

It was 1996. Cellphones were the size of a brick. You could rent the #1 movie - Braveheart - at Blockbuster. If you wanted to do that "internet thing," you went to a site called America Online (AOL) which boasted a record 5 million users. And the Central Illinois Organizing Project (CIOP) was founded.

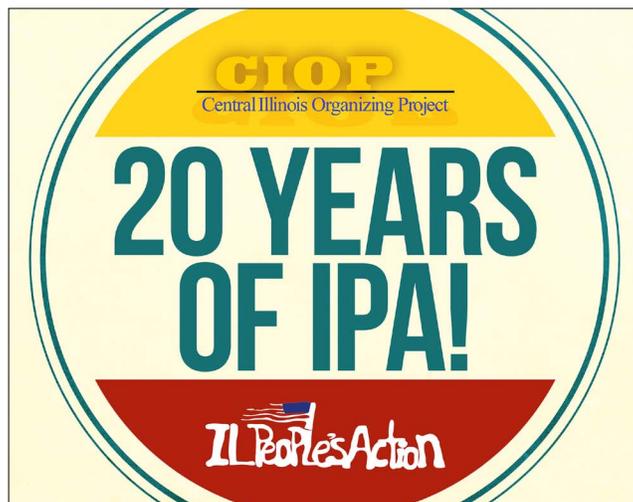
With a start-up matching grant from the Illinois United Methodist Church conference and legendary organizer Shel Trapp, local clergy organized to create a group that wouldn't just provide more services but also build power to make change.

CIOP's first campaign was against Citifinancial, among the first predatory lending actions in the nation. In the next 10 years, we won state anti-predatory lending regulations, anti-predatory lending legislation, and a refinance initiative for those who had been trapped in a bad loan. This work continued right through the foreclosure crisis, with Illinois People's Action and its affiliates helping approximately 500 central Illinois families fight off foreclosure and keep their homes.

Over the years, some of the faces have changed. We've lost old friends and gained new ones. We've lost some battles but won many others. In 2016, we are organizing to put People and Planet First. We have campaigns on the environment and environmental justice, the budget and revenue crisis and, of course, we're still fighting predatory lending!

IPA is an affiliate of People's Action, a new national organizing network merging National People's Action, USAction, and Alliance for a Just Society - 55 groups in 33 states.

- Don Carlson, Executive Director



NEW LEADER PROFILE: SHELDON GOOCH

My name is Sheldon Gooch and I am freshman student at Illinois State University. My work with IPA began when Jenn Carrillo contacted the campus College Democrats about participating in IPA's Economic Justice Issue Team to address the Illinois Budget impasse. As a student who has experienced the drastic effects of this impasse, I recognized that it was in my own self-interest and in the interest of others who are important in my life to get involved and make a change. After a couple months I have also hopped onto the Environmental Justice Issue Team because of the intersectionality it has with economic and racial justice issues.

In just the short time I've spent organizing with IPA and fighting against oppression, my leadership skills have developed majorly through my participation in direct actions and grassroots popular education trainings. Because of this, I now know that grassroots organizing is where I belong!

IPA & ALLIES MEET WITH IL EPA & GOVERNOR'S OFFICE TO DEMAND A STRONG CLEAN POWER PLAN

Last year, the Environmental Protection Agency announced a plan to cut carbon pollution from power plants as part of President Obama's Climate Action Plan. Carbon is a potent greenhouse gas and power plants are the single largest source of carbon pollution in the U.S. Each state has the flexibility to determine how the reduction will occur in their state.

On March 2, forty leaders from IPA and our Chicago counterparts met with the Governor's office and the Illinois EPA to demand an Illinois Clean Power Plan that puts people and planet first. Our focus is threefold:

- No free ride for polluters: Polluters must pay

costs associated with their pollution.

- No false solutions: Reductions in carbon must not be replaced with other dirty energy, like methane or nukes.
- No leaving low income communities and communities of color behind: True climate justice means justice for those who have historically been hit first and worst by environmental pollution.

This campaign is up and running and we need your leadership to ensure a "just transition" for people and planet. To join the fight, contact Dawn Dannenbring at dawn@illinoispeoplesaction.org.



MUNICIPAL AGGREGATION

We won 100% green energy through municipal aggregation, but we have to stay on top of it to keep it. In 2013, Bloomington residents voted 54% in favor of municipal aggregation and clean energy but IPA discovered in 2015 the city switched back to dirty coal to save a few cents. And the city didn't tell anyone.

J'accuse! Back to the City Council! After some organizing—calling and meeting with individual Council members, IPA packed the city council chamber. After solid testimony by IPA leader Bill Rau, we celebrated a 7-1 vote to revert back to 100% green aggregation. Meetings are still happening to tie up contract details.

BLACK & LATINO LEADERS SPEAK OUT ON AIR POLLUTION



Leaders Edgar Navarrete and Justin Hopkins speak at a 'Clean Air = Healthy Hearts' press conference in Peoria to address the ways in which communities of color are disproportionately affected by pollution and climate change.



STUDENTS FIGHT BACK AGAINST IMMORAL STATE BUDGET THROUGH POPULAR EDUCATION, BASE BUILDING & BOLD DIRECT ACTION

Illinois is heading into its second year without a state budget. And with every passing day, the crisis worsens for Illinoisans. While Gov. Rauner and Speaker Madigan continue their epic stalemate, 160,000 students who qualified for a MAP grant were not offered one, and 125,000 more live in fear that they will not receive the MAP grants they are currently using to pay for college. And all this because the ultra-rich and corporations Illinois refuse to pay their fair share!

Some like Zachary Braun (ISU) have already seen their grants slashed. In order to keep going to school, he was forced to borrow money from a private loan company--one that contributed money to Bruce Rauner's campaign and helped put him in office.

But students in Central Illinois are not sitting idle. They're building power in their campuses and they're fighting back!

Last year, Tanvi Singh (Heartland Community College) and John Blatzheim (ISU) were cheered on by fellow students as they participated in civil disobedience during a Moral Monday action, which effectively shut down the Chicago Board of Trade for over two hours.

And just last month, IPA leaders working with Fair Economy Illinois paid a visit to Ken Griffin, richest man in Illinois and Rauner's largest campaign contributor. FEI shut down business at Citadel, the hedge fund Griffin runs, for nearly three hours!

IPA TAKES PAYDAY FIGHT TO THE CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION



A dozen years into a payday campaign and we're still battling toxic loans. We've had victories along the way, but this fight is far from over. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has drafted new rules to regulate payday loans. Their public comment period has officially started, and it is critical that they hear from us. In March, IPA leader Candice Byrd took her story to the CFPB as part of a national conference in Washington DC.

Now it's your turn! IPA has a goal of sending in 1000 comments before the September 14 deadline.

Will you commit to sending a comment today?
Visit www.stop paydaypredators.org/IPA

HEARTLAND COMMUNITIES UNITE FOR A STRONG 'CLEAN JOBS BILL' AND SUCCESSFULLY BEAT BACK EXELON'S BAILOUT BILL THIS SESSION

IPA's environmental justice campaign leaders have been keeping busy! This spring, they strategized, organized community meetings (in Decatur, Peoria and Bloomington), spoke out at various press events and mobilized their base to stop an Exelon bailout bill from being passed.

So far, over 300 community members have come out to learn about environmental justice and to hold their legislators accountable to pass new energy policy that prioritizes renewable energy, energy efficiency and justice for communities of color.

Leaders have not only organized events in support of the "Illinois Clean Jobs Bill", but have also secured commitments from Sen. Dave Koehler, Rep. Jehan Gordon-Booth and Rep. Dan Brady to work with IPA to strengthen the current version of the bill.

This fight is far from over but in this first round, we've gone toe-to-toe with big energy and shown them what people-power can do.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

CHAPTER MEETINGS

Bloomington-Normal: Saturday, July 9th from 12pm-2pm (Location TBD)

Peoria: Monday, June 13th at 7pm (Unitarian Universalist Church, 3000 W. Richwoods Blvd.)

Decatur: Monday, June 13th at 12pm (Central Christian Church, 650 W. William St.)

JENN CARRILLO FAREWELL PARTY & FUNDRAISER

Saturday, June 11th at 7pm (IPA Office, 510 E. Washington St., Bloomington)