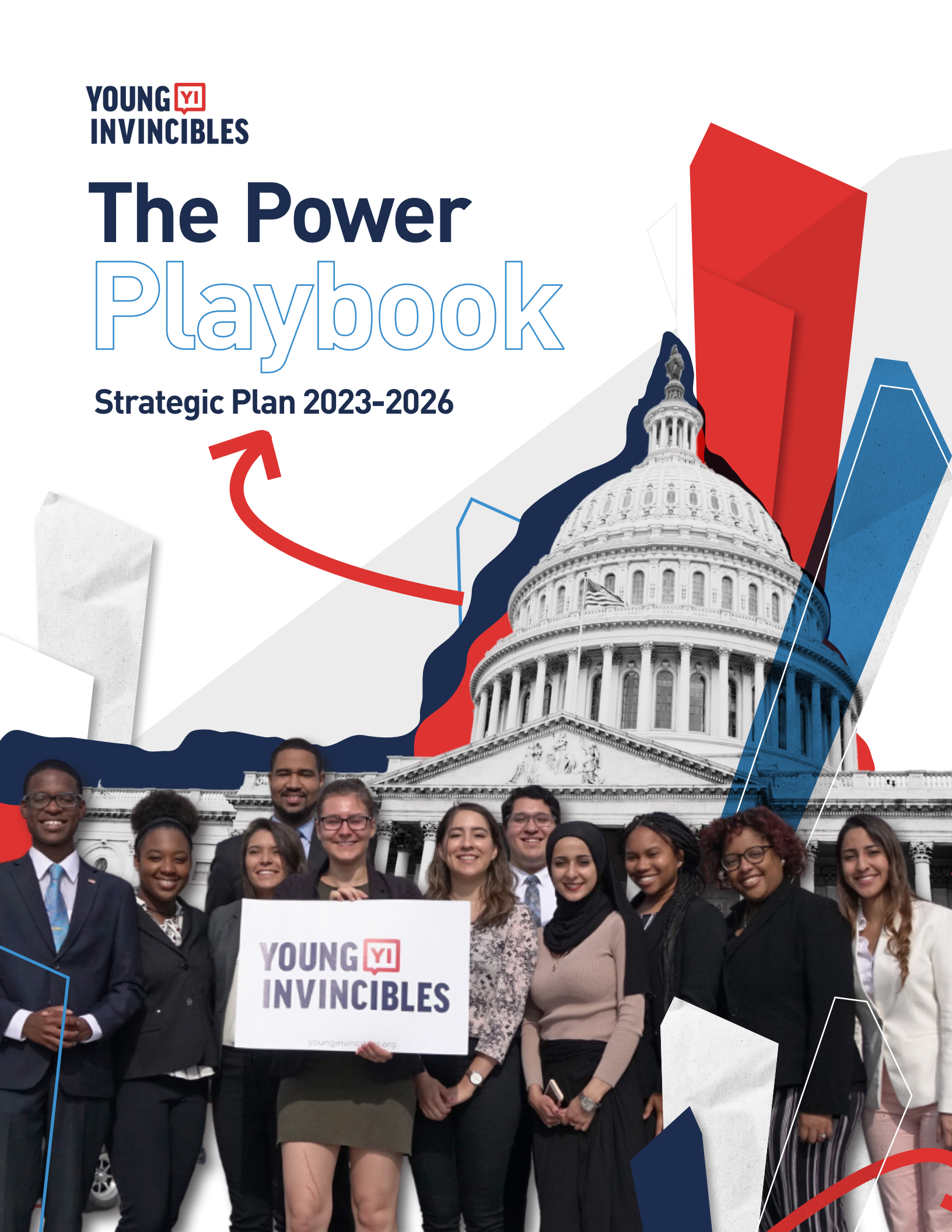


YOUNG  INVINCIBLES

The Power Playbook

Strategic Plan 2023-2026



YOUNG  INVINCIBLES

younginvincibles.org

Table of Contents

4	Message from the Executive Director of YI
6	Mission, Vision, and Strategic Goals
7	Background and Approach
8	Values
9	Executive Summary
12	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement
14	Theory of Change
16	Background and Approach



Power

“Power properly understood is nothing but the ability to achieve purpose. It is the strength required to bring about social, political and economic change.” Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Playbook

A set of strategies for conducting a campaign; A guide.



Message

from Kristin McGuire

I'm excited to share Young Invincibles (YI's) Power Playbook with you. It's the culmination of almost a year's worth of work that will guide Young Invincibles for the next three years.

We started this process with a familiar vision - to boldly go where no one has gone before. A nod to not only Star Trek but to our values of Bold Ideas, Community, Young Adult Power, Equity, and Collaboration. The task was to create a strategic direction for YI that gets us from our current conditions as young adults to a step closer to attaining our vision that "All young people fully participate in our nation's political process and have the economic opportunity to reach their fullest potential."

As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said,

"Power properly understood is nothing but the ability to achieve purpose. It is the strength required to bring about social, political and economic change."

That's the point of The Power Playbook. We believe that this will not only guide our policy work but also helps us center the joy, or play, in our work to advance economic opportunity. It will elevate and achieve our purpose.

The Power Playbook will guide us through the next three years of Young Invincibles. It will strengthen our internal operations, help grow our community engagement, and embolden our policy and research. We won't hit all of our goals immediately, and that's okay because change takes time.

I want to give thanks to our Strategic Planning Committee. I'm proud of you and the staff at large for investing the time and serious thought into this collective project. Thank you to our many partners and former staff who provided input. We are grateful for your insight. Thank you to the Annie E. Casey Foundation for their organizational effectiveness support on this project, as well as the Molina Family Foundation that provided general operating support, and many other contributions. Lastly, I want to express my deep gratitude to the young adults who participated for your vision and your continued insight. Thank you for helping us hold the line and stay focused, for always reminding us why we are here and who we are accountable to.

This would not have been successful without each of you. And don't get me wrong, it hasn't been easy. We've had some tough conversations. We've disagreed. We've agreed. We've celebrated. And I think that's what I am proud of the most; that we were able to get through the hard stuff to achieve something great. For that, we will be a better YI.

My hope is that this document inspires you and your work. I hope it provides vision and guidance. I hope it excites you.

With that, it is with great pride and gratitude that I present to the YI Network, inclusive of all young adults in this country- whether you have participated in our programming or not, our staff, our partners, and to the "Young at Heart " Invincibles, the Power Playbook. I am excited for you to explore it and make it your own. As you do so, I hope you begin to see yourself and your work within the following pages.

The task at hand is the work of all of us. Young people will not be ignored.

In solidarity,
Kristin McGuire



Young Invincibles Strategic Planning Committee



Dy Brown
Deputy Executive Director



Emma Hersh
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Tremayne Jackson
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Mission, Vision, and Strategic Goals

Mission

Young Invincibles' mission is to amplify the voices of young adults in the political process and expand economic opportunity for our generation.

Vision

All young people fully participate in our nation's political process and have the economic opportunity to reach their fullest potential.

Strategic Goals

Advancing the mission...

Strategic Goal 1

Goal: Drive engagement and advocacy for policy change.

Strategic Goal 2

Goal: Expand opportunity, community and collaboration for young adults.

Strategic Goal 3

Goal: Achieve the highest standards of management, business operations and fiscal responsibility.

Background and Approach

The six-month process of developing the Young Invincibles' strategic plan with the Executive Director, Deputy Director and Strategic Planning Committee made up of nine YI and YI Advisor staff members, considered all current aspects of the organization, young adult's needs, industry and policy in determining the future state of Young Invincibles'. Collecting data by way of survey from YI partners, funders, board members, current and past part-time and full-time staff illuminated themes requiring a deeper dive to understand the implications. This deeper dive came by way of interviews held with staff, funders, partners and board members to answer additional questions shedding greater light and perspective on the themes to make way for the development of the three strategic goals. The Strategic Planning Committee then continued adding to the plan by developing the strategic objectives and action items to finalize the plan.

This strategic plan summarizes essential strategies that will drive advancement in Young Invincibles' three goal areas. It is designed to flow throughout the organization and serves as a primary guide for allocating the resources needed to achieve YI's

long-term economic and social outcomes.

YI leadership and employees will use this plan to convert strategies into actions, then actions into results. For each strategic goal, there are strategic objectives, where leadership and employees will create an action plan, routinely measure and review progress toward achieving the objective, and evaluate how the objective's actions should be altered and improved.

A systems-based execution framework will empower YI employees to partake in performance management. The framework aligns and integrates leadership, strategic planning, employee engagement, process management, business information, and customer (funders, partners, young adults) input into feedback loops that produce continuous learning and improvement.

YI will use key measurements, enterprise risk management, and evaluation of programs to provide evidence to support YI's budget creation and decision-making. This strategic plan is illustrated in the infographic below:

WHY is Young Invincibles' work important?

WHERE is YI in the future?

WHAT is the overarching, long-term outcomes YI aspires to advance?

WHAT objectives will YI focus on to achieve its strategic goals and what measurement of progress will be used?

HOW will YI achieve these objectives?





Values

To support our vision and mission, we have defined our values to achieve our goals, knowing we must continually communicate and uphold these values across the organization.

Young Adult Power

Lasting social change is created by empowering local young adult leaders with deep community ties who can drive the work. By providing young people with tools and practice to better use their voices and skills, we create a ripple effect of young adult leaders addressing systemic barriers.

Equity

We want to live in a world of opportunity, cooperation, and abundance. A world that does not yet exist. We work to ensure political, educational, social, and economic equality for all people by understanding the complex and interconnected systems of power and white supremacy that have marginalized people and created entrenched inequities. We must acknowledge the world in which we currently live in order to change the institutions that preclude justice.

In our programming and advocacy, we create opportunities to shift power for communities with the least access to political and economic power. Our diverse team aims to implement inclusive and equitable practices, policies, and strategies.

Community

We build and sustain a community of belonging, where everyone brings their full selves. Our relationships are authentic, empathetic, compassionate, and respectful. We are mutually responsible for and accountable to one another, meeting each other wherever we are.

Collaboration

We care about one another and take joy in working together to set and accomplish our goals. We value and celebrate each other's unique lived experiences, worldviews, talents and contributions. We work through the courageous and difficult conversations that build better relationships and stronger teams. We bring high quality data, youth voice, facilitation, and strategic thinking to our relationships with our partners.

Bold Ideas

We are not satisfied with business as usual or the status quo. Tangible and sustainable systemic change requires new and different leaders whose ideas and approaches can design better solutions to the challenges we face. We commit to creating, learning, growing, and improving together.



Executive Summary

Fourteen years ago, a few college friends were sitting around the cafeteria table and came up with a bold new idea that would change the way policy makers viewed young adults in the political ecosystem. Little did they know that their idea would become the largest young adult policy and advocacy organization in the nation.

Since then, Young Invincibles has worked to elevate the voices of young people in the political conversation in truly meaningful ways and to drive forth policy change that expands economic opportunity for young adults across the country. We are proud to carry the torch, the current state of young people across the country exemplifies how critical our work to amplify the voice of young adults really is. Over the past 3 years young people have survived a global pandemic, weathered(ing) an economic downturn (for the second time for some), and are now experiencing the largest mental health crisis we have ever seen. These occurrences have exposed opportunities that we as millennials and Gen Zers have known for far too long:

- ▶ Young adults hold tremendous power and, with support, can use their lived experiences to shape policy making
- ▶ To be successful, we must focus more on power building and narrative shifting to remove economic barriers and create long lasting policy change.

Our current society frames young adults as some sort of mysterious being that is difficult to understand. We see buzzwords like quiet quitting, the anxious generation, and great resignation, but don't regularly hear the facts. Young people continue to experience a disproportionate economic impact from the financial crisis (read: We are BROKE). Media outlets often spotlight stories about why young people don't vote but fail to mention young voters played a significant role as evidenced by higher midterm turnout among young voters. Young people are increasingly accumulating medical debt and about a third report suffering from mental health issues such as depression and anxiety. We are literally sick and tired.

Our mission remains crystal clear: to amplify the voices of young adults in the political process and expand economic opportunity for our generations.

Over the next three years, we will continue to center those who are the most disproportionately impacted and have the least access to economic opportunity. We will focus our work on the policy that we have found to be the most impactful: Higher Education, Health Care, Civic Engagement, and Economic Opportunity. We will advocate for this work at the State and Federal levels. We also realize that **in order to achieve economic opportunity, we must first fight for economic justice.** We will view bad policies as a violation of our values. We will use our aspirations as a means to find solutions. We will do this by shifting the narrative around economic access and deservedness. Put simply, we will challenge longstanding American ideals by defining the so-called American Dream and who has access to it.

We will accomplish this by aligning our existing programs, creating unified experiences for young people who engage in our programming, elevating our use of digital tools to expand our reach and educate more broadly, and refocusing on our policy and research efforts to produce high quality, cutting-edge research.

Equally as important, we are dedicated to bringing celebration to our work. Movement work is hard, so we are publicly committing ourselves to inspire joy in the lives of young people as we build power.

Our approach to advancing equity

Our commitment to Diversity, Equity, and inclusion remains. What we are working together to achieve at Young Invincibles, a movement for young adults by young adults, rests upon principles rooted in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. We will continue to:

- ▶ Center low-income young people and racialized young people first (not secondarily) in all areas of work.
- ▶ Crystallize the important and unique role that YI plays and will play in the advocacy arena, and building a



Executive Summary Continued

proactive partnership and support strategy to ensure we are showing up for other organizations focused on racialized young people as effectively as possible.

- ▶ Root our policy, situational, and demographic analyses in the best research available about what the world will look like for young adults aged 18-34 now and for the next 5-10 years, making necessary adjustments as new data becomes available.
- ▶ Celebrate our identity as a diverse staff that is majority young adults while designing and normalizing organizational policies that allow us to continue to grow and improve.

Elements of the PlayBook: Since our founding in 2009, Young Invincibles has become the leading young adult Policy & Advocacy organization in the country by several measures. We have worked to create a space for young adults who believe that our generations have a unique set of experiences and these experiences are a necessary starting point for the removal of economic barriers.

The Power Playbook seeks to answer these questions and presents a set of ideas on how we can cultivate economic opportunity for young people:

- ▶ What strategies are essential to building the political power of young adults?
- ▶ How is our organization currently structured to advance where we are and where we are going? What infrastructure is necessary to realize our vision moving forward?
- ▶ How will we know when we've reached our goals?

We identified the following strategic goals to help drive our work over the next three years:

- ▶ Drive Advocacy & Engagement
- ▶ Expand Community, Collaboration, and Opportunity
- ▶ Achieve Highest standards of Organizational Operations

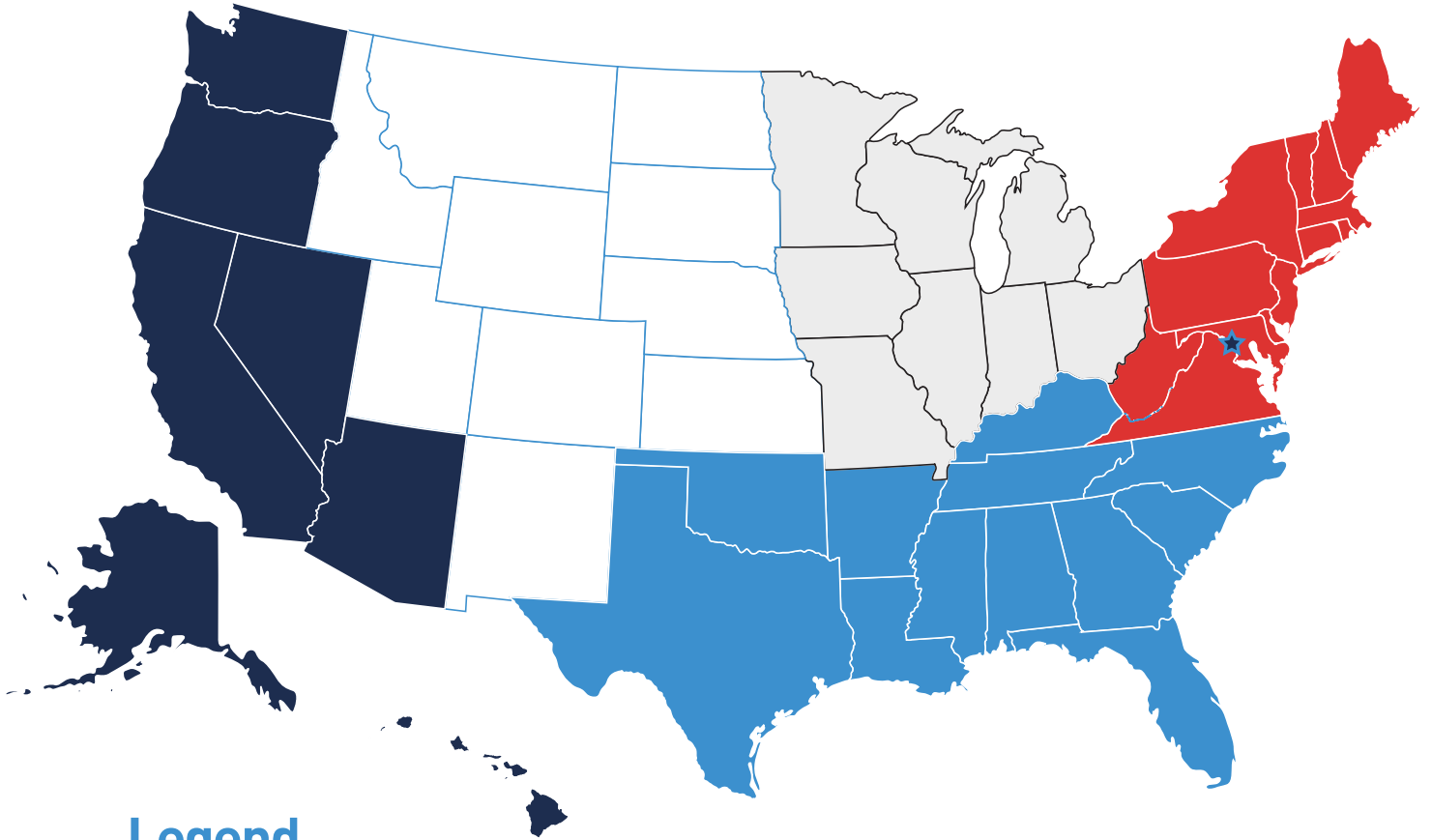
After we set the goals, we drafted a set of strategic objectives to help us reach them. These objectives are the foundation of our *PlayBook*. They represent a set of bold ideas that will move our organization from where we are to where we want to be.

We envision that success to look like:

- ▶ A strong, sustained collaborative of young adults and partners making progress on long term policy change that is centered around those most impacted by longstanding biased policy making by sharing their stories and being civically engaged
- ▶ A shifted collective mindset that challenges what is possible and equitable when it comes to economic opportunity and political access for young adults



Regional Map



Legend

- West
- Rocky Mountain
- Midwest
- North East
- South
- Headquarters



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement

YI was founded to disrupt an inequitable power dynamic during the federal debate about health care reform, with a particular emphasis on elevating the voices of young adults who did not have a voice in the political discourse. But given the ways in which racism leads to unequal distribution of resources in our society — impeding people of color's equitable access to health care, higher education, civic engagement, and financial well-being — YI recognizes that we can and must do more to strengthen both cultural competency overall our commitment to racial equity, specifically.

Since our founding, we have learned that access and opportunity look differently for all young adults, particularly those in historically marginalized and disadvantaged communities.

At YI, equity means acknowledging that different members of our generation are starting their journey towards financial and personal success from different economic and social perspectives. It means adjusting our strategies, policy positions, and training mechanisms to meet the young adults we are trying to reach where they are, not where we assume they are or where we want them to be. It means consistent learning and recalibrating of our approach towards creating lasting impact, both internally and externally.

We have made and learned from mistakes along the road to this understanding of the importance



As a result, as an organization we must commit and empower our staff to advance policies and advocacy strategies that are responsive and work to create the most good for the most at-need members of our constituency. This means centering equity in all of our work.

of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at YI, particularly in recognizing the value of the lived experiences, needs, and wants of our own staff members, of our young adult spokespeople, and of our partners. As a result, in January 2017, following calls from YI staff and young adults in our programs, the DEI Change Team was created to ensure that leadership, staff, and the organization at large followed through on their intention to fulfill YI's stated DEI commitments, effectively and authentically. The Change Team was tasked with advising leadership on how to engage staff in identifying priority issues and implementing action steps. In July of 2017 a DEI Workplan was developed with two main

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement Continued

focus areas: increasing hiring and retention of staff of color, and tackling the perception of YI as a white organization internally and externally by prioritizing race and class in our policy work and young adult programming.

This focus demonstrates an understanding that racism has been historically and intrinsically tied to the American economy and is a driving force of the systemic inequities we are working to resolve.

For example, recent Young Invincibles research has highlighted persistent racial inequality in wealth building, with white young adult households more than three times as likely as black ones to own their home. Black college graduates are 50 percent more likely than white ones to hold student debt, and black young adult households had a pre-pandemic median net worth of \$1,130 in contrast to \$47,096 for their white counterparts.

At Young Invincibles, we believe that uplifting race and class within targeted public policies, informed by and benefiting impacted young adults, better serve young adults of all backgrounds. We advocate for and with first generation college students, low-income young adults, and racialized young adults. Our approach to equity prioritizes class and access while centering race. It is explicit about race, not exclusive to race.

Today, we carry the torch of our DEI change team by continuing to embed our DEI principles in our policy work, young adult engagement, and hiring practices. We work to ensure that we are helping YI to center and serve the most at-need young adults in our nation respectfully, authentically, and effectively.



Theory of Change

Young Invincibles is a national, multi-issue, policy and advocacy organization for young adults. Because of our unique position in the policy ecosystem, we understand that change is often complex and interconnected. We value the work of our partners and know that we all hold a valuable place in creating change for young people. Our theory of change captures our understanding of how we view change, how we work to create change, and what change looks like. It upholds what we have done for over a decade:

we create successful advocacy campaigns that shift biased narratives through inspiring and engaging young adults, developing policy solutions, and elevating young adult voices to policymakers and the media.

We work to develop leadership and build power among young adults across the nation who have been impacted by the worst our country has had to offer. We do this work with racialized young people, young people who are economically oppressed, and young adults who are first generation college students. We view these lived experiences as assets that should be uplifted and centered during the policy setting processes in our states and federally. Our super power is our ability to deeply engage in high level policy conversations and translate them into consumable pieces of information for young adults. We use this talent to recruit, engage, and build a base of young people who are excited to participate in the

political process.

We believe that when we amplify the voices of young adults, provide timely and accurate information on the issues that impact young people the most, then advocate for policies that create economic opportunity for marginalized young adults, we begin to see policy norm shifts that lead to a democracy where young people have the economic opportunity to reach their fullest potential and are engaged and fully participate in our nation's political process.

When we do our work well, we see young adults who are engaged, confident, and empowered. We see young adults who are excited to serve as trusted messengers in their communities. We have strong partnerships with organizations that are also committed to improving the conditions of young adults.

Ultimately, our theory of change demonstrates how Young Invincibles harnesses the inherent power of young adults as the most diverse and largest voting bloc in our country and utilizes this power to generate the economic opportunity, social change, and political access that young adults deserve.

At Young Invincibles we Believe that young adults aged 18-34

- ▶ are the most diverse than any age group before them
- ▶ Have a unique set of experiences that should be valued when making policy
- ▶ Are a powerful voting bloc in America



Theory of Change Continued

And our Mission is to amplify the voices of young adults in the political process and expand economic opportunity for our generation.

We will accomplish this by

- ▶ Shifting Narratives via storytelling and organizing
- ▶ Building our base of young adults and partners
- ▶ Empowering Young Adults via our leadership programs and speaking opportunities
- ▶ Sharing Accurate information (Consumer Ed, research & Comms)
- ▶ Policy Change

In everything that we do, we are guided by our values: Young Adult Power, Equity, Community, Collaboration, and BOLD ideas

We will begin to see the following shifts

- ▶ Young Adults are aware of their place in the political ecosystem

- ▶ Young people are empowered and will serve as trusted messengers to their friends, families, and communities
- ▶ Partnerships are strong and work together to improve conditions of young adults

A strong movement WITH and FOR young adults will be sustained.

And when this happens, we will see

- ▶ Equitable policies that center impacted young adults
- ▶ Narrative shifts
- ▶ Strong Coalitions
- ▶ Greater Public Awareness

And this will lead to the realization of our vision that All young people fully participate in our nation's political process and have the economic opportunity to reach their fullest potential.



At **YOUNG** **YI** **INVINCIBLES**

We

Realize that Young adults are more diverse than any age group before them.

Believe that young adults have a unique set of experiences that should be valued when making policy.

Know that young adults are a powerful voting block in America.

And our mission is to amplify the voices of young adults in the political process and expand economic opportunity for our generation.

We will accomplish this by

Shifting Narratives via storytelling and organizing

Building our base of young adults and partners

Policy Change

Sharing Accurate and timely information (Consumer Ed, research & Comms)

Empowering Young Adults via our leadership programs and speaking opportunities.

In everything that we do, we are guided by our values:
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And we will begin to see the following shifts

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Young people are empowered and will serve as trusted messengers to their friends, families, and communities

Partnerships are strong and work together to improve conditions of young adult

A STRONG MOVEMENT WITH AND FOR YOUNG ADULTS WILL BE SUSTAINED

And when this happens, we will see

Equitable policies that center impacted young adults

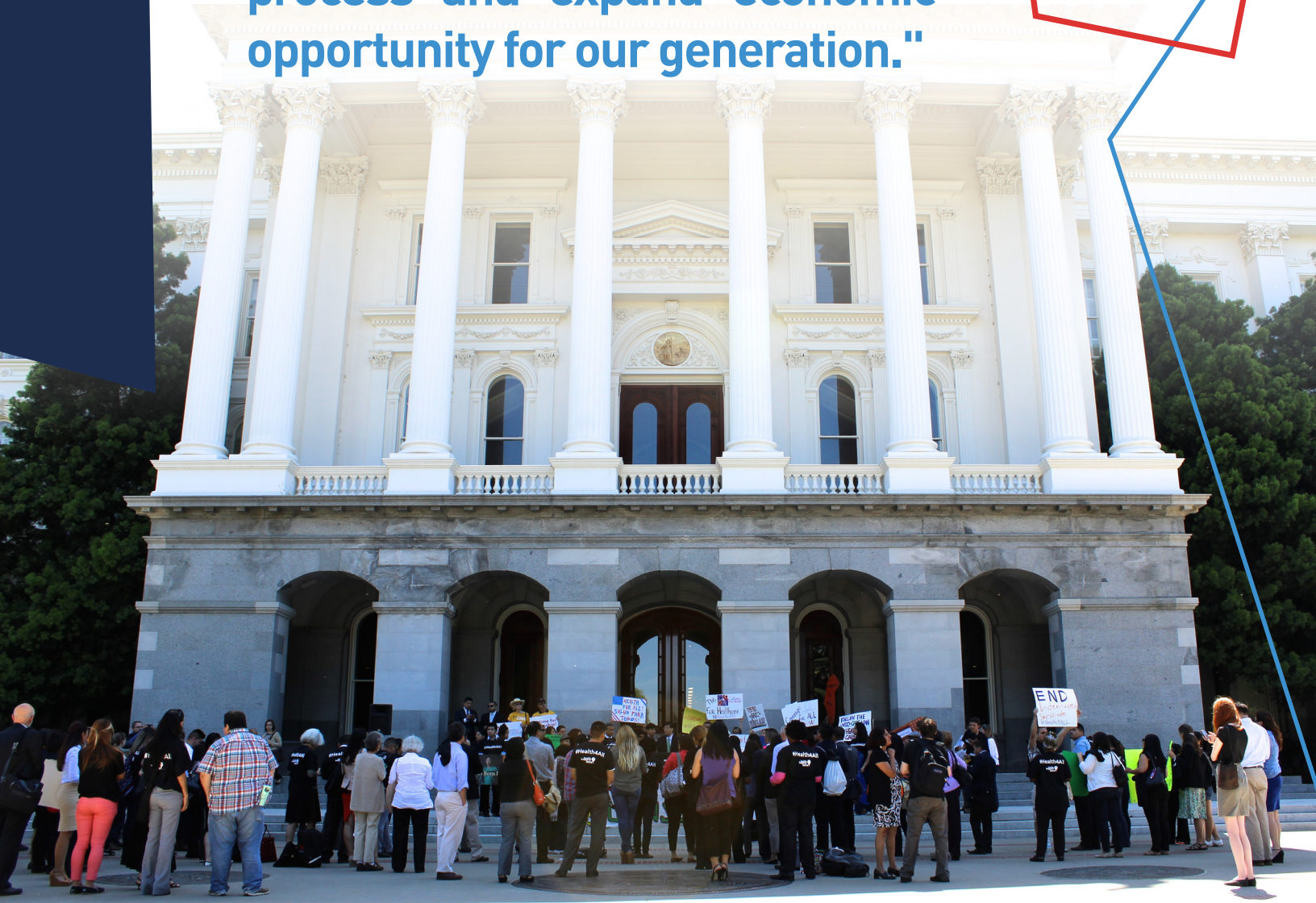
Narrative shifts

Strong Coalitions

Young people feeling empowered and becoming advocates

AND THIS WILL LEAD TO THE REALIZATION OF OUR VISION THAT ALL YOUNG PEOPLE FULLY PARTICIPATE IN OUR NATION'S POLITICAL PROCESS AND HAVE YI THE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY TO REACH THEIR FULLEST POTENTIAL.

“Amplify the voices
of young adults in the political
process and expand economic
opportunity for our generation.”





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