

TIPS

Approaches for Working with Community Allies

Working people forming a union or fighting for their first contract need allies in the community. Allies can provide valuable support in a campaign and can form long-lasting relationships that build power for working people.



COMMUNITY ALLIES HAVE AN INTEREST

People who don't work here also care about jobs, discrimination, employer responsibility and are our natural allies. Think about:

- issues that others might have related to your campaign;
- research or information others bring to the table; and
- groups that have a specific interest: environmental, consumer, religious, civic, senior, student or social justice groups around gender, race/ethnicity, etc.

PEOPLE POWER

Like our union, community organizations have people power. What difference can that make?

- increased turnout at rallies, meetings and lobbying activities;
- builds relationships;
- shows unity and momentum; and
- provides inspiration.

SHARE RESOURCES

Besides people power, what are some ways that allies can support each other?

- Transportation
- Office supplies, food, child care, etc.
- Office or meeting space

Some Ways to Get Started

- Begin with your committee
- Identify community allies
- Make an outreach plan
- Prepare co-workers to share their story
- Involve as many people as possible
- Start with easy meetings first

MORAL SUPPORT

Sometimes the main outcome of working with allies will be to support you and your co-workers in your fight to form a union or win a fair contract. Be creative in ways to show:

- We are not alone
- They've got our backs
- We're doing the right thing for our community
- We can win

PUBLICITY

Combining efforts with allies can help get attention and support for what we're fighting for:

- bringing community leaders or experts to meetings;
- providing letters to the editor and op-eds;
- expanding relationships with reporters; and
- highlighting how the employer's actions impact individual people in the workplace and the community.

POLITICAL PRESSURE

Combining our voter power and political clout can get public officials to pay attention. Think about what elected leaders care about, for example:

- public money spent on contracts or subsidies;
- enforcement of regulations under the law;
- health and safety or legal violations by employers in the community; and votes and elections.

INFLUENCE

Some community allies may be able to influence the employer's behavior because of their relationship to the employer:

- Customers
- Endorsers
- Contributors
- Advocates for employer services
- Public officials

It's a Two-Way Street

Good allies give and get:

- Information
- Resources
- People
- Moral support
- Publicity
- Political pressure
- Influence

Tips to Make it Last

- Make clear from the beginning what the commitment is to each other.
- Keep all parties informed of actions and decisions.
- Communication is key to building successful and ongoing relationships with community allies.
- Step up when they need something from you!