



Campaign Academy: Coaching and Leading Winning Campaigns



Pre Academy

Package Worksheets Only

The Campaign Lab is a system of Affiliate Staff, Members, and Leaders networked to build power to win on issues that matter most by building a culture for organizing. A culture for organizing and continually campaigning includes a shared analysis of how to win, issue identification, goal setting, strategic actions, distributed leadership, and data that informs progress. This NEA Center for Organizing training is designed to build skills around coaching all aspects of a campaign cycle.

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Welcome to Campaign Academy

Welcome to the first convening of NEA's Campaign Academy. We are going to be focused on **Why** we need the Campaign Lab and **How** we are working in the Campaign Lab. As outlined in your registration, It is required that you participate in all aspects of the event and this included the pre-academy session.

Why Pre-Academy Assignments? The resources compiled here are relevant and intended to help you shift from the day-to-day cognitive load of work to the thinking you will use as a learner at the academy. It should take no longer than 2 hours to complete the entire package.

Please download and complete the following Before Arriving.

Pre-Academy Assignments (Approximate time to Complete -2 Hours Total)

As you navigate this course, there are several modules. Prior to attending you will need to complete Pre- Academy Assignments and the Modules listed below.

1. Community Agreements (Estimated Time to Complete 15 Minutes) – Please complete this module prior to attending. It is a stand-alone module called Community Agreements outside of Pre-Academy Assignments. We will be doing an activity on day one that requires your prior reading of these. Please download, save, and complete the form in this module called, Community Agreements, and complete the questions at the end prior to our meeting.

2. Reading and Reflection on HOW (Estimated Time to Complete 60 Minutes)

Ella Baker's Legacy beginning on page 12 of the Pre Academy guide is summary of one of the most important and underreported organizers in the American social justice movement history. Her premise for leadership outlines one of the core cultural shifts within the NEA that the Campaign Lab is poised to support and develop. The authors say,

"Baker represented a different leadership tradition altogether. She combined the generic concept of leadership— "a process of social influence in which a person can enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task"—and a confidence in the wisdom of ordinary people to define their problems and imagine solutions. Baker helped everyday people channel and congeal their collective power to resist oppression and fight for sustainable, transformative change... That collective effort required leaders who were accountable to one another and were not singular. There were many organizers in groups such as SNCC who modeled Baker's brand of what sociologist Charles Payne has called "group-centered leadership."

Rather than someone with a fancy title standing at a podium speaking for or to the people, group-centered leaders are at the center of many concentric circles. They strengthen the group, forge consensus and negotiate a way forward. That kind of leadership is impactful, democratic, and, I would argue, more radical and sustainable, than the alternatives.”

How can your role in the Campaign Lab, (Team Lead, Coach, Mentor) promote this sort of cultural shift within our affiliate and local systems?

We are asking that you read only pgs. 17 and 22 of the **NEA’s Bargaining for the Common Good Racial Justice Guide**, found on pgs 30-35 of the full Pre Academy guide, the rest is a valuable resource that you will want likely want to return to when the time is right in your campaigns. One iterative question that you will be asked in your role (Team Lead, Coach, Mentor Coach) in the Campaign Lab is, “How are you centering equity in every aspect of this campaign?” Why this is part of the NEA Campaign Lab experience is answered in the forward of this document,

“Since the 17th Century, our nation’s system of public education has been the undisputed foundation of an inclusive democracy, economy, and society. Public school classrooms are where our students first learn how democratic systems of government work, and where they develop an understanding of the principles and practices that will allow them to participate in the operation of the U.S. government.

Unfortunately, when they should be working to strengthen our democracy, some far-right politicians, policymakers and pundits are actively working to dismantle it. Their weapon? Escalated attacks against public education. From attempting to whitewash the nation’s history to eliminating the contributions and lived experiences of Black people and communities of color, to maligning and marginalizing LGBTQ+ students and educators, these attacks are only intended to fulfill the self-serving desires of the attackers and their wealthy donors. Their efforts are rooted in the fertile ground of this sad truth: Inequity is sewn into every social system in our nation. These inequities make

their presence known at every schoolhouse door, and in every other element of far too many communities...

We will continue to follow the North Star of our shared vision: to unite not just our members, but the nation to reclaim public education as a common good, as the foundation of our democracy, and then transform it into something it was never designed to be - a racially and socially just and equitable system that prepares every student, every one, to succeed in this diverse and interdependent world."

As you read Pgs. 17 and 22 how are you already beginning to think about centering equity?

What are the specific ways you can use your role (Team Lead, Coach, Mentor Coach) to amplify how equity is included in all aspects of campaigns within the Campaign Lab system?

Please read the full article **Three Theories of Change** beginning on page 61 of the Pre Academy Guide. The author writes,

"To organize is to build mass support and strength among ordinary people. Organizing draws its power from working people's biggest strength: our numbers. Working people may or may not see themselves as activists or politically active or even in political agreement, but through organizing, they come together to act in common cause. The work of organizing is systematic and rigorous: It requires connecting with every single

worker in a shop, every educator in a building, every building in a district. At its core, it asks people to understand their own agency and to make choices about how they will exercise it. The work of organizing is difficult; ordinary people are seldom confronted by their own agency nor asked to make choices that recognize their own power.”

The final page of the article is a table with Advocacy, Mobilizing, Organizing across the top and “indicators” under each of these theories. In your role (Team Lead, Coach, Mentor Coach) in the Campaign Lab, consider one campaign you are working with. As you consider that campaign, place a check mark next to the indicators that sound most like the “theory” that local is working within.

Take a few minutes and reflect on how you think they might use their campaign lab work to shift.

We ask that you read the full **Chapter 6.2 of Practical Radicals – Base Building beginning on page 64 of the Pre Academy Guide**. This focuses on the tensions and strengths of combining structure based (Alinsky style) organizing and more democratic, leaderful, and transformational organizing strategies. The author writes,

“Unions rely on various forms of power and use many of the strategy models ... we focus on their base-building work because all of their other strategies must be built on a solid foundation of member organization. A strike won’t work if members don’t stick together. Base-building starts with the theory that union power is predicated on people power. Unions derive strength and influence when the majority of workers are members of the union and when those members participate in union meetings and activities. Power comes from workers’ ability to act together.

Most union growth does not happen incrementally, plant by plant, workplace by workplace. As union organizer Mark Meinster writes, “The problem is that even great tactics can’t overcome the social, political, and economic forces of capitalism, which combine to make organizing a gigantic challenge . . . Employers are under intense competitive pressure to resist workers’ demands—there’s no generous ‘high road’ for them to take; they won’t willingly give in to a union drive. And employers are compelled to come together as a class to exert power over the government, passing laws and using

the courts to challenge unions on all fronts.” Instead, union growth comes in “upsurges”—periods where workers rise up more broadly. In the United States, these upsurges took place at the turn of the twentieth century, in the 1930s, and in the late 1960s/early 1970s. There are signs we may be in the beginning of another upsurge as we write this book...

This suggests that the steady, slow work of building unions worker by worker (base building) must be paired with other strategies, especially given the added obstacles unions face—intense employer opposition and weak labor laws.”

In your role in the Campaign Lab (Team Lead, Coach, Mentor Coach) how do you foster strong base building actions AND work towards the inclusion of other strategies?

How would you categorize the plans of the teams that you are currently working with now in relationship to what the authors of this chapter have laid out?

3. Reading and Reflecting about About WHY (Estimated Time to Complete 45 Minutes)

Please read the full article, **Justice for All, Road Tested Strategies for Building a Bigger Movement**, beginning on page 80 of the Pre Academy Guide. In this, the author begins with:

“Most activists sense the dense web of connections linking social, economic and climate justice issues, yet stick largely to their own anchor points. It’s time to come unstuck. To

make progress at a pace that matches the urgency of our problems, we must widen the circles of activism and invite everyone in.”

The Campaign Lab is a network of locals who want to make change in their locals and be connected more broadly to the [NEA Campaign to Promote, Protect, and Strengthen Public Schools](#) . In your role, (Team Lead, Coach, Mentor Coach) how might you be able to use the Campaign Lab to meet the challenges of this moment in your local, community, state, or more broadly?

The authors lay out four strategies that they say are critical to building a larger movement. How would these strategies help you strengthen the work you are doing? Now and into the future?

We ask that you read the full article, **Plan 2028: Bringing Labor and Social Movements Together, beginning on pg. 83 of the full Pre Academy Guide**, pthe author sets the context by starting with,

“Plan 2028 isn't just another general strike call-it's a strategic, long-term push to unite labor and social movements in a coordinated fight against rising authoritarianism.”

She goes on to add,

“Plan 2028 could look more like a series of escalating actions over the next several years, including engagement in the 2026 elections and coordinated fights against the implementation of Project 2025. Those actions could build up to a month or several months of national protests in early 2028; that could include big strikes, rallies, protests, and legislative campaigns. Disruptions may take other forms beyond a strike workplace actions like slow-downs, sit-downs and walk-outs, or the

kinds of community boycotts and direct action seen in the Civil Rights movement. Any real disruption will still involve risks arrest, harassment, and surveillance for example-and, whether strikes or otherwise, disruptions must come with careful planning and collective care.”

How could your work in your current Campaign Lab role (Team Lead, Coach, Mentor Coach) be connected to and contributing to Plan 2028?

What would be the challenges for you? What would be the opportunities for you?

The Taking Stock Report – For this meeting we ask that you read pgs. 3-7 and 53-54, **found on pages 91-94 and 137-141 of the full Pre Academy guide.** The rest is optional for now. The authors lay out the following vision:

“In order to generate the power needed to rise to the occasion, labor unions and community organizations will need to come together in partnership. The union movement is one of the few forces capable of mobilizing working families en masse to prevent the US from succumbing to MAGA authoritarianism. Education unions are uniquely positioned because they already have a workplace presence in most neighborhoods across the country. Organized communities have ears to the ground on how to build power at the local level and mobilize communities across different neighborhoods. Together they can build power to not only protect, but to strengthen our democracy for future generations.”

How can my participation in the Campaign Lab, in the role that I am in now (Lead, Coach, Mentor Coach) contribute to this vision?

What would be the challenges for you? What would be the opportunities for you?

Community Agreements for Our Time

Awareness and Self-Knowledge

This requires self-knowledge and self-awareness. Self-knowledge allows you to see what causes you pain and conflict and enables you to embrace your contradictions and inconsistencies. It allows the space to work on things about yourself that you are not happy with. In turn, self-knowledge helps to prevent you from projecting your negative aspects onto other people. Bringing your best self also requires that you have a positive attitude, are willing to deeply explore your perspectives and remain open to the perspectives and experiences of others.

Listening for Understanding

Be an active listener. Active listening involves paying full and careful attention to the other person, looking them in the eye, avoiding interruptions, reflecting your understanding, clarifying information, summarizing the other person's perspectives and sharing your own. This does not mean re-explaining or reinterpreting another's words for others in the room. Remember that most people need time to open up and might not be willing to immediately share their personal stories, hopes, fears and/or concerns.

Being Gracious

Being kind is a vital way of bringing meaning to our own lives, as well as the lives of others. Kindness is about caring genuinely for others around you, wanting the best for them and recognizing in them the same wants, needs, aspirations and even fears that you may have. Being kind and generous allows us to communicate better with others, to be more self-compassionate and to be a positive force in other people's lives. We are gracious when we accept and genuinely work to use the pronouns that others ask us to use. Being gracious includes utilizing your sick leave when ill for in-person events and not putting the health of the learning community at risk. Being direct and precise about your needs and thoughts is also kindness.

Staying Engaged

Staying engaged requires you to be morally, emotionally, intellectually, and socially involved in the conversation. Staying engaged means that you are listening with curiosity and willing to deepen your understanding. Staying engaged might also require you to sustain the conversation even when it gets uncomfortable or diverted. This means a commitment to keeping your electronic communications to a minimum with folks not present in this learning community. This also means being present for all portions of the learning agenda.

Being Open and Suspending Judgment

Listening with an open mind includes being receptive to the influence of others. You can suspend judgment by becoming aware of your preconceived notions and listening to everything someone has to say before jumping to conclusions. It requires some vulnerability, but not to the point of jeopardizing your personal safety. Suspending judgment also means listening to what the speaker has to say for understanding, not just to determine whether the speaker is right or wrong. This means that we recognize each of us will make mistakes and that we have the capacity to grow. We should expect imperfections.

Saying "I" - tell your truth

Speaking your truth in authentic and courageous conversations about race, class, gender, and other issues where experiences/perspectives may differ widely from yours requires a willingness to take risks. It means that you will be absolutely honest and candid about your own thoughts, feelings, experiences and opinions and not just saying what you perceive others want to hear. Speaking your truth will require you to speak from the "first person" and use "I" statements.

Seeking Discomfort

Leaning in to discomfort will require you to let go of understandings and stereotypes that you may be holding onto in order to move forward. Leaning in means that you will avoid pre-judgment and be open to the kernel of wisdom in each individual's experiences. Leaning in to discomfort will require you to sit through moments of embarrassment, confusion, anxiety, and/or fear.

Reaching Empathy

Empathy and compassion allow you to understand the other person's point of view. When you are empathetic, you are more understanding, patient and kind. Expanding your capacity to feel empathy will also allow others to enter your circle of human concern. Sharing, using, and respecting pronouns is a very simple form of empathy.

Expecting Non-Resolution and Non-Closure

Expect and accept that there may not be closure. It is not likely that you will resolve your personal understanding about race or another person's racial experience in a single conversation. The more you talk about race or other issues with another person, the more you learn and the more they will learn. Authentic and productive conversations about race and other issues where experiences/perspectives may differ widely from yours are continuous and always evolving. This means that sometimes we will have unfinished, unexplored, and shortened conversations about some concepts.

**Adapted from "Embracing equity and inclusion", Annie E. Casey Foundation*

What questions do you want to ask about any of the ideas in these agreements?

What additional agreements do you need in order to be a fully participating member of our learning community?

Can you commit to these agreements? IF not, what would it take for you to be able to commit?