

Short Summary of Strike Organization Roles – Local Leaders and Staff

Every crisis committee will look differently based on the size of the union, scale of the effort (local vs. regional vs. statewide) and local dynamics involved in the strike build up. In general, here is a short overview of recommended roles to plan and run a strike. It is important to work out division of duties, how decisions will be made, and how local leaders and state affiliate staff will work together as early on as possible. See the Strike Manual for more on developing a cohesive team in Chapter 1 and 2 as well as more detailed role and responsibility descriptions for each role listed below in the addendum.

Crisis Committee Chair. A crisis chair that is well-respected, confident, reliable and unflappable. The Chair also serves as the liaison with state or regional governance to keep them informed of real time developments in the campaign and coordinate approval of necessary next steps. The Chair may also serve as the bargaining liaison. The Crisis Committee evolves over the life of the strike build-up and strike to include the following roles depending on the timeline.

Member/Worksite Representatives Per Worksite or Area (Zone) Coordinators or Regional Coordinators (Statewide). Well-respected and unflappable members to serve on the crisis committee because the group will be planning and discussing strategies to build a tactical escalation plan, including targeting the boss, high level decision makers, and what it takes to plan a strike. If the union is large, consider having **Area (Zone) Coordinators** serve on the crisis committee and organize worksite-based subcommittees of members to implement the plan on a local level. These people can also serve as picket captains mentioned below. If the effort is regional or statewide, use **Regional Coordinators**. These Coordinators are assigned local unions to push out organizing strategy and tactics from the region/state. Local unions designate their own local committees to engage local communities, members and employers in the campaign;

Community Outreach Liaison(s). Members who connect with the community and parents and focus solely on activities which bolster their engagement with the campaign. Consider adding a **Community Member Liaison(s)** who is a parent or ally from the community who can provide direct support and coordination with their networks and community organizations. Also include specific members assigned to be **Solidarity Liaison(s)**. These members connect and coordinate with other bargaining unit members, other unions and unorganized employees in the district or university;

Communications Liaison(s). Members charged with message development (internal to members and external to media), including the official **Spokesperson** (President or designee) and social media strategy and postings. This team of member should also include a **Rumor Control** person who is dedicated to fielding and responding to rumors that emerge to try to distract the union from its campaign and the official spokesperson.

Legislative Action/Strategy Liaisons (for Statewide Efforts). Members to work with government relations staff to develop strategy specific to legislative actions.

Logistics Liaison(s). Members tasked with specific things such as being a police liaison for public events, rally logistics for large-scaled actions requiring multiple moving parts, and volunteer coordinators to organize volunteer tasks.

Research Lead. A member to conduct research about the employer or target as needed.

Picket General(s). Leaders of the picket captains who oversee field operations and day-to-day strike operation decision making once on strike. These should be well-respected leaders who can make sound decisions under pressure.

Picket Captains. Captains may or may not serve on the crisis committee given the size of the union. Assemble captains based on worksites with a 1:12 ration of captain to members on a picket team. Assign non-members to picket teams to make sure they are included in strike related communications and requests for action. Captains should be reliable, organized, and confident leaders. For smaller unions, captains may need to serve other crisis committee roles. Also consider organizing picket captains for other bargaining units such as teachers for an ESP strike or professional staff for a university faculty strike, so those employees have an organizational structure in place leading up to a strike.

Strike Headquarters Coordinator. Member charged with finding, outfitting and organizing the strike headquarters space in coordination with staff.

President. Serves as an ex-officio member who is included on all communications, official spokesperson (unless otherwise designated) and in the loop on developing strategy in real-time. Runs all membership meetings and oversees any specific decision-making process as required by local (or state) constitution and bylaws.

Bargaining Liaison. A member dedicated to sharing and summarizing crisis committee planning with the bargaining team and/or Chief Negotiator to keep the team in the loop on developing strategy in real-time. The bargaining team should also inform the liaison and/or crisis chair of developments related to bargaining to notify the crisis committee of new bargaining dates, actions by management, and important developments that may impact the timeline.

Staff Advisors. Staff coordinators assigned to organizing, communications, bargaining and legal issues to work in tandem with the local UniServ Director. Staff advisors should train the appropriate roles on the committee listed above based on their expertise. The training should include role responsibilities, what the road ahead looks like, and how to do their role.

Suggested staff roles include:

- **Strike Organizer.** This staff person is the leader in the field who directs the entire strike operation and works closely with local leaders (Crisis Chair, Strike General, Picket Captains, and President). Conducts supports crisis chair in organizing and running crisis committee meetings and planning the build-up and strike strategy and tactics. Leads staff meetings when on strike and supports Strike Generals in running picket captain meetings and daily debrief meetings. Supervises strike budget and accounts for use of strike funds (unless assigned to other staff person). Makes ultimate decisions when consensus won't work, especially when related to financial decisions for field activities to support the strike. Makes requests for legal assistance and keep attorney informed of developments. Oversees operations of all community outreach efforts, strike headquarters logistics, and membership cohesion.
- **Bargainer (UniServ Director) (Local Strikes) or Several Field Staff (Statewide**

Effort). Staff person who advises and supports bargaining team for a local strike effort. In some cases, the bargainer may serve as the chief negotiator. Serves as the contact person with the mediator if one is involved. Works closely with the Strike Organizer to keep bargaining and field efforts coordinated throughout build up and strike. For statewide efforts, field staff serve as field organizers and liaisons to local leaders in each region to support implementation of the statewide strike strategy.

- **“Shadow” or Assistant Bargainer (Local Strike).** Serves as an advisor for the Bargainer. Attends important bargaining sessions as an observer to provide extra eyes and ears for Bargainer. Helps Bargainer with strategy, tactics and alternatives, including reviewing critical proposals and final tentative agreements to make sure all necessary details are included.
- **Government Relations/Legislative Staff (Statewide Effort).** Work closely with Staff Organizer and Crisis Committee and other local leaders to develop and adapt a legislative strategy during the strike build up and strike.
- **Communications Coordinator.** Staff person supporting the Communications Liaisons in developing and producing internal and external communications. Supports the production of daily strike newsletter (On the Line). Supports the production of internal and external flyers, including arranging printing services. Assists crisis committee and Strike Generals in designing and printing picket signs. Directly works with news media relations. Trains Spokesperson and any other members designated to speak with the media. Assists Communications Liaisons in preparing press releases, organizing and running press conferences and handling all media relations. Handles routine news media contact as backup to Spokesperson. Attends staff/picket captain/area coordinator daily meetings and debriefs.
- **Attorney.** Advises Strike Organizer, Bargainer and Government Relations/Legislative Staff with regard to legal questions and strategy. Handles all legal actions (injunctions, ULP's, etc.). Attorney of record for local or state union. Assists individual members with legal questions when assigned by Strike Organizer or Bargainer. Brings in other legal help as needed. Maintains low profile.
- **Optional: Operational or Administrative Staff.** Supports set up and daily operations of strike headquarters (local) and/or regional offices to support field efforts of the strike. Assists Strike Organizer and local leaders in setting up functional temporary office space (utilities, technology, layout, etc.) and serves as a daily assistant to help the Staff Organizer run the strike.