Massachusetts Voter Table

2019 Annual Report

December 2019

Our Mission, vision & strategy

The Massachusetts Voter Table (MVT) integrates nonpartisan voter engagement with grassroots organizing to increase resources and representation for communities of color, low-income people, immigrants, and youth. With our 23 partner organizations, we expand the electorate for a more reflective democracy. Our statewide coalition leads a movement-building electoral strategy that develops trusted community leaders, democratizes access to data and tools, and gets people involved in issue campaigns that improve their lives and their communities.

2019 Was a big year. 2020 will be our biggest year yet.

In 2019, Massachusetts Voter Table partner organizations reached out to 90,080 voters and had 14,579 conversations to get out the vote in local elections in thirteen cities. This spring, we worked with Raise Up Massachusetts to clear the first hurdle in the legislature to win the Fair Share Amendment, a constitutional amendment headed to the ballot in 2022. In the fall, we worked community-based organizations in Lowell to educate voters in communities of color about ballot questions regarding choosing a new voting system after the courts ruled that the at-large system discriminates against people of color. With our partner organizations and allies, we started talking to our neighbors about rent control and found that 82 percent of voters who live in our core neighborhoods in Boston, Chelsea, and Worcester support bringing back rent control.

Most of all, we're gearing up for 2020, which will be the biggest year yet for MVT. In 2020, we will make sure that our communities are seen, heard, and counted, in the 2020 Census. Along with our partner organizations, we will mobilize voters to cast their ballots during the presidential primary election on March 3, the statewide primary on September 1, and the general election on November 3. That's why we trained youth and emerging leaders how to knock on doors, educated trusted leaders at over 100 organizations about the 2020 Census, and won nearly $4 million in state funding for Get Out the Count efforts in 2019.

Making moves in 2019

Preparing for the 2020 census

Our pathway to power runs through the 2020 Census and redistricting. A complete count in low-income communities of color in Massachusetts means that our people can claim our fair share of political representation and federal resources for education, healthcare, affordable housing, and infrastructure in the next decade. In today's political climate of fear and distrust in the federal government, we face greater challenges to a complete count in this decennial census than ever before.

Trusted community organizations, including MVT partner organizations, are the key to a complete count in the 2020 Census. In collaboration with the Massachusetts Nonprofit Network, the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition, and Asian Pacific Islanders' Civic Action Network, MVT launched MassCounts, a coalition of 100 grassroots organizations preparing for the 2020 Census. Through legislative advocacy, MassCounts secured $3 million for nonprofit organizations for Get Out the Count (GOTC) efforts and $1 million for municipalities to coordinate Local Complete Count Committees.



In addition to advocacy, MVT educated hundreds of community leaders and public officials about the importance of the 2020 Census and the challenges we face in achieving a complete count. In the spring and summer, we held stakeholder meetings and community kickoffs with leaders of civic organizations, service providers, and faith institutions in eleven communities in the spring to raise awareness of the citizenship question, the transition to the first digital census, and perennial challenges facing the 2020 Census. In partnership with the Attorney General's Office, MassCounts coordinated the response to the U.S. Supreme Court ruling on the citizenship question in late June and early July. In the fall, MassCounts held six census messaging trainings to equip members of organizations on how to talk to their neighbors and friends about the importance the 2020 Census and confidentiality.

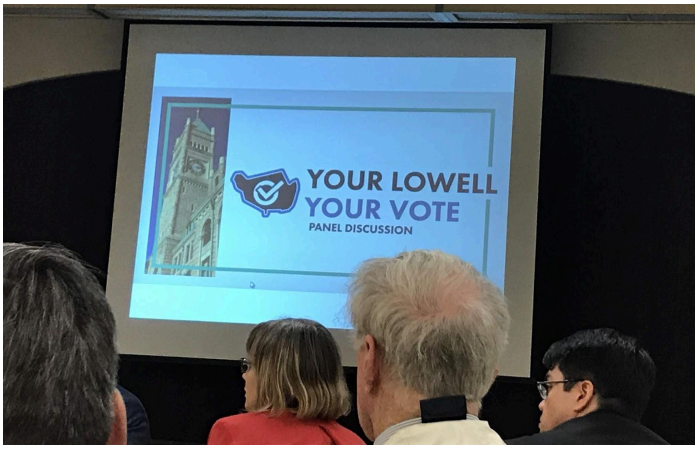
Securing resources for the public good

As part of the leadership of Raise Up Massachusetts, MVT worked with our allies in the labor movement to pass the Fair Share Amendment in the constitutional convention on June 12. The Fair Share Amendment is a proposed constitutional amendment to tax income over $1 million at an additional 4 percent, which would raise $2 billion per year for public education and transportation. This was the

necessary first step toward winning a constitutional amendment through a ballot initiative in November 2022.

After this summer's Red Line derailment and fare hikes on the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, we heard rumblings that the legislature was planning to impose more regressive taxes and fees to fund a broken public transportation system. As part of Raise Up Massachusetts, we are leading a campaign to make corporations pay their fair share to fund public transportation that our commonwealth needs for an economy that works for everyone. MVT Director, Beth Huang, joined the Senate Revenue Working Group to represent the interests of low-income people of color and advocate for equity in our tax system.

ADVANCING CIVIC ACCESS & REPRESENTATION



Following a historic lawsuit, the City of Lowell was forced to change its discriminatory at-large voting system. Voters in Lowell had the opportunity to choose what type of voting system they wanted to elect their representatives on the City Council and School Committee in the November 5 local election. MVT Field Coordinator, Betsy Englander, worked with community-based organizations involved in Lowell Votes to support voter education efforts about the options for the voting system. In partnership with Nonprofit Vote and MassVOTE, we secured funding to distribute a flyer translated in English, Spanish, Khmer, and Portuguese to educate voters to 42,000 households about the options on their ballot. This implementation of the lawsuit's ruling provides a replicable strategy for cities with at-large legislative bodies.

As part of the Election Modernization Coalition, MVT has participated in advocacy efforts to win Election Day Registration, a commonsense voting reform that has improved voter turnout in over twenty states across the country. As the displacement crisis rages, voters renting in increasingly expensive markets need Election Day Registration to fix their registration when they are forced to move.

In the fall, we worked with Massachusetts Prisoners & Organizers Working for Enfranchisement and Restoration (Mass POWER) Right to Vote campaign to collect 21,000 signatures to restore voting rights to people incarcerated on felony convictions. With Neighbor to Neighbor, Chelsea Collaborative, New England United for Justice, and Families for Justice as Healing, we began conversations connecting voting rights and mass incarceration in Boston, Chelsea, Lynn, Salem, and Holyoke. Unfortunately, the Right to Vote Campaign did not collect enough signatures to secure this important civic access reform on the 2022 ballot, but we built support and leadership through the campaign.



SEEDING THE CAMPAIGN TO REPEAL THE STATEWIDE BAN ON RENT CONTROL

The majority of our civic engagement efforts for the local elections in 2019 focused on an affordable housing agenda. After hearing from members, leaders, and residents in our communities about the displacement crisis, we took the first steps to repeal the statewide ban on rent control. Knocking on thousands of doors, we had conversations with nearly 1,000 voters in Boston, Chelsea, Worcester, and Brockton, finding that 82 percent of these voters in our core communities support rent control. At the Boston People's Assembly on September 21, we launched the first canvass for rent control in years. We held a Renters' Rising canvass day of action with Right to the City Boston, Brockton United, and Neighbor to Neighbor to get out the vote and identify supporters of rent control.

MAKING HISTORY IN 2020

A COMPLETE COUNT OF LOW-INCOME PEOPLE OF COLOR IN THE 2020 CENSUS

From January to July 2020, MVT will be dedicated to an intensive campaign to achieve a complete count of low-income communities of color in the 2020 Census. MassCounts will continue to work with 100+ grassroots organizations to ensure that everyone is seen, heard, and counted in 2020.

MVT will begin convening the coalition of community organizations, voting rights advocacy groups, labor unions, and civil rights attorneys for redistricting. We will collaborate with the legislative chairs of the Redistricting Committee to design a process to include and center community voices at every stage of redistricting at the state and local levels.

STABILIZING OUR COMMUNITIES

Our communities need secure housing and reliable transportation. MVT will continue to build the statewide movement for rent control through house parties, popular education workshops, assemblies in Boston and gateway cities, and legislative advocacy. As part of Raise Up Massachusetts, we will advocate to close corporate tax loopholes to diminish income inequality and fund public transportation.

DEMONSTRATING OUR POWER AT THE BALLOT BOX

With our partner organizations, we will close the racial civic participation gap in the presidential primary, statewide primary, and general election in 2020. Next year, we will train trusted community leaders and young people, provide high-quality tools and data for nonpartisan voter engagement, and coordinate shared field plans to reach low-income voters and voters of color across Massachusetts. Next year, we are going to claim our power. Next year, we are going to make history. Will you join us?

MVT PARNTER ORGANIZATIONS

Asian American Resource Workshop
Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association
Chelsea Collaborative
Chinese Progressive Association
Coalition for Social Justice
Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation
Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative
La Comunidad Inc.
Madison Park Community Development Corporation
Massachusetts Alliance of HUD Tenants
Massachusetts Senior Action Council
Massachusetts Affordable Housing Alliance
Massachusetts Public Interest Research Group
MassVOTE
Massachusetts Community Action Network
Massachusetts Jobs With Justice
Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition
Neighbor to Neighbor Massachusetts
Neighbors United for a Better East Boston
New England United for Justice
Right to the City Boston
Vietnamese American Initiative for Development

MVT STEERING COMMITTEE

Coalition for Social Justice
Massachusetts Affordable Housing Alliance
MassVOTE
Neighbor to Neighbor Massachusetts
New England United for Justice