

Communication Tools You Can Use

www.afscme.org/providerprograms

Objectives:

After completing this workshop, students will be better able to:

- Employ one-on-one communication techniques..
- Demonstrate best practices for communicating with members via phone.
- Prepare for and participant in meetings with legislators.
- Recognize the importance of effective communication for successful union-building activities.

Techniques:

Classroom discussion, small groups, pairs, fish bowl role plays

Time: 90 Minutes

Materials/Aids:

- 3x5 Cards
- Markers for each table
- Flip chart and markers

Advance Preparation:

- Flip Charts 1-10

Handouts: *(See pages 13-22)*

- Five Steps of One-on-One Communication
- Elements of an Effective Phone Call
- Sample Phone Script
- How to Convince Elected Officials Through Lobbying
OPTIONAL : Sample Phone Tree (See pages 16-17)

Workshop Sections:

Part 1 - Welcome / Introductions (5 min.)

and Icebreaker: Exploring 1-on-1 Communication (20 min.)

Part 2 - Making the Call: Effective 1-on-1 Phone Communications (45 min.)

Part 3 - Getting Your Message Out: Lobbying and Beyond (15 min.)
and Conclusion and Summary (5 min.)

Part I – Welcome / Introductions / Grounds Rules / Icebreaker (25 minutes)

Method: Class discussion

Goals:

- Describe workshop objectives
- List communications elements in unions
- Identify methods of communications that are in use by CCPT leaders and members

Facilitator Notes:

1. Welcome participants to the workshop. State briefly where you are from and what you do.
2. Review the workshop agenda (*posted in advance on a flip chart*):

FC1: AGENDA

- Welcome and Introductions
- Effective Communication Methods
- Making the Call: Effective Phone Communications
- Overview of Lobbying Electing Officials
- Closing

Briefly discuss the following:

- Importance of effective communication for mobilization and for moving issues forwards.
- The role of communication in unions (keeping organized, strong and active).

3. Review the Ground Rules

FC2: Ground Rules

- Everyone participates
- Everybody listens and respects responses
- Turn off your cell phones

Ask if everyone agrees with these ground rules or any more to add.

Icebreaker: Exploring One-on-One Communications (20 minutes)

Method: Participant introductions by pairs.

5. Give the following instructions:

FC3: INSTRUCTIONS

- Choose a partner you don't know. Introduce yourselves.
- Give your name, city and number of years as a provider.
- Discuss and share ways that an organization communicates with its members (any organization or union specific)
- Agree on which two methods the two of you like best.

6. Ask each pair to share "ONE" communication method they came up with that they like best. Continue the 'round robin' until all ideas are captured. Write these on the flip chart. Add any methods listed below the participants missed. *Potential examples of communication:*

- | | |
|--|---|
| - Email | - Telephone |
| - Mail | - Websites |
| - Face to face | - Newsletters |
| - Webcams | - Webinars |
| - Fliers and
other written
materials | - Other multimedia: blogs,
podcasts, video |

7. Read the list the class created and ask for a show of hands which of the method is their preferred method.
8. Ask which method is most effective. Draw out that I-on-I, face to face is the most effective method. **DISTRIBUTE** and review **HANDOUT: FIVE STEPS OF I-ON-I.**

FC4: Five Steps of I-on-I Communication

1. Introduce yourself & explain why you are talking with members
2. Use active listening skills to learn about the member and his/her issues and concerns
3. Educate about the union & what can be done to build power
4. Ask the member to participate
5. Get a specific commitment

9. Note that there are many ways we can communicate as a union. Determining the most effective method is crucial to the power your union will have.
10. Transition to the **Advantages and Disadvantages of One-on-one Communications**. Ask participants: “What are the advantages of one-on-one communication?” and record responses on a flipchart.

FC5: ADVANTAGES OF I-ON-I

- *It's personal*
- *Can get immediate feedback*
- *Can answer questions*
- *Able to read body language*
- *Establish and develop relationships*

11. Ask participants: “What are the disadvantages of I-on-I communication?” and record responses on a flipchart.

FC6: DISADVANTAGES OF I-ON-I

- *It's time consuming*
- *Access to members is sometimes difficult*
- *Message may be inconsistent*
- *Fear of rejection or that “I won't know answers to questions”*

12. Ask participants: “How can we overcome these disadvantages of one-on-one communication?”

Potential Responses:

Time consuming – Involve more people

*Access to members – Develop and use an phone tree or network,
[e.g. Kansas CCPT Key Comm]**

*Inconsistent message – Meet to go over message; develop fear
or that “I won't know the answer” talking points*

**NOTE: Distribute optional handout “PHONE TREE” pp.16-17 below, is the CCPT local does not have an established communications network.*

Summary Points:

- We need to use a variety of communication methods to reach out to child care providers.
- One-on-one communication is the most effective way to engage members and child care providers, even if it's one-on-one via phone.
- It's an effective way to educate CCPT members about the union, as well as find out what their concerns and interests are.
- We should make use of technology to talk with union members and other child care providers, e.g. web sites; online classes and webinars.
- Remember that unions are stronger with an informed, active membership.

Part 2 – Making the Call: Effective Phone Communications (45 minutes)

Method: Class discussion, Small Group and Fish Bowl Role Plays

Goals:

- Write an effective phone script
- Practice using effective communication techniques when making phone calls to members

Facilitator Notes:

What makes an informative phone call? - (5 minutes)

1. Let's discuss the CCPT phone system, "Key-Comm"— the Kansas CCPT phone tree/network— as a method for getting news out to members. Ask who participates in the Key-Comm? Ask the volunteer how it works. Note that making effective and efficient phone calls is crucial in the usefulness of this system.
2. Ask participants: "What are some of the challenges you face or you think someone might when using the phone tree network?" and take several responses.
3. Now that we know those challenges, let's talk about what are the elements of an effective phone call? (Write on flip chart)

FC7: Elements of an Effective Phone Call
(Sample responses below)

Sample responses:

- Be sure to make the call in a quiet environment and where there are no distractions.
- Make the call short. A nice greeting and quick, "How's your day?" is enough.
- Have a piece of paper in front of you with details that you can read to them.

- State the reason your calling, “I’m calling to update you on some decisions made at last night’s union meeting.”
- Ask them if you have any questions.
- Be friendly and enthusiastic.
- Encourage them to take action that relates to the issue you’re calling about. Tell them when the next meeting, event, election, etc.
- End the call and tell them if they have any questions and how they can get in touch with you or the union. Remind them about a website or other resource that is always available.

4. **DISTRIBUTE HANDOUT: ELEMENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE PHONE CALL.** Encourage participants to share this handout with other providers who are part of their phone tree/network – Key Comm.

Developing an Effective Phone Message - (40 minutes)

Method: Small Group and Fish Bowl Role Plays

1. Now that we know the elements of an effective phone call and the value of good one-on-one communications, let’s practice.
2. Tell participants we need to decide what important details we want cover in our practice phone calls. Let’s use information from the Opening General Session. For example: “Founding Convention” highlights or details regarding recent contract negotiations or agenda items for an upcoming CCPT regional meeting or a get-out-the-vote message. (Flip chart their suggestions.)
3. That’s a lot of information and we can’t cover everything we listed on the flip chart in one phone call. So for the role play phone calls you will have to decide what message .you want to deliver.
4. **DISTRIBUTE** the **SAMPLE PHONE SCRIPT HANDOUT** and **3x5 CARDS**. Remind participants that this sample phone script to help them write their own phone messages.
5. Explain that we are going to practice one-on-one communication skills while role playing an effective phone call to a CCPT member.

6. Give the following instructions:

FC8: Writing & Practicing an Effective Phone Message

- Choose a partner you don't know.
- Discuss what 2 or 3 key items you want to provide in your phone call
- Decide what action you want the member to take
- Write out your phone message or key talking points
- Each partner should do a practice call with your partner.
- You have 15 minutes.

7. Circulate among the participants, once each pair has had time to practice, call time and bring the group back together. *[Note: Place two chairs in the front of the room, back-to-back, so that the role players will not be able to see each other.]*
8. Ask if there's a volunteer pair who would like to role play their phone call for the whole group. *[NOTE : Do as many fishbowl role plays that time will allow. Be sure applaud volunteers after each role play.]*
9. Lead the Fish Bowl Role Plays. Give the following role play and feedback instructions before beginning the fish bowl role plays:
- a. The role play will start after the instructor makes the "ring tone" sound.
 - b. After the role play, let's provide each pair with constructive feedback. First, the caller in the role play will state what she did well, and one thing she might change or improve upon. Next, the receiver partner will do the same, stating "what the caller did well" and "what could be done differently."
 - c. The instructor will then ask the group to give the same type of feedback: "what went well," and "what could be improved upon."
10. Conclude by thanking those volunteered to participate in the role plays.

Summary Points:

- Effective, regular communication is critical to successful union-building activities.
- One-on-one communication is the most effective way to engage members and child care providers, even if it's one-on-one via phone. You will learn more about CCPT members' needs and interests.
- Volunteers for Key Comm are needed. Join the network so you can practice and get better at making effective phone calls.
- Remember that unions are stronger with informed, active membership.

Part 3 – Getting Your Message Out: Lobbying and Beyond (15 minutes)

Method: Class discussion.

Goals:

- Recognize the aspects of communication involved in lobbying
- Review preparation steps for a lobby visit
- Identify effective lobbying techniques

Facilitator Notes:

Communicating with Elected Officials

DISTRIBUTE HANDOUT: *How to Convince Elected Officials Through Lobbying*

1. As union members we will not only need to get the message out to members, but we will need to talk one-on-one with our elected officials who distribute money and pass legislation on behalf of our issues. Talking to elected officials is what's known as lobbying. We also need to know how to spread our message to a larger audience. Let's get an overview of communication behind lobbying and further.
2. We will name the main steps behind lobbying. Use flip charts to have a brainstorm session covering the key ideas of communication:

FC 9: Lobbying: Step-by-Step -- What communication methods will we use?
(*Sample responses are in italic below*)

- 1. Finding the right elected officials to lobby**
Talking to other local presidents
Using the Internet and email to do research
Compiling a list of phone numbers and addresses
- 2. Knowing about the issue before you lobby**
Talking to members (one-on-one, calling, emailing)
Using the Internet and email to do research
Reading written materials, newspapers or newsletters
Watching speeches (online or in person)
Talking to someone who knows them personally
- 3. Lobbying for your issues**
Calling to set up appointment with staff
One-on-one meeting with elected official
Follow up note or email

FC 10: Other communication methods will we use?
(Sample responses are in italic below and in the handout)

Getting Your Message Out Further

- *Letter-writing campaigns. Personal letters are always more effective than form letters*
- *Postcard campaigns*
- *Petitions*
- *Crowd support at hearings, community meetings and other public events*
- *Statements of support from other official bodies*
- *Media – letters to the editor, op-ed pieces, press statements, buttons, bumper stickers*
 - *Building a relationship with reporters*
 - *Alerting the media when a potential story might arise*
- *Letters of support from influential people /organizations*
- *Discussions at public meetings or forums*
- *Expert testimony at committee hearings or county board/city council meeting*
- *Telephone calls*

3. Ask if anyone has another idea or did something pop into your head about a way that you can communicate your issues? Take a few responses from the audience.

Summary Points:

- Effective, regular communications is critical to successful union-building. That includes meeting with elected officials to voice your concerns and lobbying them to hold them accountable.
- One-on-one communication is the most effective way to engage legislators, but other communication methods, such as email, letter writing, testifying at hearings, etc., are also needed and useful.
- Keep informed about your elected officials and important legislation that affects child care providers by visiting the AFSCME web site at www.afscme.org.
- We would like to ask you to make a commitment to help increase the union and child care providers' political clout before the session ends today.

Conclusion and Summary (5 minutes)

Method: Class discussion.

Goals:

- Gain a commitment to practice one-on-one communications
- Review keys to being an effective communicator

Facilitator Notes:

1. Now that we are all effective union communicators, ready to talk by phone with members, and lobby our elected officials, lets make a commitment to put what we learned into action.
2. DISTRIBUTE Note Cards. Ask participants to use a 3x5 note-card to write down one communication method they will employ to move their issues forward. (*Possible actions: Get informed using the internet, use the Key-Comm phone network more, talk to an elected official, write a letter*).
3. If time allows, ask for examples of their action steps. Ask them how and when they will accomplish this.
4. Use the note cards to summarize what we learned today: That being an effective communicator makes our union stronger.

FIVE STEPS OF ONE-ON-ONE COMMUNICATION

1. **Introduce yourself and explain why you are talking with members.**
2. **Use active listening skills to learn about the worker and his/her issues and concerns.**
 - ◆ Face the person you are talking with.
 - ◆ Maintain eye contact.
 - ◆ Nod and say "yes" at appropriate times.
 - ◆ Don't interrupt.
 - ◆ Don't jump to conclusions.
 - ◆ Ask clarifying questions.
 - ◆ Ask open-ended questions.
3. **Educate about the union and what can be done to build power.**
 - ◆ If we take up an issue as a group, it is more likely our voices will be heard.
 - ◆ We're reaching out to you and other providers so that we can build a stronger union and make real changes.
 - ◆ Standing together, we can take an active role in improving our profession.
4. **Ask the worker to participate.**
 - ◆ Who else is affected by this issue? Will you introduce me to them?
 - ◆ Will you come to a meeting next Tuesday? Will you ask _____ to join us?
 - ◆ Can I get your address and phone number so I can keep in touch with you?
5. **Get a specific commitment.**
 - ◆ Remember to follow up on the commitment!

ELEMENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE PHONE CALL

GREETING

- Be sure to make the call in a **quiet environment** and where there are **no distractions**.
- **Make the call short.** A nice greeting and quick, "How's your day?" is enough.
- Have a piece of **paper in front of you with details** that you can read to them.

IDENTIFY YOURSELF AS A PROVIDER AND FROM THE UNION & STATE YOUR PURPOSE

- **State the reason your calling,** "I'm calling to update you on some decisions made at last night's union meeting."
- **Ask them if you have any questions.**
- **Be friendly and enthusiastic.**

MAKE "THE ASK"

- **Encourage them to take action** that relates to the issue you're calling about. Tell them when the next meeting, event, election, etc. will be

CLOSE WITH CONTACT INFO AND DETAILS ABOUT RESOURCES

- End the call **and tell them if they have any questions and how they can get in touch with you or the union.** **Remind them about a website or other resource** that is always available.

SAMPLE PHONE SCRIPT

Hi this is {your name}. May I speak with {CCPT Member's Name}.

I'm a child care provider and a member of Child Care Providers Together of AFSCME Council 000.

We're calling members of CCPT to let you know that nearly 200 child care providers from across the state met in Wichita last week, and we heard about our new Union Contract which will provide new benefits to you and other Child Care Providers.

If you want to know about the Contract and other details what's going on with CCPT-AFSCME, you should attend our next Regional Meeting on [September 6th at 7:30 p.m. in the Wichita Union office on {Address}].

Do you think you will be able to attend? [wait for response]

[If yes,] Great, I'll see you there.

[If no,] Ask if you can have their email address to keep them informed.

Thanks and have a good day. Good-bye



Phone Tree

Council 000 Child Care Providers Together

Name: _____

Telephone Number: _____

↓	↓	↓	↓
Provider Name 555-555-5555	Provider Name 555-555-5555	Provider Name 555-555-5555	Provider Name 555-555-5555
↓	↓	↓	↓
↓	↓	↓	↓
↓	↓	↓	↓
↓	↓	↓	↓
↓	↓	↓	↓
↓	↓	↓	↓
↓	↓	↓	↓
↓	↓	↓	↓
↓	↓	↓	↓

If the person you are calling is not at home, leave a message, if possible, and call the next person on the list.



Phone Tree

Council 000 Child Care Providers Together

Name: _____
 Telephone Number: _____

↓
 LEAD PERSON
 555-555-5555
 ↓

↓	↓	↓	↓
Provider Name 555-555-5555	Provider Name 555-555-5555	Provider Name 555-555-5555	Provider Name 555-555-5555
↓	↓	↓	↓
↓	↓	↓	↓
↓	↓	↓	↓
↓	↓	↓	↓
↓	↓	↓	↓
↓	↓	↓	↓
↓	↓	↓	↓
↓	↓	↓	↓
↓	↓	↓	↓

How to Convince Elected Officials Through Lobbying

Why lobby?

Lobbying elected officials on the state, county, city or town level is an important part of AFSCME's program to advance the interests of its members. In general, lobbying is merely trying to affect the outcome of a decision or trying to convince someone to do something.

Every AFSCME member needs to be involved personally in the process as citizens and taxpayers, thereby convincing legislators that AFSCME is more than a handful of officers and staff. Legislators respond to their constituencies and a good lobbying campaign demonstrates that their constituents support a certain position.

The principal goal in lobbying is to demonstrate strong, broad-based support for AFSCME's position and to persuade decision-makers to agree with it. Elected officials need to be convinced that AFSCME's position is substantive and that it has support in the community.

A coalition of family members, community groups, and other concerned citizens may be able to lobby an elected official more effectively than AFSCME members alone. Because of this, lobbying efforts should always include some form of coalition building. Coalitions do not need to be permanent or covered by the press to be effective. The second section of this guide discusses coalition building to support lobbying.

Another way to speak to elected officials is through the media. The third section of this guide discusses how to maintain common sense relations with the media during a major lobbying effort.

Where to begin

First, establish a Lobbying Committee and compile a list of elected officials with their telephone numbers and addresses. The Lobbying Committee needs to determine where each elected official stands on the issue that the Council/Local is concerned about. The questions that need to be considered are:

- Is the official for or against AFSCME's position?
- Can he or she be persuaded to support AFSCME's position?
- Who are the most influential people in the legislative body? Where do they stand and whom can they influence?
- Do any AFSCME members know them personally?
- Have any AFSCME members worked on their campaigns?
- When are they up for re-election? Do they have any opposition? How long have they been in office?

- Who are the voters in their districts? Which groups of voters do they depend upon for election?
- How many AFSCME members live in their districts?
- Who are their staff?

Before beginning any lobbying, the Lobbying Committee needs to develop an overall strategy and prepare materials supporting AFSCME's position. The Committee needs to use this background information as well as the political information collected above to set its priorities. The Committee needs to:

- Fully understand the situation, the solution and the strategy.
- Understand the other side's most powerful arguments in order to counter them effectively.
- Take the information and rank the elected officials according to AFSCME's ability to influence them on the issue.
- Figure out who other potential members of a coalition might best influence.

How to convince elected officials of the merits of AFSCME's position

The first step is to summarize the arguments. Prepare what will be said to the elected officials verbally in a meeting or on the phone and what can be put in writing either as a fact sheet or a letter. Prepare any backup material they may request. The elected officials will need information that they feel comfortable using to explain their support for AFSCME's position to their constituents and other officials.

One of AFSCME's strengths is that the union has information on what other Councils and Locals are doing and on what is happening nationwide. AFSCME has a reputation for providing accurate and understandable information.

State and local officials will be convinced by two factors: the information provided to support AFSCME's arguments and the usefulness of that information; and the number of residents and other leaders in their districts who express support for AFSCME's position.

What are some ways to demonstrate support of AFSCME's position?

To show state and local officials that a substantial number of their constituents support AFSCME's position, the Lobbying Committee can organize:

1. Letter writing campaigns. Personal letters are always more effective than form letters;
2. Postcard campaigns;
3. Petitions
4. Crowd support at hearings, community meetings and other public events;

5. Statements of support from other official bodies;
6. Media – letters to the editor, op-ed pieces, press statements, buttons, bumper stickers, etc.;
7. Letters of support from influential people/organizations;
8. Discussions at public meetings or forums;
9. Expert testimony at committee hearings or county board/city council meetings;
10. Telephone calls;
11. And most important of all, one-to-one meetings with elected officials at their offices or public events.

What is the best way to meet with an elected official?

Depending upon the relationship with the officials and their schedules, the Lobbying Committee may choose one of several ways to meet with them. The AFSCME leadership may invite them individually or in small groups to a union or coalition meeting. If an elected official is invited to an AFSCME meeting, the Committee needs to make sure that the room is filled with supporters of AFSCME's position. It may be more effective for the Lobbying Committee to set up a meeting with them in their offices. In some instances, the Committee may wish to arrange a community forum and invite them to speak.

The following section provides a guide to meeting with state and local elected officials.

Setting up the meeting

Of all the ways to communicate a position to an elected official, the most effective is a face to face meeting. You don't have to be a technical expert on the issues or on how an elected body works to get your point across. In fact, it's more important that you speak from your own experience.

When deciding who should go to the meetings, consider who would be the most influential. AFSCME members who know the issue should be present. But the elected official may be influenced by representatives of other organizations, family members, local politicians, business leaders, church or synagogue representatives. Five to seven people, particularly if they are constituents, make for a good-sized delegation.

- Select one person to call for an appointment.
- When you call, ask to speak with the person who sets up the official's schedule.
- Tell the scheduler who you are, making sure you identify yourself as a member of the coalition or of AFSCME and your local number. Explain why you would like an appointment.
- If you are told the official has no time at his/her office, see if he/she can meet you before or after an already-scheduled public event. You may have to push a little, but never get insulting. Remember, this person controls access to the elected official. Be polite, but firm.

- Write a follow-up letter to the elected official saying that you are pleased he/she will be able to meet with you at the scheduled time, listing who will be with you and what issues you will be discussing.

Preparing for the meeting

- Meet as a group before the meeting with the elected official.
- Select a spokesperson for the group, with the understanding that others can add to what's being said. Too many voices can confuse things so that not all your points get covered.
- Review and discuss the facts supporting your position so that everyone understands the issues and you can discuss your presentation and develop your ideas together. Think about arguments for and against your position.
- Research past election data, personal background and voting behavior of the official so you know something about him/her personally. Pay particular attention to the voting record on issues similar to the one you will be discussing.
- Role play your meeting.

Conducting the meeting

- Arrive a little early so you don't feel rushed and can dispose of coats — if you have them — in the outer office. It's distracting to be fumbling with coats as you enter the official's office.
- Don't get upset if you have to wait. Elected officials often run late. It also can be a way to put you off guard.
- Don't be intimidated by the office or the way you are seated. Sitting behind his/her desk can be a way the official tries to keep the upper hand psychologically. Remember he/she works for you, not the other way around.
- Always use facts; don't exaggerate. Never threaten. Be polite and to the point.
- Begin your presentation by thanking the official for meeting with you and for any support he/she has given on past AFSCME issues. Express disappointment for any wrong votes. This will establish you as someone who knows what the official is doing and who will keep track in the future. Also, it's nice to be thanked and that can start the meeting off on a pleasant note.
- Present your case and try to personalize your argument as much as possible by explaining how you, the AFSCME membership, and the public will be affected. Always try to make your case in a way that is politically attractive to the official.
- Concentrate on what the official says. It's important to know what he/she is thinking. Don't get angry if you disagree. Don't take notes during the meeting. The official may be less candid. Don't interrupt.
- Leave a fact sheet with AFSCME's or the coalition's position. Leave on a pleasant note.

Follow-up and reporting

- Go someplace immediately after the meeting and write down what the official said, before you forget.
- Send a thank-you note to the official that also reminds him/her again of your position and requests that he/she keep you informed.
- Report on the results of your meeting to your brothers and sisters at the next Local meeting and to the coalition with which you are working.

What to remember when writing to elected officials

A good letter clearly and concisely spells out why you, as a constituent, are interested in a particular issue. Here are some additional suggestions:

1. Check the spelling of names and the proper form of address.
2. Identify yourself as a constituent by telling him/her where you live.
3. Explain why the particular issue is important to you and your community.
4. Make it clear what action you would like to see your official take.
5. Ask to be informed of his/her position on the issue.
6. Include your return address clearly printed or typed.
7. Express your thanks. Being rude or threatening only hurts our case.

It is always helpful to figure out a way to make your elected officials feel good about supporting AFSCME. Everyone wants to support a worthwhile cause.