



# FREEDOM SCHOOL

Building an on-ramp for organized power in Maricopa County

## What is a VIP Freedom School?

Coming out of the Civil Rights Movement, Freedom Schools are an organizing tool to gather people together, learn about grievances and injustice, and lay the groundwork for a larger movement.

Across Maricopa County, families are navigating growing economic pressure, legal uncertainty, and an increasing mistrust of public systems. Left unaddressed, these conditions isolate people and weaken democratic participation.

**VIP's response is disciplined, institution-based organizing. Freedom Schools are the on-ramp for that work.**

## Connecting Education and Action

Freedom schools prepare leaders to:

- Connect immigrant families to free legal consultation
- Engage city and county officials in structured accountability meetings
- Address worker exploitation and wage theft
- Advocate for healthcare stability for vulnerable residents
- Conduct disciplined public actions rooted in shared moral principles



## 2026 Implementation Goals:

*You can't **mobilize** what you haven't **organized***

VIP's goals for our 2026 Freedom School Strategy is to build a constituency of well informed, well connected, and well trained leaders prepared to represent the interests of everyday working families across Maricopa County in the November elections and beyond. We will:

- Launch Freedom Schools in 10+ institutions across Maricopa County
- Train 250+ emerging leaders
- Conduct 2–3 public accountability actions with decision-makers around the November elections based on issues raised and studied in Freedom Schools
- Expand legal and worker-protection resource partnerships

**“Education without social action is a one-sided value because it has no true power potential. Social action without education is a weak expression of pure energy.”**

– MLK Jr., *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community*



## Freedom schools are designed to:

### **Develop *leaders*, not just spectators.**

- Participants engage in structured one-to-ones, small-group dialogue, and public speaking practice.

### **Build durable civic infrastructure**

- Freedom Schools connect leaders across parishes, neighborhoods, and worker communities, forming a countywide network capable of coordinated action.

### **Equip participants with practical knowledge such as:**

- Constitutional and civil rights basics
- Immigration and labor protections
- Healthcare and public benefit navigation
- How local government decisions impact families