# CREATING CAMPAIGNS FOR CHANGE

Campaigns, or a coordinated series of actions working toward an identified result, can be difficult and tiring, but they can create lasting change in your community. By following these campaign development steps, you can build a strong, effective, and enduring campaign that has a real impact on your community.

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## 1 IDENTIFY THE ISSUE

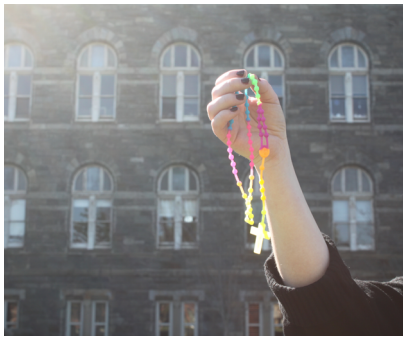
Good issues for campaign development are deeply and widely felt, meaning that a significant number of people are aware of the problem and its impact on their lives. If you're reading this toolkit, there's likely a policy on your campus that your fellow students strongly disagree with.

*To begin planning a campaign, address the following questions:*

**What** is the issue you want to address?

**Where** is the issue happening?

**Who** is impacted by this issue? How does it impact them?



Hold a strategy session with your group to answer these foundational questions and shape your team's decision on how to move forward. You may also consider hosting a town hall meeting to gather additional perspectives on the issue or to connect with resources.

# 2 RESEARCH

Once you have identified an issue, learn more about it using the following guiding questions:

- What is the state of this issue on your campus?
- Who are the key stakeholders and institutions involved? Who supports your position? Who opposes it?
- What power structures are at play?
- What is the dominant narrative around this issue?
- What data or statistics support the need for this campaign?

## GATHER YOUR OWN DATA

When organizing campaigns, having statistics, data, and stories that support the campaign is critical. In many cases, gathering data that does not already exist becomes a part of the campaign.

Here are a few ways you might collect data as a part of your campaign:

- Conduct your own survey of students.
- Connect with faculty who can support on-campus research.
- Host a town hall to gather students' perspectives and stories.

## CONDUCT RESEARCH MEETINGS

Research meetings with stakeholders can introduce you to key players, reveal who holds the power to decide on an issue, and offer an opportunity to share information and stories to influence participants' positions.

When you meet with campus administration for the first time, that is likely a research meeting! Usually, the first step in a campaign is to formally ask the person with the power to make the change to do so. They might say yes, but they likely won't. Research meetings put the lowest-effort step first and begin building a relationship with the campaign's target.



### *Essential Preparation for Research Meetings*

**Develop a unified plan.** Make sure you and your team agree on what you want to learn and what you already know.

**Come with a clear agenda.** Having an agenda allows you to control the conversation and get what you need. Don't rely on who you're meeting with to determine the discussion topics.

**Determine participants and assign roles.** Think about whose voices you want to be represented in the meeting. Which stories do you want to be heard? Make sure to designate someone to take notes, lead the conversation, and keep time.

**Consider writing a script.** At a minimum, you should identify the questions you want to ask, information you want to share, and stories you want to tell.

**Have a clear ask.** What do you want changed and by when? The more specific the demand, the more leverage you have to hold the person accountable.

After a research meeting, don't forget to debrief with the rest of your team. Follow up with stakeholders to thank them for the meeting and remind them of any promises or commitments made.

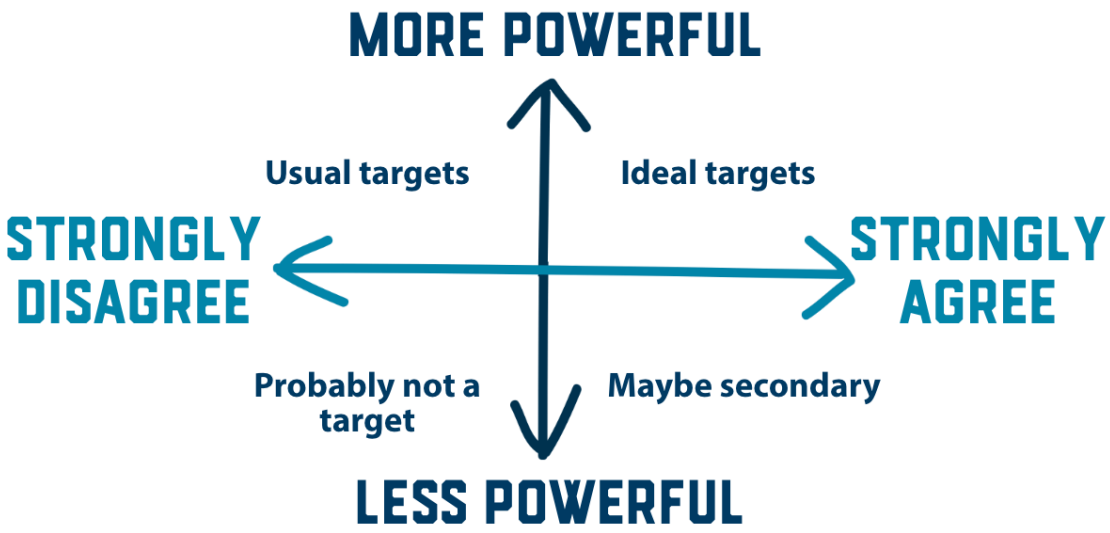
## POWER MAPPING

Power mapping is a tool organizers use to determine who has power and how we can shift it. The first step is to create a long list of stakeholders using the following questions:

- *Who is responsible for creating the problem?*
- *Who has the power to fix the problem but is not doing so?*
- *Who is geographically relevant to the issue?*
- *Who is working to fix the problem?*

After creating your list, begin researching by identifying specific people at institutions, determining their roles, and understanding their level of influence.

Next, plot the people on this list on the power mapping axes. How much do they agree or disagree with you, and how much power do they have? Include arrows to indicate who has power over whom. While your main goal is to develop a primary target for your campaign, secondary targets can be critical sources of leverage.




## 3 DEFINE YOUR DEMAND

A compelling campaign demand is clear, specific, and answers the question, "What do you need?" Most campaigns have one clear demand. When developing a demand, use these questions to test it:

- Is the demand specific and clear?
- Can the demand be achieved through this campaign?
- Does the demand address the identified issue?
- Who, if anyone, would this demand exclude?
- Is the demand winnable with the resources and time you have?

### IDENTIFYING A TARGET

Your campaign's primary target is the person who can meet your demand. Unfortunately, perfect targets are rare. After all, if the people with power over your demand already agreed with the demand, a campaign probably wouldn't be necessary. Usually, campus organizers face difficult targets with significant power and strong disagreements with the demand.

When navigating a challenging primary target, secondary targets (who have power or influence over the primary target) can be useful to engage. Sometimes, the only way to reach a primary target is through secondary targets.

**People make decisions and can meet our demands, not institutions!** Identify a specific person who can meet our demand and not just an office, organization, or school.

# 4 CAMPAIGN DEVELOPMENT

When developing a campaign strategy, look for opportunities that build off the strengths your group already has.

*Guiding Questions for Strategy Formation*

How will you move your target to meet your demand?

What unique skills, expertise, or resources does your group have?

What strategies align with your skills and resources?

## ACTIONS

Campaigns often begin by distributing petitions and collecting testimonies. Your group can collect through transcribed interviews, surveys, and video testimony. When possible, it's best to allow storytellers to choose the attribution level: Some people may be comfortable with their names being shared, while others may want to remain anonymous.

You don't have to limit petitions and testimonies to students! Think broadly about the campus community and the groups that your target might be concerned about. This could include faculty, alumni, parents, newly admitted students, or others.

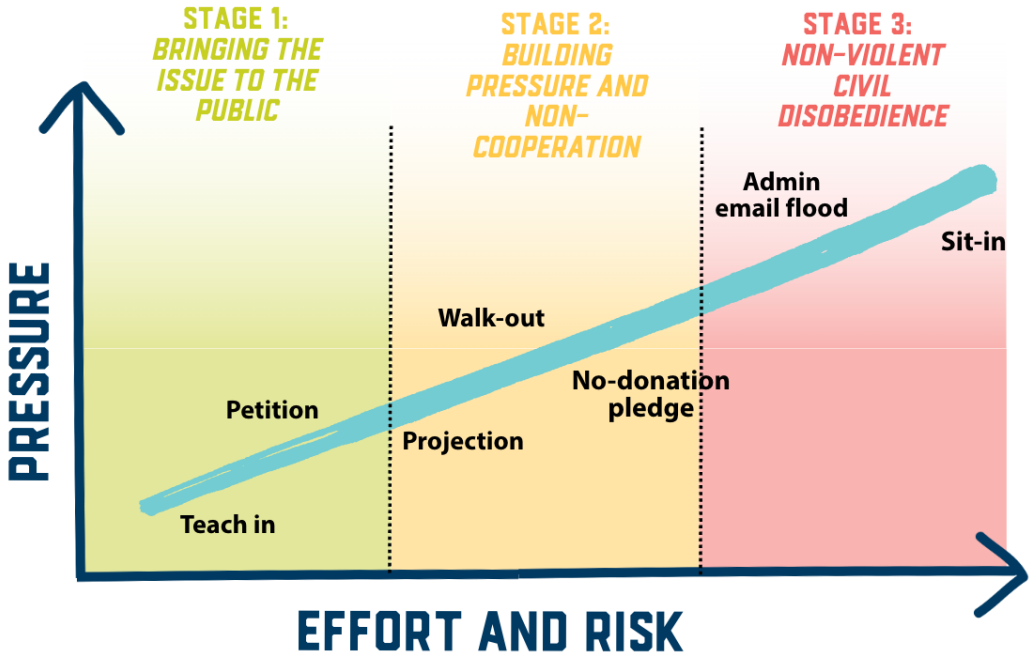
When deciding which tactic to use, think about what administrators care about and what they say are their reasons for their denial. The goal is to change the administration's calculation of the consequences of their position.

### ACTION IDEAS

- Petitions
- Testimonails
- Campus or community demonstrations
- Social media campaigns
- Wheatpasting and flyering
- Sidewalk chalking
- Campus events
- Engaging with journalists and news sources
- Writing op-eds
- No-donation pledges
- Flooding admins emails or mailboxes

## ESCALATION

Many campaigns have limited resources, and when starting out, a small base. Escalation allows your group to maintain pressure for a longer period and shows the target that your power is only growing, leaving them unsure what to expect next. As your campaign continues, keep increasing the pressure by getting louder and bolder. An increase in time, energy, and risk from one action to the next indicates that your campaign is escalating successfully.




## CREATE COALITIONS

When developing a campaign, identify your allies. Are there other clubs on campus that might agree with you? Reach out to them to set up a meeting to collaborate or get their feedback on your campaign plan.

You can also find allies outside of your campus community. Are there other organizations in your area that are engaged in work on similar issues? Are there other campuses that have similar organizations with which you can partner? These allyships not only expand your campaign to include the broader community that might be impacted, but they also provide additional sustainability for your campaign.

### *Guiding Questions for Campaign Evaluation*

- How will you track your progress? What metrics might you be able to use (quantitative or qualitative)?
- How will your campaign team meet? How will you support your team?
- What will you do if something isn't working?
- How can people raise concerns about the campaign?

# 5 CAMPAIGN IMPLEMENTATION

When you find yourself facing a setback or a success, it's a good time to reflect, especially with your organizing group.

**What is going well?**
**What could go better?**

**What unexpected obstacles have we encountered? What obstacles did we anticipate but haven't encountered yet?**

**How is our base responding?**
**How is the community responding?**
**How is our target responding?**

**What has the target's response revealed about their motivations?**
**How can we leverage that information?**

**How can we adjust our next tactic? Do we need more or less escalation?**
**Are there intermediate steps we need to take?**

# 6 CAMPAIGN CONCLUSION

All campaigns end. Sometimes an election day or deadline determines when you will know whether you have succeeded, but sometimes the endpoint is less clear. To help pinpoint the conclusion of your campaign, predetermine how you will know that your demand has been met.

## EVALUATION

After you decide that the campaign is over, consider the following questions:

- What worked well?
- What didn't go as planned?
- What did the data show about your tactics and outcomes?
- What did you learn about organizing and campaign building?
- What would you do differently next time?

## CELEBRATE!

Whether you win or lose, it is important to celebrate! If you meet your demand, you have made an important change in your community. If you didn't succeed, congratulations on building community and power under difficult conditions: You are better prepared for our next fight. How will you celebrate with your community?