



## Maine Youth Power's First Birthday!

December 19, 2021

We are **one year old** today, and what an incredible first year it has been for Maine Youth Power!

In December of 2020, seven co-founders from across the state launched Maine Youth Power together during a long meeting where we discussed what we dreamed for Maine. Now, as a youth-led youth movement, we reflect on a year of our *local wins, statewide victories* model, we have so much to be proud of! We have learned together, pivoted, made the news multiple times as youth leaders in Maine, passed a member-written piece of legislation through the Maine House and Senate. We ran skills trainings for our two cycles of fellowships, and strategically built our base with an eye towards the 2022 midterm elections. We launched multiple campaigns and power building plans around local issues such as gender neutral bathroom justice, voting rights and students rights.

Since I last wrote we have been in the early fall we created an accessible, 10 page referendum election guide for the important issues in the November election. In early November, we went up to UMaine Orono and presented and tabled at the Maine Youth Action Network Leadership Conference where we grew our movement by list and base building. This month we launched a campaign with students at Presque Isle High School in Aroostook County. Also this fall we made the news in the [Maine Beacon](#), and launched our [website](#). From our very first gathering as Maine Youth Power last year we have quickly grown and our reach across Maine now extends to Western, Midcoast, Downeast, Northern, and Central Maine with campaigns and community. Centering rural Maine is a core tenet of our movement and we are doing it!

Looking ahead, we created the [basis of our strategic plan for the 2022 election](#) which includes our budget for 2022 as well. We are excited to be building out local campaigns as well as the Maine Youth Pledge – a statewide set of legislative priorities that we invite politicians to endorse, with input from 100 young Mainers. We are planning so much more in the coming year, we find our work to be most effective each time we choose to ground with a strong race/class analysis and bring an emergent strategy perspective to our work.

### **Donors and Grassroots Kickoff**

This past year we built up our strength as an organization through applying for foundation grants. We were awarded a grant from the Funders' Collective on Youth Organizing, a yearlong grant and cohort to mentor our organization on how to defeat the 1% and win. Just this week we were chosen for a grant from New England Grassroots Fund, for young leaders, sustaining us to fund more and more young Mainers.

In November we launched our [grassroots donor campaign](#) and we now have around 40 monthly donors sustaining our movement and helping us grow. We are excited to be developing such wonderful community investment.

Maine Youth Power is preparing to throw down this coming year through a clear and thoughtful planning process and we are excited to have you join us along the way. The new year will usher in momentum to our current campaigns, new work to grow into, and new reach to young Mainers, getting us closer to the Maine we envision.

As always, please reach out and connect with us however you want to join or support Maine Youth Power and our movement to build a state where young people thrive, centering human dignity, equity, access and a livable future.

In Solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "pDolan". The signature is written in a cursive, lowercase style.

Phoebe Dolan

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Maine Youth Power Co-Director