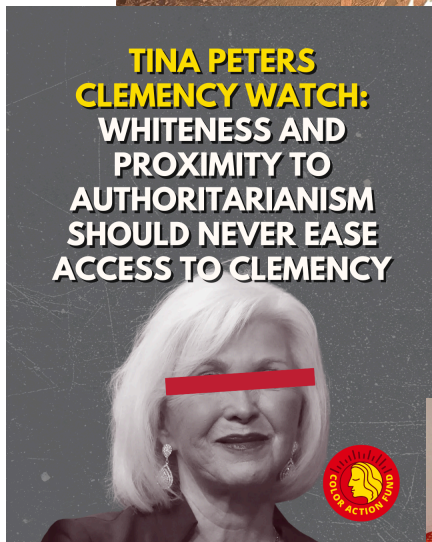


Building a Political Home: The COLOR Action Fund Field Guide to People Power

2026 Colorado Primary Election Impact Report



Published by COLOR Action Fund, July 2026

**Documenting a Latina Reproductive Justice
Model for building long-term community power.**

Why a Field Guide?

Every election produces reports, vote counts, summarized expenditures, and documented campaign activities, but those records rarely capture the deeper work of movement building: the relationships formed, the trust earned, the expectations raised, and the political understanding and action that grows within communities over time.

The COLOR Action Fund Field Guide to People Power is the first volume in a series documenting what we are learning about building enduring political power with and alongside Latine communities in Colorado. As Colorado's only Latina-led reproductive justice political organization, elections are one moment within a much longer process of building leadership, strengthening relationships, advancing political education and representation, and creating lasting accountability between communities and those who seek to represent them.

Executive Summary: Building a Political Home

Political campaigns often measure success by how many advertisements were delivered, how many voters were contacted, or how many candidates were elected. But they do not fully explain how communities build political power. We believe elections should leave communities stronger. That means communities should finish every election cycle with:

- greater political and systems understanding,
- stronger relationships,
- higher expectations for public leadership,
- tools to hold elected officials accountable,
- increased confidence to participate,
- and a deeper sense of belonging in democracy.



Throughout Colorado's 2026 Primary Election, COLOR Action Fund intentionally layered accountability, reproductive justice organizing, bilingual communications, political education, community events, narrative change, media, endorsements, digital organizing, and voter engagement into one coordinated strategy designed to strengthen long-term community power. This Field Guide introduces two concepts that help describe that work.

The first is **Political Saturation**, our framework for measuring whether communities experienced repeated opportunities to engage with trusted political connections throughout an election cycle.

The second is **Cultural Congruence**, our commitment to ensuring our work reflects the language, culture, values, identities, and lived experiences of the communities we organize alongside.

Together, these concepts form the foundation of what we are calling the **Latina Reproductive Justice Electoral Model**.

Rather than approaching elections as isolated campaigns, our electoral model understands civic participation as relationship building. It recognizes that trust grows through repetition, accountability, cultural relevance, authenticity, and sustained investment in community. During the 2026 Primary Election, communities across COLOR Action Fund's priority districts experienced between 8 and 15 distinct organizational touchpoints through candidate accountability, Community Power Town Halls, bilingual newsletters, narrative campaigns, social media, local media partnerships, direct communications, political education, hand-addressed postcards, community events, and targeted paid digital communications, including more than 1.6 million accountability-focused impressions in Congressional District 8. **Each touchpoint reinforced the others and created something larger than a campaign; they helped build a political home.**

Our Theory of Change: Building a Political Home

For generations, Latine communities have organized through relationships with families, neighbors, faith leaders, teachers, laborers, organizers, and movement builders. Political power grows in exactly the same way, through repeated experiences that strengthen trust, belonging, and collective action.

Reproductive justice is more than protecting the right to make decisions about our bodies. It is the belief that every person deserves the resources, dignity, safety, and political power necessary to make decisions about their lives, families, and futures. That belief shapes every aspect of our electoral work. Rather than asking communities to participate only when ballots arrive, we invest year-round in creating opportunities for political learning, public accountability, cultural connection, and shared leadership.

This is what we mean by Building a Political Home. Our political home is a place where people belong, recognize themselves in leadership, understand how power works, expect accountability, experience joy alongside civic participation, and where democracy feels personal because it is rooted in community.

Measuring What Matters: Political Saturation

Traditional campaign reporting often measures individual tactics. Political Saturation measures the cumulative experience communities have throughout an election cycle. It asks a different question: **Did communities repeatedly encounter trusted political education rooted in reproductive justice?**

The COLOR Action Fund model of political saturation measures five dimensions:

1. **Frequency:** How consistently communities encountered COLOR Action Fund.
2. **Diversity:** The number of different organizing strategies reinforcing one another.
3. **Trusted Messengers:** Whether engagement came from people already trusted within community.
4. **Political Accountability:** Whether candidates were expected to earn community trust through transparency and participation.
5. **Cultural Congruence:** Whether communications reflected the language, values, identities, and lived experiences of Latine communities.

These dimensions help explain not simply what COLOR Action Fund did, but how we intentionally strengthened long-term community power.

2026 Primary Election: Six Months of Layered People-Power Engagement

Between January and June 2026, COLOR Action Fund built a year-round political ecosystem across endorsements, candidate accountability, community events, bilingual communications, direct outreach, narrative change, local media, digital engagement, and cultural organizing. Each tactic represented a different pathway for community members to encounter reproductive justice values, bold Latina leadership, progressive political education, and accountable community-centered candidates.

Political Leadership and Electoral Outcomes

COLOR Action Fund reimagined its endorsement process to center progressive values, reproductive justice, public transparency, and accountability to Latine communities. Candidates were assessed not only on stated positions, but on how they showed up, whose interests shaped their leadership, and whether they were prepared to govern in alignment with community. **Across the full endorsed COLOR Action Fund slate, 9 of 12 endorsed candidates won their primary elections, for an overall success rate of approximately 75%.**

- 7 of 8 endorsed state legislative candidates won - 87.5%
- 2 of 3 endorsed statewide executive candidates won - 66.7%
- 1 of 2 endorsed federal candidates won - 50%



People-powered Candidate Investment

Through COLOR Action Fund's Small Donor Committee, four endorsed candidates received \$1,000 each, for a total of \$4,000 in direct, transparent, people-powered contributions: Neal Walia - HD-9, Consuelo Red Horse - HD-13, Gabriel Cervantes - HD-31, Chela García-Irlando - SD-34. The SDC offered a direct counterpoint to dark money politics: equal contribution levels, no special access, and political support rooted in shared values rather than concentrated wealth.



Leadership Development Becomes Electoral Power

Among the seven endorsed state legislative candidates who won their primary elections was **Gabriel Cervantes**, an alumnus of the first Reproductive Justice Academy cohort. Fellow RJ Academy alumni volunteered to manage and phone-bank for Cervantes' successful HD-31 campaign, demonstrating how leadership development can cultivate the relationships, skills, and infrastructure necessary to run and win values-aligned campaigns.

RJ Academy alumni were also highly politically active throughout the primary election cycle. Alumni knocked doors, volunteered, organized within their communities, and supported endorsed candidates across multiple races. Their participation reflected an important evolution in COLOR Action Fund's leadership pipeline: community members who first entered through reproductive justice education were now helping shape electoral outcomes and build political power in their own communities.

This leadership pathway extended into federal races. **Melat Kiros**, COLOR Action Fund's endorsed candidate in Congressional District 1, is a member of the second RJ Academy cohort. Her participation illustrates that the RJ Academy is not simply preparing people to understand public policy. It is creating a political home where emerging leaders can deepen their values, strengthen relationships, and pursue many different forms of public leadership.



Candidate Interviews and Public Engagement

The primary program began before ballots were mailed. COLOR Action Fund created repeated opportunities for candidates to demonstrate accountability directly to community.

- 18 state legislative candidates participated in two invitational group interview sessions
- Additional endorsement interviews were conducted for Secretary of State and U.S. Senate
- Community Power Town Halls placed candidates directly before voters
- All town halls were livestreamed, archived on the primary election landing page, and retained on Instagram so community members could watch, engage, and make informed decisions for themselves.

Direct Mail That Felt Like Community

COLOR Action Fund mailed 1,043 handwritten endorsed-candidate postcards between June 17 and June 19. The postcards were deliberately handwritten and sent to connections already within the organization's community. They were designed to counter the volume and anonymity of dark money mail with something recognizable: a message from people they knew and trusted. That distinction is central to the Field Guide: Dark money purchases repetition. COLOR Action Fund builds recognition through relationships.

- 177 postcards supporting Neal Walia in HD-9
- 332 postcards supporting Iris Halpern in HD-6
- 534 postcards supporting Chela Garcia-Irlando in SD-34



Documented Direct Event Participation

Across the three events with documented attendance or RSVPs, COLOR Action Fund reached at least 500 community participants. This excludes participation in the state legislative interviews, the Colorado Latino/a Advocacy Day Action Fund reception and gubernatorial town hall, livestream audiences, and community members who engaged with the archived recordings.



Community Power Town Halls and Events

Community Power Town Halls were intentionally designed to remove barriers to participation. Every event was free to attend, offered bilingual interpretation and language accessibility, and was hosted in communities across Colorado. Community members helped shape the questions and priorities presented to candidates, ensuring conversations reflected the lived realities of Latine communities. Rather than centering campaign talking points, candidates responded to community-defined issues using a reproductive justice lens, including healthcare, immigration, housing, democracy, education, public safety, economic justice, and climate action.



CD-8 Community Power Town Hall

Congressional District 8 is a nationally recognized battleground race and a Latine-influenced district where relatively narrow electoral margins carry statewide and national consequences.

- More than 100 community members attended
- Held at Thornton High School
- Co-hosted with Colorado Working Families Power

Attorney General Community Power Town Hall

- 30 community members attended in Pueblo
- Held at El Pueblo History Museum
- Co-hosted with El Movimiento Sigue

CD-1 Community Power Town Hall

- More than 75 community RSVPs
- Held at Blossom House in Westwood
- Co-hosted with Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition

Gubernatorial Community Power Townhalls

- 277 community members attended
- Held at Colorado Latino/a Advocacy Day 2026
- Co-hosted with Voces Unidas Action Fund

Election Night Open House

- Approximately 50 attendees
- Combined primary election results, Mexico's FIFA match, food, conversation, and a moños ribbon station.
- Used culture and celebration to make electoral engagement feel relational, joyful, and rooted in belonging.

Email as a Layer of Political Saturation

Email carried several different functions throughout the election cycle: event invitations, political education, narrative accountability, earned-media distribution, and district-specific candidate contact. COLOR Action Fund delivered at least 23,142 email touchpoints distributed across four distinct communications streams.

Community Power Town Hall invitations: Three documented event invitations reached 3,062 recipients with a combined weighted open rate of approximately 57.9%.

Soft Power Field Notes: Four documented editions reached 5,226 recipients with a combined weighted open rate of approximately 59.7%. The unusually strong open rates show that audiences were not simply tolerating COLOR Action Fund's political analysis. They were actively choosing to engage with it.

Media Releases and Long-Form Political Analysis: Eight documented statewide sends reached 12,107 recipients, with a combined weighted open rate of approximately 48.2%. Individual open rates ranged from 39.19% to 65%. The sends included:

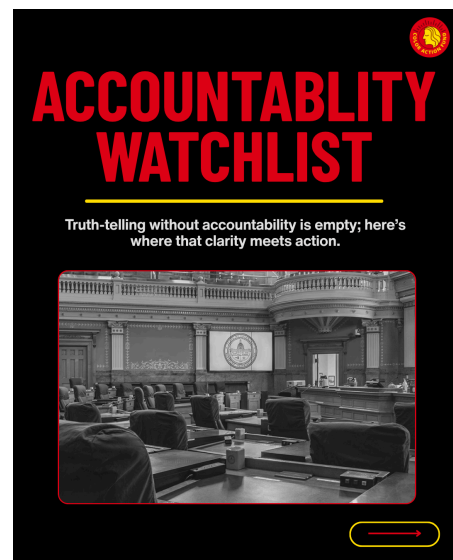
- There Is No Such Thing as Neutral Money in Politics
- 2026 Endorsements: Backing Bold, Accountable Reproductive Justice Leadership
- Presence, Perspective, and Power in CD-8
- When "Pragmatic" Becomes a Shield
- Dear Elected Officials: Tell the Truth About Healthcare in Colorado
- COLOR Action Fund Endorses David Seligman
- Whiteness and Proximity to Authoritarianism
- Some Candidates Want Our Votes. Not Our Questions.

District-Specific Endorsed Candidate Emails: These emails were direct, district-specific messages to people already connected to COLOR Action Fund, informing them that a reproductive justice-aligned candidate was running in their own community. Six targeted sends reached 2,747 community members within the COLOR Action Fund ecosystem with a combined weighted open rate of approximately 30.7%.

Soft Power Field Notes and the Accountability Watchlist: Soft Power Field Notes translated political dynamics into clear, bold, progressive analysis rooted in culture and reproductive justice. The Accountability Watchlist tracked leaders through:

- With the People
- On Notice
- Policy Watch

It connected vote counts, public actions, and political behavior to tangible community impact. The developing La Chancla or La Bendición frame added joy, humor, and cultural familiarity to accountability without diluting its seriousness.



Narrative and Local Media Power

Hard Lines & Red Lines

Over six weeks leading into the June 30 primary, COLOR Action Fund used Hard Lines & Red Lines to distinguish among people-powered leadership, status quo politics, and the influence of dark money. The campaign gave community members a vocabulary for evaluating leadership beyond party labels alone.

The campaign included:

- An initial narrative framework
- CD-8 accountability content
- Candidate contrasts in HD-33, HD-31, SD-34, HD-13, HD-6 and statewide races
- People-powered candidate profiles
- Women of Color and Denver-core thematic weeks
- Repeated slate graphics and full-candidate run-backs

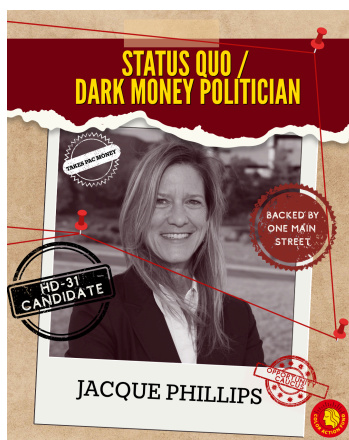
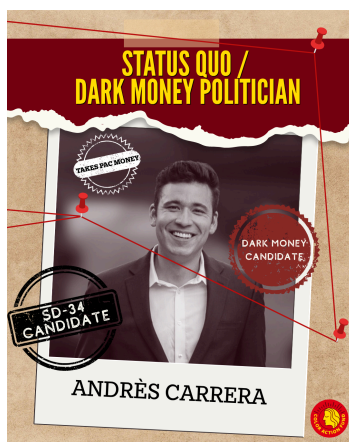
Website Engagement and Political Information Seeking

The Primary Election landing page became the sixth most visited page on the website with more than six times the views of a typical page and approximately three times the average engagement. Between January and June, the COLOR Action Fund website recorded:

- 2,365 total sessions
- 1,225 engaged sessions
- 51.8% overall engagement rate
- 13,796 recorded events

Organic search delivered the highest-quality traffic, with 536 sessions and a 72.57% engagement rate. Referral traffic also performed strongly, with 788 sessions and a 64.97% engagement rate.

These metrics suggest that people were actively seeking political information from COLOR Action Fund and spending time engaging with it.



Organic Social Media Impact

From January through June 2026, COLOR Action Fund organically generated 500,368 views, 43,714 interactions, and 6,196 net new followers.

January's viral accountability content accounted for:

- 40.1% of all six-month views
- 55.9% of all interactions
- 72.8% of all new followers

A trend-aligned, short-form video identifying organizations connected to ICE surpassed 110,900 views, generated 8,900 interactions, and added 2,000 followers. TikTok activity that month generated 86,000 views, 15,500 interactions, and 2,500 new followers. The performance demonstrated the appetite for bold, specific, locally grounded political education, particularly content willing to expose systems of power rather than speak around them. Instagram remained the primary channel across the six-month period:

- 334,800 views
- 22,089 interactions
- 3,316 net new followers

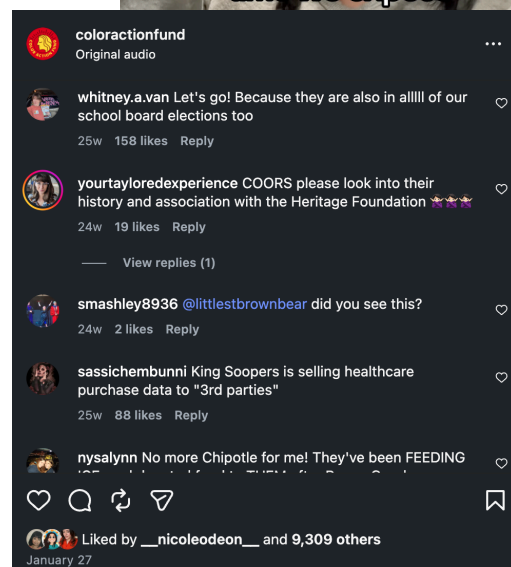
El Semanario Partnership: Latino Media Infrastructure

COLOR Action Fund partnered with El Semanario, a local, independent, Latino-owned bilingual newsroom, to expand political commentary, narrative distribution, candidate education, and trusted electoral communications. Four documented op-eds were published during the primary election period on January 15, February 19, May 7, and June 18.

In addition to political analysis, COLOR Action Fund invested in an eight-week endorsed-candidate advertising campaign with El Semanario. Weekly advertisements repeatedly introduced readers to COLOR Action Fund's endorsed slate and reinforced people-powered, reproductive justice-aligned governance. The extended buy was significant because political awareness is rarely created through a single message. Eight consecutive weeks gave Latine readers repeated opportunities to encounter the endorsed slate through a familiar, bilingual, community-rooted source. This was both a communications strategy and a movement infrastructure strategy by investing in the long-term strength of a local newsroom that informs and reflects Colorado's Latine communities.

The partnership advanced several priorities at once:

- Expanded access to political information through bilingual Latino media
- Reinforced endorsed candidates through repeated visibility
- Connected electoral participation to COLOR Action Fund's broader political analysis
- Reached audiences through an established and trusted community messenger
- Invested campaign resources directly in independent Latino-owned media infrastructure



Paid Digital Accountability in Congressional District 8

Congressional District 8 is both a nationally watched battleground and one of Colorado's most significant Latino congressional districts. COLOR Action Fund invested in a targeted C4 digital campaign designed to strengthen political accountability among CD-8 audiences. The campaign focused on two interconnected accountability narratives about Governor Polis' policy and budget priorities, including proposed prison infrastructure and accountability for current CD-8 Representative Gabe Evans

The campaign delivered:

- 1,623,228 paid digital impressions
- 16,691 clicks
- 1.03% blended click-through rate

The campaign's strongest-performing message was "Polis Accountability," which led across both desktop and mobile placements. Its performance indicated consistent audience interest in communications that directly connected political leadership to governing choices and community consequences.

Mobile placements outperformed desktop placements, averaging 1.10% CTR compared with 0.96% on desktop. The performance of the mobile formats was particularly important in a geographically expansive district. High-impact mobile placements made accountability messaging accessible across multiple municipalities and enabled COLOR Action Fund to reach people through the devices they use daily.

This campaign performance reinforces one of COLOR Action Fund's core strategic lessons: Communities respond when political communications clearly identify who holds power, what decisions are being made, and how those decisions affect people's lives. The CD-8 investment added a substantial paid layer to the district's Political Saturation. Community members encountered COLOR Action Fund through the Community Power Town Hall, candidate accountability, local and earned media, organic social content, website resources, direct communications, and more than 1.6 million targeted paid impressions.

Culture as Civic Storytelling

During the Primary Election run-up, COLOR Action Fund commissioned two artisan, custom-designed piñatas by a local Latine artist, transforming cultural tradition into a bold act of civic storytelling.

Created in response to congressional candidates Diana DeGette and Shannon Bird declining invitations to participate in COLOR's Community Power Town Halls, the installation generated significant statewide attention and public dialogue about political accountability, community engagement, and the power of culturally rooted narrative strategies.

Both candidates later lost their primary elections.



Political Saturation at a Glance

Over the course of the 2026 Primary Election, COLOR Action Fund generated an estimated 3 million opportunities for people in Colorado to encounter reproductive justice values, political education, candidate accountability, and community-centered democracy. Priority districts experienced between 8 and 15 distinct organizational touchpoints over six months through an intentionally layered strategy. This estimate reflects the cumulative ecosystem created through documented paid and organic digital communications, bilingual email, direct mail, community events, local media partnerships, earned media, relational organizing, leadership development, volunteer engagement, and partner amplification.

The six-month strategy included, at minimum:

- 18 legislative candidate interview participants
- additional statewide and federal endorsement interviews
- an endorsed legislative winner who graduated from RJ Academy Cohort One
- an RJ Academy alumnus serving as campaign manager for an endorsed candidate
- RJ Academy alumni knocking doors and volunteering across endorsed campaigns
- an endorsed federal candidate participating in RJ Academy Cohort Two
- four major Community Power Town Halls or forums
- at least 500 documented event attendees or RSVPs
- livestreamed and archived candidate conversations
- 12 endorsed candidates
- 9 endorsed-candidate primary victories
- \$4,000 in SDC contributions
- 1,043 handwritten postcards
- 23,142 documented email deliveries
- four Soft Power Field Notes editions
- eight statewide media and political-analysis sends
- six district-specific endorsed-candidate emails
- four El Semanario op-eds
- eight consecutive weeks of endorsed-candidate advertising with a bilingual, Latino-owned newsroom
- a six-week Hard Lines & Red Lines campaign
- 500,368 organic social views
- 43,714 social interactions
- 6,196 new followers
- 2,365 website sessions
- 13,796 website events
- a primary landing page performing more than six times above the typical site page
- 1,623,228 paid digital impressions in nationally watched Congressional District 8
- 16,691 paid digital clicks
- a 1.03% blended paid digital click-through rate
- Launch of COLOR Victory Fund, an Independent Expenditure Committee to support or oppose candidates in Colorado and make independent expenditures expressly advocating for or against the election of candidates.



Elections Reveal the Infrastructure Built Between Elections

The 2026 Primary Election demonstrated that COLOR Action Fund's greatest electoral asset was never a single advertisement, endorsement, event, or communications platform. It was the political home built through years of reproductive justice organizing, leadership development, strategic decision-making, and trusted relationships.

Throughout the 2026 Primary Election, those long-term investments became visible. Reproductive Justice Academy alumni entered the cycle as candidates, campaign leaders, organizers, and volunteers. Trusted Latino media partners carried endorsed candidate messages into community week after week. Community members encountered accountability through Community Power Town Halls, bilingual communications, handwritten postcards, local media, organic storytelling, and targeted paid digital campaigns. Each layer reinforced the others because it was built on relationships that existed long before ballots were mailed.



By Election Day, communities were not encountering COLOR Action Fund for the first time; they were encountering relationships intentionally built over months and, in many cases, years, in the language of their hearts. This is the Latina Reproductive Justice Electoral Model in practice.

We begin with community. We develop leaders before they run for office. We create repeated opportunities for learning, engagement, culture, and accountability because trust is built over time, not during the final weeks of a campaign. The result is more than electoral success. It is a growing ecosystem capable of producing organizers, campaign staff, volunteers, trusted messengers, community advocates, public leaders, and future candidates.

This ecosystem extends beyond our own organization. It includes values-aligned partners, bilingual and community-rooted media, a Latina-owned, women-led digital strategy firm, artists, storytellers, coalition partners, and local leaders who strengthen the collective infrastructure that communities rely on before, during, and after Election Day.

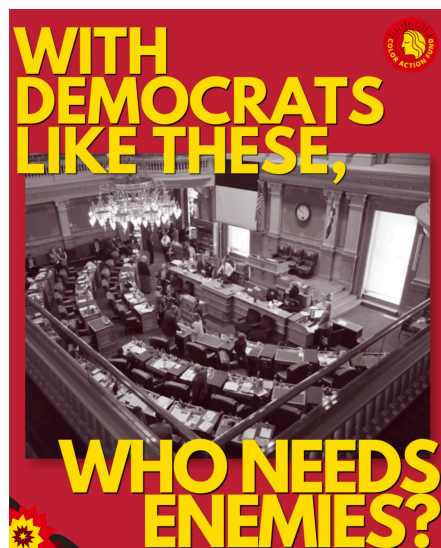


Elections don't build political power. They reveal the strength of the infrastructure built between them.

Political Courage Is Infrastructure

One of the defining characteristics of the 2026 Primary Election was not simply the number of candidates we endorsed or the number of voters we reached. It was our willingness to tell difficult political truths before they became politically convenient.

Throughout the election cycle, COLOR Action Fund consistently entered conversations many organizations avoided, delayed, or softened. We challenged the myth of "neutral" money in politics. We examined how decorum politics can become a shield for preserving harmful systems. We questioned healthcare narratives that asked marginalized communities to justify access to care. We named the influence of dark money networks operating within Democratic politics. We argued that proximity to authoritarianism should never be normalized simply because it is politically expedient.



These were examples of narrative leadership. Each analysis offered communities a framework for understanding power before the broader political conversation caught up. Political education requires helping communities understand how power operates, who benefits from existing systems, and why accountability matters, even when those conversations are uncomfortable.

Our role is to strengthen people's ability to recognize power, question power, and hold power accountable long after elections end. That work carries risk. It invites criticism. It challenges political relationships. It rejects the safety of vague language when communities deserve specificity. But reproductive justice has never asked us to pursue comfort over truth. The political home we are building depends on trust. Trust depends on honesty. And honesty sometimes requires saying what others will not.

Truth Is the Currency of Accountability

Throughout this Field Guide, we have documented events, endorsements, communications, leadership development, and election outcomes. Underneath every strategy lies a deeper commitment that shapes how COLOR Action Fund understands power: communities deserve the truth.



That commitment has required us to make choices that are not always easy. We named the influence of dark money. We examined the role of organizations like One Main Street, Advance Colorado, and the Opportunity Caucus when their political influence affected the communities we organize alongside. We asked difficult questions of candidates regardless of political party or position. We challenged decisions made by elected officials we have worked with and respected. We reported honestly about what we observed because accountability cannot exist without transparency. Our platform exists because communities have entrusted us with their stories, experiences, and hopes for a more just Colorado. That trust carries responsibility.

We believe political information should never be treated as insider knowledge available only to those with access, proximity, or privilege. Communities become more powerful when they understand how decisions are made, who is influencing them, and what those decisions mean for their everyday lives. Our commitment to report back, remain honest, and refuse to gatekeep is one of the ways we practice reproductive justice.

Pa'lante.

The **Latina Reproductive Justice Electoral Model** was designed to change how political power is built. The 2026 Primary Election represents one chapter in a much longer effort to build durable, community-rooted political power across Colorado. Communities deserve political infrastructure that exists before, during, and after Election Day.

In the months ahead, COLOR Action Fund will continue expanding:

- **General Election Leadership:** Additional endorsements grounded in reproductive justice, accountability, and community leadership, not political convenience.
- **Ballot Measure Organizing:** Education and organizing around harmful ballot measures backed by Advance Colorado and other nefarious players, helping communities understand the harm while building collective power to defeat them.
- **Narrative & Digital Infrastructure:** Continued investment toward in-house storytelling, political analysis, strategic paid communications, expanded resources, and values-aligned partnerships, including our Latina-owned, women-led digital strategy partner, to ensure political information remains accessible, culturally grounded, and actionable.
- **Building the Political Home:** Community organizing, candidate accountability events, relationship-building, and opportunities for community to learn, gather, organize, and lead together.
- **Growing Leadership:** Implementing RJ Academy Cohort Two, continuing to develop organizers, advocates, public leaders, and future candidates rooted in reproductive justice values.
- **Refining the Model:** Expanding and testing this framework across legislative, municipal, statewide, and party leadership elections while continuing to build long-term community power.

During this election cycle, COLOR Action Fund also expanded its organizational infrastructure through the launch of the COLOR Victory Fund. This investment allows our electoral work to grow alongside our organizing while remaining rooted in reproductive justice values and long-term community accountability.

To our knowledge, no other political organization is documenting elections through a Latina reproductive justice framework that integrates organizing, narrative strategy, leadership development, accountability, communications, and electoral infrastructure into a single model for building long-term community power. This Field Guide is evidence that a Latina-led reproductive justice organization can build sophisticated, culturally grounded, statewide political infrastructure with a small team, deep community relationships, and an unwavering commitment to collective liberation. **Imagine what could be built if organizations like ours were consistently resourced to match the scale of the impact they are already creating.**

