

## GET STARTED

# Assess My Local Union

If you are putting together an internal organizing campaign, start with an assessment of your local union. What do you want to accomplish? What tools and resources do you need? What are your strengths and weaknesses? This can help you figure out where to start.



## BUILD A LIST

**Do you have a list of all the members *and* the nonmembers? If not, you will need one. Here are some helpful tools for getting organized:**

- Figure out what you are entitled to through the employer.
- Create a database that can capture basic information about each person (see GOT A LIST?)
- Add fields to track progress of contacts, activists and new members.
- Reach out to active members to help build the list in their areas.
- Use a simple survey to collect information.
- Graphically map out every member and nonmember by shift and department.

### What's in Your Contract?

- The list: What information do you get and how often do you get it?
- Access to work space and time for union meetings?
- Paid time off (release time) for stewards, officers and activists?
- Access to new employees through orientations or meeting one on one?
- Member card included in HR new hire packet?

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## MEMBERS

**Start with your strengths and identify workplaces, shifts and locations where membership is strong.** For example:

- Where do we have majority membership or greater?
- Why is our membership strong here?
- Where are our most active members? What are they doing?
- Which members or activists would make good messengers to nonmembers?

## STEWARDS AND OFFICERS

**A successful internal organizing campaign needs the support of stewards and officers of the local, but also needs a broad committee of member leaders. Make honest assessments about leadership and capacity.**

- How committed are our current stewards to organizing?
- Which are the best messengers to sign up new members?
- Include stewards and officers on your workplace map. Are there places where they can easily reach out to nonmembers?
- Who else might be a good messenger and part of a representative committee?
- Where are the places without stewards or member leaders?

## NONMEMBERS

**Since one of the goals of internal organizing is to sign up nonmembers, assess what you really know about people who have not joined yet.**

- Who are the nonmembers? Where do they work?
- Who has been asked to join before? Or, who used to be a member but quit?

### Got a List?

- Name
- Date of Birth
- Hire Date
- Job Title
- Department
- Worksite
- Shift/Hours
- Days
- Home Mailing Address
- Home Phone
- Cell Phone
- Work Email Address
- Personal Email Address
- Membership Status
- Date of Membership
- Language Spoken
- What else?

### A Good Messenger

is someone who is respected by others, listens and connects the importance of union membership to what others care about.

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- Think about members, stewards and activists who already know and talk to co-workers who have not joined our union.
  - Are there areas where groups of people have negative attitudes about the local union? Where? Why?

## OPPORTUNITIES

**By now, you've identified possible obstacles to your plan. Think about what external factors might provide good motivation to members and nonmembers alike. These are opportunities to add urgency to your internal organizing campaign.**

- One area of opportunities is contract negotiations.
- Fighting back against an attack on benefits also can be unifying.
- A new issue in the workplace that has broad interest is another possibility.

## GET A PLAN!

**Use your assessment to figure out whom to engage and where to start.**

- Involve as many people as possible to set goals and a deadline.
- Start with easy stuff to build confidence.
- Short timeframes build excitement and urgency.
- Figure out how to track progress and results before you begin.
- What resources and training will you need to be successful?

### Track Progress

- Track activity and outcomes such as:
  - new leaders or activists;
  - who's talking to whom;
  - date and outcome of one-on-one meetings;
  - notes about issues people care about; and
  - new members and updated contact information.