ACORN is the Association of Community Organizations for Reform now, a grass roots membership organization of low and moderate income people. Founded in 1970 in Little Rock, Arkansas, it has grown to a membership of over 60,000 families.

ACORN is now firmly rooted in 26 states: Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, and Texas.

For 12 years, ACORN members have organized to improve their communities and to win a fairer share for all low and moderate income Americans.

ACORN groups have worked for lower utility rates, better housing, fairer taxes, and improved health care. We have fought to stop community development rip-offs, to expand job opportunities, and to guarantee a role for low and moderate income people in all the decisions that affect our lives.

From these struggles, the ACORN People's Platform grew. The Platform is our agenda for a more just and democratic America. Since it was first adopted in 1978, ACORN members have put the Platform into action locally and nationally.

In 1980, ACORN challenged the Democratic and Republican Parties to adopt our Platform. Through actions and electing delegates to the Democratic National Convention, we pressed our demand for a voice in Party affairs and convinced the Democrats to establish a national Commission on Low and Moderate Income Representation.

In 1982, ACORN's nationwide housing campaign helped squatters take over more than 350 abandoned houses, pressuring public officials to solve the nation's housing crisis. In June, when 350 squatters set up a tent city behind the White House, a special Congressional hearing was held on our housing demands, and the Secretary of HUD finally agreed to negotiate with ACORN leaders.

Just before Election Day, ACORN joined forces with labor unions, churches, peace groups, and others to set up tent cities, called Reagan Ranches, all across the country. The ranches demonstrated the groundswell of opposition to Reaganomics and mobilized voters to elect candidates who oppose the President's economic policies.

In 1983, ACORN members will continue to fight to make the dreams and demands in our People's Platform a reality.

The People's Platform

Preamble

We stand for a People's Platform, as old as our country, and as young as our dreams. We come before our nation, not to petition with hat in hand, but to rise as one people and demand.

We have waited and watched. We have hoped and helped. We have sweated and suffered.

We have often believed. We have frequently followed.

But we have nothing to show for the work of our hands, the tax of our labor. Our patience has been abused; our experience misused. Our silence has been seen as support. Our struggle has been ignored.

Enough is enough. We will wait no longer for the crumbs at America's door. We will not be meek, but mighty. We will not starve on past promises, but feast on future dreams.

We are an uncommon common people. We are the majority, forged from all minorities. We are the masses of many, not the forces of few. We will continue our fight until the American way is just one way, until we have shared the wealth, until we have won our freedom.

This is not a simple vision, but a detailed plan.

Our plan is to build an American reality from the American rhetoric, to deliver a piece of the present and the fruits of the future to every man, to every woman, to every family.

We demand our birthright: the chance to be rich, the right to be free.

Our riches shall be the blooming of our communities, the bounty of a sure livelihood, the beauty of homes for our families with sicknesses driven from the door, the benefit of our taxes, not their burden; and the best of our energy, land and natural resources for all people.

Our freedom shall be based on the equality of the many, not the income of the few. Our freedom is the force of democracy, not the farce of federal fat and personal profit. In our freedom, only the people shall rule.

Corporations shall have their role: producing jobs, providing products, paying taxes. No more. No less. They shall obey our wishes, respond to our needs, serve our communities. Our country shall be the citizens wealth and our wealth shall be our country.

Government shall have its role: public servant to our good, fast follower to our sure steps. No more. No less. Our government shall shout with a public voice, and no longer jump to a private whisper. In our government, the common concerns shall be the collective cause.

We present a people's platform, not a politician's promise.

We demand the changes outlined in our platform and plan. We will work to win. We will have our birthright. We will live in richness and freedom. We will live in one country as one people.

We will dream of more, but we will not settle for less.