



**High
Participation
Local
Guide**



Indicators
Assessment
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Indicators

High Participation Locals Defined

These are unions where leadership, responsibility, organizing skills, and decision-making are broadly distributed throughout the membership rather than concentrated in a small group of officers, staff, or activists. Members are not simply recipients of union services; they are active participants in building and exercising collective power. The local has strong worksite structures, effective communication networks, ongoing leadership development, strategic use of data, and the capacity to organize around workplace, political, and community issues. A high participation local also intentionally centers equity by identifying and removing barriers to participation, developing diverse leadership, and ensuring that all members can see themselves reflected in the union's priorities, leadership, and decision-making.

A High Participation Local is Characterized By:

- Trained worksite leaders in every building or worksite.
- Broad member participation rather than reliance on a small activist core.
- Continuous recruitment and development of new leaders.
- Leadership pathways that intentionally recruit and develop leaders across race, class, gender, job classifications, generations, language groups, geographic locations, and other dimensions of diversity.
- Member-to-member communication systems that can quickly share information and mobilize action.
- Organizing data used to identify strengths, gaps, opportunities, and priorities.
- Participation and leadership data used to identify who is engaged, who is missing, and what barriers exist to engagement.
- Budgets that invest in organizing capacity, leadership development, worksite structures, campaigns, accessibility, and participation.
- Leaders and staff focused on building capacity, strategy, coalition work, and long-term power rather than simply solving individual problems.
- Organizing campaigns that elevate the voices and experiences of historically underrepresented and marginalized members.
- A culture where equity is not a separate committee or initiative, but a core organizing practice used to expand participation, leadership, and collective power.

Why High Participation Locals Matter

1. They Create Sustainable Union Power

When knowledge, relationships, responsibilities, and leadership are shared widely, the union does not depend on a single president, organizer, or staff person. Leadership transitions are smoother, burnout is reduced, and the organization can continue to grow even when leadership changes occur. A high participation local intentionally develops leaders from throughout the membership, ensuring that power and knowledge are not concentrated among a few individuals.

2. They Increase Member Ownership

Members are more likely to fight for and defend an organization when they have meaningful roles within it. High participation locals create opportunities for members to solve problems, lead campaigns, recruit coworkers, and shape decisions. They also examine who has access to those opportunities and intentionally remove barriers that prevent participation. The union becomes something members build together rather than something that works on their behalf.

3. They Build Stronger Worksite Power

Strong worksite structures allow issues to be identified early, relationships to be maintained, and members to respond quickly when challenges arise. Rather than waiting for officers or staff to intervene, worksite leaders and teams organize coworkers and address concerns directly. High participation locals recognize that every worksite, job classification, and member group must have access to leadership opportunities and representation to fully develop collective power.

4. They Improve Organizing Outcomes

A high participation local is able to:

- Recruit and retain members.
- Increase participation.
- Develop new leaders.
- Run effective campaigns.
- Mobilize quickly around workplace issues.
- Build support for bargaining and advocacy efforts.
- Reach and engage members who have historically been disconnected from union activity.
- Create leadership pathways that strengthen participation across the entire membership.

5. They Strengthen Bargaining and Advocacy

The strongest bargaining teams are backed by engaged members, worksite structures, and community support. High participation locals can mobilize members around bargaining priorities and translate workplace concerns into collective action. They also ensure that bargaining priorities reflect the experiences and concerns of the full membership, especially those whose voices have traditionally been underrepresented.

6. They Expand Influence Beyond the Workplace

High participation locals are better positioned to build coalitions, influence public policy, strengthen community partnerships, and advance issues that affect both members and the broader community. Because they intentionally engage diverse constituencies and community partners, they are more effective at building broad-based support for campaigns and sustaining efforts aimed at systemic change.

Core Beliefs of a High Participation Local

A high participation local does not measure success primarily by how effectively leaders and staff solve problems. It measures success by how many members are organized, developed, connected, represented, and prepared to exercise collective power together.

A high participation local also understands that participation and power grow when barriers to participation are removed. Building a stronger union requires intentionally expanding who participates, who leads, whose experiences are centered, and whose voices shape organizational priorities.

The Four Essential Outcomes of a High Participation Local

A high participation local continually works toward:

1. Supermajority Membership

Most eligible employees choose to belong to the union. Membership growth reflects all worksites, classifications, and member communities.

2. Supermajority Participation

Members regularly engage in conversations, campaigns, meetings, leadership opportunities, and collective action. Participation is broad, consistent, and representative of the full membership rather than concentrated among a few activists.

3. Leadership at Every Worksite

Leaders are continuously identified, trained, mentored, and supported throughout the organization. Leadership reflects the diversity of the membership and is not limited to formal officers or long-time activists.

4. Equitable Access to Power and Participation

The union routinely examines who participates, who leads, who benefits, and who may face barriers to engagement. Recruitment, leadership development, communications, bargaining, budgeting, organizing, and coalition-building are designed to ensure all members have meaningful opportunities to contribute, lead, and shape the future of the union.

Key Points

A high participation local builds **power through participation, leadership through development, and solidarity through equity.**

It succeeds not because a few leaders are exceptionally capable, but because the organization has created the conditions for many members to lead, participate, and exercise collective power together.

High Participation Local Self- Assessment

Rating Scale

1	2	3	4
Low Participation	Emerging Participation	Growing Participation	High Participation Local

1. Distribution of Union Work

Who does the work of the union?

1	2	3	4
Officers, staff, and a handful of activists perform nearly all union work.	Some members assist with union work but remain dependent on officers and staff.	Worksite leaders and committees perform significant portions of union work with support and coaching.	Work is broadly distributed across trained worksite leaders and member teams. Officers focus on strategy, coalition work, political leadership, and organizational growth.

2. Worksite Representative Capacity

How capable are worksite leaders?

1	2	3	4
Representatives primarily relay information.	Representatives occasionally assist members with workplace concerns.	Representatives regularly organize members and handle basic worksite issues.	Representatives confidently address Level 1 concerns, organize coworkers, identify leaders, recruit members, and mobilize collective action.

3. Organizing Data

How are data used?

1	2	3	4
Data is mainly administrative.	Data is occasionally reviewed after campaigns.	Data informs some organizing decisions.	Data is routinely analyzed to identify engagement levels, leadership gaps, organizing opportunities, worksite capacity, and strategic resource allocation.

4. Member Engagement

What percentage of members take action?

1	2	3	4
Less than 20% regularly participate.	Participation centers around a small activist core.	Many (50-60%) members participate in campaigns and events when asked.	A supermajority of members (>75%) routinely participate in conversations, surveys, campaigns, meetings, actions, and leadership opportunities.

5. Organizing Conversations

How often are members engaged one-on-one?

1	2	3	4
Member contact occurs primarily during crises or dues collection.	Some organizing conversations occur during campaigns.	Worksite leaders conduct regular outreach.	Organizing conversations are a normal part of union culture, with leaders consistently identifying issues, building relationships, and developing activists.

6. Budget Alignment

What does the budget build?

1	2	3	4
Most spending supports governance, conferences, and routine operations.	Some funds support member engagement activities.	Significant resources support organizing and leadership development.	Budget decisions intentionally increase organizing capacity through leader development, worksite teams, member resources, communication systems, organizing technology, and campaign infrastructure.

7. Worksite Structures

How strong are organizing structures?

1	2	3	4
Few organized worksites.	Some active worksites.	Most worksites have functioning representative structures.	Every worksite has an effective organizing team capable of communications, issue identification, membership growth, advocacy, and campaign mobilization.

8. Internal Communication Systems

How do members learn and act?

1	2	3	4
Communication is one-way and inconsistent.	Information flows through a few activists.	Multiple communication methods exist.	Member-to-member communication networks exist in every worksite, allowing rapid dissemination of information and mobilization around union priorities.

9. Campaign Readiness

Can the local run a winning campaign?

1	2	3	4
Local relies on staff or outside support.	Local occasionally runs issue campaigns.	Local can conduct internal organizing campaigns.	Local consistently builds campaigns around clear goals including supermajority membership, supermajority participation, leadership growth, and collective action.

10. Coalition & Community Power

How connected is the local to broader community movements?

1	2	3	4
No meaningful coalition relationships.	Occasional participation in coalition events.	Active relationships with community partners.	Union regularly organizes alongside community allies, builds public support, increases coalition strength, and advances common-good campaigns.

11. Role of Union Staff

Who owns the work—the staff or the members?

1	2	3	4
Staff are the primary problem-solvers. They handle grievances, communications, organizing, and member issues. Members rely on staff to get things done.	Staff begin involving member leaders and worksite representatives in union work. Training and mentoring occur occasionally.	Staff regularly coach worksite leaders, assist with strategy, and support organizing efforts. Members increasingly handle workplace issues and	Staff function primarily as organizers, trainers, strategists, and capacity-builders. Staff train members to address workplace issues, develop leaders, analyze organizing data, support campaigns,

1	2	3	4
		organizing responsibilities.	and strengthen worksite structures. Staff focus on building systems rather than solving individual problems.

12. Role of Union Leaders

Are leaders doing the work themselves, or developing others to lead?

1	2	3	4
Officers and executive board members perform most union functions, make most decisions, and solve most member problems. Leadership is concentrated in a small group.	Leaders recruit volunteers and encourage participation, but still carry most responsibility for union operations.	Leaders intentionally develop new leaders, delegate responsibilities, and build worksite teams. Leadership is becoming distributed.	Leaders focus on strategic planning, political leadership, coalition building, restorative conflict resolution, campaign development, and leadership recruitment. Their primary responsibility is developing other leaders and building collective power. Leadership exists throughout the organization rather than being concentrated in elected positions.

13. Centering Equity

The degree to which the local intentionally identifies, removes, and addresses barriers to participation, leadership, representation, and power based on race, class, gender, language, disability, job classification, work location, and other experiences that affect members' ability to fully engage in the union. A high-participation local treats equity not as a separate initiative, but as a core organizing strategy.

Who has access to leadership, participation, decision-making, and power in our union, and what barriers are preventing others from fully engaging?

1	2	3	4
Equity is rarely discussed or considered in decision-making. Leadership and participation tend to come from the same	The local expresses support for diversity, equity, and inclusion and occasionally offers trainings or recognizes equity	The local intentionally recruits leaders from underrepresented groups, begins examining participation and leadership data, and adjusts programs, communications, and	Equity is embedded in every aspect of union work. Leadership reflects the diversity of the membership. Participation barriers are regularly assessed and addressed. Organizing

1	2	3	4
social groups. The local assumes everyone has equal access to participation opportunities.	concerns. There is growing awareness of participation gaps, but limited action to address them.	structures to increase access and inclusion. Equity is incorporated into organizing, bargaining, and leadership development.	campaigns, bargaining priorities, communications, leadership recruitment, budget decisions, coalition work, and strategic planning are evaluated through an equity lens. Members most impacted by inequities are actively involved in shaping union priorities and strategies.

Scoring and Interpretation Process of the Self-Assessment

Step 1: Rate Each Category

For each category, assign a score from 1-4 based on the descriptions provided.

Score	Description
1	Low Participation
2	Emerging Participation
3	Growing Participation
4	High Participation

Encourage the leadership team to discuss evidence rather than perceptions when selecting scores:

- What examples support this score?
- What evidence contradicts this score?
- Would worksite leaders and members score us the same way?
- Are there significant differences across worksites?

Step 2: Calculate the Overall Score

Add all category scores and divide by the total number of categories.

Overall Score Interpretation

Average Score	Classification
1.0 – 1.9	Low Participation Local
2.0 – 2.9	Emerging Participation Local
3.0 – 3.5	Growing Participation Local
3.6 – 4.0	High Participation Local

Important Note

The overall score should be viewed as a general indicator rather than a definitive measure of local strength.

A local with an average score of 3.2 may still have critical weaknesses in:

- Role of the Leader
- Worksite Structures
- Communications
- Equity
- Coalition Building

These weaknesses may significantly limit the local's ability to build sustainable power despite a relatively strong overall score.

Step 3: Identify Strengths

Circle all categories scoring 3 or 4.

Ask:

- What are we doing well?
- What systems created this success?
- How can these strengths support weaker areas?
- Which practices should be replicated elsewhere?

Strong categories often indicate assets that can accelerate growth in other areas.

Step 4: Identify Priority Growth Areas

Highlight all categories scoring 1 or 2.

Rather than trying to improve everything at once, identify:

Priority 1

The category most limiting the local's growth.

Priority 2

The category that would have the greatest impact if improved.

Priority 3

The category most directly connected to future campaign success.

A local should generally focus on no more than three priorities at a time.

Step 5: Look for Capacity Gaps

Some categories tend to drive success in many others.

Foundational Capacity Areas

- Worksite Representative Capacity
- Organizing Conversations
- Communication Systems
- Role of Union Leaders
- Role of Union Staff
- Centering Equity

When these categories score low, improvement in other areas often becomes difficult.

For example:

Weak Area	Likely Impact
Role of Union Leaders	Few new leaders available
Communication Systems	Low participation
Organizing Data	Poor targeting of resources
Worksite Structures	Weak campaign execution
Centering Equity	Uneven participation and leadership

Step 6: Examine Equity Across All Scores

In addition to scoring the Centering Equity category, review every category through an equity lens.

Ask:

- Who participates?
- Who leads?
- Who is missing?
- Who benefits from existing systems?
- What barriers may exist?

For example:

A local may score high in participation but discover:

- Participation is concentrated in a few worksites.
- Leadership does not reflect the membership.

- Some job classifications rarely attend events.
- New members are not being engaged.

The question is not simply:

"How many people participate?"

It is also:

"Who participates and who does not?"

Step 7: Identify the Next-Level Actions

Once each category is scored, focus on movement rather than perfection.

The goal is not:

- Moving from 1 directly to 4.

The goal is:

- Moving from 1 to 2.
- Moving from 2 to 3.
- Moving from 3 to 4.

Ask:

For Categories Scoring 1

"What is one action that would move us toward a 2?"

For Categories Scoring 2

"What systems need to exist to move us toward a 3?"

For Categories Scoring 3

"What would make this sustainable and distributed enough to become a 4?"

Interpretation Framework

A useful way to interpret results is to think about where responsibility for union work currently resides.

Overall Classification	Primary Characteristic
Low Participation	A few people carry the work.
Emerging Participation	More people are helping.

Overall Classification	Primary Characteristic
Growing Participation	Leaders are being developed and responsibility is distributed.
High Participation	Members collectively own the work and continuously develop new leaders.

Reflection Questions

After scoring, discuss:

Strengths

1. What are our greatest strengths?
2. Which categories create the most power for our local?

Challenges

3. Which categories are holding us back?
4. What barriers prevent progress?

Equity

5. Whose voices are shaping our union?
6. Whose voices are missing?

Capacity

7. What work remains concentrated among a few people?
8. What work could be distributed to members or worksite teams?

Strategy

9. If we could improve only three categories this year, which would create the greatest impact?
10. What would a High Participation Local look like in three years?

Growth Snapshot

At the end of the assessment, summarize findings in four statements:

Our greatest organizational strengths are: _____

Our most significant capacity gaps are: _____

The next leaders we need to develop are: _____

The three highest-impact actions we will take in the next 12 months are: _____

Key Outcome Measures

In addition to using the self-assessment, teams need a plan that helps them track ongoing progress against these outcomes:

Internal Outcomes

- Supermajority Membership
- Supermajority Member Engagement
- New Leader Recruitment and Development
- Effective Worksite Teams in Every Worksite
- Member-to-Member Communication Networks
- Leadership that reflects the diversity of the membership across race, class, gender, job classifications, worksites, language groups, and other dimensions of identity and experience
- Reduced barriers to participation and leadership
- Participation rates that are representative across member groups
- Equity-informed leadership development and succession planning
- Member confidence that the union represents and advocates for all members equally

External Outcomes

- Organized Community Support
- Increased Coalition Strength
- Successful Issue and Political Campaigns
- Strong Influence with Decision Makers
- Visible leadership on issues of racial, economic, gender, and educational justice
- Strong relationships with diverse community constituencies
- Campaigns that engage and benefit historically marginalized groups alongside the broader membership

Level 1: Low Participation Local**Mindset**

The union is primarily a service organization. Members expect officers, staff, or a few activists to solve problems for them.

What It Looks Like

- A small core does most of the work.
- Officers and staff handle grievances and worksite issues.

- Few members participate in meetings, events, or campaigns.
- Leadership positions are hard to fill.
- Organizing conversations are rare.
- Data is used primarily for record keeping.
- Budget is focused on governance, conferences, and routine operations.
- Communication is one-way and information driven.
- Political and coalition work is minimal.
- Leadership and participation often come from the same small groups of members.
- Participation barriers are largely invisible or unexamined.
- Equity is viewed as a separate issue rather than part of union-building.

Key Question

"How can we help members?"

Success Measure

Providing services and solving individual problems.

Level 2: Emerging Participation Local

Mindset

The union recognizes the need for greater member involvement but participation is still concentrated among activists and officers.

What It Looks Like

- Some worksite representatives exist.
- Leaders recruit volunteers when needed.
- Members participate during contract campaigns or crises.
- Some leadership development occurs.
- Data is reviewed occasionally.
- Some organizing activities supplement traditional service work.
- Committees function intermittently.
- Communication systems exist but are inconsistent.
- Budget begins supporting member engagement efforts.
- Leaders recognize participation and representation gaps.
- Discussions about diversity, inclusion, and equity begin occurring.

- Some effort is made to recruit a broader group of members into committees and leadership opportunities.

Key Question

"How do we get more people involved?"

Success Measure

Growing participation in events and activities.

Level 3: Growing Participation / Functional Organizing Union

Mindset

The union intentionally develops members into leaders and organizers. Leadership understands that growth happens through organizing rather than servicing.

What It Looks Like

- Representative worksite structures are in place.
- Members are trained to handle many workplace issues.
- Bargaining teams represent major constituencies.
- New leaders are intentionally identified and developed.
- Data informs organizing decisions.
- Campaigns are member-driven.
- Communication systems support mobilization.
- Budget supports organizing and leadership development.
- Leadership begins shifting from problem-solving to strategy and movement building.
- Leadership recruitment intentionally seeks underrepresented voices.
- Participation data is used to identify who is not engaged.
- Communication, training, and events are designed to increase accessibility.
- Equity considerations are incorporated into organizing, bargaining, and leadership development.

Key Question

"How do we build member power?"

Success Measure

Increasing numbers of members taking action and assuming leadership roles.

Level 4: High Participation Local**Mindset**

The union's primary goal is building collective power. Members do not simply participate in the union; they are the union.

What It Looks Like**Leadership**

- Officers and staff focus on strategic work:
 - Political strategy
 - Coalition building
 - Restorative conflict resolution
 - Leadership development
 - Strategic campaigns
- Routine work is distributed through worksite structures.

Worksite Capacity

- Every worksite has trained leaders.
- Worksite leaders handle Level 1 issues.
- Leaders recruit and mentor future leaders.
- Organizing conversations are ongoing and systematic.

Engagement

- Supermajority membership.
- Supermajority participation.
- Member-to-member communication networks.
- High turnout for actions, campaigns, surveys, and meetings.

Data

- Data drives organizing strategy.
- Resources are allocated based on worksite needs.
- Leaders can identify strong, developing, and weak worksites.
- Data informs campaign planning and leadership development.

Budget

- Resources build organizing capacity.
- Investment in worksite teams.

- Leadership development funding.
- Campaign materials and organizing technology.
- Member resources that increase participation and collective action.

Equity

- Leadership reflects the diversity of the membership.
- Participation gaps are routinely measured and addressed.
- Organizing plans intentionally engage members who have historically been disconnected from union activity.
- Bargaining priorities include issues affecting members with different workplace experiences, identities, and classifications.
- Budget decisions are evaluated through an equity lens.
- Members most affected by inequities help shape union priorities and campaigns.
- Equity is viewed as a core organizing strategy rather than a separate program.

External Power

- Strong coalition relationships.
- Organized community support.
- Effective political campaigns.
- Ability to influence decision-makers and public narratives.
- Active partnerships with organizations working toward racial, economic, gender, disability, and educational justice.

Key Question

"How do we grow power, develop leaders, remove barriers, and win?"

Success Measure

Sustained collective action, leadership growth, supermajority engagement, representative leadership, equitable participation, and the ability to improve workplace and community conditions for all members.

Simple Summary of the Shift

Category	Low Participation	Emerging Participation	Growing Participation	High Participation
Union Work	Staff & officers do it	Activists help	Leaders share responsibility	Members own the work
Leadership	Few leaders	Some volunteers	Leadership pipeline	Continuous leader development
Grievances	Staff handles	Shared responsibility	Reps handle many issues	Worksite leaders lead
Data	Administrative	Occasional use	Organizing support	Strategic organizing tool
Communication	Information sharing	Periodic outreach	Mobilization	Member-to-member networks
Budget	Maintain organization	Support activities	Build leaders	Build organizing power
Campaigns	Reactive	Occasional	Planned organizing	Permanent organizing culture
Equity	Assumed but unexamined	Recognized as important	Intentionally integrated	Embedded in all decisions and structures
Goal	Survive	Engage members	Build participation	Build power

Equity Progression Across the Levels

Level	Equity Focus
1. Low Participation	"Everyone is treated the same." Participation and leadership gaps are largely unseen.
2. Emerging Participation	"We should be more inclusive." Awareness grows and conversations begin.
3. Growing Participation	"We intentionally recruit and develop broader leadership." Systems begin addressing barriers to participation.
4. High Participation	"Equity is how we build power." Participation, leadership development, bargaining, organizing, budgeting, and coalition work are all evaluated through an equity lens.

Coaching the Shift to High Capacity

1. Distribution of Union Work

Coaching Questions

Low Participation → Emerging

- Who currently performs most of the union's work?
- What work could members begin doing with support?
- What responsibilities are officers holding that others could learn?
- Where are opportunities for members to contribute beyond attending meetings?

Emerging → Growing

- What systems exist to recruit volunteers into ongoing responsibilities?
- Which union functions have been successfully delegated?
- What prevents more members from taking ownership?

Growing → High Participation

- What percentage of union work is performed by worksite teams?
- Which responsibilities remain concentrated in a few people?
- What would it take for members to view the union's work as their work?

2. Worksite Representative Capacity

Coaching Questions

Low Participation → Emerging

- Do all worksites have a representative?
- How are reps selected and supported?
- What skills do reps need most?

Emerging → Growing

- Which reps are most effective and why?
- What training do reps receive?
- How often do reps practice organizing skills?

Growing → High Participation

- Can reps handle routine workplace concerns confidently?
- Are reps identifying new leaders?
- Do members seek out their reps before contacting officers or staff?

3. Organizing Data

Coaching Questions

Low Participation → Emerging

- What member information is tracked?
- What information do leaders wish they had?

Emerging → Growing

- How is data used during organizing campaigns?
- Which worksites are strongest? Weakest?

Growing → High Participation

- How does data influence resource allocation?
- Can leaders quickly identify:
 - Participation rates?
 - Leadership gaps?
 - Membership density?
 - Worksite engagement levels?

4. Member Engagement

Coaching Questions

Low Participation → Emerging

- What percentage of members participate?
- Who participates and who does not?
- Why do members choose not to engage?

Emerging → Growing

- What activities attract participation?
- How are members invited into meaningful work?

Growing → High Participation

- What would supermajority participation look like?
- What structures ensure participation is ongoing rather than campaign-specific?
- How is participation measured?

5. Organizing Conversations

Coaching Questions

Low Participation → Emerging

- How often do leaders have one-on-one conversations with members?
- Who is not being reached?

Emerging → Growing

- How are organizing conversations documented and followed up?
- Are leaders trained to move members from concern to action?

Growing → High Participation

- Are organizing conversations a regular expectation of leadership?
- How are conversations used to develop activists and leaders?

6. Budget Alignment

Coaching Questions

Low Participation → Emerging

- What does the current budget primarily support?
- Which expenses build participation?

Emerging → Growing

- What percentage of spending grows organizing capacity?
- What spending benefits only a small group?

Growing → High Participation

- Does the budget actively support:
 - Leadership development?
 - Worksite teams?
 - Communication systems?
 - Organizing campaigns?
 - New leader recruitment?

7. Worksite Structures

Coaching Questions

Low Participation → Emerging

- Which worksites have active structures?
- Which worksites have none?

Emerging → Growing

- What distinguishes strong sites from weaker sites?
- What supports do sites need?

Growing → High Participation

- Does every worksite have:
 - Leaders?
 - Communication networks?
 - Organizing plans?
 - Membership goals?

8. Communication Systems

Coaching Questions

Low Participation → Emerging

- How does information currently reach members?
- Which members are not being reached?

Emerging → Growing

- Which communication methods generate engagement?
- Is communication primarily informational or organizing-focused?

Growing → High Participation

- How quickly can members be mobilized?
- Are communication networks member-to-member or leader-to-member?
- How is communication effectiveness evaluated?

9. Campaign Readiness

Coaching Questions

Low Participation → Emerging

- What is the last campaign the local ran?
- What was learned from it?

Emerging → Growing

- What campaign skills are strongest?
- Where are capacity gaps?

Growing → High Participation

- Can the local execute coordinated campaigns across multiple worksites?

- How are campaigns used to develop leaders and participation?
- What would it take to consistently achieve supermajority engagement?

10. Coalition & Community Power

Coaching Questions

Low Participation → Emerging

- What community relationships currently exist?
- Which partners share common interests?

Emerging → Growing

- What coalition work has been attempted?
- Which relationships have potential for growth?

Growing → High Participation

- How does the local contribute to community campaigns?
- How much organized support could the local mobilize outside the workplace?
- How are members involved in coalition work?

11. Role of Union Staff

Coaching Questions

Low Participation → Emerging

- What work are staff doing that members could learn to do?
- Are staff solving problems or developing capacity?

Emerging → Growing

- How are staff training leaders?
- What organizing skills are staff intentionally transferring?

Growing → High Participation

- How much staff time is spent:
 - Coaching?
 - Training?
 - Strategic planning?
 - Leadership development?
- If staff disappeared for a month, which functions would continue successfully?

12. Role of Union Leaders

Coaching Questions

Low Participation → Emerging

- What responsibilities are concentrated among officers?
- How are leaders involving others?

Emerging → Growing

- What decisions can be shared?
- How are leaders developing future leaders?

Growing → High Participation

- Are leaders measured by what they accomplish or by the leaders they develop?
- How many emerging leaders are being actively mentored?
- What responsibilities could be transferred this year to strengthen the organization?

13. Centering Equity

Moving from Low Participation → Emerging

- Who participates most often in the union?
- Who participates least often?
- Do our leaders reflect our membership?
- What barriers might prevent some members from participating?

Moving from Emerging → Growing

- How are we identifying underrepresented voices?
- What leadership opportunities are we creating?
- Where do communication, scheduling, language, geography, or workplace structures create barriers?
- How do we know whether our outreach reaches all members?

Moving from Growing → High Participation

- How is equity integrated into organizing, bargaining, communications, and leadership development?
- What participation data do we track?
- How are impacted members helping shape priorities and campaigns?
- How do budget, staffing, and leadership decisions increase access and participation?
- What evidence do we have that participation is becoming more representative of our membership?

Key Question

Whose voices, experiences, and leadership are shaping the union—and who is still missing?

Grand Coaching Question

Repeatedly return to this coaching question

What would need to be true for twice as many members to take meaningful responsibility for the success of this union?