

# Driving for Decent Pay

## Save These Useful Tips On Running a Living Wage Campaign

📋 **Plan a detailed campaign strategy and do a “SWOT” analysis** of your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and the threats that you face. And factor in opportunities for flexibility and creativity.

📋 **Set a salary goal—and be bold.** Research various versions of a living wage for your region, broken down to an hourly rate according to members’ workweeks. Then develop a theme/message that stirs members and keeps the campaign on track.

📋 **Set a timetable to reach a living wage** in one contract, or over several agreements.

📋 **Work for a strong, short salary schedule** to move people to the top rate quickly and maximize their career earnings. And aim for extra schedule columns/lanes for professional development.

📋 **Consider interim ways as well to boost pay**, such as paid lunch and holidays or added pay for professional development.

📋 **Tie the living wage to the pension issue.** After all, the more you earn by the end of your career, the higher your pension.

📋 **Survey members and, if possible, the public** on the salary issue. Be aware of what members are thinking at *every* step of the campaign.

📋 **Collect living wage arguments that resonate with the public.** Document the changes in ESP work, its growing complexity, and ESPs’ positive day-to-day influence on students.

📋 **Find ways to incrementally engage members** in the living wage campaign. Get teacher support upfront and use teacher help to reach ESPs.

📋 **Use Association communications** to the fullest. Use your state affiliate publication and state and local affiliate web sites to “create a buzz” around pay. Prioritize salary coverage on local sites.

📋 **Use the media.** Find out who local education reporters are, then cultivate them.

📋 **Find, then train “respected” members on the living wage and campaign skills.** Build a durable committee, with representation from all classifications, that gets constant member feedback. And get more trained Association reps into the schools.



**ESPs, talking about their work and their impact on students, are a living wage campaign’s best spokespeople.**

📋 **Organize regionally** to build momentum, compare tactics and pay scales, and create favorable pay patterns. Build coalitions among different locals in the same district and across district lines.

📋 **Find and develop your best ESP spokesperson.** They’re the most credible voices in the community on the need for a living wage.

📋 **Inventory your ESP assets.** Devise a reporting form to record each member’s seniority, community connections, awards, specialized training, etc.

📋 **Inventory your members’ community links through a “community contact card”**—from church affiliation to rescue squad membership. Focus on those links *first* before reaching farther.

📋 **Research other potential community allies**, including unions, religious denominations, PTAs, influential parents, and other community groups. Develop ties with them early, before campaigning.

📋 **Research school board members/decision makers and build relationships with them.** Use a “board watch” reporting form. Identify points of leverage. And start sending members, in an organized way, to every school board meeting.

📋 **Rely on member input, enthusiasm, and creativity.** Collectively, you and your members are far, far smarter than the most clever consultant!

*--Dave Winans (Dwinans@nea.org)*