



# Community Organizing and Activism: Confronting Injustice in Public Spaces



## ➤ Black Youth & Organizing

“Everyone is the organizer.”

– Irving David Allen, Community Organizer

### OVERVIEW

Organizing and activism focus on restoring democracy at the grassroots level where people advocate and work for change, recognizing that systems of power advantage some more than others. As might be expected, this kind of work looks different depending on the context and the community in which the organizing takes place. And sadly, some communities are overlooked and even dismissed in our political processes. For instance, Black and youth members of our communities may be mischaracterized as apathetic, leading officials to underestimate or devalue their potential contributions. Irving David Allen thinks differently—he says the reason why Black and young people do not always participate in civic activities is because structural impediments and political corruption keep them out at the same time injustices persist. For them, the system is not working to make life better.

However, even when people are excluded from official political processes, there are still ways to take action. First, build relationships. Second, make connections with others in the community. Third, visualize what you want. Fourth, make a plan to create the change(s) you see as necessary for a more just world. Communities everywhere face challenges and many are finding ways to mobilize in order to get the changes they want. To learn more about skills and tools for organizing for change, consider the many resources available through the Community Tool Box, <https://ctb.ku.edu/en>.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What changes are needed in your community to eliminate lingering injustices?
2. What barriers does your community need to overcome to be actively involved in the political process?
3. What issues that your community cares about need to be discussed in upcoming political campaigns?
4. In what ways can you make your voice heard in public decision making?
5. What people and groups in your community can help you bring about needed changes?
6. What would success look like if you were able to lead the way for positive social change?