WE ARE THE HARVEST

THE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN FOR A BLACK AND BROWN SPACE IN NEW ORLEANS

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WE ARE THE HARVEST

Our Voice Nuestra Voice (OVNV) is a nation-building organization, anchoring ancestry while building Black and Brown solidarity in New Orleans. We remember our shared culture and language, reconnect to the land, and organize our community around collective action. We build the capacity of community members, parents, and families to act as advocates in order to create a more equitable city, focusing on a number of issues including education, criminal justice, and immigration. Our deep understanding of the racial and structural inequities that exist in our country empowers us to dismantle them. We envision a world where Black and Brown people live without harm, practice liberatory education, and enact restorative justice. Our ancestors sowed seeds so that we could reap a bountiful harvest. We are the harvest.
A BLACK AND BROWN SPACE

Connection is key. We — Black and Brown people — are deeply connected. One of our strongest, most ancient connections is our oldest ancestor: the earth. Despite this truth, Black and Brown communities in the Greater New Orleans area and beyond lack permanent safe spaces to rest, play, and create in harmony with the earth. An important part of our work in the upcoming year will be to establish a permanent physical location where we can remember our shared culture, reconnect to the land, build coalitions, and manifest new futures for our Black and Brown communities.
BUILDING POWER AND LIBERATION

Our shared history of cultivating the land led to the development of technology, health, and scientific knowledge that pushed our civilizations and humankind forward. But the land has been stolen from Black and Brown communities throughout history by way of oppressive structures including but not limited to colonization, slavery, redlining, and gentrification. At the same time, community divestment has diminished the safety and resources of the existing spaces that Black and Brown people inhabit. Black and Brown communities are too often prevented from flourishing due to inequities in social services, policing, education, criminal justice, and other long-standing structures and institutions. Further, our communities have suffered from food apartheid — a lack of access to high quality, nutritious, fresh food in Black and Brown neighborhoods — as well as divestment from Black and Brown-owned grocery stores and fresh farms. For hundreds of years, the agriculture industry has poisoned our food with refined sugars and harmful additives while exploiting our labor to produce and distribute food that is often inaccessible to our people.

The result of these ongoing circumstances is that Black and Brown people exist in spaces that are unsafe, undefended, neglected, and detached from the gifts of the earth. We therefore continue to be pushed to the margins, which impedes the preservation of our culture and weakens our collective identity. In the face of this reality, we do not define ourselves by our oppression. Rather, our power and liberation stem from the seeds that our ancestors sowed. OVNV creates space for our people to continue to build that power and liberation. For example, the #BlackAndBrownGetDown works to create safe spaces for our community to build coalitions, repair broken bridges, and heal harm. But these spaces have only been temporary. As we look toward the future, we are compelled to create a space that is permanent so that Black and Brown communities can heal and harvest the earth, defend our humanity, and build together.
ACTIVITIES

The Capital Campaign will fund a permanent space for Black and Brown people of New Orleans to host activities within the following categories:

**RETREATS & RESIDENCIES**
We will host retreats and other programs for culture-bearers and the broader community. Initiatives will include: language and remembering programming to reconnect to lost or stolen histories; explorations of New Orleans culture and its global roots (e.g., art history, religion, language, visual arts, performing arts, music); culturally relevant youth development; and leadership development activities in a variety of domains. We will host four central residencies per year that will enable culture-bearers, artists, and creators to innovate while practicing and sharing their traditions. This may include a residency for musicians to develop their skills, teach, and host performances steeped in cultural tradition for our community and members.

**FOOD & FARMING**
Like many across the globe, a major issue facing our communities is land and food sovereignty. Our communities do not have ownership of our land and the rights to use it to benefit our community most. We also lack access to produce food and to distribute or sell it in such a way that is most beneficial to our community. Thus, one aspect of this project will be a community farm, where participants will remember how to be in alignment with the land and how to operate in the fullness of their power. They will grow their own food for themselves and their families, and they will be able to teach others how to do the same. Additionally, we will develop food and farming curricula to increase participants’ respect for, connection to, and healing of the earth. The space will be equipped with solar panels, rain barrels, and other sustainable energy infrastructure to minimize our impact on the climate. Participants will gain an understanding of the historical contexts of and connections between land/food sovereignty, housing, and other issues.

**COMMUNITY ORGANIZING**
The land will serve as the headquarters for OVNV’s organizing activities and a launching point of new programming and efforts. We will continue to design and execute member-driven campaigns to tackle a variety of issues. In our new space, we will deepen our organizing work by utilizing cultural and remembering approaches to building and provoking power. We will continue to lead relevant, individualized training sessions for new and existing leaders and organizers. Recognizing that justice work is some of the most difficult, draining work one can do, we will also use our space as a place for rest and play for our member-leaders and others in the community.
DESIGN JUSTICE

For the architecture and design of this space, OVNV has partnered with Colloqate, a New Orleans-based, Black-owned and led nonprofit design and architecture firm. We are mindful of the ways that oppression affects all our actions and decisions. Therefore, the Colloqate design team will provide concept design for the project by way of a collective effort grounded in the understandings of Design Justice. This is a process that deeply involves OVNV’s target population and the broader New Orleans community.

Design Justice means acknowledging the harms of the past, and understanding the ways that spaces and architecture have enabled them. Every injustice is connected to a physical space, and power structures use architecture and design as tools of oppression: the police state’s connection to the prison industrial complex, racial segregation to redlining and high-rise project housing, climate and environmental destruction to car-centered infrastructure, and more. Design Justice begins by analyzing these connections and imagining spaces that instead make social and cultural reparations.

Design Justice frameworks also expose the ways that oppression constrains our imaginations. Engaging with these frameworks delimits our imaginations and facilitates envisioning spaces that do not yet exist. Creating such new, emancipated spaces means involving the community in telling its story, naming its needs, and designing in a way that manifests a just future. Black and brown communities need a space that centers our culture, our memories, and our ways of being, serving to nourish our bodies as well as our connections to each other and the land. We believe the space we have imagined has the power to transform the relationships in Black and brown communities, and to the earth, laying the groundwork for a liberated future.
THE IMPACT

Through this project, we expect to attain the following outcomes:

SHORT-TERM

- Increased access to a permanent space for Black and Brown community members to gather, rest, and play
- Increased opportunities for culture-bearers and creators to innovate in a safe, permanent space
- Increased understanding of historical contexts and underlying problems behind land/food sovereignty, housing, and other systemic issues
- Increased opportunities for children to experience culturally responsive educational enrichment
- Increased understanding of land healing practices and cultural traditions
- Increased agricultural skills and knowledge
- Increased food sovereignty and access to high quality, nutritious, fresh food
- Increased integration of organizing campaigns and remembering work
- Increased safety, healing, belonging, and connection

MID-TERM

- Increased innovation and activism
- Improved health and wellness
- Increased transnational solidarity among people of the Global South
- Increased ability of Black and Brown community leaders, organizers, and families to lead campaigns and cross-collaborate
- Defense of Black and Brown community safety and tradition

LONG-TERM

- Increased respect for, connection to, and healing of the earth
- Increased local, national, and international policies that protect the lives of Black and Brown people
- Increased cultural preservation in New Orleans
- Increased socioeconomic, educational, racial, and language equity in New Orleans
- Increased healing, hope, and joy in New Orleans’ Black and Brown communities.
To support these activities, OVNV will hire a Director of Land Leadership who will be charged with leading all land-related work. This individual will secure a location, steward land resources, and build out all agricultural infrastructure. Requirements for the position include a background in agriculture and sustainable practices as well as a passion for planting the seeds to grow the next generation of land-connected individuals in our community. This leader will have strong foundations in both land healing practices and agricultural technical skills.

MEASURING SUCCESS

OVNV will conduct evaluations using (1) a CRM/database of members, leaders, and actions to track engagement and participation; (2) pre- and post-program surveys to evaluate the effectiveness of our organizing trainings, retreats, and educational programs; and (3) feedback forms to determine effectiveness and areas for growth at our events. Organizing campaign success will be measured by setting goals and metrics and comparing those to the outcomes of the campaign as measured by public records, policy changes, or other tangible or structural changes. Metrics may include: # of retreats held, # of new OVNV members, # of OVNV total members, # of residents, # of projects designed by creators and culture-bearers, # of youth served, # of crops grown, # of meals distributed, # of campaigns incorporating remembering approaches led, and # of surveys conducted.

At the end of each year, we will release a report describing the impact of our programming as well as how our successes will inform our continued implementation of programming in succeeding years. This report will contain both qualitative and quantitative data and will be distributed to our members and families, funders, and other partners.
# BUDGET

The total budget for our Capital Campaign is $5.8 million. This includes costs associated with activities within four phases: Pre-Planning, Planning, Land Acquisition and Build Out, and Post-Construction. Expenses include the purchase of the land; personnel (i.e. salaries and benefits); legal and professional services including but not limited to architecture and design, accounting, fund development, and marketing; fees paid to program consultants for design and evaluation; insurance; and materials including books, supplies, and equipment.

<table>
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<th></th>
<th>Pre-Planning</th>
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<th>Land Acquisition and Build Out</th>
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"The Great Spirit is our Father, but the Earth is our Mother. She nourishes us.... That which we put into the ground she returns to us."

- Big Thunder (Begadi), Wabanaki Algonquin