



## Chapter 7

# Organization

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# Neighbor-to-Neighbor Precinct Organizing

## Take Back Your Country – Starting In Your Own Backyard

### Precinct Organizing Overview

Electoral districts come in varying sizes and scopes. States and U.S. Congressional districts are the largest, with state senate and state house districts getting progressively smaller. Organizing from the ground up, starting at the grassroots, begins at the most basic of all electoral units, usually called a ‘precinct.’ The common trait of these basic electoral units is that people in the same geographic vicinity all use the same voting station. For the sake of ease, this section refers to the basic electoral unit as a precinct, though it sometimes goes by other names. The general concept of this section is to emphasize the importance of neighbor-to-neighbor organizing.

Campaigns typically group the voters of each precinct together to predict or influence voting behavior. Ideally, Party members working at the precinct level connect the precinct to state-level Party organizations. In other structures, activists have been known to create their own network to compliment, compete, or substitute for the Party.

Precincts are not an arbitrary unit of division created by the campaign or a Party, but an administrative unit set by the county. Since precincts exist continuously - with or without any particular campaign working in them - so should your organizing efforts.

### What is a Precinct?

Sometimes known by other names, a precinct is the smallest administrative political unit, composed of a number of registered voters in a defined area. All voters in this area vote at the same location. Specifics vary by county; check with your local County Board of Elections.

A number of precincts often comprise larger administrative units such as wards, counties, state House and Senate districts, and U.S. Congressional districts.

Though larger electoral districts tend to change every decade, precincts generally remain the same.

### Campaign Oriented Organizing vs. Community Oriented Organizing

Electoral campaigns organize precincts as part of their field plan. A campaign will organize a precinct in ways that make sense for a temporary organization with a one-time specific numerical goal. Currently, most precincts organized by a Democratic organization in this country are organized for short-term campaign work. This is not the only way to organize a precinct. Precincts can also be organized along a community oriented model. In these models, the organizers are people who live in the precincts themselves and have a more personal connection with their neighborhood. This kind of organizing lends itself to greater sustainability through multiple election cycles.

### Traits of campaign and community oriented organizing models

Campaign oriented precinct organizing	Community oriented precinct organizing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Precincts activated from two to five months before an election.</li> <li>- Field organizers are typically marginally familiar with the area.</li> <li>- Unfamiliarity with precinct gives impression of impersonal, remote, or distant relationship to voter.</li> <li>- Field organizers are often trained in electoral organizing and are paid to dedicate many hours a day to working for the precincts they are assigned.</li> <li>- Allows for controlled, consistent messaging from the campaign.</li> <li>- Connected to and directed by larger organizations with material and staff resources.</li> <li>- Focused on winning an election on a specific date.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organized and sustained independent of the election cycle</li> <li>- Genuine relationships developed with voters.</li> <li>- Organized in-precinct by organizers intimately familiar with the precinct itself.</li> <li>- Volunteer activists: unpaid, limited time available, frequently untrained.</li> <li>- Typically lacking in resources.</li> <li>- Might be disconnected or poorly connected to campaigns or Party organizations: off-message, duplicated work, voter confusion.</li> <li>- Focused on long-range community building.</li> </ul>

## Campaign Oriented vs. Community Oriented Organizing

Both models of organizing have advantages and disadvantages. To leverage the advantage of both models, activists and Party organizations should utilize the traits of both. Ideally, a precinct organization is built from the ground up by local activists and endorsed and supported by the state and county Party organizations. When a campaign is ready to contact voters, it should utilize the existing precinct organizations to supplement their direct voter contact work. This ideal scenario requires both the local Party and the local activists to work together from the beginning to formulate local precinct plans.

Before anything else, local activists should check with their local or county party organization to see what precinct efforts already exist. Duplicating efforts could serve to confuse the voters. Work with the existing efforts to improve them. If no precinct level organizing is taking place, propose starting a precinct program to the local Party and get to work!

### Strengths of Your Precinct Program:

A campaign's limited resources shape its organizing in particular ways. Campaigns are not meant to build a district's democratic performance in the long-term, only take advantage of what performance currently exists in the district at the time of the election. It does not usually make sense for a campaign to spend resources registering new voters, developing strong relationships with the voter, engaging Republican-Base areas, or preparing for anything beyond Election Day. An electoral campaign should be spending its resources on people likely to vote and in targeted (swing and/or base) precincts.

Your precinct program has an interest in sustaining and improving the performance of your precinct, has local knowledge on the precinct's voters, and has substantially more time to invest. Precinct organizations are not limited by a campaign's typical field organizing time frame (three to six months). Because of these advantages, a precinct program can engage voters in all precincts.

Priorities over the long term (continuous)	Priorities over the short term (campaign)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Maintaining an updated voter list</li> <li>- Maintaining your activist base</li> <li>- Identifying and engaging infrequent and drop-off Democratic voters</li> <li>- Finding and registering new Democratic voters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Maintaining an updated voter list</li> <li>- Identifying and maximizing Absentee, Early, and/or Vote-by-mail supporters.</li> <li>- Identifying and persuading undecided voters likely to vote.</li> </ul>

This section brings together skills from other sections (activist recruitment, voter contact, etc) for use year-round in our own neighborhood. Even if you do not work or volunteer on a specific campaign, you can always work to maintain your precinct.

In a campaign setting, precincts are ranked in order of importance for targeting purposes. Base precincts are targeted for turnout. Swing precincts are targeted for persuasion. And Republican-Base precincts are ignored completely. This makes sense from a resource management standpoint for most campaigns. But for your continuous precinct organizing strategy, you have a larger, long-range view: Increase the Democratic voter turnout cycle after cycle.

The voter contact section of this manual discusses voter targeting in a campaign environment. This section will discuss precinct organizing for the long run.

### **Close elections are won or lost at the precinct level.**

In 1960, John F. Kennedy beat Richard Nixon by one vote per precinct. One vote!

This phenomenon becomes more apparent in close local elections.

## Organizing Individual Precincts

Your precinct is the first piece of a precinct network in your county, your district, and your state. The goal is simple: build a political community to increase Democratic voter performance.

### Step One: Get to know the political landscape

The first step in organizing your precinct is to understand the precinct, and where the precinct fits into existing electoral organizations. Check around and see what efforts have been made in the area. Duplicating efforts of another organization is not only frustrating for organizers and volunteers, but confusing for the voters.

#### A Step-by-step guide

1. Know the landscape
2. Recruitment
3. Planning and Management
4. Be a resource
5. Work it!

**Know the Players:** Developing a good relationship with state and county Party leaders is a priority for a precinct organization. The Party’s County Chairs will likely have access to vital information such as the precinct’s voter file and potential activists in the area. Even with initially unenthusiastic Party officials, the county Party or local precinct committee person will see the power of your organizing by seeing the results you produce. The first step is to sit down and meet with the County Party or other Party official. Having a good relationship with the county and state Parties will help campaigns plug into your existing precinct work.

<u>Get to know your...</u>	
- Existing Precinct Leaders	- State House Representative
- Ward or Area Leaders	- State Senate Representative
- County Party Chair	- City Councilor for the district
- State Party Chair	- School Board member for the district
- State Party Field Director/ Organizers	- Local judge of elections
- Local campaigns’ field staff	- County Clerk
- Community Leaders	- County Board of Elections Officers
- Local issue groups	- Neighborhood association leaders

**Know the Numbers:** Your most important asset in organizing your precinct is the ‘voter file.’ The Party’s voter file is more substantive than the publicly available voter roll kept by the County Board of Elections. As we noted in the ‘Developing a Field Plan’ section of this manual, different precincts may be targeted and prioritized by campaigns in different ways, depending on their vote share and Democratic performance. Knowing what kind of precinct you are organizing will help you set goals in a similar manner.

The number of registered voters is important for letting organizers know what they will be working with, but a truly effective electoral organization relies much more heavily on Democratic Performance, Voter History, and a sustained Voter contact program to hit its goals. To do this, you must obtain voter file data for your precinct.

<u>Numbers you need</u>
- Voter Registration Numbers: Democrats, non-affiliateds, other Parties.
- Voter Turnout: Similar election years, turnout for each office down the ballot
- Democratic Performance Index: How many voters can you expect in an election?
- Democratic Base and Persuasion: How many die-hards? How many persuadable?
- Voter Histories: Who votes most often? Who doesn’t vote at all?

**Know the Dates and Places:** Just as with field planning, an organized precinct must have a timeline and benchmarks. Keep track of the significant election calendar dates. Don’t forget Absentee/Vote-by-Mail/Early voting registration, application, and submission deadlines. Consider both Primary and General election schedules, as well as local municipal elections. Keep track of precinct voting locations and attempts to move the polling place. Every precinct team member should have a map of the precinct with borders and polling location clearly marked.

## Step Two: Initial Recruitment

After you've met with the local Party and/or any other local players, get started on recruitment right away. You can not - and should not - do this alone. A precinct captain should create a precinct team and invest these activists in the success of the precinct. Refer to the section of this manual, "Building An Activist Base," for an in-depth view on how to grow your organization and develop your activists.

**First Tier: Relational.** Remember to start close to home – literally - and cast a wide net around your neighborhood. Call on your existing local network – people who would help you because they know you. Known DFA and Party activists in your area are also a good first outreach. Elected officials and Party activists might know a number of reliable activists in your neighborhood. As always, the best source of volunteers is other volunteers. Utilize other people's personal networks.

**Second Tier: Voter History.** The bulk of your initial recruitment can be done using your voter file. You may know nothing else about the people on your list, but you know the most important facts – their voting frequency and contact information. Identify those voters who never fail to vote. People who have voted in every election in the last four cycles are likely to take a great deal of pride in the fulfillment of their civic duty. A good recruiter can appeal to this sense of civic pride. Also identify voters who have voted in any recent Democratic primary.

Name	Address	Phone	'00 Pri	'00 Gen	'02 Pri	'02 Gen	'04 Pri	'04 Gen
Joe Black	121 main lane	555-1357	D	X	D	X	D	X
Rachel Sadler	125 main lane	555-2468		X				X
Henry Armatage	137 main lane	555-1256	D	X			D	X
Julia Silbergeld	139 main lane	555-3478		X		X		X
Laura Quayle	149 main lane	555-9865						
Erin Dame	120 main lane	555- 5421		X				
Ilya Shayman	128 main lane	555-0921				X	D	X
Ari	144 main lane	555-4567		X				X

**Third Tier: Public Displays of Affiliation.** Wearing buttons is not enough. But it is a good way to see who is passionate in the neighborhood. These are people with liberal bumper stickers, lawn signs, buttons, and other visible displays of friendly politics. If this person is a stranger, work on becoming familiar. A knock on the door or a sidewalk chat is a great way to create a neighborly bond.

### Turning Volunteers Into Team Members: The Initial Precinct Meeting

One of the most powerful tools in neighbor-to-neighbor organizing is the House Meeting, or in this case, a 'Precinct Meeting.' This isn't a meeting for folks to get together and commiserate or rant about politics. The precinct leader rolls out a plan, explains how people can make an impact, and encourages participants to commit to a role.

Potential activists are invited to a meeting at an activist's house. The meeting starts out with some time to get to know each other and connect, but it is important to get down to business quickly. The precinct leader should briefly explain the value of precinct organizing, giving the context of the organizing project. This includes a numerical breakdown of the precinct – how it has voted in the past, and how it can be organized to vote differently in the future. The precinct leader works out a goal for the precinct (number of volunteers, target percentage for future Democratic performance, etc). The precinct leader discusses the importance of direct voter contact and layered communication as a strategy and lays out tactics used in the precinct (canvassing and phone calling). A rough timeline with benchmarks should be rolled out.

At this point, many potential activists will be impressed, overwhelmed, or a combination of both. Make sure the numbers and the plan are accessible to people who might not have a campaigning background, but do not sacrifice the serious tone of the project.

The precinct leader should break down the plan into small, manageable chunks. The precinct-wide contact goal can be broken down block-by-block. Every potential role in the precinct is written out for people to see.

Delegating tasks. It is easy enough to work out an impressive sounding plan, but the challenge is to get your team to execute it. You'll need to get people invested in their own part of the plan. Because everything is quantified and broken down, people can see the impact one person can make. Even in a group setting, it is important to commit people by asking them individually. Everyone at the meeting should be offered a chance at being the captain of their block and/or their neighboring blocks or areas. Additional tasks for those who want to take leadership positions should be laid out. Each person should be asked, one-on-one at the meeting and for everyone to hear, "Can I count on you to identify all of the Democratic voters in your block?" (or something similar). The precinct captain goes around the room, asking each person in turn, until each person has been asked. Start with the strongest, most enthusiastic team member – the first response will set the tone for each subsequent ask.

After people have been asked to take responsibility for their own block, you can ask the room as a whole for volunteers to take on additional responsibilities (see box for examples). Don't worry if not all the roles are filled, everyone on the team is responsible for recruiting more team members. The precinct captain should expect attrition over time, so positions will need to be regularly filled.

After roles are fulfilled, take a moment to celebrate your new team. Boost the energy level of the room. Before concluding, the team should head right into the plan sketched out by the precinct captain. As a group, start filling in your timeline or calendar and determine an action item that can be agreed upon and completed in a week's time. Determine the date of the first round of voter contact (identifying supporters) and the first precinct Democratic social event. Keep the momentum of the first meeting going by making sure to call and follow-up with each of the attendees within two days of the meeting.

### **Always Be Recruiting: Additional Volunteer Pushes**

The initial precinct meeting is the culmination of the first recruitment push. Your precinct organization must always be recruiting. The social chair, precinct captain, or other person should be in charge of making sure the team is constantly growing. Recruitment must be one of the benchmarks to measure the success of the organization.

Every now and then the initial precinct meeting should be replicated to give new volunteers a sense of context. The team should evaluate progress toward benchmarks and celebrate successes. Different tactics can be used to build up the names of potential activists in your neighborhood. Social events and community service projects are excellent ways to build a political community as well as build you volunteer list. Precinct Democratic BBQs or similar events in the neighborhood can be a great first event. Having your initial team invite their assigned Democratic voters is an easy contact for the team member and a fun event for the voters. These social events serve as a community-building opportunity, a voter ID opportunity, and a recruitment opportunity. Be sure to have a sign-in sheet for all attendees, and follow up with all new attendees with a phone call or personal visit to plug them into a volunteer opportunity.

**The Precinct Captain:** is responsible for recruiting, training, motivating and coordinating team members. Holds team members accountable to goals.

**Block Captains:** is responsible for voter contact along a given block/area. Each precinct activist should be assigned to a small area to call their own.

**Data Director:** responsible for updating and maintaining data from all voters contacted. Block Captains report their contacts to Data Director for tracking.

**Research Director:** is responsible for research on issues important to the precinct. Should also assist the Data Director by looking up information missing from the precinct's voter file (wrong numbers, etc).

**Early Vote Coordinator:** responsible for encouraging, assisting, and keeping track of all absentee, vote-by-mail, and/or early voting in the precinct.

**Poll Captain:** responsible for E-day poll watching, for obtaining election judge certification, or building a relationship with the existing election judge.

**Social Chair:** responsible for BBQs, social events, service opportunities, and visibility. Can also be responsible for continued recruitment.

### Step Three: Planning and Precinct Management

Refer to the section of this manual, “Building Your Volunteer Base,” for an in-depth view on how to manage activists in your organization. Also refer to the section, “Time: Planning and Goal-Setting” for greater detail on developing a plan for your precinct. Refer to the section, “Developing a Field Plan” to see what kind of precinct you live in and to predict how you will interact with campaigns once they establish themselves.

**Precinct Captain Responsibilities:**

- Recruit
- Train
- Motivate
- Coordinate

### Planning

As with any campaign planning, your precinct plan should start with a goal and work backwards from there. The ultimate goal of the organization is to increase the number of Democratic votes cast in the precinct. Additional goals can include the number of volunteers on the team, or the number of social events and service events.

<b>Example Vote Goal for Precinct</b>			
2006 Performance:	%	2010 Goals	%
771 registered voters	--	810 registered	--
312 Total votes cast	40.5 turnout	332 expected	41%
143 Dem votes cast.	45.8 of votes	173 votes	52%

Set your timelines and benchmarks as specifically as possible. If the precinct is in its activist recruitment phase, how many activists is it looking to recruit by a specific date? If the precinct is identifying supporters, how many households does the precinct team need identified, and by what date? If you know you need to identify a certain number of supporters, you should set monthly and weekly goals leading up to the election.

Remember to consider your resources. If you live in an area where houses are spaced far apart, then your team members will require more time to contact the precinct’s voters. Understanding your phone and canvass rates are crucial to planning and setting expectations for your team members.

Good planning requires good data management. The precinct data manager should be tracking voters contacted and volunteers recruited. For the voter contact operation, block captains report to the data manager and the data manager to the County Party so they can report it up to the State party. Figure out a regular reporting system for your team. For example, you might decide that team members report in to the data manager twice a month on a certain day of the week. As that date approaches, the precinct manager checks in with each team member to check in on progress. After that date has passed, the data manager calls each team member who has not reported in.

### Managing

Just as recruitment is an ongoing process, so is developing the team you’ve recruited. The tone set by precinct captain will determine the success of the precinct team. Celebrating successes and highlighting those who’ve done good work are the key to any campaign organization. Your focus should always return to the impact a small group of people can make in their own backyards. The precinct captain is building a team, not merely recruiting volunteers. Ideally, you’ll work with these team members over a period of many years. Keep the tone casual, friendly, and neighborly.

Encourage your teammates sense of ownership over the program – this is their neighborhood. If you are part of a larger precinct network, let your activists know from the start. People will feel more confident of your plan knowing that others nearby are doing the same.

Utilize the leadership ladder (as described in “Building Your Activist Base”) to encourage your team members to take on greater responsibility. You should have a plan for your best activists to take increasing leadership. Meet with your best team members individually to reinforce their sense of ownership over the precinct.

### **Step Four: Make your presence known – be a resource**

One of the greatest benefits of having a robust precinct program is building a local and personal connection between your Party or organization and the voters themselves. Does your Party have a local Party Headquarters in every single precinct? Probably not. Building a precinct program will serve that function, literally bringing politics close to home for more people. Instead of being confused as to who or what the Democratic Party is or what they stand for, your neighbors will have a resource easily available to them. You are the local representative of the Party.

Modern campaigning has become more efficient, but runs the danger of becoming remote and impersonal. Voters increasingly ignore strangers calling their homes, knocking on their doors, and sending them mail before an election. It's not that people ignore callers, knockers, and mail – they ignore strangers who do it. This is the greatest strength of community-oriented precinct organizing – familiarity.

### **Relationship Building: Your Precinct's Voters**

Your next task is to build up visibility and awareness for the organization in order to let your neighbors know they have a Democratic resource easily available to them.

An easy and engaging project for your team early in the cycle is to get your activists invested by creating a quick visibility campaign. Even though bumper stickers and lawn signs have a negligible impact on voter persuasion and turnout, they can create a sense of community for those who share a similar view and help to build a sense of community. Get as many Democrats to post signs in their windows, cars, yards etc. indicating that they support a particular Democratic candidate or that they support a particular progressive issue. The precinct captain might display something like "Precinct XY Democratic Headquarters." Other team members put up their own signs. This is a particularly encouraging project in areas with a large Republican population because Democrats will realize that they are not alone in their neighborhood.

Do an ID canvass so you know who your Democratic supporters are. A voter's explicitly stated preference is more accurate than their listing on a voter file. This is why Voter ID and Democratic Performance are more important than Democratic registration numbers. Team members can canvass every Democrat, Independent, or unaffiliated with an issue survey and/or with an informational flyer listing all of the public officials representing the area and how to contact them. One of these officials would include the Democratic precinct leader. Mail or deliver a sign to all registered Democrats in the neighborhood and follow up to encourage them to display the signs. Your precinct team members are establishing themselves as a resource to the voters. Voters will know that they can go to a neighbor with questions about issues, registration, and voting.

Precinct Events – Casual, targeted precinct events are a high impact activity which will motivate your activists and volunteers as well as engage 'ordinary' Democratic voters. These events can be ordinary, such as a neighborhood BBQ in your backyard – except that all the attendees are neighborhood Democrats. Especially in Republican dominated areas, this serves to build community among the precinct's registered Democrats. The event can be as conspicuous or inconspicuous as you feel appropriate for your neighborhood, but the point is to start putting a local, familiar face on electoral organizing. The first events do not need to have an explicit agenda except for a few key items:

#### **Democratic Precinct Event Guidelines:**

- Everyone should know how you got their name (publicly available registration).
- Everyone should know that the event is a local precinct event – one of many to come.
- The invite list is targeted to registered Democrats, but no one should feel alienated. No 'litmus' test for attendance, unless they're just there to heckle.
- Data collection. Always important. Have everyone sign a 'guestbook' with contact information.
- You have a plan, let people know. You want to encourage people to join you.
- Make an ask.
- Make your contact info available, along with basic materials on voting, registering, etc.

Future events can be structured according to the needs of the precinct. These events can be entirely social (i.e. neighborhood Democratic Bowling night), educational (political movie/DVD night), or volunteer-oriented (precinct mailing night). Ideally, your events are a little of everything (for example, ‘Mailings and Margaritas’ at Susie’s house).

The frequency of these events can vary from precinct to precinct. At a minimum have events once every other month.

**Relationship Building: Your Precinct Network**

Just as your precinct team is a resource for your precinct’s voters, it is also a resource for the County Democratic Party and for the other precinct teams in the area. If there is a network of precinct captains in your area (county, ward, district, or other geographic area), get in contact with these activists. Your County Democratic Party should be aware of other activists organizing the area. These people can provide experience and resources for your precinct team and likewise your precinct team might be able to provide insights for them. It is a good idea to meet regularly with these other activists, at least once every other month.

Regular contact with the County Party will also help the Party stay up to date with what is happening on the ground in your area. The most basic form of contact is to send your updated voter file over to the Party on a regular basis. In most states, campaigns rely on the State Party to provide them with the most up-to-date voter lists. Often campaigns do not have fully accurate information, largely because such information doesn’t exist or didn’t get passed on from one campaign cycle to the next. The continuously organized precinct organization is the solution to this common problem. Your precinct sends its information to the County Party, the County sends it to the State Party, and the State Party to the campaigns running in the state.

Inter-precinct events also help build a sense of community for your activists. Having a picnic with five or six different precincts shows each team member how they are part of a larger effort. These events can also show voters that the Democratic Party is not a foreign, distant, or faceless organization; instead the Democratic Party is a network of their neighbors.

### Step Five: Work Your Precinct – Local, direct voter contact.

The greatest strength of community oriented precinct organizing is the very local and personal nature of the work. As politics get larger and more impersonal, it becomes more important for activists to put a familiar face to the issues which affect them and to do so year-round.

The bulk of your precinct organizing work will be direct voter contact. Everything else is just a prelude to the real work of contacting potential voters and keeping track of these contacts. From the very beginning, your precinct should have a plan with goals, strategies, tactics, timelines, and benchmarks. If you know that your precinct cast 200 Democratic votes in the last similar election (2002), your precinct goal might be to increase to 250 votes. If you have an entire year to work on this plan, this might be realistic. If you have three months, you might have a harder time. Either way, your events and activities follow a plan and have a purpose.

On the most basic level, your precinct’s tactical plan is:

- 1) Walk
- 2) Phone
- 3) Update
- 4) Repeat

**Finding New Votes** – A continuous neighbor-to-neighbor organizing program has the time and the local knowledge to increase Democratic voter performance in a way that no temporary campaign can afford to. As a precinct level organization, your voter contact priorities can play to these strengths. (For more on information on targeting from an electoral campaign’s perspective, see the section in the manual on Developing a Field Plan).

**Absentee, Early Vote, and Vote By Mail** – All electoral campaigns should have a solid plan for organizing absentee, early vote, and vote by mail. Precinct organizations are a good place to distribute, explain, and collect absentee and vote-by-mail ballots. The familiarity of having a neighbor explain an alternative process will help add new advance voters to each precinct, freeing up resources on Election Day. If precinct captains are working closely with the campaign and have been trained on advance balloting, precinct volunteers can be a good way to reduce the costs of an advance ballot program.

**Strategy and Tactics: Variations and Considerations** – There are literally hundreds of thousands of basic electoral districts in the country. The principle of neighbor-to-neighbor organizing is the same in all of them, but more targeted tactics may vary greatly. Starting early and planning far into the future is the best way to maximize available tactics. The gold standard is accomplishing direct contact with every supportive and undecided voter multiple times.

<b>Tactical Considerations for Precinct Outreach</b>		
<u>Precinct Type</u>	<u>Characteristics</u>	<u>Tactical consideration</u>
High Retiree population	More likely to be home, sleep earlier	Higher contact rate, cannot contact late evening, can contact all afternoon.
High Student population	Less likely to be home, sleep later, irregular schedule, moves frequently	Low contact rate, can call/canvass late, can call/canvass in the afternoon. Yearly re-ID to see if students have moved.
Rural	Houses far apart, value face-to-face contact	Canvass is higher impact, but fewer canvass contacts per hour. Supplement with phone contacts.
Urban	Houses close together, less likely to be home	Low contact rate, but many houses per hour. Need multiple rounds of canvassing.
Ethnically/racially Homogenous	More open to similar race/ethnicity	Recruit volunteers of similar race/ethnicity to canvass.
Apartments/ Condos	Difficult to access	Find volunteer who lives inside condo/apartment to canvass. Supplement with phone.

**SUGGESTED VOTER CONTACT PRIORITIES:**

(non-campaign, Party-building phase)

<p><b>Top Tier</b></p> <p>Key principles:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Early Education</li> <li>2) Repeated contact</li> </ol>	<p><b>Drop-off and Infrequent Democrats</b> – This is an effective way to find more Democratic votes for your elections over the long term. A great many Democratic voters are unreliable in mid-year elections or for offices lower down the ballot. These are people who probably would vote Democratic, but often stay home because they do not understand the importance of the election or office. In most districts the discrepancy between presidential year turnout and Midterm turnout is large. Because these voters are already on your side, because there are many such voters, and because these voters are easy to locate, this can be your most lucrative target to increase turnout. The better your relationship with Infrequent Dems, the easily you can turn them into ‘always voters.’</p>
<p><b>Second Tier</b></p> <p>Key principles:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Targeted Outreach</li> <li>2) Committed Follow-up</li> </ol>	<p><b>New registrants, new voters</b> – Newly registered Democrats are always an exciting prospect. It is important to remember, however, that a new registration is not a new voter. If you are registering voters without any sort of follow up, consider that registration wasted; that person will probably not vote. Make your neighborhood registration effort meaningful with a good tracking system and a targeted follow up plan.</p> <p><b>Voter Registration Drives</b> – Be smart about voter registration drives. Registration canvasses can be effective in Democratic base precincts (65% or higher Democratic), or in targeted households (Dems tend to live together). Open registration at Supermarkets and libraries can be risky because you might register more Republicans than Democrats (conspicuous liberal or Democratic paraphernalia may mitigate this risk).</p> <p><b>Students and Young Voters</b> – It is important to note that students will turn out to vote if they feel they have a stake in the election, and if the process of voting is not confusing. Young people in the neighborhood should be targeted as soon as they turn 18. They can be registered in college and at home, so be sure you know which location they are voting. Young people should be recruited as precinct activists and given meaningful responsibilities in the organization.</p> <p><b>New Neighbors</b> – The obvious sign of impending new neighbors are ‘For Sale/Sold’ signs. Keep an eye on apartments and fluid populations such as students and military personnel. Your neighbor might not be political or might be a conservative Republican. A precinct activist should greet the new neighbors shortly after arriving. A precinct activist can help the neighbor move in or bring treats or some other apolitical interaction. The best way to engage newcomers politically is to begin by chatting about local issues to get a feel of where they lie on the political spectrum. If their political views are friendly, help register to vote, show them the polling location, and let them know about your precinct organization.</p>
<p><b>Third Tier</b></p> <p>Key principles:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Listen.</li> <li>2) Meet them where they’re at.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Independent or Swing Voters</b> – People who claim to “vote for the person, not the Party.” Finding common ground (rather than points of contention) outside of an election cycle will put you in the strongest position as the election approaches. As always, make sure you are making the most of your opportunities with Democrats and new voters before spending resources on this category. Precinct organizations are a good fit to spend time with this group because of the time organizations have between elections.</p>
<p><b>Fourth Tier</b></p> <p>Key principles:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Think about resource allocation.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Persuading the Opposition</b> – Many activists feel a great satisfaction knowing they’ve ‘converted’ a voter. Persuading a Republican to start voting Democratic is relatively uncommon. From an organizing perspective, such persuasion is either a luxury or a last resort. It requires a large commitment of resources for a small and unlikely return. You could spend the same amount of time elsewhere and make a greater impact.</p>

## How to Host a House Party – DFA Case Study

Several times a year DFA sponsors nationwide house parties in order to build local communities and galvanize national action on important issues. The same process can be applied to any house party. There are several different types of DFA House Parties:

- **National Movie Nights** help educate your community about important issues. Past movies include *Sicko*, *Iraq for Sale*, *The War Tapes*, and *Uncounted*.
- **DFA Night School** is our free interactive online campaign training program. DFA will be holding Night School house parties throughout the year. Visit [www.democracyforamerica.com/nightschool](http://www.democracyforamerica.com/nightschool) for more information.
- **Work or Candidate Parties** are designed to help candidates or local groups accomplish campaign actions like mailings, writing multiple letters-to-the-editor and raising money.

### Simple Steps to a Successful House Party

1. **Determine the Goal of Your Party.** The first step to holding a successful house party is to be clear about the party's goals. This will help ensure the rest of your house party plan stays focused. Remember, a house party can accomplish one or more of the following:
  - Build your local DFA community
  - Educate local activists on important issues
  - Train local activists in winning campaign strategies and tactics
  - Raise money for your local group or local candidate
  - Accomplish campaign work actions or tasks

**Always set a quantifiable goal for any House Party**

**Example: 15 people in attendance and 30 Letters-to-the-editor**

2. **Pick a Location.** The location should be a place that encourages familiarity and even a sense of intimacy with the host. It should be somewhere easy to access and free to the organizer. The best location for most house parties is a home or apartment. It should fit your crowd goal in a way that allows attendees to mix comfortably. Since mixing and socializing is a part of your agenda, you will have to figure where people can and cannot go within the home. Part of your agenda will also involve addressing the whole crowd, so attendees will need to be able to gather in one place so that everyone can hear the speaker(s).
3. **Register the Party Online at DFA's Website: [www.democracyforamerica.com](http://www.democracyforamerica.com)** . This allows you to email and track invitations and promote your party online and to the wider DFA community.
4. **Build the Crowd.** Most successful house party events attract 10 to 30 people. You can build your crowd by:
  - Establishing a "host committee" where each member of the committee takes responsibility for inviting a certain number of people. Be sure that every member commits to a specific task, such as inviting five to ten friends.
  - Emailing your local DFA group and other members of your social network.
  - Email is not enough. Make a list of your friends and family and **start making follow up calls**.
  - Putting a notice in the local newspaper or calendar.
  - Using social networking sites like Facebook or Myspace can be helpful but cannot be relied upon.
5. **Plan Your Party.** Work out a rough schedule for the party beforehand. See the next page for a sample timetable. Simple refreshments are fine. People don't come for fancy food, but to socialize and take part in the specified action.
6. **Make Reminder Phone Calls and Send Reminder Emails.** One week before your party, call everyone that you have invited. This will remind those who've said yes and serve as an extra push to those who haven't yet responded.

## Time to Party!

Staff a table by the front door to have your guests sign in. Try to greet each person individually. Have extra pens and name tags handy. Display DFA and candidate materials if needed.

Other tips:

- Ask everyone to introduce themselves and share their “story” about why they’re interested in this campaign and why it matters in their lives. This is the key to creating a sense of intimacy and building community. Remember that the personal story should be short – just a minute or two each. The best way to set the tone is to make sure that the hosts start with their own brief stories. People will follow the example.

### Sample DFA Party Agenda (have fun!)

<b>6:30 PM</b>	Staff a table near the front door. Sign-in guests, provide name tags and materials. (Be welcoming!)
<b>7:00 PM</b>	Welcome; Guests introduce themselves and briefly explain why they’ve come.
<b>7:30 PM</b>	Watch DVD provided by DFA or listen to DFA Night School Training (or other actions).
<b>8:10 PM</b>	Host or surrogate makes pitch for help, support, money or campaign work. (Be specific.)
<b>8:30 PM</b>	Host closes the event by thanking everyone for attending.

## Making a House Party into a Fundraising Pitch for a Candidate or Group

See the section on fundraising in the manual for more about making a financial ask. A house party pitch is a little different than a one-on-one pitch, but the fundamentals are the same.

Begin the pitch by making the case for giving. Party hosts are usually the best persons to do this and can simply talk about why they themselves are contributing to DFA local group or candidate. If a national house party day is raising money for a specific purpose (A DFA candidate, or a specific action like putting a television ad on the air, etc.), let your guests know.

Hosts who are uncomfortable asking for money should find a surrogate, such as an elected official or local grassroots leader active in DFA. Whoever does the job needs to do three things:

1. **State a goal and give the context.** “Tonight I’m asking the people at this house party to help me raise \$500 to support DFA’s grassroots campaign to support candidate X. . . “
2. **Request an action.** Tell people you want them to make a donation tonight. Give a specific amount – “If each one of us here tonight gives \$25 we can easily make our goal of \$500.” Also mention any additional incentives (anyone who gives \$100 will receive a coffee mug, or hosts who raise \$500 will receive a signed book from Howard Dean, etc.) Multiple requests (give money, volunteer time, host your own party, etc.), are okay, but keep the list short and specific.
3. **Be specific.** Do you want someone to write a check? Tell them who to make it out to and where to put it – your hands, a basket in the hall, wherever. Want people to volunteer? Show them the sign up sheet or give them a card. Make your requests clear and concrete and close the formal program by thanking everyone for coming. This gives people time to act on your request by writing checks, signing up to volunteer, or doing whatever else you have asked.

# Running Better Meetings

**On its face, running a meeting seems simple enough, yet...**

- How many times have you been to a horrible meeting?
- Felt your time was wasted by attending?
- Left a meeting without knowing what was accomplished?
- Left a meeting without knowing what the next step was?

**Too often , meetings are held without a clear purpose or plan.**

## Purpose of Meetings:

- o Formulate an action plan to accomplish a task.
- o Resolving issues which require the presence of those attending.
- o Update attendees on progress of others when needed.

Key Principles	Common Pitfalls
<p><b>1) Functionality</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- You meet for specific reasons.</li> <li>- Expect to come out of the meeting with an executable plan.</li> <li>- Action plans are specific, have timelines, and have delegated roles for all attendees</li> <li>- Only people relevant to the meeting topic should have to attend.</li> </ul> <p><b>2) Transparency</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Key members have input on the agenda beforehand.</li> <li>- Agenda is distributed to all attendees before the meeting.</li> <li>- Topic and contents are known to members, even if they are not attending the meeting.</li> </ul> <p><b>3) Discipline</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Topical. Concerns are discussed only when they appear on the agenda. Time can be set aside for additional items, but know when to take discussions offline.</li> <li>- Timely. Each agenda item is timed. If discussion exceeds time, either table it or agree to continue discussion with the explicit intention to sacrifice subsequent items. Establish this early on.</li> </ul> <p><b>4) Accountability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Speakers must respect listeners.</li> <li>- Listeners must respect speakers.</li> </ul>	<p><b>1) Unnecessary Meetings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sometimes having a meeting is itself a mistake.</li> <li>- Can the required tasks simply be done or delegated without the group’s input? Must you talk about it before just doing it?</li> <li>- Scheduling meetings regularly is still important, but make each have a purpose.</li> </ul> <p><b>2) Obsession with Process</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Serious activists should not go to a meeting to seek emotional affirmation from the group.</li> <li>- The primary concern is to get the job done. Process obsession may unnecessarily occupy too much time, and end up disrespecting everyone’s time.</li> </ul> <p><b>3) Dominating Personalities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sometimes people need to shut up and listen. It is more polite to say ‘get to the point’ or ‘how is this relevant?’ than to waste everyone’s time. Embrace this interruption.</li> <li>- Discussion leaders need to be sure they are not dominating the discussion. They are leading a meeting, not emceeding an event.</li> <li>- 50% rule. No one needs to speak more than 50% of the time.</li> </ul> <p><b>4) No Plan = No Action = No Follow up</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Without these components, you didn’t really have a meeting. Be specific about all of the above.</li> </ul>

## Pre-Meeting Prep

- First, determine whether you really need the meeting. Do you need the group to decide your next course of action, or does it merely require quick decision-making?
- Next, who must attend? A good way to figure this out is to ask yourself what each person's delegated task might be at the end of the meeting. If you know that people will walk away without a task, why did they attend in the first place? Meetings can become dramatically less effective when the number exceeds 20 or so people, especially when the agenda is open or unclear. Larger meetings tend to become more informational than discussion-oriented.
- Materials and Visuals – Handouts should be created and distributed prior to the meeting, with extras on hand at the meeting. Bring pens, notepads, markers, whiteboards etc. Visuals are often helpful in clarifying topics and keeping people's attention.

### Tip:

Since your meeting should start on time, ask likely latecomers to arrive early. A trick is to ask certain people to help 'set up the room', or ask them to a 'pre-meeting to discuss X' to get them there earlier.

## The Agenda

- Always have an agenda for any meeting that exceeds 10-15 minutes (most meetings) or meetings that exceed one topic.
- Ask for input from your attendees as you are creating your agenda to make sure you cover everything you need to cover, and so you can table unrelated issues before they pop up at the meeting.
- Agendas should be sent out before the meeting so people know how their time will be spent and can come prepared to discuss and decide.

### Tip:

Each item should have a number of minutes to be spent printed alongside the item. Sticking to the allotted times helps you facilitate a timely meeting.

## Running the Meeting

- **Start on time.** Respect people who made it on time by starting on time. This sets the tone for the meeting.
- **Assign Roles**
  - Leader/Facilitator: Runs the meeting. Usually responsible for calling votes, moving to the next topic, and keeping focused. Leaders should not speak through the whole meeting. If they want, they can organize a lecture, not run a meeting.
  - Note taker: Take minutes. Highlight delegated tasks. First post-meeting task is to send the notes out to all attendees.
  - Timekeeper: Makes sure each agenda item stays on time. The group can rely on this person to interrupt when needed.
  - Attendees: Attendees should generally be involved in the meeting. For example, each agenda item could be handled by a different attendee.
- **Decision-Making.** Choose a process that doesn't bog you down. Consensus is typically for small, homogenous groups. Majority votes are often more practical, just as long as the facilitator can manage and end debates in a timely fashion and call for a vote.

### Tip:

Want your meeting to last less than 30 min? Make it a standing meeting. Short meetings will stay short if everyone stands during the meeting. If no one sits, no one wastes time.

## Ending the Meeting

- Review the plan of action. This is a good spot for people to prove that the meeting was held for a reason. One suggestion is to go around the table and have each person state his or her next steps. The note-taker can also state delegated roles for each person. At the end of the meeting, if you've worked out a goal, it should come with a plan to achieve it
- Action plans should all have a timeline. X item is done by Y time.
- Establish clear follow-up procedures – When, how, etc. Since each task is to be done by a certain time, and this time is known to the group, follow up should be easy.

### Tip:

Is someone sucking up the time? Let them know. "We're **all** very busy here." Frame the interruption in terms of the needs of the group.

## Post-Meeting Follow up

- Send out the minutes.
- Each person or team completes their task on announced schedule or makes known to the appropriate person that the task will not be done on schedule.
- Examples of follow up plan can include reports (even brief summaries) sent to one person at particular times (weekly, halfway through, upon completion, etc), or one person calling each team at particular times to compile progress reports.

## Sample Meeting Agenda

<b>Tri-County DFA Host Steering Meeting</b>	
July 25, 2005, 6pm-7pm	
I. Introductions (Jane)	<b>9 min</b>
- Name, city, and ONE highlight from your DFA group	
II. Report on battling the Wal-Mart re-zoning initiative (John)	<b>16 min</b>
- Latest update	
- Next steps	
- Suggestions for action items for neighboring DFA groups	
III. Efforts to bring in a statewide DFA training	<b>12 min</b>
- Logistics (Joe)	
○ Venue options narrowed down	
○ Next step: Food	
○ Next Step: Housing Coordination	
- Attendance (Janice)	<b>7 min</b>
○ Email strategies	
○ Calling our DFA membership for reminders	
- Report from Burlington (Jesse)	<b>4 min</b>
IV. Local elections starting up (Jordan)	<b>8 min</b>
- Do groups have an endorsement process?	
- Has anyone been approached?	
- Who will be the point person for this initiative?	
V. Closing (Jared)	<b>4 min</b>
- Review action items and delegated roles	
- Follow-up Plans	
- Dinner at Oasis Diner	

# Coalitions and Constituency Groups

## What is a Coalition?

A coalition is a group of organizations working together for a common purpose. These organizations may have different structures and diverging interests, but are bound together by a common purpose. Coalitions are about building power. The reason to spend the time and energy building a coalition is to amass the power necessary to do something you cannot do through one organization.

## What is a Constituency Group?

An electoral constituency group is any group of people bound by a common trait, interest, or affiliation in a given district. Members of a constituency group presumably vote in generally the same way. Candidates have an interest in building a relationship with these groups for the purpose of winning an election in which the group can help the candidate reach his or her vote goal. A constituency group may also have an interest in helping the candidate become an elected official. The constituency group can then hold this official accountable on issues that affect their constituency.

### Types of Coalitions

1. Working or Paper
2. Permanent or Temporary
3. Single or Multi-issue
4. Geographically-based (national, local, etc) or Constituency-based (women's, religious, etc.)

### Electoral Coalitions

Endorsements might come in name only, or include resources (money and people). Endorsements are accompanied by the expectation that once in office, the elected official will act in the interest of the endorsing group. A campaign will seek the support of many different constituency groups, and constituency groups will scrutinize many different candidates.

## Evaluating the Need to Build a Coalition or Court a Constituency

Building bridges for the sake of building bridges wastes an organization's resources and often leads to misunderstandings between groups. Organizational relationships are built on the need to work together, for a common purpose with a stated goal – not by the mere existence of the other group. Investing in these relationships cost resources – people, time, and money. Often these relationships allow groups to make the best use of their combined resources.

### Potential Advantages and Disadvantages

Advantages	Disadvantages
- Allow an organization or candidate to speak credibly to more people.	- Lose a measure of control; make too many compromises
- Increase the campaign or organization's resources: more people, more money. Work is done to achieve a common campaign goal.	- Distracts from other work, group and coalition politics, false expectations can cost the coalition members.
- Broaden scope and appeal of the candidate or organization.	- Unforeseen political consequences, or reactions from other groups

Candidates running for election should quickly become familiar with potential constituency groups. Electoral campaigns can quickly determine the necessity of various constituency groups. Groups with a large membership, strong influence, or deep pockets can be directly helpful. Organizations which represent a significant portion of a campaign's vote goal can become critical allies. If the vote goal for the campaign is 3500, and the district has 1000 registered South Asian voters, then the candidate could potentially reach a large portion of his or her vote goal by investing in a relationship with a local South Asian political group. The same principle applies when targeting elected officials in advocating public policy. Citizen lobbying efforts should work to incorporate constituent organizations in their lobbying efforts.

## Principles of a Successful Coalition

### **1. Respect Organizational Interests and Decision-making**

Each organization brings its own structure, values, culture, and decision making processes. They enter into a coalition relationship for their own sake. Understanding what brings the organizations to work together is an important part of making that relationship work. Different values and decision-making processes will lead organizations to respond differently throughout a campaign. From the beginning organizations may have some areas of disagreement. If these areas are acknowledged and respected, the coalition's common purpose will guide the relationship, not the differences.

### **2. Set Realistic Expectations**

Contributions from different groups may vary widely. Groups may have different strengths and weaknesses. Groups should be targeted for relationships based on what strengths a group brings to the table (and also what challenges the group will bring). Work with group leaders to maximize their potential contributions throughout the campaign. Be explicit with the roles and responsibilities of the partnership. What are the shared resources of the partnership - cost sharing, list sharing, a shared timeline with benchmarks? The coalition should determine how decisions are made for the group.

### **3. Distribute Recognition Where Due**

Each group has a reason to get involved with the campaign. Acknowledging this reason will help the organization distribute credit. For advocacy groups this may be done by sharing contacts, relationships, and media exposure. For electoral campaigns, this could be public recognition of the constituency group's issues and importance in exchange for a public endorsement.

## Getting Started: Step by Step Relationship Building

### **1) Evaluate the Proposed Relationship**

Go into the relationship with a specific purpose and a plan. If the initiating organization cannot articulate a reason for the building the relationship, the other organization will not find a reason to be receptive. For example, "we want to see more of you people" is not a good reason.

#### **IS THIS LEGAL?**

Find out if your group's legal structure allows for coordination with your potential coalition partners.

### **2) Do Your Homework**

Develop a list of key contacts within the organizations with whom your groups wish to partner. Research the target group: its issues, its past positions, its involvement in politics. Resources and literature available from the group will show you some of the group's priorities. Ask public officials close to your group about the target group. For electoral campaigns, it will be useful to know how much a portion of your vote goal this group could tackle for you. However, be careful not to mistake constituency groups as representing a monolithic bloc of voters.

### **3) Cultivate Community Leaders**

Understanding whom to contact can be a small challenge. When dealing with unfamiliar communities, it is not uncommon to miss important dynamics like infighting or competing organizations. Arrange a personal meeting with the appropriate leadership of the target group. Relationship building requires a good coalition builder to listen more than to speak or demand. Make an effort to listen to the community leaders before asserting a new agenda. Be sure to sort out any existing problems or misunderstandings before or at the beginning of the meeting. This assures the leaders that they are an important aspect of the coalition or campaign. Ideally, the candidate or organization is involved in working on the same issues. Never go into a situation to tell a community what's best for them. But find areas of agreement, invest the target group in the solution, and involve the target organization in the group.

#### 4) Recognition

As your groups work together, plan to share credit. Understanding the motivations for each group can be helpful in building the relationship. If one group seeks to benefit from media attention, for example, their group should get a mention in media hits, if possible. In electoral campaigns, recognition from a candidate comes in the form of standing up for particular issues of interest to the constituency and access to that candidate after taking office. In return, constituent organizations lend their name and resources to the campaign.

#### 5) Establish a Structure for Continued Dialogue

Each group should know the progress of the others toward a goal. Establish quantifiable goals and set benchmarks. Be specific. Numbers. Dates. Work together. Don't just ask how their canvass went, go canvass with the group in the group's neighborhood. After the completion of the goal, the groups should continue to network after the campaign time is done.

### **DFA CASE Study: Fair Share for Health Care**

In 2005, the Maryland Legislature passed a bill requiring companies with more than 10,000 employees in the state to pay their fair share for health care. The law required companies to either spend 8% of their payroll on health benefits or contribute to the state's health insurance program for the poor. In practice, the bill only affected Wal-Mart, because the other qualifying employers (Northrop Grumman, Giant Foods and John Hopkins) already met the law's guidelines.

Unfortunately, Maryland's Republican governor vetoed the bill, leaving only one option for the bill to become law: the legislature would have to override the veto. As the 2005 legislative session approached, DFA worked closely with labor groups such as SEIU (Service Employees International Union) and UFCW (United Food and Commercial Workers), and grassroots groups, such as Maryland for Health Care, WakeUp Wal-Mart, and Wal-Mart Watch, to develop a campaign to persuade undecided legislators to support the override vote. The labor groups brought a strong framework of institutional knowledge on the Maryland legislature and relationships within the state. DFA and other grassroots groups brought a committed set of activists who were ready to pressure legislators.

We worked with our coalition partners to develop tailored communications for DFA members. We also developed a list of undecided legislators on whom to focus our member outreach. This information enabled DFA to develop a broad campaign asking DFA members across the state to contact their legislators, while simultaneously executing a more targeted campaign to put heightened pressure on undecided legislators. Dozens of DFA members from around the state called their legislators to ask them to support the override vote. The labor groups supplemented this grassroots tactic with radio advertisements in targeted districts.

The culmination of the campaign was a high-visibility rally in Annapolis on the first day of the legislative session to show support for the override vote. No one coalition group could have developed sufficient grassroots pressure on their own. But working together, we mobilized hundreds of people and swayed several key legislators.

In the end, Wal-Mart pulled out the big guns. They hired the biggest cadre of lobbyists in recent history to try to influence the legislation. But the coalition showed that good 'ol fashioned shoe leather can overcome the special interests.

Ultimately, the Fair Share Health Care Act received two-thirds majorities in both houses of the Maryland Legislature. It is the first successful Fair Share legislation in the country. This campaign provides a model for success in other states by demonstrating that a coalition of labor and grassroots groups can overcome lobbyist influence.