

TakeAction Minnesota Core Narrative

We affirm that narrative creates policy and practice; and policy and practice affect people's daily lives. Therefore, we work to change the dominant narrative not only as a strategy for long-term change, but in recognition that the dominant narrative serves as the source for what's killing people. In speaking, writing, and living out our own narrative we are building the world we dream of as we go.

This document comes from conversations that involved over fifty staff and members of TakeAction Minnesota, as well as historical documents that engaged thousands – reNEW, Vision Duluth, the Five Year Arc and the long-term agenda.

Our Narrative

We believe in a Minnesota where each and every person is able to live in joy -- lives that are fulfilling, stable, creative, and happy. Where success is defined by how much people and whole communities are able to live in joy.

Where the inherent worth and dignity of every person is recognized without exception. We celebrate that we are all connected to each other and to the land we live on, and view these connections as a source of support that we can freely rely on without shame.

We believe in a Minnesota where our government and our economy is by us and for us. Where each and every person has the power to make the decisions that affect their community, their lives, and their futures -- especially communities that have been violently denied opportunities for generations.

Where everyone experiences the freedom to be our full selves, every day. Where a person's full identity and personhood is fully seen and respected. Where people can feel safe to live in their communities, to celebrate, to *exist*, without being perceived as a threat or treated as disposable.

Where the feminine is highly valued. Where women are free to choose the paths that are right for them, and where work formerly known as 'women's work' is deeply respected. Where men and women alike are free to laugh, cry, and share with their families. Where communities of all genders come together to raise children, prepare and share meals, and care for each other.

Where our kids are encouraged to follow their passions in high-quality, freely available schools and our elders are cherished and supported to age with dignity.

Where each and every person's needs are fully met, in this moment and for the future, with a belly full of healthy food, a stable roof over their head, clear water to drink, and clean air to breathe. Where the purpose of work is to build and grow our communities, and where each and every person's contribution is valued and treated with dignity. Where we all have a safe and stable climate to live in, on an earth that is protected and loved.

And that these needs include not only those necessary for survival, but those that make our lives worth living: plenty of time with our loved ones, for creativity, for being outside in this beautiful state, for laughter and play. Celebrating and valuing the many different identities, heritages, cultures, and traditions that people and communities hold.

We believe in a Minnesota where we tell the truth about centuries of oppression and exploitation that started with stolen land and culture of Native people. That was built on stolen labor from kidnapped African peoples and Native people already here. A system of stolen labor that has evolved and is ever present in our communities today, now also sucking immigrant workers into its clutches. We actively work to repair and heal this harm, and all other harm, recognizing that only a community that repairs and heals from its harms can be sustained together over time.

We recognize that profound inequities are deeply woven into every element of our current state – the institutions that govern us, the structures of our economy, the air that we breathe. We are committed to the transformative work that is needed to rewrite the rules of our economy and our democracy to create a Minnesota where we can all thrive.

How we're getting there

TakeAction Minnesota exists as a part of a movement changing who decides and who benefits. To ensure that all Minnesotans have a voice in decisions about our state and their lives, and that the benefits of these decisions go to all Minnesotans – not corporations. We lead when the moment calls for it, and we support our partners when the moment calls for it.

We know that there are huge barriers to this vision. We lift up in particular the ways that corporate power, structural racism, and gender oppression divide and oppress each and every one of us.

We know that these barriers are a deep part of our history -- a legacy of oppression -- which is why we fight to change the immense impacts they've had in each and every one of our lives, and all the ways in which this legacy continues to live in our current reality.

We use short-term fights in the streets to hold corporations accountable, to win policy changes at the Capitol, and to elect candidates who best represent our diverse, growing communities. But these short-term campaigns don't stand alone. They are strategies to win long-term, transformational change in people's lives by bringing more people into the movement, winning concrete changes in Minnesotans lives, and changing the toxic narratives that tell us we are on our own.

No matter what the campaign, we are doing it for the same reason: to build, connect, and help to lead a statewide, multi-racial, politically independent movement. A movement made up of organizations and people with the power to tear down these barriers and build up the power of Minnesotans to have agency in their own lives.

We are an organization made up of members – of individual Minnesotans and of powerful organizations. We follow the lead of our members.

We do this work *intersectionally*, connecting people across differences of geography, race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability. We lift up the voices and leadership of people most oppressed by the world we live in now. Our agendas and strategies are primarily built and guided by our leaders with these experiences.

We also fully recognize that the people who benefit from these oppressive systems have a role to play in taking them down, because each of our liberation is tied to each others. Whether we are from cities, farms, towns or suburbs. Whether we are people of color who live under the thumb of systemic racism and white privilege or white folks whose lives have benefitted from white privilege. No matter our gender identity or sexuality in a world built for men to succeed in. Whether we are able bodied or have a disability. It may look different, but the tentacles of corporate power, structural racism, and gender oppression reach even those who in many ways benefit from them. It is only by acting together that we will build the power to get free and build the Minnesota we dream of.

Most of all, we work in joy even as we know the work is hard. We work to heal the pain that simply existing in a world not built for us creates every day. We value and celebrate our full selves. We build deep connections grounded in love. We help people realize their power and throw off their shame to speak their truths. We challenge people to grow and to make their own voices heard. We recognize the pain and we recognize the joy in this work, and we act together through that, grounded in the legacies of resistance and creativity of our many peoples.