



Freedom Inc. Annual Report 2021

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Message from Directors

Dear Friends, Comrades, and Family,

This year was challenging for people worldwide, including us, at Freedom Inc.; nevertheless, we remained resilient and steadfast in our commitment to our communities and organizational values as we continued to provide life-saving support services and advocacy for our members. Though the pandemic disproportionately impacted our communities, Freedom, Inc continued to be a local and national leader for social justice and social change.

As we transitioned back to in-person work, we continued to center our communities in all our programs and remain vigilant in fighting for survivors and victims. Our commitment to our people's health and safety continued to be our focal point even as Freedom, Inc struggled with staff transitions. Our work included FreeKaynairra Campaign- protecting Black women/Queer folks, weekly mutual aid support services for hundreds of families, eviction protection and defense, victim advocacy and crisis services, civic engagement activities, political education, Police-Free School campaigns, youth leadership, and organizing summer retreats and schools, and most important, celebrations and community building events (both in-person and virtual) for our members.

Staff at Freedom Inc spent this year designing and implementing new strategies and initiatives to strengthen our organizational infrastructure to meet our communities needs. After winning our multi-year-long PoliceFreeSchool campaign, our youth team got more that 160 teachers and school staff to pledge not to use harmful disciplinary practices in schools. We mobilized over 3,000 people with our civic engagement work, increased our volunteer base to 146 persons, and engaged 1500 community members in a survey around Community controlled Budget Campaign strategies.

Our staff trained and participated in racial, gender and queer justice virtual events, gatherings, and conferences and convened virtual programs for communities and members.

With your support this year, we kept our Community healthy and safe.

In 2021, we claimed significant victories; after years of organizing and building our base. We cared for our Community while we struggled with maintaining organizational health and sustainability. We appreciate and thank all those who supported us in keeping our communities safe, thriving, and free from gender-based violence.

We will continue to center our communities and be at their service.

Love and Power!

M Adams and Kabzuag Vaj



Kabzuag Vaj

Co-Executive Director & Founder

M Adams

Co-Executive Director

Our Mission



About Freedom, Inc.

Freedom, Inc. (FI) is a Black and Southeast Asian non-profit organization that works with low-to no-income communities of color. Our mission is to achieve social justice through coupling direct services with leadership development and community organizing that will bring about social, political, cultural, and economic change resulting in the end of violence against women, gender-non-conforming and transgender folks, and children within communities of color.

FI works to challenge the root causes of violence, poverty, racism and discrimination. Our belief is that people who are most affected by these issues must have voice, power, resources, and choice, in order for true social change to happen.

Our Community

At Freedom, Inc. we describe our governance structure as a flower. Rather than making decisions through a traditional non-profit hierarchy, activities are coordinated through overlapping committees that form the petals of a flower (eg. Programs for youth, empowerment, organizing, political education, and domestic violence victim advocacy are linked together with operations like fundraising and administration).

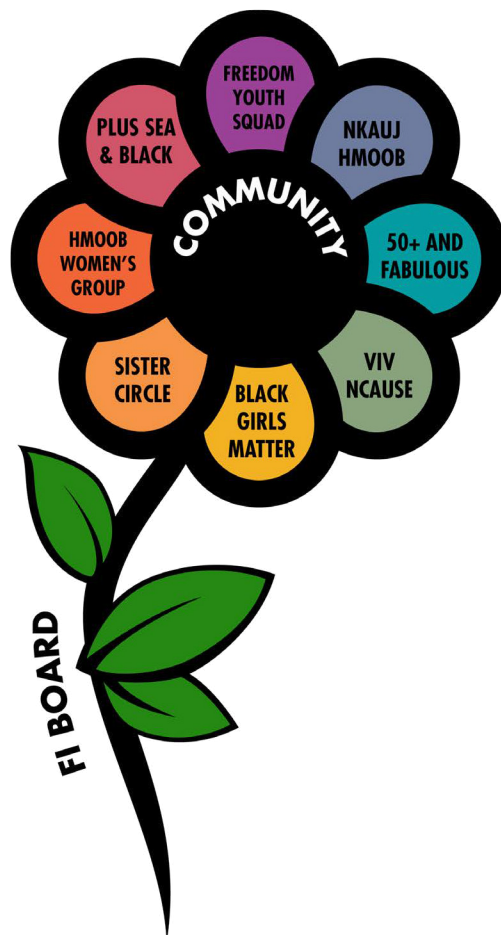
The center of the flower is made up of the organization's members, so the community served is the community in control of the issues, campaigns, and strategies engaged by the organization.

“Our community is our campaign”

The staff facilitates communication of key needs and priorities, which strengthens continued leadership within our communities. Staff, in conjunction with community leaders and elders, collaborate to maintain focus and progress when addressing needs,

The board assumes financial and legal responsibilities, but defers leadership to staff and communities for maintaining mission-driven work and

The mission statement and organizational model for Freedom, Inc. is “Our Community is our campaign.” We maintain positively-directed focus on the greatest benefit to our multifaceted communities. Concerted efforts are let by those most susceptible to, and affected by, violence, injustice, and inequality. We continuously hone our critical strategies for developing and sustaining that leadership. In doing so, we provide a cross-sectional and bulti-pronged approach to goal achievement that ensures prosperity and success for our future.



Gender Justice Team

Returning to The Office

After working remotely since early 2020 we officially began working from the office towards the end of 2021. We have continued to keep our communities safe by not opening up to the public and limiting group sizes in our building. We continued to meet the needs of our clients and members virtually.

2021 was a huge year for us in terms of supporting our clients and members through some pretty difficult times. We were able to keep vulnerable clients in alternative shelter through hotels for months at a time. We were able to support houseless clients by paying for room rentals in shared homes. We also supported hundreds of people from falling behind on rent with our financial support. The gender justice department continued to deliver hot meals. We also partnered with our mutual aid department to deliver food pantry to folks who couldn't get to us. We were also able to provide alternative shelter and safety for clients who were victims of trafficking. One of them successfully moved into stable housing and has managed to stay there since 2021.

#FreeKanyairra

Free Kanyairra Gadson Campaign - During 2021 we laid the groundwork for a powerful campaign to support a survivor of violence as she was being criminalized for fighting back against her attacker. Our comms staff and gj team came together and created a powerful video with the goal of humanizing this client who was navigating a high profile case. Some of the safety needs for this client and her family included moving them out of the city for their own safety, offering self defense courses so that she felt a sense of safety within herself. The entire family was needed support as they all were impacted by the harm their loved one faced. While with Freedom Inc. she joined our community where she talked about feeling connected and identifying healing tools that she could practice on her own.





Strengthening Our Work

In 2021 Freedom Inc., and our Gender Justice Department had a lot of internal shifts. A huge accomplishment that was in the making for a couple of years is the restructuring of our Gender Justice Department. We have formally incorporated a leadership pipeline into our staff roles. We decided to create Gender Justice Support positions. This accomplishes 2 things: 1) It's an opportunity for our advanced members to slowly move into paid leadership roles as they are developed into community leaders with FI. This will be most people first time being outward facing as organizers and community support. We also created manager positions as a way to position the director to focus on departmental and organizational development.

We had half of our gender justice staff take part in a social movement technologies training. We went through a 2 month intensive skill up and training around creating graphics and other virtual stories/projects for our departments. This was important because we usually do not have a comms staff. We saw during the pandemic that having an online and social media presence is fundamental to our work.

Advocacy & Organizing

We began a campaign and defense for our community from mass evictions. We laid the groundwork for a housing campaign. This was necessary because we saw the our folks didn't have the support they needed to safely survive the pandemic while losing jobs and income. We knew that at some point this would all reach a head and black and sea communities would be hit hardest when the eviction moratorium ended.

For Sexual Assault Awareness month we held a community Pop up for SA month. We were able to engage nearly 200 survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. This is allowed us time to bring in more supporters, volunteers and group members into Freedom Inc. We were able to engage a new community of folks as well.

In 2021 we held our annual Still We Rise Black Survivors Banquet. In 2021 we held this event virtually. Our staff was able to create a culturally specific healing and celebratory space for our survivors. We healed together through words of affirmation. We healed together through art - the banquet closed out with a local artist who guided participants through the creation of their own paintings.

We launched our Sheroes campaign – We highlighted the work of our current SEA womxn movement leaders. This was done in order to visibilize the SEA community if the fight against white supremacy, anti colonialism and Black and SEA liberation. We held panels where the community could hear from these leaders. We created Her-story by creating swag with pictures, names and quotes. Collectively we worked to identify a framework for radical southeast asian feminisms.

We hosted a Community care caravan, luncheon, banner drop and vigil at a Brittingham park in response to the shooting in Atlanta where the lives of several asian women were lost. This became a strong reminder and example of how white supremacy fetishizes and harms asian women. This also created multiple spaces for our sea community to heal in various ways. It gave us space to display our thought leadership. One of the goals was to force our city to see that the Atlanta shooting wasn't just an incident and that the racism and fetization of asian folks is a systemic issue.

Queer Justice Team



In 2021, the Black and Southeast Asian community continued to be impacted by COVID 19 and the continuous state-sanctioned violence. We honed in on strengthening our radical direct services for Black and Southeast Asian queer and trans people. Our impact had to deepen and widen.

As we sharpened our knowledge and skills internally as an organization, we strengthened our relationships with partner organizations with staffed QT advocates. Through this, we created the Midwest Hmoob QT Justice Collective intending to increase the amount of QT Hmoob Advocates. We held monthly Wisconsin Hmoob QT Justice Organizers virtual gatherings to provide networking and mentorship opportunities that directly improved services and programs for Hmoob QT folx throughout Wisconsin. We went from four QT Hmoob Organizers between Minnesota and Wisconsin to seven.

Freedom, Inc.'s Hmoob QT Justice Leadership played a key role in the Black & Brown Womyn Power Coalition LGBTQI 101 and Advance Training for advocates, training over 30 advocates throughout Wisconsin and Minnesota. Providing analysis on queer justice, advocacy skills, and moving organizations from being more than just queer-friendly.

One of our greatest success stories for 2021 of how Freedom, Inc.'s theory of change and culturally specific direct services work is that after four years of working with a QT survivor fleeing from intimate partner violence, we were able to get them asylum. They continue to be an active supporter and volunteer of Freedom, Inc.

We continue to create safe spaces and leadership opportunities for Black and Southeast Asian QT people. To remember and celebrate the brilliance and resistance of Black and brown QT people, we held a Pride Brunch free to the public with food and live performances. Our Hmoob Power Team created an in-language video about Pride, creating accessibility for Hmong elders and Hmong speakers to learn about Pride and how to be an ally.

Accomplishments:

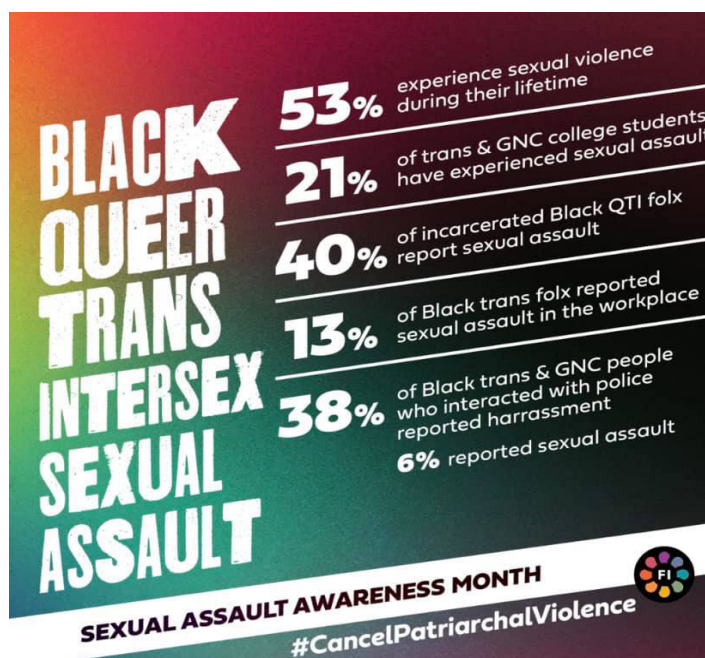
- Kick off the SEA Shero Project accompanied by a series of webinars of SEA Sheroes fighting for social justice
- Provided healing space for local and national QT Hmoob folx
- Strengthened relationship and growth of Hmoob QT Midwest Advocates
- Led the WI Hmoob QT Justice Organizer month virtual gatherings to provide networking and mentorship opportunities that directly improved the services and programs for Hmoob QT folx
- After four years of providing direct services for a QT survivor fleeing intimate partner violence, we successfully got them asylum
- Freedom, Inc. Hmoob Power Team created an in-language video about Pride, creating accessibility for Hmong speakers to learn about Pride month and how to an ally in the fight for queer justice.
- Give OUT Day for Freedom, Inc. brought over \$5,000 to support our direct services and leadership development for Black and SEA QTI folx.
- Participated in Southeast Asian Freedom Network's conversation about our lives, dreams, and work, which became a dialogue about the joys of being both QT and SEA and the need for abolishing the carceral state
- Freedom, Inc. QT Hmoob Leadership led the Black & Brown Womyn Power Coalition LGBTQI 101 and Advance Training for advocates throughout WI and MN.
- Organized gathering for Midwest Hmoob QT Advocates from WI and MN
- National Convening of the Queer Contingent of BOF

Events:

- National QTI Hmong Virtual Healing Space (HAWA, TG, FI)
- Honor, Protect, & Heal Vigil
- Community Care Luncheon
- Community Care Caravan
- National Hmoob Women Healing & Community Care (BOF)
- AAPI Healing Together Community Cookout
- Resist Reflect Remember: Healing Together Virtual Concert
- FI Pride Brunch
- MadPride 2021 Live Stream Virtual Festival in partnership with Liquid, GSafe, Our Lives, StageQ
- Give OUT Day for FI

Programming:

- PLUS SEA Programming (8)
- Black Love Day
- QTI POC Game Night



Youth Justice Team

Despite ending the school contracts with police, Madison schools are still employing harmful disciplinary practices, including calling police to respond to “behavioral issues” among students, leading to assaults, arrests, and profiling, which continue to disproportionately impact young people of color, queer youth, and students with disabilities. Instead of providing spaces for our impacted young people to learn, grow, and better themselves like their White peers, they continue to be criminalized and branded as troublemakers and problematic youth.

It is clear that while we have achieved major steps towards changing an educational system that is neocolonialist, racist, patriarchal, and White supremacist, as seen in various policies, the institutionalized marginalization of Black students and teachers, and school officials’ overreliance on punitive tactics such as policing, we still have a ways to go towards institutionalizing transformative and restorative justice practices in our educational system, truly investing in the potentials of Black youth and youth of color, and achieving community control over our schools.

FI now has the buy-in of the greater Madison community and we now have the opportunity to bring more people in the movement and become one step closer to actualizing our vision of community control over our school, led by those most impacted, specifically Black youth and youth of color, queer youth, young people with disabilities, their parents, and teachers. We believe that community control will provide the solutions to dismantling harmful systems and practices and towards real investments in the leadership, wellness, and creativity of Black youth and youth of color.

During 2021, we promoted and engaged educators and school officials to participate in our Black Sanctuary Pledge. More than 160 teachers in Madison pledged not to use harmful disciplinary practices, police/ICE/law enforcement, and punishments to address issues among students. As part of their pledge, FI conducted trainings for these teachers around Police Free Schools, knowing your rights and knowing your reality (particularly anti-Blackness and its impact on youth), restorative justice, culturally competent pedagogy, and community control for parents and teachers.

We conducted deep political education workshops/training for parents and teachers who have identified themselves as supportive of young people. The workshops provided parent allies and teacher allies with a thorough understanding of the harmful systems that engendered and perpetuated violence against youth and students of color, practical action points to combat this violence in their daily lives, and organizing skills to mobilize more support from their networks.

Our youth brought the issue of Police Free Schools to the forefront of public discourse in Madison to make Police Free Schools a core voting issue in every election cycle and organized the most impacted communities to participate in elections and build their power. Moreover, we continued to hold elected officials, schools, teachers, parents, and communities accountable for their commitments and build on further support and actions.

We continued to invest in our youth through our 7 programs, which include culturally specific programs for Black and Southeast Asian youth, summer camps, and our Freedom Youth Squad. Through these programs, we invested in the most impacted youth from our communities. Here, they found support, community, and opportunities to grow, build knowledge and skills, and participated in decision-making. FI programs provide political education to all participants and provide comprehensive leadership development with deep political education for participants of the Freedom Youth Squad. We continued to engage our youth, their parents, teacher allies, and community members to share their experiences, participate in civic activities and other governing processes, and develop leaders within our community to sustain and grow our movement.



BLACK LIVES MATTER AT SCHOOL

"Make Black lives matter at school by using restorative justice instead of calling the cops."

- FREEDOM, INC. YOUTH



BLACK LIVES MATTER AT SCHOOL

"Make Black lives matter at school by making Black history mandatory for all students and teaching about our glory."

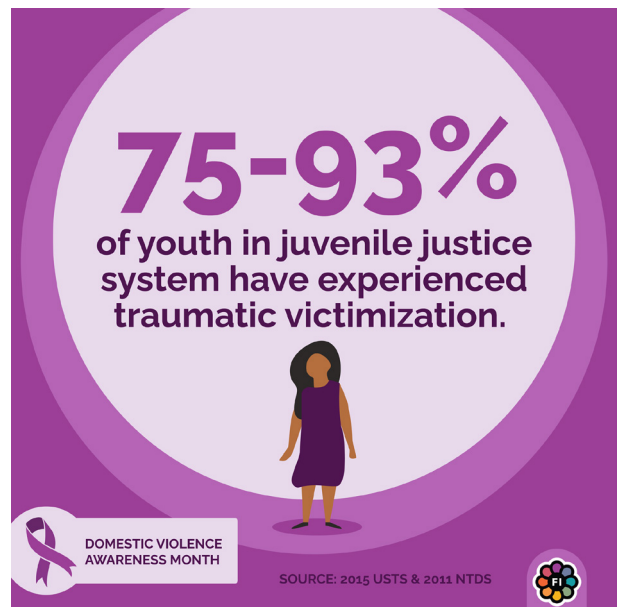
- FREEDOM, INC. YOUTH



BLACK LIVES MATTER AT SCHOOL

"Make Black lives matter at school by respecting Black girls' bodies."

- FREEDOM, INC. YOUTH



75-93%
of youth in juvenile justice system have experienced traumatic victimization.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

SOURCE: 2015 USTS & 2011 NTDS

Community Power Building Team

Elections

Through phone banking, canvassing and a series of GOTV Pop-ups we reached over 3,030 individuals in Dane County. We also held a candidate forum on March 22nd for the April 5th election where we invited all candidates and facilitated a conversation for our community to be able to make informed decisions in local elections. During the forum, we prioritized identifying how candidates would address the needs of Black and Brown youth, immigrant and refugee communities, as well as the ongoing conditions from the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Voter Engagement

In 2021, CPB grew our volunteer list to 146. Our volunteers participated in DEFUND police phone jams, delivered life sustaining resources to our communities through Mutual Aid, canvassed with us and phone banked with us, and helped us distribute over 1000 Get Out The Vote mailers in Dane county ahead of the April 5th Election.





Campaigns, Base Building and Leadership Development

The Madison People's Budget Report was published in 2021. This documented the first two phases of the Community Controlled Budget Campaign including 1500 survey respondents and seven culturally specific focus group spaces. This report highlights the perspectives of Madison's Black, Southeast Asian and LGBTQIA communities. It provided our communities the space to express what resources and services they recognize as critical for sustainability such as housing security, recovery centers, childcare, afterschool programs and income security. In addition, this report captured our communities ability to make self governing decisions and prefer investments into community care, instead of policing. In 2021, our organizing efforts around defunding the Madison Police budget, and directing those dollars into life sustaining programs helped move 82K from MPD into the CARES program which sends its team to respond to mental health related 911 calls instead of the police.

In addition, Community Power Builders hosted 13 Freedom Fellows, who were Black women and youth, from July through September and developed their outreach and civic engagement skills around involvement in the City Budget process. Freedom Fellows still remain part of Community Power Builder's network and provide support around phone banking and engaging the public in local elections.

Through our Mutual Aid Campaign, we were able to engage almost 1000 Black and SEA community members. We also launched Mobile Mutual Aid aid to increase access for our no to low income communities who don't have reliable transportation to get the essential items they need. In December of 2021, with the support of our volunteers and members Freedom Inc distributed over 600 holiday baskets including grocery gift cards and essential household items to communities at Northport Apartments, Bayview, and in Fitchburg. In addition to providing our community with these resources we connected them to our programming to be part of our Mutual Aid work in 2023. Our Mutual Aid program was revisioned to give our members opportunities to take on leadership roles in distribution and organizing other community members in mutual aid services.

In the summer of 2021, CPB hosted a series of community meetings that helped increase our number of informed members. In addition, through our community meetings we were able to collaborate with Lussier Center. In 2021, we hosted a phone jam and made over 200 calls targeting elected officials in Dane County demanding they recognize the demands of #DefundPolice, and the importance of investing in life sustaining infrastructure for our most marginalized communities.

Administration & Operations Team

In 2021, we continued to be affected by the ongoing covid-19 pandemic and we were affected by the competitive labor market along with everyone else. The operations department had many successes in strengthening our infrastructure to increase staff retention and morale. Due to the nature of our work and the many hats our employees wear, we implemented Basecamp as our team and project management tool. It allowed us to better track our progress in organizational goals, events and duties. The most important feature was that it allowed us to pick up work easily between different employees in the event of an absence due to the pandemic. In addition, we also implemented our peer review process to assist with Employee Evaluations. The tool allowed us to evaluate staff development needs, served as a great measurement tool for improvement, and a way for staff to see what they were being evaluated on. The evaluations consisted of peer review and review from their direct supervisor. There was great feedback on the process and evaluations went well. We also created a new job description template for streamlining job postings and for creating new job descriptions. This allowed us to incorporate more values and job duties into our job descriptions as well as assess the compensation staff were being paid. We can say that we have increased organizational morale and camaraderie through our infrastructure strengthening process.

Board of Directors

Chong Moua | Board Chair

Sami Schalk | Secretary

Cua Xiong | Treasurer

Dana Pellebon | Board Member

True Thao | Board Member

Seng Xiong | Board Member

Joshua Hargrove | Board Member

Statement of Financial Position

Statement of Financial Position		
	2021	2020
ASSETS		
Cash	\$ 5,066,337	\$ 3,188,452
Certificates of deposit	103,378	103,018
Unconditional promises to give, net	1,153,115	1,061,082
Grants receivable	213,990	332,220
Prepaid expenses	-	5,754
Property and equipment, net	1,619,680	1,678,848
Total assets	\$ 8,156,500	\$ 6,369,374
LIABILITIES		
Accounting payable	\$ 128,583	\$ 55,106
Accrued expenses	265,388	23,622
Note payable	580,546	790,285
Grants payable	787	-
Total liabilities	975,304	869,013
NET ASSETS		
Without donor restrictions	4,541,114.00	3,811,277.00
With donor restrictions	2,640,082.00	1,689,084.00
Total net assets	7,181,196.00	5,500,361.00
Total liabilities and net assets	\$ 8,156,500.00	\$ 6,369,374.00

Statement of Activities

Statement of Activities

	2021	2020
CHANGES IN NET ASSETS WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS		
REVENUES		
Contributions	\$ 3,867,965	\$ 5,255,723
Government grants	1,348,910	1,499,818
Paycheck Protection Program	-	150,000
Service fees	57,097	21,446
Other	7,307	11,463
Total revenues without donor restrictions	\$ 5,281,279	\$ 6,938,450
EXPENSES		
Program services		
Ending Gender-Based Violence	\$ 3,075,896	\$ 3,207,980
Black Feminist Future	1,808,231	448,107
Community Power Building	685,690	920,054
Management and general	566,766	589,580
Fundraising	66,552	83,137
Total expenses	\$ 6,203,135	\$ 5,248,858
NET ASSETS RELEASED FROM RESTRICTIONS		
Expired of time restrictions	1,330,333	356,359
Satisfaction of program restrictions	321,360	119,476
Total net assets released from restrictions	1,651,693.00	475,835
Change in net assets without donor restrictions	729,837	2,165,427
CHANGES IN NET ASSETS WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS		
Contributions	2,602,691	1,442,724
Net assets released from restrictions	(1,651,693)	(475,835)
Change in net assets with donor restrictions	950,998	966,889
Change in net assets	1,680,835	3,132,316
Net assets at beginning of year	5,500,361	2,368,045
Net assets at the end of the year	7,181,196	5,500,361





Freedom, Inc
2110 Luann Lane
Madison, WI 53713
(608)716-7324
www.freedom-inc.org
info@freedom-inc.org