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# Using This Guide



*The First Rainbow Coalition* is a call to action to get more involved in the community and reach out to others who are doing the same. Built by community organizers in Chicago in the late 1960s, the Rainbow Coalition provides an example of how to organize diverse groups of people around shared community concerns and push for social change against incredible odds. The coalition's struggle against systemic racism and classism in the United States persists today.

This discussion guide is designed to empower viewers of *The First Rainbow Coalition* who want to practice civic participation, community organizing, and coalition building for social justice. Event planners and educators can use this guide to bring people together around the film in support of these core goals:

- Educate people about coalition building through the story of the Rainbow Coalition and highlight local examples of multiethnic coalitions past and/or present.
- Encourage people to reach out to others in the community to build diverse coalitions and empower citizens with helpful organizing tools.
- Facilitate dialogue about contemporary community concerns—such as poverty, racial inequity, housing, and policing—and articulate a shared vision for the community.



## About Indie Lens Pop-Up

Indie Lens Pop-Up is a neighborhood series that brings people together for film screenings and community-driven conversations. Featuring documentaries seen on PBS's *Independent Lens*, Indie Lens Pop-Up draws together local residents, leaders, and organizations to discuss what matters most, from newsworthy topics and social issues to family and community relationships. Make friends, share stories, and join the conversation at an Indie Lens Pop-Up screening near you: [bit.ly/ILPOP-Screenings](https://bit.ly/ILPOP-Screenings)

### Neighborhood Theme

This season, we will build on our Indie Lens Pop-Up theme of “neighborhood” by asking audiences: **What’s your vision for your neighborhood?** As we experience increased polarization and division in our everyday lives, we will come together to watch and discuss *Independent Lens* documentaries at hundreds of events hosted by Indie Lens Pop-Up partners in communities across the United States. Together, we will hear diverse stories, learn what it means to listen with acceptance and openness, and build communities where all neighbors belong and

## How to Watch the Film

- Indie Lens Pop-Up Community Screenings: Nov. 13, 2019–Jan. 26, 2020
- PBS broadcast premiere on *Independent Lens*: Monday, Jan. 27, 2020
- Online streaming at [video.pbs.org](https://video.pbs.org): Jan. 27–Feb. 25, 2020

# About the Film



**“THE RAINBOW COALITION, IT PRESENTED A POSSIBILITY. IT GAVE US A VISION FOR WHAT COULD BE IN TERMS OF INTERRACIAL POLITICS AMONG THE URBAN POOR.”**

—Lilia Fernandez, historian

In 1969, the Chicago Black Panther Party began to form a multiethnic coalition with the Young Lords and Young Patriots organizations, which became the Rainbow Coalition. Banding together in one of the most segregated cities in postwar America, the Rainbow Coalition changed the face of 1960s Chicago politics and created an organizing model for future activists and politicians.

# From the Filmmaker



We hope that you, the viewer, are able to connect with this film and the issues and ideas it explores. The film is largely set in the past, but was always intended as a vehicle to provide a space for community dialogues about issues affecting us today. Many of the issues affecting the Rainbow Coalition member groups still resound in communities across the nation.

The Rainbow Coalition that began in 1969 is just one of many examples of how diverse people have worked together to improve their lives and to transform the communities in which they live. I feel that the Rainbow Coalition's work presents a challenge to communities today and asks a simple question: Do our communities work alone to effect change or can we begin to think about the possibilities of working together to build stronger and more effective movements for community empowerment?

— Ray Santisteban, Producer/Director *The First Rainbow Coalition*

# People in the Film



## JOSE “CHA CHA” JIMENEZ

Jose "Cha Cha" Jimenez was a founding member of the Young Lords, a street gang that he later relaunched as a human rights organization. The Young Lords was made up of Puerto Rican and other Latinx youth living in Chicago's Lincoln Park neighborhood. Jimenez was born in Puerto Rico and moved with his family to Chicago when he was young. He was in and out of jail during his youth, and it was in solitary confinement where he was turned on to the work of Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, and the Black Panthers. After his release, he began organizing youth around the gentrification and displacement brought on by urban renewal. He later ran for city alderman in 1975, receiving 39 percent of the 51 percent needed to win and turning out a newly registered bloc of Latinx voters.



## HY THURMAN

Hy Thurman was one of the early members of the Young Patriots, a group that began as a street gang and later organized working-class Whites in Chicago's Uptown neighborhood. Thurman was born in Tennessee to a family of sharecroppers. He dropped out of high school and joined a wave of White southerners moving to Chicago for more opportunity. What he found was more poverty and the slum conditions of Uptown, referred to as "Hillbilly Harlem" by the local upper-class Whites. When urban renewal targeted Uptown as a location for a new city college, Thurman and the Young Patriots presented an alternative proposal to save their neighborhood (the city rejected it). Also, with support from the Rainbow Coalition, Thurman and the Young Patriots helped establish a free neighborhood health clinic and breakfast programs.



## ROBERT “BOB” E. LEE III

Robert "Bob" E. Lee III was a member of the Illinois Chapter of the Black Panther Party and was instrumental in building the Rainbow Coalition, alongside Fred Hampton. Lee was born in Houston, Texas, and learned community organizing from his activist father, the civil rights leaders that frequented his mother's nightclub, and the Longshoreman Union organizers that lived across from his family home. In 1968, he moved to Chicago as a VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) volunteer and worked out of the Ishram YMCA—a popular hangout for Puerto Rican and working-class White youth. It was here where he would make the connections that would help him start the Rainbow Coalition. He was a community organizer right up until his death from cancer in 2017.



## FRED HAMPTON

Fred Hampton was the deputy chairman of the Illinois chapter of the Black Panther Party. A gifted child born to a middle-class family in a Chicago suburb, Hampton organized the youth council of a local NAACP branch while studying prelaw at Triton Junior College. Inspired by the Black Panther Party's Ten-Point Program, he joined the group and began organizing in downtown Chicago. He quickly demonstrated his leadership skills by securing a nonaggression pact among Chicago's most powerful street gangs and by organizing rallies, blood drives, a health clinic, and free breakfast programs. He was 21 years old when he was killed by Chicago police on December 4, 1969.

# People in the Film

## Other community organizers interviewed in the film:

**Henry “Poison” Gaddis** – Member of the Illinois Black Panther Party who was inspired to join after hearing Fred Hampton speak

**Bobby McGinnis** – Young Patriots founding member, alongside Hy Thurman

**Ericka Huggins** – Leader of the Los Angeles Black Panther Party and former political prisoner

**Kathleen Neal Cleaver** – Leader in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and the Black Panther Party

**Sadie Lum** – Member of I Wor Kuen (Righteous and Harmonious Fists), a radical group of Asian Americans that began in New York City’s Chinatown and later expanded to San Francisco as the Red Guard Party

**Aaron Dixon** – Captain of the Seattle chapter of the Black Panther Party during its initial years



# The Rainbow Coalition in Context

The 1960s were a time of rapid social change in the United States. The Civil Rights Movement that began in the 1950s had reached maturity and was starting to realize some significant wins, such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which ended segregation in public places and banned discrimination in employment. Other groups, such as those in the women's liberation movement and the antiwar movement, took note and began to organize themselves to demand change.

Progress by civil rights groups met intense, often violent backlash from White conservatives that wanted to maintain the status quo of systemic racism. The era saw the assassinations of many civil rights leaders, which prompted groups like the Black Panther Party to take up arms in self-defense. Some key civil rights events of the 1960s include the following<sup>1</sup>:

- 1960** ● Students for a Democratic Society founded
- 1963** ● March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom took place
- John F. Kennedy assassinated
- 1964** ● Civil Rights Act passed
- Freedom Riders register Black voters in the South
- 1965** ● Malcolm X assassinated
- Voting Rights Act passed
- Filipino and Latinx farmworkers in California begin five-year-long Delano Grape Strike
- 1966** ● Black Panther Party founded, in Oakland, California
- National Organization for Women (NOW) founded
- 1967** ● Antiwar demonstrators gather at Lincoln Memorial to oppose Vietnam War
- 1968** ● Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. assassinated
- Fair Housing Act passed
- Robert F. Kennedy assassinated
- Demonstrators clash with Chicago police at Democratic National Convention
- 1969** ● Stonewall Uprising in New York fomented LGBTQ rights movement
- Activists from American Indian Movement occupy Alcatraz Island

When the Rainbow Coalition formed in 1969, Chicago was dominated by the politics of Mayor Richard J. Daley, a formidable political figure in the country and one of the most powerful mayors of all time. He first took office in 1956 and served six consecutive terms until his death in 1976. During that time, he implemented an aggressive plan to rebuild Chicago. The Navy Pier, Millennium Park, the O'Hare International Airport expansion, the University of Illinois at Chicago, and the completion of the city's expressway all happened under his watch.

To achieve such ambitious infrastructure plans, Daley built a powerful political machine that steamrolled anyone and anything that got in the way of his vision for Chicago. While landlords and property owners cashed in, Chicago's urban poor had little recourse as their neighborhoods were uprooted and bulldozed. At the same time, the Daley administration fought to preserve neighborhood and school segregation and refused to implement affirmative action procedures in the city's police department. Daley was widely criticized for the violence he sanctioned against demonstrators at the 1968 Democratic National Convention and the infamous "shoot to kill" order he issued to Chicago police during the riots that followed the assassination of King.<sup>2</sup>

It was in this environment that the members of the Rainbow Coalition began organizing their communities to push back against the oppression of Daley's political machine and the systemic racism and classism prevalent throughout the United States.

#### Sources:

1. [history.com/topics/civil-rights-movement/civil-rights-movement-timeline](https://www.history.com/topics/civil-rights-movement/civil-rights-movement-timeline)
2. [encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/1722.html](https://encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/1722.html)

# What is Community Organizing?



Community organizing is the process of bringing people together around shared concerns and working as a group to create social change. Community organizers recognize that multiple people working together to solve a problem have a better chance to create meaningful change than any single individual has.

The members of the Black Panther Party, the Young Lords, and the Young Patriots featured in the film are all examples of community organizers. They brought their neighbors together to fight for change around shared concerns of gentrification and displacement brought on by urban renewal, poor and unsafe housing conditions, police brutality, and more.

At the time, neighborhoods were deeply segregated by race and class, and as a result, many of the community organizations formed around the race and class of their neighborhood. As examples, the Black Panthers began by organizing in Black neighborhoods, the Young Lords in Puerto Rican neighborhoods, and the Young Patriots in White working-class neighborhoods. But community organizations can form in many other ways. For example, people can come together based on an interest, an issue, a profession, employment, or other identities, such as gender or sexual orientation.

The Black Panthers, the Young Lords, and the Young Patriots used community organizing to help empower their neighbors, demand respect, and push for social change. Some elements of community organizing described in the film include:

- **Identifying a shared concern or problem affecting people in the group.** For example, both the Young Lords and the Young Patriots started out as street gangs, but got involved in community organizing when urban renewal plans threatened to displace residents from their neighborhoods.
- **Agreeing upon a vision for change to solve the problem and a core set of values.** The Black Panther Party, for example, articulated its vision as “All Power to the People,” which was adopted by Rainbow Coalition members. In addition, Hampton articulated “solidarity” as being a core value of the Chicago Black Panthers, saying: “We’re going to fight racism, and not with racism, but we’ve got to fight it with solidarity.”
- **Creating a set of demands based on the vision and identifying the people in positions of power to meet those demands.** As an example, when the Young Lords went to the Community Conservation Council meeting, they presented the demand: “No more meetings here unless you have Black, Latino, and poor White representation in your council.”
- **Recruiting more supporters to join your group.** For example, the Students for a Democratic Society recruited members of the Young Patriots street gang to become politically active in the campaign JOIN (Jobs or Income Now).
- **Organizing actions with your supporters to win demands.** As an example, the Young Lords and their supporters organized voter registration drives in the Latinx community during Jimenez’s campaign for city alderman, registering a new group of voters that later went on to help elect Harold Washington mayor of Chicago in 1983.

# Coalition-Building Strategies



Coalition building takes community organizing to the next level. Once a group has organized itself, it can build a coalition by reaching out to other groups that have similar concerns. For example, the Black Panther Party was already a well-organized group with a vision and supporters when Lee and Hampton reached out to the Young Patriots and Young Lords. The Black Panthers' already well-organized group made them appealing coalition partners.

Coalitions are particularly effective when the problem that organizers are trying to solve is complicated and protracted. Racial inequality and poverty are arguably some of the most protracted problems in American society. The coalition partners needed each other in order to create meaningful change.

Some components of coalition building include:

- **Identifying groups that are organizing in the community.** For example, after hearing about its nonviolent takeover of a police meeting, Hampton reached out to the Young Lords. "The very next day it came out in the news, and that's when we met Fred Hampton," Jimenez says in the film. "We were talking about how we can work together because we were all being attacked by the city, by the police. Then they told us about the Young Patriots in the North Side."
- **Getting to know the group by showing up to open meetings and listening to their concerns.** As an example, the film shows archival footage of Lee speaking to Young Patriots members at a community meeting. "Panthers are here for Uptown," he says. "We come here with our hearts open. You cats can supervise us where we can be of help to you. ... What do you want in your community?"

- **Identifying common concerns and values and developing a shared vision.** For example, Thurman says in the film: "Housing issues, police brutality, just being fed up—that, we could all agree on." As a vision, the Rainbow Coalition adopted the Black Panther Party's rallying cry of "All Power to the People."
- **Meeting and communicating regularly to build relationships within the coalition.** As an example, after that initial community meeting that Lee and Gaddis attended, they kept coming back to solidify the relationship. "We worked very, very hard in Uptown community, it was two weeks. We went there every day, every night," says Gaddis in the film.
- **Practicing collaborative leadership.** For example, the Black Panthers, Young Lords, and Young Patriots all agreed that there would be no one leader of the coalition. Each group was equal to the others, and all group leaders worked together to solve problems and make decisions democratically.
- **Coordinating strategies, supporters, and resources to create change.** For example, Jimenez says in the film: "[The Black Panthers] showed us the importance of programs. As an organizing vehicle, we set up a free Reach for Children program, a free health clinic and dental clinic, a free clothing program, a full pantry," said Jimenez.

The Rainbow Coalition formed around revolutionary politics. In Hampton's own words, "We say that we work with anybody and form coalitions with anybody that has revolution on their mind." However, there are many types of coalitions. For example, a coalition of schools, daycare facilities, and healthcare providers could form around addressing a public health need, such as a measles outbreak. Or a city could organize a coalition of businesses, religious organizations, and city agencies around disaster preparedness. It is not a requirement that groups in a coalition agree on every issue. However, they should agree on a few top issues to effectively work together.

# Coalition-Building Strategies

## Other “Rainbow Coalitions” of the Time

Coalition building was not unique to Chicago. At the time the Rainbow Coalition was forming, Black Panther chapters nationwide were launching coalitions all over the country. For example, Dixon, of the Seattle chapter of the Black Panther Party, who is interviewed in the film, organized a similar coalition. In San Francisco, the Panthers organized with Los Siete de la Raza, and in Oakland, with the Brown Berets—both Latinx community organizations.

Also interviewed in the film is Lum, from I Wor Kuen, which formed coalitions with the Black Panthers and the Young Lords in New York and San Francisco. In Denver, the Crusade for Justice, a Chicano organization led by Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales, formed alliances with American Indian Movement leaders, including Vernon Bellecourt and Alice Blackhorse, in a common struggle for Indigenous rights.

Before his assassination, King worked to build the Poor People’s Campaign—a coalition made up of leaders of American Indian, Puerto Rican, Mexican American, and poor White communities—to address the fundamental questions of poverty. Chicano leaders Reies Tijerina of New Mexico and Gonzales of Denver were among the leaders of the coalition.

Reverend Jesse Jackson adopted the Rainbow Coalition concept in his work with the PUSH Rainbow Coalition, which focused on economic inequality and civil rights. He brought the name to a national stage in 1984 and 1988 when he ran for U.S. president in the Democratic primary.

# Community Concerns Raised in the Film

The community members and organizers interviewed in the film frequently expressed concerns related to housing, policing, and poverty. Are these issues in your area today? This section provides more context about the community concerns raised in the film and their contemporary relevance.

## Neighborhood Segregation by Race and Class

Before the Fair Housing Act passed in 1968, housing discrimination was legal in the United States. The federal government, private banks, real estate agents, and individual property owners all used race and class as criteria for selling or renting homes. For example, the 1930s federal policy known as redlining used color-coded maps of more than 200 cities to designate neighborhoods with Black, Latinx, and working-class White residents ineligible for mortgage insurance.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, many public housing programs after World War II were explicitly advertised as “Whites only.”<sup>2</sup> The result was deeply segregated cities across the country. Just days after King was assassinated, on April 4, 1968, Congress passed the Fair Housing Act and officially made housing discrimination illegal. Fifty years later, American cities are still largely segregated; mixed-income and racially integrated neighborhoods are relatively rare. Weak enforcement of the law and underreporting of discrimination have allowed race and class bias to continue to shape neighborhoods to this day.<sup>3</sup>

### File a complaint of housing discrimination:

[usa.gov/housing-complaints](https://www.usa.gov/housing-complaints)

### See if your neighborhood was redlined:

[dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/#loc=5/39.1/-94.58&text=intro](https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/#loc=5/39.1/-94.58&text=intro)

### Sources:

1. [dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/#loc=5/39.1/-94.58&text=intro](https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/#loc=5/39.1/-94.58&text=intro)
2. [npr.org/2017/05/03/526655831/a-forgotten-history-of-how-the-u-s-government-segregated-america](https://npr.org/2017/05/03/526655831/a-forgotten-history-of-how-the-u-s-government-segregated-america)
3. [usnews.com/news/the-report/articles/2018-04-20/us-is-still-segregated-even-after-fair-housing-act](https://usnews.com/news/the-report/articles/2018-04-20/us-is-still-segregated-even-after-fair-housing-act)

## Unhealthy Housing Conditions

The National Center for Healthy Housing estimates that 45 percent of homes have at least one health or safety hazard.<sup>1</sup> Public health concerns brought on by unhealthy housing conditions include lead poisoning, asthma, injuries due to falls, radon-induced lung cancer, and carbon monoxide poisoning. When lead paint was banned in 1978, the rates of children with lead in their bloodstream began a steady decline. However, there are still an estimated 1.2 million children in the United States that have lead poisoning.<sup>2</sup> Community organizers in places like Flint, Michigan, helped to reveal a problem of lead

water pipes nationwide. About 2,000 public water systems contain elevated levels of lead. Low-income neighborhoods and communities of color are disproportionately impacted, and testing and treatment have been found inadequate in many states.

### For healthy housing statistics by state:

[nchh.org/who-we-are/nchh-publications/fact-sheets/state-hh-fact-sheets](https://www.nchh.org/who-we-are/nchh-publications/fact-sheets/state-hh-fact-sheets)

### Sources:

1. [nchh.org/resource-library/fact-sheet\\_state-healthy-housing\\_2018\\_usa.pdf](https://www.nchh.org/resource-library/fact-sheet_state-healthy-housing_2018_usa.pdf)
2. [vox.com/science-and-health/2017/4/27/15424050/us-underreports-lead-poisoning-cases-map-community](https://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2017/4/27/15424050/us-underreports-lead-poisoning-cases-map-community)

## Gentrification and Unaffordable Housing.

Gentrification occurs when more affluent newcomers move into a low-income neighborhood, drive up housing prices, and displace residents—fundamentally changing the neighborhood’s character and demographics. Black and Latinx residents are disproportionately displaced by gentrification. In the 1950s and 1960s, federal urban renewal programs drove gentrification in more than 600 cities.<sup>1</sup> The program provided funds for cities to clear out downtown slums by seizing property and paying residents to relocate. The stated goal was to build better housing; however, more often, lucrative commercial buildings went up instead. In 2007, the foreclosure crisis drove a new wave of gentrification.<sup>2</sup> Subprime mortgage lending targeted low-income neighborhoods, and when properties foreclosed and their residents were evicted, investors bought up homes and flipped them for profit. Currently, seven cities account for the majority of gentrification in America: New York City, Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, Baltimore, San Diego, and Chicago.<sup>3</sup> Unaffordable housing, however, is a problem that affects most American cities, large and small. Low-income renters in particular struggle; nearly half of all renters spend more than 30 percent of their income on rent.<sup>4</sup> Unaffordable housing fuels a growing homelessness crisis in the United States. On any given night, more than 500,000 people in America are homeless, and an estimated 34 percent are families with children.

### See how urban renewal affected your area:

[dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/renewal](https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/renewal)

### See what demographic shifts are occurring in your community:

[myottetm.github.io/USMapBoxIMO/USLwDispConc.html](https://myottetm.github.io/USMapBoxIMO/USLwDispConc.html)

### See how homelessness affects your state:

[endhomelessness.org/homelessness-in-america/homelessness-statistics/state-of-homelessness-report](https://endhomelessness.org/homelessness-in-america/homelessness-statistics/state-of-homelessness-report)

# Community Concerns Raised in the Film

## Sources:

1. [nationalgeographic.com/news/2017/12/urban-renewal-projects-maps-united-states](http://nationalgeographic.com/news/2017/12/urban-renewal-projects-maps-united-states)
2. [urbandisplacement.org/gentrification-explained](http://urbandisplacement.org/gentrification-explained)
3. [ncrc.org/gentrification](http://ncrc.org/gentrification)
4. [curbed.com/2019/6/25/18715797/housing-market-affordable-housing-state-of-nations-housing-harvard-2019](http://curbed.com/2019/6/25/18715797/housing-market-affordable-housing-state-of-nations-housing-harvard-2019)
5. [endhomelessness.org/homelessness-in-america/homelessness-statistics/state-of-homelessness-report](http://endhomelessness.org/homelessness-in-america/homelessness-statistics/state-of-homelessness-report)

## Police Use of Excessive Force

Described as police brutality in the film, police use of excessive force has garnered national attention in recent years, largely due to community organizers from the Black Lives Matter movement, who demanded change after the high-profile deaths of Eric Garner in New York, Michael Brown in Missouri, Sandra Bland in Texas, Freddie Gray in Washington, D.C., Alton Sterling in Louisiana, Philando Castile in Minnesota, Stephon Clark in California, and others. It is estimated that incidents of police use of excessive force range in the hundreds of thousands each year.<sup>1</sup> In 2018, about a thousand of these incidents resulted in a civilian death, whereas police deaths during the same period totaled about 100.<sup>2</sup> Although historical data were not well tracked, the stories in the film indicate that police use of excessive force is not a new community concern. Because of their revolutionary politics, Rainbow Coalition organizers attracted extra police attention, primarily through police units known as Red Squads that were tasked with spying on activists thought to have ties to communism. COINTELPRO was an FBI program from 1956 through 1977 designed to “neutralize” political dissidents, and although many groups were under COINTELPRO surveillance, the Black Panther Party was the target of the majority of its actions.<sup>3</sup> After Hampton’s death, a break-in at the FBI offices revealed that the FBI had floor plans of his apartment on file. Hampton’s relatives and survivors sued the federal government for its role in his death, and in 1982, they received a \$1.8 million settlement.<sup>4</sup>

**See how police use of excessive force affects your state:**  
[mappingpoliceviolence.org/states](http://mappingpoliceviolence.org/states)

## Sources:

1. [ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5813980](http://ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5813980)
2. [nature.com/articles/d41586-019-02601-9](http://nature.com/articles/d41586-019-02601-9)
3. [pbs.org/hueypnewton/actions/actions\\_cointelpro.html](http://pbs.org/hueypnewton/actions/actions_cointelpro.html)
4. [archives.gov/research/african-americans/individuals/fred-hampton](http://archives.gov/research/african-americans/individuals/fred-hampton)

## Poverty and Child Hunger

In 2017, about 12 percent (one in eight) of Americans lived below the poverty line, which is measured at about a \$25,000 annual income for a family of four. In 1960, the poverty rate was also about 12 percent.<sup>1</sup> Although the total poverty rate has not changed much in 50 years, some populations have seen a decline in poverty—most significantly, older Americans and Black Americans, thanks to expansions in Social Security. However, during that time period, the child poverty rate rose from more than 15 percent in 1960 to more than 17 percent in 2017—one of the highest child poverty rates in the developed world. For children in female-headed households, the poverty rate was almost 50 percent.<sup>2</sup> Hunger is a significant concern for children living in poverty. An estimated one of every six children shows up to school hungry, which makes it harder to focus on learning.<sup>3</sup> At the time the Rainbow Coalition organized free breakfast programs for neighborhood children, no federal programs existed. In 1975, the federal government officially launched a program, which has grown steadily since. In 2016, more than 14 million children participated in school breakfast programs.<sup>4</sup>

**Find child poverty data by state:**  
[endchildpovertyus.org/state-resources](http://endchildpovertyus.org/state-resources)

**See hunger stats in your state:**  
[nokidhungry.org/who-we-are/hunger-facts](http://nokidhungry.org/who-we-are/hunger-facts)

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2. [usnews.com/news/healthiest-communities/articles/2018-09-12/poverty-in-america-new-census-data-paint-an-unpleasant-picture](http://usnews.com/news/healthiest-communities/articles/2018-09-12/poverty-in-america-new-census-data-paint-an-unpleasant-picture)
3. [nokidhungry.org/who-we-are/hunger-facts](http://nokidhungry.org/who-we-are/hunger-facts)
4. [fns.usda.gov/sbp/sbp-fact-sheet](http://fns.usda.gov/sbp/sbp-fact-sheet)

# Community Concerns Raised in the Film

## White Nationalism

Recent violence by White Nationalists in South Carolina, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Ohio has raised widespread public concern. White Nationalist groups are organized around preserving a system of White supremacy.<sup>1</sup> In contrast, the Young Patriots organized their group around community concerns and around, in Thurman's words, "patriotism to the community, rather than the system." Since racism was part of a system that kept poor people down, the Young Patriots rejected it and opted for solidarity with community-based groups. They wore the Confederate flag alongside Black Panther pins in an attempt to redefine the flag's meaning and spark conversations with people they met. But eventually, their participation in the Rainbow Coalition led them to discontinue use of the flag. The Confederate flag remains a common symbol used to represent both White Nationalism and Southern Pride. In a 2015 CNN poll, 72 percent of Black respondents saw the Confederate flag as a symbol of racism, whereas only 25 percent of White respondents did.<sup>2</sup>

### Sources:

1. [splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/ideology/white-nationalist](http://splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/ideology/white-nationalist)
2. [cnn.com/2015/07/02/politics/confederate-flag-poll-racism-southern-pride/index.html](http://cnn.com/2015/07/02/politics/confederate-flag-poll-racism-southern-pride/index.html)

# Ten-Point Program of the Black Panther Party

**“WE’RE GOING TO FIGHT RACISM, AND NOT WITH RACISM, BUT WE’VE GOT TO FIGHT IT WITH SOLIDARITY .”**

– Fred Hampton, deputy chairman of the Illinois chapter of the Black Panther Party

The Ten-Point Program of the Black Panther Party was an inspiration to many community organizers interviewed in the film. It became a guiding document for a broad coalition of people. The platform was initially written in 1966 by Black Panther Party leaders Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale.<sup>1</sup> The original platform laid out these 10 points:

1. We want freedom and the power to determine the destiny of our Black community.
2. We want full employment for our people.
3. We want an end to the robbery by the capitalists of the Black community.
4. We want decent housing fit for the shelter of human beings.
5. We want an education which teaches us our true history and our role in the present-day American society.
6. We want all Black men to be exempt from military service.
7. We want an immediate end to police brutality and the murder of Black people.
8. We want all Black men immediately released from federal, state, county, and city jails and penitentiaries.
9. We want all Black people when brought to trial to be tried in court by a jury of their peer group or people from their Black communities, as defined by the Constitution of the United States.
10. We want land, bread, housing, education, clothing, justice, and peace.

**Source:**

1. [pbs.org/hueypnewton/actions/actions\\_platform.html](https://www.pbs.org/hueypnewton/actions/actions_platform.html)



# Discussing the Film

Documentary films are a great way to start a community dialogue. The questions that follow can help you think more about the main ideas in the film and help generate a discussion with other viewers, either in person or online at #FirstRainbowPBS.

1. How do you define community organizing? What examples of it did you see in the film?
2. How have you participated in community organizing? What inspired you to get civically engaged?
3. What was happening locally in the late 1960s during the time the Rainbow Coalition was starting in Chicago?
4. What examples of diverse coalitions exist in the area now? Are there contemporary coalitions elsewhere that are inspiring you?
5. What are some of the similarities and differences you noticed between the time period covered in the film and what is happening now in our community?
6. Gentrification brought on by urban renewal programs was a major catalyst for groups like the Young Lords and Young Patriots to begin organizing. How has gentrification and urban renewal shaped local neighborhoods? Where is gentrification happening today?
7. “Many of the cities are facing the same issues of housing, of police brutality, of poor healthcare,” says Cha Cha Jimenez in the film. Do you agree? How are these concerns raised by community members locally?
8. Are there other examples of community concerns shared by local residents that were not mentioned in the film?
9. Why do you think the Rainbow Coalition was successful? What does it take to build effective coalitions?
10. What lessons can we learn from the Rainbow Coalition and other grassroots movements from the 1960s and 1970s?
11. How did it feel watching the archival footage included in the film? What stories do you hear in contemporary media regarding community division or solidarity?
12. What strategies can we as individuals put into practice that will help strengthen relationships across diverse groups in the community?
13. “It was almost electric. I mean, people were so excited about finally having a voice,” says Hy Thurman in the film. How are people affected when they feel heard? Why is it so important in a democracy for people to have a voice in their communities?
14. Fred Hampton says in the film, “They want to get rid of me because I’m saying something that might wake some other exploited people.” What is your response to the brutal treatment of Hampton and other organizers mentioned in the film?
15. Their participation in the Rainbow Coalition prompted the Young Patriots to take, in Thurman’s words, a “completely different look at the meaning” of the Confederate flag and eventually discontinue its use. In what ways were the Young Patriots different from other White Nationalist groups that have organized around the Confederate flag?
16. The film brings up the 2017 march by White Nationalists in Charlottesville, Virginia, which resulted in the death of a counter-protester. How has seeing marches like these affected you and your work in the community?
17. “Class consciousness cuts across all kinds of strata. For poor White people to be working with poor Black people was unheard of,” says Ericka Huggins in the film. In what ways was the Rainbow Coalition radically inclusive? In what ways could it have been more inclusive?
18. “All Power to the People” was the vision of the Black Panther Party and later a rallying cry of the Rainbow Coalition. What is your vision for the community? What change would you like to see to improve the lives of local residents?
19. “If you don’t know where to start organizing, walk to your front door, and you look in front of you, you look behind you, you look to the left, you look to the right, and then you pick a direction,” was the advice from Bob E. Lee in the film. What would you say to someone who wants to organize in the community, but may not know where to start?
20. What advice would you give to people who are already organizing in the community, but want to form broader coalitions? How do you recommend getting started in coalition building?

# Invite Local Speakers for a Panel Discussion

*The First Rainbow Coalition* is a great reason to get more involved in the community and organize others. The suggestions that follow are for those looking to do more after watching the film, such as hosting a community event or an activity with other viewers to get them more engaged in the issues. ★



A panel of speakers from the community can help bring the story of the Rainbow Coalition into a local context. A good place to start is to look for people in the area that are organizing around the issues presented in the film. Examples include the following:

- Use the GuideStar nonprofit locator to search the keyword “coalitions” in your state: [guidestar.org/search](https://www.guidestar.org/search) or search your local news outlets.
- See if there is a local group working on civic participation, such as an affiliate of Popular Democracy: [populardemocracy.org/our-partners](https://populardemocracy.org/our-partners) or People’s Action: [peoplesaction.org/institute/institute-members](https://peoplesaction.org/institute/institute-members)
- Find a local member of the National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition: [nchh.org/build-the-movement/nshhc](https://nchh.org/build-the-movement/nshhc)
- Contact the National Community Reinvestment Coalition to be connected to one of their member organizations: [nrc.org/contact](https://nrc.org/contact)
- Reach out to a member of the End Child Poverty Coalition: [endchildpovertyus.org/coalition-partners](https://endchildpovertyus.org/coalition-partners)
- Check to see if there is a local racial justice organizing

group listed in the Racial Equity Resource Guide: [racialequityresourceguide.org/organizations/organizations](https://racialequityresourceguide.org/organizations/organizations) or affiliated with Showing Up for Racial Justice: [showingupforracialjustice.org/chapters-and-affiliates.html](https://showingupforracialjustice.org/chapters-and-affiliates.html)

- Bring together local groups organized by ethnicity or identity, such as:
  - Unidos US
  - NAACP
  - Black Lives Matter
  - League of Women Voters
  - Women’s March
  - Council for Global Equality
  - National Disability Rights Network
  - Interfaith Alliance

**Tip:** Make sure to have a space set up where community organizers can share information about their work and sign up people to get involved.

# Generate Media Inspired by the Film



Viewers can engage more deeply with the film by creating their own media related to the issues raised and sharing it. Sharing media can also help promote the message of the film and encourage more people to tune in and engage in a discussion. Here are some ideas for generating media:

- **Make buttons** inspired by those worn by the Rainbow Coalition. It can feature the rainbow design or original designs created by audience members. Try making this activity collaborative by having audience members contribute to each other's button designs, such as having multiple people paint the colors of the rainbow onto one button. [peoplepowerpress.org/pages/do-it-yourself-button-making-kits-button-makers-and-pro-button-making-machines](http://peoplepowerpress.org/pages/do-it-yourself-button-making-kits-button-makers-and-pro-button-making-machines).
- **Create a short film or audio recording** about a local coalition. If you are hosting an event, you can arrange interviews between your event speakers and local journalists for extra publicity. Or you can arrange for local filmmakers or student journalists to create content that can be screened before or after the film. StoryCorps is also a great tool to capture the stories of community organizers—learn more here: [storycorps.org/participate](http://storycorps.org/participate). Make sure to tag your uploads with the keywords

“First Rainbow Coalition,” “Independent Lens,” and “PBS.” Questions to ask your conversation partner include the following:

- What inspired you to become involved in your community?
  - How do you organize others in your community?
  - What have you been able to accomplish through community organizing?
  - What is the most challenging part about organizing people?
  - What is the most rewarding part about organizing people?
  - What is your vision for your neighborhood?
- Ask audience members to share their personal **then and now pictures** of neighborhoods that have experienced urban renewal and gentrification. They can post photos before the event online at #FirstRainbowPBS. You can also find archival photographs through your local historical society and maps of old urban renewal plans to create a compelling display at your event. Search for free, printable urban renewal maps here: [dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/renewal/#view=0/0/1&viz=carogram](http://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/renewal/#view=0/0/1&viz=carogram).

**Tip:** Post pictures and videos at #FirstRainbowPBS to join the national conversation.

# Host a Coalition-Building Workshop



It is a goal of the film to encourage people to be active in their communities and work with others to address community concerns. This workshop is a sample activity you can lead with other viewers of the film to help introduce them to the initial steps of community organizing and coalition building. This activity is not designed to advocate for any particular issue—the Indie Lens Pop-Up series is a community convener, not an advocacy organization. Rather, this activity is designed to surface concerns that are important to audience members in the room and that provide them with opportunities to talk with others about what they might do to address the issues important to them.

Time needed:	People needed:	Things needed:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 45 minutes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitator(s)</li> <li>• 10 or more participants</li> <li>• Artists/illustrators (optional)</li> <li>• Photographer (volunteer)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sticky notes</li> <li>• Large poster papers</li> <li>• Pencils</li> <li>• Markers</li> <li>• Tape</li> <li>• Display area</li> <li>• Camera</li> </ul>

- **Set the intention.** After watching the film, explain to people that you are going to lead them through an activity designed to introduce them to community organizing and coalition building. Before beginning the exercise, ask participants to agree to these two foundational principles by verbally saying “yes”:
  - Equality of all people
  - Right of civic participation in a democracy
- **Participants write down community concerns.** Distribute a sticky note and a pencil to each audience member. Ask all participants to write down a concern or problem in the community that they would like changed. It could be something in their local neighborhood, their city, their state, and so on. They do not need to write their name on the sticky note.
- **Display the concerns for all participants to see.** Have people post their sticky notes to a designated wall. Then invite people to look at all the notes and review the collective concerns of the group. Ask them to reflect on these questions as they review the notes:
  - Was my concern repeated?
  - Which concerns were repeated most often?
- **Participants group their concerns.** Ask participants to relocate their cards into groups of similar cards. Participants should talk with each other to find the best groupings, and a facilitator can provide support if necessary. Once participants are satisfied with

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the arrangement, take photographs to document the groups of concerns. Post photos online at #FirstRainbowPBS to add it to the collection of concerns generated at other screenings.

- **Organize into small groups based on concerns.** The card groupings are a guide for how participants can organize themselves into small groups around issues. Participants are always welcome to opt in to a different group if they'd like, especially if there are some single concerns that were not easily grouped.
- **Get ready for small-group discussions.** Provide participants with a few basic community dialogue tips, including the following:
  - Speak from your personal experience or perspective by using “I” statements, such as “I believe that ...” or “My experience is ...”
  - Step up and step back, that is, participate, but please don't dominate the conversation.
  - Practice active listening by not interrupting speakers and using phrases like “What I heard you say was ...”
- **Create a shared vision with your small group.** Ask people to introduce themselves to the group by sharing their name and the neighborhood in which they live. Then invite each person in the group to discuss the following questions:
  - Why is this issue concerning to you?
  - What change would you like to see?
- **Illustrate the vision in your small group.** The change that group members would like to see will help them create their small group's vision. Ask them to bring this vision to life by illustrating it. For example, if the concern is policing, the group could illustrate a scene of how they would like police to interact with the community members. To enhance this activity, you could invite several artists from the community to work with each group to help them illustrate their vision.
- **Present each group's vision to all participants.** Ask a volunteer from each group to take turns explaining their group's vision to all of the participants using the visual illustration as the guide. Take a photograph of each illustration and post it to #FirstRainbowPBS to add it to the collection of visions generated at other screenings.
- **Identify opportunities for coalitions.** Have participants return to their small groups to discuss the visions presented by the other groups and which groups they would approach to form a coalition. It may be helpful to mention that groups do not need to have identical visions or agree on every issue in order to collaborate. The goal is to find enough commonalities with another group for a coalition to be effective. Some questions to guide the discussion include the following:
  - Did any group have a similar or compatible vision to yours?
  - Which groups would you approach to form a coalition and why?
  - What would you say to them to attract them to your coalition?
  - Are there any groups not in the room that you would like to approach to form a coalition?
- **Pitch coalitions to the group.** Ask a volunteer from each group to take turns sharing which group they would like to form a coalition with and why.
- **Create a vision board based on your coalitions.** Have each group take their vision illustrations and display them together like pieces of a puzzle to form one large picture. Try to have groups that have been identified as coalition partners put their visions next to one another in the display. Take a photograph of the picture your participants have created and post it to #FirstRainbowPBS to add it to the collection generated at other screenings.
- **Reflect and conclude.** At this point, participants can break from formal groups and mingle freely with each other. If resources allow, have some refreshments or snacks available to encourage participants to linger and discuss the activity. As a closing, ask participants to reflect on the questions below and encourage them to use their sticky notes to write down any next steps or exchange contact information. Reflection questions include the following:
  - How does it make you feel to see this vision board?
  - What is the next step you would like to take to make this community vision a reality?

# Additional Resources

## Films

*The First Rainbow Coalition*, directed by Ray Santisteban  
[pbs.org/independentlens/films/the-first-rainbow-coalition/](https://pbs.org/independentlens/films/the-first-rainbow-coalition/)

*Decade of Fire*, by Vivian Vázquez Irizarry, Gretchen Hildebran, and Julia Steele Allen  
[pbs.org/independentlens/films/decade-of-fire/](https://pbs.org/independentlens/films/decade-of-fire/)

*The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution*, directed by Stanley Nelson  
[pbs.org/independentlens/films/the-black-panthers-vanguard-of-the-revolution/](https://pbs.org/independentlens/films/the-black-panthers-vanguard-of-the-revolution/)

*I Am Not Your Negro*, directed by Raoul Peck  
[pbs.org/independentlens/films/i-am-not-your-negro/](https://pbs.org/independentlens/films/i-am-not-your-negro/)

*Dolores*, directed by Peter Bratt  
[pbs.org/independentlens/films/dolores-huerta/](https://pbs.org/independentlens/films/dolores-huerta/)

*Lorraine Hansberry: Sighted Eyes, Gifted Heart*, directed by Tracy Heather Strain  
[pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/lorraine-hansberry-sighted-eyes-feeling-heart-full-film/9973/](https://pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/lorraine-hansberry-sighted-eyes-feeling-heart-full-film/9973/)

*The Black Power Mixtape 1967–1975*, directed by Göran Hugo Olsson  
[pbs.org/independentlens/films/black-power-mixtape-1967-1975/](https://pbs.org/independentlens/films/black-power-mixtape-1967-1975/)

## Toolkits

“The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution Collection” on PBS LearningMedia  
[pbslearningmedia.org/collection/the-black-panthers-vanguard-of-the-revolution-collection/](https://pbslearningmedia.org/collection/the-black-panthers-vanguard-of-the-revolution-collection/)

“Dolores Huerta Collection” on PBS LearningMedia  
[pbslearningmedia.org/collection/dolores-huerta/](https://pbslearningmedia.org/collection/dolores-huerta/)

“Lorraine Hansberry” on PBS LearningMedia  
[pbslearningmedia.org/collection/hans17-lorraine-hansberry-sighted/](https://pbslearningmedia.org/collection/hans17-lorraine-hansberry-sighted/)

“Community Conversation Guide” from the American Library Association  
[www.ala.org/tools/sites/ala.org.tools/files/content/LTC\\_ConvoGuide\\_final\\_062414.pdf](https://www.ala.org/tools/sites/ala.org.tools/files/content/LTC_ConvoGuide_final_062414.pdf)

“Community Toolbox” from the Center for Community Health and Development at the University of Kansas  
[ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/assessment/promotion-strategies/start-a-coalition/main](https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/assessment/promotion-strategies/start-a-coalition/main)

“Racial Equity Resource Guide” from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation  
[racialequityresourceguide.org/](https://racialequityresourceguide.org/)

“Youth Activist Toolkit,” by Advocates for Youth  
[advocatesforyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Youth-Activist-Toolkit.pdf](https://advocatesforyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Youth-Activist-Toolkit.pdf)

## Books

*Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*, by Matthew Desmond (2017)  
[penguinrandomhouse.com/books/247816/evicted-by-matthew-desmond/](https://penguinrandomhouse.com/books/247816/evicted-by-matthew-desmond/)

*The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*, by Richard Rothstein (2017)  
[www.norton.com/books/9781631492853](https://www.norton.com/books/9781631492853)

*Hillbilly Nationalists, Urban Race Rebels, and Black Power*, by James Tracy and Amy Sonnie (2011)  
[mhpbooks.com/books/hillbilly-nationalists-urban-race-rebels-and-black-power/](https://mhpbooks.com/books/hillbilly-nationalists-urban-race-rebels-and-black-power/)

*I Am Not Your Negro*, by James Baldwin and Raoul Peck (2017)  
[penguinrandomhouse.com/books/556894/i-am-not-your-negro-by-james-baldwin/9780525434696/](https://penguinrandomhouse.com/books/556894/i-am-not-your-negro-by-james-baldwin/9780525434696/)

*Women, Race, and Class*, by Angela Davis (1981)  
[penguinrandomhouse.com/books/37354/women-race-and-class-by-angela-y-davis/9780394713519/](https://penguinrandomhouse.com/books/37354/women-race-and-class-by-angela-y-davis/9780394713519/)

*From the Bullet to the Ballot: The Illinois Chapter of the Black Panther Party and Racial Coalition Politics in Chicago*, by Jakobi Williams (2013)  
[uncpress.org/book/9781469622101/from-the-bullet-to-the-ballot/](https://uncpress.org/book/9781469622101/from-the-bullet-to-the-ballot/)

# Credits

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