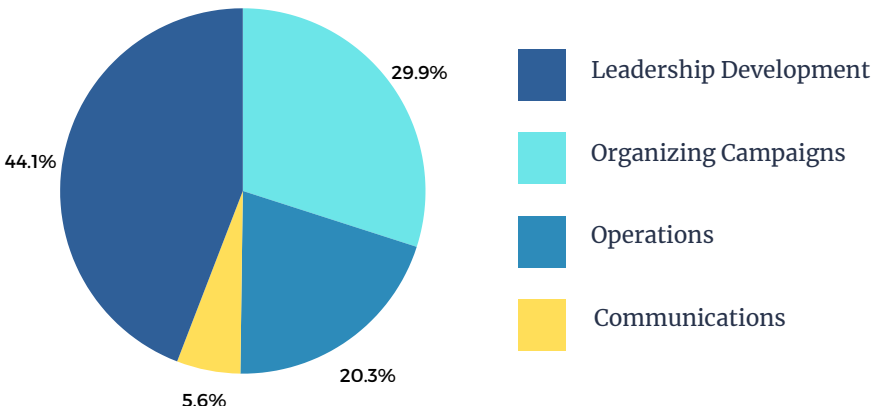
District Attorney Commitments: Transparency + Diversion

Over 350 Justice United members used the first competitive District Attorney race in over 20 years as leverage to win commitments from the most powerful person in our local justice system -- the DA! Both candidates, Kayley Taber and winner Jeff Nieman, pledged **to make diversion options for mental health and substance use treatment "the rule," to implement data tracking for racial disparities, and to increase drivers license restoration for those who can't afford the fines and fees.** At our accountability assembly a year later, DA Nieman reported good-faith progress.

Our Financials



Revenue: \$104,651.41



Expenses: \$81,882.33

By raising two-thirds of our budget from our own member dues and individual donations, **we can focus on being accountable to our own community priorities.** This is a rare and powerful funding model. **Deep gratitude** to all who play a role in sustaining our work to build power to make change for justice, together.

Sustain our work! Donate at <https://www.ocjusticeunited.org/donate> or via check (to Orange County Justice United, PO Box 9484, Chapel Hill, NC 27515).

*Please contact us if you are interested in alternate forms of giving, including as part of an IRA's RMD, if applicable.