

Campus Organizing

No on 36 Campaign, Portland, Oregon

SITUATION

There's often a disconnect between campus LGBT activists and state LGBT organizations. In the presence of an anti-gay ballot measure, it's crucial that our community be in sync and working together. Students, with their energy and passion, can become a volunteer force to be reckoned with. Communities can instantly double or triple their organizing capacity when students get directly involved in fighting against anti-gay ballot measures. Students and student groups also gain countless skills and benefit from the hands-on campaign experience.

STRATEGY/SOLUTION

In 2004, we lent a field organizer to spearhead student organizing in the No on 36 Campaign in Portland, Oregon. No on 36 was the statewide campaign working to defeat a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage.

In just two months, our field organizer cultivated and mentored an impressive team of student leaders to aggressively recruit and talk with thousands of students on more than five campuses in the Portland area. More than 1,500 students volunteered in those last critical two months of the campaign, making them more than one-third of the volunteers in Portland.

RESULT

Students came back week after week, waking up at 7 a.m. on Saturdays to walk door-to-door talking to voters. They took buses and biked to phonebanks after classes on weekdays. They were the energy and fire that brought Portland to say NO to the constitutional amendment by 59.7 percent!