

# BLACK BILL OF RIGHTS



## Community Toolkit

Harnessing Your Power to Make Change  
and Fight for Black Freedom

A project of the Black Bill of Rights  
and the ACLU of Northern California

**BLACK**  
BILL OF  
RIGHTS

**ACLU**  
Northern  
California



Authors: Jasper James (Black Bill of Rights) and Tessa D’Arcangelew Ampersand (ACLU of Northern California)

Contributors: Claire Machado, Christina Iriart, Jen Woo, Nasreen Johnson, Sarah Rosedale

Design: Gigi Harney

Cover artwork and storytelling illustrations:  
James Shields (Creative Shields)

**BLACK**  
**BILL OF**  
**RIGHTS**

**ACLU**  
Northern  
California

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Introduction and Background</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Part 1: Understanding Power</b> .....	<b>6</b>
• <b>Identifying the Problem</b> .....	<b>7</b>
• <b>Cutting an Issue</b> .....	<b>10</b>
• <b>Identifying Your Targets</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>Part 2: Building Power</b> .....	<b>18</b>
• <b>Relationships are Everything</b> .....	<b>19</b>
• <b>Step One: Uncover Your Story</b> .....	<b>20</b>
• <b>Step Two: Find Your People and Build Your Base</b> .....	<b>22</b>
• <b>Step Three: Connect with Purpose and Develop Leaders</b> .....	<b>26</b>
• <b>Step Four: Create Infrastructure</b> .....	<b>28</b>
<b>Part 3: We Have Power</b> .....	<b>31</b>
• <b>Tactics to Win</b> .....	<b>32</b>

In developing this toolkit, we pulled together resources and tools used by organizers across movements over many decades. We especially acknowledge the work of Midwest Academy and Marshall Ganz in informing many of the steps and tools for successful organizing that we have outlined in this toolkit.



# INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Thank you for being here. The wealth that the United States was built upon was made possible by the capture and enslavement of millions of Africans and the genocide of Indigenous peoples. The United States of America is indebted to Black people; and yet, we have been systemically silenced, erased, and murdered throughout history and today.

Despite the Abolitionist movement of the 1800s, the Civil Rights movement of the mid-1900s, and the historic uprisings calling for Black justice in the summer of 2020, the United States has yet to hold itself accountable for the blatantly racist practices that perpetually undermine the liberation, safety and power of Black communities.

The Black Bill of Rights is the result of a multi-year journey that started with the killing of Stephon Clark by sheriff's deputies in Sacramento County, California in 2018. I wanted to understand how it was possible for police to kill innocent people without consequences. I met with families, conducted research, and began to understand the policies and systems that impact Black freedom. I am convinced that after 400+ years of lynchings, racism and excuses, this is our moment to put white supremacy on notice.

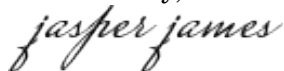
The Black Bill of Rights provides a framework for meaningful action to dismantle white supremacy and tools for community education that everyday people can use to collect the benefits of justice that should have come with building an entire nation. The project leads our community through four steps. First, educate yourself. Understand the policies and systems that allow white supremacy to thrive. Second, be solution-oriented. Using guides available on the Black Bill of Rights website, confront your local leaders and demand they stand for Black lives. Third, believe in the realm of possibility. The Black Bill of Rights is a living resource from which we can continually reimagine and recreate our future. And finally, be ready for a fight. That's where this toolkit comes in.

This toolkit is for new advocates for freedom and justice and, along with the resources gathered at [www.blackbillofrights.com](http://www.blackbillofrights.com) and [www.aclunc.org](http://www.aclunc.org), provides insights into how we can build collective power and knowledge in order to overcome and address disparities that affect our everyday lives. The toolkit is organized into three sections:

1. Understanding Power and identifying the systemic and institutional problems that arise from it
2. Building Power through community, collaboration, and finding the value of our own story
3. Winning Power through campaign and organizing tactics that allow the people to bend systems of Democracy towards justice

I hope you will find these tools helpful and will continue to contribute to the growth, learning and collaborative processes that are the heart of the Black Bill of Rights.

In solidarity,



Jasper James

Black Bill of Rights

## WWW.BLACKBILLOFRIGHTS.COM

At the Black Bill of Rights [website](http://www.blackbillofrights.com) we have gathered resources to help people and communities learn more about the specific systems and discriminatory practices that harm Black people. We have divided the site into three categories:

- **DEMOCRACY:** In the United States, some voices have always had more power than others. How are systems of voting, access to technology infrastructure, and representation in public policy decisions and the legal system all structured to keep Black people out? And, how do we re-enfranchise not only voters, but our voice in the Democratic process?
- **SAFETY:** All people deserve safety and bodily autonomy as a fundamental human right. Police rob Black communities of physical and mental safety through the state-sanctioned right to murder Black people with impunity and the racist patrols that terrorize communities. In turn, the healthcare systems that we must access for the mental and physical ailments associated with these traumas are underfunded and racist themselves. What solutions, policies, and campaigns deliver real health and safety by divesting from law enforcement and investing in racially and culturally competent healthcare?
- **ECONOMIC AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY:** Generational poverty is by design. Housing and lending access, educational opportunity, environmental policy, and criminalization exist to hold back Black liberation. How do we seize economic and educational opportunities and divert resources back to Black communities, instead of continuing to feed white supremacy?

At the Black Bill of Rights website, you will find sample policies and resolutions, reports, community-driven projects and toolkits that you can use to uncover the points of inequity in your community and campaign for real solutions that will change lives. Knowledge is power. With power, the people become the enforcers of the laws that are meant to provide all people living in a democracy with equity, freedom, and justice.

**This resource is meant to be co-created with people like you. If you identify additional resources, please submit them!**

# PART 1: UNDERSTANDING POWER

**Before we can win power as a community, we have to understand existing structures of power. Who has the power to give us what we want? And, what are the underlying structures that inform the problems we are trying to solve?**

## HOW JAMES AND TASHERA BUILT POWER TO WIN

Nine-year-old Tashera is curious, intelligent, and has a circle of cherished friends; however, her grades are low and she complains bitterly about returning to school each Monday.

James, her father, knows that anti-Black racism from her teachers and school administrators is largely to blame, but doesn't know how to change his daughter's educational experience.

One day, he receives a call notifying him that the school police officer had been called because the teacher perceived Tashera as threatening. James was angry.

The policing of Black students on campus and perception of children as threatening leads to disproportionate suspensions, Black students swept into the carceral system at a young age, or even use of force by school police officers.

Tashera's treatment at school needed to be urgently addressed, but what could one dad and his kid do to fight against systemic racism? Where do they start in understanding power and the problems that are harming them?

*See their story about power unfold through this toolkit.*

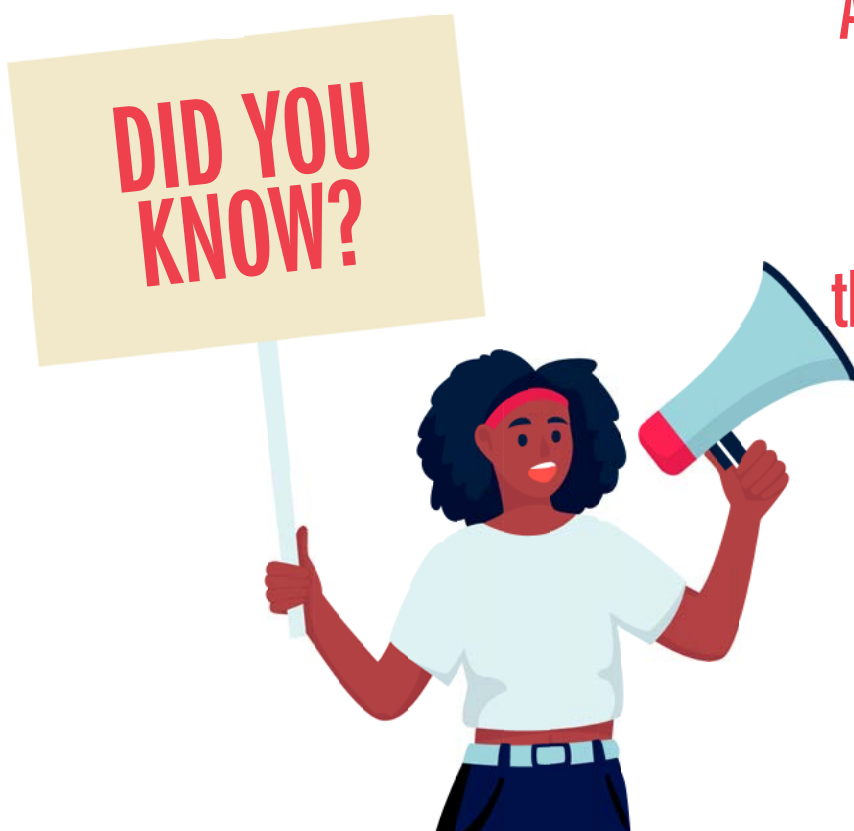


# IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM

The normalization of white supremacy in the United States has led to structural and institutionalized racism and systemic oppression that can feel overwhelming to an individual or family trying to fight for justice. Standing on the outside of systems of power, it can be difficult to pinpoint the racist structures that are impacting your family or community. White supremacy thrives on opacity, so the first part of understanding power is to identify the specific problems we seek to address and the structures we need to dismantle. Below are some starting points to understand how these systems work, and to gain the information you need to know what your demands are as an advocate.

## Community Research and Story Gathering

As an individual family, James and Tashera probably feel very alone in addressing racism at Tashera's school. It is easy for a school administrator to dismiss valid claims of racism and instead mischaracterize the child as poorly behaved. But through collective story-gathering and research, the family can uncover a teacher that unfairly disciplines Black students or an institutional decision that discriminates, such as curriculum exclusively by white thinkers. James and Tashera might find that teachers regularly call school police on Black students, and uncover stories of the minor or harmless behaviors that teachers mischaracterize as threatening. With this information in hand, a group of families can demand that the school face consequences, that teachers receive better racial bias training, that school police be removed from campus, and that a culturally competent curriculum be implemented that recognizes the contributions of Black leaders to American science and society. Uncovering these patterns helps to uncover the truth and highlight the specific areas for change. The Building Power section of this toolkit takes a deeper look at how James and Tashera can begin to build community and hear others' stories.



At [www.BlackBillofRights.com](http://www.BlackBillofRights.com)  
and [www.ACLUNC.org](http://www.ACLUNC.org) you'll  
find a lot of resources like  
these to help you understand a  
problem better!

An illustration of a woman with dark skin and her hair pulled back, shown in profile from the chest up. Her right arm is raised with a clenched fist. She is holding a large, dark, irregular shape that resembles a cloud or a mass of stars. Inside this shape, the words "we can change THE world" are written in a red, cursive script. "we can" and "world" are in a larger, more flowing font, while "change" and "THE" are smaller and more upright. The background of the entire image is white.

we can  
change  
THE  
world

**We have significantly more access to those in power at the local or state level, and therefore significant ability to make changes that impact people's lives.**



# Uncovering Data to Highlight the Problem

It is well known that government, policymakers, law enforcement and corporations hold a lot of power in our society. To a lesser degree, nonprofits, foundations, universities, think tanks and government committees and commissions also hold power. In these early stages of advocating for change, where you are uncovering what your demands are, all of these institutions can provide valuable information:

- **REPORTS:** Nonprofits, foundations, government agencies, academic authors, and official task forces convened by governments often produce reports after they study an issue. While these reports can be incomplete or carry their own bias, they can be a helpful source in backing up your claims or illustrating a similar issue you may be facing.
- **PUBLIC RECORDS ACT REQUESTS (PRAS):** California law requires government agencies to provide records upon request, as long as the request is reasonable in how it describes the information you are looking for, is not overly broad and therefore requiring significant staff time to prepare, and is not exempt from disclosure. How you make a request varies by county. Some counties have a centralized record-keeping system, whereas other counties require you to make your request directly to the relevant governing agency. Organizations like the [First Amendment Coalition](#) and [Digital Media Law Project](#) provide how-to guides and primers on the California Public Records Act.
- **DATA ANALYSTS, REPORTERS, AND STUDENTS:** In the same way that our analysis of a problem can suffer from not enough data, too much data can be overwhelming if we don't know how to analyze it for trends and conclusions. There is a steep learning curve to data analysis, but many resources. It is important to keep in mind that public data can flatten and erase the experience of

racism, by not adequately capturing details, by faulty algorithms that capture incomplete or racist data and therefore produce racist conclusions, and by data analysts who twist the conclusions to support white supremacy. Organizations like [Re:Power](#) are BIPOC-led and are training the next generation of data analysts to provide movements the data they need to fight for justice. Data analysis is also a popular education field, and many reporters are developing a muscle for equitable data analysis as well. Identify reporters or professors who demonstrate shared values, or reach out to an organization like Re:Power and ask for recommendations for help with data analysis on a sliding scale. Make sure you are clear about what you need, so they are aware of the time commitment and required skill.

- **EXISTING OR SAMPLE LEGISLATION:** Oftentimes in the effort to pass legislation, nonprofits and coalitions develop research that can provide valuable information in your own efforts. When the research doesn't exist, it's okay to ask for it. Nonprofits, professors, reporters, and others may have similar interests, or be able to make invaluable connections to students or other groups that can explore the issues your community is facing, provide policy analysis, and potentially even help to draft legislation.

Changing policy, creating new or different structures for decision-making, redistributing resources, or developing social services and mutual aid programs can all positively impact people's lives and take down white supremacy. **There is no singular answer for any community or individual. The resources and strategies in this toolkit can help you and others to understand the inequities at work, so you can build power and design a campaign that creates change in your community.**

# CUTTING AN ISSUE

Meaningful change is slow—whole lifetimes and generations slow. It is easy to think about problems like racism and brutality in policing that exist now, that existed 50 years ago, that existed 100 years ago, and conclude that change never happens at all. It is also easy to look at that same problem and feel overwhelmed by how much needs to change. This can lead to feelings of defeat and hopelessness.

Cutting an issue means breaking down a problem into manageable demands, where the path to winning is clear and achievable. This provides winnable moments that show us change is possible, motivate future activity, and keep communities of change-makers inspired to keep going. It can also reveal alternative issues to work on and help a group make decisions about where to best spend resources.



Directly impacted people should always be at the table when organizing. Ultimately, cutting an issue is about how you will spend your resources.

If you are making decisions about an issue without including the people who will be impacted by that issue, you run the risk of creating a campaign strategy for something that people don't want, or that won't impact their lives in meaningful ways.

This is patronizing and disempowering, and could cause more harm than good.

# Here are the questions to answer in cutting an issue:

## WITHIN THE PROBLEM YOU ARE ADDRESSING, WHAT IS:

- o **RELEVANT:** These are problems that people can name as having an impact on their lives. For example, housing inequity as a result of historic redlining might be the broad problem, but what people feel more acutely is an inability to get approved for a home loan. Speaking to that more immediate issue will help people to understand and join your campaign, because it will feel relevant to their lives.
- o **TIMELY:** Is this an issue that is happening right now? Is there a sense of urgency? Are there other issues that feel more urgent that would compete for people's time and interests in trying to solve them? Is there potential to win within a timeframe that will hold people's interest?
- o **IMPACTFUL:** Will solving this issue have a tangible effect on people's lives? Will that effect be felt widely across the community you are advocating for and with? Do the people who will be impacted agree with you?

## CAN YOU WIN IT?

- o Is the issue specific enough that you can identify a primary target to influence?
- o Does your group have enough people-power to have an influence?
- o What is the political landscape? Can you win through a vote by elected leaders? Can you win through a ballot measure?

## DOES IT SHIFT POWER?

- o Are you able to build power with people in your community?
- o Can people take actions in ways that contribute to their own sense of power and growth?
- o Does it shift the narrative?
- o Does it set the stage for future changes that contribute to building a movement?

Answering these questions might take research, many organizing meetings and tough decisions, as well as walking through some of the other steps of campaign strategy outlined in this toolkit, to determine how viable your issue might be. But going through this process can help you to find your own power and develop strategies to win.

# IDENTIFYING YOUR TARGETS

Once you know more about the problems, you can identify who has the power to create or solve that problem. Power is the ability to control circumstances and make things happen in the world. Across the different arenas that lead to inequity for Black Americans, most attention is paid to people with power at the national level: Congress, the President, federal agencies like the Department of Education. But we have significantly more access to those in power at the local or state level, and therefore significant ability to make changes that impact people’s lives. The tables in this section show the likely decision-makers within the different categories and what they have control over.

Let’s use the example of police violence. It is one of, if not the most, pressing forms of oppression impacting the lives of Black Americans.

## LAW ENFORCEMENT POWER HOLDERS

POSITION	Police Chief	Police Union	Police Review Commission	Sheriff	District Attorney (DA)
POWER SOURCE	Hired by City Council or Mayor	Police	Appointed by City Council	Elected by voters	Elected by voters
JURISDICTION	City	City	City	County	County
BLACK BILL OF RIGHTS CATEGORY	Safety	Safety	Safety	Safety	Safety
CONTROLS	Policies Police	Police Personnel Policies and Demands	Policies Police	Policies Sheriffs	Legal Action
EMPLOYS	Officers	Union President	N/A	Deputies	Prosecutors
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	<p>The Police Chief leads the department and analyzes the city's policing needs and decides how to fulfill them.</p> <p>Oversees officers, adheres to the designated budget, creates policies and procedure, develops community programs.</p> <p>Their power is extensive, especially when their management aligns with that of the Police Union.</p>	<p>Police Unions are ultra-powerful groups that protect police officers by blocking reform and legislation to retain power. They protect officers from being held liable for use of force or misconduct, enable overtime and high payouts that inflate budgets, block limitations on use of surveillance or military equipment, and deter demands for greater transparency.</p> <p>Police Unions use their money and influence to support local political candidates.</p>	<p>Police Review Commissions investigate complaints of excessive force and misconduct and racially abusive treatment by police officers. They may also review and evaluate policies and procedures of the police department and report back to the City Council.</p> <p>Their power and intentions vary depending on ordinances or ballot measures that created them and the political views of the appointees.</p> <p>State law and union contracts block their access to data and ability to make recommendations that lead to significant change.</p>	<p>The Sheriff polices the unincorporated parts of the county, usually covering rural areas and small towns.</p> <p>Sheriffs also oversee the county jails and often choose to collaborate with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) against state law and without necessity.</p> <p>As elected officials, Sheriffs have power that can't be directly controlled by the County Board of Supervisors. The Board of Supervisors' power over the Sheriff comes through the budget; they allocate money for the Sheriff and county jail.</p>	<p>The DA is an elected official who has the power to choose who to prosecute and the crimes with which they will be charged.</p> <p>DAs have an outsized impact on who is swept into the criminal justice system and who is given a second chance.</p> <p>They also influence statewide criminal justice policies and laws.</p>

While violence is perpetrated directly by the police, there is a vast network of government and non-government entities with direct influence over the individual actions of officers. The School Board decides if police are on school campuses and the City Council determines how much budget funding police receive. You can also see how these local elected officials hold power over other policies, jobs, and where parks and liquor stores are built.

## LOCAL POWER HOLDERS

POSITION	School Board	City Council	City Attorney
POWER SOURCE	Elected by voters	Elected by voters	Hired by City Council
JURISDICTION	School District	City	City
BLACK BILL OF RIGHTS CATEGORY	DEMOCRACY SAFETY ECONOMIC	SAFETY ECONOMIC	
CONTROLS	Budgets Curriculum Jobs Policies Police	Budgets Jobs Maintenance Parks Police Policies Zoning	Policies
EMPLOYS OR APPOINTS	Superintendent	Police Chief, City Manager, Department Heads	N/A
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	School Board members, also called Trustees, decide if police officers are stationed on campuses, review expulsions, set dress codes and other policies, determine types of classes offered, and set budgets for technology, counselors, and construction.	The structure of the City Council is dependent on the City Charter or Constitution, but commonly, Councilmembers represent a district as determined every 10 years during the census count and subsequent redistricting process. In a few cities, elections are held "at-large" and all voters in the city elect representatives regardless of geography.  City Councilmembers set policies and pass budgets that impact how much money is allocated to the police department, transportation, maintenance, and other city services.	The City Attorney serves as the city's chief legal counsel for elected officials and staff. The City Attorney directly advises the Mayor, City Manager, and City Council. One of their primary concerns is protecting the city from lawsuits.  When a City Council agrees to pass a policy, the City Attorney drafts the language, influencing the scope and strength of that policy. The City Attorney also drafts and reviews city ordinances, resolutions, contracts, deeds, leases, and other legal documents.



Learn who has power where

The Board of Supervisors also decides how law enforcement interacts with our communities, by overseeing the budget for the Sheriff’s office and the county jail. The Sheriff is independently elected and has control over the deputies and how the jail functions.

## COUNTY POWER HOLDERS

POSITION	Board of Supervisors	County Clerk	Registrar of Voters	County Counsel
POWER SOURCE	Elected by voters	Elected by voters or appointed by Board of Supervisors	Elected by voters or appointed by Board of Supervisors	Hired by Board of Supervisors
JURISDICTION	County	County	County	County
BLACK BILL OF RIGHTS CATEGORY	DEMOCRACY SAFETY ECONOMIC	DEMOCRACY ECONOMIC	DEMOCRACY	
CONTROLS	Budgets Health Jobs Maintenance Parks Policies Sheriff* Zoning	Marriage and Business Licenses	Elections	Policies
EMPLOYS OR APPOINTS	Department Heads, County Counsel		Election workers	
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	County Supervisors create and implement county-wide policies, local ordinances, determine how land can be used, and collect taxes. They also set budgets for the Sheriff’s department, public health department, libraries, and social services which include resources for unhoused people.	The County Clerk provides a variety of direct public services, such as issuing marriage licenses and approving filings for new business names.  County Clerks can be particularly critical to the voting process because they also serve as the Registrar of Voters.	The Registrar of Voters is responsible for maintaining the files with voter information, verifying ballot measure petitions, filing campaign statements that appear in official election materials, and implementing state, federal and county laws to run elections.  City Clerks serve in this role for cities, or they may contract with the county to run the city’s election.  This person may be the County Clerk or may be a separate individual within the County Clerk’s office.	The County Counsel provides legal services and opinions to the county and all county officers, including the Board of Supervisors and the Sheriff, therefore influencing how county officers interpret proposed policy changes.

Some of these power holders don’t have any direct authority over law enforcement, but they have control over other systems that also have a history of racist harms towards Black people. For example, the healthcare system is not designed to address the needs of people who experience direct and generational trauma. A lack of jobs, education, and housing opportunities lead to generational poverty and structural inequities. Democracy cannot function when people cannot access the core mechanisms that drive it. State-level decision-makers and agencies pass laws and regulations that influence some of these issues.

## STATE POWER HOLDERS

POSITION	State Legislature	Attorney General (AG)	Secretary of State
POWER SOURCE	Elected by voters	Elected by voters	Elected by voters
BLACK BILL OF RIGHTS CATEGORY	<b>DEMOCRACY</b> <b>SAFETY</b> <b>ECONOMIC</b>	<b>DEMOCRACY</b> <b>SAFETY</b> <b>ECONOMIC</b>	<b>DEMOCRACY</b>
CONTROLS	Passes Laws <b>Budgets</b>	Legal Matters	<b>State and Federal Elections</b>
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	The State Legislature in California is comprised of 40 Senators and 80 Assemblymembers. Their main role is to propose, analyze, and pass state laws. The state budget is required to pass through both houses with a 2/3 majority. All legislators are bound by term limits and can be lobbied by any constituent, regardless of profession, citizenship status, or voting eligibility.	The Attorney General represents the state in legal matters and provides legal advice to state government. The AG acts as the “People’s Lawyer” for state matters and is responsible for upholding civil liberties and fair and impartial application of state laws.	The Secretary of State oversees all federal and state elections and maintains a database of registered voters. They are also responsible for disclosure of campaign and lobbyist financial information.

There are also committees, coalitions, and professional associations that hold power in a community. A few examples are listed below.

## LOCAL COMMITTEES

POSITION	Language Access Advisory Committees	Rent Boards	Housing Authority	Hospital Boards	Bar Associations
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	<p>Convened locally in each county, these committees advise the Secretary of State on language accessibility of elections and election materials based on the language needs of that county.</p> <p>They also recommend which languages to prioritize and policies that ensure all voters can understand the voting process and vote in a language that is most comfortable for them.</p>	<p>These boards vary from city to city, but their main role is to determine the amount that landlords are allowed to raise rent in cities that have rent control.</p> <p>They can also settle disputes between renters and landlords and ensure landlords are following the law.</p>	<p>The county Housing Authority administers affordable housing programs including public housing, Section 8 low-income housing vouchers, and homeless programs.</p>	<p>The Board of Directors for a hospital oversees hospital governance including finances, quality of care, and strategic plans.</p> <p>Hospital Boards make decisions about mergers and acquisitions with other healthcare entities.</p> <p>As Catholic healthcare groups buy and merge with local hospitals, the quality of care diminishes for Trans and Gender Non-Conforming people and reproductive care, including abortion access and miscarriage management.</p>	<p>Organized primarily to deal with issues affecting the legal profession, whether on the local, state, or national level.</p> <p>Associations provide lawyers with advice regarding current public legal issues. Their main priority is protecting lawyers; however, they will investigate allegations of misconduct committed by a lawyer and take appropriate action, including revoking their license.</p> <p>There are also specialty- and identity-specific Bar Associations, such as the California Black Lawyers Association, where you may find more culturally aware legal representation.</p>

# Primary and Secondary Targets

Picking an issue is critical to identifying your target. Your Primary Target is the person who has the power to meet your demands; however, you may choose to identify Secondary Targets as stepping stones to reach your Primary Target.

Secondary Targets are important if you realize you don't have enough influence over your Primary Target. If you have a Secondary Target, then you must first think about how to influence that Secondary Target and win them over to your side.

## Power Mapping

Power mapping is a tool to identify who has influence over your targets and which messages and causes sway them. This activity can help you harness power. You could consider drawing it out using sticky notes:



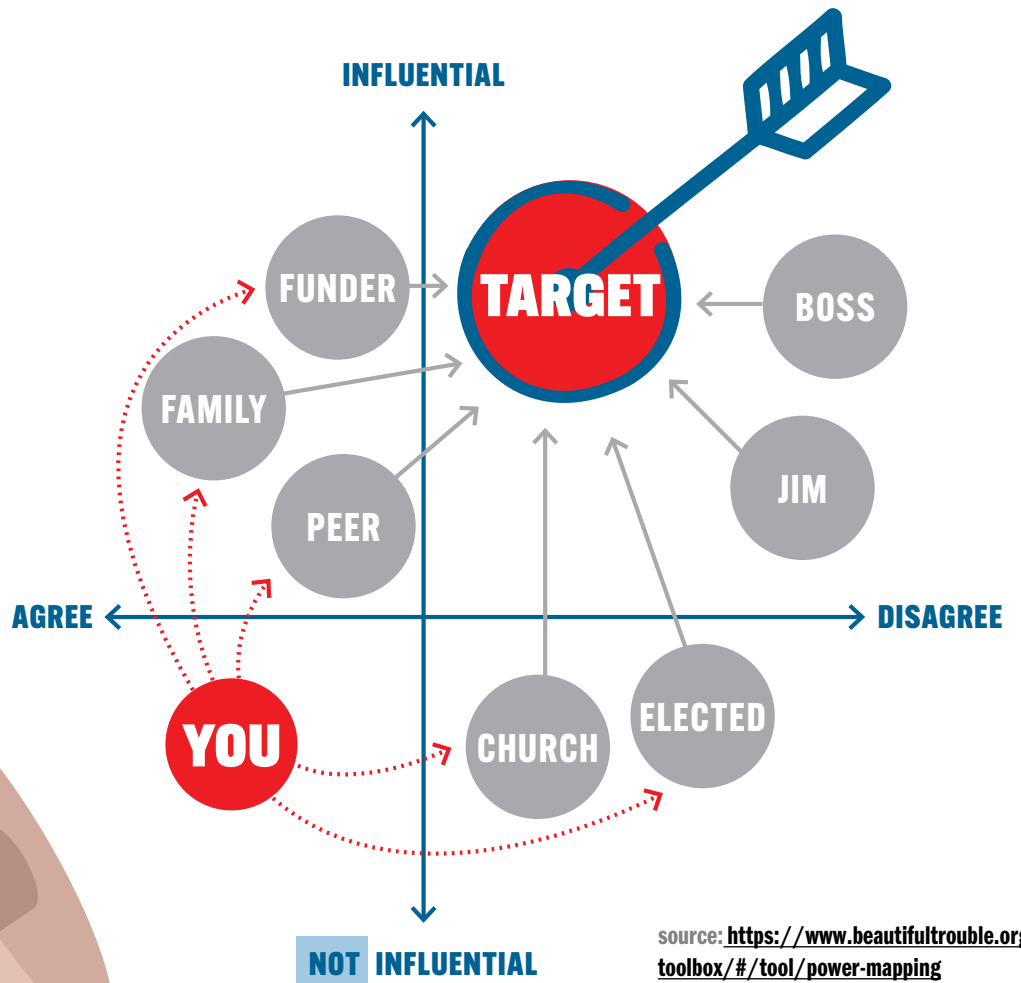
**PRIMARY:**  
SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENT

**SECONDARY:**  
PRINCIPAL  
CITY COUNCILMEMBER

1. Identify your Primary or Secondary Target
2. Map all possible connections to the target. Be thorough and creative. Consider:
  - a. Campaign donors
  - b. Campaign endorsements
  - c. Where did they hold campaign events? Do those places hold special connection for the Target? What does that say about their values or relationships?
  - d. Who speaks up on their behalf?
  - e. Faith leader connections
  - f. Political alliances
  - g. Work or employment background
  - h. Regular statements or messages they make about policy views or values. Who shares those?
3. Overlay the different connections on a matrix that answers (1) how influential they are over the target, and (2) how much they align with your cause. This step helps you to identify the connections that have the best possibility of pulling the target to your side, while also weeding out connections that may harm your cause or don't have the influence you need.
4. Draw relational lines. How are different institutions connected to the target? To one another? To you? A connection may not have a lot of direct influence over your target but may be closely aligned to you and have direct influence over a connection that can influence your target. Relational lines help you to strategically map who needs to influence who in order to get you what you want.



Identifying who has decision-making power over your demands enables you to make strategic decisions about your next steps. This is not as straightforward as it seems. Often, people in power will use that power to protect themselves, their families, their financial interests and the structures that keep them at the top. When your values, goals, and demands misalign with those in power, you must build collective power and develop a long-term campaign to push those in charge to wield their power for good. The following parts of this toolkit focus on how you can subvert, circumvent, and win power to your side.



source: <https://www.beautifultrouble.org/toolbox/#/tool/power-mapping>

# PART 2: BUILDING POWER

Power belongs to the people, even when the people don't have it. That's why we organize.



## HOW JAMES AND TASHERA BUILT POWER

At first, James and Tashera thought there must be rules in place at Tashera's school to prevent the kind of mistreatment she was experiencing. But, as they uncovered the problem she was facing, they realized that district-wide rules enabled teachers to single out Black students and that there were no consequences for bringing in the police, even when those interactions turned violent. More so, through conversations with other students and parents, they learned there was a pattern of Black students being unfairly disciplined.

Even though the school districts rules didn't protect them, James and Tashera were encouraged by the number of parents and students coming together to demand justice and fairness. Together, members of the school community gathered stories, educated others about what was happening, and built a coalition for anti-racist education.

As organizers, **people are the source of our power**, not just in terms of numbers, but in connection to one another, and to the shared sense of ownership in the strategy, tactics, and goals you develop together. Organizing is about claiming power by bringing people together, weaving our stories into an undeniable collective narrative, taking strategic action together, and developing leadership so that everyone has a role. We grow our capacity—in time, energy, skills and resources—to make change over the long term.

## RELATIONSHIPS ARE EVERYTHING

Relationships are necessary to organizing—without them, you are a lone actor. Relying solely on your power as an individual isn't much on its own but can be significant when joined with others. Relationship-building is at the core of organizing because it keeps people connected to one another, develops a sense of family so that even during hard times you share a common purpose, and builds community so that we have the power to make our vision for the world a reality.

Organizing relationships are about purposeful connections that build power in two ways:

1. *Base-Building* in which you bring more people into the work through networking and building your list of people that you can call upon to make their voice heard and amplify your shared message.
2. *Leadership Development* in which you help people grow their capacity to take on greater and more complex roles by investing in their learning and their sense of ability.

Fundamentally, organizing is about putting your time, resources, and energy into building relationships with others, so that your collective power is impactful enough to overcome centuries of disenfranchisement, marginalization, and oppression.

*Alone, we will struggle.  
Together, we can win.*

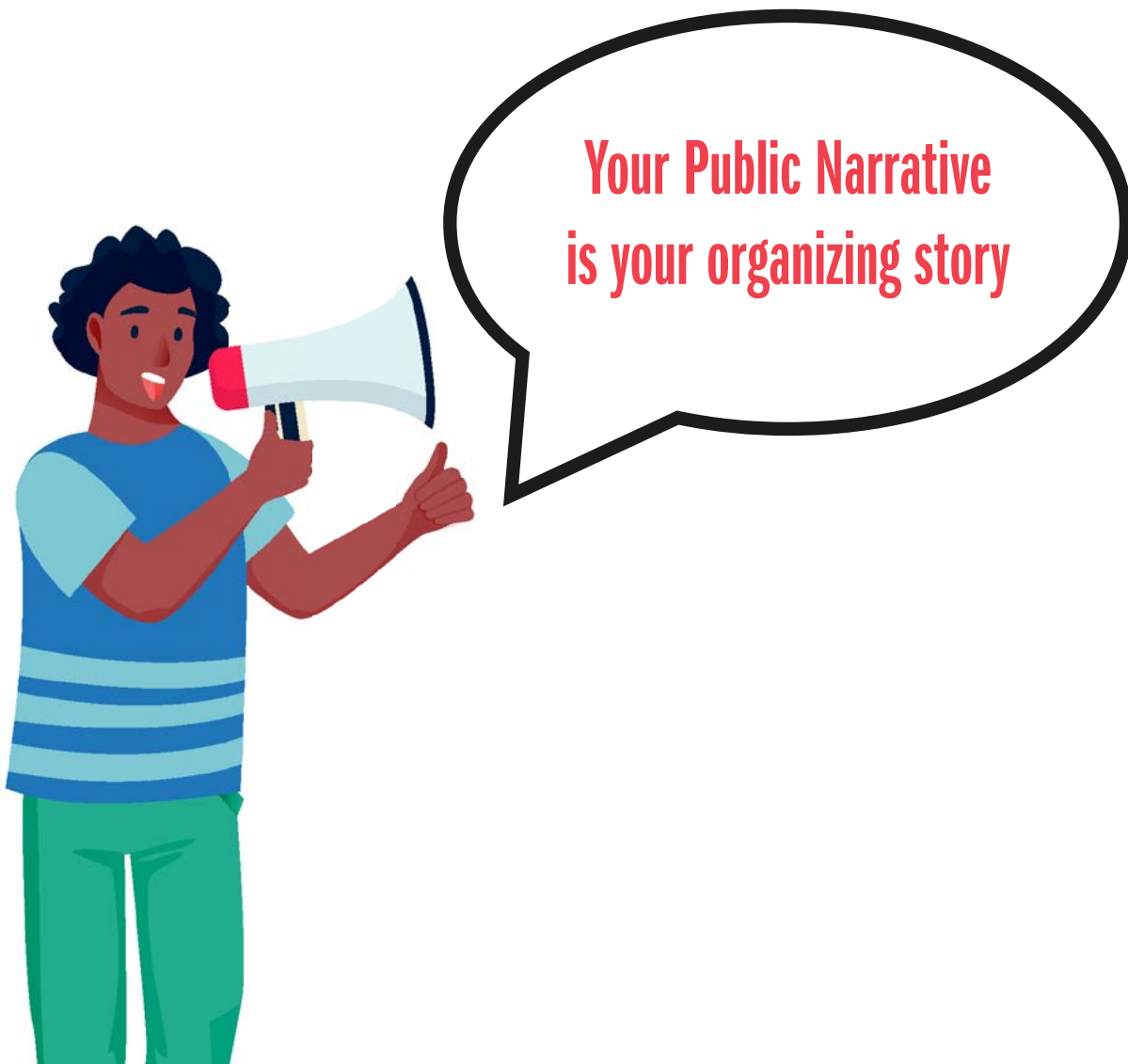
# Step One: Uncover Your Story

You cannot connect with others if you are unable to open up and share some part of yourself. As organizers, it is also possible to put too much of ourselves out there in a way that can be draining or emotionally traumatizing when someone chooses not to join our cause after we've shared so much. Developing a Public Narrative is a way to bring your authentic self and experiences into the work, but through intention that allows you to set boundaries.

## Develop Your Public Narrative

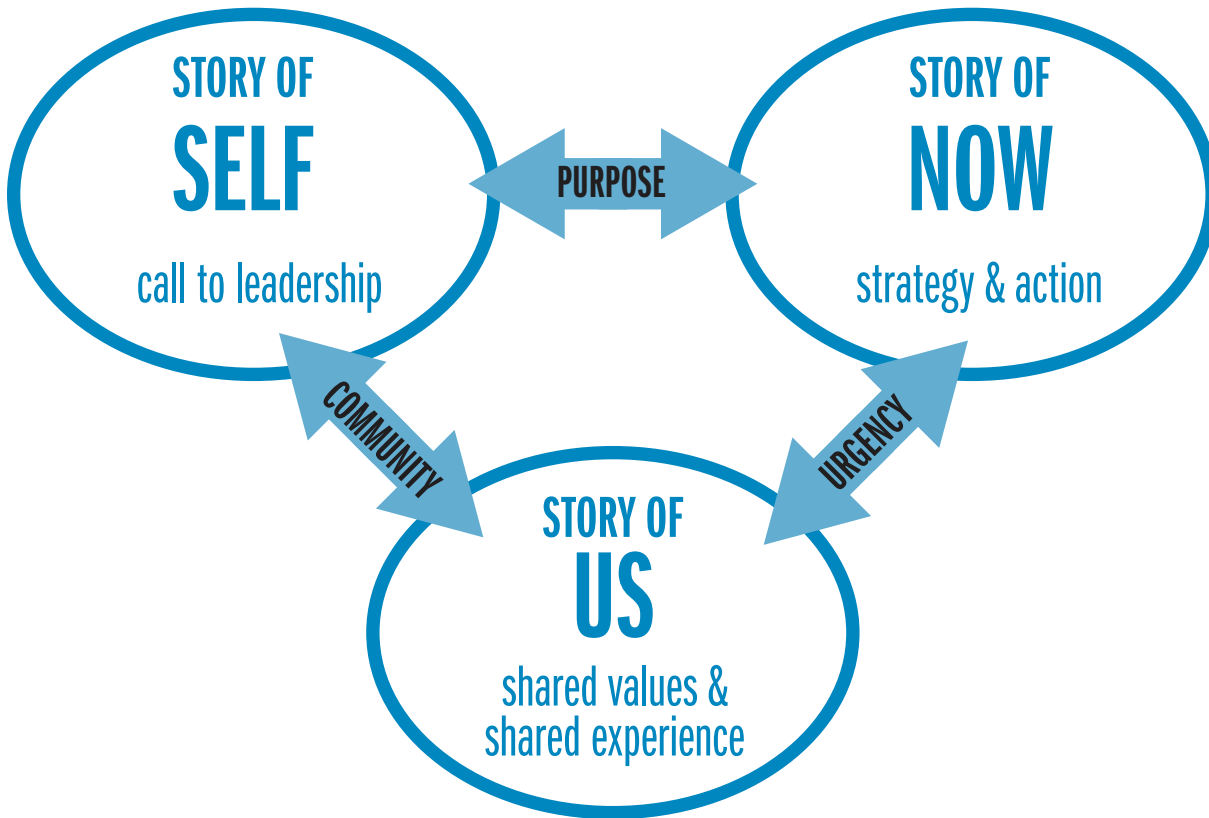
Your Public Narrative is your organizing story. It allows you to connect meaningfully with others, identify shared values, and move others to act along with you. Before we ask people to share their experiences with us, we must commit to share our experiences with them. We build relationships on foundations of trust and shared value.

Public Narrative is a particular type of storytelling that was developed by longtime organizer, and now Harvard professor, Marshall Ganz. It has been used in campaigns around the world to build community around shared values and to inspire others to take meaningful action.



## Main Components of Your Public Narrative

The three main components to your Public Narrative are self, us, and now.



An organizer starts with the *story of self*. This answers the question, “Why?” Why do you fight for Black justice? This is not about your resume, and it does not have to be about your darkest or most personal secrets. Rather, your story of self communicates your values and what event spurred you to step up and fight for change. Before you can ask people to join you, you must be able to clearly articulate your story of self.

Then we move to the question of, “What values do I share with those around me?” This is the *story of us*, and it communicates a story about the experiences, values and desires that connect a specific group of people you are inspiring another to join. The story of us is a bridge between me as an individual and us as a community. It answers the question, “What binds us together?”

Finally, there’s the *story of now*—this part of the story creates a sense of urgency, and it calls on us as a community to act on our values in the face of injustices. It charts a pathway in which people can see their collective story holding the power to realize their shared dream through specific actions.

## Reflect on answers to these questions, and what you want to share with others:

1. **WHY ME?** What moments from my experience led me to this place?
2. **WHY US?** What are the values and dreams that I believe join us together?
3. **WHY NOW?** What are we compelled to do and how do I see us getting there?

This story will become vital to your ability to connect with purpose to others who you are trying to inspire to join you in advocating for change.

## Step Two: Find your People and Build Your Base

Once you have a clear grasp on what motivates you and why you are asking others to join you, you need to be able to find others to share in the work with you.

### Networking

There are surprising ways to meet people in your community who may share your values, including:

- City Council meetings, Board of Supervisors meetings, and School Board meetings are places where you can listen to public comments and connect with other people who share common interests;
- Organizing meetings on topics that are related or values that align with your own;
- Community education, such as trainings, film festivals, or book readings;
- Townhalls or community meetings designed to gather input from the public. You can use those spaces to identify others who are voicing similar concerns as you;
- Parent groups, clubs, social justice, and advocacy groups can also be good sources of like-minded individuals;
- Social media can be a great place to find local, like-minded people by searching for hashtags, joining groups, and seeing who else follows the same groups or community leaders you follow; just be careful of misinformation.

Don't be afraid to approach people and make a connection. Ask to meet up for coffee and connect for a one-to-one meeting or to attend a community meeting together.

# Tabling

Tabling or providing information at community events is a tactic that allows others to approach you to learn about an issue.

In addition to community festivals large and small, farmers markets or swap meets, and other public events, you can also create your own opportunities to table. Are there film screenings or book readings relevant to your issue? Ask the business owner if you can table outside during those events. Do you have an elected official who is an ally to your cause? Ask them if you can table during their town halls. It is also legal for you to stand on public sidewalks with a clipboard as long as you are not blocking the flow of traffic. For more information about your right to leaflet, visit [www.aclunc.org/KYRtoDemonstrate](http://www.aclunc.org/KYRtoDemonstrate).

## Good tabling involves these FIVE elements:

1. **INTRODUCTION:** Say hello, introduce yourself, and ask them their name. Connecting as people first is foundational to having a meaningful conversation.
2. **NAME THE PROBLEM:** You likely have less than two minutes to engage someone. What do you want to say about why you are tabling? Provide a Problem Statement that has a level of urgency and that emphasizes a story over data and statistics. The more you can make it appeal to someone's emotional side, rather than their analytical side, the more successful you will be in bringing them into your vision.
3. **PROVIDE A SOLUTION:** People don't respond well to feelings of hopelessness. Your Problem Statement should be concise and followed up with a clear solution to address the problem. This can be the policy you are advocating for, the group you are forming, or anything that outlines a sense of purpose and power to make change.
4. **CALL TO ACTION:** Invite them in. Your call to action can be as simple as "Will you join our e-mail list?" Make sure you end your pitch with an ask.
5. **DATA COLLECTION:** Regardless of your call to action, tabling is always an opportunity to build your base of supporters. Make sure you have a sign-up sheet to collect names, e-mails, phone numbers and any other relevant information.

**EXAMPLE: (Step 1)** Hi! I am Mark, a parent at ABC School. **(Step 2)** At the next school board meeting, our board is talking about renewing their contract for police on our school campuses. When we listen to Black students, we hear that they don't feel safer on campus with police and feel that school police actually escalate situations. **(Step 3)** We are working together to eliminate police officers stationed on our school campuses. **(Step 4)** We are gathering a group of parents and concerned community members to ask the board not to renew the contract. Will you be able to join us on Sept. 6 at 5:30 p.m.? **(Step 5)** Great, here is a signup sheet so we can send you the details.

You may notice that there are three elements of a tabling pitch just as there are three elements to your Public Narrative. Weaving these two tools together makes them powerful:

In your Problem Statement, share elements of the Story of Self and how that problem relates to you.

In your Solution, talk about shared values and vision that motivates the listener and tells a Story of Us.

In your Call to Action, your Story of Now should compel them with a sense of urgency and clear steps towards your vision.



## Public Education Events

When you have a lot of information to share, hosting your own public education event can be a way to connect with members of the public who may share your interests or values. You can present a film screening, a book reading by an author in your community, or a panel where folks impacted by an issue share their stories and answer questions.

Public education events can be expensive to produce, but they don't have to be. Local libraries and community centers often rent out rooms or equipment like projectors and speakers at little or no cost. You can also host a teach-in at a public park, where people are invited to sit outside in small groups, read passages from a book together, and share knowledge that the collective brings.

Whichever type of public education event you decide to hold, make sure to collect contact information for participants so you can follow up with them.



**Public education events  
don't need to be expensive.**

**Remember to collect participant  
contact information.**



# Canvassing

You do not need fancy equipment or access to expensive lists of data to reach out directly to people in your neighborhood. Going door-to-door is a highly effective way to organize—that’s why campaigns have done it for centuries. Anyone can go door-to-door to discuss an issue and ask people to take action; it is a fundamental component of democracy, just make sure to respect people’s wishes by avoiding houses with a “No Soliciting” sign.

Canvassing involves much of the same elements involved in good tabling, but you are bringing your message to people instead of people approaching you. Here’s what you need to get started:

- 1. INTRODUCTION:** Make sure you share your name. If you are canvassing in your neighborhood, connect based on your shared community, but it is best to not share your exact address with someone for your safety.
- 2. PITCH:** Just like in tabling, you want to have a clear problem, a ready solution, and an ask. You will want to share some brief information about the problem, invite them to an organizing meeting where they can learn more about the problem and share their perspectives, and stay connected by joining your e-mail list.
- 3. DATA COLLECTION TOOLS:** While many campaigns have data lists or tablets they use while canvassing, something as simple as a notebook used to collect information can be very powerful. If you plan to canvass the same area more than once, make sure to take the time to gather information about each address, including their name and responses to your questions. Future canvassers should be able to access this information so they don’t waste their time, or your neighbors’ time.
- 4. LEAVE BEHINDS:** Since people are at home, it is helpful to leave them with some information, such as a flyer, a business card with your contact information, or some other tool they can use to initiate getting involved.

**LEVEL UP YOUR OUTREACH:** If you have the funds, or have built a relationship with an organization that has access to a voter file, texting and phone banking can help you reach new people.

Progressive communication campaigns start with an introductory ask, such as, “Do you care about the impact policing is having on Black students at ABC School?” and then builds from there.

Over time, you can identify who supports you, track their interests, and make progressively more significant asks, such as attending a virtual popular education event, or learning how to contact their lawmakers about a specific issue.

Eventually, some of the people who consistently take action can be brought into your base and can play a leadership role.

# Step Three: Connect with Purpose and Develop Leaders

One-to-one meetings are opportunities to build meaningful relationships with one another, learn more about each other, and share values and skills that develop new leaders in your campaign.

## ONE-TO-ONE MEETINGS

As you network, table, host events, or canvass, you'll meet people! These are people who can join you in building your base and carrying out your campaign tactics. One-to-one meetings give us valuable information about what inspires people to act, how to move them to action, and how you can work together towards sustainable change. A relationship-building one-to-one includes five main elements. Use them as a framework to structure your conversation.

### Attention

In today's world, it's easy to be distracted. Make sure that when you meet, both of you are in a place where you can give each other your full attention. Silence your cell phone and give your undivided attention to the meeting. Without being present, you simply can't connect.

### Purpose

Have you ever been in a meeting where you're not sure why the other person wants to meet with you? You spend the whole time wondering, "What exactly do they want?" Don't hide the ball. Be clear about the purpose: "I asked to meet because I know you care about this issue, and I want to hear your ideas about what we can do."

### Exploration

This is where you share your Public Narrative, and ask the other person to share their experiences, so that you can understand not just *what* you each care about but also *why*. Share how your experiences and values have led you to this work, ask the other person open-ended questions to hear their story, and practice *active listening*. This should take up the bulk of your meeting.

### Exchange

Exchange resources such as ideas, information, skills, time and—the most valuable of resource of all—other people who might want to join you.

### Commitment

A successful one-to-one ends with making a specific commitment. Commitments don't just have to be about signing petitions or showing up to an action. You can also make a commitment of time to meet again and keep building the relationship. But don't be afraid to delegate responsibility to them based on the interests they expressed during your meeting.

Your one-to-one should include these five elements, but don't lose sight of the fact that this is a conversation, not an interview! Make sure that you're sharing about yourself as well as asking good open-ended questions and actively listening.

# Helpful Open-Ended Questions

Here are some questions that might help you to dig deeper and engage with someone in a meaningful way:

Visioning Questions, such as:

- o How would you like xyz to be?
- o What is the meaning of this situation in your own life?

Change Questions, such as:

- o What will it take to bring the current situation towards the ideal?
- o Who can make a difference?

Strategizing Questions that take into account alternatives, consequences and obstacles:

- o What are all the ways you can think of that would accomplish these changes?
- o What would be the political effect if you did xyz?
- o What keeps you from doing xyz?

Support and Action Questions, such as:

- o What support would you need to work for this change?
- o What would it take for you to participate in the change?
- o How can you get others together to work on this?

*Strategic questioning is an approach to communication developed by Fran Peavey in the 80s and 90s.*

## Community Organizing Meetings

As your people-powered group of leaders grows, an Organizing Meeting is an opportunity to deepen relationships with one another and gain clarity in your purpose. You can use an Organizing Meeting to:

- Make sure everyone you are organizing with knows each other;
- Build trust with one another;
- Develop a set of values or guiding principles for how you will make decisions;
- Brainstorm and map out all the resources you have access to collectively;
- Share information that may inform your campaign tactics;
- Identify new leadership roles or tasks individuals want to take on, and what support they need to be successful;
- Make decisions about campaign tactics or goals.

Organizing should be joyful. Whether it's a one-to-one meeting or a community organizing meeting, make it your own. Commune with food, bring in music and dance. Infuse your relationships with others with your authenticity and welcome theirs. When it comes to advocacy, you are the expert in your own story and your own needs. No one worth partnering with should make you feel that you need to dress or talk a certain way for people to take you seriously, and your organizing spaces shouldn't enforce that either.

# Step Four: Create Infrastructure

White supremacy is all around us. It is in the structures we create to make decisions and even in the progressive social justice spaces where we are fighting against white supremacy. Take time to be intentional about how you want to communicate and work together as a group; it is critical to building a new world together. Below are some suggestions.

## Take the Time to Set Participation Norms

Participation norms are a helpful way to set ground rules and expectations from the very beginning about how you want to work together. There will be conflict in your group, and participation norms are helpful in those moments. Here are a few adapted from the ACLU:

**BE PRESENT.** Engage meaningfully and authentically in the conversation that's going on in the space. Our commonalities and our differences are an asset. Rather than avoiding difficult conversations, engage in them. Remember the power of sharing stories from your own life experience.

**LISTEN WELL AND BE OPEN-MINDED.** Be willing to learn—and to teach—with compassion, humility, and patience. When someone makes a mistake, strive to be forthright, forgiving, and open rather than defensive.

**ACKNOWLEDGE INTENT AND ADDRESS IMPACT.** Assume that others are speaking and acting from a place of good intent. At the same time, if your actions negatively impact others, please take responsibility for that impact.

**ASSURE THAT SHARED SPACES ARE ACCESSIBLE TO ALL.** Shared spaces should be as physically and socially accessible as possible. This includes gender-neutral bathrooms, wheelchair accessibility, language access and interpretation, sensory sensitivity, being mindful of scents, and utilizing multiple methods for conversation and input to address all learning styles.

**CARE FOR YOURSELF AND OTHERS.** Practice patience and compassion for yourself and others. Do what you need for your own well-being, and support others in doing the same.

**TRUST, CENTER, AND VALIDATE THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED OPPRESSION.** That includes believing them if they're telling you that something is hurtful, even if you don't immediately understand why.

**RESPECT THE SPACE WE ARE IN.** Wherever you are gathering, remember that you are guests in that space and minimize the clean-up others will have to do after you.

**RESPECT CONFIDENTIALITY.** A brave/safe space requires a mindset that what's said here stays here and what's learned here is shared.

**PAY ATTENTION TO PRONOUNS.** Put your own pronouns on nametags. When introducing yourself, state your name and pronouns. Look and listen for the pronouns others have used for themselves, and use those pronouns.

**MOVE UP/MOVE BACK.** Be aware of the space you are or are not taking up. If you have been participating a lot, try moving back. If you have not participated very much, move up. Try out Progressive Stack, where people who generally experience oppression (women, people of color, immigrants, indigenous, houseless, systems-impacted or LGBTQ people) are given priority to speak.

**USE "I" STATEMENTS.** Speak from your own experience and bring an open mind.

**HAVE FUN!** Organizing should be joyful.

You may also want to set participation norms about how you will work together outside the coalition meetings. What are expectations for communication by e-mail? What are expectations for how the work will be divided?

## Get Clear on Your Values

Before embarking on a campaign together, it is important to identify your core values. Core values are your guideposts when you come up against tough group decisions or disagreement about how to move forward. In addition, the process of setting values as a group can help you to learn about one another, what motivates each member of the group, and build team camaraderie.

The Management Center has many tools for nonprofits to create structures for effective operation, but even if you are not an official nonprofit organization, many of the tools can be adapted for the needs of your coalition or organizing team, including their value-setting process.

## Consensus-Based Decision-Making

It is common for most organizations and workplaces to operate within a hierarchal system, where someone is in charge, with other people holding varying levels of power, and new people or people who are perceived to have less experience having relatively no decision-making power. This can be efficient, but it ignores the reality that people who end up at the top of the structure often have racial or economic privilege, and undervalues the expertise that comes from lived experience. There are many alternative ways to structure decision-making; here is one option that can be an easy entry point for consensus-based models:

**Fist to Five** is a method for developing group consensus. When making a decision, the group is presented with the option to raise their hand (or write in the chat if on a video meeting, or state out loud for accessibility reasons) with the following options:

- o **Fist** – Indicating “I do not agree and am unsure we can move forward”
- o **One Finger** – Indicating “I have serious concerns about this plan”
- o **Two Fingers** – Indicating “I am concerned”
- o **Three Fingers** – Indicating “I have questions that need to be answered first”
- o **Four Fingers** – Indicating “I am mostly okay with moving forward”
- o **Five Fingers** – Indicating “I am fully on board with moving forward”

If there are people in the group who raise a three or fewer fingers, the group pauses before moving on to answer questions and address concerns. After discussion, as a group you should decide how you move forward. If you have fists, 1s, or 2s, will you not move forward until everyone is a 3 or higher? Will you move forward if everyone is a 4 or 5 except one or two people? Will you decide that after discussion, you vote as a group whether or not to move forward, even if you have fists or 1s? What if the people who are fists, 1s, or 2s are directly impacted and people who are 3s, 4s and 5s are not?

Consensus-based decision-making is a method to shift how we share power with one another and build community. Seeds for Change has more information about consensus-based decision-making methods.

# Fist-to-Five

**FIST**  
“I do not agree and am unsure  
we can move forward”



**ONE FINGER**  
“I have serious concerns about  
this plan”



**TWO FINGERS -**  
“I am concerned”



**THREE FINGERS**  
“I have questions that need to be  
answered first”



**FOUR FINGERS**  
“I am mostly okay with moving  
forward”



**FIVE FINGERS**  
“I am fully on board  
with moving forward”



# PART 3: WE HAVE POWER

**We build power so that we can win and regain the power we need to create justice and opportunity for our families and our communities. We can win the power we deserve through developing strategic campaigns and organizing tactics.**

## **HOW JAMES AND TASHERA WON AT THE SCHOOL BOARD**

When it came time for the school board meeting, the coalition for anti-racist education was ready. Hundreds of parents and students showed up and gave public comment showing the impact of police on campus. The school board members had no choice but to change the rules, and decided there was no place for police on campus! James and Tashera had succeeded in creating a safer school experience for her, and they built power in the community to tackle other issues of systemic racism in the school and beyond.



# TACTICS TO WIN

Throughout this toolkit, you have laid the groundwork for a campaign. In this final section, we will go over a few different tactics that your group can use to put pressure on your primary and secondary targets with your ask. As organizers, part of our job is to be flexible and adaptable. The tactics and strategies available to us are vast and always changing and growing as technologies and new methods evolve. The more we practice, the more nuanced and successful our tactics become, and the stronger our base, the more expertise and creativity we can bring to these tactics.

## Aligning Your Ask to Your Target

It is important that your target aligns with your demands and you make asks of them they can fulfill. Here are some examples:

Types of requests you can make from the City Council or Board of Supervisors:

- Introduce or support a resolution or ordinance
- Direct staff, a committee, or ad hoc commission to study an issue
- Hold a town hall or community forum to hear more about an issue
- Create a new oversight body, such as a police review commission (when it doesn't conflict with a city charter and therefore require a vote by citizens)
- Include or exclude funding from a budget
- Implement and fund an online community survey
- Hold Police Chief (City Council) or Sheriff (Board of Supervisors) accountable

You might request that the Police Chief:

- Discipline or fire an officer
- Allocate budget money for a project
- Support ordinances or resolutions at the City Council or Board of Supervisors meetings
- Release body camera footage

In addition to many of the same requests as for the Police Chief, you can also ask a Sheriff to:

- Change some rules about who is imprisoned or released
- Stop cooperating with Immigration and Customs Enforcement
- Change health and other policies in the jails

## Influencing Elected Officials

Many organizations, like the ACLU, provide trainings on influencing the legislative process. Every city, county, and state has its own legislative process with different committees, calendars, and structures to consider. The first step in influencing the legislative process is to figure out how it operates. Are you trying to influence a city councilmember? Research how that city makes decisions: Does it have committees? Are there citizen commissions that analyze an issue and make recommendations? How are votes decided—by a simple majority or something else? Does the mayor have veto power?



In addition to doing your own research into the process, you can also ask a councilmember or their staff what the decision-making process would be during a lobby meeting. Elected officials work for you, and anyone can meet with their elected officials to share their story and their needs. Here are some tips to have a successful meeting:

1. Establish your “ask” — know exactly what you want the decision-maker to do and make that clear in the meeting.
2. Prepare for your meeting — plan out your talking points, know who is saying what, anticipate their opposition.
3. Conduct your meeting — don’t take no for an answer. Ask what additional information could persuade them otherwise. Ask what they are willing to negotiate on or the common ground from where you can collaborate. Use the meeting to ask questions that help inform your strategy.
4. Follow up – your first meeting shouldn’t be your last meeting. And make sure you follow up on any questions that arose from your meeting.

## Campaign Tactics

Getting decision-makers to commit to big change is usually not as simple as a few conversations or lobby visits. Here are some strategies to build political and narrative power: power that brings more people into your cause and power that shifts how people talk about your cause and what they’re willing to do.

## Shifting Narrative and Public Opinion

- **DEEP CANVASSING:** Unlike canvassing or other traditional campaign tools where communication is usually a one-way interaction, deep canvassing relies heavily on listening. Canvassers engage voters or neighbors in conversation where they ask them about their values and experiences and build an interpersonal connection. Deep canvassing has been proven to be highly effective in shifting narrative and changing voters’ minds. It also serves as a tool for bridging across difference and building long-term connection in a heavily divided society.
- **ART:** Art can reflect visions of the world we are trying to create, and positive imagery of people that combats negative stereotypes. It can also inspire and move people to action. Art is often used in social justice movements as murals or public displays, posters that stores display to demonstrate broad solidarity, illustration or photography that helps people see their humanity, or collaborations with major brands or clothing companies that help build your cause into a cultural norm, such as the Levi’s collaboration with Black Lives Matter. Collaboration with local brands and artists can help shape the culture around your cause in your community.
- **TEACH-INS:** Teach-ins or other popular education events help people to learn an issue more deeply, so they can understand how to take action. Teach-Ins are particularly effective when they draw a through line from an aspect of history society condemns to the present day, for example, the history of slave catchers who formed the beginning of modern-day police forces. Teach-ins are also effective when they create space for story-sharing and for building community history and awareness that undermines negative or oppressive narratives that dissuade people from getting involved.

## Demonstrating Power

- **PUBLIC COMMENT:** When your concern is on the Board of Supervisors or City Council agenda, making public comments—especially when you’ve mobilized many people—can be a powerful way to demonstrate to lawmakers the support for your ask. Public comments are usually two minutes or less per person, so be sure to hone what you will say so it is sharp and to the point. When your concern is not on the agenda, you can use general public comment time to raise awareness for the lawmakers and for other members of the public. Keep in mind, that during the general public comment, lawmakers are generally not allowed to respond. To have a conversation, you should set up a meeting.
- **COLLECTING AND MOBILIZING COMMENTS:** Another way to demonstrate support for your cause is through gathering postcards or letters, hosting a day for people to call their lawmaker’s office, or using social media to encourage people to tweet at their lawmaker. These are all public ways you can show overwhelming support. Be sure to let people know what to say and how to make a clear ask, as well as the phone number or other information they need to contact their lawmaker.
- **RALLIES, SIT-INS, BOYCOTTS, PROTESTS:** These are all important tactics to demonstrate support for an issue or disrupt business-as-usual to get decision-makers to pay attention. Each of these is a little different, but no matter which tactic you plan, there should be an end goal beyond the tactic itself.
  - o Rally: Often a short event in one location. It can be outside a business or lawmakers office and will often draw media attention. Be sure to have powerful, motivating speakers that speak to your values as well as people passing out information to passersby.
  - o Boycott, Strike or Walk Out: This is a collective decision to disrupt social structure by boycotting a business (and impacting its bottom line), refusing to work so that business and production grinds to a halt, or walking out of class or other institutions. This can be highly disruptive and lead to lost wages, but it can also be highly effective in forcing a company or decision-makers to take action as they watch their profits plummet.
  - o Protests: These can be stationary or move through streets and are an effective way to bring supporters of a cause together. Protests can be planned or in response to breaking news. If you are planning a protest, it’s important to know your rights. Visit [www.aclunc.org/kyrtodemonstrate](http://www.aclunc.org/kyrtodemonstrate) for more information.
  - o Sit-Ins: This is a planned, intentional act of civil disobedience. This could result in arrests or tickets, and people engaging in this strategy should be prepared for the outcomes and any disruption to their lives.
- **COORDINATED DAY OF ACTION:** You may consider utilizing many of these tactics on one “Day of Action,” including lobbying with all the elected leaders on one day, holding a rally, holding vigils throughout town, and mobilizing people to call in with public comments or post on social media. This can not only get the attention of the decision-makers you are trying to influence, but also media and the public, winning more attention for your cause.

## You Can Run

When elected officials don't listen to you, become an elected official! Oftentimes there are very few limitations on who can run for office, especially for local districts. Qualifications can be as simple as being a resident or being registered to vote. In some cases, you can have a criminal conviction or be undocumented and still run for office. Organizations like The Collective PAC (Black candidates), Black American Political Association of California (BAPAC), Black Women Organized for Political Action (BWOPA), New American Leaders (1st and 2nd generation American candidates), National Women's Political Caucus (candidates who identify as women) and Victory Institute (LGBTQ candidates) support underrepresented candidates in developing a campaign and fundraising.

# YOU WILL WIN

*Ultimately, history shows us that progressive causes win.*

There are usually setbacks and missteps, but taking the time to build real power with others in your community and developing strategic campaigns can lead to victory.

In 1864, a free Black man from Sacramento named Daniel Blue successfully petitioned the courts to free an enslaved 12-year-old girl named Edith, in what is the last known case of slavery in California. Just over 100 years later, Mildred and Richard Loving won their case before the U.S. Supreme Court to legally marry as an interracial couple, in a watershed moment in the slow dismantling of Jim Crow laws. And in 2020, despite a global pandemic, the Black Lives Matter movement propelled forward a racial reckoning that has set off legislative efforts to defund the police, re-evaluation by major companies about how they uphold white supremacy, and personal accountability by many in the United States.

**Every setback has the power to propel us forward by waking people up to the realities of white supremacy and oppression. What do you dream? We hope this toolkit has provided you the tools to make that dream a reality. So go do it! Meet your people. Organize for change. Do it with joy.**



[www.BlackBillofRights.com](http://www.BlackBillofRights.com)

[www.ACLUNC.org](http://www.ACLUNC.org)