

ILLINOIS  
SAFE  
SCHOOLS



THE ALLIANCE

presents:

# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS! ORGANIZING AND ADVOCACY



# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS! **ORGANIZING AND ADVOCACY**

These materials are also available in Spanish, if you are interested in receiving the Spanish materials, please contact the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance. Translation was provided by the ¡Comunicaté! Translation & Interpretation Collective.

## **¡Comunicaté! Translation & Interpretation Collective**

We are a collective who seeks to bridge accessibility between Spanish and English, in spoken and written form, in order to promote and enable community members to be their full selves in spaces where language would otherwise be a barrier. Our professional expertise are reflective of our lived experiences as bilingual, immigrant, queer, and/or femmes of color. Our aim is grow alongside our community and ultimately create a more language inclusive world.

### **DISCLAIMER:**

THIS BOOKLET IS FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY AND NOT FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING LEGAL ADVICE.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ABOUT THE KNOW YOUR RIGHTS PROJECT.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>GOALS FOR THIS PROJECT.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>DEFINITIONS.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>I THINK I GET IT, BUT STILL HAVE QUESTIONS.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>COOL, BUT WHERE DO I START?.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>BUT HOW DO I GET THIS INFORMATION?.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>NOW WHAT DO I DO WITH THIS INFORMATION?... </b>	<b>17</b>
<b>BUT TO ACHIEVE LARGER GOALS, WE OFTEN NEED TO ESCALATE.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>WHAT DO I DO WITH ALL THIS INFORMATION?.....</b>	<b>36</b>

# ABOUT THE KNOW YOUR RIGHTS PROJECT



The mission of the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance (the Alliance) is to promote safety, support and healthy development for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth, in Illinois schools and communities, through advocacy, education, youth organizing and research.

This curriculum was created by staff of the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance. Antonio Gutierrez was consulted when developing our Know Your Rights comic materials, whose contents informed this curriculum. Antonio Gutierrez, is a queer, gender non-conforming undocumented immigrant from Guadalajara, Mexico. Antonio has lived in Chicago after immigrating to the United States to reunite with family members.

Antonio joined the immigrant-rights movement in 2012 as an organizer with the Immigrant Youth Justice League ( IYJL ), an undocumented-led organization. Antonio has engaged in and remains active in collective organizing of community events such as fundraising programs, mass marches, national retreats, city-wide ordinance campaigns and civil disobediences.

Antonio is one of the co-founders of the Autonomous Tenants Union ( ATU ), an all-volunteer anti-displacement organization in the City of Chicago. Antonio is a member of the steering committee of Organized Communities Against Deportations ( OCAD ), an undocumented-led group that fights deportations and criminalization of Black, brown and immigrant communities in Chicago.

## GOALS FOR THIS PROJECT

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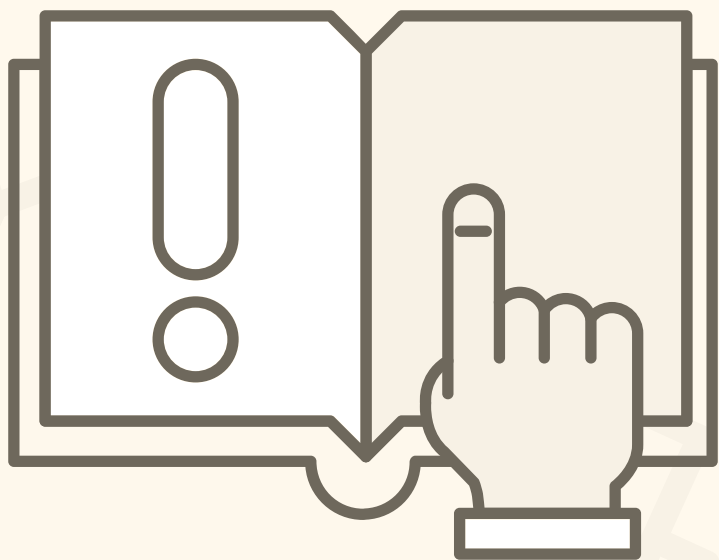
The goal of the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance is to support young people's success in their school environments by providing essential information about their rights, and the responsibility their schools have to honor and accept them. When students know their rights, they are more likely to get the support they need to address the root causes of the problems at hand and demand remedies that allow them to thrive in their academic setting. When doing so, they develop key leadership and advocacy skills. Our goal is to meet the needs of youth and respond to requests for more legal resources, opportunities for peer-to-peer mentoring, legal and medical rights awareness, and support around discriminatory discipline practices in school.

## WHY THIS PROJECT?

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As a youth-advocacy organization, we see grossly disproportionate access to education depending on race, economic resources, family support and geographic location. Lack of access to safe and supportive education can impact achievement later in life & limit opportunity for mobility, employment, and health. At the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance, we believe that all students, not just LGBTQ students, flourish in environments where diversity is valued.

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# DEFINITIONS

## WHAT IS **ADVOCACY**?

Advocacy, in our work, is when we work with young people to improve their situations.

A lot of the times, young LGBTQ+ and allied young people will reach out to the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance and ask for support with something going on at school.

**We work with them and their school district to improve their situation. This could mean having bullying addressed, having their names and pronouns respected, gaining access to restrooms and locker rooms, and anything someone could need support with at school.**

## WHAT IS **ORGANIZING**?

Organizing is when a group of people come together in a strategic and targeted manner to promote their interests.

The Illinois Safe Schools Alliance often works with groups in school districts who are organizing for a school policy change.

**These people engage students, parents, residents, school district employees, school board members, elected officials, and organizations in the school district to write and pass school board policies.**



**THESE PEOPLE ARE ORGANIZERS.**



*I think I get it,  
but I still have  
questions...*

*Sure! What  
are they?*



## WHY SHOULD PEOPLE **ORGANIZE?**

Because no one knows your best interests better than you!

A school board member might agree with you on certain (or even most) things, but at the end of the day, you are the person who understands your interests the best.

If you are an LGBTQ+ student in a school district, you know better than anyone what LGBTQ+ students in your district experience everyday.

**You can identify what's going on the district, and work with others to improve it.**

## HOW DO I BECOME AN **ORGANIZER?**

You start organizing!

Anyone can organize, and anyone can make change happen. All famous organizers have started small.

**Marsha P. Johnson** was not an activist or organizer before the **Stonewall Uprising**. She became active in the **Gay Liberation Front** and the **Gay Activists Alliance** immediately after the **Stonewall** uprising in 1969, and organized the **Street Liberation Pride** rally the very next year. These rallies evolved into **Pride parades** and **Marsha** is one of the largest reasons we have **Pride parades** today.



**Rosa Parks** was not part of a civil rights group prior to being **Secretary of the Montgomery** chapter of the **NAACP** in 1943. Her sit-in on a bus would spur the **Montgomery bus boycott** 12 years later. The **Montgomery bus boycott** is regarded as the **first large-scale demonstration against segregation in the U.S.**

## CAN YOUNG PEOPLE ORGANIZE?

**YES!** Young people are amazing organizers for a lot of reasons. But one of the main ones is because they hold views that no one else can.

A school board member might agree with you on certain (or even most) things, but at the end of the day, you are the person who understands your interests the best.

A teacher in a school building can tell you what happens in the school, from their perspective, but only you can speak from a student's perspective.

**AND** young people have access to things that other people may not have. Students in a school have access to their teachers, school administrators, and school board members, something the average person doesn't. Young people also have access to certain youth groups that only specific adults can enter.



*Cool, but where do I start?*

**YOU CAN START IN A LOT OF PLACES, BUT A GOOD PLACE TO START IS BY ESTABLISHING A GOAL**

**ONCE YOU ESTABLISH A GOAL, YOU CAN IDENTIFY DECISION MAKERS FOR YOUR GOAL, HOW THEY CAN SUPPORT YOUR GOAL, AND IF THEY WOULD WANT TO SUPPORT YOU**

**In a school district, some decision makers for policy are:**



**The School Board President**



**School Board Members**



**The District Superintendent**



**The District Attorney**



**Other District Administration**  
(Assistant Superintendents,  
Principals, etc.)



**District Staff**  
(Teachers, Counselors,  
Social Workers, Deans,  
etc.)

## IN ORDER TO FIND OUT **HOW AND WHY** THEY WOULD SUPPORT YOU, YOU CAN THINK OF:

### **Their power**

This is the power they have over the decision you want them to make. A school board president can have powers that let them call policies to the board for a vote, and can vote on policies before the board.

### **Their self-interest**

This is what motivates this person intrinsically. Someone who is LGBTQ+ identified or an ally to LGBTQ+ people in their personal lives will often support LGBTQ+ policy initiatives.

### **Their fears**

These are consequences a person doesn't want to face. A school board president may be worried about upsetting parents in the district.

### **Their wants**

These are outcomes a person wants for themselves. A school board member might really want to get re-elected to the board, and would want to keep voters in the district happy.

### **Their network and relationships**

These are the people a decision maker is connected to, and the individuals who influence them. They may be members of community groups, professional organizations, unions, or other organizations. Someone might consult with these groups when making important decisions.

*But how do I get this information?*



*You research!*

## YOU CAN FIND OUT INFORMATION ABOUT DECISION MAKERS IN A LOT OF DIFFERENT WAYS. YOU CAN:

### **Talk to people who have interacted with a decision maker in the past.**

In schools, these can be students, parents, teachers, counselors, or other school district employees

### **Look at statements they've made to the media in the past**

Often times, Superintendents and CEOs of school districts are the ones who make public comments on behalf of the district

## YOU CAN FIND OUT INFORMATION ABOUT DECISION MAKERS IN A LOT OF DIFFERENT WAYS. YOU CAN:

### If they are an elected board member, you can look at

What their platform was when running for a seat on the school board

- This is what they tell voters they will do if they are elected

Election results to see how 'popular' they were during the election

- This can tell you how much people supported their platform

Statements they've made to the media either during an election or at times when the district got a lot of media attention

### You can also just try to find what you can on the internet

Sometimes you can find work history, to see what other school districts people have worked in and how those districts supported LGBTQ+ students, possibly through policy

School board members often have other jobs, and only sit on the school board part time. You can try to see if they have any professional experience that might make them an ally.

Decision makers might even have a biography listed on their website that tells you a lot about them, or social media pages where they circulate information.

### But a really great way to find out information is to meet with them and get to know them

Students in schools have access to school board members and school district employees that people outside of the school don't have.

You can ask for a meeting and schedule a **research visit**

**Research visits** are meetings with decision makers where you get to know them, how they think about issues, their values and network, and to gauge their interest in your cause.



### You can structure a successful research visit in the following way

Have everyone introduce and **credential** themselves

- **Credentialing** yourself is when you show why your voice on something is important

There are a lot of ways of doing this, but it can be as simple as saying “I’m a student at \_\_\_\_\_, in my \_\_\_\_\_ year of school” and adding any school clubs you might be involved with. You can also talk about whatever networks and relationships you all have in common, if you have any.

- **Confirm how much time you have with them**



Ask questions to find out about them, their self-interest, and their power

- **How long have you been doing this work?**
- **What are your goals for the next few years?**
- **What does it mean to be [the decision maker's title]?**

Ask questions to test their priorities

- **What are your priorities right now?**
- **What do you see as the biggest problem in our community right now?**
- **State issue you're here to talk about - but stay neutral and let them state their own opinions.**

What do you think about this issue?

Ask questions to assess their fears and wants

- **What do you see as the biggest challenge to achieving [one of the decision maker's goals]?**
- **How do we overcome these barriers?**

Ask questions to find out who is in their network and who they have relationships with

- **Who do you talk to about this issue? What have they told you?**
- **Do you belong to any professional orgs that work on this issue?**
- **Who else should we talk to about this issue?**

**These are obviously a lot of questions, so it's good to have more than one person from your team be a part of the meeting, so the meeting flows better and you make sure you ask all the questions you need to ask.**

## NOW WHAT DO I DO WITH THIS INFORMATION?

**YOU USE IT TO ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS!**

**WHEN YOU GET ALL THIS INFORMATION, YOU CAN START POWER MAPPING**

**Power mapping is...**

an amazing tool that helps people figure out who to engage in their work and how to engage them to achieve their goal

**There are a lot of ways to power map, ...**

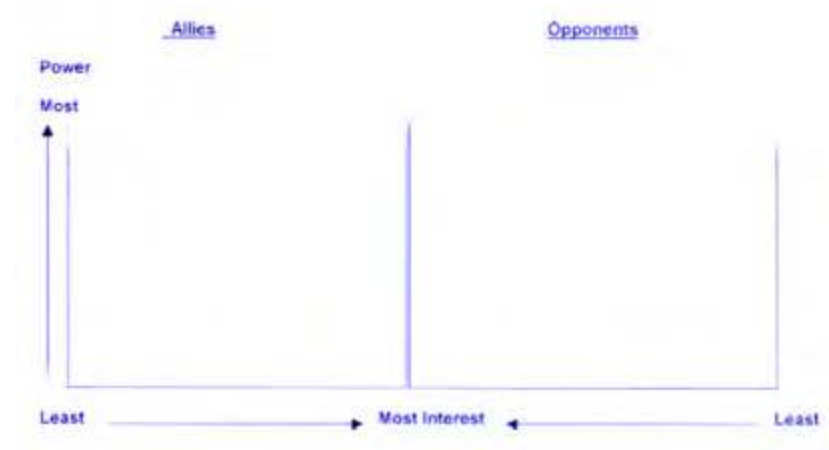
but we'll cover two of our favorites

**The first is a power & interest chart**

but we'll cover two of our favorites.

**Looking at the diagram below,**

we have interest at the bottom, with power on the sides



## The interest runs from the outside to the inside

If you were to put people you researched on this map, you would put the people least interested in helping you achieve your goal on the outside and the people most interested in helping you achieve your goal on the inside

## The power runs from the bottom to the top

If you were to put people you researched on this map, you would put the people with the least power to help you achieve your goal at the bottom and the people with the most power to help you achieve your goal at the top

## But it's divided by "allies" and "opponents"

If someone is friendly towards your goal, or shares the same goal as you, they would be on the left side

If someone is not friendly towards your goal, or has a goal that is not in line with yours, they would be on the right side.

## As an example, let's make your goal to get a raise in your allowance from your parents

### You've done your research, and found out that:

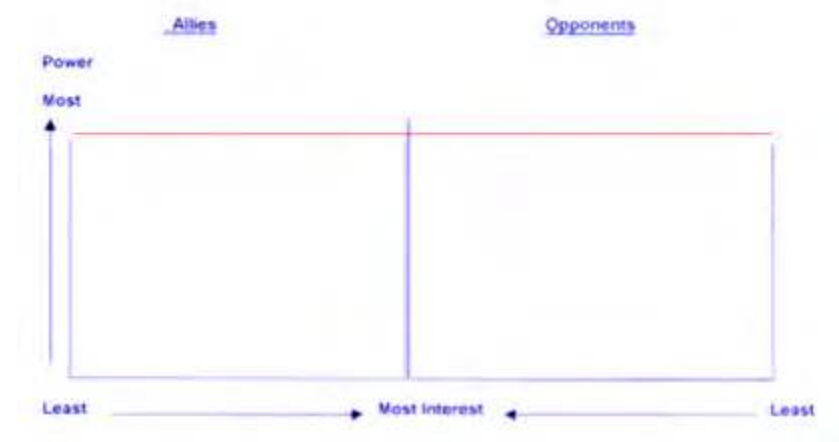
Your parents are the only people who decide how much your allowance is

You have two parents, we'll call them Parent A and Parent B

They agree to a dollar amount for your allowance together. If your allowance is \$10, it's because they each want it to be \$10.

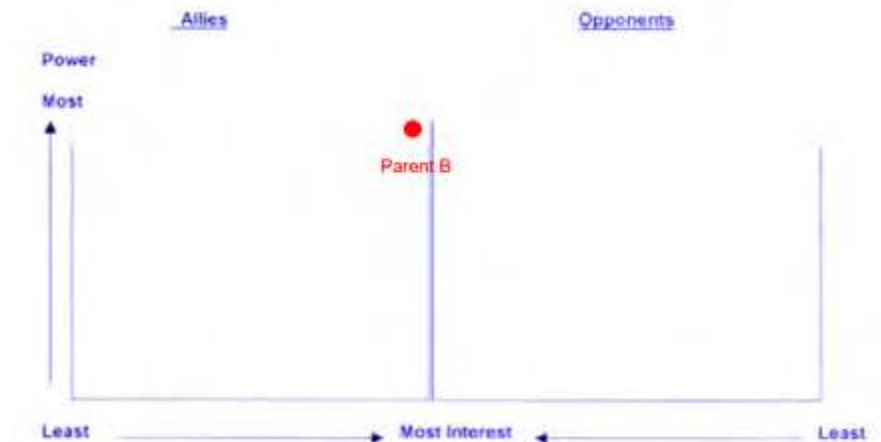
## So, in this case, ...

your parents would be near the top of the map, somewhere along this red line:



## If Parent B has told you they want to ...

give you a raise in your allowance - you would put them at the top and just to the left of the middle (since they're your ally!)



### If Parent A told you that they're not sure if ...

they want to give you a raise in your allowance, and that they'll decide at the end of the school year - you would put them at the top and on the 'allies' side but in between the most left side and the middle



### So if you wanted to achieve your goal...

of getting a raise in your allowance, you will need to figure out how to get Parent A to agree with Parent B

### You can now add...

the stuff you've found out to your research, to help you keep track of everything:

- Your parents are the only people who decide how much your allowance is
- You have two parents, we'll call them Parent A and Parent B
- They agree to a dollar amount for your allowance together. If you're allowance is \$10, it's because they each want it to be \$10
- Parent B wants to give you a raise in your allowance
- Parent A is thinking about it and will decide at the end of the school year

## BUT HOW DO YOU GET PARENT A TO AGREE WITH THE PARENT B?

You can use a different sort of power map!

This one looks like this:



### We have a decision maker in the middle,

with different sources of influence all around them, let's make this person Parent A:

In the upper right hand corner, we have VIP Influences, with some examples listed.

- We can think of these as individuals or organizations that speak directly to the decision maker
- These are typically close, professional relationships.
- If we think of your home as an organization, we can think of Parent B as a 'colleague' of Parent A and thus, a VIP influence.

In the lower right hand corner, we have Financial Influences, with some examples listed.

- **These are people whose money can put pressure on the decision maker**
- **If we think of your home as an organization, we can think of the companies who charge your family for bills (like the electric and gas companies) as financial influences of Parent A.**

In the lower left corner, we have Personal Influences, with some examples listed.

- **We can think of these as people who have a very close, personal relationship with the decision maker. These people may not have a lot of public influence or money behind them, but they have the individual relationship that means a lot to the decision maker**
- **If we think of your home as an organization, we can think of you and any of your siblings as personal influences of Parent A**

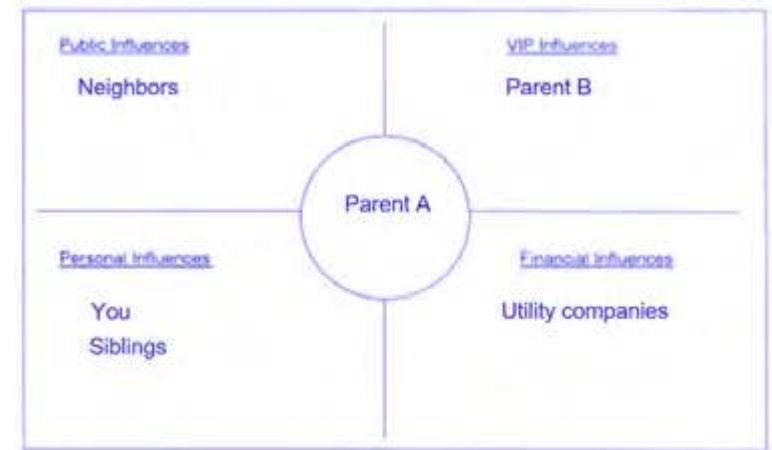
In the upper left hand corner, we have Public Influences, with some examples listed.

- **We can think of these as groups of people who do not have immediate access to the decision maker, but have influence over them, like voters to an elected official.**
- **If we think of your home as an organization, we can think of your neighbors as a public influence.**

**Once you map out influences,**  
you can figure how to get them to support your goals .

For Parent A, we've identified these influences

- **Parent B is a VIP influence**
  - **Utility companies are a financial influence**
  - **You and your siblings are personal influences**
  - **Your neighbors are public influences**
- **You can use a diagram to keep track of them, like this:**



Now we have to figure out what you can do to get them to influence Parent A.

A good place to start is by revisiting your goals and your research

- **Goal: Get a raise in your allowance**
- **Research:**  
Your parents are the only people who decide how much your allowance is.

You have two parents, we'll call them Parent A and Parent B.

They agree to a dollar amount for your allowance together. If you're allowance is \$10, it's because they each want it to be \$10.

Parent B wants to give you a raise in your allowance.

Parent A is thinking about it and will decide at the end of the school year.

So now, let's use the influences and research to help achieve your goal

- If Parent B already said they want to give you a raise in your allowance, you can ask them to explain to Parent A why they think it's a good idea.
- If the utility companies are charging your parents every month, you can help brainstorm with Parents A & B how to save money on utilities.

You can install LED bulbs.

You can promise to unplug electronics in your room when you're not using them.

- If you are a personal influence, you can explain to Parents A & B why you want a raise in your allowance and how that might be good for the whole family.
- If your neighbors are a public influence, you can get them to sign a petition asking your parents to give you a raise in your allowance.

At this point, you've done a great job of using different sorts of influences to convince Parent A to give you a raise. And hopefully that would work!



To learn more about power mapping , check out Activity #1 of our Organizing & Advocacy Curriculum!

## BUT TO ACHIEVE LARGER GOALS, WE OFTEN NEED TO ESCALATE:

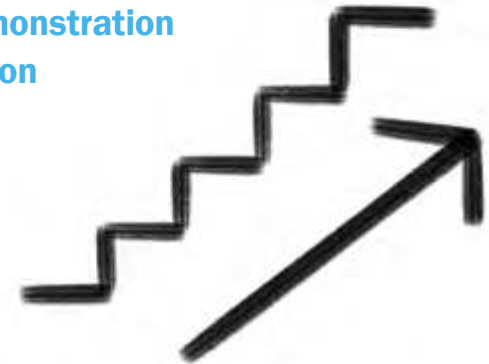
### ESCALATION IS

the concept that when decision makers tell us they can't help us with our goal, we have to do more in order to convince them

### WE CAN THINK OF ESCALATION

as having six stages, each one requiring more work than the last

1. Investigate / Research
2. Meet / Negotiate
3. Public Engagement
4. Public Demonstration
5. Direct Action
6. Win!



**THE INVESTIGATE / RESEARCH STAGE WE WENT OVER PRETTY WELL ALREADY, WHEN WE DISCUSSED RESEARCH AND POWER MAPPING**

## THE MEET / NEGOTIATE STAGE IS WHEN YOU MEET WITH A DECISION MAKER TO STATE YOUR GOAL AND TO ASK THEM TO DO SOMETHING IN SUPPORT OF YOUR GOAL

### You want to come ...

to these meetings (there's often more than one) with a plan based on your research, power mapping, and what you know about the decision maker's self-interest, fears, and wants.

### You want to create ...

create a space where the affected people (this can be you) can voice their own needs and wants.

### Be sure to credential

your team via your network and resources

- Remember, for a student this can be as simple as saying 'I'm a student at your school.' with some information about clubs or activities you're involved in

## THE ALLIANCE THINKS OF THE INVESTIGATE/ RESEARCH PHASE AND THE MEET/NEGOTIATE PHASE AS ADVOCACY.

Most of the people we work with do not want to be public about what is going on at school, and that's perfectly OK. People should have the power to consent to making their stories public.

### If you are working with someone...

in a similar situation, you can still put pressure on the decision maker without making anything very public.

- You can ask organizations or people to write private letters to the decision maker.
- You can have certain organizations or people call the decision maker directly.
- You can set up meetings with the decision maker and people who might be able to influence them.



To learn more about escalation, check out Activity #2 of our Organizing & Advocacy Curriculum!

## WHEN WE ESCALATE PAST THIS STAGE, WE STEP INTO ORGANIZING.

Organizing involves public engagement and concentrating the right resources in the right place(s) at the right time(s).

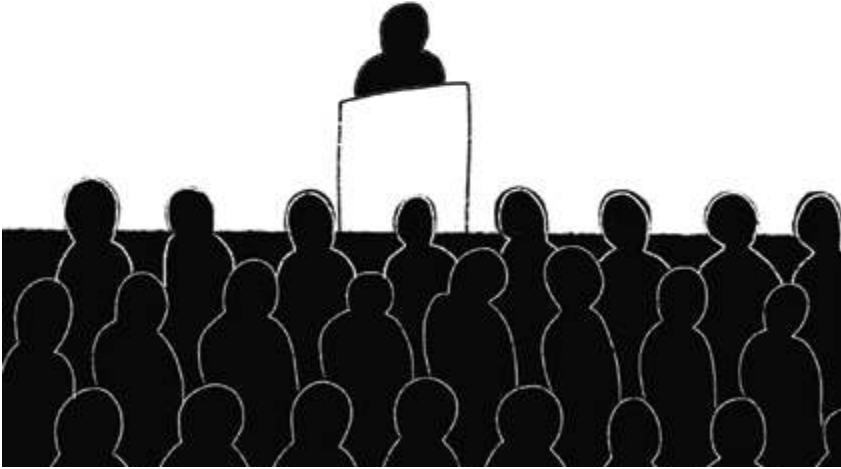
If you remember, we have four stages that take place after the meet/ negotiate stage.

### These are:

3. Public Engagement
4. Public Demonstration
5. Direct Action
6. Win!

## **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT IS A PROCESS THAT BRINGS PEOPLE TOGETHER TO ADDRESS AN ISSUE THEY CARE ABOUT OR TO SOLVE SHARED PROBLEMS.**

Effective public engagement brings together everyday people and gives them leadership roles.



### **When engaging the public, ...**

you want to begin by listening. You want to understand what the greater public's knowledge of the issue is, and build off that.

- **You may also want to create a space where you include and amplify the voices of people who are normally excluded or most impacted by the issue.**
- **For example, if you were organizing in your school district to pass a policy that supports and affirms LGBTQ+ students, you can create spaces where LGBTQ+ students' voices are centered.**

### **You can frame an issue so that...**

there is some public deliberation so that the group can decide what their values are and what are the best steps to achieve your goals.

- **If you decide to deliberate the issue, it's okay to have **non-negotiables**. **Non-negotiables** are values or details that are not up for deliberation.**
- **If you were organizing in your school district to pass a policy that supports and affirms LGBTQ+ students, it's OK to say that transgender students using bathrooms and locker rooms in line with their gender identity (like a transgender boy using boys' bathrooms and locker rooms) is a **non-negotiable** and will not be deliberated.**



**If you want to practice talking about non-negotiables, check out Activity #3 of our Organizing & Advocacy Curriculum!**

### **Make sure not to overwhelm people...**

with too much information at once.

This often means that there will be multiple ways for people to learn about the issue and ways to support your goals

Some examples are:

- Town hall meetings
- Online and in person petitions  
You can even decide to go door to door with your petition to engage people
- Community events
- One on one meetings with people

## Throughout the process, you should be encouraging people to take action.

That can mean going door to door with a petition, calling people to invite them to meetings, organizing public events, giving presentations to educate more people, and anything that supports the group's goals.

- This is important because it means more work is being done to achieve your goal and it means you now have more leaders!

## A PUBLIC DEMONSTRATION OR A DIRECT ACTION ARE EVENTS WHERE THE PUBLIC DECIDES TO SHOW THE DECISION MAKERS WHERE THEY STAND ON AN ISSUE.

These should be done in a way that helps you meet your goal, so you should be strategic about how you organize them.



## A public demonstration is...

a large public event where people gather to show support for or against something.

Typically this is done after the public engagement stage, since at this point, you should have a good number of educated, supportive people, and it will be easier to find more people willing to attend your public demonstration.

- Examples of public demonstrations are asking people to:

Come to a rally

Attend a school board or city council meeting

March from a public place to a government building

- For all of these examples, you want to pick a location that makes sense. If you want to get your school district to pass a certain policy, it might make sense to have supporters attend a school board meeting
- In any of these examples, it is a good idea to make signs or have people wear shirts that show support. This way it becomes visibly clear why all these people have gathered. And if you attend a school board meeting, not everyone has to testify, some people can just show support via signs or shirts.



## A direct action is similar to a public demonstration, but ...

but is often used to **escalate** even further. Public demonstrations are often not as targeted as direct actions. Direct actions tend to be a sort of last resort to really pressure decision makers to act favorably. They also tend to involve more risk.

- **We can think of the goals of a direct action as four main things, to:**

- Escalate
- Not get detained or arrested
- Raise the visibility of your group's goals
- Pressure decision makers

- **However, because direct actions tend to be more targeted and more directly pressure decision makers, some of them come with a risk of arrest, even if you're plan is to not get arrested.**

- **Examples of direct action include:**

- Picketing outside a government building

- Holding a vigil at a strategic location

- Organizing a sit in, in a strategic location

- Blocking the street by holding hands

- **Often called a soft blockade**

- Blocking the street with equipment or people tied/chained to each other

- **Often called a hard blockade**

- Hunger strikes

- Labor or rent strikes

- **You need a lot of people to make a direct action a success, ideas of roles for people to play are:**



### Logistics

People who are in charge of thinking about the best strategy on how to implement the action, obtaining necessary materials, making sure the action is feasible.

### Care-takers

These are the people who make sure participants who are most likely to get arrested (if you are organizing a blockade, these are generally the people in the blockade) are emotionally and physically well before, during, and after action. Caretakers will often make sure that participants do not have medical issues and are hydrated during action. After the action, caretakers should also notify participant's loved ones, if they want someone to.

### Police liaison

People who speak to police on behalf of participants while the action is happening, attempt to negotiate with police so that arrests are delayed and make sure that those who do not want to get arrested don't get arrested

- **The police will often tell you what is considered a 'crime scene'. People who do not want to get arrested, should stay away from the crime scene.**

## Peacekeepers

Group of people who make sure that people in the crowd remain calm and do not become confrontational with others (like counter-protestors). This group should also try to have the supporting crowd listen to police instruction.

## Arts

Group of people who make sure that there is materials to make visuals, which can be in the form of signs, messaging on equipment, banners, apparel and other props

## Outreach

Group of people that will make sure that others are there to support the action. This sometimes requires people asking community members to come out to the action. When promoting event, you can decide to be vague about the details, and not promote it as a direct action. This is done so that people who want to keep the action from happening don't get a chance to.

## Media

People who will make sure that media is aware of the action and can attend the action. This group should create a press release, press advisory, and have (or create) a press contact list. This group should also make sure that there are specific people who will livestream the action as well as update social media sites.

## Legal

People who will be in charge of reaching out to lawyers, whether it is immigration and/or criminal lawyers. If someone is risking arrest, they should have a chance to speak to lawyers before taking part of the action, and have legal assistance after action.

- **Immigration lawyers are helpful for people who are not U.S. citizens, as arrests can have negative outcomes for people who are not U.S. citizens. This can range from having to file more paperwork when you apply for a new immigration status, or can even lead to deportation proceedings**

## Ideally, a large direct action will show...

the decision makers how many supporters you have and how many are willing to dedicate a lot of time to your cause. If the action gets media attention, it can put even more pressure on decision makers to act favorably.

## Looking at all the roles mentioned, ...

you've probably figured out that a direct action is A LOT of work. And that's one of the reasons we save it for last.

- **Another reason is because it might take several direct actions to get the decision makers to act favorably, and you need to make sure you have the right group of people to do that.**



If you want to practice planning a direct action, check out Activity #4 of our Organizing & Advocacy Curriculum!

## WHAT DO I DO WITH ALL THIS INFORMATION? THIS IS ALL KIND OF SCARY.

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### YOU CAN DO WHATEVER YOU WANT WITH THIS INFORMATION.

But we hope this helps you think about how you can create change in your own communities.

### IF YOU FEEL SOMETHING IS UNJUST OR CERTAIN GROUPS OF PEOPLE ARE BEING TREATED POORLY, THERE'S A LOT YOU CAN DO ABOUT THAT.

And you can do even more if you find a good group of people to organize with.

At times it can feel scary (especially direct actions!), but organizing is often led by community members much like yourself. In Chicago, two separate high schools are open today because community members organized for them.

## Little Village Lawndale High School



Little Village is a very densely populated neighborhood on Chicago's near Southwest side. Residents of the neighborhood had long asked the Chicago Public Schools system to build a new high school in Little Village to accommodate all of their young people.

Although a school was promised to them, CPS had not allocated the funds to open the school.

On May 13th, 2001 fourteen community residents of Little Village neighborhood staged a nineteen day hunger strike demanding the construction of a new high school.

During and after the hunger strike, residents went door to door to ask community members what they wanted to see in the school. Results from the survey actually informed the construction of four different high schools on the same campus, they are:

- World Language High School.
- Multicultural Arts High School.
- Infinity; Math, Science, and Technology High School.
- The School for Social Justice.

In August 2001, CPS decided to allocate funds for the schools and the campus opened its doors in 2005.

## Dyett



In 2012, the CPS Board of Education voted to phase out and eventually close Walter H. Dyett High School, a high school in the City's Bronzeville neighborhood on the Southside.

Several schools in Bronzeville had already been closed, and closing Dyett would leave young people in the community without any neighborhood high school, with the closest one two miles away. Rallies and sit-ins ensued, eventually forcing the district to promise to keep Dyett open.

A coalition of community members and organizers envisioned Dyett with a new, revamped curriculum focused on green technology and global leadership. But when Chicago Public Schools delayed a final vote on a plan, community members turned to a hunger strike as a last resort.

They sat in Washington Park—where Dyett is located—in the summer heat, drinking only liquids for 34 days.

National and international media covered the story. Mass protests were held inside City Hall. After one hunger striker fainted at a school board meeting, two board members pressed the district to make a final decision on Dyett.

CPS decided to keep Dyett open as an arts school. Although it is not the vision the strikers had in mind for the school, it remains open due to their efforts

## All of these campaigns involved every day people...

who stepped out of their comfort zones and imagined themselves doing stuff that might have felt impossible.

A lot of us are indebted to them today, and someday, we might be indebted to you



# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS! ORGANIZING AND ADVOCACY



**THANKS FOR READING!**



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