

COMMUNITY TOOLKIT

For grassroots policy development



GETTING STARTED

What problem do you want to see solved in your community?

Community organizing is an approach to solving problems in your community by recruiting your fellow community members impacted by the problem, and working together to develop demands to solve the issue. It is important to give time and space to really listen to the experiences of your fellow impacted community members, and together develop demands to realize a solution. Ask people to volunteer to help lead this work with you, and you will build community power to win!

This page is a simple guide for getting started. It is adapted from In-Advance and Spadework training tools, and many other organizations' work.

WHO ELSE IS IMPACTED BY THIS ISSUE?

Is this an issue in your neighborhood?

Or a different type of community?

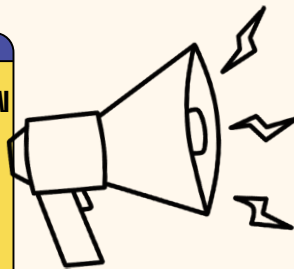


TURNING A PROBLEM INTO AN ISSUE

a good issue for a policy campaign is one that matches most of these criteria:

Does the issue...

1. Result in real improvement or deliver material benefits in real people's lives?
2. Provide clear opportunities to expand your network of community members?
3. Have a clear primary target? (a decision maker!)
4. Have clear demands?
5. Have demands that are winnable, given your ability to influence the decision makers?
6. Have a clear timeline that works for you?



OUTREACH

You need to recruit other people impacted by this issue to build enough power to win change. Try to form a committee of dedicated folks to meet regularly to make strategic decisions.

Methods include:

1. Street Outreach: meet people where they are
2. Presentation: go to where people gather
3. Doorknocking: meet people in a specific area
4. Personal Visit: build a relationship with potential leaders
5. House Meeting: ask leaders to host their friends and families to discuss the issue

DECISION MAKERS

Research what people make the decisions that impact your issue. Are they elected officials at the City, County, or State? Are they working in a government department? Or are they working for a corporation?

BUILD A CAMPAIGN TO WIN!: STRATEGY GUIDE

1. GOALS: What kind of changes do you want and need?
2. What is the PROBLEM you're trying to address?
 - a. What is the ISSUE? This is the slice of the problem that can be solved with specific, winnable demands to the decision maker(s).
3. What are your DEMANDS? (these are specific, measurable proposals to resolve the issue)
4. what are your TARGETS? (decision makers who can give you your demands)
 - a. Do you have other targets? People who can influence the primary target.
5. Which COMMUNITY to organize? These are the folks who are directly impacted by the problem and also want to find a solution.
 - a. There can be a secondary community you may want to recruit, if they can influence your targets
6. Who are your KEY ALLIES? Individuals and organizations that can lend political connections and resources to your campaign.
7. Who are your KEY OPPOSITION? This is who will be opposed to your demands, because they might lose something (power, money, etc)
8. TACTICS: how can you get your targets' attention and get your demands?