

Building community support should be an ongoing activity of the local union. Drumming up support when we face a crisis is too late. The best way to ensure that we have allies is to develop alliances built on mutual interests. Community groups, politicians, religious leaders and others are much more likely to help us if we have a history of working together. Take the time to identify what relationships already exist between members and other community groups. Identify other groups and build relationships early. Get involved in their actions. Make sure that members who belong to other groups talk up the union inside those groups.

**When developing a community action strategy, identify pressure points on the employer and where the union has influence.** Each local union has connections to the community through its members. Our members are active in their communities, from churches to political parties, community organizations and more. We may have members who live next to or socialize with local politicians. They may know people on the board of directors of the employer. They may be involved in groups with influence over the boss. The point is to think strategically about those who can influence the boss and what our relationships are with these people and institutions.

Most importantly, remember that building community alliances is organizing, and organizing requires building personal relationships through one-on-one contacts. Just as there are goals for one-on-one contacts in the worksite, there should be goals and timetables for one-on-one contacts with community, political and religious leaders.

Building community support takes time and focus. Make use of all membership and institutional contacts, and make sure that one person coordinates the effort. If everyone is responsible, no one is responsible.

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