

## Indivisible Listening Tour Webinar Notes

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### A. Statistics and Overview

There are currently almost 6,000 chapters across the nation, with at least 2 (and an average of 13) per Congressional district. Many of us were motivated to join by Trump's election, our sense of isolation, and our need to do something. Many of us are first-time organizers. Most of our leadership is from women. Our members are staying involved because we feel a sense of community. It is important to know that we have each other's backs.

### B. What is Working

1. Group leaders are rising to the challenge and hanging on for dear life.
2. Members find it most helpful they are able to do direct actions and have clear, step-by-step implementation directions.
3. Structure helps (e.g., steering committee, teams).
4. Following the Guide helps.
5. Coordination between groups at CD and state levels really helps.

### C. Challenges to keeping people engaged

keeping core folks involved while expanding membership

2. internal communication
3. difficulties linking with other chapters to collaborate and share innovations, best practices
4. internal divisions along political lines, degree of progressiveness, class and culture, tactics
5. battle fatigue--we need strategies for helping people develop leadership and find new support when folks need to step down or take a breather
6. technology is a barrier for those who are not tech-adept
7. one of the best ways to retain members is to focus on successes, but we lack easy, reliable means of measurement (e.g., participation, impact)

### D. Best Practices for keeping people engaged

1. hold regular group meetings (at least once a month) to keep up momentum and give a chance to work with others
2. live-stream meetings if possible (to increase participation)
3. use every possible means for cross-channel communication (FB, websites, calendars, etc.) in order to engage the most folks possible
4. use everyone's skills: groups who use everyone's skills do maintain member interest and get more done.
5. 3 make NMO's an opportunity to create a member engagement pipeline
  - ask members where and how they want to fit in
  - ask members how they want to use their skills
  - let them know what we are focusing on
  - ask members how we can better do what we are already doing
6. community creation and maintenance keep groups healthy and strong: meeting and getting to know new friends who are helping you carry the emotional weight of what is happening is really important. Implementation ideas:
  - social events : post-meeting potlucks, movie nights, TGIF.
  - providing emotional support for folks when jarring news come out
  - providing opportunities to celebrate small and incremental successes
7. pass around the leadership on a rotating basis (this is helpful as a means to give people input and buy-in and helps to prevent burn-out by sharing the load)

### E. Challenges and Best Practices: Diversity and Inclusion

1. Race and class diversity in membership is a challenge for many Indivisible chapters.
2. Many people in under-represented groups have faced oppression their entire lives and have organized around these issues for decades.
3. Many Indivisible groups lack training in anti-black racism and anti-oppression work, and because of this, our work and spaces can be unfriendly to people of color.
4. Because of our lack of diversity and lack of training, many groups lack contacts with people-of-color-led organizations.

5. We have work to do to reach out to such organizations and work with them.
6. So some best practices are to partner with people-of-color-led organizations: Black Lives Matter, United We Dream, NAACP, to build relationships, show up at their events.
7. Hold teach-ins using SURJ about white supremacy, anti-black racism and how to fight it.

## **F. Challenges in Deep Blue, Deep Red States**

1. In Red states, hopelessness, trolling, best engage with folks who deeply disagree, stress.
2. in Blue states, not enough to do.
3. Local-issue work (e.g. voter registration, immigrant rights, forums, Civics 101, fund-raising for other organizations) can be helpful to keep folks engaged and do relevant work (in addition to working the Congressional front) when there is less margin for gain at the Congressional level.
4. The Indivisible agenda really depends on folks doing work in these states. We need to be absolutely everywhere. The constant pressure of MoCs knowing that we are there and pushing them across the nation is what is pushing the Congress to a more progressive stance.

## **G. Electoral Work**

### **1. Groups overall are not experienced electorally.**

### **2. SHARED GOALS:** There is a lot of unity in these goals across chapters.

- a. wanting to win back the House and drive everything to the left. Indivisiblers want to elect more progressive Democrats and where there are Republicans in power, more moderate Republicans or more moderate Democrats.
- b. Indivisiblers want to make this happen from the ground up: taking seats at local, state, and national level.
- c. Indivisiblers want viable candidates. There is some fear that the Indivisible national team is going to come up with a roster of unelectable hyper-liberal candidates--they will not do this.
- d. Indivisiblers are interested in recruiting candidates and building the bench in their districts.

### **3. CHALLENGES:**

#### a. party unity:

1. Indivisiblers are deeply concerned about not re-litigating the Bernie/Hillary divide which is already contentious in some chapters.
2. In conservative regions, concern about dealing with hot-button issues like immigration, abortion, police reform, civil rights.
3. A minority of groups are deeply concerned about contention of making endorsements in primaries, viewing them as divisive.
4. Worry about being duplicative or in opposition with Democratic-affiliated groups.

#### b. In very conservative districts:

1. concern about perception of the national organization as a very progressive group impacting the local groups.
2. how to reach out to conservative voters when it seems they are very fragile and defensive.
3. need a rural strategy where people are really spread out.
4. need help in areas where the local/national Democratic party seems to have given up and are not making an effort.

### **4. ELECTIONS: WHAT INDIVISIBLE LEADERS WANT:**

a. Leaders interested in building a platform and have a variety of issues which they would like to see built into this, including: redistricting, immigration, getting money out of politics, the environment, abortion rights, economic issues, expansion of voter rights and voter engagement, universal access to health care, and civil rights.

b. Leaders want different types of electoral strategy and support. They want a candidate guide that includes a list of open seats, campaign tracking, campaign activity tool kits, a simple endorsement structure at the local level, GOTV coordination, a Blue-to-Red program which uses Blue state capacity in Red state races in 2018 (adopt-a-district), and guidance on how to pick and support a more progressive candidate in the primaries.

#### c. ELECTORAL TOOL WANTS

1. National voter registration tool and training.
2. a system for canvassing and calling.
3. access to voter files to identify voters to talk to.
4. a system for peer-to-peer texting.
5. the ability to do mass-text recruitment.
6. different tracks for experienced/inexperienced trainers and organizers.
7. messaging training.
8. the ability to partner with groups already doing this work (e.g. Move On, Sister District, Code Blue, Swing Left).

## **H. Specific Legal and Structural Support Issues beyond Electoral Work**

1. folks want fund-raising support (the ability to raise \$ to do their work).
2. legal and logistical question support (liability insurance, campaign finance law, permits, etc.).
3. resources on security culture.
4. coordination support (statewide conferences, mentorship, amplification of best practices).
5. support with partnerships and inclusivity: clarification of their relation with political party both locally and nationally and partnering with other Indivisible groups.
6. long-term higher level strategy: more interaction with national team, more opportunities for input, more strategic guidance and longer-term vision, guidance for state and local work, issue strategy: how to prioritize issues at local, state, national levels.
7. Training: anti-oppression, white supremacy, facilitation, delegation, contexting actions and activities; how to talk about goals, strategies and tactics; campaign organizing, decision-making models, press and public speaking, combatting ICE, direct action, digital organizing (including list of recommended apps),  
deep-listening canvassing.
8. Preferred training modes: in-person, Webinars, conference calls.
9. Help with leadership structure and development, recruitment and management, long-term planning.

## **I. What Indivisible groups are already doing to help themselves and each other**

- a. planning their own convenings
- b. making their own networking FB pages
- c. building their own coordinating structures
- d. building their own group structures, decision-making processes and community norms
- e. planning their own anti-oppression trainings
- f. occasionally endorsing and volunteering for candidates
- g. determining their own structure and messaging
- h. choosing local and state issues to engage with

## **J. What National Team is doing already**

1. more than 500 how-to documents, explainers, and toolkits
2. Facebook Lives weekly meetings
3. Anti-oppression content (how-to's, first webinar)
4. Mobilize
5. training docs (media, recruitment, strategy, tactics)
6. Hubdialer program to help focus attention from Blue states to Red states
7. 2 weekly e-mails with clear Calls to Action

## **K. What Indivisible will be rolling out in next three months**

1. Inter and Intra Group Structures and Processes. Help on models for groups struggling with this using best practices from groups who are in good shape.
2. Local, regional and state coordinator structures. (a scalable and open-source structure.
3. Political education and anti-oppression work (e.g. white supremacy and how to fight it).
4. Facilitation notes and lists of groups to help do anti-oppression training at the local level.
5. Keep building tool-kits on inclusivity, anti-black racism work and partner with POC-led organizations on some of their campaigns.
6. Hiring a training director who will be continuing to fill out the set of how-to documents, creating webinars to use in trainings, training local trainers for local training, consult for regional meetings.
7. Hiring an elections director to build tools, training and resources for the 435 program and overseeing targeted states campaign staff and work.
8. Hiring a digital organizing director focusing on peer-to-peer communication and system and building support system for groups, and build out digital tool-set.
9. Tools and training:
  - a. access to voter file along with analytics and targeting that will share all our data into a central data base which we will share with other progressive organizations to amplify the work and make it affordable. Will be used year-round (not just for elections) to allow folks to call their senators, as folks to come to events, and do recruitment, etc.
  - b. Training for canvassing, phone-banking, and peer-to-peer texting for the voter file.
  - c. create a mobile application: communication within groups is an on-going concern. The Amplify app developed for Indivisible San Francisco makes it possible to send calls to actions as well as updates and breaking

news directly to members' mobile phones. Indivisible is going to beta test at a national level for this in October. To beta test, contact field@indivisible team.

d. Trainer's trainings for group leaders in various regions. Specifically to learn how to run trainings for their own groups.

e. creating a voting system to create Indivisible's policy platform and endorsement scheme on national level to get all-member input on vital issues.

10. Legal and fundraising support:

a. Non-profit status letter: Indivisible national team will offer a letter for allowing local groups to use their non-profit tax number, C-4 status for use in reserving spaces, getting permits, etc.

b. fundraising tool and staff person: there will be a way to raise money, deposit it to a central account, and withdraw it as needed with minimal administration (includes debit card, automatic IRS reporting, system to access backend info. on every donor we sign up, clear legal guidance on how we can and cannot spend money).

c. guidance on legal questions on C-3 and C-4 fund-raising and fund-raising for electoral work (documents, Webinars. FAQ doc)

d. electoral support (within next couple of weeks): a local endorsement toolkit and support system for how to impact state elections and primaries, will include how-to's for groups interested in doing this work.

**L. What's coming in 2018 (timeframe a little amorphous, but these are in the works)**

1. policy platform (will be created with input with all chapter members to what issues we will focus on and what we will hold our MoCs accountable for)

2. roll-out of beginnings of 435 Program: a suite of tools, trainings and materials to allow chapters to make an impact on local, state and federal elections. The reality is that we cannot compete with huge corporate dark money, so financial contribution isn't going to be Indivisible's strategy for change; citizen engagement is.

3. additional legal support on non-electoral topics (everything else).

**M. Where Isaac (as Indivisible's Organizing Director) thinks we are headed**

1. Indivisible started out as independent chapters based on a Google doc supported and guided by a website and email. We know that independence and local focus is our power and we need to maintain this.

2. On top of that initial structure, we've overlaid an organizing team. We know our national team staff cannot reach out to all group leaders on a

one-on-one basis, but will continue to support as best we can. It's the local groups who have created organic coordination structures across cities, districts, and states.

3. Biggest up-and-coming thing will be to create peer-to-peer structures, networking each group leaders with each other at the national level. Creating a mentoring system where every group leader has someone they can talk to so group leaders in similar situations can share best practices and we can all support each other through our challenges and successes.

4. Continue the listening process between chapters and the Indivisible team.

5. We are the ones who didn't freeze. We are the ones who took the pain and loneliness that we felt and began to come together as first responders to a national catastrophe. Despite majority Republican Congresses and White House, the ACA has not been repealed, the wall has not been built, a wholesale Muslim ban has not gone into effect. After 10 months, not a single significant piece of legislation has been passed and this is because of the citizen power of our pushing back in every one of our 435 CDs. But the problem is that we know that there is a lot more to come, and they will continue to try to destroy health care, criminalize and disenfranchise and deport the poor and people of color, strip away environmental oversight, and all to benefit the very rich at the expense of the rest of us. So look, it's okay to admit that there is fatigue. It is our choice to shepherd our resources and work to be sustainable and stay engaged, try new things, work together, and to take back the power, change Congress, and make the society we want.