



# Building Indivisible Statewide Networks

**Welcome!** If you're reading this guide, it's most likely because you're part of an Indivisible group who is somewhere along the path of working with other Indivisibles to build a statewide network - an intentional system for working together to build power across the state. Read on for support!

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## Part 1: Introduction

### **For anyone who's new to Indivisible, let us introduce ourselves.**

Brought together by a practical guide to resist the Trump agenda and now resisting extremism, Indivisible is a movement of thousands of group leaders and more than a million members taking regular, iterative, and increasingly complex actions to resist extremism, elect local champions, and fight for progressive policies. We make calls. We show up. We speak with our neighbors. We organize. And through that work, we've built hundreds of mini-movements in support of local values.

Indivisible was founded in response to Trump's election - but we know that Trump was a symptom of a sick democracy, not its cause. We face two fundamental problems: first, our democracy was rigged from the start in favor of the white and wealthy. Second, in the last few decades, an alliance of white nationalists and the ultra-rich have been actively working to further undermine democracy and cement their hold on power permanently. That's how we ended up with Trump - but the fight isn't over as we push back against rising extremism.

Indivisible National is a social movement organization that grew as the Indivisible movement grew, building out a professional team of organizers, works, campaigners, digital and data specialists, and other experts to support the movement and fight for progressive values. Like other social movement organizations, Indivisible's staff both supports and works independently of the movement itself - just as local Indivisible groups both take autonomous action and also coordinate with each other and with our national team.

### **So how do state networks fit into all this?**

Since Indivisible was founded, some states have developed strong, interconnected statewide networks that sustain, nourish, and strengthen their local organizing in their states (and you'll hear more about some of them later on!). State networks are not only well positioned to support organizing work at the local level, but also cultivate power within the national movement - they can show up statewide for major action or rapid response moments. Indivisible is here to support more states in developing and strengthening these kinds of networks - so that you'll have more hands on deck for big actions, and so that you can build community, camaraderie, and support along the way.



## **Let's cover some key terms before we move forward.**

An *Organizer* at Indivisible is a staff member who supports our local groups and Group Leaders. Our staff Organizers usually work with 1-3 states at a time. Your state's organizer will be a crucial support in building your network. You may already talk to them all the time, though if you don't know your organizer, email [SupportTeam@indivisible.org](mailto:SupportTeam@indivisible.org) to get connected!

A *Group Leader* is someone who has a major role or responsibility within their Indivisible group. We use this term relatively broadly, and if you are a leader in a group, you can use whatever role titles you like. If you're reading this guide and working on building a statewide network, you're probably a Group Leader or a very active member!

We've already referenced it, but a *Statewide Network* is a coalition or other intentional system for working together to build power across a state.

*Statewide Coordination* is a systematic strategy that makes individual tactics more powerful and more possible. Individual groups can be influential and impactful in their own right, but when Indivisible groups across a state come together to make a difference, such as around a sign-on letter to a Member of Congress, a rally in the capitol, or a campaign to get letters sent or calls made to Senators, that's powerful! It moves the needle towards the change we want to see in our country and in the world.

## **So, why statewide networks?**

When Indivisibles across a state come together to start talking, building relationships, coordinating, sharing information, identifying shared values or goals, making decisions together, and taking action together - and when they do any of that on a regular basis - we consider that a state network.

The benefits of statewide networks are manifold. Depending on how many Indivisible groups there are in your state, they can allow you to feel less alone, build camaraderie and community, and share ideas for problem-solving and best practices. Most importantly, they are a powerful platform for action. When it's time to show up for a major local crisis, you'll have allies across the state to call on for support. Or when an opportunity flares up in Congress, your whole state can come together to put pressure on Senators or key Representatives.



## What could a state network look like?

Many states already have some kind of organized network. Here are two examples of how networks in Georgia and Massachusetts organize themselves, communicate, and support action in the state (as of Spring 2023 when this guide was written - the networks below may have shifted since, as is the way of dynamic community organizing).

The Indivisible Georgia Coalition (IGC) is a statewide network of Indivisible and allied groups in Georgia with a mission "to hold our elected officials accountable and resist the regressive agenda that seeks to take our country backwards". IGC holds statewide calls once/month; while core team members of any Indivisible or allied group in the state are invited to attend these calls, there are 15 Indivisible groups who are official "members" of IGC, meaning they have signed on to IGC's Organizing Principles. Member groups have voting power if/when IGC needs to vote on something, e.g. an endorsement. As of February 2023, IGC has three co-conveners, each of whom is also part of the leadership team of their local Indivisible group. IGC is committed to taking anti-racist action and making our communities, state, and country more just and equitable. IGC primarily exists to facilitate communication among its members, amplify actions of local groups, and share resources to increase our impact.

[Indivisible Mass Coalition](#) (IMC) maintains a formal Board made up of one person from each Congressional district in Massachusetts. The Board sees its purpose as to support actions of local groups, funnel information and resources from the national Indivisible organization to local groups, forge relationships with allies in the state and support collaboration between local groups and allies, and provide support to local groups in reaching out to elected officials. IMC has had a series of opportunities to show up with each other both for major national moments - such as rallying in support of the passage of the For the People Act in 2021 as part of Indivisible's democracy reform campaign - and for statewide moments, such as working to pass the ROE Act for expanded abortion access in MA. Their status as a statewide coalition has allowed potential allies or partner organizations to call on them for support and trust that IMC will bring significant people power and commitment.

What about in your state? You'll find out in the process of building out your network just what infrastructure and action opportunities work for you, but here are the key elements we've found are present in strong state networks that you can aim to work toward:



- *Communication* - groups talk to each other in regular network meetings or convenings and share valuable information across the state; folks know how to get information they need as well as share their own ideas
- *Teamwork and Collaboration* - the network has agreed on shared values, teams up for bigger efforts, and works toward building relationships with partner organizations in the state
- *Action* - the network regularly takes action together around major Indivisible Weeks of Action and other local and state work, and has a consistent recruitment process in place to support these actions and events
- *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion* - Leadership understands and prioritizes diversity and inclusion, is representative of communities in the state demographically and geographically, builds partnerships with frontline communities in the state, and develops leaders of marginalized identities
- *Infrastructure* - the network has a sustainable leadership team with defined roles, a process for bringing on new groups/members, and a succession plan

### **Some big picture thoughts on how to go about doing this work...**

As you're moving forward building your statewide network with other Indivisibles in your state, we encourage you to approach this work from the mindset of *emergent strategy*. Social justice activist and author adrienne maree brown writes of emergent strategy as "the way complex systems and patterns arise out of relatively simple interactions." What this means for building a statewide network is that you don't have to pre-plan everything out and have it fully formed before you start building! An interconnected system built out of strong relationships in alignment with shared goals isn't something we can reverse engineer. Rather, it's something that emerges over time through a series of connections, 1:1 meetings, conversations in small groups, and incremental goals. You can build out your network iteratively to match your state and the people involved.

This goes for all aspects of state network building that we'll cover in the rest of this guide. For instance, there's no need to decide all the leadership roles in advance and then look for people to fill them - you can take the time to assess where you're at, what folks' interests and strengths are, and where you want to go collectively, and codify your roles along the way. Or for communication platforms, you can choose a system you want to try out, and if it isn't meeting your needs after a few months, change it and try something new.

Without structure, our work can stagnate or lose accountability, so this isn't to say you should linger or languish in the process phases. Don't feel like you have to have it



all figured out or get it perfectly right from the get-go, but know that the work is continual and should be incorporated into your regular planning and strategy building.

## **Getting oriented & building relationships**

As you're working on building your state network, your Organizer will be a crucial resource. If you're not already connected to them, email [SupportTeam@indivisible.org](mailto:SupportTeam@indivisible.org) to get connected! You'll likely find it helpful to meet with them regularly over the course of this work - they can provide valuable resources and expertise to support you as you are thinking things through.

Next, you'll want to learn the landscape of groups in your state (likely via talking with your organizer). Who's out there, and what are they working on? You and your organizer may want to collaborate on connecting with leaders throughout the state in one-on-one meetings, also known as 1:1s. 1:1s, and the relationships that come out of them, are a core building block of organizing. In a 1:1, you ask questions and listen actively to get to know the person - their values and what motivates them. Then, you explore how their interests and motivations connect to the work your group is doing, to find a mutual place from which to work together going forward. 1:1s are the tool you need to build your statewide network in collaboration with other Indivisibles. Moreover, once you build up your network, you'll have more capacity to do regular 1:1s with new members, which in turn will get more hands on deck and give you more capacity, relieving the amount of work you have on an ongoing basis. 1:1s are part of how you build relationships, and at the end of the day, relationships and the meaning they bring to our lives are what keep people coming back. Ask your Organizer for more resources and guidance on how to have an effective 1:1 for statewide network-building purposes!

As you start to get to know the landscape in your state through 1:1s, self-assess: what infrastructure or connections, even if informal, already exist? Is there a foundation you can build upon, such as a few groups in one region who already talk to each other?

Once you've made your initial connections, schedule a series of meetings - monthly might work well - in which you, your Organizer and those leaders you've connected with across the state can begin to work through the following considerations and taking steps to build a statewide network together.

## **How to use the rest of this resource**



This resource is not linear. Rather, it's separated into those large buckets of considerations and work that can serve as a framework as you're building your statewide network: Values & Purpose, Communication, Action, and Infrastructure, Inclusion, & Sustainability. But there's no need to work through these buckets in that order. If anything, it will make sense to get started on some first steps for each of them and let them inform each other as you build. You can even use these categories as standing agenda items in the regular meetings in which you work with the fellow leaders you connected with in 1:1s toward building your statewide network together. (More on holding effective meetings later on!)



## Part 2: Values & Purpose

One of the first things to work toward clarifying as you build your statewide network with other Indivisibles is a set of *shared values*. Why begin with shared values? They give us something to orient around as we're making decisions. When it's not perfectly clear what the right call is, we can ask: which of these options align best with our shared values? They also will help others in the state understand what your network is about and what you prioritize. This can help you build toward coalition work with other organizations in the state.

Let's take a moment to clarify some common language that you may have heard before around concepts of values and purpose.

- *Norms or agreements* are guidelines for how everyone in the group or coalition will treat each other so everyone can focus on the work.
- *Shared values* are core beliefs everyone shares that are the root of why the network does the work.
- *Issues* are broad topics you might work on - like democracy reform, immigration justice, or climate justice - often with specific subsets or local ramifications.
- *Goals* are visions for a specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound shift away from the status quo in a positive direction that reflects shared values.

Here's an example of what agreed upon norms could look like, from Indivisible OneNYS, our state network in New York State:

- *Bridges, not barriers.* We value communication as a tool to learn from each other so we can grow in our understanding, capacity, and commitment to our vision.
- *Coalition, not competition.* We value relationships as they are the source of our power needed to achieve our goals.
- *Trust, not top-down.* We value respect, inclusivity, and integrity as we strengthen our bonds and networks, both as units and the collective, as we work as a team on equal footing to fulfill our purpose.

Here are some examples of values for your statewide network to explore:

- Action perpetuates justice
- Everyone deserves to reach their greatest potential
- None of us are free until we are all free
- Silence is complicity



- Listen to and follow those most impacted
- Dismantle oppression everywhere and in every way
- Teamwork makes the dream work

We deserve to live in a world that reflects our values, and unfortunately that isn't our current reality. We organize and fight to have policy and a political system that reflects our values.

Once you have a set of shared values and passion for an issue, you can work toward identifying a mutual goal. To continue with our friends at Indivisible OneNYS as an example, they believe in the Indivisible movement and that teamwork makes the dream work. During 2021, their mutual goal was pushing Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer to be bold and a fighter out front on voting rights legislation, especially S1, during a Senate with a Democratic trifecta, without wiggle room for defection from the caucus, when he's up for re-election and cares deeply about his legacy. All of this would have a positive impact on people across the country. This goal is informed by OneNYS's shared values, but also gives them a sense of purpose to focus their work in the post Trump era, and helps them make decisions about what to prioritize and what tactics to use in statewide coordination.

Keep in mind that like everything with your statewide network, you don't have to get it right from the start and never change! Shared values and mutual goals don't have to be static - you can draft an initial values statement and mutual goal, work on with them for a series of months, and come back to them periodically as you learn more from experience. Codify what you know for now, do your work, and iterate over time!



## Part 3: Communication

### **Communication Pathway #1: Ongoing Communication**

As you develop your state network, you'll likely need a platform for ongoing communication - an organized way to talk with Indivisibles across the state, and for you to hear from them. While regular phone calls, texts, or emails can work well, sometimes small group or statewide communication best happens through a platform - a centralized place to talk and share information - and we outline some of your best options below.

Strong communications platform should:

1. Foster engagement and responsiveness
2. Allow for multi-directional sharing of information, ideas, and strategizing - allowing statewide leaders to communicate with groups, groups with leaders, and groups with other groups
3. Be regular & consistent - they should convey valuable information to those who need to hear it in a timely manner.

Eventually, you'll also want to set up systems and norms for how folks use these platforms so that regular communication doesn't become overwhelming or unproductive.

### **What platforms are available?**

While there are endless possibilities, the most common communication platforms Indivisible groups tend to use are Google Groups (via email), Slack, Facebook (normally private groups), and Signal. Below, you can read more about the pros and cons of each of these, along with some tips for using the platform(s) of your choice most effectively.

We recommend 1-2 platforms. If you have more than 2 main ways to communicate, that can create a lot of work for leaders to spread valuable info across all the platforms, and can feel disorganized for your membership. If you're not sure where to start, talk it over with leaders you're beginning to work with across the state, or consult your Organizer.

| Platform                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Pros                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Cons                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Tips                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Facebook</b><br><br>Facebook is a widespread social media platform. A lot of groups (and statewide networks) have BOTH a public Facebook page (for public events, calls to actions, etc.) and a private group (for select members, where the “real” organizing / planning happens). | (+) A lot of people are already on Facebook and using it for organizing-related communications<br><br>(+) A lot of resources exist to help get you and your members familiar with Facebook, as well as their algorithms / tricks<br><br>(+) You can tag specific people to ensure they get a notification | (-) Some people are not on Facebook & will not be willing to join Facebook, so you may not be able to reach everyone<br><br>(-) The algorithms preference certain things and bury others, so it can be hard to ensure everyone is seeing the most up-to-date information<br><br>(-) It’s easy to miss things - Facebook overloads users with notifications, making it easy to miss when tagged in something | - Have a public Page and private Group.<br>- Require people to answer questions (& Group Admin actually review them) before they are accepted.<br>- Suggested questions: email; zip code; how did you hear about the group?<br>- Have a plan to welcome new members to the FB group<br>- Have a plan to regularly “scrub” your private Group members - remove people who have moved, or who never respond or take action. |
| <b>Slack</b><br><br>Slack is a messaging app designed for teams to talk to each other. It feels much like an online office. You can message with individuals or                                                                                                                        | (+) Feels like a specific, unique place for people to go for things related to Indivisible organizing (Facebook and email are often inundated with other topics)<br><br>(+) No algorithm. Posts show up                                                                                                   | (-) Have to download a new app & create an account, and some people are not willing to check another platform/account<br><br>(-) People are often not familiar with it if they don’t                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | - Have a training & onboarding plan to help people not only get on Slack, but also know how to effectively use it. Slack is amazing and can do a lot, but can be overwhelming at worst/underutilized at best if people do not understand how to get around.                                                                                                                                                               |

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| with whole teams or larger groups via “channels.” Can work well on a computer, tablet, or phone.                                      | chronologically.<br><br>(+) You can tag specific people to ensure they get a notification (unlike Facebook where people are overloaded with notifications, Slack’s notifications are specific to when people are tagged) | already use it for work or other volunteering; higher learning curve.                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Google Groups (email)</b><br><br>Google Groups live within Gmail and are an email space within which to message a group of people. | (+) People are familiar with email / low to no learning curve<br><br>(+) Customizable notifications - people can receive every email, digests, abridged, or no emails                                                    | (-) People are inundated with emails, so messages can get lost in the shuffle.<br><br>(-) Unlike Slack or Facebook where you can centrally post group norms or values, Google groups don’t have a “landing page” to easily orient people. | - Have a process in place to onboard people into the Google Group. Could be an intro given over video chat, or a thorough “welcome” email that goes over the norms & expectations for how to use the Google Group. |
| <b>Signal</b><br><br>Signal is a texting app focused on security and often used for group conversation.                               | (+) Secure / encrypted<br><br>(+) Familiar format - looks & functions like a text message thread<br><br>(+) Easy to create “chats” or “group messages” on a specific topic                                               | (-) Linear format, so it can be hard to keep track of things and easy to get inundated with a lot of messages at once.                                                                                                                    | - Appoint someone to “manage” the chat to help make sure conversation stays appropriate, and manage / summarize when there are influxes of information                                                             |



## Communication Pathway #2: Regular Statewide Meetings

Why meetings? You might be thinking, “we already communicate all the time! Why a meeting?” When done well, regular statewide meetings offer opportunities for deeper engagement and connection across your membership, which can be especially valuable in statewide settings where people are dispersed across a wide geography.

A few perks of hosting regular meetings:

1. Some things are better discussed as a group, and require more depth & engagement than you can offer via virtual communications platforms. We all have experienced how much can get lost or misinterpreted when we reply only via text or another form of written communication.
2. Meetings help build deeper connections across groups. Trusting relationships are the foundation of community organizing, and your statewide network offers an avenue for people to build those.
3. Have fun together! Organizing can be tough -- in order to sustain each other, we need to make sure we're enjoying our organizing. Explore ways that your regular meetings can bring energy, laughter, joy, and perspective to your members.
4. Meetings can serve as training opportunities - your Organizer is a great resource to offer trainings and/or connect you with trusted training resources depending on the needs of your state & membership!

Best practices for statewide meetings:

1. *Determine who needs to be there.* Most statewide networks have some sort of liaison(s) between local groups and the statewide network. These could be regional reps, 1-2 reps per group, or something else.
  2. *Determine how often to hold them.* We recommend hosting meetings as often as you feel necessary. The most common occurrence is monthly, but some states meet every other week, while others meet quarterly.
  3. *Make the day, time, and platform consistent.* Survey your members to identify the most optimal time. Not everyone will be able to attend every meeting, so have a notetaker and a way to distribute notes shortly after every meeting. Most groups use Zoom or another video conferencing platform of their choosing - designate someone to set up all your Zooms so they are consistent.
- Other Zoom tips:*

- Make the Zoom event recurring so folks can save the link



- Create a recurring calendar invite and invite all your members. Include the Zoom link and other basic info in the event Description
  - Send reminders (via your platform of choice from above!): Send 1 far in advance, e.g. 1+ week ahead of the meeting if you meet monthly, and a “friendly reminder” 1-2 days ahead of the meeting
  - Zoom does have a monthly cost for bigger meetings, and Google Meet is a great free alternative. Alternately, talk to your Organizer about the option to use Indivisible staff Zoom accounts for major meetings.
4. *Follow agenda best practices.* Send it out ahead of time so that people are prepared to engage, and make time to highlight and celebrate the work that people are doing across the state.
5. *Rotate facilitators & have a schedule for the rotation.* Rotating facilitation keeps the pressure off one person from always having to assemble the agenda and host the call. It also fosters democratic leadership and engagement - people are more engaged when they know that they, too, might be the person creating the agenda & facilitating the meeting soon. Create a schedule, and make sure facilitators send their proposed agenda ahead of time and welcome feedback, in order to best incorporate everyone’s needs.
6. *Assign roles to help you out.* These include:
- Facilitator - sends invite email(s); creates the agenda, sends out agenda at least 1 day in advance, welcomes feedback on agenda & adapts accordingly, facilitates the meeting
  - Recruiter - Supports the facilitator in ensuring everyone has the meeting information and feels welcome; reaches out directly as-needed to remind people of the meeting & summarize the agenda

*The following roles can be assigned once the meeting starts:*

- Notetaker - takes notes during the meeting, ideally on a shared notes document or some other means that allows you to promptly share the notes with all members who can’t make it to the meeting
- Time keeper - ensures the meeting is flowing according to the agenda
- Tangent buster - kindly interjects when people get off topic; helps ensure there is a plan to follow up on that person’s topic at a more appropriate time
- Follow-up - someone to send information to both attendees and absentees after the call with an overview of the call and key next steps

So - you’ve started making connections across the state, figured out some communication pathways, talked through your shared values and a mutual goal...what now? You might want to start considering the next part: action!



## Part 4: Action

Indivisible groups know how to use their constituent powers by taking impactful action that moves them towards their organizing goal. A statewide network can help all the groups achieve more ambitious goals together thanks to statewide coordination. The good news is that all you need is a dream-big mindset, persistence, Indivisible friends, and your trusty organizing skills, such as goal setting, strategy, and tactics.

Why is statewide action so powerful and worthwhile? You know the issues of your state and the state of politics better than anyone. Problems that seem insurmountable don't have to feel so daunting. Getting marginalized communities to the negotiating table so solutions actually solve the problems doesn't have to be a pipe dream. The groups in your state can work together and achieve the unthinkable, shift how politics is played, and inspire others along the way. Moreover, statewide networks are powerful for national organizing - elected officials will know your power when they sense the alliance of a full state coming at them!

Strong statewide action will be a mixture of good communication, timing, and getting many hands to make light work.

- First, you need to get clear on your goal and choose the right tactic to work toward meeting it.
- Next, identify roles and responsibilities needed to carry out that tactic and recruit people to own them. For example, let's say your tactic is to have a statewide meeting with a US Senator that they agree to after reading a letter from your statewide network. Break everything down on a timeline and bite-size pieces. Some people might draft the letter, while others' roles are to set up and promote the meeting.
- Finally, you'll need regular communication around carrying out the plan. Help everyone see the big picture as well as the work being done in sub-teams. Celebrate the work folks are doing to make it happen!

Here are a couple of examples of statewide actions Indivisible networks have taken:

- *Local action:* Indivisibles in Arizona organize together for mutual aid work to get masks to indigenous communities during the pandemic. *State action:* Texas Indivisibles supported Democratic state legislators who withheld a quorum and flew to DC to fight voter suppression laws in the TX legislature.
- *Federal action:* Indivisibles in Washington organized a statewide meeting with Senator Patty Murray, which helped open up more communication, and



strengthen their relationship with her, and push her on passing voting rights legislation by any means necessary.

Other statewide actions could include:

- Coordinated social media blitz
- Statewide letter
- Statewide video
- Coordinated office visits (in-person or virtual)
- Coordinated rallies with earned media
- Call-in day
- Statewide meeting with elected
- Having an elected be a keynote speaker at your statewide convening
- Letter to the editor campaign

Another great place to start with coordinated action is to plug into Indivisible's national priorities around democracy reform, economic justice, climate, healthcare, and immigration. We regularly have major Weeks of Action around crucial moments in Congress, and holding an event can be a way to bring in new people and show the power of your group.

***“We just completed our first successful rally with the Deadline For Democracy... our rally in St. Louis was really our crowning achievement and such a great event because our leaders from around Missouri came to the city to join me in this joint rally. We had over 200+ attendees, with a variety of speakers such as elected officials and voting rights and faith leaders...we were able to generate local press too. This was exciting and proof that we are stronger together and building our state coalition is something that will help Missouri...Being able to show up for each other in all areas of the state when needed is also critically needed in our state. People need to see progressives so maybe they will be motivated to join us and we can flip this state!”***  
***-Debbie Kitchen, Indivisible Missouri Coalition***

You can build your capacity for statewide coordinated action most centrally through the relationship building you will already be doing to build your network. When you and fellow leaders across the state are talking with each other about what's going on both nationally and locally, the moments where it's time to show up for each other or rally together will become clear. Over time, this can also set you up to be in coalition with other organizations across the state who share values and work on similar issues.



Statewide actions often require some work both to recruit attendees and to gain press attention. Indivisible has extensive resources to help you out in these realms - ask your Organizer when the time comes!



## Part 5: Infrastructure, Inclusion, & Sustainability

No one can organize for social change alone - let alone build a statewide network to support that organizing! Designated leadership roles, ongoing leadership development, intentional practices around inclusion, and succession plans all help us avoid burnout, reduce harm, and make our work more powerful.

Here's what strong, inclusive statewide infrastructure and sustainability might look like:

- Defined roles exist, including a leadership team.
- State organization is democratic and inclusive - for example, leadership roles rotate with some regularity, there's a process for taking input from groups across the state, decision-making processes are intentional & designed for inclusion, and so forth.
- Leadership is diverse and representative of communities within the state as well as the geographic distribution of the state.
- The state network develops and supports leaders of marginalized identities, such as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), people with disabilities, and queer & trans people.
- A process exists for welcoming/onboarding new members and groups into the statewide network.
- The state network seeks out and maintains relationships with frontline groups - communities most impacted by harmful policies and inequity.
- Leaders in the state network have a succession plan - a plan for what will happen if or when someone in leadership leaves.

That might sound like a lot! But remember: you don't have to execute this all from the start! As you're working on developing the state network with other leaders in the state and with your Organizer, come back to this list - and to other qualities of sustainability and inclusion that your team unearths together - to consider how you're doing and how you want to grow. Much like shared values and other aspects of this work, you can identify a priority area of growth and focus on that for a period of time - then reassess in a few months.

Here are some things to consider in working on infrastructure, inclusion, and sustainability:

*Defining roles and creating a leadership team:* Shape your state network's roles and leadership team around your mutual goal and the actions you hope to take together,



as well as around the strengths and interests of people who are getting involved and willing to step into leadership. You can use traditional roles or role names like “treasurer” if they’re useful to you, but you don’t have to fill a preexisting roster unless that’s helpful.

*Prioritizing inclusion:* If you’re a white group leader, ask your Organizer about, and then work through, Indivisible’s resources on understanding & undoing white supremacy culture and building inclusive groups. If you don’t have this kind of practice already, begin a regular practice around what we might call being accountable to your whiteness - examining how you perpetuate white supremacy, how your whiteness impacts your behavior in small group spaces, and how you can avoid harming people of color in organizing spaces. This is not about diversifying for the sake of diversity - that will only lead to tokenization of people of color or putting undue burden or extra work on group members of color. Rather, it’s about building an inclusive group culture where people of marginalized identities are safe and able to thrive.

For all statewide network leaders, inclusion is a forever practice of understanding how group culture norms might exclude or make a space inaccessible to people, particularly people of marginalized identities. Read up on accessibility, gender inclusion, and anti-racism. Whatever your particular gaps in inclusive practice might be as a leader or a state network might be, work to narrow them.

*Onboarding new members:* Indivisible has a [guide](#) on how to do this well!

*Coalition-building:* Coalition-building is often most possible once a group or state network has had time to establish itself and create a foundation of working together. If or when you’re ready to start building coalitions with other organizations or frontline communities in the state, start by assessing what connections the groups and leaders you’re working with already have. How can you strengthen those connections? Can leaders or members of your state network show up for meetings, events, or major moments led by those groups?

Next, start to research and follow organizations in the state whose work aligns most closely with your values, goals, and planned next actions. If you don’t have any contacts with some of these groups, starting to attend their meetings and events can be a great way to get the conversation started. Again, it will be a matter of building relationships over time, so do all the things in coalition relationships that you’ve been doing to build up your network in the first place.



*Succession plans:* Although they can be hard to think about when you're just getting started, at some point it makes sense to start thinking about what would or could happen if a key leader in your network might need to step down. Ask your Organizer for resources when you're ready.