



## CLIMATE ORGANIZING

*WE are the leaders we have been waiting for.* –Sweet Honey in the Rock, musical group

### LEADERSHIP

Effective leadership is essential to good community organizing. Everyone can be a leader, and some of the best leaders are people just like you.

#### Roles of a Leader

The role of a leader is to guide others toward a shared purpose. The most important thing to remember is that *you don't need to do everything yourself* – in fact, *you can't* do everything yourself. As a leader, your primary job is to empower others to take action, organize, and lead. Accordingly, your work will include:

- **Recruitment.** Recruit other community members to work, organize, and lead with you to build an effective campaign to address the issue you are organizing on. Build an organizing team to achieve your campaign goals.
- **Training.** Train, support, and mentor your team-members to become good organizers and leaders.
- **Delegation.** Delegate responsibility (rather than tasks) to other team members.
- **Accountability.** Hold team members accountable for carrying out their work and fulfilling their responsibilities.
- **Agitation.** Push people to take on new responsibilities out of their comfort zone in order to help them grow as an organizer.
- **Relationships.** Build strong relationships with team members and community allies through one-on-one conversations and other meaningful interactions.
- **Inspiration.** Inspire and motivate your team members and others in the community through good energy, positivity, and enthusiasm.
- **Evaluation.** Evaluate and assess the success of campaign strategies and tactics, and monitor progress toward goal.
- **Coordination.** Ensure all team members are working together toward a shared goal.

#### Recruitment

The best organizers create teams to work, organize, and lead with them to build an effective campaign. As a leader, one of your primary tasks will be to recruit other community residents to join your campaign and become fellow leaders. Try to create a core group of campaign leaders who you can trust to be reliable and follow through on commitments. Here are some ideas for recruiting new members.

**Create a list of ways people can get involved.** What roles would you like to fill? What skills are you looking for? How can people participate?

**Spread the word.** Reach out to people in your community to tell them about your group and how they can get involved. Here are some ideas for how to do that:

- *Use your relationships.* The relationships you already have with people in your community – whether they're through family, school, work, sports, or other activities – will be one of your



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most powerful tools as a local organizer. Make a list of the people (or groups of people) you know, and start telling people about your idea and how they can get involved.

- *Contact existing ally groups.* Reach out to existing environmental groups in your community. Ask if they are interested in partnering or participating in the campaign. Start a list of potential allies and partners.
- *Organize an event or action.* Hosting an event is one of the best ways to recruit new organizers to your campaign. Schedule time during your event to tell participants about the campaign and how they can get involved. Be sure to bring a sign-up sheet so people can give you their contact information.
- *Make announcements.* Look for opportunities to announce your campaign and call for members. For example, if you're attending another community event, ask the organizers if you can make a short 5 minute presentation. You could also make an announcement at the beginning of a class, meeting, or other gathering.
- *Advertise your group.* Post a description of your campaign and call for members in community newsletters and/or newspapers, and on community message boards (both online and print). You could also try posting on Craigslist or Kijiji, although you may have to filter the responses. You can also scan the local papers for letters to the editor about climate change issues. Get in touch with the authors to see if they would be interested in joining your group.

**Follow up.** If someone indicates an interest in joining your group, follow up promptly with one-on-one communication. An in-person meeting or phone call is always better than email. Taking the time to establish and nurture a meaningful personal connection with potential group members will pay off. Get to know your potential group members and learn about their story of self, background, skills, passions, and interests. This creates a strong foundation for future working relationships, and shows people that they would be a valued and integral member of the group.

### Training

As a campaign leader, part of your job is to train, mentor, and support other team members. This doesn't mean you have to be an expert yourself, but

- Pass along training materials (like this toolkit) to your members and encourage them to review relevant sections. Other good organizing training materials can be found at [350.org](http://350.org) and [350.org/workshops](http://350.org/workshops). There is also a useful training hub at [Moveon.org/organize](http://Moveon.org/organize).
- Keep an eye out for in-person and online training opportunities, and let your members know about them.
- Be available to mentor and support campaign members. Listen to concerns and ideas, and provide advice and feedback.

### Delegation

As a campaign leader, one of your most important jobs is delegating responsibility for various pieces of work to your fellow team members. Empowering others to take action, organize, and lead will make your campaign far more effective and successful. Delegating is important because it:

- **Grows capacity.** You can't do it all yourself. Delegating responsibility to other campaign members means more work will get done. Others will bring new ideas and connections that you don't have. Plus, it's more fun to organize with a team of motivated and creative people!



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- **Creates more leaders.** Delegating tasks gives people new experiences and helps them develop the skills and confidence to become leaders.
- **Builds a committed team.** Giving people tasks and responsibility can empower them, make them feel a sense of ownership and investment in the campaign – ultimately making them more committed to campaign goals. Creates a sense of community and collective responsibility.
- **Increases our power.** The more people we have actively engaged in a campaign and taking responsibility, the more power we will have – and, ultimately, the more likely we are to achieve our goal. You may be able to do a task faster yourself, but by delegating you build more power.

There are some tricks to delegating:

- Create a list of potential responsibilities – both ongoing and associated with particular events and actions. For example, regular updates in local media, running the facebook page, event logistics, etc. See the Teambuilding section for a longer list of possible campaign roles.
- Create a list of possible team members. For example, people who have responded to emails, come to a few recent events, or otherwise stand out as reliable and committed.
- Meet with potential team members in person or by phone. Start by getting to know them: share your story of self and ask about their background and interests in the campaign. After establishing a connection, clearly explain the role, why it is important, and why you think they are a good fit. Make sure you get a commitment and double check that they understand the responsibilities. Establish a timeline, goals, and provide them with anything they need to succeed (i.e. training, materials, etc.). Be sure to check-in on how things are going and/or debrief with them after they have fulfilled their responsibility.
- Trust your team members and give them the space to be creative, explore, test different approaches in their work. Your work as a leader is to ask questions and guide people toward finding effective solutions.
- Everyone has special skills and talents. Find out what the interests and strengths of each team member, and find a meaningful place for them on the team.

### Accountability

Means holding yourself and others accountable for fulfilling a responsibility or particular task they took on. It means providing people with the information, materials, and tools to follow through on a commitment they made. Holding someone accountable doesn't have to be confrontational or unpleasant. Here are a few tips:

- When delegating a task, make sure you clearly establish responsibilities, expectations, and timelines.
- Check in regularly. Either set a specific check-in date, or be in regular communication. Make sure everything is on track and
- Address problems promptly. Small problems can become big, and it's always better to nip them in the bud.
- If someone misses a deadline or goal, check in to find out what went wrong and talk about how you can change things in the future.
- Be objective. When discussing shortcomings in someone's work, always focus on the task not the individual. It's crucial to talk about missed deadlines and goals, but make sure it's not taken as a personal critique.



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- Open communication. Be willing to have difficult conversations and maintain a culture of openness and transparency in your group.

### Agitation

Agitation means gently pushing your committed campaign members to step out their comfort zones and take on new leadership roles. It is an essential part of campaign leadership. Click [here](#) for an in-depth guide on agitation from MoveOn.org.

### Relationships

Building and maintaining relationships – with your team members, allies and partners, media, and community contacts – is another key part of being a lead campaigner. Trusting, respectful, and open relationships are the foundation of a community campaign. Here are a few useful tips for building strong relationships with your campaign members:

- **One-on-one meetings** are one of the best tools for building and maintaining relationships. They are an opportunity to open up and connect at a deeper level with a fellow campaigner – whether you’re just getting to know someone or you’ve been collaborating for years. Try to listen more than you talk. If it’s your first meeting, try to ask probing “how” and “why” questions to learn more about someone and why they are interested in the campaign. Open up and share your own story of self. Click [here](#) for more advice on one-on-one meetings from MoveOn.org.
- **Following up** after meetings and events has many benefits, including building relationships. It shows that we appreciate and value peoples’ time and contribution, and makes them more willing to continue to participate. After an event, always send a thank you email to your speakers, participants, new campaign recruits, media, community partners and allies, and fellow organizers.
- **Debrief with campaign members after events.** Take the time to ask people about how their role in an event or action went – both what went well and what could be improved.

### Inspiration.

Inspire and motivate your team members and others in the community through good energy, positivity, and enthusiasm. The best leaders are contagiously enthusiastic about the campaign.

### Evaluation.

Evaluate and assess the success of campaign strategies and tactics, and monitor progress toward goal. This includes open communication and regular debriefing with your campaign members.

**Coordination.** Keep track of each team members’ responsibilities and work. Look for overlaps and make sure the appropriate team members are collaborating and in communication. Ensure all campaign members are working together toward a shared goal.