

Building Power for the Common Good

Five Elements to Assess, Reflect, and Plan

This assessment is a tool to help reflect on how to build and strengthen a Common Good Strategy for your organization or union. This will help you assess where to focus your time and resources to build towards developing transformational relationships, running strong campaigns, and winning Common Good demands!

5 Elements of Building Power for the Common Good

1. **Expand the Scope Beyond Wages and Benefits**
2. **Engage Community Partners in Issue Development and the Campaign**
3. **Center Racial Justice in your Demands**
4. **Expose the Bad Actors**
5. **Strengthen Internal Organizing, Membership, and Member Engagement**

Ratings:

- 4 – Not yet
- 3 – Basic Planning and Limited Implementation
- 2 – Emerging Implementation
- 1 – In Place and Proven

Two versions of the assessment tool are included: one for local unions with collective bargaining rights and one for local unions without them. Building power – to negotiate with those in power – may use different tools and strategies, but success relies on the same organizing principles.

ASSESSMENT TOOL: With Collective Bargaining

1. Expand the Scope of Bargaining Beyond Wages and Benefits

Identify issues that resonate with members, partners and allies and that impact our communities. Put forth demands that address structural issues, not just symptoms of the problem.

	Yes	No
Community bargaining survey is conducted to find out what community members want to see in negotiations		
The membership-wide bargaining survey includes issues beyond wages and benefits		
One-on-one conversations and small listening sessions are hosted to find out what issues members care about beyond wages and benefits		
Bargaining proposals include broader community demands (such as housing, climate justice, childcare, etc.)		

Overall Ratings:

- 4 – Not yet
- 3 – Basic Planning and Limited Implementation
- 2 – Emerging Implementation
- 1 – In Place and Proven

Based on this rating system, what overall rating would you give for this element? _____

What are the biggest challenges in this area?

Based on your rating, what would you focus on to strengthen this element in your union?

2. Engage Community Partners in Issue Development and the Bargaining Campaign

Bring in community partners on the ground floor and ask them what they need out of the bargaining campaign. Common good is about building long-term community-labor power

	Yes	No
A list of community leaders and organizations we could have alignment with on a broad set of bargaining demands is identified 1-2 years before the bargaining campaign		
One-on-one conversations are held with community organizations and leaders to identify common issues and strategies at least 1 year before the bargaining campaign		
Members are surveyed to find out their connections with the community		
Community listening sessions are held to identify issues in the community		
Coalition meetings are held every few weeks to a month with key leaders and organizations to share updates and make decisions on bargaining strategy		
Community members are invited to attend and speak at key bargaining sessions		
Community members join membership meetings and events to share key issues and updates, and build unity		

Overall Ratings:

- 4 – Not yet
- 3 – Basic Planning and Limited Implementation
- 2 – Emerging Implementation
- 1 – In Place and Proven

Based on this rating system, what overall rating would you give for this element? _____

What are the biggest challenges in this area?

Based on your rating, what would you focus on to strengthen this element in your union?

3. Center Racial Justice in Your Demands

Campaign demands should address the role that employers play in creating and exacerbating structural racism in our communities.

	Yes	No
Union leadership is representative of the racial and gender demographics of the membership		
Intentional development, mentorship, and support to train members of color to union leadership positions		
Community organizations and leaders rooted in racial justice in the community are identified and prioritized		
Bargaining proposals are created with union and community members of color to address racial justice demands		
Strategic research focuses on how corporations and individuals have extracted wealth from communities of color		
We identify the languages our members speak and provide translation and interpretation of union activities		
Our union has trained stewards on recognizing and understanding the impact of structural racism in our workplaces and tracks grievances and other concerns that could become racial justice demands in bargaining		

Overall Ratings:

- 4 – Not yet
- 3 – Basic Planning and Limited Implementation
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Based on this rating system, what overall rating would you give for this element? _____

What are the biggest challenges in this area?

Based on your rating, what would you focus on to strengthen this element in your union?

4. Expose the Bad Actors

Go on offense in your campaign by identifying, exposing and challenging the real villains, the financial and corporate actors who profit from and increasingly drive policies and actions.

	Yes	No
We have conducted strategic research on corporate and billionaire targets who are draining our city/state/district of money		
We have a simple one-page document with proposed targets (and revenue solutions to fund our proposals - if in the public sector)		
Our campaign includes actions targeting the “real opposition,” such as tax-dodging corporations/developers or charter school billionaires		
We have a well-developed external campaign communications plan designed with community partners that includes media outreach, written and digital communications to engage additional community support and participation		

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Based on this rating system, what overall rating would you give for this element? _____

What are the biggest challenges in this area?

Based on your rating, what would you focus on to strengthen this element in your union?

5. Strengthen Internal Organizing, Membership, and Member Engagement

These campaigns must deeply engage the memberships of both unions and community organizations, and there must be opportunities for deep relationship- building and joint- visioning between the members of the different organizations

	Yes	No
We have a Contract Action Team (CAT) with members at every workplace to engage members throughout the contract campaign		
Regular union membership meetings are held		
We have an escalating series of worksite and public actions for members to take		
We hold “structure tests” such as majority petitions to test the unity of your membership and readiness to take action with majority participation		
We run popular education trainings with members around the bargaining process, research, and our targets		
Bargaining proposals are co-written and approved by the membership		
Member activists and leaders are identified and recruited throughout the campaign		
Our bargaining team is intentionally large and is representative of the overall membership (e.g. demographics, work location, job), and bargaining sessions are open to all members and oral interpretation and written translation is provided in languages that members speak		

Regular, timely and detailed bargaining updates are provided to members		
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What are the biggest challenges in this area?

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ASSESSMENT TOOL: Without Collective Bargaining

1. Expand the Scope Beyond Wages and Benefits

Identify issues that resonate with members, partners and allies and that impact our communities. Put forth demands that address structural issues, not just symptoms of the problem.

	Yes	No
Community survey is conducted to find out what community members want to see in negotiations		
The membership-wide survey includes issues beyond wages and benefits		
One-on-one conversations and small listening sessions are hosted to find out what issues members care about beyond wages and benefits		
Proposals include broader community demands (such as housing, climate justice, childcare, etc.)		

Overall Ratings:

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A list of community leaders and organizations we could have alignment with on a broad set of demands is identified 1-2 years before the campaign		
One-on-one conversations are held with community organizations and leaders to identify common issues and strategies at least 1 year before the campaign		
Members are surveyed to find out their connections with the community		
Community listening sessions are held to identify issues in the community		
Coalition meetings are held every few weeks to a month with key leaders and organizations to share updates and make decisions on strategy		
Community members are invited to attend and speak at key sessions		
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Proposals are co-written and approved by the membership		
Member activists and leaders are identified and recruited throughout the campaign		
Our Organizing Committee is intentionally large and is representative of the overall membership (e.g. demographics, work location, job), and meetings are open to all members and oral interpretation and written translation is provided in languages that members speak		

Regular, timely and detailed updates are provided to members		
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