

Community Organizing Manual

Produced by:



What Mobile Justice Means to Me

“I see Mobile Justice from the perspective of our situation in my park. I have big concerns with the community’s perception of us. The relationship between the homeowners and the park owner is also a problem. Mobile Justice is about overcoming these issues. This is particularly needed in communities of color as well.”

John Freeman, Chisago City, MN

“Mobile Justice means fighting for our rights, education, and working for justice within parks. We need to challenge park prejudice that takes place against us, but we also need to address it within our own community. Too many manufactured homeowners draw a dividing line between themselves and ‘those kind of people’ who live in ‘those kind of parks.’ This has to stop. Mobile Justice has to include everyone.”

Pat Freeman, Chisago City, MN

“Mobile Justice means empowerment. It’s a matter of educating people of what they can accomplish if they are organized and unified.”

Bev Adrian, Bloomington, MN

“Mobile Justice is about getting the same rights as everyone else. Anyone who lives in a manufactured home and calls it their home should have equal rights to stick built homeowners. We should be treated fairly and not treated as lower class. Sometimes people classify us as being lower class and we are labeled as problem people. I live in a park and I am not trash!”

Mary Hamilton, Anoka

“Mobile Justice is freedom. We want a community where families can move in and their kids can grow up healthy and happy. The stigma of ‘trailer trash’ is gone. It has got to go away.”

Betty Bailey, Lexington, MN

“Mobile Justice is about being a part of the family of homeowners who keep working to make people look at manufactured homes just the same as stick-built homes, so people can live there by choice and not face any judgment. What we do for Mobile Justice reflects on me and everyone in parks. We can get rid of the negative images; and everyone sees the fruit of our labor. I’m proud to know that we can make people so interested, upset or happy with us that we can be in the news. As long as there are still issues that need be fixed, I am going to stay involved.”

Pat Therrein, Lakeville, MN

“Mobile justice is about winning legal justice for people residing in mobile home parks. I can’t wait to face the park owners in person and see what they have to say. Park owners need to find another way to make a living that doesn’t destroy other people’s livelihoods.”

Wayne Britz, White Bear Lake

“Mobile Justice is when residents of manufactured home parks stand up for themselves. It’s understanding what you can do and then doing it. Mobile Justice is about not having to take it anymore.”

Paul Wissmiller, St Anthony Village, MN



This Manual is Dedicated...

To leaders who fought to lay ground for the work we do today;

To ordinary people doing extraordinary things to stand up for their communities; and

To the next generation of leaders, who will defend our victories and take us further down the path of Mobile Justice



Acknowledgements

Community organizing obviously existed long before APAC. As an organization we have been fortunate enough to benefit from the wisdom of people who have been doing this work much longer than we have. We have tried to capture many of their ideas and experiences in this manual, while at the same time adding tools and ideas that are unique to APAC.

Special Thanks go to Jay Clark, Beth Newkirk and Salvador Miranda for training generations of APAC organizers.

To compose this manual we drew on nearly 30 years of experience in the field organizing in communities across Minnesota, and more recently in the northwestern states. Other organizations have added to our knowledge through their collaboration, training and materials along the way. They include:

- Applied Research Center
- Arden Manor Resident Association
- Association of Manufactured Homeowners (Washington State)
- Bennett Park Cooperative
- Bonnevista Resident Association
- The Gamaliel Foundation
- Housing Preservation Project
- Latinos Unidos
- Lowry Grove Resident Association
- Minnesota Center for Neighborhood Organizing
- Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless
- Midwest Academy
- Minnesotano Media Empowerment Project
- The Northwest Regional Working Group
- Organizing Apprenticeship Project
- Shady Lane Resident Association
- Skyline Village Resident Association
- Sunrise Estates Resident Association

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Writing about manufactured home issues inevitably brings up the question of terminology. Various players in the world of manufactured housing use a variety of different terms to express the same idea, and many of these players have strong opinions as to which term is most appropriate.

This manual does not attempt to resolve these conflicts, or come up with a new standard. Many of these debated terms are used interchangeably throughout the manual. Some examples include “manufactured home park” and “manufactured home community” and “homeowner” and “resident.”

We chose the language that we used to try to balance two specific objectives - making the materials as readable as possible to the widest possible audience, while at the same time eliminating terminology that we found to be offensive.

It may be possible that the preferred terminology in Minnesota will be different than the commonly accepted terminology in other states. The materials are a working document meant to stimulate conversation and action, not to be the final word on all things manufactured housing.

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Manufactured homeowners across the nation are organizing for justice. For far too long residents have been treated as second-class citizens by public officials, businesses, park owners, and the media. The results are park closings, deteriorating living conditions, and the all too familiar stereotypes used to marginalize our communities.

Right now there is a war of values that is raging in our country that will influence our efforts to promote positive social change in manufactured home parks. Manufactured homeowners are organizing around a clear set of values: family, home, community, justice, and equality. Our opponents on the other side also share a common set of values: profit, development, private property, and a notion of progress dictated by the “highest and best use” of land.

In order to win effective changes, we need to look at the world we live in. Park owners, developers, and governments have deeply rooted institutional power that they use to promote their values. The resulting state of manufactured home parks is no accident but is rather the result of deliberate practices, ideas, and policies. People who benefit from this will likely oppose change, using their power to cling too unjust privileges.

Park residents are perceived to be powerless and are usually portrayed as victims (at best) by the media. “Park prejudice” is rampant in our society. Racism and class prejudice compound this problem.

Therefore, changes in the world of manufactured home parks cannot rely on a group of outsiders, regardless of their intentions. It’s useless to rely on the goodwill of people trying to solve resident’s problems especially when they don’t include residents at the table when decisions are being made.

What we are talking about instead is building a powerful movement with manufactured homeowners at the helm creating a vehicle for their own social, economic, and political power. We need to promote our values and build our power by organizing people, ideas, and actions. We need to stop portrayal of residents as victims, and confront park prejudice, racism, and class prejudice. None of this can be done without a strong leadership base of manufactured home park residents.

This manual is a tool that we hope you will find useful in working for justice in your community. All Parks Alliance for Change (APAC) is an organization of manufactured home park residents in Minnesota. For 30 years, we have been fighting to win victories to strengthen resident rights and to give residents more control over their lives. This manual brings together knowledge accumulated over years of experience on the front lines of the battle for mobile justice.

Organizing



“Dictionary” Definition:

Community organizing is a process by which disenfranchised people come together to act in their common self-interest. Organized people use power to directly influence decision-makers, eliminate oppression, and advance justice.

The goal of organizing in manufactured home parks is to create a movement of powerful resident leaders who advance a common vision of justice in their communities.

Disenfranchised = denied access to the rights of citizenship; not included in decision making; overlooked; silent; often feel powerless.

Self-interest = what people value, need, and want for themselves and their community; not selfish; not selfless. See “Identifying Self Interest” for a full definition.

Key goals:

- To win issues that improve people’s lives
- To unite people
- To build power
- To engage people in collective action to directly influence decision-makers
- To advance social justice values and systems that promote equality, democracy, and human rights

Distinguishing features:

- Members and leaders shape the agenda and make decisions
- There is democratic participation from a clearly defined constituency or membership
- There are clear demands and specific targets (decision makers)
- Members and leaders are aware of all potential opponents and allies
- Leaders are intentional about creating relationships around common self-interest to recruit more members and allies
- Tactics vary but are intentional and strategic
- Leaders engage in direct confrontation with the target
- Members and leaders focus on changing the government policies, corporate policies, media norms, and other systems that create injustice

What is Community Organizing?

Organizing Versus Other Approaches to Social Problems

People use many different strategies to respond to the challenges faced by communities. Although every approach has value, it is important to recognize the differences among various approaches. The table below shows the different strategies people could use to respond to the same issue.

Problem: Lone Tree Manufactured Home Park is going to close in 9 months because the highway department is building a road through the park.

Approach to Social Change	Solutions
Direct Service	A local charity decides to open its space to families who become homeless when the park closes.
Advocacy	The highway department holds meetings for residents of Lone Tree to provide information about how to get the compensation they are guaranteed under federal law. They want to make sure everyone understands the complicated process.
Community Economic Development	A housing developer lobbies to keep part of the park open but only allows newer homes to stay. The project developer gets the highway department to open up two jobs to residents of Lone Tree. The residents will help build the road in exchange for a good paying job that will provide them with enough money to buy a stick-built home.
Electoral	The Political Action Committee works with residents to elect a new mayor who promises to do everything she can to stop the road from being built.
Organizing	Your homeowners association holds a neighborhood meeting to find out what the people of Lone Tree want. The homeowners decide to fight to keep the park open. Neighbors work together to build a movement against the road. A core group of neighbors become leaders, they do some research and decide to take legal action against the transportation department. They also recruit allies, stage a protest and delay the construction of the road. After a long fight, they win the lawsuit and the park stays open. Two Lone Tree leaders are elected to city council.

Questions

1. How do each of these approaches understand the problem?

The root cause of the problem is understood differently, depending on the approach:

- **Direct Service:** The families of Lone Tree will soon have no place to live.
- **Advocacy:** Lone Tree residents don't understand complicated laws; they might not get equal protection under the law unless they follow the right process.
- **Community Economic Development:** Older manufactured housing is not decent housing; Lone Tree residents should live in "real" homes.
- **Electoral:** The current elected officials are not responsive to the needs of the Lone Tree Residents.
- **Organizing:** The social and/or government system(s) support(s) the values of the commuters who want the new road. It does not support the interests of the people who live at Lone Tree.

2. What role do the Lone Tree residents play in each of the solutions?

The role of Lone Tree residents is different depending on the approach:

- **Direct Service:** Homeowners are clients or recipients of services.
- **Advocacy:** Homeowners are clients or recipients of service.
- **Community Economic Development:** Some residents are pitted against other residents
- **Electoral:** Homeowners are engaged voters, some of whom were activists in an electoral effort.
- **Organizing:** Homeowners are leaders and agenda setters.

3. Is there a change in power relationship in any of the solutions?

A shift in power is different depending on the approach:

- **Direct Service:** no change
- **Advocacy:** no change
- **Community Economic Development:** There is a lateral shift from park lord to developers.
- **Electoral:** Changes primarily for the person who is elected into office.
- **Organizing:** The Lone Tree residents become powerful leaders. They set the agenda, held people accountable, and used whatever means they could to protect their homes.

Is there a war of values going on right now? Absolutely. In your world, in your country, your state, your city, and your community there is a war of values that is being played out. This is not necessarily a war that is being fought through violence; it is a battle of ideas. Understanding the war of values is essential to building your power to influence change. Park closings, rent increases, park prejudice, and lack of homeowner rights are all casualties of the war of values. These are examples of the very real consequences when another set of values wins against yours.

Know Your Values

A first step to building power is to know your own values. It's easy to think of what you are against, but what are you for? Think of a broad set of values that resonate with you and the larger community. Don't be afraid to think big!

Know Their Values

Remember this is a "war." There is another side that you are up against with another set of values. We have some powerful adversaries on this side including park owners, managers, developers and some elected officials. This may be difficult, but try to think of what values they represent. When they speak publicly, what values are they appealing to? Greed is not a value. No park owner will say, "I'm closing the park because I'm greedy." So what are they saying? What is it that attracts sympathy from the media and public officials?

Compare Values

Once you know your values and their values, take some time to see how they compare. How are they different? Are there any values that you are both appealing to? If so, how can you win that debate?

Usually when you compare the two sets of values, you will find that your values have a much broader appeal in society as a whole. The values that the other side holds generally appeal to a much narrower audience.

Who Wins?

Even though our adversaries have a narrower set of values, in many cases they are winning. Every time a park closes, residents' rights are trampled or someone uses the term "trailer trash," it is a victory for their values. So why are they winning?

The reality is that it's not just the values you hold that matter. It's how to use them. The other side is very smart in the way they appeal to values and they also have a lot of power to promote those values. We have to be equally intentional about tying our work to our values, and building power to promote our values so that we can win.

Introduction to Power

What is the first word you think of when you hear the word power? For many of us these words are often negative because we are told that “power corrupts.” In fact, most of our examples of power come from situations in which power has been abused by park lords and managers.

In reality, to change the community around us we need power. But we must first overcome our misconceptions of power if we truly intend to become powerful people and organizations.

Rethinking Our Understanding of Power

Becoming a powerful leader is a choice that every individual has to make. Power is not found in other people, nor is it something that can be given. Anyone who wants to be a powerful person can be.

Round Robin Exercise

In a group setting, go around to each person and ask him or her to give you an example of where an individual has used power for bad. Write down each example. Go around one more time and ask each person to give an example of where an individual has used power for good.

Here are two models for understanding power:

1. Power As It Is — In the world that we live in, we have been taught the following things about power:

- Power is limited—the more power that I have, the less you have.
- Power is controlling
- Power is all or nothing—a person is either powerful or powerless
- Power is corrupting or immoral
- Power is sourced in money, force, law, or status
- Power is what can be done NOW

2. Power As It Could Be — Here is how power can be in the world that we want to live:

- Power can be relational—I have power when you have power. Together, we have more power
- Power can be freeing to new possibilities
- Power can be varied—a person is never completely powerless, since one person’s action always affects others
- Power can be used for the good of all, not just the individual.
- Power can be sourced in respect, relationships, creativity, and organization.
- Power can be built over time and achieved in the long term

Where Does Power Come From?

Power comes from four major areas. Combining all of these major sources of power is important in developing power both as an individual but also for your organization. Each source of power must be continually developed and used strategically. Always make sure there is a purpose behind everything you do.

Organized People

There is strength in numbers. Organizing people is crucial to your work and is your most important form of power. Examples of organized people include: homeowners associations, unions, church congregations, cooperatives, APAC, etc. The key is to organize people around a shared vision.

Organized Resources

Money and resources can give you the power to change your community. Organized money can take many forms. One example is a group of residents withholding their rent from a park owner due to bad conditions in their park. The more people involved in this action the more money the park-lord will lose.

An organized resource means utilizing allies and groups around you. Recruiting allies is important because they offer new opportunities and options. An example is recruiting an attorney familiar with your issue to provide you advice on your legal options. Another example is recruiting a church to be an ally because their congregation has a lot of influence over the person or group you are targeting (e.g. a park owner, public official, etc.).

Organized Ideas

Imagine being in a room full of people. If everyone were asked to shout one thing they wanted to change about their community, you'd have trouble hearing what everyone said. It's important to craft a unified message that everyone can agree to. Examples of simple unified messages include: "Save Our Homes," "Mobile Justice," "It's Not A Trailer, It's My Home," "Family Home Community."

Organized Actions

United we stand, divided we fall. Organized actions are your means to an end. Every action must be strategic and carry a purpose. An organized action utilizes the power of your organized people, resources, and ideas. Examples of organized actions include: boycotts, lawsuits, lobbying, marches, protests, rallies, walk outs, strikes, surveys, candidate forums, etc. These actions are utilized as tactics to achieve your goal and must be planned out ahead of time.

How To Influence Powerful Institutions

Know where to direct your energy. Understanding where power comes from is not enough to create change in your community. Institutions have the power to influence the decisions that affect you. Power operates on three different levels. You need to understand how to wield power on each of these three levels.

Decision Makers

These are people who have the power to make decisions on issues that affect you. This includes elected officials, park owners, city councils, and people in leadership positions. They are able to make decisions on an immediate concern or issue that your park or community is dealing with. In terms of creating change for your community, their ability to do this is limited.

Agenda Setters

These are the people who are telling the decision makers what's important. They set the agenda. Examples of agenda setters include businesses, special interest groups, non-profit organizations, funders, and park owners' associations. Being able to influence agenda setters or becoming an agenda setter can have a long-term effect of creating change in your community.

People Who Influence "Public Meaning"

"Public Meaning" influences not only what we talk about but more importantly how. People who influence public meaning are largely part of the media. Where does the word "trailer trash" come from? Where do the stereotypes come from? Media has influenced the way the general public perceives people who live in manufactured home parks. Images of alcoholics, domestic abuse, and drugs come to mind. Given the choice between "trailer" and "manufactured home," news media will usually go with trailer, again reinforcing stereotypes and misconceptions.

There is a trickle-effect with powerful institutions. "Public Meaning" and all its negative stereotypes influence the way agenda setters talk about manufactured home parks. For example, if "Public Meaning" is saying that manufactured homes are mostly broken down "trailers" and the people that live in them are "transients," then agenda setters will make the case that manufactured home parks need to close because the homes are old and there's a better use for the land. The decision makers listen to the agenda setters and soon enough a park-lord is selling her or his land for redevelopment, or a city council will look for options on how to close down the park.

On the other hand when you are able to influence public meaning, agenda setters, and decision makers, you will have a greater chance of creating positive change in your community.



A Tool for Winning Issue Campaigns

Issue Campaign	mobilizes people, resources, ideas, and actions to resolve a problem.
Tactic	any activity planned towards achieving a goal.
Strategy	the plan; an intentional series of tactics designed to achieve a goal.

Introduction: What is a community power analysis?

A community power analysis is a tool for planning out your strategy and tactics for a given issue. It helps to identify the key players involved as well as concrete steps you can take to reach your goals. Plotting out a power analysis before any issue campaign takes off ensures that your approach is both strategic and intentional. In this section we have outlined the various planning elements to a community power analysis.

Goals

Goals are what you want to win. Consider the following criteria when choosing a goal:

1. It should be specific. No vague goals.
2. It should be achievable. Make sure it's reasonable.
3. It should be measurable. A result people can notice.

When identifying goals, be sure to do a power analysis for each goal. You can also set short-term, intermediate, and long-term goals. Always consider how these goals will build the power of your organization.

Target

A target is a person who has the power to give you what you want. Targets are people in positions of power that you have some leverage over and whom you can hold accountable. (Examples: elected officials, city council members, and park-lords.) Brainstorm as many targets as possible and then identify whom you need to prioritize. For example, if your target includes a governing body, like a city council, focus in on people who may be potential swing votes.

Allies

Allies are people or groups who support your work on some level. It's important to involve long terms allies that you could work with in the future and short-term supporters that can help you achieve your goal. An example of a long-term ally could be a church that has a lot influence in your community. An example of a short term ally could be your park owner which on a specific issue you may agree but not on other. When brainstorming allies it's important to be creative. Recruit allies that have influence over your targets, but who may not be directly tied to your issue. Make sure to identify concrete, useful things that your allies can do to be active. Examples of things your allies can do are write letters of support, show up at a meeting you are hosting, speak out publicly in your favor, and get media coverage.

Opponents

Opponents are your detractors: people who you know will oppose what you do. It's important to know and understand who your opponents are and what their likely tactics may be. Opponents are not necessarily the same as your targets. Some opponents who are "on the fence" can sometimes be neutralized and your tactics can be helpful in achieving that.

Research Strategy

Research strategies are things that you need to learn, know, or prove. Identify what you need to research, analyze, discuss, etc. The more information and ideas you have, if used strategically, can add to your power. Find out as much as you can about your targets. If they are elected officials, when are they up for election? Before meeting with any targets it's important to have your research strategy figured out.

Tactics

A tactic is a purposeful action step. Your tactics should either directly or indirectly engage your targets. It's important to use a variety of tactics that are creative and surprise your targets and opponents. Your tactics can be both offensive and defensive (proactive and reactive). In considering tactics, it's important to utilize tactics that involve a lot of people, that are visible, and that can escalate your issue campaign so that you are constantly building momentum. An example of an indirect tactic is to utilize the media. Get an article published about your issue. Examples of direct tactics include: rallies, marches, accountability meetings, and sit-ins. It's important to note that a series of tactics is necessary to reach your goals. One tactic is simply one step on a staircase; each tactic brings you closer to the top.

Why are you involved?

Exercise 1: Think of when you first became involved in manufactured home park issues. What was it that got you involved? This is important, because many others may be interested in becoming involved for the same reason. Have everyone in your group give a brief summary of how they got involved. Record all the reasons people chose to become involved.

How to get other people involved

Exercise 2: In a small group, think of events or actions in which you have seen success in getting people involved. Examples can come from either work with a resident association or another activity (church group, school event, community gathering, activist experience). In round robin style, ask everyone to give at least one example.

Now go around again and give an example of a time when you were unsuccessful in getting people involved in an event or action. Compare and contrast the two lists. How were these events different from each other? What tactics did you use to get people involved for the successful events? How is this different from what you did with the unsuccessful events?

Lessons

After doing these exercises you will see that people almost are a lot more likely to get involved in an issue that they have a direct interest in. For a lot people to get involved the event has to be of importance to the community or it has to be fun. The event also has to offer a solution to address the situation. People aren't likely to participate if there is no hope. Participation of the community must also be necessary for the resolution of the problems.

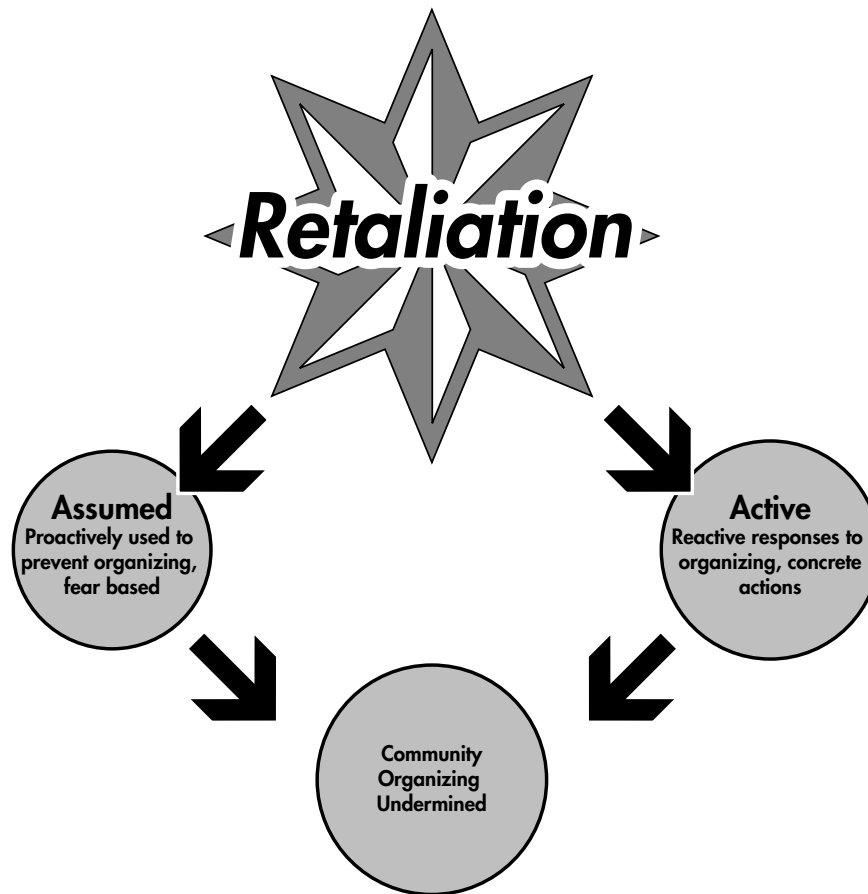
Examples of tactics organizations use to get people involved:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---|--|
| ▪ Park wide meetings | ▪ Flyering | ▪ Recruiting board or committee members |
| ▪ Door knocking | ▪ One-on-ones | ▪ Surveys |
| ▪ Petition drives | ▪ Letter writing campaigns | ▪ Accountability session (with owner, politicians) |
| ▪ Rallies or protests | ▪ Community events (pot lucks, block parties) | |
| ▪ Membership drives | | |
| ▪ Newsletters | | |
| ▪ Voter registration | | |

What is Retaliation?

Retaliation is a strategy used by powerful institutions to prevent homeowners from organizing and/or asserting their rights. It is a two-pronged strategy involving both active and assumed retaliation. "Active retaliation" is carried out in the form of specific actions that punish leaders and their base for their efforts to pursue change.

An effective and far more insidious form of retaliation is "assumed retaliation," meaning that people automatically assume that organizing or asserting ones rights will lead to retaliation, even in the absence of specific past examples. Assumed retaliation operates so that powerful institutions rarely have to use active retaliation. The very existence of assumed retaliation prevents people from organizing and standing up for their rights due to a perceived sense of powerlessness and internalized fears.



Retaliation is Real

There are countless examples of active retaliation. The case of Tammy Hoth, a homeowner and leader from Montana, shined a national spotlight on the issue of retaliation. She was arrested and jailed for exercising her free speech rights in a manufactured home community by flyer-ing and attending resident association meetings. Tammy Hoth was threatened with 6 months in jail for her actions, but the charges were later dropped following a national campaign for her freedom.

Strategies for Dealing with Retaliation

In Minnesota, APAC brought a case to the state Supreme Court after a park lord (Uniprop) refused to allow organizers into the community to educate residents about their rights. The Supreme Court upheld APAC's right to freedom of expression. In a manufactured home community called Jackson Heights, immigration police raided the community after residents rallied against a road project that would demolish their homes. The leader of the residents association and many of its members were deported.

Park lords have a variety of tools at their disposal to carry out other forms of retaliation, such as eviction, rent increases, denial of services, discriminatory enforcement of park rules, harassment, and damage to reputation.

Retaliation is an Excuse for People not to get Involved

The assumption that getting involved will lead to retaliation prevents many people from getting involved. Yet for every example of real retaliation there are many, many more examples where residents organize and retaliation is either not used or ineffective. We need to be sympathetic towards people who fear retaliation out of a feeling of powerlessness or vulnerability, but we also want to challenge their assumptions and embolden them to become leaders rather than victims. If you are involved in organizing your community for Mobile Justice, then you are taking a risk. You need to let people know that if they want to see change, then they have to assume some of the risk as well.

Why Does Retaliation Exist?

Retaliation is a tool that park lords, government agencies, and others use to maintain control and to retain power. Many see retaliation as an act of power, but it really isn't. Retaliation would not be necessary if community organizing had no potential for success. Retaliation happens because institutional power fears this success. Therefore retaliation is not a demonstration of power, but rather an act of fear and powerlessness. They are scared of you!

Although retaliation comes from a place of powerlessness, it is also a strategy that has proven to be successful. Retaliation works. That is why it is so important that we understand how to confront it.

How to Overcome Retaliation

Find out what Protections Exist in Your State.

Many states already have laws that make retaliation illegal. For example Minnesota state law says:

“A park owner may not increase rent, decrease services, alter an existing rental agreement or seek to recover possession or threaten such action in whole or in part as a penalty for a resident’s: (a) good faith complaint to the park owner or to a government agency or official; (b) good faith attempt to exercise rights or remedies pursuant to state or federal law; or (c) joining and participating in the activities of a resident association as defined under section ”

When looking at the laws in your state, pay close attention to how those laws are enforced and what loopholes (if any) may exist.

Educate Residents About Their Rights

Once you have done the analysis, educate your base about these rights and your commitment to ensure they are protected. This will often decrease a lot of people's fear about retaliation.

If No Protections Exist, Change the Law!

Freedom is supposed to be one of the core values of this country. There is no reason why people should be denied basic human rights due to their choice of housing. Protections for retaliation are essential because, without them any effort to organize bears the risk of catastrophic consequences.

Conduct a Risk Assessment for Your Organizing Campaign

People worry a lot about the risks of becoming involved, but rarely think of the risks of not becoming involved. In a group setting, ask people to come up with a list of the risks of getting involved (after educating them about the law!). Then ask them to come up with a list of what will happen if no ones gets involved (park closings, rent increases, unfair rules, bad laws, etc). If you are choosing issues that people care about, the risks of doing nothing are often greater than the risks of doing something.

<i>Risks of Getting Involved</i>	<i>Risks of Doing Nothing</i>
Losing your home	Losing your home
Rent Increases	Rent Increases
Damage to reputation, harassment	Damage to reputation, harassment
Arrest and/or deportation	Accept victim role, powerlessness
Loss of anonymity	Loss of self-respect, dignity
Public disapproval	Public ignorance
Park lords become more hostile	Park lords think they can get away with anything
Possibility of failure	Setting precedent of weakness

Strength in numbers

By acting as a group, it is more difficult for institutions to retaliate against you. The old saying, "united we stand, divided we fall," holds true when it comes to retaliation. The stronger the base, the broader the network of support will be in response to any real retaliation.

Surround yourself with allies

You are less likely to face retaliation if you surround yourself with powerful allies (organizations, elected officials, faith community leaders). Institutions will retaliate against people they perceive to be weak, but if they have powerful people on their side it serves as a buffer. Have your allies send a message "you mess with them, you mess with me!"

Be Public

Retaliators are like cockroaches; they scatter and run when you turn on the lights. The more outspoken and public you are in your work, the less isolated you are and the more people will sympathize with your cause. It also creates an opportunity to hold institutions accountable on a higher level for retaliation, compared with fighting it out in the darkness.

Act Professionally

Don't provide park lords with easy excuses to retaliate against you by not paying rent or disobeying reasonable park rules. Make sure that you are credible in what you do and say, thus maintaining the moral high ground. People sympathize with community leaders, but not with public nuisances. Whenever possible, try to appeal to your target's self-interest rather than demonizing them right off the bat. Angering a target should be a deliberate and strategic decision, not an accident. Remember there is nothing wrong with making someone angry as long as it is strategic. But recognize that with that anger comes a heightened risk of retaliation.

Have a Plan

Don't wait until you or someone else is attacked to come up with a plan. Rather than scrambling to do damage control, you want to be in a strong position to respond immediately and effectively if your opponents use retaliation aggressively.

Respond to Acts of Retaliation Aggressively

Acts of retaliation have the potential to obliterate your campaign. People will look to your organization to see what your response will be, as they weigh their decision to stay involved. This is not a time to put your tail between your legs and hope everything will blow over. Now is the time to be vocal and aggressive like never before. Your base will be looking to see if your commitment to stand up to them is real, and your opponents are already looking at whom to target next. Put a stop to retaliation now!

"If you've come to help me, you're wasting your time. But if you've come because your liberation is bound to mine, then let us work together" Australian Aboriginal Leader

There are many ways to get park residents involved in an issue campaign. Many times, park owners use fear mongering, threats and misinformation to get residents on their side. Campaign contributions and kickbacks have been effective in buying votes from politicians to block residents' rights. Some people give handouts and charity to feel good about themselves without addressing the real problem. None of these are good approaches for us to use to push for change.

We need to be consistent with our values. We need to talk to appeal to a mutual and enlightened sense of self-interest as a means to get them involved. The concept of self-interest, like the concept of power, is necessary to understand in order to create change. We need to know our own personal motivations, what motivates our base (constituency), and what motivates our adversaries. It is only then that a strategic conversation to move forward can begin.

When many people hear the term "self-interest" they immediately think of selfishness. This is incorrect. Self-interest is a relational concept. Its very definition implies a self and an other. The word "self" we understand. The word "interest" comes from two Latin words "inter" and "esse." These words mean: "to be among". Self-interest therefore means "self among others," or one's interest in the context of a community. A person's self-interest is influenced by their values, their vision and their relationships.

Self-interest is very different than either selfishness or selflessness. The chart below describes the difference.

<i>Selfishness</i>	<i>Selflessness</i>	<i>Self- Interest</i>
Denies others	Denies self	Self in relation to others
Defined by self	Defined by self	Defined by relationships
Creates victims	Creates victims	Builds leadership
"me, me, me"	"you, you, you"	We!

The Problem with Selfishness

It's obvious why we don't want to be in relationships with selfish people. Selfish people show no consideration for others and will do most anything to further their own individual needs. Many of the injustices that we organize around are the result of selfish actions (rent increases, selling land for redevelopment, etc.).

Examples of Selfishness:

- Greed
- Stealing
- Corruption
- Self-centeredness
- A lack of regard for others
- Selling people out for personal gain

Selfish people are ineffective at getting people involved, because people will not spend all their time and energy to benefit just one person. Selfish people aren't always up front about their intentions (see selflessness) but in the end their true motives are always found out. People feel betrayed and choose no longer to be involved.

The Problem with Selflessness

Saying that we shouldn't be selfless may sound strange, because many of us are taught that this is exactly how we should be. The problem with selfless people is that they have unclear motivations at best and often times tend towards corruption. Think about people you know who have claimed to be selfless. Politicians are a good example. Most politicians claim to be selfless, that is why they often refer to themselves as "public servants." The reality is that they all have an agenda whether they communicate it or not.

Selfless people wrap themselves up with good intentions, but the impact of their actions can be harmful. Victims often look to selfless people for help. The ironic thing is that selfless people are often victims themselves. Rather than empowering people to help themselves, selfless people solve problems in a way that perpetuates victim status. When a selfless person has no vested interest in an issue they will likely run at the first sign of trouble.

Examples of Selflessness:

- False modesty
- "Do gooders"
- Passive aggressiveness
- Claiming only to think of others
- People with a "Martyr Complex"
- Denying personal benefits of ones involvement
- People who "help" other people

Selfless people are ineffective at getting people involved, because people either don't trust them or look to them as saviors who will do all the work for them. If someone invites you to a meeting to tell you about all the good things they are going to do in your community, why should you go? Just do nothing and wait for them to deliver on their promises. Worst-case scenario, things stay the same.

The Key is Self-Interest

Self-interest is the best way to relate to someone else because it respects both sides of the relationship. By discovering someone's self-interest you are able to identify ways of collaborating with them towards a goal in which you will mutually benefit. It is by discovering shared self-interest that a group of people can begin to articulate a set of shared values and build power to affect change.

Appealing to self-interest is an effective way of getting people involved, because people will usually step forward to fight for something when it benefits them. Self-interest allows for people to trust each other moving forward if people are up front and open about what they expect to get out of their involvement.

A one-on-one is a face-to-face conversation between you and another person to determine their self-interest. The conversation should motivate the person to talk about important aspects of their lives. If you know where someone's passions lie, you will better be able to understand their motivations.

In a one-on-one we want to get to know the other person: their history, their family, their ambitions, what inspires them, and what makes them angry. It is important that a one-on-one be intentional. It is a strategy to recruit and develop new leaders and allies.

In conducting a grass roots organizing campaign, regular sit downs or "one-on-ones" with your leaders are an effective tool to move the campaign forward and keep people involved. The meeting should last no longer than an hour, and the other person should do most of the talking.

What to do in a One-on-One

- Recruit new leaders and allies
- Determine self-interest
- Build trust
- Form a relationship
- Educate
- Create clarity
- Get information
- Proposition, get commitments
- Agitate, push leaders to the next level
- Strategize and discuss next steps
- Hold people accountable and be accountable

Tactics

- Ask open ended questions
- Ask follow up questions
- Take risks
- Listen!
- Watch the time, stay on task

Who do we have One-on-Ones With?

- Park leaders
- Community leaders
- Leaders of faith communities
- Members
- Potential allies

Evaluating One-on-Ones

In order to get the most out of a one-on-one, evaluation and reflection is necessary. A good starting point is to identify a skill, a feeling, and an experience that this person has.

Public speaking, note taking, fund raising, and petitioning, are just a few examples of skills that people may have that can aid the work that you are doing. Identifying these skills creates a potential means for them to become involved. People are more likely to participate if there is an opportunity to do something they are already good at.

Anger, fear, burnout, hope, excitement, and apathy are all examples of feelings. We need to understand how people are feeling to successfully motivate them. Your proposition or "pitch" to get someone involved will differ if they are feeling apathetic or angry or hopeful.

People's feelings are usually based on their experience. By experience we don't mean qualifications, but rather one's personal history. Has this person been involved in something like this before? How have they been treated in the past? How are they being treated now? What brought them to this community? How do they feel others perceive them? How do they perceive themselves in relation to others (park owners, public officials, developers)?

Questions for Reflection

- What does this person care most about? Why?
- What motivates them?
- What do they get excited talking about?
- What talents and skills does this person have?
- What relationships does this person have and value? Why?
- What values does this person have?
- What issues is this person concerned about?
- What ideas do they have?
- What is their story?
- Questions for Self-Reflection
- Did I establish a relationship?
- Did I uncover their self-interest?
- How courageous was I? What risks did I take?
- Did I step out of my comfort zone?
- What did I do well?
- What should I have done better?

Unless you intend to do everything it takes to achieve Mobile Justice by yourself (impossible!), you will need to delegate responsibilities. Organizing requires a lot of work (flyering, door knocking, phone calls, letter writing, meetings, one-on-ones). Getting people in your community to commit to doing things not only makes life easier for you, it is also a first step in leadership development.

Some leaders tend to take charge of everything themselves, often for “selfless” reasons, such as not wanting to have to bother people with doing things or worrying that people are too busy. This is counter-productive. What happens if they move out of the park or get hit by a bus? Everything they have done goes with them. Instead of a powerful community losing one of its leaders, you end up in a community with a power vacuum.

In order to get people involved in taking on this work, we need to know how to ask them to be involved: a proposition. Here are some things to consider when making the pitch:

Be Strategic

Before asking anyone to do anything, make sure you have a plan of action for the work that you are doing. A community power analysis is a great tool for doing this. Don’t just ask people to do things at random. Figure out what needs to be done, and who is the best person to do it.

Be Personal

Sometimes it’s not enough to just say at the end of an all park meeting, “we need someone to do X, Y, and Z.” You need to ask specific people to do specific things and follow up with them one-on-one.

Align Your Self-Interest With Theirs

We aren’t guilting people or begging them to become involved. We are offering them a proposition based on mutual self-interest. There should always be a benefit to their involvement. People will likely act on their own self-interest, and are unlikely to act on something that is not in their self-interest.

Be Specific

Don’t be too open-ended in what you are asking someone to do. Vague and open-ended commitments tend to scare people off. You are more likely to get a positive response if you have a specific time-line with clearly drawn out duties.

Be Realistic

Be respectful of people’s time and comfort level with what you are asking of them. That doesn’t mean that you should accept every excuse they give you. You can push back if they acknowledge something is in their self-interest, but refuse to do anything about it.

Acknowledge Their Level of Experience

Different tasks require different levels of experience. You probably don’t want to ask someone with a lot of experience, such as an ally at the state legislature or city council, to help you flier your park. That is not the best use of their time. You also don’t want to ask someone with little experience, such as someone who just moved into the park or is new to the issue, to do an interview with the media for example.

Leadership



What is a Leader?

Most people tend to associate leaders with people who are in the public eye. These tend to be people like our president, mayor, pastor, or CEO. The common thread is that these leaders have influence and some decision-making authority. Another common perception is that leaders are people who are charismatic and dominant. Often times they embody qualities that we feel we don't personally possess.

Our misconception of what a leader is can lead to the belief that we can never be leaders. Nothing could be further from the truth. When organizing in manufactured home parks it's important to note that leaders are not born, they are developed. Being charismatic has nothing to do with being a leader. Being a leader means understanding the power that you have as it relates to the power of your community.

Three Elements of a Leader

Leaders Have a Vision.

Our community is not perfect; there are always things that can change. Our values influence our vision for our community. Effective leaders understand their vision as it is tied to their values and the values of everyone else in their community.

For example, in 2007, residents of manufactured home parks in Minnesota were organizing to pass a new state law that protected against the closing of parks. Leaders across the state got involved in the process, called and met with their legislators, and were able to successfully gather enough support to pass our new state law. Leaders in Minnesota shared the same values of "Family, Home, and Community." The new state law was their common vision of how to live out their values.

Leaders Have a Base.

In the section on "Power" we learn about where power comes from [Organized People, Organized Money, Organized Resources, and Organized Ideas]. Leaders draw their power from their community (or base); they support the work of their leaders. Leaders in turn have the responsibility of keeping their base engaged, and will consistently have events or actions that their base can participate in. Leaders are ineffective and have little power in a community without a strong base.

Leaders Have a Vehicle.

Unfortunately, this doesn't mean that you get a free car if you become a leader. Figuratively speaking, a vehicle is a means by which to live out your vision and values. A vehicle is also an effective way to keep your base organized. What do you do with a group of leaders and a base? For many residents of manufactured home parks, their vehicle has become a homeowners association.

A vehicle is simply a formal structure, which leaders and a base can participate in to create the changes they want to see in their community.

Stages of Leadership Development

Leadership development has to be an intentional component of any organization, whether it is a homeowners association in a particular manufactured home park or a statewide tenants' union. The four stages of leadership development take leaders through a journey of self-discovery. At every stage, responsibilities increase and change. There is no set period of time for development, as this varies from person to person.

New Leaders: Getting Started

A leader in this stage understands the importance of getting people involved. They generate a lot of good questions. They also attend meetings and encourage other people in their community to attend as well. A common quality of a new leader is that they're angry, they understand what's going on in their community, and they are able to see the unfairness and inequality. In meetings, these leaders participate, give their opinions, and figure out the next steps for their organization.

Emerging Leaders: More Responsibility and a Base

The emerging stage engages the leader with new responsibilities. The main responsibility in this stage is recruitment of new members. This is done through one-to-one personal visits in which the leader talks with individual people about their shared vision for the community.

A leader in this stage asks good questions but also actively seeks out the answers to their questions through research. The leader begins to take a more active role in the campaign by being a spokesperson at specific activities (e.g. rally, meeting) and by seeking out responsibilities at meetings. They also understand the importance of the media and how to get them involved. In the development process they begin to learn about local and state governments, and they become experts on their specific issue.

Their world view changes from their specific neighborhood to a better understanding of the bigger picture. Lastly, they understand how institutional power works.

Experienced Leaders: Teaching Others

An experienced leader teaches others around them and intentionally develops new leaders. They coordinate the outreach to the base and continue to do one-to-one personal visits. Experienced leaders recruit allies to support their campaign. They are also the main representatives for the organization in coalitions and partnerships.

They are comfortable conducting media interviews alone. They attend and participate in strategy sessions. They actively take a role in prepping new leaders in taking a more active role in the organization. They participate in negotiations and run meeting evaluations. An experienced leader is able to connect their issue with much broader issues; for example, how their manufactured home park is tied to the broader issue of affordable housing.

Lastly, an experienced leader chairs meetings and participates on boards of various organizations, such as APAC.

Super Experienced Leaders

At this highest level of leadership development, the leader takes a step back from the day-to-day activities of the organization and acts as an overseer. The crucial component of this leadership stage is encouraging new leaders to take a more active role in the organization. A super experienced leader will chair coalitions and provide feedback to emerging leaders.

Competing Mind sets in Addressing Social Problems

Victims	Functionaries	Leaders
Complain a lot but unwilling to do anything	Prepared to help, but not willing to take initiative	Take initiative and inspire others to get involved
React to a situation only when it throws them into crisis	Ability to be proactive but tend to get bogged down in bureaucratic "busy work"	Proactive in demanding solutions to community issues
Have needs	Have «capacity»	Have power
Motivated by fear	Unclear motivations	Motivated by self-interest, values, and vision
Don't believe that change is possible	willing to accept limited changes but only as it relates to problems	Believe in deep and lasting changes that alter relations of power
Take directions from anyone willing to help them (so-called experts)	Take directions from protocols and other functionaries, do not consultation with the community	Engage the whole community to create direction
Blame everyone for their problems including themselves	Tend to ignore root causes of the problem and instead look only at fixing its symptoms	Strategize and conduct power analysis to find out who can deliver desired changes
Short term involvement, only until their fear goes away	Easily frustrated or burnt out because they can't solve everyone's problems	Develop long term vision for change that requires delegating responsibility and cultivating new leaders

These are not static categories that people are stuck in. We all ultimately choose the kind of people we want to be. Being a victim, functionary, or a leader has very little to do with one's status, profession, age, etc. If we are serious about pursuing social change, we need to make the decision to be a leader, and work to turn other victims and functionaries into leaders as well.

When you were growing up, were you ever forced to sit at the 'kids table' even though you were way too old to sit there? You would sit and eat your dinner, while your companions were throwing food at each other and crying because they couldn't play with their toys. At the other table, the table for grown ups, people were having conversations about your family, and about you.

"This kid is really smart, but they don't have a sense of responsibility," the adults would say. "We don't give them an allowance, because they'd just spend it on a car and clothes. We think we should send them to boarding school so they can have a better education. They'll have to earn their fair share though, this summer we're making them work at the car wash."

Putting You in Your Place

It's amazing how many decisions are made for you when you aren't at the table. Before you know it, you're working for a car wash all summer to pay for boarding school, but you don't want to go to boarding school. You don't want to buy a car either; your dream is to play the saxophone! They are right about one thing though. You are smart.

So why aren't you at the table? This scenario is a metaphor for society today. Decisions are being made about your life and your future, and you aren't at the table. How often are manufactured home park residents present when decisions are being made? Rarely.

There are two reasons you aren't asked to sit at the table

- People are doing bad things to you, and they don't want you to know about it
- People are trying to do "good things," and they think they know what's best for you

Either way, people are making decisions for you. They aren't giving you a choice. You won't be receiving an invitation. In Arden Hills, MN, homeowners became aware of a plan to build a freeway through their park, which would destroy at least 50 homes. They went to city hall to investigate why they had not been consulted about these plans and how they would be able to participate in changing the plan. The city responded: "You can watch the city council meetings on TV."

People are trying to put you in your place, and that place is not at the table.

Who is at the Table?

People at the table participate in "public life." They are well connected. They are big shots. They have titles. They are leaders. Specifically, they are politicians, business people, lobbyists, celebrities, the media, functionaries, and so-called "experts."

What Happens When You Aren't at the Table

Everyday we see the consequences of policies that were formed without residents at the table. What do you think your lot rent would be today if residents were invited to your park-lord's staff meetings to discuss rent increases? How many parks would still be open if residents were present for back door meetings between developers and city planners? How much park prejudiced press coverage would there be if residents were in the newsrooms when reporters were told what stories to cover?

If you have chosen to become a leader, and you care about stopping rent increases, park closings and media bias against your community, the solution lies in getting involved in public life.

The Assault on Your Public Life

We have been taught that power is bad. We have also been taught that you are either born a leader or a follower. If you are not charismatic, a genius or big shot then you cannot be a leader. This is all designed to deny you a public life. Park prejudice is a system of biases that strips people of their public life. Time after time, when homeowners step into the public area, their adversaries will take cheap shots and make personal attacks about them. "This person has a gambling problem. They never pay rent. Their home is a mess." It's amazing how often the other side will play to these stereotypes in front of government bodies to destroy your credibility. Usually the statements are untrue. But even if they were true, how is that anyone's business? Public officials and decision makers generally consider attacking someone's private life off limits in the context of political discussions. Why don't they apply you the same respect? Park prejudice is an assault on your public life.

Building a Public Life

By making a decision to become a leader, you have decided to have a role in public life. But don't expect the establishment to welcome you with open arms. You will have to build your public life by the same means they did, but for very different ends. You will have to form intentional relationships with powerful people. You will have to present your credentials, and take a stand for what you believe in. There will be times when you need to compromise, and times to dig in and fight. There are times when you will need to hold people accountable and there are times when people will hold you accountable. You will make friends and enemies. Sometimes friends will become enemies and enemies will become friends.

Differences Between Public and Private Relationships

Relationships you have with your closest friends and family are examples of private relationships. Relationships with public officials, allies, and others in the political area are public relationships. It is important to understand some of the distinctions between the two.

<i>Private Relationships</i>	<i>Public Relationships</i>
Seek love	Seek respect
Conflict is avoided	Conflict is necessary
Unconditional	Conditional
Similarity, like mindedness	Diversity, multiple perspectives
You have to be nice	You have to be civil
Selfless	Self-interest
People you would go on vacation with	People you act professionally around

Being Nice

Minnesota, more than any other state in the country, prides it's self in being "nice." There is nothing wrong with being nice, but being nice should never come at your own expense. Sometimes, leaders are thrown off guard by decision makers when they meet face to face. They expect to encounter a vicious monster foaming at the mouth and threatening them. Instead they meet and find that they really are actually quite "nice." Suddenly leaders begin to second-guess themselves and their tactics. The truth is these people aren't being nice. They are being civil. They are responsible for demolishing people's homes, raising their rents to pad their own pockets, and keeping you from having a say. None of these things are nice. So in your public life, be civil. Don't be mean for the sake of being mean, but do stand up for yourself and your community and stick to your demands. Would you voluntarily tie one arm behind your back in a boxing match? No! So don't do that in your public life.

Knowing When to Step Up and When to Step Back

In the community-organizing chapter we looked at power from two points of view: power as it is and power as it can be. We also talked about good and bad qualities of leaders. To be effective as a leader you need power, but there is a right way and a wrong to use it.

What is Power Building?

Power building means using your leadership to build the power of your organization and advancing the cause of Mobile Justice. Power building requires working with others in the community to marshal all the clout and resources you can to address common concerns in the community. Power building is relational. It requires building relationships with your base, your allies, agenda setters, and decision makers.

Good leaders understand community organizing and the importance of developing leaders in the community to build on the work they are doing. Power building doesn't mean creating power in the theoretical sense, but actually exercising it by demonstrating to people your ability to create change. Power is a means to an end, not an end in and of itself.

What is Power Tripping?

Power tripping happens when a leader tries to individually consolidate as much power as they can, often at the expense of others. Power trippers don't see it as necessary to develop a common vision or goals, but rather spend all their energy trying to convince others that their way is best.

Frequently power trippers exhibit a lot of emotion and extreme unreasonableness. Many power trippers will play the "selfless card" to avoid criticism. Power trippers are also very fearful of allowing others to the table, because they feel it will threaten their power.

The sad reality is that their power is an illusion. For that reason, power trippers often perceive themselves as having more power than they actually do. What little power they do have is abused, which turning people off to the organization and undermines the real power they could have. Remember, our power comes from organized people, organized ideas, organized resources, and organized actions. All of these things require power building.

Interventions

Here are some ideas for interventions to break the power tripping cycle. Personal interventions are generally best to try first. They involve meeting one-on-one or in a small group with the power tripper. The main goal here is to convince the leader of the need for change. If this fails you should consider structural interventions, which require working within the organization itself to create changes.

Personal Interventions

Analyze the Problem

What is the problem you're having? Does the leader fail to understand the consequences of their actions? Or do they know the consequences and yet they power trip anyways? How will this person respond to criticism? What are the benefits and risks of intervening?

Appeal to Self-Interest

Ask yourself what is in this leader's self-interest. Why are they a leader? What do they value? What issues or complaints do they have with their involvement? Rather than looking at power building as a threat to their authority, they should see the benefits (less work to do on their own, more likelihood of success, and more genuine power).

Power Tripping versus Power Building

Choose the Best Messenger

Who does this person listen to? What relationships does this person value? Who do they respect? Who will they not respond well to? Who will they feel threatened by?

Structural Interventions

Control of the Agenda

The one who sets the agenda carries a tremendous amount power. Make sure that multiple voices are heard in setting the agenda, and that the agenda allows for community comments, discussion, and decision-making.

Bylaws

If your association has bylaws, what do they say? Are there things that are in the bylaws that concentrate power in the hands of a few? If so, how can you change them? Are there good things in the bylaws that aren't being followed? If so, how are they enforced?

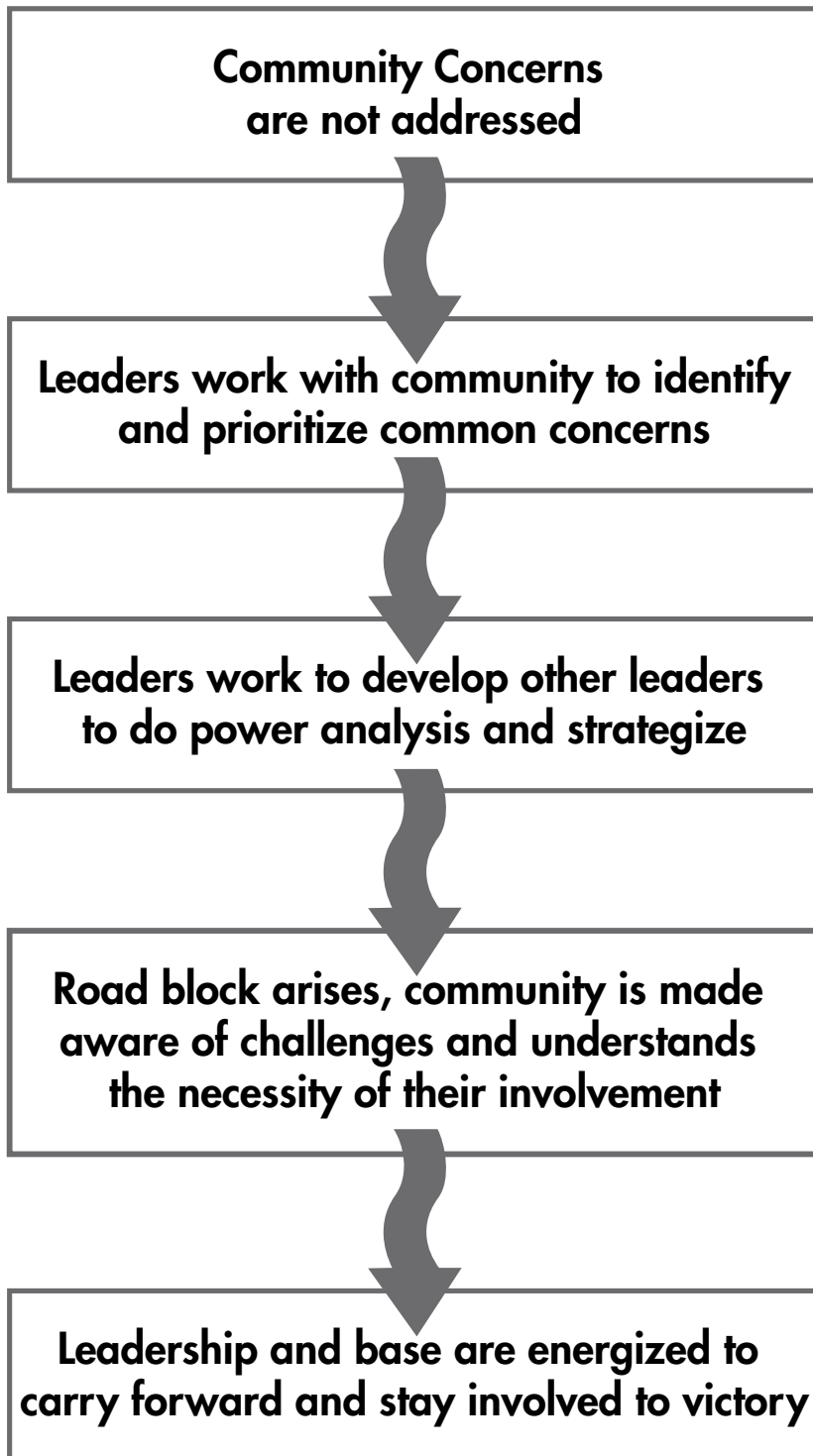
Democratic Elections

Leaders should be directly elected by your base to ensure that they are truly representative of the community. Leaders need to be accountable. If they are not serving the best interest of the organization, people have the right to vote for new leaders to represent them.

Adopt Power Building Model

The next page lays out an alternative model to the power tripping cycle. Use this as a tool to promote democratic decision-making and to keep people involved in the work of the organization.

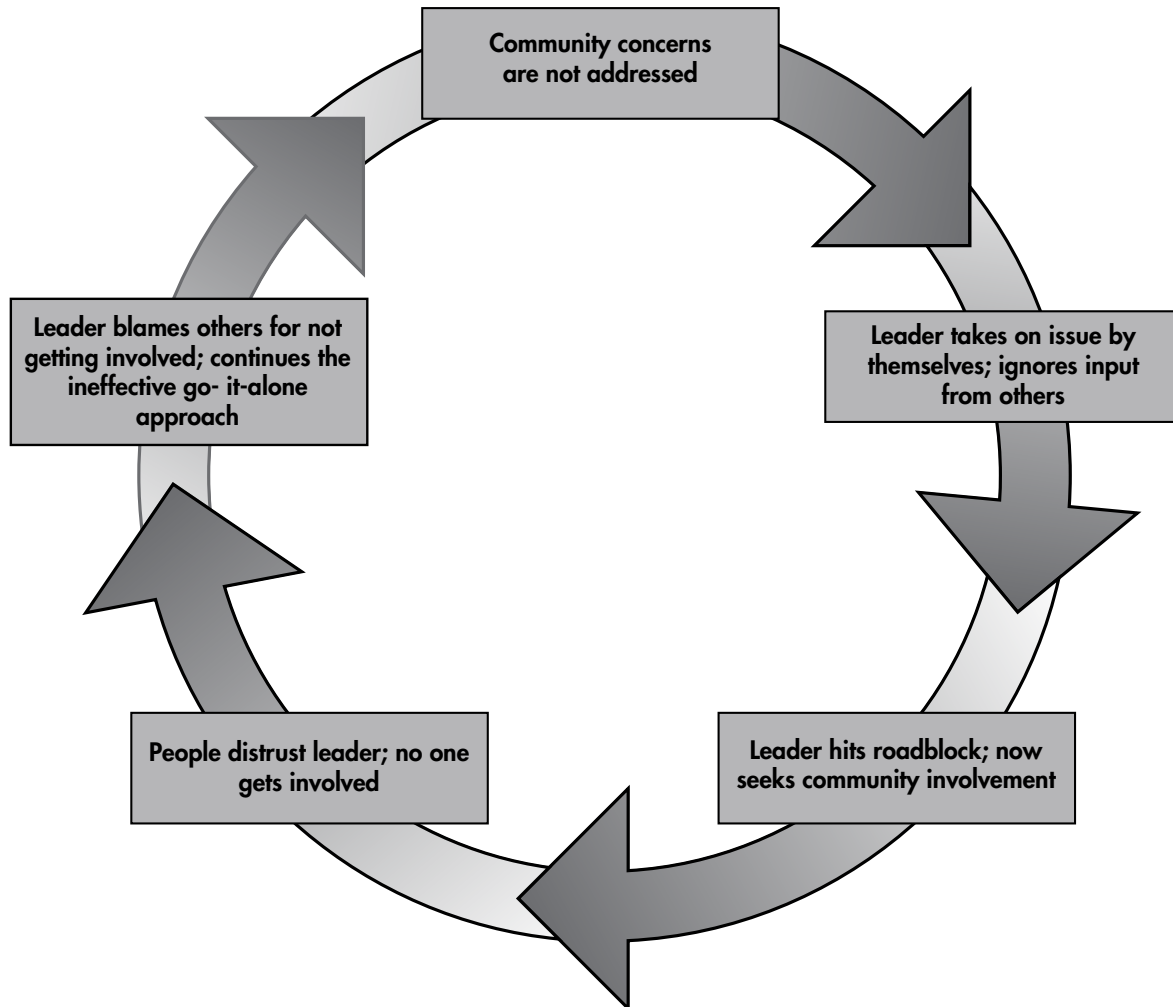
Power Building Model



Power Tripping versus Power Building

Unfortunately, this is a cycle that plays itself out all too often within organizations. Sometimes it is an intentional abuse of power, but many times it is unintentional. Some leaders don't recognize that their actions and behavior are undermining their community's ability to build their power to address community issues. Power tripping needs to be addressed whether intentional or not.

Power Tripping Cycle



The organizing section of the manual explores some strategies to get people involved as leaders for change in your community. We also talked about self-interest as a means of building honest relationships with potential leaders. Understanding the different stages of leadership development charts a course for how a leader can grow.

The reasons people choose to become leaders are different than the reasons people choose to stay leaders. A serious challenge faced by any organization is retaining leadership and getting people to work beyond an immediate crisis once it is resolved.

Retaining powerful leaders is critical to the success of your organization. When a leader leaves the organization you lose a lot. You lose the knowledge and experience that person gained while with the organization. You lose the relationships that person built with decision makers and allies. You lose the time and energy that went into training and developing that leader. Sometimes you even lose some of your base. The point here is that whatever time you put into retaining leaders pales in comparison to the amount of work you will have to do to make up for lost leaders.

Why People Become Leaders

People usually become leaders in response to an immediate crisis that impacts them directly. They are angry at the sense of injustice they see, and through their leadership they aim to right a wrong. Some folks become leaders in the fight for Mobile Justice after a history of involvement in other issues. Some people are just born angry and naturally like standing up to bullies. Others are looking for something useful to do with their time.

Why People End Their Leadership

There are numerous reasons people end their leadership. The most obvious one is that the crisis that originally got them involved has ended. Either they won and no longer feel the need to stay involved, or they lost and now feel bitter and hopeless. This isn't the only reason people end their leadership. Here are some others:

- Change in responsibilities
- Lack of time
- Fear of retaliation, or failure
- Personality conflicts within organization
- Leader feels that their work goes unappreciated or unrecognized
- Skills are misused, people aren't doing what they want to be doing
- Leader feels that they aren't being heard
- Burn out
- Feeling of doing the same things over and over again
- Frustration, cynicism, and a sense that nothing is changing

Why Leaders Stay Involved

Leaders are more likely to stay involved if they believe in a long term vision or set of goals beyond an immediate crisis. That way leaders realize that there is always more to be done and that their continued leadership has relevance. They also are more likely to stay involved when:

There are opportunities to become involved on a variety of levels (community, municipal, state, regional, national, galactic, etc.)

They connect manufactured home issues to a broader set of issues they care about (senior citizens rights, immigrant rights, affordable housing, racial and economic justice)

- They see that they are empowering others, they are agents of change
- They realize the problem isn't going to go away unless they do something
- There is a feeling of camaraderie and support from fellow leaders and allies
- Victories inspire them to hope for more change
- They feel useful and appreciated
- They feel challenged
- They see their leadership as part of their legacy

So, How do you Keep Leaders Involved?

1. Develop a long term vision. When working on a specific issue, set long term goals to show how the campaign relates to this vision.
2. Keep people fired up and angry. As long as injustice persists so should our outrage.
3. Celebrate victories. It really is okay to have fun.
4. Delegate. Spread out the work to avoid burnout
5. Use a leader's skills wisely. Don't make them do things they hate.
6. Show appreciation. Be generous with your compliments.
7. Build a strong support network. No one likes to feel that they are alone.

Resident Associations



Residents of manufactured home parks have a lot of power. Manufactured Homeowners can:

- Take legal action
- Reveal the truth about park lords
- Withhold rent via legal processes (rent escrow, tenant remedies actions, etc)
- Vote
- Negotiate with the park-lord
- Demand that the police department respond to issues in the park
- Propose legislation on the local or state level to protect homeowners

Almost everyone has the power to do any of these things, but often times people choose not to take action. Why?

Round Robin Exercise: In a group setting, go around to each person and ask him or her to share one common reason people give for not acting on the power they have. Some reasons may be: fear of retaliation, too expensive, too time consuming, or they don't know their rights.

Group Activity: Break up into groups of 2-3 people. In each group, choose one of the ways homeowners can act on their power (listed above) and answer the follow questions:

1. What would it be like to do this action on your own? What would likely happen?
2. What would it be like to do the action in an organized group? What would happen?

De-brief: Make a list of ways a resident association would make you more powerful than going it alone.

With a resident association neighbors can share the risks and benefits of acting on their power. Resident associations also create more power. Here are some examples of how:

- Resident association leaders gain credibility (e.g. when they present themselves as the "President of the resident association" for example)
- Resident associations can build a reputation as a powerful group of people. The benefits of being known as "a group to be reckoned with" often stay even when new leaders take the reigns.
- Resident associations can organize resources, including funds, allies, and property to promote the goals of the association.

Resident associations promote new ideas about who lives in manufactured home parks. The current perceptions and stereotypes of park residents work to take away homeowners' power. Ending these stereotypes and creating a new public meaning of parks will, in the long-term, make park residents more powerful.

Resident Associations are Most Powerful When:

- There is a large base of active members who believe in the mission
- There is frequent communication between leaders and members
- Residents know their rights
- Leaders are strategic and fair in negotiations
- Leaders get support from others in the broader community
- Leaders and members consistently follow through with what they commit to do
- New leaders are continually developed to keep the association going

Residents of any manufactured home park can join together with their neighbors to form a resident association (also known as a homeowner association or HOA). The concept is simple: there is great strength in numbers. Resident associations give structure and legitimacy to any group of neighbors who want to organize to protect and improve their community.

What is a Resident Association?

A resident association is a formal group of neighbors who come together and form an organization to act on their shared values and vision for the community. Three things are needed to make change in any community: a vision, a base of people who believe in that vision, and a vehicle to organize the base. Resident associations are a vehicle manufactured homeowners can use to organize a base and promote their vision.

Characteristics of Resident Associations:

- ***Participatory:*** everyone in the community is encouraged to get involved
- ***Represents a majority:*** at least 51% of the households in the community are members of the association
- ***Democratic:*** every member has a vote and a voice in decision making
- ***Community-Led:*** the leaders of the association are from the community and elected by the members
- ***Mission Driven:*** the association has a written mission statement that describes its purpose
- ***Structured:*** there is a formal structure created by the membership, called bylaws, mapping out instructions for how decisions get made and how leadership roles are filled

Examples of What Resident Associations Can Do:

- Negotiate with a park-lord or manager to resolve community issues
- Pass legislation on the local or state level to protect homeowners
- Develop a neighborhood watch
- Host a park-wide cleanup day
- Purchase the park as a co-op, land trust, or non-profit
- Have a regular newsletter to communicate to homeowners
- Establish a welcome committee for new residents
- Participate in broader coalitions (affordable housing, racial justice, etc.)
- Organize voter turnout for elections
- Hold accountability sessions with public officials
- Host community celebrations and social events
- Organize against park closings
- Organize for relocation compensation

Benefits of a resident association:

- Important decision makers such as politicians, police, park management are more likely to listen to an organized group of residents than individuals
- It makes your community visible
- A resident association can be a place where neighbors exchange information and ideas about how to respond to issues in the park
- If residents in the park want to take legal action the resident association can be the plaintiff instead of individual residents
- A resident association gives people a place to voice their concerns where they can be heard without fear of retaliation
- A resident association can build a sense of community in the park as people get to know each other

Accomplishments of Park Residents in Minnesota



Moorhead, MN

Faced with a park owner who was illegally selling homes and then evicting people and keeping the money, residents of Bennett Park got the Attorney General to sue their park owner for malpractice. They won and the park owner was forced to sell the park to the residents. Bennett Park Cooperative is now the 3rd resident owned park in the state!



Stacy, MN

Manufactured home park residents in Stacy, MN used their voting power to elect 3 of their park leaders to the city council. The new council members are now working to make sure "park issues" become city issues. They also got the park management to establish a 24-hour emergency park number, add stop signs, replace damaged street lights, and remove abandoned homes from the park.

*Dedicated to the memory of Bud Wilson,
a fighter for Mobile Justice*



Inver Grove Heights, MN

Residents of Skyline Village started a neighborhood watch to improve the safety in their park. They met with the police chief and fire chief and worked closely with them to catch an arsonist who burned down several homes. Then, they worked with the city to pass an ordinance that will guarantees all residents compensation for their homes if the park closes. Now they are negotiating with the corporate park-lord to improve maintenance of the park.

Over the course of your work you will inevitably be involved in a number of meetings. These include resident association membership meetings, public meetings (city council, legislative committees, etc.) and coalition meetings. Meetings are the lifeblood of an organizing campaign. Meetings should serve as the main tactic for communicating directly with your base. It is at meetings that major decisions are made and crucial information revealed. Holding regular meetings is key to building momentum. Knowing how to run an effective meeting is necessary for success.

The Problem with Meetings

Think about all the meetings you have attended in your life: school meetings, family meetings, work related meetings, church meetings, and community involvement meetings. That's a lot of meetings! Most of your neighbors have probably been to a similar number of meetings.

Think of some of the worst meetings you have attended. What made them so bad? Were they unorganized? Boring? Did they seem to go on and on without accomplishing anything? Maybe there were insurmountable differences between people at the meeting. Maybe there were people who monopolized the meeting and did all the talking. Maybe people got side tracked and talked endlessly about issues that weren't related to the meeting.

This isn't to depress you. These are some ideas of things to avoid when you are organizing meetings for your community. If your meetings are boring, unorganized, and a place where only a few people do all the talking, then people aren't going to come.

Steps to Pulling Off an Effective Meeting

STEP 1: Personal Reflection

You never want to have a meeting just for the sake of having a meeting. Before calling a meeting, take some time to think about what you want to accomplish. What should the meeting look like? Who should be there? What needs to happen for the meeting to be successful?

STEP 2: The Pre-Meeting

Planning the meeting ahead of time will greatly increase it's likelihood of success. It's well worth the time to have a "pre-meeting" with your leaders. At the pre-meeting, brainstorm goals and think about the actions necessary to achieve them. At the pre-meeting you should also decide:

- The date, time and location of the meeting
- The agenda
- The ground rules
- Who's invited to the meeting
- Roles for the meeting:
 - Facilitator
 - Topic presenters
 - Timekeeper
 - Note-taker
 - Ground rule enforcer
 - Greeter and sign in table attendant
 - Plants: people in the audience who are told to make a specific question or comment

- Who will play these roles
- How the room will be set up
- The outreach strategy to get people to turnout

When discussing who should be invited, you should also consider the possibility of uninvited guests showing up at your meeting. Make sure you have a plan in place for how to handle this. If an adversary shows up and you are not sure what to do, we recommend putting it to a vote. Whether they decide to have the person stay or leave, you are respecting the will of the majority. Hopefully the person in question will respect that too.

STEP 3: The Meeting

Meetings are likely to be effective when they:

- Start and end on time
- Have a printed agenda
- Have ground rules
- Provide opportunities for everyone to participate
- Create tension
- Address a problem that people care about
- Present a solution to the problem that requires everyone's participation

The **agenda** is a tool to ensure the meeting stays focused, on schedule, and is run in an organized manner. It should include:

- The date and location of the meeting (for future record)
- Ground rules
- The major points that will be discussed
- Time allotments for each agenda item

Ground rules are a means of enforcing the will of the majority at a meeting. They are the basic code of conduct.

Examples of ground rules are:

- Stay on Agenda.
- One person at a time.
- No interrupting.
- Give everyone a chance to speak.
- Respect each other
- Turn off cell phones

At the start of the meeting present your ideas for ground rule and ask for feedback. Then ask everyone to approve the ground rules by a show of hands. That way if someone gets out of line, it is easier to enforce the ground rules if everyone has agreed to them ahead of time.

Tension is an important element of a good meeting. Tension arises when people are confronted with an unjust situation and challenged to make commitments to do something about it. Unless you're organizing a meeting about a bake sale, there should be tension in the room. There is nothing warm and fuzzy about causing social change given the forces we are up against.

It is only with the continued involvement of your base that things will change. You want to give people hope, but not put them at ease. If people leave your meeting feeling totally at ease, then the problem is resolved in their mind, and there will be no reason to stay involved. When the problem comes back again because nothing changed, they will blame you for giving them a false sense of security. Therefore, it is a mistake to try to avoid conflict in a meeting. Instead you should identify conflict that exists and use that conflict towards positive ends.

Look for ways to ensure that **everyone participates**. There are several ways of doing this.

- Introductions- have everyone say their name and how long they have lived in the park. Also try to think of one good question to have everyone answer. For example: What's one thing you like about living in the park? Why did you come to this meeting? What's one thing you would like to change about the park?
- Ask people how they feel. When discussing topics that bring new information to light it's important to get residents' reactions. Ask people in one word how they feel about what they just heard.
- Ask people "Why?" Once you know how people feel about a situation or problem, it's important to get their sense of why it is happening. This will get your audience heated up and ready to tackle solutions.
- Group brainstorming is a great way to generate ideas, foster participation, and identify new leaders. Brainstorm topics can include: What do you want to change in the park? How should the association respond? Write all of the ideas down on a wipe board, chalkboard or large sheet of paper that everyone can see.
- "Dotmocracy" is the perfect follow up to a brainstorm. Usually you will have a ton of ideas written down. Give people 3 to 5 small sticky dots (you can buy them at an office store, they're pretty cheap) and have them vote for their favorite ideas.

STEP 4: Evaluation

You must evaluate every meeting you do. In order for people to keep coming back you want to know how they felt about the meeting. Here are three different ways of evaluating a meeting. We recommend all of them:

- **BEFORE THE END OF THE MEETING:** "In one word, how do you feel?" Even if after you did this at some point earlier in the meeting. A quick check in at the end of the meeting with everyone there will tell you a lot about how the meeting went. This will also help you plan the next steps.
- **AFTER THE MEETING ADJOURNS:** pull together a group of people to do a more detailed evaluation right on the spot. This can include everyone at the pre-meeting, people who spoke out during the meeting, and anyone else who wants to be a part of evaluating the meeting. Go around the circle and ask people one thing that they thought went well. Then ask them one thing that didn't go well or that could be better next time. Looking at both lists, brainstorm what the next steps are coming out of this meeting.
- **A COUPLE DAYS AFTER THE MEETING:** schedule some one-on-ones with people who made an impression on you at the meeting as having leadership potential. In the one-on-one ask them how they felt about the meeting and identify ways that they can work on next steps.

Making a flier seems simple, but creating one that will stand out among all of the advertisements and demands on your neighbors' time is an art. These days we are constantly being baited to spend our time and money. Not only are we bombarded with advertisements on TV, the radio, billboards and cereal boxes, we also have friends, family and hobbies competing for our attention. All of us have developed fine-tuned defenses to these solicitations and your flier will have to get past them. How? Here are some simple tips that work:

Purpose

Before you hit "print" and 1,000 copies start spitting out of the machine, wait! Did you ask yourself why you were doing this? It's always important to think these things through. What outcomes do you want as a result of this flier? Do you want people to call you? Do you want them to come to a meeting? Do you just want them to have information? Or do you want them to do something? Once you've identified the purpose of the flier, read it over and make sure it accomplishes it. "Can I print now?" you ask. No, keep reading.

Different Types of Fliers

	Purpose	Audience	What they get from it	What you get from it
Educational Outreach flier	Informing people of something (their rights, threats to the park, your organization, etc). Identifying interest in these things.	New people.	Information, somewhere to go with questions or concerns.	Learn what people care about. Develop new contacts.
Meeting flier	Getting people to come to your meeting.	Whoever is invited.	Information about the meeting.	People at your meeting!
Update fliers	Updating people on key developments over the course of a campaign.	Your base.	Knowing what's going on, confidence in your organization.	Knowing that your base is aware of what's going on and ready for action (without having to have a meeting).
Action flier	To compel people to do something (call an elected official, write a letter to the editor, sign a petition, etc.).	People who will likely participate in the action.	The satisfaction and empowerment of doing something about an issue they care about.	Having a successful action, building the power and leadership of your organization.

Basic Information

Your flier has to include some basic information. Who is the flier from? Is it your resident association, a statewide group, or just you? People rarely consider anonymous fliers to be a credible source of information. After you identify who the flier is from you should also provide some basic contact information (phone number or e-mail) in case people have questions.

If the flier is for a meeting make sure you include the correct date, time and location of the meeting. This may seem horribly obvious, but it's amazing how often people leave it out. If the location is unfamiliar to folks, consider either putting a map or directions on the flier.

Too Much Versus Too Little

It's important not to try to do too much with one flier. How do feel about this?

Rainbow Paradise Valley Park Residents:

Your Park Lord can only charge you \$3.17 per day for late fees
according to State Law 30137c subdivision F

Call 555-LAW-SUIT if your park lord in charging more
and our organization will tell you what to do about it.

We will be having a meeting on Sunday, January 1st at 6:00 am
at the Mobile Justice Amphitheater

We just met with the park lord and they said that they would continue
to charge \$3.18 for late fees.

\$3.17 is too expensive; so we are trying to change the law make it \$3.16 instead.

Call Senator Prejudice and let him know that he needs to support
Senate File 9145 or else you won't vote for them next time around!!!

"Yikes, that was terrible!" I know, but it's an example of what can happen if you are trying to do too much. This flier is educational, it advertises a meeting, it updates people about a meeting with the park lord and it tries to compel people to action. Now some of you might be thinking, "I would do all of those things! What's wrong with putting it all on the flier?" You would do all of those things because you are a powerful leader for mobile justice and fighting to reduce the late fee by \$.01 is clearly aligned with your self-interest. Not everybody in your community is there however, right? Otherwise why would you be reading this manual? The point is, if you give people too many things to do, they will probably get overwhelmed and do none of them.

Keep it Simple. It is important to have a simple flier. Most people skim a flier on first look. They only read the rest of the flier if they think that it is interesting. You can maximize reading by keeping the information short and to the point. Another problem with too much information in the context of meeting fliers is that sometimes the flier will tell people everything they need to know, and then they decide not to go to the meeting. Make sure your flier says what the meeting is about, but leave them wanting more so that they actually show up.

Feelings

Don't do a boring flier. No one wants to read a boring flier. Think about people's feelings in the community right now vs. how you want them to feel when they get the flier. Are they indifferent and you want to make them angry? Or are they already mad and you want them to feel hopeful? Sometimes we get accused of using "scare tactics" when we do fliers about park closings. People have every reason to be scared about park closings. Scaring people for the sake of scaring them is wrong. But providing information that wakes people up to a grim reality in order to compel them to action is good. Just make sure that your information is accurate.

Think Visually

Part of not having a boring flier means having it look nice. Make sure the layout is aesthetically pleasing and professional looking. Use pictures that capture the feelings you want to provoke. Highlight major information using bold, BIG LETTERS, underline, etc.

Use boxes and borders to separate information. If your association can afford it, go with colored paper. Pick a color that is warm and bright so that the letters and images stand out.

Beware of Your Flier Falling into the Wrong Hands

There is nothing you can do to keep a flier from falling into the wrong hands. For that reason, make sure that you are prepared to defend everything that is in your flier in terms of the it's tone and accuracy. We take time to ensure that all of our fliers are accurate because, on more than one occasion legislators have received our fliers. In order to maintain strong relationships with your targets, always take the time to be accurate.

Getting People Involved Through Action and Meeting Fliers

People will get involved when your flier can get them to answer "yes" to three questions:

Q1: Is the meeting about an issue/problem that I care about?

If the issue your resident association is working on is well-known and easy to explain then simply write it on the flier. Example: "Our water is brown and disgusting." If the issue is more complicated, make it as simple as possible by relating it to common values. Example: "We don't have the same rights as other homeowners. This must change!" If most of your neighbors don't care about an issue, the resident association should put it aside and work on something people do care about.

Q2: Is there a realistic solution to that issue/problem?

People don't want to get involved in a group if all they do is complain. Most people get involved in a resident association because they want something to change. Make sure your solution is specific and that there is a good possibility that it will work. Unrealistic solutions will discourage involvement. Example: It's time to ask the mayor to enforce the city's clean-water laws.

Q3: Do I have to get involved in order for the solution to work?

It is human nature; we all do it. If we know there is a problem and we also know that someone else is going to fix it for us, then we won't get involved because our involvement is not required in order for the change to happen. It is important to let people know that there are specific things they can do and that the problem won't be solved unless they do them. Example: Bring a cup of water from your house so we can demonstrate to the mayor that everyone is impacted by the park's failing water system. Be clear and specific about what you want people to do.

Can Your Flier Pass This Test

This is a pass or fail test. Ask someone who knows nothing about your meeting to look at your flier for 10 seconds. Take the flier away and ask them to answer these questions. If they answer them correctly, you pass. If not, go back and edit your flier so that all of the important information stands out.

- Who is the flier for? Who is it from?
- What is the flier asking you to do?
- When is the meeting? Where is the meeting?
- What will change if I get involved?

Step 1: Identify Issues a Resident Association Can Address

What are park-wide concerns the association can work to resolve? Invite everyone to a park to a meeting where they can speak their minds about what they want to see changed in their community. Vote to find out what issues unite the most people.

Step 2: Get Support From a Majority of the Households in Each Park

Get a team of volunteers together to go door-to-door and invite people to join the association by signing a membership petition. In the state of Minnesota, an association is official when at least 51% of the households join. Check your state laws to see if there is a definition of a legal resident association. Regardless, to avoid splinter groups and to be certain of park unity, 51% or more of households is a recommended percentage.

**Hold a Park wide
meeting to do steps 3-5**

Step 3: Define the Mission/Purpose of the Association

Work together to write a 2-3 sentence mission statement to let people know what the resident association is about.

Step 4: Decide on the Structure of the Association

Decide how many people you want on the association board, who is eligible to be a board member, and what board members will do.

Step 5: Hold Board Elections

Decide who will be the leaders and representatives of the resident association. Accept nominations and elect someone for each board position

Step 6: Approve By-laws

The board's first job is to write the rules, or by-laws of the association. Bylaws map out the structure of the association and set a process for decision-making. After a draft of the by-laws is written, hold another meeting to have them approved by the membership.

Step 7: Celebrate!

Keep the energy high by celebrating. Some ideas: have a party, put up "we did it!" signs around the park, make t-shirts or stickers for association members, and recognize individual contributions.

Step 8: Win Real Victories for Your Community!

Do a community power analysis for each of the 3 priority issues. Do a community power analysis. Set a goal, meet with potential allies, negotiate, and win real changes for your community.

The Difference Between a Problem and an Issue

Every year APAC receives hundreds of hotline calls from park residents who have various problems. Door knock your community or attend a resident meeting and you will likely hear about a lot of problems. Some of these problems have clear concrete solutions and others do not. Some problems are shared by many people in the community and others only pertain to one or two individuals. Your success in pushing forward positive changes in your park will rely on your ability to turn a problem into an issue. An issue is a solution to a problem. For example, a rent increase in your park is a problem, while fighting to get rent control is an issue.

Criteria for Picking Issues

When residents first get organized they often have limited resources. It is impossible to deal with every problem that is of concern to someone in the neighborhood. You should instead focus on crafting issues and have specific criteria in determining how those issues are prioritized.

The Issue Must be Winnable

The issue must have clearly defined goals that can be achieved in a limited period of time. If you go after issues that are not winnable, you will be wasting people's time and leave them feeling powerless and frustrated.

The Issue Must be Consistent With Your Values

Any issue the association addresses should be consistent with your mission and values.

Park Residents Must Participate Democratically in Choosing the Issue

Park residents as a whole should identify what issues they want to work on. If issues are chosen without consulting the residents, it contradicts the purpose of being organized. If an issue is of little concern to people in the neighborhood, then few people will get involved. Even if you win the issue so what, people won't care.

The Issue Must Attract Active Support Sufficient to Win the Issue

It is only with the active involvement of a significant number of park residents that you can have a big impact. Additionally, sufficient support helps prevent leader burnout.

The Issue Must Create a Sense of Unity Among Residents

You must work on issues that will bring the diverse constituencies of the neighborhood together, not tear them apart. This will help create a true sense of community and build your power.

The Issue Must Develop and Expand Your Leadership Base

Winning one issue alone will not solve all the problems of the neighborhood. You must always aim to cultivate new leaders to work on other issues.

Why does your resident association exist? Who is it for? What is your charge? A mission statement can answer all of these questions. It might not seem important, but it is. Every organization has a mission statement that clearly maps out why the organization exists. The point of a mission statement is to let people know what your resident association is about. Mission statements can also be a litmus test for future ideas that are brought to the association.

How to Write a Mission Statement:

A mission statement is a brief 2 to 3 sentence overview of your association. Every association member should be invited to participate in a discussion about the mission of the association. The following questions can guide the discussion: Whom does your association include and represent? What are the general goals of the association? Why does the association exist? What values does the association promote?

Coming up with a mission statement out of nowhere is hard, but it is perfectly fine to borrow ideas from other organizations. There are some examples of mission statements printed below. Find things you like about the sample mission statements and think about what these mission statements might be missing. Allow everyone to talk about what they'd like to see in the statement. Once you come up with something, vote on it, and approve it.

Sample Mission Statements:

Bonnevista Residents Association: Our goal as an association is to unite neighbors for the well-being of all people residing in Bonnevista Park, and to make this park a safe community for all who live and visit, here, now and in the future.

Mission statement for the Skyline Village Resident Association: We the members of the Skyline Village Resident Association exist to protect and give a voice to all residents of the park. The principal goal of the association is to encourage resident participation in finding solutions that improve park conditions.

Dayton Park Resident Association Mission Statement: We, the members of the Dayton Park Resident Association, aspire to create a community in which equality, respect and friendship are fundamental values. We want to ensure that all residents regardless of race, creed, nationality, or gender preference have a voice in our community. We have organized to improve the environment and conditions in our neighborhood.

What to do With a Mission Statement:

- Share the mission statement with everyone in the park and use it as a way to get more people involved
- Translate it into other languages so that everyone in the park can read it
- Include the mission statement on letters and fliers
- Read it out loud at the beginning of all park meetings
- Require incoming board officers to work to uphold the mission
- Go back and read the mission when people are not sure if an issue or idea is appropriate for the resident association to work on

1. Confirm Status of the Association

Some states have specific definitions of what constitutes a resident association. For example, Minnesota defines a resident association as “an organization that has the written permission of the owners of at least 51 percent of the manufactured homes in the park to represent them, and which is organized for the purpose of resolving matters related to living conditions in the manufactured home park.” Before holding elections, confirm that you have met whatever requirements exist to form an association. If none exist, as a general rule it is best if the majority of households in your park have joined the association.

2. Define the Mission of the Resident Association

The association should have a brief mission statement defining its purpose and values, so that it is clear to potential board candidates what the association is about.

3. Decide the Structure of the Board

Size: The board should have an odd number of people. Generally 5 or 7 people is a good size. If the board is too small, your officers may get burned out. If the board is too big, meetings may become unmanageable and hard to coordinate.

Officers: Boards typically have a president, vice-president, secretary, and a treasurer (if the association wants to do fundraising). The other members are known as “at-large” members and share the same voting privileges as officers.

4. Identify Potential Conflict of Interests

It is critical that in a resident association, the issues affecting residents be the main concern of its officers. There are numerous ways in which a conflict of interest may arise, and the membership will have to decide whether or not someone can be on the board. For example:

- Park managers, owners, landlords, maintenance or people otherwise employed by the park
- Immediate relatives of the park owner or management
- People who own a home or homes in the park, but do not live in the park
- Anyone else who doesn't live in the park
- Anyone who benefits financially from the operations of the park or from closing the park due to a unique relationship with the park or developers

5. Determine Who can be on the Board

Before nominations, the membership should clarify who can and cannot be on the association board. As a general rule, conflicts of interest are best avoided, and only members of the association can be members of the board.

6. Nominations

Only resident association members can be nominated for board positions. Members can also nominate themselves. Once a candidate has been nominated they should either decline or accept the nomination.

10 Steps to Electing a Resident Association Board

7. Candidate Speeches

Candidates should give a brief speech (2 minutes) on why they want to be on the association board, what they hope to accomplish, and why they are the best person for the position.

8. Voting

Elections should begin for the highest office (president) and proceed down so that people can run for multiple positions if not elected. They should be done through secret ballot and only one person per household is allowed to vote. To win the election, a candidate must receive 51% of the vote. If no one receives 51% during the first round of voting then the top two candidates will hold a run-off election.

9. Vote Counting

An objective party should count votes. Candidates for a particular position should not be involved in counting ballots for that position. Votes should be tallied and the results posted for all to see.

10. Acceptance Speech and Pledge

Each newly elected board member should give a 1-minute acceptance speech and promise to uphold the mission of the resident association.

President

The president is responsible for working with the board to run the association. They preside at association board meetings and park wide meetings. They are usually the association's spokesperson and a key contact with allies, targets, and media. The president must lead in a democratic manner and consult with the board and membership before taking actions or making major decisions.

Vice-President

The vice-president will take over for the president in the event of absence or inability to perform normal duties, as well as succeed the presidency, should the president be removed or resign. The vice-president will assist the president in the performance of his or her duties.

Secretary

The secretary takes minutes of all board meetings and distributes them as needed by the board and membership. They also collect ballots at election times for the board and can facilitate the production of newsletters.

Treasurer

The treasurer will facilitate fund raising efforts and keep the board apprised of the association's funding budget at each meeting. They also present an annual budget to the association at the annual meeting. If the association decides to require the membership to pay dues, the treasurer will collect them.

At-Large Members

At-large members along with the other officers vote on matters of importance to the association. They are responsible for outreach work and for recruiting support. They also represent the residents' interests at board meetings.

Developing strong allies is one of the most important things a resident association can do to build power and promote their vision. Allies are people or groups who support the resident association's work.

What Allies Can Do for You

Support	Examples
Moral Support	Attend association meetings, visit with families affected by the issue, host social events so association feels connected to larger community, show park residents they are not alone
Financial & Resource Support	Host or donate to fundraisers for a specific association project, provide space, equipment, transportation, or day-care for association events
Education & Research	Educate their base about your issue; give the association insight based on their experience with similar issues. Research the issue, or distribute surveys
Advocacy	Write letters of support or generate phone calls to target, speak at public meetings, meet with target, make supportive statements to the press, write open letters, speak publicly about the issue
Organizing	Collect signature for petition drives, foster leadership development by encouraging people in the community to become actively involved, organize or participate in building a coalition around the issue, organize or facilitate meetings, outreach, flyering, etc
Relationships	Connecting the association with powerful organizations or leaders with which they have a relationship
Mediation	Between the association and the target or between the association and opponents

What's in it for Them? Inside the Mind of a Potential Ally

There are some questions people will want answered before they will say "yes" or "no" when you ask: "Will you support us?"

Potential Allies want to know:

- What is the problem? (Do I agree that it really is a problem?)
- Why should I care? (Does the problem impact me? What will I gain?)
- What is the solution? (Do I agree with the solution? Is it possible? Is it worth the time?)
- What do they want me to do? (What am I committing to? Can I do it? Do I want to?)

The key to recruiting an ally is to answer all of these questions and start building a relationship based on your common self-interest. It's not enough to just prepare a persuasive speech. It's best to let people talk themselves into becoming an ally during a one-to-one visit. There are a number of things a resident association needs to do in order to prepare for a one-to-one visit with a potential ally.

Steps to Recruiting Allies:

Step 1: Define your values

People who share the values of the resident association are likely to be strong allies. What are the values underlying the work your resident association has set out to do? Why are people in your community willing to spend time and energy on the goals of the association? The answers to these questions will help you figure out whom you might share a common self-interest with and who might be potential allies.

Step 2: Community Power Analysis

Potential allies want to understand what you are trying to accomplish and how they fit into the big picture. The Community Power Analysis is a tool resident associations can use to map out the big picture of any issue in the park. One important part of the analysis is to brainstorm a list of potential allies. When doing this it's important to be creative. Recruit allies that have influence over your targets but that may not be directly tied to your issue. Remember to think about your values and who might feel the same. Be as specific as possible - names are better than titles.

Example Brainstorm of Allies:

- Guiding Light Church
- State Senator Johnson and Representative Smith
- Mayor Holmes
- Maggie Burns from the affordable housing coalition
- Police Chief Marx
- Our neighbors
- Hormel plant, where many of us work
- the American Legion
- Betty Ann from Legal Aid
- Catholic Charities
- The Immigrant Rights Coalition
- American Civil Liberties Union
- AARP
- University of Wisconsin student group
- the Bell Plain neighborhood group
- Dave from the Alliance of Churches
- SEIU, UFCW and other labor unions
- the local newspaper: The Park Times
- the pickle factory
- the Sierra Club

Step 3: Brainstorm what allies can do

Once you have a list of allies, decide what you want each of them to do. Make sure to identify concrete things that can be done right away. Here are some ideas:

- Write a letter of support
- Speak out publicly at an upcoming press conference
- Turnout members to an association event
- Call your target and ask them to respond to the association's demands
- Attend a negotiation between association and a target
- Call the media and ask them to cover an upcoming association event
- Do research for you
- Testify at the next city council/ legislative committee meetings
- Present information/ answer questions at the next association meeting
- Put up a sign in their yard or store
- Announce an event in the church bulletin or at the next union meeting
- Write a letter to the editor
- Make an in-kind donation to the resident association
- Give their workers a day of paid vacation so they can go to capitol

Step 4: Set up and prepare for the meeting

Find out how to contact the people you want to get support from. It might be good to divide the list of allies among the leaders of the association. Call each potential ally and ask them to meet with you to talk about the resident association and the issue you are facing. If the potential ally is a group of people, like the city council or an organization, perhaps start by meeting with just one person from the group.

Make a list of questions you want to ask the person you are meeting with. Remember that your goal is to find out about their self-interest and get them to tell you why it would serve their group to support your cause. Also remember that one of the questions should be a proposition for the person to do something.

Step 5: Meeting

Review your goals and questions before the meeting. Remember that the one-to-one is not only about getting the potential ally's support for this issue, but to begin to build a relationship that could be beneficial in a future campaign. Be sure to reflect after the meeting and record any commitments you made. What valuable information did you learn? Even if the potentially ally declined your proposition, a new relationship was formed and new information was gained. If you did recruit an ally: congratulations.

Step 6: Follow-up

If the person or group made a commitment to do something, be sure to remind them of that commitment a few days later. You could make a phone call or send a thank you card. If you promised to do something, make sure to do it right away. Public relationships are built on accountability. It is important to hold yourself and your new ally accountable for following through with commitments. Sometimes a friendly reminder is all it takes.

No Permanent Friends, No Permanent Enemies

In organizing, allies come and go. Some will support a resident association long-term and others will stick around for just one issue-campaign. This is because allies are people who share an interest with the resident association. Anyone can be an ally if they 1) will benefit in some way if the resident association accomplishes its goal and 2) are willing to do something.

It is important that an association be strategic in the way it uses its allies. Don't just recruit allies for the sake of allies. Knowing the type of support you need, will help you prioritize who to talk to and what you want from them.

The ability to negotiate is crucial for a resident association to be effective. There may be certain issues where an association can win without ever directly engaging their opponent. This is not always the case though. Often your association will have to sit across the table from a target and use your power to negotiate a just outcome.

Negotiations will vary greatly based on the issue, personalities involved, history, how powerful you are and how powerful your opponent is. Nonetheless there are some common ideas that are universal to negotiation, regardless of the circumstances.

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATIONS

Before The Meeting:

Know Your Demand

It's not enough to know that there is a problem. Your association must turn the problem into an issue (solution!). This solution should come in the form of a specific demand. The demand should be reasonable, clear, and within the other side's power to achieve. You should have a specific timeline involved, and measurable means of monitoring their progress towards satisfying the demand.

Know What You are Willing to Settle For

Negotiations often entail give and take. In the best of all worlds, the other side will accept your demand unconditionally. It is likely that they will try to get concessions or that they will only accept part of the demand. For this reason it is important to know what your bottom line is. What are you willing to settle for?

Know When to Walk

It is possible that conditions in the negotiation will reach a point where continuing the meeting will do more harm than good. Know where to draw the line, and make sure that everyone in the group is comfortable with walking out under a pre-determined set of conditions.

Know Their Arguments Ahead of Time

Plan ahead for arguments that the other side may make to counter your demand. Put yourself in their shoes and think of what concerns they may raise. This may lead you to do research that will strengthen your argument.

Know Their Self-Interest

If someone is willing to negotiate, they may fear they have something to lose. Think of what they have to gain. There is almost always a benefit to the other side for agreeing to your demands (financial, social, moral, political, etc.). People are generally unlikely to sacrifice something without getting anything in return. Think about what's in it for them.

Understand Your Power

If you haven't done a community power analysis on your issue, do it now! You have power as an organized association, but it's important to know where it comes from and how to use it in the negotiation.

Determine Their Consequences

Once you understand your power, you can have a plan for what to do if an agreement can't be reached. This way you have the power to escalate your tactics if they refuse to consider your demands. Be ready to threaten these consequences if negotiations sour. Some examples include contacting the media, holding a rally, and contacting someone with power over them. Sometimes the threat of an action can be more powerful in the eyes of a target than the action itself.

Know Who You Want at the Meeting

This works for both sides. Think of allies that could strengthen your argument or demonstrate your power if they are at the meeting. Also think of who specifically is invited to represent the other side and who isn't.

Set the Agenda

To maintain control over the meeting, come up with an agenda ahead of time. The agenda can have strict amounts of time listed to discuss specific topic. If you are unable to reach an agreement in the time allotted then you have the power to end the meeting. If the other side attempts to sidetrack the discussion in the meeting, refer them back to the agenda.

Possible Negotiating Roles

You should decide how to divide up roles. There are various roles that people on your side can play.

Good Cop: someone with a pleasant demeanor who is honed in on the other side's self-interest. When things get heated, they can constructively bring the opponent back into the conversation constructively.

Bad Cop: someone who is gutsy and willing to take risks. They can present the potential consequences if the other side refuses the demand

Agenda monitor/Time keeper: keeps things on track and makes sure that all the demands are addressed.

Story teller/ Expert: someone with personal testimony or expertise who strengthens your position. They put a human face on the issue.

During The Meeting:

State Your Demand.

This may seem obvious, but a lot of groups will talk among themselves about the issues they want to see resolved, but are too timid to make any demands once the other side is sitting across from them. Once you state your demand at a meeting, it may be necessary to restate it multiple times throughout the meeting. If the other side tries to change the subject when you state your demand, it generally means that it makes them uncomfortable. Always state and restate your demand. *Make sure they give a yes or no answer.*

Silence is Golden.

Allow there to be periods of awkward silence during the negotiation. The social skills we have developed in our personal lives tell us to jump in and fill awkward silences. In negotiations however, awkward silences tend to happen at times in which the conversation has reached a breaking point or an impasse. Studies show that when there is an awkward silence in a negotiation, the side that speaks first almost always loses.

You Must Look Unified

It is crucial that the association has a clear position and that there is consensus among your representatives in the negotiation. Never disagree in front of each other, or the other side may try to exploit your differences to strengthen their own position. In the event that something comes up in the negotiation that is unexpected or if you are uncomfortable with what is being said, call for a caucus to work it out as a group away from the person you are negotiating with.

Stick to the Most Important Points

At all costs avoid side tracking the discussion by raising issues or questions not relevant to your demand. This is a tactic your opponent may use to avoid responding to your specific demand. Don't do their work for them by bringing up things that steer questions away from the discussion. Remember that you are at the table to represent the concerns of the resident association, not your own individual problems. This can be challenging, especially if you are meeting with someone who you may not have an opportunity to meet with again and who has a great deal of power to change an individual problem such as park-lords.

It's About Power not Personality

It is important to avoid overly personalizing the conversation. Remember that negotiation is part of your role in public life. Your job is to win real victories for your community, not to make friends. It is just as likely that your opponent will try to "hug you to death" as they are to come in yelling and screaming at you. Your tone should always be respectful, but don't feel like you can't be firm and demanding just because someone is being "nice" to you. Also, just because someone is yelling and screaming at you doesn't mean you have to yell and scream back. Negotiations are a power play, not a social outing.

Don't be a Victim

Most of your opponents are probably not accustomed to negotiating with organized groups of homeowners. They will likely look at you through a lens of park prejudice. For many people, their image of park residents is that of a victim based on what they see in the media. You are a leader, not a victim. You are not there to beg. You are there to bargain.

Get Clear Commitments: Yes or No!

If your demand is clear, reasonable and within the person's ability, it is fair to push them to make a commitment. Don't let them get away with, "I'll think about it" or, "I'll do what I can." If the other side needs more information, be specific as to the process of getting back together to negotiate. If they say they need to talk with someone else, find out who and what exactly they need to find out. Any commitment made should be demonstrable. In some cases you may even request for them in writing. If they say "it's not our responsibility," ask them to accompany you to a meeting with the person who they feel does have the responsibility.

Responding to the Other Side's Tactics

Tactics the Other Side May Use	Your Response
Over personalizing	Stay professional
Divide and conquer	Be unified
Non-committal	Force commitment
Threats	Assert your rights
Compromise	Know your bottom line
Refusal to cooperate	Escalate tactics
Changing the subject	Stay on agenda

After The Meeting:

Evaluate

Immediately after the negotiations end, get everyone on your side to evaluate the negotiation. What went well? What didn't go well? What could you have done better? What are the next steps?

Make the Results Public

If you win, celebrate! If the outcome is mixed, telling others what happened could spark interest, which may get new people involved or make them aware of next steps. If you lose, shame the other side into returning to the negotiating table. This may be the time to consider new tactics, such as legal action, protest, or a media campaign.

Follow Through on Your Commitments

If there are commitments you made during the negotiation, it is critical that you follow through on them in good faith. You can't expect anything from them otherwise. If they said no, and you threaten consequences, you have to deliver on them. Otherwise they will not take you seriously when issues come up in the future.

Identify New Issues and Continue Dialog

Once an issue is resolved, there are always more that can be addressed. It is important to continue the dialog in order to see sustained progress. Sometimes a positive relationship can be achieved with the other side.

Negotiation Worksheet

Pre-Negotiation Questions

1. What is our demand?
2. What are we willing to settle for?
3. Under what conditions do we walk out of the negotiation?
4. What arguments might the other side use against us?
5. What is our target's self-interest in this issue?
6. How could our desired outcome benefit them?
7. Where does our power come from?
8. How can we use our power in the negotiations?
9. What will the consequences be for the other side if they fail to agree to our demands?
10. Who should be at the meeting?
11. What needs to be on the agenda?
12. How are we going to divide up roles?

Evaluation Questions?

1. What went well?
2. What didn't go well?
3. What could we have done better?
4. What are our next steps?
5. How do we share the results with our base?

Why the Legal System can Work for You

The law is not a replacement for good, solid, neighborhood organizing. Without a solid foundation of community leadership and power, it is impossible to get meaningful change in your community. However, for a well-organized and strategic resident association, the legal system can be a powerful tool, if it is used wisely.

A Different Way to Get Things Done

Regardless of what the laws are in your state, there are some basic protections and rights that exist for residents of manufactured home parks. The question is, how do you use the laws to get things accomplished in your community?

The first question is: does it make sense to approach the park owner or management about dealing with the issues before taking legal action? On the one hand, it takes a certain amount of time to allow the park ownership to receive and react to demands from the residents, while on the other hand; it is a show of good faith and a demonstration of unity that could get results from the ownership. Depending on the type of issue that the homeowners are working on, communicating with the management can prevent the management from claiming ignorance of the issues that the resident association is raising.

When Negotiation is Not Enough

So, what should a resident association do when negotiation is simply not working? In some ways, working on a legal challenge and working on an organizing campaign are not so very different. The questions you need to answer are: What do you want to accomplish? What resources do you have that will help you get things done? Who has the power to make the decisions that get you there?

What do you Want to Accomplish?

Just like a resident association needs to pick winnable goals when organizing, so too does an association need to choose legal issues carefully. The hardest part of choosing legal issues with your association is making certain that the issues are winnable. This does not mean that an association should back down just because something is a struggle: to the contrary, hard cases are sometimes the most important. It simply means that there are some issues ("my landlord is a jerk and we need to get rid of him") that are not legal issues.

Another question is: can your issue be resolved under the law. Either because of the specific circumstances or because of the way the laws are written, there are times when, even though something looks like a legal issue, there is no authority for the courts to do anything about it. That does not mean your issue can't be solved, but it does mean that instead of a court of law, the association must work in the court of public opinion.

Another possibility, which will be discussed more below, is that instead of the court system, an issue might be under the power of a government agency. In this case, it may be possible to get the issue addressed outside of the formal court process.

Finding Resources

In the legal process it is important to evaluate your resources. If you are taking your issue to the court system you need:

- as much information as possible about your issue
- documentation on what has happened up to this point
- people who are willing to speak about the issues in court
- access to legal services
- money
- time
- patience

If you do qualify and the resources are available, legal aid has attorneys who will understand the court system and the laws in your state. Each state has a legal aid system, but the resources that are available to the local legal aid office can vary drastically and depending on the issues that your resident association is working on. Legal aid offices may be limited in the type of work that they can do because of the types of funding that they receive. They are also limited to representing people who qualify for their services based on income.

If you do not qualify, or if the local legal aid office does not have the resources to work on your kind of case, there are several other options for obtaining legal services. One method is to look for other programs that provide free or low cost legal assistance. Some possible places to ask are law school clinic programs, state and county bar associations, and volunteer lawyer programs.

Another possibility, if the resources are available, is for the association to pay for an attorney. Make certain that before you agree to hire an attorney she understand what you want, and that you understand what the attorney will be doing and how much it costs. Do not be afraid to ask questions or talk to more than one lawyer before you decide whom to work with.

The last option is going it alone. This can work for some individual issues, because a person has the right to represent him or herself. However, it is not legal for someone who is not a licensed attorney to represent other people. If the action is taken by the resident association as a separate entity, only a licensed attorney can represent the association. Additionally, depending on what kind of court an issue is brought to, the process can be very complicated. Small claims courts and specialized housing courts have systems that can be navigated by people who are not lawyers, but other parts of the court system and full of procedures and rules that are designed to be as complex as possible.

Who has the Power

Sometimes an issue looks like a legal problem, but that does not necessarily mean that the court process is the place to get the law enforced. Sometimes an issue is a legal issue and the court process is the right place to go, but it is not the resident association who has to bring the park owner to court. The big question in both of these instances is, who has the decision making power in your state for your issue.

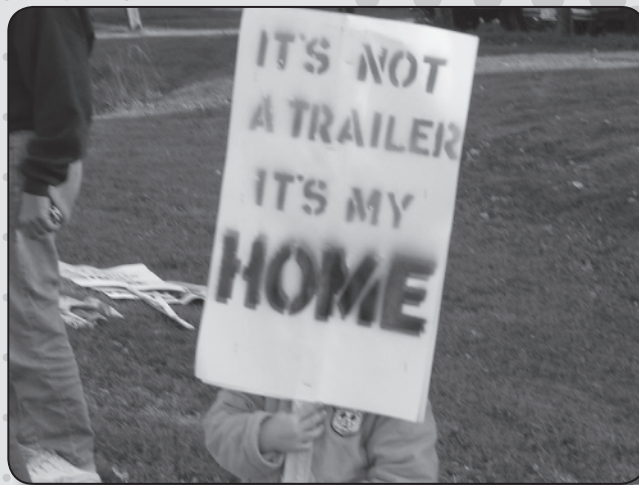
Some issues, such as racial discrimination, are under the jurisdiction of both federal and state agencies. Other issues may be enforceable by the state attorney general's office. Some issues may even be under the control of local authorities. It is important to identify who has the power over your specific concerns and work on getting them involved in your issue in a manner that is helpful to the association. Just like every other person or entity, agencies, and especially municipalities, have self-interest and sometimes this does not necessarily match up with what the resident association wants.

Utilizing the power of government entities and their enforcement authority can be a lifesaver for a resident association trying to get laws enforced. It takes the burden off of the association to do all of the work; it shows that there are others paying attention to the issue, and it gets things accomplished in your community.

Ten Tips to Prepare for Legal Action

1. Get a copy of your lease and park rules if you do not already have one
2. Put all requests to the park owner in writing and make sure you keep a copy. To be on the safe side, send things by certified mail.
3. Establish priorities
4. Be unified
5. Keep records and take notes of all communication with park management
6. Request records for all applicable agencies
7. Comply with your lease agreement (pay rent, follow rules) unless there is a court order saying otherwise
8. Find allies
9. Identify who has the power to make the decisions
10. Develop a clear message

Park Prejudice



The term park prejudice was coined to give a name to the negative public image of people who live in manufactured home parks and the injustice that occurs as a result.

Park Prejudice is:

- A form of oppression
- Based on a set of stereotypes that promote the idea that people who live in manufactured home parks are inferior and do not deserve the same rights and opportunities as others
- Rooted in history and embedded in the structure and cultural norms
- Something that happens between individuals AND something that is part of the laws, organizational policies and practices, and social norms of our country.
- Not an accident, but rather a series of decisions that put park residents “in their place” to benefit others
- Perpetuated by the media

Examples of Park Prejudice:

- It is acceptable to use the phrase “trailer trash” to describe people. This phrase literally means: worthless, useless, something that should be thrown away, discarded.
- The federal government does not consider manufactured homes as equal to stick built homes, therefore public and private institutions, such as banks, government entities, and non-profits, deny homeowners the opportunity to earn equity, get fair financing, apply for first-time home buyer loans and participate in other housing programs.
- When there are problems in manufactured home communities, often the people who have the power to solve them (police, the city council, courts, churches, social service agencies) do nothing. This is justified by the perception that people who live in manufactured home parks are dysfunctional, unintelligent, alcoholics and meth addicts whose poor life choices have caused the problems.
- During a time of rapid growth in the manufactured home park industry, zoning ordinances in cities across the county restricted parks to industrial areas and the outskirts of town. At the same time cities prevented individuals from placing manufactured homes on city lots, forcing people to place their homes in specific designated areas. Now, these areas are being developed and parks are closing for a “higher and better use of the land.”
- The entertainment and news media portray manufactured home parks as dangerous, dirty, falling-down places where the dregs of society or poor victims live. Some common portrayals are: tornado victims, crime scenes (announced as “mobile home murder” as opposed to “single family home murder”), teen pregnancy, neglectful parents, poor, “white trash,” “illegal alien,” and bad grammar.
- When park owners let the infrastructure of a community deteriorate, the public often thinks that the best solution is close the place down rather than fixing it. Even non-profit organizations and public housing agencies find it acceptable to close manufactured home communities in order to build other housing (condos, senior apartments).
- People are hurt by the park prejudice of their family and friends, relationships are lost.

Why Does Park Prejudice Exist?

Manufactured home parks are a relatively new type of neighborhood in the context of our nation's history. In many parts of the country, manufactured home parks were built to fill the housing shortage for the nations returning heroes of World War II. Just a few decades later, people living in these same neighborhoods are now seen as the scum of the earth, quite literally "trash."

Many different forms of prejudice (race, class, gender, religious, etc.) have developed over the course of hundreds or even thousands of years. How did park prejudice develop so quickly? How did national heroes become perceived as "trailer trash?"

To answer this question we need to look at why park prejudice exists in the first place.

Park Prejudice Exists Because of Fear and Ignorance

It's amazing how many people still believe that manufactured homes are mobile. "It's just a matter of hauling a truck up to the front of the home and riding off into the sunset. Right?" This perception comes from an outdated historical model of manufactured home life. People need to understand the difference between yesterday's travel trailers and today's homes.

The media shapes most people's perceptions. Shows like Jerry Springer and COPS are aired almost every night, promoting horrible stereotypes against park residents. Local news media coverage tends to portray park residents as either victims or criminals. When examining the media as a source of information, it is not surprising that the public views park residents solely as dysfunctional, drug dealing, and tornado victims.

Because of this negative image, a lot of people are afraid of park residents. This is unfortunate because it prevents people from seeing the reality of park life that only happens through personal interaction. Ever notice that there are almost always police officers at city council meetings that your group attends? Do they go to all council meetings or just the ones you are at?

Park Prejudice Exists to Take Away Our Power

Like any form of prejudice, Park Prejudice creates a feeling of superiority among people who don't live in parks. Park Prejudice puts people in their place. Think back to the exercise we did on how to influence powerful institutions. The last ring of power is the ability to shape public meaning. Think about everyone that benefits from the keeping park residents in their place. This ranges from park-lords to nonprofit organization whose job is to "help" people living in manufactured home communities. Park Prejudice therefore is no accident, rather is an intentional means to take away your power. Park prejudice is used in influencing agenda setters and decision makers to someone else's benefit and at your expense. Often time park owners will talk about park residents as free loaders, gamblers, alcoholics, and other derogatory terms when speaking in front of the city council. They do this because they understand the power of this corrupted meaning of park life.

Park Prejudice Exists Because it is Tolerated

Parks owners, the media and public officials are using park prejudice to take away your power. What is our response? We can't afford to sit around and wait for these negative attitudes to change, because they aren't going to unless we do something about it. The sad truth about park prejudice is that it has been tolerated for far too long. We see the negative consequences of these images playing out all the time in manufactured home communities. But how often do we speak out? How often do we call park prejudice what it is? Rather than going home upset about what we've heard, now is the time for organized people to hold individuals and institutions accountable for perpetuating park prejudice.

Level	Definition	Examples
Individual Park Prejudice	Individual Park Prejudice exists within an individual. People who don't live in parks are influenced by negative portrayals of park residents in the media. People who live in parks internalize, or believe, these negative images.	Non-Park Residents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Believing that stereotypes of park residents are true Holding prejudiced thoughts and attitudes Park Residents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feeling inferior because of internalized stereotypes Having a victim mentality, wishing to be helped rather than helping themselves
Interpersonal Park Prejudice	Interpersonal Park Prejudice takes place between individuals. It is carried out as specific actions from one person to another.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harassing or making fun of someone for living in a manufactured home Calling someone "trailer trash" Using the word trailer rather than home Telling derogatory jokes about park residents
Institutional Park Prejudice	Institutional Park Prejudice takes place when a political, community, financial, or other institution acts to the detriment of manufactured home owners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rent increases, unfair rules, abusive treatment by park owners and management, and unfair treatment by police Businesses denying employment to park residents Local government attempts to get rid of parks
Systemic Park Prejudice	Systemic Park Prejudice takes place across systems (legal, political, cultural, educational, economic, etc). This happens when a variety of institutions and systems act to the detriment of manufactured homeowners. It is also tied to the whole history of manufactured home parks and their public meaning.	<p>Lack of resources and public will to preserve manufactured home parks compared to other forms of housing</p> <p>Manufactured homes not considered "real" homes</p> <p>Differences in rights of stick built owners compared to manufactured home owners</p>

by Paul Wissmiller, APAC Treasurer

Abode, domicile, home, dwelling, and residence are all synonyms for a place where someone lives. Trailer is not one of them.

The word trailer offends me. When a person uses the word trailer to refer to a manufactured home, they degrade not only the homes but also the people who live there. Even when a home is described as a nice house in a "trailer court" or "trailer park" it diminishes everyone by using this derogatory term.

What comes to mind when you hear the word "trailer park?" Ever notice how people always say "down at the trailer park?" Why is it never up? A lot of people immediately associate "trailer park" with "trailer trash," an ugly slur that society uses against us. Using the word trailer therefore brings about all the negative images of "trailer trash," those stereotypes that say we are all transients that are dangerous, stupid and living off welfare. Changing the language we use to talk about our homes is an important part of changing this perception.

The term trailer is not only offensive, it is inaccurate. All though it may be pulled by a truck from the factory to where it will be established, a manufactured home stops being a "trailer" once it is delivered and set upon a pad.

Some people have opted for the term "mobile home" which, although better than trailer, is still inaccurate. Statistics say that over 90% of manufactured homes are never moved once they are installed. The two main reasons manufactured homes remain on their original site are that they were meant to be permanent and that moving them after they are installed is extremely costly, sometimes over \$10,000. Many older homes cannot be moved due to their age.

If a home is one of the small number that ever leaves its original site, it may stop being lived in while in transit to a new location, but it never stops being a home.

Using "manufactured home" is the best term. Even if a lot of people don't know what it means, use this as an opportunity to enlighten them about the reality of manufactured home living.

Maybe the real question here is why we should even have to label our homes in the first place. After all, no one else has to have these debates over what to call their homes. The way I see it, a home is a home, whether it's a million dollar mansion or a single wide. So if you ever feel confused over all the terminology used to categorize our homes, don't settle for it. Just say, "It's my home."



A Mobile Justice Movement

When we look back through history, it is clear that social movements can combat prejudice and oppression against groups of people. The suffrage movement won women the right to vote and the labor movement won the 8-hour workday. There are countless other examples.

This is our time in history, and we can create a movement to end park prejudice. In fact, one has already begun. Thousands of homeowners are already fighting for Mobile Justice. Anyone who wants to see park prejudice put into the history books can work to build and strengthen the Mobile Justice movement.

What Makes a Movement?

Leaders: Heroes are not required, just many ordinary people who are willing to organize. Ordinary people become leaders by building a base of neighbors and allies who understand park prejudice, have a vision for justice, and act on that vision as part of an organization. Sometimes this base is called a homeowners association. This means homeowners associations must link local issue campaigns to the larger Mobile Justice movement in order to influence the public meaning of manufactured home parks.

Organizing: Organizing is what builds any movement. Homeowners across the nation must unite and demand change. However, organizing campaigns around issues in individual parks alone will not end park prejudice. Mobile Justice will be achieved when:

1. Leaders are intentional about putting local issue campaigns in the context of a larger movement to end park prejudice.
2. Homeowners demand institutional and structural changes that take park prejudice out of laws and institutional policies. Even if, by magic, every person in this country shed his or her prejudices against manufactured homeowners, park prejudice would still exist. It will exist until the unequal treatment of manufactured homeowners that is mandated by law, common policies, and practices are changed.

Time: Genuine social change takes time. Mobile Justice will not happen with one campaign or in one year or in one city. The Mobile Justice movement must be sustained and built for many years and in many locations in order to be successful in combating park prejudice.

People Power: Many manufactured homeowners from across the nation will have to be involved in sustaining organizing campaigns, setting the agenda, presenting an alternative meaning for manufactured homes, influencing decision makers and keeping up the momentum for change.

Where do we begin?

Know Our Place in History

Manufactured homeowners have been told time and time again, “stay in your place,” but only a few take the time to ask why. The first step in ending prejudice against manufactured home park residents is to understand where it comes from and how it works. Instead of “staying in our place” we must seize our place in history and know that we have an opportunity to impact the future. Take time to research the history of manufactured home communities in your area.

Create a Vision for the Future

It's easy to talk about what we are against, but if we want to build a movement we have to know what we are “for.” What do you want the “public perception” of manufactured home parks to be in 5 years? What values do you want to uphold? What does Mobile Justice mean to you? What does Mobile Justice mean to other people in your community?

What it Will Take to Overcome Park Prejudice

Decide to Fight for our Shared Vision

Being powerful is a choice. If you want to end park prejudice and reach your goal, you have to make a personal commitment.

Build Power in Your Own Community

A leader in the Mobile Justice Movement must have a base of people who are willing to stand up for what they believe. Start in your own community by motivating your neighbors to get involved. Start a campaign to fix a small injustice in your park and keep the momentum going.

Reveal Park Prejudice

Ignoring or denying that an injustice exists is one of the most effective ways to keep it going. Homeowners who want to end park prejudice must first prove that it exists.

- Research and document cases of park prejudice
Find concrete evidence that demonstrates that manufactured homeowners are treated unfairly. Keep the focus on institutional policies and practices, not individual behavior.
- Call it what it is
Explicitly say that an issue is “park prejudice;” this forces people to acknowledge and address it as such.
- Explain it
Combine concrete evidence with personal stories to illustrate how park prejudice works to keep manufactured homeowners in their place. Focus on systemic patterns and appeal to people’s core values of fairness.

Re-frame Park Prejudice

To change the public perception of manufactured home parks, homeowners must present a new and more accurate story about their communities to the public. Park prejudice is one frame, and it is winning. Homeowners must create their own definition of manufactured home parks.

10 things homeowners can do to combat park prejudice

1. Stop using the word “trailer” and explain to others, including the media, how that word works to perpetuate park prejudice.
2. Learn about the history of manufactured home parks in your city and state. Has there been a pattern of unfair treatment of the park by the city? Are there any current city policies or actions that threaten the park? Share what you find with your neighbors, write a letter to the city, and/or ask a local news reporter to write a story about what you discover.
3. Set up an alert system so that when public figures, such as legislators, city council members, or news reporters, say something that is park prejudiced you and others who care can write letters of disapproval.
4. Start a resident association in your park and demonstrate that park residents are powerful when united.
5. If you think something is wrong, do research to find concrete evidence that homeowners are being treated unfairly. Share what you find with your neighbors, the authorities and the media.
6. When describing your homeowners association to the media use words like: outraged, park prejudice, united, powerful, demand accountability, take a stand, justice, unfair, fight for family, home, community, rights, join us, and manufactured home. Avoid words like: victim, struggling, helpless, have no voice, need help, afraid, hopeless, impossible, trailer, trash, and problems.
7. Get involved with or start a campaign to change park-prejudiced laws in your city or state. Or proposed a new law that will give manufactured homeowners more rights.
8. Create art that exposes the injustice of park prejudice.
9. Testify at a public hearing so that decision-makers hear about your experience of park prejudice and understand why there is a need for change.
10. Connect with other homeowners who are standing up for change across the country.

The Evergreen Estates Story

Narrator: John, a single father of two teenage boys, is getting married to Marissa is just a few months. John and Marissa were worried about finding room for their combined family. There was simply not enough space in John's manufactured home at Evergreen Estates for Marissa and her two elementary aged children, especially since Grandma moved in last year after her stroke. Finding a bigger house to fit their budget was nearly impossible in their expanding suburban community, and John wasn't willing to move his boys from their school. John started having second thoughts about the wedding, but then a perfect solution appeared. He saw Neighbor Norm put a "For Sale" sign on his single-wide home. John called Marissa and they decided to buy the home. The boys would live there with Grandma, leaving space in John's home for Marissa and her children. They went to tell Neighbor Norm.

Neighbor Norm: I got a call from the park manager yesterday. She saw the "For Sale" sign and told me that I can't sell my home in the park unless I find a buyer who will agree to replace the siding and all the windows. That adds thousands of dollars to the sale price. There is nothing wrong with the windows or the siding; she just wants the house to look new. She should fix up the pot-holes and paint the speed bumps instead of making demands of my home.

Marissa: But that's illegal, she can't force us to fix the place up when there's really nothing wrong with it! I know that the state law says manufactured homeowners have the right to sell their home in a park, no matter how old it is or how it looks.

Neighbor Norm: Well, the law doesn't count here. John, you remember what happened when that family down the street threatened to take the park to court because their water started coming out brown. The retaliation was so bad they decided to move out. Remember how the manager canceled their trash service and threatened to evict them? Yeah, it's best to keep quiet around here. There's nothing we can do.

John: I'm sorry Marissa, but I think Norm's right. Marcus will turn 18 in February and that means he will have to apply to live in the park. Even though he has lived here his whole life, if the manager wants to, she can reject his application. Let's not give her a reason to make my son homeless. We'll just have to come up with the extra money for the siding and windows somehow. It's our only option.

Marissa: You're right, there's nothing we can do. How are we going to get the money?

Narrator: John and Marissa looked into getting a home equity loan, but their home had no value in the bank's eyes, so they didn't qualify. Next they turned to family. Marissa though maybe her sister would be willing to help.

Marissa's Sister: I can't believe you're even considering moving into that trailer park. Have you seen how those people live? I feel sorry for your girls, the other kids at school are going to call them trailer trash. How could you do that to them? No, I won't help you fix up that worthless trailer. Why don't you buy a real house?

Narrator: Meanwhile, John looked into a grant from the local non-profit housing organization.

Housing Advocate: Well, John, I see you're in a difficult situation and I feel for you. Unfortunately, we don't give out grants for mobile homes, and I don't think you'll find any responsible non-profit to help you fix up a 1978 mobile home, it's not safe. I wouldn't be able to sleep at night knowing I helped someone move into a place that could catch fire or blow over in the next wind-storm. Besides, we can't justify helping people invest in something that will only depreciate in value. And you know, I don't think Evergreen Estates Trailer Park is going to be there a year from now. The city is holding meetings to discuss a better use for that land. Have you thought about moving out of the area? We may be able to help you finance a small single-family home.

Questions for Evaluating the Evergreen Estates Story

In small group will meet for 10 minutes to answer the following questions (only spend a few minutes on each question). Use the Levels of Park Prejudice handout to guide you.

- What is an example of individual park prejudice in the story?
- What is an example of interpersonal park prejudice in the story?
- What is an example of institutional park prejudice in the story?
- What is an example of structural park prejudice in the story?
- If you wanted to produce institutional change in this scenario, what solutions could you propose?

EXAMPLES OF PARK PREJUDICE: The Evergreen Estates Story

Individual/Internalized Prejudice:

- **Norm** stating, "It's best to keep quiet around here. There's nothing we can do." John and Marissa agreeing that "there's nothing we can do," about the manager breaking the law. All three characters internalized the park prejudiced belief that residents are powerless to challenge the demands of a park manager.
- The **housing advocate** who believes that manufactured homes are unsafe and bad investment has internalized the park prejudiced ideas that manufactured housing is undesirable and should be eliminated in the future.

Interpersonal Park Prejudice:

- **Marissa's sister's** belief in the stereotypes about people who live in manufactured homes. She acts on her belief of the trailer trash stereotype by shaming Marissa for putting herself in a situation where those stereotypes will apply to her. She denies Marissa her support and approval.

Institutional Park Prejudice:

- The **non-profit housing organization policy** that excludes loans and services for manufactured homes. This policy excludes manufactured homeowners from opportunities traditional homeowners can access.
- The **financial institution policy** prevents manufactured homeowners from getting low-interest loans, limiting the amount of equity people can build in their homes. Federal guidelines from Fannie Mae prevent many manufactured homeowners from accessing market rate loans. This denies manufactured homeowners the opportunity to borrow against their homes to pursue higher education, make home improvements, or respond to financial emergencies.
- **City officials** suggest that manufactured homes are not the best use of land. The city holds meetings about the future of the park, without informing residents and asking them to participate.

Structural Park Prejudice:

- In the broader context of structural park prejudice in the United States, a history of public policy decisions, institutional practices, and cultural myths have created a housing situation that disenfranchises people. Manufactured home parks have played the role of segregating poor and working class people into the same space where they can be managed by wealthy park-lords. Public institutions, driven by the belief that manufactured homes are not real homes, deny homeowners access to earning equity in their homes, fair financing options, first-time home buyer loans and other housing programs. The undervaluing of manufactured homes is justified by the myth of mobility and the idea that people who live in manufactured home parks are transients, not real homeowners. The negative treatment of manufactured home owners is justified by the myth of trailer trash, which brands residents of manufactured home parks as undeserving of the same opportunities as traditional homeowners. The American Dream of homeownership does not include manufactured homes. Internalized privilege and oppression keep this system in place.

Racial Justice



The face of manufactured home parks is changing dramatically.

Across the nation, we have witnessed a dramatic change in racial demographics. Many demographers estimate that by 2050, white people will no longer be the majority in the United States. These changes in demographics are very clearly seen in manufactured home communities. According to the U.S. Census, parks in Minnesota have become strikingly more racially diverse in the last 15 years. Here the percentage of people of color living in parks has more than quadrupled, and in some parks people of color make up 95% or more of the population. Similar trends have been seen in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, Iowa, and most other states.

As demographics shift, racial disparities in manufactured home communities have emerged—and they are devastating.

Abuse of authority against park residents has impacted all races. However, many times these abuses fall disproportionately on people of color. For example, in the state of Minnesota 54% of the residents who have been displaced by park closings are people of color, even though they represent only 10% of park residents in the state. This means that there is a huge racial disparity in terms of who is being forced out of their homes.

Racism is part of the historical legacy of institutions that put park residents “in their place.”

Conditions in manufactured home parks are not the result of individual behavior. They are the result of systemic failings on the part of a variety of institutions. These institutions such as banks, cities, the criminal justice system and government agencies keep park residents “in their place.” Unfortunately, racism is part of the historical legacy of many of these same institutions. Long before there were manufactured home parks and park prejudice there was institutional racism. Confronting this legacy and demanding change is key to achieving mobile justice.

People of color are an asset to our communities. Racism is the problem.

Immigrants and people of color bring their culture, diversity, and history to manufactured home communities. They are vital to preserving the economic viability of many parks. Even more parks would close down if it were not for the large numbers of diverse families that have moved in to fill vacancies. Park residents of color face all the stereotypes of park prejudice; however they also face racial scapegoating and stereotyping in parks. This is a tactic to divide parks residents. We reject this. Everyone is entitled to equal rights and fair treatment.

Park owners and government officials have an obligation to promote racial justice in manufactured home parks, but in many instances they have failed to do so.

Parks have become racially segregated in many communities where people of color are living in the worst conditions – bad roads, unsafe water, lack of storm shelters. It is not uncommon to see both a “white park” and a “Latino park” in the same city. The living conditions vary greatly from one park to the other, even though people of color may pay the same or more rent than white residents. Again, these disparities are not a consequence of individual behavior, but rather the result of systemic inequality perpetuated by multiple actors such as state agencies, municipalities, and park management.

Real solutions exist, but organized people are necessary to create political will.

There is a lot that can be done to challenge racism in manufactured home parks. Organized people have a lot of power to push for changes. When institutions are held accountable for racism they will be forced to change.

Racial Justice is an essential part of Mobile Justice, meaning that everyone will benefit.

Racial Justice is in the interest of every manufactured homeowner regardless of race. Racism within parks only strengthens park owners, developers and public officials in their efforts to undermine our community. If they are able to get away with injustice against one group of people they will likely do the same to another. Whereas, if we are successful in uniting across racial lines to organize against racial injustice the power we build together can be used for the benefit of all.

Level	Definition	Examples
Individual Racism	Individual racism exists within an individual, in the form of thoughts, fears and biases, both conscious and unconscious.	<p>White People</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Believing that negative stereotypes are true Holding prejudiced thoughts and attitudes Internalized privilege, feelings of entitlement <p>People of Color</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feeling inferior because of internalized racism Feeling hopeless, that nothing can be done
Interpersonal Racism	Interpersonal Racism takes place between individuals. It is carried out as specific actions from one person to another.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harassing or making fun of someone because of their race Using racial slurs Telling racist jokes
Institutional Racism	Institutional Racism takes place when that acts of a political, community, financial, or other institution acts to the detrimental impact people of color.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discriminating against people of color who apply to live in parks Steering people of color to live in less desirable sections of a park Efforts by institutions to eliminate parks predominantly composed of people of color
Systemic Racism	Systemic Racism takes place across systems (legal, political, cultural, educational, economic, etc.). This happens when the acts of a variety of institutions and systems detrimental impact people of color. It is also tied to history.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Racial disparities - park closings disproportionately impact people of color Patterns of segregation—People of color are often forced to live in worse conditions than whites. Immigration status creates fear of retaliation if residents stand up for their rights.

Narrator: Mr. and Mrs. Perez are a young married couple moving to southern Minnesota. They have 2 kids. They both grew up in Texas, the children of migrant workers. They have saved up money to purchase a manufactured home and are out looking at options. The Rainbow Sunrise Mobile Home Park seems like the best option. It is close to work, and affordable. There are no other affordable homeownership options nearby. On Monday afternoon after work, they stop in to see the park manager to ask about living there.

Mr. Perez: Hello, we are looking to purchase a home here in the park. Are you the one we should speak to?

Manager: Yes I am, we have some older single wides available towards the back of the park. Would you like me to show them to you?

Mrs. Perez: We were actually hoping for something a little newer and with more space.

Manager: Oh I'm sorry, I don't think I can show you any of those homes, there are some for sale but I just don't think that someone in your situation would be able to afford them. Why don't you get back into your car and follow me to the back of the park and I'll show what we have.

Narrator: So Mr. and Mrs. Perez got back into their car and followed the park manager to the back of the park. They were optimistic, because the park seemed to be in good shape, lots of nice new homes with big lots. There was a new laundry room and a playground right next to the park office where the mailboxes were located. But as they drove further and further away, they arrived at an older section of the park. There were more potholes, the lots were smaller and most of the homes were older homes.

Mrs. Perez: I don't like the looks of this. Why do we have to go all the way to the back of the park? We saved up a lot of money, I'll bet we can afford to live in one of those new homes by the office. Look around, all the families in this part of the park are Latino like us. At the front of the park I only saw white families. Is this discrimination?

Mr. Perez: Maybe. This seems unfair, but there isn't really anything we can do about it. This is the only place in town for us to live, we can't afford to upset the manager and risk having to go live in another park 30 miles away. It's best just to keep quiet and stay out of trouble.

Narrator: So even though they weren't happy about it, the Perez family decided to purchase an older home in the back of the park. They went back to the office to fill out the application.

Manager: Here's the application, now make sure you put down three character references here in Minnesota, along with your social security numbers.

Mrs. Perez: I'm sorry but we only just moved here. We don't really know anyone here who could be a character reference. Could we give you references from Texas?

Manager: I guess so, as long as they speak English. I don't want anybody calling me speaking Spanish. The main reason for the character reference is just because there's been complaints of gang activity here in town so I have to be careful with who I let in here. I would prefer someone from Minnesota but I guess I'll have to use whatever you can give me.

Mr. Perez: I'm confused. I don't see where on the application form you are supposed to put down the references. Also it doesn't ask for a social security number.

Manager: Just put it on the back, we don't usually ask it of everybody just from people who may be illegal. I'm sure you understand.

Narrator: The Perez family was accepted to live in the park. The residents of the new section of the park generally didn't interact with the Latino families who lived in the older section of park, although occasionally racial slurs were shouted at the Latino families by a few white homeowners. Over time, the living conditions on their side of the park became worse. Rumors began to spread that the city was moving to shut the park down. Mrs. Perez went to City Hall to talk with the city planner.

City Planner: What can I do for you?

Mrs. Perez: I want to know what you are planning to do over at Rainbow Sunrise.

City Planner: Oh you mean the trailer park? Well a lot of people are scared that we are shutting down the park. The resident association has been spreading misinformation to folks, we are only looking to take out the older trailers near the highway.

Mrs. Perez: But that's where my family lives! There are a lot of families over there, we don't want to lose our homes!

City Planner: Well, I know it may be hard for some folks, but really it's for the best. That part of the park has gotten so run down that we have no choice but to get rid of it. Plus you people don't do nearly enough to keep the park clean. I guess when you used to living in such bad conditions where you come from in your home country, you just don't care about your place looking nice.

Mrs. Perez: I was born in Texas!

City Planner: Okay, okay. Fine, but the point is the trailer park is not the best use of that land. A lot of developers have expressed interest in it, which will bring in a new tax base for the city. I'm surprised the resident association hasn't explained this you.

Mrs. Perez: I didn't even know we had a resident association. No one has ever talked to me about any of this and I've been living there for 3 years!

City Planner: Well that's too bad. Shortly we will be having a public meeting to let all of you know what you will be getting for relocation compensation. We could use your help, because we don't have anyone here at the city who speaks Spanish. I might need you to translate.

Narrator: Several months later the 20 homes along the highway in Rainbow Sunrise were taken out, and the Latino families were all displaced. After the homes were taken out, the park owner raised rents of the remaining families to make up for lost revenue, and less maintenance was done in the park to cut costs. But the park lord was never able to pull in the same profits as before, and decided to close the park two years later for redevelopment.

Reflection Questions

1. Identify the different levels of racism in this story (individual, interpersonal, institutional, and systemic).
2. How were Latino residents affected by institutional racism?
3. How were white residents affected by institutional racism?
4. What was the role of the resident association in the story? What should it have done differently?
5. Can you think of any real-life examples of these kinds of racism in your own community?

A lot of the abuses that you refer to as racist are happening to white people too. Is this really about race?

Calling attention to racism does not mean that we are saying that people of color are the only ones impacted by abuses against residents. However, in the event that abuses are falling disproportionately on people of color, we have a moral duty to denounce these abuses and reveal the racial disparities behind them. Racism is bigger than just one or two personal experiences. The impact of racism is community wide and exists on many different levels.

You said that the city is not doing enough to promote racial justice. Does that mean the mayor is a racist?

The individual attitudes or prejudices of certain decision makers aren't the point. Personal intent is irrelevant and hard to prove. We need to hold decision makers accountable for the impact of their actions on communities of color, regardless of their intent. When talking about racism, the motivations of individuals tend to be over-emphasized. We should be focusing on the real problem: institutional racism.

Racism is not the only form of discrimination that takes place in parks; what about discrimination based on gender, disability or public assistance status?

It is important that all forms of discrimination that take place in parks are addressed, however racism has to be a priority. Racism has been well documented and the results are devastating. While other forms of discrimination tend to manifest themselves on an individual basis, racism is a community wide issue. Additionally, while there is general acceptance about addressing other forms of discrimination, there is a reluctance to talk about racism. It is up to us to break this culture of silence.

Isn't the real reason that conditions are bad in predominantly Latino parks because they don't care if their neighborhood looks nice?

Park conditions as a whole are not the result of individual resident behavior but rather the result of multiple institutional factors. Ultimately, park conditions are the responsibility of management. Every month each resident pays lot rent, and part of that rent should go to maintenance of the park. The problem is that residents aren't getting what they are paying for as slumlords pocket the money at the community's expense. In segregated communities, Latino park residents often pay the same or more than residents in predominantly white parks, but the conditions vary dramatically. People want to be proud of where they live, regardless of their race. Additionally, lack of access to financing for purchasing and repairing homes often leads to deteriorating conditions.

People of color are only a minority of the population living in manufactured home parks. Why should our work be biased in their favor?

People of color are the majority of the population in many manufactured home parks. We are not asking for special rights or privileges for anyone. People of color deserve the same rights and treatment as everyone else. We want a level playing field: race equity. Mobile Justice cannot exclusively benefit white park residents. Besides, if parks owners or the government are able to get away with abusing one group of people, they will likely try to do the same with another group of people. This "divide and conquer" strategy will only succeed if we allow it to.

Park Prejudice and Racism: Similarities and Differences

Park Prejudice: A system of attitudes and actions that marginalize manufactured home park residents to someone else's benefit

Racism: Power + Racial Prejudice. A system that uniquely advantages whites to the detriment of people of color

A good starting point for a conversation on racial justice work in manufactured home parks is a look at the relationship between racism and park prejudice. It is important to recognize the similarities, but critical to recognize the differences between racism and park prejudice.

Similarities	Explanation
They exist on different levels	Park Prejudice and Racism exist on different levels: Individual, Interpersonal, Institutional, and Systemic. In both cases, decision makers often conceal the institutional and systemic causes.
They are the result of fear and ignorance	People often avoid interactions with people or neighborhoods based on their fear. Their opinions about groups of people based on what they see in the media.
People blame the entire community for the actions of a few	For example, if someone has committed a crime and appears on the news, people will notice either their race or housing type and assume everyone like them is a criminal.
They take our power away	Racism and Park Prejudice promote systemic forms of privilege that benefit a few at the expense of many.
They are enshrined in our laws, business practices and general culture.	They are self-perpetuating. They don't necessarily require someone to carry them out because they have become embedded in society. They are caused as much by inaction as they are by overt acts of hatred or bigotry.
They should be measured by impact, not intent.	Many times people are reluctant to expose racism and prejudice because they believe people's intentions to be good. However, intent is meaningless. The impact of decisions, actions and inactions is what matters.

Differences	Explanation
The scope of Park Prejudice and Racism are different.	Park prejudice is fairly limited in scope and mostly pertains to housing issues in manufactured home parks. Racism exists in all forms of housing. It can also be seen in a much broader context: education, employment, immigration, criminal justice, etc.
The impact of racism in the U.S. has been far more drastic.	<p>Impact of park prejudice: park closings, rent increases, unfair laws and rules, etc.</p> <p>Contemporary impact of racism: lack of access to health and education, racial profiling, deportations, workplace and housing discrimination, etc.</p> <p>Historical impact of racism: slavery, genocide, segregation, lynching, etc.</p>
Park Identity is fluid. Race is not.	When someone leaves a manufactured home park, they have a choice of how they identify themselves, whereas race follows you wherever you go and can't be changed.
History	Racism has existed for thousands of years. Manufactured home parks have only been around for half a century.
Racism is not officially tolerated, park prejudice often is	Even though racism continues to exist, the idea that racism is wrong is widely accepted. When a public figure uses racial slurs it sparks outrage. However, using terms like "trailer trash" is still considered acceptable.

We need to have a conversation about racism, even if it is sometimes uncomfortable. It is important when addressing issues of race in your organizing that you are standing for something positive.

Racial Justice is a complex idea. Similar to concepts such as “mobile justice” or “social justice,” people may have differing ideas of what racial justice looks like. While you have many options, here are just a few practical ideas for creating racial justice in manufactured home communities:

1. Everyone should have equal access to safe and affordable housing. End racial discrimination towards applicants when they apply to live in parks.
2. Park residents of color have a right to the same living conditions as white residents. End segregation within cities, as well as “steering” practices that segregate people within parks.
3. Respect everyone in the community - no racist stereotyping or scape-goating by management or residents.
4. Park management should be culturally competent, meaning they know how to communicate effectively with all of the residents in their park, including those that don’t speak English.
5. Resident associations, cooperatives and statewide organizations should reflect the diversity within the parks in their leadership and membership.
6. End exploitation and scape-goating of immigrants within the parks. No institution should use a family’s immigration status to avoid accountability for violating people’s rights.
7. Government agencies, elected officials, park management, community developers, and non-profit organizations need to be proactive in facilitating real solutions to eliminate racial disparities.
8. Governing bodies, law enforcement, park personnel, and businesses must benefit everyone equally in their services, without discrimination.
9. Everyone has a right to stability, no more demolition of diverse neighborhoods to build mansions, strip malls, Wal-Marts etc. Preserve these neighborhoods so that park closings don’t disproportionately impact people of color.
10. White park residents will be constructive allies in the struggle for racial justice.

Media and Messaging



Have you ever heard the saying “If a tree falls in the forest, and no one hears it, does it make a sound?” The same logic is true of grass roots organizing campaigns. Inevitably your work you will put you in a situation where “preaching to the converted” at resident meetings is not enough. You need to get the word out to a broader audience.

The media can be a powerful tool to get your message across. People learn from what they read, hear or watch in the media. Park-lords and elected officials are often very sensitive about their reputations, and sometimes even the threat of negative media coverage can get them to change their tune.

For the most part, manufactured home park residents have been negatively portrayed. The main reason why stereotypes and misconceptions are able to make it to the media is because of who’s sending the message. As a resident association you can begin to frame a new image and a new message regarding homeowners in your park.

It is also helpful to think outside the standard definition of media. Where do you get your news? You’ll be surprised to find that it doesn’t always involve television and the newspaper. The Internet, church bulletins, newsletters, and radio are all alternate sources for news. Targeting your media campaign around many different outlets will allow you to reach a much wider audience.

A wider audience isn’t always better. Think about who your message or story is for and pursue media outlets that specifically cater to those communities.

Getting media coverage takes work. There is no magic wand to wave that will get you coverage. To work effectively with media, you’ll have to build relationships and be strategic about your message.

There are many of benefits to using media in your campaign, but there are also risks.

Benefits of Media Coverage	Potential Risks
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Broader attention to your issue▪ Puts decision makers in the hot seat▪ Counters park prejudice▪ Organized ideas build your power	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ No guarantee coverage will be positive▪ The other side's arguments may also come out▪ The story may carry a park prejudice bias▪ Coverage can be difficult to get and unpredictable

How to use media

The best way to avoid the potential risks of negative media coverage is to be very strategic in the way you work with media. Never try to get coverage simply for the sake of getting coverage. Instead you should do a community power analysis for your campaign to decide how to include media in your tactics.

Use the media to build your power. You never want to feed into park prejudice by appearing weak and helpless. Instead you should use media as a tool to build your power; put pressure on decision makers, highlighting campaign victories or generating public outrage.

There is a difference between pity and outrage. You don't want people to feel sorry for you, you want them to get riled up and actually do something. The targets in your campaign probably feel sorry for you already, but you are targeting them because your situation is their fault. Your goal is to force them into action, not gain pity.

When to use media

Only use the media once you have answered the following questions:

- What is our message?
- What will the other side say?
- What coverage is realistic?

The best ideas in the world are meaningless if they aren't connected to a powerful message. It is with a powerful message that ideas can become actions. Here is how to construct a powerful message.

Keep it Simple

Decision makers hear from many people every year about a wide variety of issues. You want to make sure that you keep your message simple, so that it's easy for people to remember.

Appeal to values

People are unlikely to act on something that is not consistent with their values. If you want to get someone committed to the issue that you are fighting for, you have to appeal to their core values.

Know your audience

Many of the values you appeal to (justice, fairness, security, etc.) are universal. Depending on your audience, you may want to frame the issue in a slightly different way. For example, the way you talk with a park resident about an issue may be different from the way you talk to a legislator about the issue. The points you might bring out to a very conservative legislator should be different from the ones you would bring up to a very liberal one.

Speak from a position of power, not as a victim

Manufactured homeowners deserve respect, not pity. You are a leader of a strong organization that is part of a powerful national movement! You are not begging. Your power comes from being a voter who elected the decision makers. Your lot rent is what keeps the park-lords in business. They work for you! You aren't the only one supporting these issues. You have friends, neighbors, and organized groups of people who support this work. You also have strong allies.

State the problem and the solution

In order to make the case that the change you are proposing is worth the effort, you need to make the case that there is a problem. You can use your own story to personalize the problem, but you also need to talk about what that means on a broader scale. You also have to present a solution, and say specifically how the solution addresses the problem.

Be concise

It is very important to be concise. The longer you spend talking about something, the more muddled the issue becomes and you drift away from the message.

When the media is working on a story, it is important that they have an understanding of who the players are. Depending on the depth of the coverage, you may not be able to explore all of the subtle nuances of every actor. The media will generally portray park issues as two sides pitted each other. You are on one side and your targets are on the other. You have to be smart about how to describe the dynamics of the conflict. Below are some questions to consider as you craft your message.

What do You Say About Yourself?

Who are you? What do you want the media to say about you? Think about what you want the audience to think about you. Are you trying to attract sympathy or outrage? Think about the identity of the people that are impacted by your issue: homeowners, seniors, low income families, immigrants, people of color, and veterans. Frequently referring to your community as a “neighborhood” attracts more support than as a “manufactured home park.”

What is the Other Side Saying About You?

Pay attention to what the other side may say about you. Are they appealing overtly to park prejudice or racism? Or are they doing it more subtly? Do they claim to feel sorry for you or are they indifferent? Do they see your organization as legitimate or are they attacking you? The risk of a story backfiring against you depends on how the other side chooses to portray you. Be prepared to respond to their attacks, park prejudice, or racism. Know what vulnerabilities they might exploit.

What do You Say About the Other Side?

What is your problem with the other side? Is it that they fail to understand your situation, or is it something that they are deliberately doing to you? Depending on how you answer this question, the tone of how you describe the other side will change dramatically. Is the other side a villain who needs to be shamed, or someone who is misinformed but has the capacity to do the right thing? In either case, think of the vulnerabilities the other side might have, such as reputation, legal issues, or future elections. Be strategic about how you use these vulnerabilities in the media campaign.

What are They Saying About Themselves?

The other side is likely to defend themselves. What basis do they have for doing so? How do they see themselves? What values might they appeal to? What ability do they have to attract public sympathy? For example, park-lords love to portray themselves as martyrs. They are “affordable housing providers” who have “pulled themselves up by their bootstraps or “small business owners just trying to get by.” Elected officials like to portray themselves as “public servants who are looking out for the interests of the community as a whole” (notice this rarely includes you!). All of these phrases are designed to appeal to certain values and to public sympathy.

Sending out a press release is the most common way of attracting media coverage. A press release is essentially a one-page synopsis of your story, told the way you see it.

There are several things that need to be in a press release in order to attract attention. The most important thing, is to answer the basic questions “who, what, when, where” and of course “why?”

Make sure your details are accurate. Double-check the release for grammar and spelling errors. It should be well written and have all of the necessary information. Sometimes smaller media outlets like local papers will use your press release as the actual article so make sure you get it right!

Elements of a press release

- **Media contact:** the overall press coordinator from your group (typically the one who is sent out the release). Be sure to include a phone number.
- **Headline:** This should grab a reporter’s attention. This is usually the first thing a reporter looks for.
- **The Body:** This where you tell your story.
- **Interview contacts:** The names, titles and contact information for the people you want interviewed. Make sure they are prepared!

Make it interesting

Be sure to think like a reporter when writing the press release. What sparks their interest? What about this story will readers find interesting? What message are you trying to get across? How does the story relate to a broader question in society?

Typically a press release is used to attract coverage for a specific event. Organizations hold events such as rallies, protests, celebrations, and press conferences constantly. You need to make sure that your event sticks out above the rest. What makes your event different from every other event that is happening around town on a given day? Don’t assume that simply by declaring a press conference you will get any press to come to your event. You have to have a good press release and a thorough follow up.

Timing is critical

Timing is everything, if you want your press release to be effective. Various newsrooms have different processes for assigning stories to reporters, but this usually takes time. You need to be sure to allow the reporter enough time to contact people about the story and to write the story. Most reporters work on tight deadlines!

Send the release to the right person

This may seem obvious, but newsrooms are busy places with lots of activity. It is easy for your press release to end up on the wrong desk and get lost in the madness. Before sending the release, do a little research on the news organization you are sending it to. What reporters cover your area? Who has covered similar issues in the past? Who is the editor? A lot of this information can be found on-line. Doing research on the front-end can save you the headache of having to resend it to someone else. Even worse your story could be ignored because the appropriate person never got the release.

Follow Up

Once you have sent the press release, put in a call to the news organization to confirm that they have received it. This is an opportunity to make your pitch to them about why the story is important. It is fair to ask if they anticipate covering the story. If people are on the fence, generating a half dozen phone calls from park residents to the tip line or newsroom could sway them. Just make sure to be respectful; you don’t want them to get angry with you and write a bad story!

Framing a message is about shaping the way people think about your issues. It is important to keep it simple. Your message should be something everyone can understand. Try to get ahead of the game by framing your issue first. If no one has reported on your issue before, the task at hand is to pro-actively frame the issue according to what you want people to think and know about the issue. If your issue has already been reported on, you'll have to find a way to "re-frame" the message and change the terms of the debate. This is particularly true if prior coverage has been park prejudiced or racist.

Here are some examples of how a single event can be framed in several different ways, based on headlines a reporter could choose for a story:

Frame #1 Tornado destroys trailer, killing family of two

A mother and her son were killed yesterday when a tornado destroyed her small trailer while they were home. "Everyone knows that trailers are not safe places to be during severe weather," said John Doe of the local fire department, "If only she had the common sense to get out of there this whole tragedy could have been avoided."

Frame #2 Park residents blame lack of storm shelter for tornado deaths

The day after a deadly tornado hit their trailer park, residents are complaining and pointing the finger at the lack of a storm shelter in their park. "If there was a storm shelter in the park, this never would have happened," said John Doe, who lives in the park. "We are so poor and defenseless here. Someone needs to do something about this before someone else gets killed."

Frame #3 Park Owner's negligence responsible for family's death

Members of the Rainbow Park Residents Association had harsh words for their park-lord today. "Where is our lot rent going every month, if it isn't going to keep us safe?" stated Jane Doe, President of the Association. "We have been working for years to convince the owner to build a storm shelter, and he needs to be held accountable for this tragedy."

Frame #4 Ineffective storm shelter laws place MHP residents at risk

All Parks Alliance for Change, a statewide homeowners association that works to pass laws to protect the rights of manufactured homeowners, said that the recent tornado related deaths in Rainbow Park highlight the need for reform of existing storm shelter requirements. "The current law simply provides way too many loop holes. Park owners can basically get away with whatever they want," said Bev Justice, APAC president. "This law needs to change."

Frame #5 Death of Latino family highlights racial disparities within parks

Manufactured Home Park residents have joined forces with racial justice advocacy organizations to denounce the segregation in parks that forces people of color to live in parks with the worst living conditions. "Rainbow Park is the only park in town without a storm shelter," said Juan Gonzalez, a leader in the coalition. "This is also the most racially diverse park in town. We believe that people of color deserve to live in the same conditions as everyone else. We have to eliminate these racial disparities, because in this case they are deadly."

ACTIVITY: Break into 5 groups and have each group analyze one of the five frames. Answer the following questions, according to the information contained in the story. Be prepared to share your answers with the rest of the group.

- Why did this happen?
- Who is responsible?
- What is the solution?
- What needs to change?
- How are residents portrayed?

What frames are media using?

There are many different ways that an individual can interpret an event. By doing this exercise, you can explore various frames that the media uses to interpret a singular set of facts.

Frame #1 Tornado destroys trailer, killing mother and son

This frame only talks only about the specific event, but ignores the broader issues. The story blames the mother for her family's death, promoting stereotypes and park prejudice. The frame for this story is "Individual Responsibility."

Frame #2 Park residents blame lack of storm shelter for tornado deaths

This frame correctly identifies that a lack of a shelter was a factor in the family's death, but it does not identify who is responsible. The residents are portrayed as victims who want someone to do something to help them. The frame for this story is "Residents Looking for a Handout."

Frame #3 Park Owner's negligence responsible for family's death

This frame identifies both the problem and who is responsible for the solution. The park lord needs to build a storm shelter. It also refers to residents as an organized group of people. The frame here is "Absentee Landlord."

Frame #4 Ineffective storm shelter laws place MHP residents at risk

This frame identifies a problem and a solution that are different from the previous frame. The state laws are inadequate and need to be changed. In this frame, residents are part of a statewide organization. The frame here is "Policy Change."

Frame #5 Death of Latino family highlights racial disparities within parks

This frame looks at the story through a race equity lens. Here the problem is that people of color are not given the same rights as everyone else (racism) and the solution is equal access to public safety. Here the frame is "racial justice."

Interviews are one of the only ways in which the general public can hear your message in your own words. After reading your press release, the reporter's next step is to call people for interviews.

People can find interviews intimidating. Below are some tips to help you have a successful experience.

Choose the right spokesperson

Some people within your organization will be better suited for interviews than others. Ideally you want someone who is articulate and knowledgeable about the issue. You can also choose a person who has a strong and compelling personal story that highlights the issue you are trying to address. Consider your audience, your message, and who is the best person to deliver the message.

Be Prepared

Know what your message is and what you want to accomplish with the interview. Know what audience you are trying to reach. Think about what questions they might ask, including ones that contradict your position or attempt to bring you off message. Many time reporters will ask "devil's advocate" type questions.

Present your credentials

You aren't just some random person that the media stumbled on to cover this story. You are a leader of a powerful organization. "Resident Association President" sounds a lot more credible than "trailer park resident." Use your title if applicable, if none exists use words like "member, leader, community leader, or concerned citizen.

Stay Calm

Don't panic or feel intimidated by the reporter. They are human beings too, and many of them are easy to get along with.

Stay on message

Don't get off topic or provide too many details that are irrelevant to what you are trying to accomplish. Keep it simple. Make clear points. Sometimes it may seem like you are repeating yourself a lot, but that's okay. Reporters are looking to get the best quote out of you, so they will ask you the same question in slightly different ways.

Be Respectable

Be mindful of your appearance (especially if it's a TV interview!) and avoid using unprofessional or foul language.

Tell the truth

Stick to the facts. If you don't know the answer to a question, that's okay. Just tell them you'll get back to them. If you say you will get back to them, make certain to do so. Never make stuff up or say things that are untrue.

Refer them to other people

You may want to encourage them to talk to other people about the issue. For example, if you are asked a question that is outside of your personal experience or expertise, refer the reporter to someone who can answer the question.

Follow Up

Be sure to follow up with the reporter afterwards to thank them for their interest in your story and to see if there is any additional information they need. You always want to be sure to maintain a good relationship with the reporter because you'll probably want them to do a follow up story in the future.

Provide feedback

Once the story breaks, let the reporter know what you thought about it. Good or bad, it always helps for the reporter to know that you are paying attention.

There are many reasons why public policy is important. It is possible that in any given year are the law that you are pushing for will not pass. In that case it is especially critical to know why you are embarking on a public policy initiative.

Influencing Legislation and Public Policy

It is irresistible to state the obvious—engaging in public policy work is a way to pass better laws.

Demonstrate and Build the Power of the Organization

Turning out people for legislative hearings, rallies, generating phone calls and letters, even the very act of pushing for changes to the law at all, are demonstrations of your organization's power. The act of building the base to engage in these activities likewise builds the power of the organization.

Cultivating Allies

A public policy campaign is an opportunity to find allies. Sometimes the allies will be short term allies who only care about the single issue that you are pushing that session, but sometimes it is the opportunity to work with organizations who have the potential to be long term allies. Short term allies can create opportunities if they have a lot of clout and can push your single issue. Long term allies can strengthen your organization in the long run.

Creating Leadership Opportunities

Every opportunity that leaders in your community have to fight for their values is a potential opportunity to deepen the leadership in the community. So much work needs to be done in a public policy campaign that there are unlimited opportunities for homeowners to take on leadership roles. Whether it is being on a legislative committee, doing outreach in the community, or meeting with an elected official, public policy initiatives are a great opportunity to identify new leaders.

Getting Your Message Out

The press will only cover issues if they feel there is something newsworthy. While what the press deems newsworthy can be an area of some debate, a public policy campaign is an opportunity to create the news and get your issues known on a broader level. Even if a particular piece of legislation does not prevail, sending out press releases for key hearings or events can peak the interest of the press. This, in turn, can present your message to a broader audience and create greater awareness of your issues. Ultimately, this increased public awareness is an incentive for your legislator to do something to address your issues.

Developing Relationships

Developing relationships with policy makers can pay dividends in the long term, even if the policy that you are pushing for does not pass in the short term. In any issue that you work on, it is likely that the opposition has staff who are frantically trying to build relationships and become the go-to people. If you are going toe to toe with an industry group, it is likely that they have a paid lobbyist who is at the capital every day working to get their message out and cultivating relationships with key legislators. However, the lobbyist does not live in each and every legislative district, and at the end of the day the legislator is not accountable to the lobbyist; the legislator is accountable to voters who live in the district.

Distracting the Opposition

Sometimes the best defense is a good offense. Getting a strong message out prior to the opposition's, gaining allies, and showing that you are a powerful force can be an effective way to shut down the opposition. If they are busy fighting your initiatives, it can prevent them from marshaling their resources to create hostile legislation.

One of the questions that every organization must answer as a first step is, where do we start? What are the first things that we should push for if we want to improve the law?

The answer depends on where you are currently. It is important to have a sense of the lay of the land, and to know what laws already exist in your state. It is also important to pick issues that are the things that are important to manufactured homeowners in your state.

Just as picking issues is important to community organizing, it is also important for legislative organizing and most of the same principals apply. You must get your entire constituency involved in the process of picking your issues. You have to pick an issue that is important to people so that they will want to get involved. You have to determine if it is the kind of issue that you could expect action on this year, or if it is the kind of issue that will take multiple years. You also have to be aware of what the potential opposition is going to be: will this be a hot button issue with the park owners, or is it something that they will not really care about? If the legislation that you are proposing involves government agencies taking on responsibilities, do you have their support? Doing a thorough analysis of the issue is critical to an effective public policy campaign.

Sample Questions for Analyzing Issues

Is it consistent with our values?

- What are the values that this legislation would appeal to?
- How is this consistent with our values (what we stand for)?
- Does this build our organization? If so, how?
- How does this further racial justice/racial equity aims?

Is the issue deeply felt? Is the issue widely felt?

- What are the benefits of changing the law?
- How important is the issue to the lives of people who live in manufactured home communities?
- Who benefits?
- Is there a downside of changing this law for people who live in manufactured home communities?
- Are our members going to be willing to put in the work on this issue?

Is it winnable?

- Who are our potential allies, how strong is their interest in the issue, and how powerful are they?
- Who are our opponents, how strong is their opposition, and how powerful are they?
- What is the political landscape for this issue?
- Is what we are proposing legal and constitutional?
- What is the level of public awareness of the issue? Has it been in the press?
- Do we have people with stories or testimony about the issue?
- Do we have examples to point to from other states?
- What resources would it take to push this issue (time, \$, volunteers, etc.)?

Starting from Scratch: Prioritizing Fundamental Rights

If you do not have special protections for people who live in manufactured home communities, or if you have laws that are missing some important protections, here are some ideas to think about as a starting point.

Freedom of Expression and the Right to Organize

One of the most critical steps to getting people involved is actually going and speaking face to face with other homeowners. Imagine what happens in a community where park owners can prevent residents from having meetings, knocking on doors to spread the word about activities, or even distributing informational fliers. Particularly in high-pressure situations, park owners have attempted to use the threat of trespassing charges to prevent homeowners from receiving vital information. One way to block park owner interference in getting the word out to the community is through freedom of expression and right to organize laws.

The basic premise behind freedom of expression and right to organize laws is that they allow residents and allies to speak out in any community in the state and distribute information and materials without interference from the park owner. Without the threat of trespassing charges, which can include steep fines and even jail time, homeowners and allies have a better chance of building strong resident associations.

Eliminate No-cause Eviction

One of the most basic and fundamental legal protections for manufactured homeowners is protection from no-cause evictions. No-cause eviction means exactly what it sounds like: a homeowner can be evicted from the community for no cause. Sometimes this coincides with the end of lease terms; sometimes it is simply a notice from the park owner indicating that a homeowner is being evicted.

There are many reasons that a park owner might wish to evict a homeowner without cause. One potential reason is to try to clear the park for a redevelopment, while at the same time avoiding any responsibility for relocation costs or longer park closure timelines. Another possible reason that a park owner might want to eliminate a homeowner is if that person is considered to be a “problem”, such as the leader of a resident association or someone who demands accountability. No-cause eviction can also be a mechanism for eliminating older homes from a manufactured home community.

Eliminating no-cause eviction serves several different purposes. First of all, it means that a homeowner cannot be evicted for no reason. Secondly, it protects homeowners who engage in organizing or other community activities from being eliminated from the community based on the whim of a park-lord. It prevents park owners from wielding ultimate control over every aspect of a resident’s life.

In a larger sense, eliminating no-cause eviction protects manufactured homes. It is an acknowledgment that a homeowner cannot simply pack up and leave if a park owner decides not to renew the lease or decides that it would be more convenient to have a less “demanding” homeowner. Instead, it ensures that homeowners do not lose the place they call home without a valid reason.

Retaliation Laws

As a leader in the community, a homeowner can become a target for retaliation. Even without no-cause evictions, park owners have been known to use any pretext to kick out those who challenge substandard living conditions or who push for rights in their community. However, there are laws in some states that attempt to remedy this situation. Retaliation laws flip the burden onto park owners to prove that the actions that they are taking are not in retaliation to some action by the homeowner. Retaliation laws can cover not only evictions, but also rent increases or loss of services. While retaliation laws will not prevent park owners from acting in bad faith, they can prevent them from bullying residents unchecked.

Why Start Here?

So, why do we consider these a starting point for public policy change? These policies create an environment that maximizes the ability of homeowners to assert their rights or participate in the political and civic process without undue interference from park-lords or managers. If you want to have a coordinated, statewide push for comprehensive homeowner rights, these are a critical starting point. Without these protections the park-lords will hold the upper hand in any organizing effort.

The number one question that everyone asks about public policy makers is: why should they listen to me? What chance do I have to make my voice heard in the legislative process when there are so many powerful people out there trying to get elected officials to do things for them? As grass roots organizations and social justice movements have successfully shown time and again, legislators can be forced to pay attention to the people that they represent.

You Asked

Always remember that your legislator is a “public servant.” Your legislator is supposed to work for you. Letting your legislator know that you are interested in an issue, that it is important to you, and that you want the legislator to do something about it is a vital first step to creating systemic change. Legislators have many groups competing for their time and attention. It is up to you to educate your legislator about manufactured housing issues. If you are prepared, if you have a powerful message, and if you have tailored that message to your audience, your legislator will listen. It is your legislator’s job to listen to you.

You have Strength in Numbers

On most issues you will have a vast numerical advantage over your opponents. Typically, your opposition will be the manufactured home park owners. For every one park owner there are tens or hundreds of homeowners. Know the scope of your numbers and communicate this to elected officials. While the statistics vary from state to state, nation wide millions of people live in manufactured home communities. There may be districts in your state where the percentage of the population who lives in manufactured home communities is politically significant or even overwhelming.

You Have a Broad Geographic Presence

Manufactured housing issues can be urban issues, suburban issues and rural issues all wrapped into one. Manufactured homeowners can live in every corner of your state. This means that there will be legislators who are accountable to manufactured home owners in almost every district in your state. Let your legislators know that they have manufactured home communities in their districts.

You Vote

Some politicians do not believe that people who live in manufactured home parks vote. In many places this is demonstrably untrue. If politicians know that your base votes they are more likely to be responsive to your concerns. Many state legislative races are won or lost by a small number of votes. If you know how many potential voters live in manufactured home communities in a district, and effectively communicate this to the elected representatives of that district, it can make them stand up and take notice.

You Can Mobilize

If you are mobilized, elected officials will be forced to listen to you. Personal phone calls, letters, emails, and meetings are all examples of ways that you can leverage your numbers into attention from elected officials. At key points in the legislative process you can alert decision maker that you want them to take action on your issue through various tactics such as post card campaigns, action alerts to your allies, and fliers encouraging homeowners in key districts to make phone calls.

You Build Relationships

Getting to know your elected officials and letting them get to know you and your issues are critical to finding champions at the legislature. This starts long before the legislative session begins. Less formal meetings, particularly in your legislator's home district, can be a good way to let your elected officials know who you are and what you are all about. It is a chance to give officials a good impression of manufactured home communities and the people who live there. Some officials may never have visited a manufactured home community and believe the same stereotypes about manufactured homes as the rest of the general public. This is your opportunity to set the stage. If you are having an event in your community, consider inviting your elected officials. Events such as National Night Out are perfect opportunities for elected officials to see manufactured home communities as real neighborhoods.

You Have Good Stories

The halls of the capitol are full of professional lobbyists paid to tell legislators about issues. Lobbyists might be working on many different issues for many different clients. They know the process well and can use relationships that they have built over the years to influence decisions makers. What they do not have - that you do have - is a personal story about the issues. The personal experience that you relate to your policy makers about an issue can make the kind of emotional impact that fact and figures cannot. Legislators sense that you really care about the issues and are not talking to them just to wheel and deal. Real people with real stories make a real impact.

You are Credible

If you are organized and prepared, if you present your message in an accurate and effective way, and if you approach your elected officials in an appropriate and respectful manner, you increase your level of credibility. You are one of the experts on your issues. Demonstrating this expertise to policy makers will make them take you seriously.

Can you go it alone when you are trying to influence public policy? Do you want to? It all depends on the relationship between the size of your organization, your resources, your power and your relationships, relative to how controversial your issue is. Unless you have unlimited time, resources, and tons of clout, it is wise to find strong allies. Just as individual homeowners form associations to leverage their power, homeowners associations form coalitions to create greater leverage up at the capitol.

Issues, Allies and Scope

Not every issue that you work on is going to involve the same group of potential allies. This means that unless you decide to form one catch-all coalition for manufactured housing issues you might be working with different groups of organizations on different issues. For example, the people who care about preservation of communities might not be the same people who identify licensing requirements as a key concern. With a broader coalition you will have more potential allies; however, some of them may be less invested in your issues. Additionally, it is important to anticipate potential conflicts within your group of potential allies. Keeping the coalition focused can eliminate the potential for major rifts within the group.

Not every ally is going to be your friend on every issue. The key is to know if any individual group is a short-term or long-term ally. Short-term allies agree with you on this one issue or set of issues, but may not on other issues. Long-term allies are the organizations that share core values and a mission that supports your organization's position in the long-term. In the instance of a formalized, broad scope coalition, long-term allies will be the most critical. They are going to be the ones who will respect your position, if not always agree with your entire legislative agenda. Short-term allies are critical for specific issues, but are less likely to accept or be interested in your entire agenda. While these allies can be critical for pushing your legislation, they are more appropriate for issue-specific coalitions.

Understanding Self-Interest

Each organization is going to come to the table in a coalition for a different reason. You must ask: why would a given organization want to participate in your legislative coalition? Understanding the self-interest of the various organizations at the table will help establish the level of commitment that each of the organizations have for a given issue. It will also let you know how to talk about the issue with a specific ally, and tell you something about the various organizations' approach to messaging on an issue. For example, if an organization is involved in a legislative coalition because their mission is to serve senior citizens, their message is going to focus on seniors.

Homeowners must also think very carefully about the role of park-lords in the legislative process. Sometimes there are going to be points of common self-interest between homeowners and park-lords. Remember; however, if you are working in coalition with the park owners' association, that they are going to be looking out for the self-interest of their members and could quickly become your opponents. From a strategic perspective, think about whether it is worthwhile to include organizations who might become opponents on an issue in your coalition. While it can be useful to work with the industry group on issues of common interest, it might be strategically prudent to do so outside of a broader coalition and on a more individual basis.

Why to be a Leader on Your Issues

With a group of strong allies at the table, it is easy for homeowners to become overwhelmed. After all, many of the people at the table will have clout and connections that your organization does not have. However, on manufactured housing issues it is critical that homeowners take a leadership role in setting the agenda.

You are the one who has to live with the consequences of any change in public policy. If there are unintended consequences that are detrimental to the quality of life for manufactured homeowners, people in other groups are only affected in an abstract way. Their lives do not change and they do not bear the burden of adverse consequences. Likewise, they do not gain the benefits of positive law changes and will have less dedication to any given issue. Smart advocacy groups understand that without the unique knowledge that homeowners bring to the table, they are unable to fully understand the impact of policy change.

Additionally, you as a homeowner are the expert on your own life. You are the one who is the most informed about how the laws affect the quality of life in manufactured home communities. As the expert you are naturally in a strong position to be the leader.

Finally, you have the base of homeowners. Your organization has the base of individual voters who have the strongest interest in the issues. This means that when it comes to developing relationships between engaged constituents and legislators, generating phone calls and letters, and demanding accountability at the ballot box, homeowner groups are in the strongest position to assert their leadership in a legislative coalition.

Tips for Leading a Coalition

1. Be assertive. Let the other organizations at the table know that you are the one convening this coalition. Let them know that as a homeowner you are the one who has to live with the results of the legislative process.
2. Be clear in establishing the scope of the coalition. This will avoid messiness and conflict within the coalition, particularly if the coalition includes short-term allies.
3. Be direct in talking about the goals of the coalition. If every organization at the table understands the scope and goals of the coalition, they can make informed decisions about why they should be part of the coalition.
4. Be firm about your position. This is not to mean that you should be inflexible. You brought people together for a reason and they may have some fantastic ideas about how to approach an issue or address the identified problem or concern. However, do not let your allies force you to adopt policy proposals that you do not feel comfortable with.
5. Be informed. If you are prepared and have done a thorough job of analyzing your issues, you will gain the respect of the other coalition members.
6. Be vigilant about park prejudice within your coalition. In an environment where park prejudice is accepted in the media and in everyday life, it is not uncommon for even your allies to have misconceptions about manufactured home communities and the people who live there. In both the formation of policies and the message that you will be using with policy makers, it is important to watch out for statements and policies that buy into park prejudice. As a homeowner you are in the best position to recognize instances of park prejudice within your coalition and deal with it in an appropriate manner.
7. Be respectful and understanding of the self-interest of other groups at the table. Knowing why other groups are there and respecting their positions can bring you a long way toward forming a consensus within your coalition.
8. Be aware of your power. When all else fails, if the coalition supports a position that is detrimental to the lives of manufactured homeowners you have the power to walk away from the coalition. Be clear about your concerns with the position taken by the coalition. Sometimes a lack of understanding of your specific concerns can lead to misunderstandings about the issues. Clarity can clear up disagreements; however, sometimes it is necessary to fight for your position - even to the point of actively lobbying against a coalition-supported bill.

Regardless of where you live, it is likely that you will need to work with people from different political parties. Even if one party is in a strong position of power in both the legislative and executive branches in your state, chances are at some point in time the ebb and flow of politics will change things up. Additionally, you are likely to be working with homeowners within your own organization who share vastly different political views. Knowing what values appeal to various political parties is an important part of refining your approach when dealing with elected officials.

What Do We Mean When We Say Values?

Increasingly, political parties use the term “values” to win votes. This language of values includes many points that are more noise than action. However, at its most essential level, the term values means the core belief system that underlies the decisions that politicians make on a day-to-day basis. Additionally, there are many hot-button wedge-issues that are mired in the language of “values,” but have little to do with the position that an individual candidate holds on issues related to manufactured home communities. It is also important to realize that political parties, while theoretically united on some issues, are not monolithic in their views. Values that may seem intrinsic to each political party are likely to vary dramatically from legislator to legislator.

Republican Party Values	Democratic Party Values
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Small government▪ Federalism (states’ rights)▪ People should be self sufficient▪ Government should not regulate business▪ Supply side economics▪ Limited spending on social programs▪ Conservative social values▪ Ownership society▪ Privatization of services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Strong government▪ Civil Liberties▪ Government should help people▪ Business should be regulated▪ Demand side economics▪ Support of social programs▪ Libertarian social values▪ Equal rights and civil rights▪ Public Services

The Squishy Center

Another important factor when thinking about parties and values is that each party is in a constant battle to gain ground from the large number of voters who do not have a specific party affiliation. This means that politicians are always looking for issues that benefit a large number of voters that can be framed in a manner that is consistent with core party beliefs, while at the same time appealing to a broader range of potential voters. Many manufactured housing issues can be framed in a nonpartisan manner that does not directly conflict with core party beliefs.

Third Party Values

There is a vast range of third parties with varying levels of political power. Even if there are no third party politicians in your legislature, it is good to be aware of third parties. The major parties are frequently trying to appeal to potential third party voters. If a third party candidate takes a strong position on your issues and the major party candidates feel that this could swing the election, the major party may take a strong position on your issue.

Framing your Message

As a nonpartisan organization, what does all of this partisan political party talk mean for you? Understanding the political parties and their values allows you to frame your message in a way that is attractive for your specific audience. The ability to tailor your message to your audience allows you to gain supporters from either political party. Additionally, there are some values that are common within both political parties: family, home, community, fairness, and justice are words that are shared in the rhetoric of both parties.

Example

Here is an example of how a message can look tailored to different audiences with different sets of core values:

Issue: Park owners should get tax incentives for selling parks to resident owned communities or non-profits.

Republican Values Message: Resident ownership of manufactured home communities allows people to be property owners and homeowners. It increases self-sufficiency and creates less of a need for government services due to park closures. It creates a healthy business environment because it allows park owners to make a profit while at the same time decreasing the need for government services.

Democratic Party Values Message: The loss of affordable housing due to park closures is devastating to the low-income families, senior citizens, and people of color who live in manufactured home communities. Creating a tax incentive for the preservation of this affordable housing resource will help homeowners save their communities and prevent people from becoming homeless.

The idea of meeting with state legislators is intimidating to some people. That's probably because they look at legislators as "big shots," people who are too important to listen to them. The truth is legislators are people just like everyone else. They love to be loved, and hate to be hated. Here are some basic tips for having effective meetings with your state representatives.

You are the Expert!

Remember that you are there to talk about your experience as a manufactured home park resident and how these issues affect your life. No one knows more about this than you.

Have a Clear and Unified Message

Don't just make up what you are going to say on the spot, spend a little time preparing your message. If you are going in with a group of people, take some time to compare notes and make sure you aren't saying anything contradictory or redundant.

Respect the Legislator's Time

Stick to the main points of the bill and why you want it passed. Legislators have very busy schedules. They will likely have only 15 to 20 minutes to talk with you. You can't afford to get off message, or waste time getting hung up on irrelevant personal issues. Be detailed but concise.

Listen to What the Legislator Says

The legislator should give their opinion on the bill you are proposing. If they don't, ask them! Listen carefully to what they say. Do not interrupt them. If they support the bill, it is important to know why (it may be for different reasons than yours). If they do not support the bill, find out why. Once you know their reason for opposing the bill, you can always look at ways to refute these arguments and come back.

Tell the Truth

This probably seems obvious, but often times legislators may have questions about the bills that you don't have the answers to. Rather than making up an answer, it's okay to say, "You know, I'm not sure, let me get back to you." That's much better than making something up and then losing credibility if it turns out you were wrong.

AFTER THE MEETING

Evaluate

This won't be your last meeting with a legislator, so it is important to evaluate the meeting. What went well? What didn't go well? What are the next steps?

Follow through on your commitments

If you tell a legislator that you will get back to them with more information, make sure you do it. Follow-up not only boosts your credibility in the eyes of a legislator, it also further develops the relationship.

Stay in communication

People who are effective in developing relationships with legislators don't just meet with them once a year, they find multiple ways of staying in contact. For example, after the meeting consider sending a thank-you note for taking the time to meet with you. Before major votes on the bill, call them to say that you are counting on their support.

Public policy is a multi-player game. This means that you are likely to be called upon not only to advocate for positive policy change, but also to battle against hostile legislation. The good news, at least in this context, is that it is easier to get legislators not to do something than it is to get them to take action. The bad news is that whoever is proposing the legislation has, presumably, gotten their message out to the key legislators and created the narrative of the issue.

Why Defeating a Bill is Easier Than Passing a Bill

Why is it easier to kill a piece of legislation than to pass a law? It is in large part due to the structure of the legislature. In order to pass a law, the proposed legislation has to pass through multiple committee votes, floor votes, and get signed by the governor. This means that there are many opportunities for a bill to stall out in the legislative process. If a deadline is not met to get through a committee, if a committee has a very full schedule and does not get around to hearing a bill, or if just one committee votes against a piece of legislation, that can mean the end of a bill. On the flip side, if you are trying to defeat a piece of hostile legislation you can sometimes kill the bill by concentrating pressure on just one committee.

Another reason it is easier to defeat a bill than to pass a bill is that the legislature tends to cling to the status quo. If there is not a clear and immediate need for a change in policy, the legislature may be reluctant to make changes to a system that is already in place and presumably already works. The other side is, of course, working hard to convince the legislature that the system is broken and needs to change.

Be Proactive

Establishing relationships, building your base, and gathering information about your issues are all steps that are critical to stopping hostile legislation. Even if your organization does not intend to push for policy change, building and maintaining relationships can help you block your opposition's efforts.

Vigilance

Watch what is happening at the legislature, even if you are not proposing any legislation. Keep an eye out for any bills that have the potential to harm your members. Cast a broad net when watching out for hostile legislation; sometimes things will slip through the cracks. Having allies who have a regular presence at the capitol who can alert you to impending problems, keeping an eye on key committees, and maintaining strong relationships with legislators can all give you a heads-up for potential problems.

Mobilization

Be prepared to get your base and your allies to communicate with legislators as soon as you become aware of hostile legislation. Remember, defeating a bill in just one legislative committee can be enough to kill a piece of hostile legislation. If the bill comes up for a hearing in a committee, you have the opportunity to mobilize your base to show up for the hearing and also to provide testimony against the bill.

What is the problem? Disenfranchised Residents

When Election Day comes, only half of all eligible voters go to the polls. They do not have trust in our democracy and see no reason to get involved because they feel that their vote doesn't matter and that they have no influence over decision-making. Candidates and elected officials appear to be much more influenced by people with economic power such as park owners, government agencies, developers, and fellow elected officials instead of the people they actually represent and no one seems to be doing anything about it. People feel powerless, ignored, and hopeless, but are sick of the injustice.

One challenge to gaining electoral power is the perception and sometimes reality that, like many disenfranchised groups of people, residents of manufactured home communities do not participate in decision-making, do not stand up and take action against injustice, and do not even know their rights. This is an assumption that causes decision-makers to continue ignoring the needs of residents and those with economic power to continue expanding highways, closing parks, and destroying communities.

This will not come to an end unless residents unite, take action, and hold decision-makers accountable. When people do not stand up and engage in the decision-making process they are unheard, allowing others to set the agenda and make the decisions for them.

Although we cannot make all the decisions, we can decide who does. People have the power and the right to elect representatives, influence decision-making, set the legislative agenda, and influence public meaning.

What is the Solution? Electoral Power

Electoral power is a collective tool we exercise to elect candidates, influence their stance on an issue, and hold them accountable. When people with a similar interest come together to voice their concerns and be a part of the political process, they build political power that can be used to influence and improve public policy and further social change.

Electoral power is successful in creating social change because it empowers and unites a historically disenfranchised group of people. They use their power to address issues of injustice, build political relationships, and make demands of decision-makers throughout the elections and into the legislative session. The power that they gain from their work at the legislature strengthens the representation of their communities and eliminates the injustices that they decided to fight from the start.

Electoral power provides access to a longer-term and more influential power that not only strengthens community organizing efforts and collective power, but changes the public meaning of the community and their issues so that their perceived power is stronger as well. Here we see that electoral power has two sides: it is both perceived and real. It is perceived in the way that it reflects a large voting block that has the power to influence election results and it is real in that it works as a tool to bring park issues to the forefront of political discussions and hold decision-makers accountable. These two sides to electoral power are what get candidates and elected officials to lead the public policy changes that support the communities they represent.

How Can I Build Electoral Power? Electoral Organizing

Electoral organizing, although a key element in creating social change, is only one step to building power and cannot be effective unless it is also connected to legislative work and community organizing.

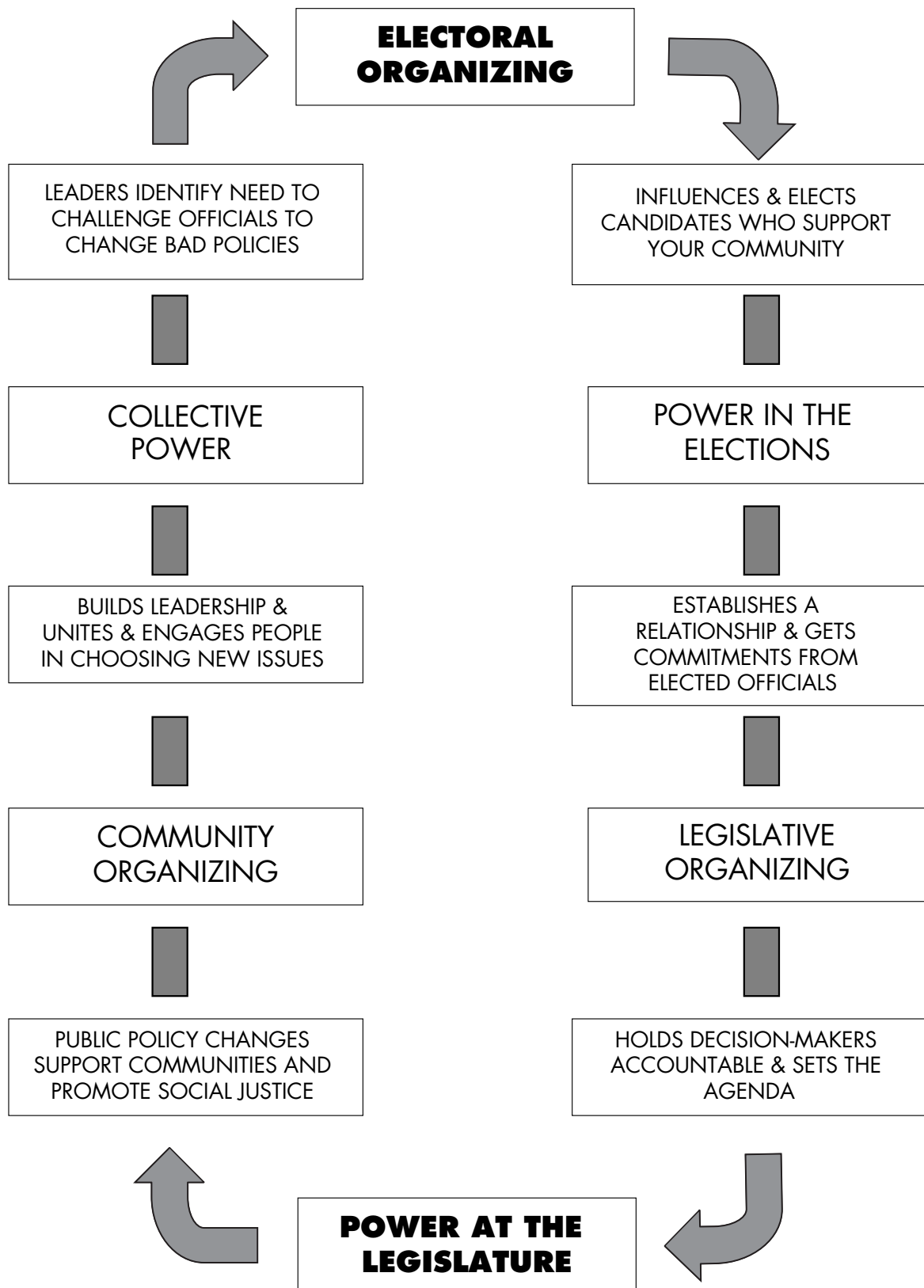
Electoral organizing also strives to achieve the same goals as community organizing by building power and leadership, but with a focus on influencing election results and holding decision-makers accountable. It pools together ideas, resources, and people to organize tactics and strategies that influence and educate candidates and elected officials. It builds leadership not only in the people it organizes, but also in candidates and decision-makers by challenging them to be better leaders and better representatives.

Electoral organizing strategies and tactics typically include, but are not limited to:

- Voter registration: canvassing, pledge drives, and registration drives can prepare unregistered and infrequent voters for Election Day.
- Voter education should answer: Why should I vote? How do I vote? Who are the candidates and what do they think? Tools and tactics such as voter guides and candidates forums can answer these questions.
- Candidate education: literature on the issues, forums, and questionnaires.
- “Get Out the Vote” (GOTV): canvassing, literature drops, voter guides, phone banks, rides to the polls, and assistance at the polls.

These efforts get more people to the polls, and define public meaning during the elections by addressing issues not previously included in political discussions. Electoral organizing often utilizes media and candidates to redefine a community’s values and make their needs a priority so that the perception of their issues is positive and ready to be further discussed at the legislature.

A POWER BUILDING CYCLE



*Fund Raising
Supplement
to the
Community
Organizing Manual*

Produced by:



Part I: The Fund raising Mind set

1. Recognize Your Challenges

“As an organizer I start from where the world is, as it is, not as I would like it to be. That we accept the world as it is does not in any sense weaken our desire to change it into what we believe it should be—it is necessary to begin where the world is if we are going to change it to what we think it should be.”

—Saul D. Alinsky, “Rules for Radicals” (1971)

Your problem is serious. Your solution is clear. Based on the outcome, many people are facing either an enormous benefit or a severe crisis. But you don’t have the resources you need to act and be effective. Sound familiar?

Once you have made the decision to commit the time and energy needed to develop these resources, it is important that you take stock realistically of the challenges that face you in order to overcome them:

- **Resources** You may be starting with little or no money, volunteers, or staff. As a result, you do not have a cushion that can absorb fund raising strategies that may be highly profitable, but are costly (in time or money), risky, or long term.
- **Experience** Your board of directors, volunteers, and staff are likely unfamiliar with fund raising strategies and uncomfortable with asking for money. You will have to spend time developing a strong, committed, knowledgeable group of fund raisers and a structure that supports them.
- **Name Recognition** Face it—Your group is likely not a household name. The range of funding available to a university, museum, or social service agency is a long way off. In fact, when people first hear about you, many will not understand your work and your goals. Some will disagree with you. Others will sympathize with your mission, but think it is hopeless, naïve, or idealistic. You will have to spend time carefully identifying and building relationships with supporters.

2. Philanthropy in America

“The word philanthropy comes from two Greek words meaning “love of people.” In modern times, this goodwill and humanitarianism is often expressed in donations of property, money, or volunteer time to worthy causes. Similarly, the word charity comes from a Latin word meaning “love” in the sense of unconditional loving-kindness, compassion, and seeking to do good. The roots of these words remind us of the fundamental reasons for the work of most nonprofit organizations.”

—Kim Klein, “Fund raising for Social Change” (2001)

The U.S. has the largest system of organized philanthropy in the world. Why is this? It is for the very simple reason that non-governmental organizations—funded through private sources—provide many services that, in other nations, are provided by the government and funded by tax dollars. This system is so large that, if all non-profits did the same work, they would be the nation’s largest industry—employing 10 percent of the workforce and generating 5 percent of the Gross Domestic Product. There are over one million organizations recognized as tax-exempt non-profits by the Internal Revenue Service and there are several million more that are small, grass roots organizations with no formal status—including block clubs, community gardens, etc. The obvious question to ask for those seeking it is: Where then does the money come from?

- **The Big Myth** While foundations and corporations have always played a vital role in supporting non-profits, they are overrated as a source of funds. Even with steady cutbacks over the last three decades, most nonprofit funding still comes from government programs. Following government dollars, more money is given to non-profits by

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individuals than all other sources combined. Every year since 1935, the American Association of Fund Raising Counsel has published the report, Giving USA. Their research shows that giving patterns have remained constant with gifts from individuals each year exceeding foundations and corporations by nine to one.

- **The Power of Individual Giving** In fact, approximately seven out of ten adults regularly make donations to non-profits. Of those, most support between five and eleven groups, contributing a little over 2 percent of their income. In addition, The Independent Sector has published findings in a book called Giving and Volunteering in the United States that 82 percent of the money given by individuals comes from families with incomes less than \$60,000. Many studies show that poor and working-class people give a larger percentage of their income than upper middle-class or wealthy individuals, which may be because the need is not only clearer to them, but something they have experienced themselves.

3. Why People Give

“If I am not for myself who is for me? And if I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?”

—Hillel

People give for a variety of reasons. Many non-profits appeal to motives that are not very persuasive: “We need the money” and “Your contribution is tax deductible.” Neither reason is special either to your organization or to the potential donor. Giving is highly personal. It is central to understand people’s perspectives and above all their self interest.

Self interest is one of the most important and misunderstood concepts in social change work. It is not the same as selfishness (or self-preservation) and it is not the opposite of selflessness (or self-sacrifice). It is simply that which is important to them or motivates them. In terms of nonprofit giving, the most common reasons include:

- **Tangible Benefit** On the most basic level, making a donation gives the person access to your programs and services. Donors need the organization as much as the organization needs them. In a very important way, a donation is really a fee for work provided. In addition, sometimes donors also receive newsletters, free gifts, opportunities to win prizes, member discounts, etc.
- **Personal Relationships** People also make contributions not just to establish a relationship with your group, but also to reaffirm a relationship with other people. There may be a basis for giving in an expectation, shared identity, or even tradition within a peer group, family, or community.
- **Deeply Held Beliefs** People give fundamentally because it is consistent with their values. People give because they care about the issue, they believe in the group, and often because they or someone they know is or once was in the position of people served by your group.
- **Establishing/Reinforcing Self Image** People give because the group expresses their own ideals and enables them to reinforce their image of themselves as a principled person—“I care about other people,” “I want to make a difference,” “I am a leader in my community,” etc.
- **And, Finally, Because They Are Asked!**

4. Why Do We Need Money

“We’re not supposed to want money—even though we need it to survive—because we’ve heard that ‘money is the root of all evil.’ This, of course, is a misquote. The Bible tells us, ‘The love of money is the root of all evil.’”

—Andy Robinson, “Grass roots Grants: An Activist’s Guide to Proposal Writing” (1996)

Why do we need money? In a word: Power.

The traditional political science definition of “power” is like an equation: It is the ability of “A” to get “B” to do what “A” wants, even if “B” does not want to do it. For most people, though, the experience of “power” is more personal and often very negative. Many people feel victimized by the use of power. The classic statement of Lord Acton is often remembered as: “Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” Our own negative experience of power is so pervasive, we cannot even remember the quote accurately as: “Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.”

Like money, power is something we’re not supposed to want. It comes with a lot of fears: Will developing power corrupt me or make me seem like a bad person? Will I spend time and effort developing power only to fail? Will I be successful in support of the wrong solution and make matters worse? Can I accept that any solution comes with winners and losers and not everyone will be happy?

There is the temptation then to use a different word. But, as Mark Twain said: “The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightening and a lightening bug.” Ultimately, if are interested in promoting social change, we are interested in altering the relations of power. We are interested in permanently changing how decisions are made.

Power comes from two sources that support and reinforce each other: organized money and organized people. With success in organizing people, you have already developed a number of resources including the skills, energy, and experience of your volunteers. Success in organizing money allows you to:

- **Organize More People** It gives you the resources to expand your existing efforts and allows you to bring in more people and to broaden your skills and experience.
- **Take on Larger Challenges** It can put you in a better position to retain and build on the momentum of your last effort so that you can move on to your next, larger campaign.
- **Alter Decision Making** Once it is clear that you have resources and are a stable, growing organization, you become the “other side” that has to be consulted in any decision.
- **Protect Victories** Any victory once won can be easily lost if no one is there to protect it. Wins can become losses based on how agencies enforce it, how courts interpret it, and if future decision-makers will reverse it.

5. What Gets You the Money

So we need the money and there are people who are interested in giving it. But what gets us the money? It’s important to think about what individuals or organizations in a position to give money are considering when they consider whether to give money to you. It could include any or all of the following reasons:

- **Issue** Do they care about what the organization does? Are your concerns also their concerns?
- **Legitimacy** Have they heard of you? Do you strike them as being well-organized and competent?
- **Word of Mouth** Are others supporting you? Do people or organizations they know support you?
- **Enthusiasm** Do you convey a sense that you are excited and committed?
- **Organizational History** Can you point to a track record of getting things done?

- **Realistic Goals** Are your goals ones that they will see as achievable? Can you deliver on what you promise?
- **Uniqueness of Organization and/or Project** Is your organization filling a unique niche important to them?
- **Staying Power** Do they see you as an organization that will sustain and grow?
- **Competence** Is your organization lead by competent people? Will their contributions be used well?

Part II: Sources of Funds

There are many ways to raise money for your issues and your organization. Each method has a variety of advantages and disadvantages. One very broad distinction that is made between different Fund raising methods is who exercises control over funding decisions: is it your organization and constituency, or is it an outside party? This is sometimes discussed as internal versus external Fund raising, or grass roots versus grass-tops Fund raising.

Grass roots Fund raising is raising money from and by your constituency. It is the most ideal. If you think about it like an organizing campaign, it accomplishes social change in three ways:

- **Win Real Victories** You have developed a constituency that is capable of setting and achieving Fund raising goals. In addition, you have raised it without outside involvement and therefore outside obligations and so you have raised money for social change work without any limits on it.
- **Give People a Sense of Their Own Power** When you involve many people in setting and reaching a Fund raising goal, you give people the sense that they have the ability not just one talented fund raiser. It also makes your organization a more stable one because its financial foundation is built on a broader range of both funders and fund raisers.
- **Change the Relations of Power** If your group develops its own internal funding base through grass roots Fund raising, it reinforces the perception of your grass roots organizing power and it makes it clear that your funding, and therefore your organization, is here to stay.

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It is, however, important to develop a diverse mix of funding sources. Relying entirely on one source of funding is like building a one-legged stool. Even if it can stand on one leg, it is still inherently less stable. Some of the other ways you will want to look at raising funds are external or “grass-top” Fund raising methods. Here are some of the advantages and disadvantages:

External Sources or Grass Top Fund raising

Fund raising Type	Methods	Advantages	Disadvantages
Community and Private Foundations	Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are easy to approach for money since exist to be asked for money. • Grants may be large. • Grant requests cost little in time and money. • Can be a good source of start-up funds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only one in six requests produce funds. • Decision-making time line can be long. • Funding is based on the priorities of the foundation not your members. • Foundations often have limits that prevent ongoing funding.
Corporations	Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They have money. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typically small amounts. • Rarely ongoing support. • Usually require substantial publicity in return. • May be on the wrong side of your issues.
Government	Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be very large. • May be easy to get if you perform a service the government wants to fund. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typically many restrictions. • Typically burdensome reporting requirements. • Notoriously unstable.
Religious Institutions, Service Clubs & Small Businesses	Donation, second collection, percent of sales, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their decision-making process is often short and simple. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typically small amounts. • Rarely ongoing support.

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Internal Sources or Grass roots Fund raising

Fund raising Type	Methods	Advantages	Disadvantages
Membership	Member dues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides leaders and volunteers. • Maintains political base of support. • Typically a stable base of income. • Provides potential individual donors and event attendees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People don't like to ask. • Takes a long time to build a base. • Requires significant time and money. • Requires newsletter or other services in return. • Requires membership list maintenance system.
Individual Donors	Small donor, major donor, bequests, door-to-door canvassing, phone-a-thon, internet, direct mail, challenge campaign, pass the hat, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deepens connection to members. • High likelihood of success. • High return on investment. • Likely long-term source of support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People don't like to ask. • Requires maintaining relationships.
Fund raising Events	Bingo, bowl-a-thons, dinners, benefit concerts or performances, house party, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large volunteer participation. • Opportunity for public outreach. • Chance to establish a tradition. • "Doesn't feel like begging." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often little return for investment of time and money. • Can burn out volunteers, who then avoid other Fund raising activities.
Fund raisers	Fund raising walk, raffles, garage sales, bake sales, silent auction, change jars, recycling donations, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large volunteer participation. • Opportunity for public outreach. • Chance to establish a tradition. • "Doesn't feel like begging." 	Often earn small amounts.
Workplace Donors	United Way, Community Shares USA, etc.	—	—

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Fund raising Type	Methods	Advantages	Disadvantages
Earned Income	Contracts, fees, newsletter ads/ ad books, speaking fees, sell merchandise, etc.	—	—
In-Kind Contribution	Furniture, equipment, supplies, services, time, etc.	—	—

Section III: How to Raise Funds

1. Foundation Grants

Foundations may offer one type or several different types of grants. You need to clearly identify the type of grant you are applying for when you begin to develop a proposal. Many foundations offer only “program” or “project” grants. For these types of grants, you will be required to identify either a broad, ongoing area of your work that is defined by the issues you address (i.e. a program), or a narrowly defined set of activities with specific, measurable outcomes, and a beginning and ending date (i.e. a project). “General support” grants are less available, but do exist. When they are available, they can be a good source of funds for broader organizational, leadership, and issue development. You may also be able to identify some “matching or challenge” grants that can be used to support your efforts to diversifying your funding by matching money raised through other methods, such as membership dues, Fund raising events, and individual donor campaigns.

The first step in submitting a grant proposal is collecting your thoughts. Before you do anything else, you will want to start by developing a “case statement” that explains why your organization exists, what need it was set up to meet, how it wants to meet this need, and its capacity to do so. The goal is to provide a complete picture, but to be clear and relatively brief. Foundations often impose very tight limits on the number of pages. The following is a basic outline similar to many used by foundations:

- **Statement of Mission** Why does your organization exist?
- **Description of Goals** What will you do about why your organization exists?
- **List of Specific, Measurable, and Time-Limited Objectives** How will you accomplish your goals?
- **Summary of the Organization’s History** Do you have a track record showing accomplishments?
- **Structure of the Organization** How is your membership and governance consistent with your goals?
- **Fund raising Strategy / Plan, Financial Statement & Budget** How are your expenses consistent with your mission and how will resources be managed sustainably?

Steps for Developing a Grant Proposal:

- **Research** There are over 60,000 private and community foundations in the United States. You could just play the numbers and send out lots of proposals assuming that some will be funded. This will cost you a lot of time and at least some money. You will want to narrow the scope to those foundations that are your most likely prospects. Some of the most important considerations are what geographic area they serve, what are their areas of interest, what is their typical grant size, and what types of groups they have previously supported. Foundation directories, in both printed and electronic, are available for sale and at many public libraries. Much of this information is also available online through both web-based directories and the foundations own web sites. You can also answer some of these questions by looking at the newsletter, annual reports, or web sites of similar groups to find out who is funding them.
- **Contact** Once you have identified a manageable list of target foundations, you will want to contact them to obtain or verify that there has not been a substantial change to their focus areas. You will also want to ask about or verify the application process, deadlines, contact person, etc. In some cases, a foundation may actually require a telephone inquiry prior to submission of a proposal. Foundation staff are often very friendly and contacting them before you submit a proposal is also your opportunity to get some advice on submitting a request.
- **Letter of Intent** Many foundations will ask you to send a short “letter of intent”, which is often limited to 1 or 2 pages. This allows both you and the foundation to determine whether you are a general match before time is invested in a detailed proposal. You should send the letter on letterhead to a specific identified contact with the foundation. If you have done a good job with your initial case statement, you should have something to use as a good resource. The key elements in the letter are: (1) who you are (your group, who you serve, where you are located, and when you were established); (2) what you propose to do (your project, your capacities to conduct the project, why it is needed, who it will serve, what outcomes you expect, and the project budget); (3) what you are asking for (what type of grant and for what dollar amount); and (4) follow up (thank them for their time and attention and ask if you might submit a full proposal).
- **Proposal** If the foundation welcomes a full proposal, you can begin to expand on the your initial case statement and possibly your letter of intent. Make sure that you are using the proper format for this proposal. Make sure that you understand and follow the foundation’s established guidelines, but also make sure that you are making it easy on the eyes—use a large, readable font; number and label the pages; include margins and spacing; etc. The basic components of a grant proposal are:
 - **Cover Letter** This is the first thing that the foundation staff will read, but the last thing you will write. It provides a brief reminder of previous contact or support, your mission, your proposal, how it meets the foundation’s guidelines and interests, and the amount you are requesting.
 - **Cover Page and Executive Summary** Many foundations require a cover sheet or summary that includes basic information like title of the project, submission date, beginning and ending dates for the project, total project budget, amount requested, contact persons and phone numbers for your organization, and a brief summary describing the need and your proposed activities to address this need (normally two paragraphs).
 - **Organization History** Describe your mission, your constituency, your goals, your accomplishments, and when you were formed. Emphasize the aspects of your work that relate to your proposed project.

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- **Problem Statement** Describe the need you have identified, what problems produced that need, and any other relevant background. If you can use specific stories to illustrate the larger problem do so.
- **Program Goals and Objectives** Identify what you hope to achieve. “Goals” restate the need your group seeks to address (i.e. manufactured home parks are at risk for redevelopment). “Objectives” are the measurable outcomes (i.e. preserve up to six at-risk communities each year).
- **Strategy and Implementation** Identify how you are going to meet your goals and objectives. This should your nuts-and-bolts methods (i.e. monitor at-risk parks, conduct outreach to threaten home owners, recruit housing preservation groups, etc.).
- **Timeline** Develop a timeline with deadlines or benchmarks to indicate when you will employ strategies or meet objectives.
- **Evaluation** Indicate how you will define and measure your success or failure. This should be clear if you have identified measurable objectives and specific strategies. You should find ways to quantify your project. You should also talk about how you will learn from and build on the work in your proposal.
- **Personnel** The foundation may ask for brief biographies, or even resumes, for key board members, staff, or project volunteer leaders.
- **Budgets** You will need to submit an annual budget for your organization. If you are submitting a project grant, you will also need to submit a project budget. The budget should include both expenses as well as all funding being sought.
- **Attachments** Foundations often require additional materials with your grant request. The most common requests are for a copy of your Internal Revenue Service tax-exemption letter; a list of your board members; and a recent financial statement.
- **Site Visit** Foundations will often conduct an initial screening of grant requests to eliminate some proposals before they have any further contact with you. If you make it through this initial screening most foundations will set up an in-person meeting to further discuss and explore your proposal. This may be at their office, your office, or in a setting where your work goes on. You may meet with a member of the foundation’s staff, board, or grant committee. This is your chance to see your group, staff, leaders, and programs in action. Think about how you can best talk about and show the work that you are doing and the impact it is having on people.
- **Implement** Congratulations! You got the grant. Now you have reached the hard part. You have to effectively run a project, responsibly manage funds, and regularly update the foundation. Make sure that you are periodically reviewing your progress against your original project proposal. Even if it is not required (and it some times is), acknowledge the grant makers in your publications and on your web site.
- **Report** Nearly all foundations will request written reports. This will include at least a final report at the end of the project. It may also include an interim report at some mid-point in the grant. This will include both programmatic and financial reports. The foundation will provide you with instructions on how to submit the report and what to include in it. Make your reporting easier by setting up tracking and record keeping systems, saving media coverage and materials, etc.
- **Renew** If you manage the project well and get the work done, you will find it easier to raise money in the future. If you do a bad job, you may not be considered for future

funding and, even worse, could develop a reputation that spreads to other funders. If you used properly, funding from one foundation can be used as leverage to seek additional grants from other funders. So, strike while the iron is hot. Take advantage of the fact that other grant makers can now see that your proposed project is in operation and attracting support.

2. Membership Program

In Fund raising terms, membership programs are the base upon which you build other Fund raising appeals. Your members are the pool of people most strongly affiliated with you, and it's usually among them that you find your donors in other Fund raising efforts. So membership programs are a logical step towards a larger program to raise money from individuals.

Membership programs can also affect your organization's governance. In some groups, members are treated simply as "small donor" contributors. In others, members have voting rights and are the ultimate "owners" of the organization. The rights and responsibilities vary from group to group, but in Fund raising terms, these members are the base upon which organizations build their Fund raising from individuals.

A membership program especially benefits groups that need to:

- ***Represent a constituency*** Membership helps to show that your constituency supports the organization and its purpose, contributes, and influences the organization's direction. When you have a large membership, observers know they need to pay attention to your group.
- ***Mobilize citizens to become involved*** Your membership is the most obvious source of potential volunteers and leaders.
- ***Inform constituents about issues and build a base of support*** Through meetings and mailings, the members can learn about the issues and take on leadership roles.
- ***Rely on supporters for financial support*** A membership program, with its dues and subsequent Fund raising appeals, is a first step toward identifying a regular base of individual donors.
- ***Draw its leaders from the grass roots*** Membership is a good first step to identifying potential new leaders.

How to Manage Your Membership Program:

In general, a good membership program has a clear plan including a plan for using your campaigns and programs to build your membership. Some general criteria for measuring the effectiveness of your membership plan, include:

- Attracts members or contributors who are committed to your issues.
- Provides members with opportunities to become actively involved with issues and programs.
- Brings in enough members to provide significant support, both financial and otherwise.
- Builds a long-term relationship with members, both as contributors and as leaders.
- Retains most members from year to year. (The average annual renewal rate is 70%.)
- Recruits enough new members to cover those lost through attrition. (Generally, between 25% and 40% of total membership is lost each year.)
- Provides members with opportunities to increase their financial support.
- Nurtures new leaders and produces candidates for the organization's board of directors.

- Can be efficiently managed and maintained.
- Doesn't waste the group's resources or become an undo drain on resources.
- The following are some basic steps that should be followed with each member:
- Ask them to join around specific issues and actions.
- Thank them for their support and welcome them to your organization.
- Get all of their contact information, including phone number and e-mail address.
- Enter their information into a standardized and regularly updated membership list.
- Send them a membership packet promptly.
- Provide them with regular updates on the organization and the issues, including a newsletter.
- Contact them about renewing their membership during the month before it elapses.
- Standard Presentation on Membership:

Whether it is being made to a large group at a meeting, an individual at their door, there are standard elements that are important to cover in a membership presentation in order to instill it with context and urgency:

- **Introduction** Provide your name, your organization's name, and a one sentence description of your group.
- **Thanks & Update** If they are a current member, thank them for their support and mention one or two victories that their support made possible during the last year.
- **Purpose** Explain in one sentence the challenge that your organization is making the primary focus of its efforts right now.
- **Problem** In two or three sentences, provide background on the problem.
- **Solution** In one or two sentences, explain what decision maker you are targeting to fix the problem and what it is that you want them to do.
- **Urgency** In two or three sentences, explain the challenges that you face in getting the decision makers to listen and to act as they should.
- **Membership** Explain that the best way to support this campaign is join your group (or renew their membership) because this gives your organization the political and financial support to win.
- **Conclusion** Thank them for joining and explain that they will receive as a member (membership packet, newsletter, issue updates, etc.).

3. Individual Donor Fund raising

There are many ways to raise money for your issues and your organization. If an important distinction for you is who exercises control over funding decisions – is it your organization and constituency, or is it an outside party – then grass roots Fund raising, or raising money from and by your constituency, is the most ideal for you. In Fund raising terms, membership programs are the base for individual donor Fund raising, but it is only the beginning. The following are some general steps you will need to repeat:

- **Build (and Keep Building) the Base** The primary method for building your individual donor Fund raising is through a good membership program; although there are other methods, such as Fund raising events that will be discussed in the next sections. A good membership program includes an immediate thank-you for joining, regular

communication that includes ways to become more involved, and a prompt renewal. It recognizes that many first-time members will not renew and it makes a sustained effort to bring in an expanding number of new members. It also has a very clear understanding of why people join, both the reasons that tangible (i.e. newsletter, issue updates, etc.) and intangible (i.e. feeling connected, building power, etc.). Some of the common ways to encourage first-time members to join as well as to renew them and to increase their donor contributions include:

- **Promotional Items** Many established organizations will use promotional items to draw in first time members, such as pens, key chains, bumper stickers, etc. These items do come with a cost (although it is some times very small), but they can serve as a reminder of your organization and can help to reinforce their identity as a member.
- **Benefits** The most common benefit is a newsletter, but organizations some times offer discount cards or access to preferred providers that offer lower costs to your organization's members. An organization that intends to have a large donor base must establish a workable benefits program. The value of a benefits program is that it is a tangible way of demonstrating that the relationship you established with your member is reciprocal. It also fulfills their unstated assumption as an American consumer: 'I gave you something, I should get something tangible in return.' There are two basic guidelines for choosing benefits for donors: (1) the cost of fulfilling this benefit (both producing it and sending it); and (2) the likelihood that you can continue to offer this benefit (you can always add benefits but it is harder to take them away from members that have come to expect them). The offer of increasing benefits with higher contributions can also be a way to increase your individual donor Fund raising.
- **Premiums** Premiums are additional promotion items offered to donors who contribute within a specific period of time. Often they are provided toward the end of the year, when an organization is working to meet its Fund raising goals or right before a major organizational event. They can be items similar to what you provide as a promotional item or they might be free passes to an event.
- **Analyze Your Members** To build your donor base, you must periodically analyze the makeup of your membership to understand what kind of people are joining and why. This process will be made easier if you track certain types of information as part of your membership records, including: when they joined, how they were asked, who asked them, what is a key value for them, and what is a key issue or program for them. This will give you some insight into both recruiting new members as well as retaining (or even increasing the support from) the ones you have now.
- **Move Them Up** The goal with individual donor Fund raising is always to "move them up." Generally, donors over a relatively short period of time either "move up" or "move on." Individuals rarely give the maximum amount of support they can afford on the very first contribution. They are making the rational choice to make a smaller investment at first in order to see what kind of return it will get. If you conducting a good membership program (i.e. prompt thank-you's, regular communication, etc.), you are proving to be a good return and can reasonably expect an increased investment in the organization as the relationship grows. There is usually a four step process that you are trying to move members through: (1) a first spontaneous donation when they become a member; (2) a repeated donation of the same amount for another Fund raising activity; (3) a renewal of their membership; and (4) an increase in the size of their contributions, both for membership and other Fund raising.

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- **Donor Methods** There are a variety of methods for building members into ongoing donors, such as:
 - **Direct Mail** One of the most common methods is to use a personally addressed solicitation or “direct mail.” It is important recognize the need to stand out when you rely on mailings to renew your members and solicit additional contributions. Of all the mail sent in the U.S., 40% goes to households and 40% of household mail is “direct mail.” This translates to one in six pieces of mail being a personally addressed solicitation. It is the least expensive way (in both time and money) to reach the most people. A well-designed and well-written direct mailing can give your members some tangible with in-depth information that they can hold in their hand and review on their schedule. You may decide that you want to use direct mail as a way of bringing in new members by mailing to people you don’t have as members (i.e. a “cold list”), but, if you do, you should view this as a long-term Fund raising strategy. With a cold list, you are likely to break even the first time and only make money through a subsequent mailing to those who gave the first time. A successful direct mailing typically has four parts:
 - **The Carrier (Outside) Envelope** Many mailings fail because although the letter is effectively written, it is in an envelope that goes unopened. If you have the time, the most effective method is to make the envelope very personal: hand write the address; stamp rather than meter the postage; and use a specific person in the return address rather than just the organization’s name. If you don’t have the time to make it that personal, you may still want to include a “teaser” on the outside of the envelop (text or picture) that is intriguing or produces an emotional response.
 - **The Letter** The function of the letter is simply to catch the reader’s attention long enough for the person to decide to give. As with the outside envelope, your first goal with the letter should be to make it personal. If it’s not personally addressed to them, you may already have lost the reader. The reader will likely devote little time to reading the letter. In which case, it is more important that it be easy to look at and short rather than brilliantly written and profound. In general, your letter needs to tell them why they should care and what you want from them. They have also been well-trained by sales pitches to know that the key parts of the message to pay attention to are the first thing (why you’re there) and last thing (what you want from them). Often people will read the first and last paragraphs first in order to get an idea of whether the letter is worth their time. So, pay particular attention to the beginning and the end.
 - **The Return Card** It is important to include a card for people to return with their contribution. It makes it clear the action you want them to take. They are unlikely to sit right down and write a check, so it also serves as a handy reminder later on when they are paying bills. It is important sure that this return card has a very brief restatement of your appeal (so they remember why it is important to give) as well as your return address, in the event it gets separated from the mailing.

- ***The Return Envelope*** Don't underestimate the power of convenience. The number of responses you get will increase significantly if you include a self-addressed reply envelope. If you have the budget to pre-stamp the envelopes or set up a business reply envelope (BRE) account, this will also significantly boost your responses.
- ***Phone-A-Thon*** People complain about the disruption of Fund raising calls, but they work. They are more direct and personal than direct mail and, as a result, they produce greater results. The costs include some toll-call charges, food and drinks for callers, and follow up mailings. The basic steps for a phone-a-thon are:
 - ***Prepare the list of people who will be called*** This can include current or lapsed members, people who attended meetings, allies, friends, etc. Make sure you have prepared calling lists that include the information you feel is relevant (i.e. relationship to the group, previous contributions, etc.). You should also have a form or coding system prepare to keep track of when calls were made, who made them, if the person was contacted or if a message was left, if they plan to contribute, and if they want more information.
 - ***Determine number of volunteers and phones needed*** You can assume that a motivated caller can attempt 40 phone calls per hour and that they will actually reach 15 people per hour. They are not likely to want to call for more than two hours. Once you have your calling list, you can figure out how many two-hour shifts you will need to schedule and therefore how many callers you will need. Make sure that you have lined up the proper number of phones.
 - ***Schedule a phone-a-thon*** Plan for calling as a group activity to make the calling more social and fun. This can help to boost morale and energy, which will hopefully translate in the phone calls. Schedule a time that works for your callers, but also one when you are most likely to reach people (Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday between 6:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m.), but also isn't likely to conflict with some other major event (i.e. the Super Bowl, Halloween, etc.).
 - ***Write a script for callers to read as they phone*** Generally, callers will develop their own style for talking with people after the first couple of calls. They will feel more secure on those initial calls if you provide them with a basic script. This script could look very similar to the membership presentation that was described earlier.
 - ***Prepare three follow up letters and appropriate enclosures*** It is important that you follow up immediately with people after the calls. You will want to have sample letters ready (with the appropriate enclosures) based on three possibilities: (1) you reached them and they agreed to contribute, which means you want to send them a reminder with a return card and return envelope; (2) you could not reach them after a couple of attempts, which means you will send them a standard direct mail; or (3) they requested additional information about your group.

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- **One-on-One Meeting** Since the most effective way to raise funds is face to face, preparing for and conducting a successful meeting with a donor is important. Make sure you understand why you are asking them for a contribution in light of your group's issues and programs. Why is their contribution important? Make sure you understand why they are likely to contribute. What is in their self-interest? Why have they contributed before? In general, the meeting should go as follows:
 - **Establish a rapport** Stress the values you share, the common relationships, etc.
 - **Make the case for your organization** The need you address, your successes, etc.
 - **Ask for the contribution** Ask for a specific amount or a specific range.
 - **BE QUIET** Don't feel like you need to keep talking or they'll say "no." Let them answer.
 - **Respond to the questions or objections they ask** If they raise concerns about the amount or the timing or needing more information, respond to the questions they ask, but also offer alternatives (i.e. a smaller amount, a post-dated check, a follow-up visit with more info, etc.).
 - **Wrap up and follow up** Restate any agreements reached or commitments made during the meeting. Make sure to follow through.

4. Fund raising Events

- **Many people have participated in some kind of Fund raising event** an annual dinner, bake sale, walk-a-thon, raffle, etc. These events are designed to raise a small amount of money from a large number of people, rather than large amounts from a small number of foundations, wealthy donors, or corporations. Often people who give money are initially moved to do so because they feel they are getting something directly in return for their gift food, entertainment, learning, social interaction, a chance to win something, etc. In reality, they are giving to your organization or cause. The event provides a reason for them to give at that time. An added bonus is that this kind of direct return makes it easier for board members, leaders, and volunteers to ask for support. It's important to clearly understand why you choose to use Fund raising events before you commit to them.

Events are good Fund raising tools because...	They help build your leaders' skills. They increase the number of supporters. They publicize the organization to the community.
Events aren't good Fund raising tools because...	They take a lot of effort. They usually have significant financial costs. They might not make much money.
Good reasons to choose Fund raising events:	It can attract lots of people. It can provide you with greater visibility. It brings in new donors and additional contributions.
Bad reasons to choose Fund raising events:	Unlike other Fund raising, it feels "less like begging." It gives you an activity for new members and leaders. You've always done it.

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For your organization, there are specific benefits to Fund raising events. They are an excellent strategy for acquiring, retaining, or upgrading donors. If your organization is serious about building a broad base of individual donors, you need to consider having at least one or two Fund raising events each year. These events provide:

- **Diversity** It creates another source for funding.
- **People Power** It can develop leaders by giving them experience, skills, and confidence.
- **Ownership** It makes Fund raising everyone's responsibility and, with each request, it becomes more comfortable.
- **Community** It can create fun, involve more people, and generate more public awareness.

There are a wide variety of types of Fund raising events. In selecting the right event for your organization, you should consider several criteria, including the appropriateness of the event, the image reflected in the community by the event, the amount of volunteer energy required, the amount of front money needed, the repeatability of the event, the timing of the event, and how the event fits into the organization's big picture.

Some of the many types of Fund raising events and activities include:

- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| ▪ Ad Book | ▪ Bowling Party | ▪ Marathons |
| ▪ Auction | ▪ Car Wash | ▪ Pass the Hat |
| ▪ Bake Sale | ▪ Concert | ▪ Picnics |
| ▪ Benefits | ▪ Craft Sales | ▪ Raffle |
| ▪ Bike-a-thon | ▪ Dinners | ▪ Recycling Drive |
| ▪ Bingo | ▪ Food Tasting | ▪ Rummage Sales |
| ▪ Block Party | ▪ Holiday Party | ▪ Sporting Events |
| ▪ Book Sale | ▪ House Party | ▪ Walk-a-thon |

How to Plan a Fund raising Event:

Fund raising events require more planning time than one would imagine. The simplest event often requires at least a month to prepare and more complex events can take six months or more. Because so much can go wrong and because many things often hinge on one another, events must be planned with more attention to detail than almost any other Fund raising strategy. Regardless of the event you select, here are some basics for planning a successful, and repeatable, event:

- **Set up a planning committee** You will need a small committee of volunteers to oversee the work for the event. The job of the committee is to plan and coordinate the event, not to do every task. After planning the event, most of the committee's work is delegating as many tasks as possible. Each Fund raising event should have its own committee, although there can be overlap from one event to another. Events are labor intensive, however, and people need to have a break between events.
- **Develop a master task list** On a piece of paper, make four columns labeled: what, when, who, and done. Under "what," list all the tasks the need to be accomplished, including those that you think are obvious so that they don't get overlooked. Under "when," identify when each task must be completed and then reorganize the list in chronological order. Under "who," assign a specific person to each task or it will not get done. Under "done," note the date that the task was completed.

- **Prepare a budget** On a piece of paper, create an “income” and “expense” list. Look at the master task list. Put anything that will cost money on the expense list and any ways you intend to raise money under the income list. Create a column for your best “estimate” of the likely cost or income. When you have listed everything, subtract the expenses from the income to figure the projected “net income.” If this amount seems reasonable for the amount of work you will be doing, this is now your financial goal. Now, add an “actual” column and track the income and expenses on an ongoing basis. Keep a watchful eye on any expenses that seem to grow or any income that seems to lag behind.
- **Create a timeline** To ensure that you have thought of everything that should be done and that you have allowed enough time to do it, you should think backward from the target date for your event. This will force you to review what step has to take place before the next one. You may discover that when you account for all the steps that need to be taken that it is impossible to hold the event on your target date. In that case, you have to either change the date or change the event.

5. Corporate Fund raising

Many corporations have a related foundation. It may have been set up to promote the companies values, image, or just to provide a tax write. Fund raising from corporate foundations can be pursued in the same way that you could seek grants from other private or community-based foundations. This information was provided earlier. It is not, however, the only option for raising funds from corporations. These entities often spend ten times the amount they give out through their affiliated foundations on general advertising and marketing. Corporations will tap into these other larger sources of funds if they see a partnership with your group as benefiting their company's interests.

More and more nonprofit organizations are looking to break into this market-oriented Fund raising. There are three primary ways in which this takes place:

- **Event Sponsorship** The most common arrangement is for the company to connect their name with an event. This can include a financial contribution, donated goods, and/or assistance in promoting the event in exchange for publicity that the company sees as a benefit to its image and marketing.
- **Cause-related Marketing** The way this partnership usually works is that a company makes a small donation to your cause each time the company's produce or service is sold during a specific period of time. This could range from a portion of sales at a store to the use of services at a travel company.
- **Licensing** This kind of partnership involves a more direct and potentially long-term relationship since it would involve licensing the use of your organization's name in connection with the promotion of a company's product.

There are of course ethical concerns in forming these kinds of partners. Will the companies unfairly exploit your good deeds to sell their goods and services? Do these partnerships threaten your traditional sources of funding by changing your image or calling your independence into question? The following are some questions to ask to figure out if this is the right Fund raising strategy for your organization:

- Does the corporate offer qualify as a tax-deductible contribution?
- Is it a no-strings-attached offer of outright support from a corporation's budget for marketing, advertising, or public relations?
- Does the offer provide a profit for the corporation making it a contribution, but a share in profits?

- Could the offer weaken your organization's case for support from the public or foundations?
- Could the offer blur the distinction between your charitable role and the company's for-project role?
- Could the offer increase sales of a product or service considered harmful to the public?

If you decide to go forward with a corporate Fund raising strategy, you can start this process by identifying a contact with a company and submitting a proposal letter. The letter should generally include:

- **Addressee** Direct this to a specific person, either someone you spoke with or the official contact person.
- **Introduction** State the type of partnership you are interested in pursuing. In a brief phrase, describe the event, marketing, or licensing project.
- **Focusing** Explain why you have applied to their company in particular.
- **The Need** In one or two sentences, describe the need that this project will help to serve. Use one well-chosen statistic to demonstrate the need.
- **Your Solution** In three or four sentences, outline the project as a solution to that need, including one or two measurable outcomes.
- **Constituency Benefit** Describe how your constituents and not your organization will benefit.
- **Uniqueness** Point out how your organization and your work is unique based (i.e. issue, geographic area, etc.).
- **Budget** Provide the total budget.
- **Your Request** State your funding request. Indicate other support you have received.
- **Closing** Request a time to meet or to submit a full-scale proposal.

6. Workplace Campaigns

Payroll deduction programs can be one of the efficient and effective methods of raising funds. Through a workplace solicitation program, employees specify how much money they want to donate each pay period and that amount is deducted from their paycheck by their employer. There are several ways that your organization can benefit from payroll deduction programs, including becoming a beneficiary of the United Way, the pioneer of this kind of Fund raising, or of one of the other alternative funds in your area. Or, if your group isn't affiliated with one of these funds, you can still seek funds through what is known as a "donor option plan." Here are your organization's options:

- **United Way** They are the oldest, largest, and most powerful of these workplace funds. As a result, your organization may want to start by applying for funding through United Way before pursuing any alternative workplace solicitation program. You can get more information and application forms from your local United Way. There are some difficulties with the United Way. They emphasize social service over social change. However, if you are accepted, you can count on a significant and steady source of funds. If you are not acceptable, this may strengthen your case when approaching another program.
- **Alternative Funds** If your organization cannot or does not wish to receive United Way funding but still wishes to pursue payroll deduction Fund raising, there are a variety of

alternative funds. These funds often include a broader range of organizations and have a stronger social change focus. You can discover if there is another fund in your area by contacting the Alliance for Choice in Giving at: 217-761-1110, www.nacg.org, or P.O. Box 4572, Portland, ME 04112.

- ***Donor Option Plan*** In some communities, the United Way, and some of the some alternative funds, provide the option for employees to make payroll deduction contributions to other non-profits that are not affiliated organizations. The United Way does not promote this program (and asks local groups not to advertise or solicit contributions through it), but it still accounts for 20% of their workplace contributions.

