

VOICES IN ACTION

CVH ANNUAL REPORT 2025



COMMUNITY
VOICES
HEARD

CVH IS FIGHTING BACK





CVH Power Member Congress, November 2025



ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Table of Contents

- 1 A Message From Our Executive Director
- 2 Mobilizing for Justice
- 6 Building Our Base
- 9 A Harlem Homecoming
- 11 Follow Black Women
- 13 Get Out the Vote: CVH Power Wins
- 15 In the News
- 17 By the Numbers
- 18 Looking Ahead + How to Support

CVH Board of Directors

- Linda Bartee** • Poughkeepsie
- Peter Bernstein** • Westchester
- Giancarlo Fernandez** • NYC
- Miriam LaCroix, Esq.** • Westchester
- Karen Mejia** • Orange
- Lutonya Russel-Humes** • Dutchess
- Charlene Smart** • Dutchess
- Sheila Vereen-Massengale** • Westchester
- Barbara Williams** • NYC

CVH Power Board of Directors

Peter Bernstein	Jennifer Cabrera	Sharon Cromwell
Anderson Fils-Aime	Ketny Jean-François	
Christina Ozual	Odetty Tineo	Rosa Torres

WE WERE BUILT FOR TIMES LIKE THESE

Community Voices Heard was founded at a time when those on public assistance were stigmatized and penalized. CVH set out to create a space where the people directly impacted by the issues had a real seat and voice at the table in creating the solutions needed to improve conditions for their families.

Thirty-one years later, **we are witnessing the same kinds of attacks that sparked CVH's creation.** The federal government is once again targeting the most vulnerable among us: slashing safety net programs, undermining voting access, and demonizing those who use public assistance. It's a scary time for our communities, and the threats feel both familiar and urgent.

But here's what gives me hope: **CVH was created precisely for moments like these.** We were born out of necessity when our people were under attack, and we have spent three decades building the power to fight back. This is what we were made for.

The organizers we've trained, the campaigns we've won, the leaders we've developed – all of it has been preparation for this fight.

Thanks to our supporters, we have the foundation we need to meet this scary moment head-on. Your investment in CVH over the years has built something enduring.

To our past and present members, staff, and partners: your courage in the face of these attacks inspires us all. To our supporters and donors: you've helped us build an organization designed for exactly this kind of struggle.

As we mark 31 years, we're not just celebrating our past – we're affirming our readiness for what lies ahead. **CVH exists because attacks like these happen, and we will continue to be the voice and the power our communities need when they need it most.**

With the determination that comes from knowing this is our purpose,



Juanita O. Lewis
Executive Director





Taking the fight to Albany, NY, Washington, D.C., and more, CVH members fought back against massive cuts.



CVH Member Liz Hoyos speaks in Washington, D.C., about organizing with her neighbors in East Harlem against their predatory landlord.

OUR HOMES ARE NOT YOUR TAX CUTS!

CVH Power Members traveled to DC in May with People's Action and partners from across the nation to fight back against cuts to HUD, SNAP, and Medicaid. Our message is clear: No cuts – protect our people, our communities, and our homes.

Armed with powerful testimonies about how housing programs have kept their families stable and communities intact, they took their fight directly to the halls of Congress. The proposed cuts would devastate working families, who are already struggling to keep roofs over their heads and food on their tables.

While there, members paid a visit to Representative Mike Lawler's office – where his staff called the cops instead of meeting with his constituents. This shameful response only strengthened our resolve and made it crystal clear whose side he's really on.

The fight isn't over. We'll keep organizing, keep showing up, and keep demanding that our elected officials prioritize people over profit.

Throughout the year, our chapters have continued to mobilize against these devastating federal cuts, showing up at every opportunity to defend the programs our communities depend on. From town halls to text banks to direct actions, we're building the power needed to protect our communities and ensure that housing, food, and healthcare remain rights, not privileges.

The proposed cuts would devastate working families, who are already struggling to keep roofs over their heads and food on their tables.



CVH Members on the Million Dollar Staircase at the capitol building in Albany, NY.

CVH MEMBERS TOOK THEIR PLATFORM TO ALBANY

At the beginning of 2025, CVH Power members from across New York State traveled to Albany to demand action on our 2025 platform, including:

1. **Statewide Right to Counsel** to guarantee the right to a free lawyer to all tenants facing eviction across New York State.
2. **Clean Hands Act** to curtail landlords' ability to sue tenants for eviction if the landlord has pending violations.
3. **Invest in Our New York** to make corporations and the ultra-rich pay their fair share of taxes.
4. **A Path to Universal Basic Income** in New York State by expanding current programs and creating more of them.
5. **Public Housing Investments & Reform** for public housing capital repairs to preserve public housing.

We showed our collective power and held meetings with over 40 New York State representatives. Our message was clear: the people want the state to invest in our communities, our children, and our futures.

CVH Power members who live in public housing returned to Albany for a Public Housing Lobby Day with partners from Citizen Action, New York Communities for Change, and Community Service Society.

Public housing is a vital source of housing in New York State – more than half a million New Yorkers call public housing home. Every public housing resident deserves to live with dignity.

*CVH members met with **over 40** New York State representatives to discuss our platform.*

CVH
Members
went to
Peekskill, NY
on Tax Day to
protest cuts
to Medicare
and the
closure of the
Social
Security
Office.



FIGHTING BACK IN OUR BACKYARDS

While CVH members took the fight to Washington, they also mobilized in their own communities to push back against federal cuts that threaten the safety net millions depend on.

On Tax Day, **CVH members rallied in Peekskill, NY, to protest cuts to Medicare and the closure of the local Social Security office.** Shutting down Social Security offices doesn't just create inconvenience – it denies seniors and disabled community members access to the benefits they've earned and desperately need.

In New York City, members gathered at City Hall to protest devastating cuts to SNAP and the federal government's decision to end the annual Household

Food Security Report – a critical tool for understanding and addressing hunger in our communities. When the government stops even measuring hunger, it's easier to ignore the crisis.

Members also took their demands directly to the Real Estate Board of New York (REBNY), delivering a letter outlining concrete solutions to the housing crisis: implementing a rent freeze for rent-stabilized housing, tripling capital funds to build 200,000 new affordable homes, expanding programs for seniors and extremely low-income residents, and increasing resources for public housing repairs. The message was simple – the real estate industry must be part of the solution, not the problem.



BUILDING OUR BASE

From Ella Baker organizing trainings to Summer of Power and our annual Member Congress, CVH members grew our reach across the state.



CVH Members launch our Summer of Power at our new office in July.

SUMMER OF POWER: POWER IN NUMBERS

In July, we launched our 2025 *Summer of Power*, designed to build momentum and set the stage for the critical work ahead. Members from all four CVH chapters came together in a unified effort to celebrate our significant Primary Election wins, reflect on our achievements, and, most importantly, strategize for the next phase of our movement.

Over the summer, members focused on growing and strengthening our membership base, ensuring that we are fully equipped with the numbers and the power needed to confront the challenges ahead. Our goal is clear: to build the capacity to fight for our values and drive lasting change through 2026 and beyond.

Throughout the summer, CVH members across the state made a collective commitment to action, participating in more than 70 doorknock shifts, conducting over 300 one-on-one conversations, and welcoming over 100 new members into our ranks. By expanding our base and deepening our engagement with our communities, we're ensuring that we have the power and support necessary to win at every level.

Summer of Power has proven to be a key moment in building the strength and solidarity we need for the road ahead.

*Over the summer, members held more than **70 doorknock shifts**, over **300 one-on-one conversations**, and welcomed over **100 new members**.*

CVH
Organizing
Director
Tamara
Brummer
points to our
event timeline
in 2025 at our
annual
Member
Congress.



BUILDING POWER TOGETHER: OUR ANNUAL MEMBER CONGRESS

CVH Power's Annual Member Congress brought together leaders and members from all four of our chapters. The gathering served as both a celebration of our collective work and a strategic space to prepare for the fights ahead.

A historic milestone of this year's Congress was CVH Power's first-ever gubernatorial endorsement interview for New York State. Members engaged directly with the candidate, asking incisive questions rooted in our chapter priorities. The conversation highlighted the significance of our member-led endorsement process:

one that ensures our political strategy remains accountable to the people most grounded in our shared values.

We also reflected on the remarkable scope of our work in 2025: 92 events across the state, including tenant meetings, leadership trainings, campaign actions, and large-scale mobilizations. Celebrating these victories reminded us of both the progress we've made and the potential we hold.

As the Congress concluded, members looked ahead to 2026 with renewed energy and purpose.

*We reflected
on the
remarkable
scope of our
work in 2025:
92 events
across the
state.*



A HARLEM HOMECOMING

This year, we moved into our new office space and came back to our roots in East Harlem.

Lieutenant
Governor
Antonio
Delgado and
CVH Deputy
Director Brittney
Baxter at our
Lights of
Freedom Mister
Softee truck
outside our
new office.



COMING HOME TO HARLEM

In a significant milestone for our organization, we hosted our Lights of Freedom gala at our new home in Harlem. The event served as a vibrant celebration of our community and the progress we've made together. The evening was filled with energy, as attendees came together to celebrate our shared achievements and the next chapter of our work. The sense of joy and camaraderie was palpable as people danced, celebrated, and embraced the importance of this homecoming.

A key moment of the evening was the dedication of our new conference rooms, which honor two of our impactful past members: Stephen Bradley and founding member Gail Aska. These spaces now bear their

names and will serve as a lasting tribute to their unwavering commitment and leadership. Moving forward, as we gather to organize, strategize, and cultivate the next generation of leaders, these rooms will stand as a daily reminder of the legacies they leave behind.

The event also welcomed several distinguished guests, including Council Members Yusef Salaam and Carmen De La Rosa, and Lt. Governor Antonio Delgado, who each offered their support and joined in the celebration of our shared mission. Their presence underscored the importance of the work we do and the ongoing partnerships that help drive our movement forward.

*We dedicated
our conference
rooms to two
of our past
members:
Stephen
Bradley and
founding
member Gail
Aska.*



FOLLOW BLACK WOMEN

Our Follow Black Women project brought together 100 Black women with NY Attorney General Letitia James and NYC Mayor-Elect Zohran Mamdani.



Attorney General Letitia James at our Follow Black Women: We Are the Agenda event in September.

100 BLACK WOMEN SET THE AGENDA FOR THE NEXT MAYOR

At the beginning of the year, we launched Follow Black Women visioning sessions across our chapters, creating space for Black women to come together and articulate their vision for New York State. These conversations laid the groundwork for the organizing effort that would shape our agenda throughout the year.

In September, we brought together 100 Black women with Attorney General Letitia James and NYC Mayoral Candidate Zohran Mamdani. Together, we identified the issues that matter most to us:

- Affordable Housing & Rent Relief
- Education & Public Schools
- Economic Opportunity & Jobs
- Health/Mental Health & Social Services

Mayor-Elect Zohran Mamdani didn't just listen – he committed to quarterly meetings with our community, prioritizing these very issues in his administration, and ensuring his staff reflects the diversity of the city. Following the event, we held two online sessions to dive deeper into the top issues and identify policy solutions for the new mayor.

In November, our Executive Director and longtime CVH member Rose Fernandez were named to Mayor-Elect Mamdani's transition team.

This is what power looks like: Black women organizing, defining our priorities, and ensuring our voices shape the decisions that affect our lives.

A photograph of two women standing in front of the United States Capitol dome. The woman on the left is wearing a blue beanie and a blue sweatshirt with a logo that partially reads 'COMMUNITY VOICES'. The woman on the right is wearing a pink jacket and red-rimmed glasses. The Capitol dome is in the background under a clear blue sky.

GETTING OUT THE VOTE

Our sister organization, CVH Power, interviewed, endorsed, and got out the vote – and our candidates won up and down the ballot.

CVH Power Members and staff at our Follow Black Women canvass for NYC Mayoral Candidate Zohran Mamdani with our union partners and the Working Families Party in Queens.



CVH POWER CANDIDATES WON BIG

In June and November, Community Voices Heard Power members across New York City, Yonkers, and the Hudson Valley hit the ground running to ensure every voice was heard in critical local elections. CVH members went beyond the ballot box, engaging directly with their communities and ensuring that the issues that matter most to everyday people were front and center in these elections.

A key part of our electoral strategy was CVH's *Follow Black Women* campaign, which hosted an **in-depth Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) training** to empower our members with the knowledge and tools they needed to vote with confidence. This initiative reflected our commitment to ensuring that our members not only vote but are

active, educated participants in every step of the electoral process.

The results of our collective effort were undeniable. Our sister organization, CVH Power elected **seventeen endorsed candidates** – each of them representing a powerful step toward building a more just and equitable future for our communities.

But our work doesn't stop on Election Day. As we grow our electoral power, we are also **strengthening our model of co-governance**. We build lasting partnerships with leaders who share our values and are ready to govern with us. We look forward to working alongside those we helped elect to ensure they deliver for our communities.



IN THE NEWS

Our members' powerful stories captured attention far beyond our neighborhoods this year.

CVH NYC
Member
Kathryn Marrow
interviewed at a
People's Action
rally outside the
Real Estate
Board of New
York (REBNY)
offices.



MAKING OUR VOICES HEARD

Our members' powerful stories captured attention far beyond our neighborhoods this year. From a Mid-Hudson News op-ed, co-authored by Newburgh member Nola Hatton and Congressman Pat Ryan, to Fox5 DC spotlighting our National Day of Action in Washington, CVH voices are breaking through the noise.

Beacon member, Rachel Scher, shared her experience with Medicaid and how work requirements would impact her on CNN's One Thing Podcast; our Executive Director penned an op-ed in City Limits with former HUD Administrator Alicka Ampry-Samuel and another in City & State with our union partners; we spoke with The Nation and Bloomberg on the devastating impact of cutting housing assistance for immigrants.

When our communities speak truth to power, the whole country listens – and that coverage helps build the broader movement for housing justice and economic equity we all need.



Read more at cvhaction.org/news

BY THE NUMBERS

\$500,000+

AMOUNT HARLEM MEMBERS WON IN SETTLEMENT AGAINST THEIR LANDLORD AFTER A 16-MONTH RENT STRIKE

17

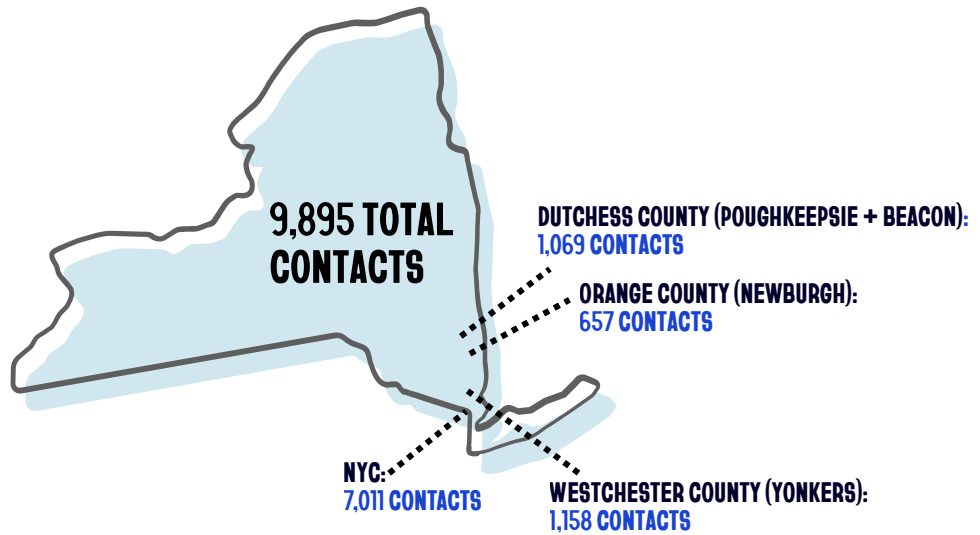
NUMBER OF CVH POWER-ENDORSED CANDIDATES WHO WON THEIR ELECTIONS

\$225 MILLION

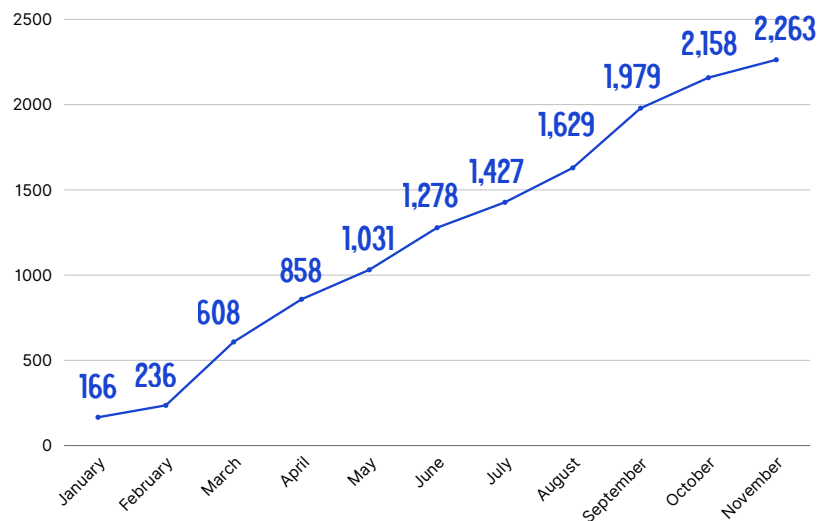
WON IN THE NYS BUDGET FOR NYCHA CAPITAL REPAIRS, PLUS \$75 MILLION FOR UPSTATE REPAIRS



OUR CHAPTERS



NEW CONTACTS: JANUARY - NOVEMBER 2025



92 EVENTS IN 2025

INCLUDING TENANT MEETINGS, TOWN HALLS, MOBILIZATIONS, TRAININGS, AND MORE

155 PEOPLE

FILLED OUT OUR 2025 SUMMER OF POWER SURVEY

WE TEXTED 18,815

PEOPLE VOTING REMINDERS

COMMUNITY VOICES HEARD



Attorney General Letitia James, Mayor-Elect Zohran Mamdani, CVH Executive Director Juanita O. Lewis, and partners from WFP, 32BJ SEIU, and NYSNA at our Follow Black Women event in September.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2026

As we close out 2025, we enter 2026 with clarity, determination, and a growing statewide base ready for the fights ahead. The coming year will demand more from us: more organizing, more leadership development, more mobilizations, and more unshakeable solidarity across our four chapters. And our members are ready.

In 2026, we will continue confronting the housing crisis head-on, fighting for stronger tenant protections, real investment in truly affordable housing, and accountability for decision-makers who have allowed displacement to flourish.

This will also be a defining year for our political power. With statewide offices and legislative seats on the line, we will carry forward the lessons and momentum of our first-ever gubernatorial endorsement process.

And we are already shaping the agenda for New York State. Our **Executive Director and longtime CVH member Rose Fernandez were named to Mayor-Elect Mamdani's transition team**, a testament to the co-governance model we are building and the power our members bring into every political space.

The challenges ahead are serious, and the opposition is well-funded. But we have something stronger: members who fight for their homes, families, and futures because they know what is at stake.

Every meeting, every mobilization, every conversation at a tenant's door brings us closer to a New York where working-class communities of color win the dignity, safety, and opportunity they deserve. **We enter 2026 ready to build, ready to fight, and ready to win.**



YOUR SUPPORT FUELS OUR FIGHT

We depend on supporters like you who believe that working families deserve a voice in the decisions that shape our lives. Your contribution directly funds the organizing that puts power in the hands of our communities.

When you donate to CVH, you're not just giving money – **you're investing in a movement.**

You're funding the bus rides to Albany, the childcare that lets parents attend meetings, the materials that help us reach new members, the leadership development opportunities for new members, and the organizing trainings that turn individual voices into collective power.

As we face one of our most consequential years yet, your support is more important than ever.

Donate today at cvhaction.org/give or scan the QR code.

Thank you.



cvhaction.org/give



**COMMUNITY
VOICES
HEARD**