LOCAL ORGANIZING 101 TRAINING
Introductions

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We’re a community of people building a new energy system with rooftop solar at the cornerstone.

over 100,000 supporters
Since 2014, HOA’s in Virginia had the right to “establish reasonable restrictions concerning the size, place, and manner of placement of... solar energy collection devices”

Reasonable restrictions ~ up for interpretation

*** This prevented 300+ Virginia homeowners from going solar and cost the state more than $7 million in lost economic investment

In March 2020, new legislation (Senate Bill 504, House Bill 414) was signed into law by the Governor

NEW LAW: HOA restrictions are “unreasonable” if it

1) Increases system cost by more than 5% over the proposed design
2) Decreases system performance (e.g. energy production) by more than 10% over the proposed design
This is the result of **on-the-ground organizing work** by:

- the staff, members, and volunteers of Solar United Neighbors

  +

- a diverse coalition of solar industry representatives, solar advocates, and environmental organizations

- Produced bipartisan support
  - Unanimous consent in the VA Senate
  - 95:4 in the VA House of Delegates
Objectives

- **Identify** problems we face and feel empowered to do something about them

- **Explain** what organizing is and why it works

- **Understand** the steps to launching a local campaign
Representatives always listen to reason and facts surrounding an issue.

**Fiction:** Our democracy is supposed to ensure that our representatives look out for our best interest, but they are often are also focused on appeasing stake holders, corporations and other entities influences that often overpowers public good.
Fact or Fiction?

Knowledge = Power

**Fiction:** Knowledge is imperative to organizing, but our power is wielded through collective organizing. I like to say that knowledge = important and is your responsibility. You have to build power.
What is power?

Organized resources and organized people

Who has power?

Big Money • Law • Consumers

What is your power?

Collectivity
WHAT?

What is organizing?
- A powerful tool against corporate interests
- A method to build power
- Bringing people together to raise voices and create change
- Working toward systematic change

What goes into it?
- Planning
- Knowledge
- People Power
Faction or Fiction?

We win campaigns from our ability to bring direct pressure?

**Fact:** Direct pressure wins. Groups often have illusions of their own power that lead them to think they win because:

- They are right
- They are on their side
- They have the moral high-ground
- They have all the best information
- They speak for large numbers of people
What are you trying to accomplish?

Ex: You want to retire a coal fired power plant near your community

Ex: You want to pass a bill that will move your city to 100% clean energy by 2035

Ex: You want to get your HOA to uplift a ban on rooftop solar in your neighborhood
Goal: the thing you are trying to win or change

Target: the person who can give you what you want

Strategy: the theory for how you’ll influence your target

Tactics: actions taken to build or show power
Fact or Fiction?

Your targets need to agree with you in order to win your campaign.

**Fiction:** They don’t necessarily need to agree with you if you can appeal to their self interest.
What is a goal?

It’s what we want to achieve, stated in terms of strategy and timeline!!

3 Main Components of a Goal:

1. A target 🎯 (local, state, or federal)
2. A measurable action 🏃
3. A timeline
   ▪ Short term = weeks, months
   ▪ Long term = +1 year

Test it:
At the end of the timeframe, will you know if you won or lost? If not, revisit
But first...let’s talk about pitfalls

• We often jump straight to tactics (hold a rally, gather petition signatures, make phone calls...) without SLOWING down and figuring out:

  1. What our goal is for the issue we are working on
  2. What our strategy is or our theory of change to reach our goal

• We often assume the “bad” or “mean” elected official is the person we should be putting pressure on (targeting).

• Other pitfalls?
A SMART Goal

- **S**pecific (simple, sensible, significant)
- **M**easurable (meaningful, motivating)
- **A**chievable (agreed, attainable)
- **R**elevant (reasonable, realistic and resourced, results-based)
- **T**ime bound (time-based, time limited, time/cost limited, timely, time-sensitive)
What’s an example of a goal with these components?

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Targeting & Power Mapping

Take time to research the following:

- Vulnerability of target
- Opposition
- Our organization’s/ your networks access and resources
- Political aspirations of target
  - Human traits
    (e.g. take on a challenge, or fold under pressure?)
  - Donations
  - Self-interest
- Relationships: learning the self interest of all players connected with your primary target.
Goal: the thing you are trying to win or change

Target: the person who can give you what you want

Strategy: the theory for how you’ll influence your target

Tactics: actions taken to build or show power
Strategy = theory for how you are going to **WIN**
Four Steps to Developing a Strategy:

01 Choose Potential Target: who's going to make the decision (choose the person lowest on the totem pole that can get the goal done)

02 Power map: who and what influences them

03 Decide which strategy to work within (4 choices)

04 Consider resources and timing
First you do research on who your target will be....

Then you decide which strategy to use.

These 4 strategies are...
Hero Opportunity

Convincing them of their self interest
Persuasion

Convince someone to solve it --

Usually only happens if our self interest and their self interest is already aligned and we “show them the light.”
Pressure: Creating change using public action
Making it easy for them to do the right thing
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target with us</th>
<th>Constituency is with us</th>
<th>Constituency/other interests is against us</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Target against us</td>
<td>Pressure</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If in the lower right quadrant – lacking leverage
- Choose a different target
- Choose a different influential constituency
- Choose a different campaign
CASE STUDY: READY FOR 100

SIERRA CLUB

READY FOR 100%
Ready for 100 Power Mapping

GRID Alternatives
Transportation Advocacy Groups
Chief Sustainability Officer
Sustainability Advisory Committee
Sierra Club

Property Developers / Managers

Mayor Hancock

Higher Education Institutions
Chamber of Commerce
US Conference of Mayors
Governor Hickenlooper
Denver City Council
Registered Neighborhood Organizations

Oil and Gas Industry
Denver Water
RTD

Potentially Influential Targets
Tactics

- SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES used to influence the power map and implement the strategy
IMPORTANT: There are common tactics used frequently on many campaigns. Only use tactics that actually implement your strategy – do NOT use a checklist of tactics that do not contribute to your specific goal/strategy.
**Tactic Menu:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tactic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Lobbying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Coalition building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Research/reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Rally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Tactic does NOT = campaign

These are common tactics used frequently on many campaigns. Only use tactics that actually implement your strategy – do NOT use a checklist of tactics that do not contribute to your specific goal/strategy.
Goal: Remove the #1 barrier to residential solar deployment (i.e. 300+ installations blocked since 2014) asap.

Strategy: Target those in position of power to help us overcome barrier: Legislators/Governor

Tactics:
- Built diverse coalition (industry, enviro, our network, legal expertise
- Engaged Bill patrons early on: Found well-respected patrons
- Lobbied and showed grassroots support: Action alert, phone to action, in person,
- Spoke at committee hearings
- Engaged listserv- frequent updates etc.
- LTE's from affected people
- Engaged HOA representatives (i.e the other side) came up with consensus language that we could both live with
- Used opportunity to build trust with other side with goal of longer term relationship

Final tally: 712 emails and phone calls to legislators
Last Tips

1. You can escalate, but you can never de-escalate

2. Look to use as few resources as possible while building as much as possible

3. The more fun things are, the more opportunity there is for team and organizational building and long-term power
Takeaways

• Please chat in: 1 thing you learned
  1 lingering question
Thank you!

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