

Organizing Skill Rotation [Program]

In this training, session, participants will rotate through three different organizing skill activity stations lasting 40 minutes each. Through rotation, participants are able to get small group practice time of skills that can take our campaigns to the next level.

Trainer Names: *[At least six trainers, two per station.]*

Lead Trainers: *[in charge of beginning/end, session flow]*

Working with Media:

Fundraising:

Movement Songs:

[Link to Written Content](#)

Time: 150 minutes (2 hrs 30 mins)

Normal = say out loud

Underlined = flipchart this!

Italics = trainer notes/instructions

Bold = key point

1. Introduction to Our Stations [5 min]

This training is going to be a little different than our other trainings - we are going to be getting a crash course in three organizing skills that will take our campaigns to the next level. To do this, we are going to rotate through three different 40 minute stations. To maximize our time together, let's make transitions as fast as possible, and make sure you bring your Sprog folder with you! After the three stations, we will be meeting back here to do some reflection together.

Lead trainers: Make sure that you go over the following information: Where is each station? At what time will participants be rotating? Who will be leading each station? Make sure you have prepared each trainer ahead of time with this information as well.

Then, divide the group into three groups. Ideally, the Sprogers will be in their SIM groups, and there will be at least two different SIM groups per station.

Once you have gone over this information and answered any clarifying questions, start the session!

Station #1: Working with Media

Trainer Names:

Learning Objectives:

Skills, Knowledge, and Attitude which learners should take away from this session.

- Recognize the roles that different types of traditional media can play in a campaign
- Understand how to attract and retain media coverage of campaign events
- Have the confidence and skills to effectively promote your message through mainstream media

Achievement Objectives:

Tangible steps learners will take to advance real or simulated campaign work.

- Practice giving a press pitch

Time: 40 minutes

Anchor: The ANCHOR step invites learners to reflect on past experiences which relate to the learning of the session. (e.g. “Think back to a time when _____. What did that feel like?”)

1. Why we work with media [5 min]

Let’s ground this training by examining why we want to work with the traditional media in the first place. What campaigns have you seen in the news? Think of a specific time.

Potential follow up questions: How do you think getting that kind of publicity impacted the campaign? How has working with the media given those campaigns power? How can it help us meet our campaign goals?

Answers should be specific examples. Some good themes to pull out are: working with media puts pressure on your targets, educates the general public about your campaign, polarizes members of the public to take a stance on your issue, recruits volunteers to your organization, gives an energy boost to group members, and holds officials accountable to promises or endorsements.

You can think of media coverage as a tactic in your campaign that gets you closer to your goal.

Add: The ADD step introduces new information and tools for learners to consider.

2. What is news? [5 min]

Working with the media is a key tactic for reaching your goal. But how do you even get coverage in the first place? News organizations don’t cover every single story that gets put in front of their desk. Especially in today’s world, when many newspapers are struggling to stay in print, it’s important to editors that articles capture a reader’s attention. The things that you all just shared in the introduction to this activity -- what made you want to read a news article -- all hint at various types of newsworthiness. So what makes something newsworthy?

- **Impact** - A story that highlights a problem which affects many people and has big consequences.
- **New** – A story that is current, timely, and fresh.
- **Timely** – A story that is relevant to what’s happening now. For example, the Black Lives Matter movement organized to #ReclaimMLK on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day each January, because MLK’s legacy is especially relevant in America near that particular day.
- **Local** - Tied to the particular community that the newspaper services. Even if your organization

is talking about a federal problem, it's important that you find a local angle, such as a potential impact on local air quality.

- **Human Interest** – There is a human face and personal angle to your story. The reader hears the story of a fisherman who fishes in the local river that is threatened with pollution, or a local child who suffers asthma attacks on bad smog days.
- **Conflict** - A story with good guys and bad guys makes good news. It's important to cast these characters within the messaging frame that you use.
- **Visuals** - The image of youth leaders in the People's Climate March has graced the pages of many publications. Visuals of hundreds of people fighting for change can captivate an audience.

Stories that fulfill each of these categories are much more likely to get picked up by reporters and TV producers. Your first step towards getting news coverage should be identifying what in particular makes your event newsworthy.

3. Pitching a Reporter [10 min]

There are two main ways you can pitch a reporter - a written press release and a verbal press pitch.

A **press release** is a written statement that gives the media context and information about an event your organization is hosting. A press release should be straightforward: the first sentence should say exactly what is happening. From that point, the release should provide background context reported **as the campaign would like it to appear in print**. Many reporters do not have time to research background information on their own, and will just copy from the press release. Most press releases also include relevant quotes from campaign members, who put a human perspective on the issue. If you would like the reporter to attend the event in person, the press release should include event information such as where, when, and what time an event will be held.

In addition to a press release, you might also want to **pitch reporters** on your story over the phone. Pitching your story uses the same frames that you use in writing a press release, yet the art of it is very different. A pitch is traditionally done over the phone, which means that you need to be ready to answer questions and use a message box, like we talked about in Communications 101.

Reporters often have no knowledge of your issues or have their own political views and agenda. Social justice issues often get little coverage, or the coverage of them is distorted. Even if they are sympathetic, they aren't your friend. They're usually on a deadline, and they have very little time and may work on multiple stories at once. Their editors want to sell papers or produce popular news segments. However, it is possible to develop a great relationship with a reporter, and give them a compelling news pitch that results in media coverage! The best way to do this is to build a relationship rooted in respect and professionalism.

To think about how to do this, let's think about a time you had to ask someone you didn't know a favor. Think about how you asked them, and think about what you did that worked well. *Give participants two minutes to think on this, then encourage them to shareback. Record what participants say on a list, then title the list "Tips for Pitching a Reporter." Congratulate them for being awesome at this already! If participants miss any of the below tips, feel free to add them in.*

- **Tailor the pitch to the reporter.** Know what a reporter usually writes about, and how that overlaps with your event. Your pitch can reference their past work and make the reporter feel

like you are pitching them something right up their alley.

- **Just start talking.** If you ask a reporter if they want an update about your campaign, they might say no. Don't give them that chance! A good first line is, "I really wanted to update you on our Seize the Grid campaign at the University of Illinois. We recently..."
- **Be flexible.** Be ready to pivot or talk about a new angle on your story, depending on the reporter's response. If you sense that a reporter isn't interested in your story, try to use a different angle to recapture their attention. For example, if you began talking about a story that revolved around conflict, but realized a reporter wasn't interested, you could try to emphasize the human interest angle going forward.
- **Do the work for them.** Ideally, you will have a press release to send a reporter after you pitch the topic to them over the phone. The idea is to make writing an article on your campaign as easy as possible!
- **Make a direct ask.** Ask the reporter straight up if they will cover your event.
- **Treat reporters with respect.** Return their calls and emails on time. Call a reporter if you think that they misrepresented your campaign, but never yell or scream at them.
- **Stay cordial and brief.** Not only is chit-chatting not "off the record", it also makes writing your article much more time consuming for the reporter. Build a relationship through constructive dialogue and a good working relationship, not by asking personal questions.

Apply: The APPLY step invites learners to utilize the new information in a task, challenge, or focused conversation. (e.g. practice, application, case studies, compare, etc.)

4. Practice Pitching Reporters [20 min]

After explaining a pitch, the trainers will model giving one. Have one trainer play a reporter and another play a Seize the Grid campaigner. Be sure to model the above guidelines while presenting the pitch to Sprogers. And keep it quick! Afterwards, ask Sprogers: What did you notice that you liked about that pitch? What would you have done differently?

For this activity, participants will need to use the message box that they created in Communications 101.

We will now practice pitching a story to reporters using the message box that you created for your SIM group in Communications 101. Your organization is holding a campaign rally tomorrow, and you've already prepped your message in your message box. You will now get the chance to pitch that story to a reporter.

Ask participants to get into small groups. Assign one trainer to each group; the trainer will role-play a reporter, who asks the other organizer questions about the event that they have pitched. Take turns asking each of the participants questions one-on-one. After interviewing a participant, debrief and give feedback. Then, move on to interviewing the next participant.

After everyone in the small group has gotten a chance to be interviewed, bring the group back together.

-- Rotate Stations [5 min] --

Make sure that each group knows where they are headed!

Station #2: Fundraising

Trainer Names:

Learning Objectives:

Skills, Knowledge, and Attitude which learners should take away from this session.

- Understand the principles of fundraising.
- Recognize the importance of fundraising for a purpose.
- Know where to find additional resources on fundraising for a campaign.

Achievement Objectives:

Tangible steps learners will take to advance real or simulated campaign work.

- Create a list of strategic and creative grassroots fundraising ideas.

Time: 40 minutes

Anchor: The ANCHOR step invites learners to reflect on past experiences which relate to the learning of the session. (e.g. “Think back to a time when _____. What did that feel like?”)

1. Introduction [5 min]

While our strength as organizers is in the power of people, not money, we still need money sometimes to help us in our organizing efforts. We’ll never have the money to go toe-to-toe with corporate interests using money as a source of political power. However, sometimes we need money to help us organize people to effectively counteract and overcome the influence of money in the political system. What are some ways that you have seen effective fundraising done?

If any of these types are missed, trainers should fill in:

- *Physical (bake sales, selling t-shirts, dunk booth, etc.) Note that these can get WAY more creative and effective, but these are examples that people will recognize.)*
- *Remote (electronic and online sources such as crowdfunding, micro-loans, and work-trade)*
- *Individual donors (Canvassing, passing a hat at an event, etc.)*
- *Other Organizations*
- *Administration/Student Government*
- *In-Kind Donations (donations of products or services instead of money)*
- *Sponsorship (businesses, corporations, etc.)*
- *Grants*

Add: The ADD step introduces new information and tools for learners to consider.

2. Why People Give or Do Not Give [10 min]

How many of you have ever given money to someone who needed it, or to a group that was raising money? *As folks raise their hands, move on to:* OK, now think of just one time you gave money. Think

about what the person said, the reasons they gave, or what the fundraising page said. Think about why YOU decided to give. What really made the difference for you?

After they've thought about it for a minute or shared with a partner, ask individual people to share. Ask some people a few follow-up questions to tease out the 'why.' Write these reasons why on a flip chart paper titled "Why People Donate."

Answers should touch on: Because they care about the issue, because they identify with the issue, to get public recognition (particularly businesses), to get tangible goods (t-shirt, calendar), because the group's work directly impacts their life (ex: local development fights), guilt, pride, because they don't have time to be an activist, loyalty, tax deduction (if you have a non-profit fiscal sponsor), to reinforce their image (environmentalist, feminist), or to boost self-esteem.

Now, have you ever said "no" to giving money to someone or to a cause? Why? *To make this easier, begin with a story from your own experience with saying 'no', in order to reduce the shame around sharing about that. As people speak, write these reasons why on a flip chart paper titled "Why People Don't Donate."*

After folks have shared their own stories, invite them to answer: So those are some of the reasons we've said no. What are other reasons people say no to giving?

Answers should touch on: Talking about money is hard in our society, our communities have different abilities to give funds, the public is sometimes distrustful of young people and marginalized people, organizers don't want to impose on strangers, organizers may not know what to say in a fundraising conversation, and sometimes, people can be mean.

Congratulate the participants on creating such great lists - they are expert fundraisers already!

3. Principles of Fundraising [5 min]

We have a few principles of fundraising that can help our fundraising campaigns to get people to donate!

- **Fundraise for a purpose**—One of the largest flaws is trying to raise money without a purpose in mind; just like events for the sake of events isn't strategic, raising money for the sake of raising money isn't strategic and it is generally a lot harder. It is better to say "we're raising money to send people to Sprog" or "we're raising money for a solar panel for our school's roof".
- **Move Beyond the Bake Sale**—Bake sales are way overdone, and you can be more creative than that. Try to come up with fundraising tactics that not only raise money, but also support your campaign goals. Like a Nintendo Wii tournament (fun and reaches different groups) or posting a video in YouTube.
- **Make a specific ASK and start HIGH**—It's important to make a specific ask and to ask for more than you think you'll get, so that (hopefully) you'll get what you actually need.
 - Not just money, but in-kind donations, too. Example: (400 cups of yogurt for the Re-Energize Texas Summit).
 - If you ask for \$100, you might get \$50. If you ask for \$50, you can bet they won't offer to give you \$100.
- **People give to people**—In-person asking will produce a much higher response than asking over

the phone by imposing urgency and pressure to respond on the spot. If that's not possible, you can still have great success by sending a letter and following up with a phone call. Personalize your appeal as much as possible.

- **It costs money to raise money**—For example, if you're selling t-shirts, you have to have the t-shirts made first, which costs money.
- **Do your research**—If you're approaching individuals, groups, or businesses for donations, know as much as you can about them so that you can appeal to their interests, and frame your ask in the most beneficial light.
- **Cultivate your donors**—Thank them. For example, make sure to send thank you notes to businesses that donate to your raffle. Continue to make them feel part of the organization or campaign: stop in to businesses or have coffee with major donors to keep them updated on your work. Send them important press clips.
- **Staging**--Plan your fundraiser so that you target certain people at different times, thereby building momentum and maximizing the amount you receive. For example: send emails to specific people with your fundraising ask, then, 2 weeks later, blast out the same fundraising ask through social media. You will reach again the first people with a friendly reminder tone and also gather new possible donors.
- **People want to give to winners**—Consider having some folks who will give money before you send out the majority of your asks, that way you already have money and folks will view their contribution as being a part of something larger than themselves.
- **Just Ask!**—You don't get what you don't ask for. You should feel free and confident to ask in many different situations.

An important thing to remember is that a lot of potential donors give out of self-interest, not just to help an organization or further the issue. Consider your organization's needs, but also consider your donor's needs. Fit your pitch to your audience and what they are looking for. Using Public Narrative that we learned in Public Narrative 101 can be very useful. As we discuss in the Public Narrative Training, when we share our personal story, that creates a connection between us and the audience. It can be a helpful tool to engage with people and motivate them to support you.

4. Planning [5 min]

Here are some simple steps to creating a great fundraiser from the Sierra Club Grassroots Organizing Training Manual:

1. **Have a fundraising plan** - When developing your fundraising plan, the key is to be ambitious but realistic. Your written fundraising plan should establish an overall financial goal for the campaign, as well as goals by source (different accounts, organizations, and individuals) and solicitation method (mail solicitations, neighborhood coffees, and "dialing for dollars" phonebanks).
2. **Develop a campaign budget** so you know what you need.
3. **Know who to ask** - Who has money to spare? Who has a vested interest in the outcome of this campaign? Who can be persuaded to contribute? Make lists, starting with the easiest targets (your family, close friends, other people involved with groups of the coalition, colleagues at work, etc.), and then move outward toward more distant targets (members of similar organizations, community leaders, politicians, etc.)
4. **Know what to ask** - How much can this particular individual contribute? It is generally advisable to aim too high and flatter people with your overestimation of their personal wealth than to aim too low and end up with much less than they were prepared to give. If you ask for \$50, they might end up giving you \$25. But if you ask for \$25, you can bet they won't offer you \$50.

5. **Ask!** - Asking for money is often uncomfortable for the asker. Instead of assuming that people don't want to give, assume that they do, and convey that with your body language and words. Tell them (rather than ask) how they can make a significant investment in protecting the environment through contributing a specific dollar amount. If the response is no, ask what they think they can contribute and offer them another choice or two. If maybe or yes is the response, ask them to write the check or give you the cash right then and there or make arrangements to pick it up. Keep in mind that some of your expenses may be met through in-kind donations. These should be included in the fundraising section. Sometimes printing costs, food, or technical assistance can be provided by local businesses that may be affected by your issue or are simply interested in supporting the cause for free publicity.

Apply: The APPLY step invites learners to utilize the new information in a task, challenge, or focused conversation. (e.g. practice, application, case studies, compare, etc.)

5. Fundraising Brainstorm [15 min]

In small groups, have people brainstorm different ideas for fundraising. (10 min)

Criteria:

- Must be CREATIVE (no bake sales or car washes here, please!).
- Must move campaign goals forward in addition to raising money.

Choose your scenario:

- Raise money to send members of your group to Sprog next summer.
- Raise money to host a state planning summit to coordinate a state-wide campaign to address climate change (could be to pass legislation, could be trying to stop new coal-fired power plants, etc.).
- Raise money to purchase a video camera for your SIM group.

Have the groups share their story and present their ideas to the large group. After each presentation, evaluate the ideas learned and created. (5 min)

These are great ideas that can help your campaign to fundraise! For more resources on Fundraising, check out the resource list in your Sprog book!

-- Rotate Stations [5 min] --

Make sure that each group knows where they are headed!

Station #3: Movement Songs

Trainer Names:

Learning Objectives:

Skills, Knowledge, and Attitude which learners should take away from this session.

- Understand the rich history of songs in our movements.
- Know how and when to respectfully utilize songs in a movement.

Achievement Objectives:

Tangible steps learners will take to advance real or simulated campaign work.

- Create a song for your SIM campaign.

Time: 40 minutes

Adapted from Sunrise Movement and the Momentum Community.

Anchor: The ANCHOR step invites learners to reflect on past experiences which relate to the learning of the session. (e.g. “Think back to a time when ____ . What did that feel like?”)

1. Song Opening [5 min]

Open by singing a song as a group. Ask everyone take a deep breath. Ask: who feels energized? Who feels connected? Have participants raise their hands.

Here are some examples from our movement partners you can use! Make sure to include the history of the song when you introduce it. The Sprog booklet also contains some songs for your use.

- [If Not Now songsheet](#), [recorded music](#), [principles of song leading](#), [podcast on leading movement songs with intention](#)
- [People’s Climate March Music Bloc](#)
- [Climate 101](#)
- [Peaceful Uprising - March on Blair Mountain Solidarity Songbook](#)
- [The Same Thing by Rachel Schragis](#)
- [YEA! MN](#)
- [BYP 100 Healing and Liberation Chants](#)
- ["Funeral for our Future" Keystone XL Pipeline Protest](#)
- [Rise Up Singing, The Group Singing Songbook](#)
- [Climate Songs and Chants](#)
- [Fossil Fuel Divestment Chants](#)
- [Movement Song Sheet](#)

Add: The ADD step introduces new information and tools for learners to consider.

2. Why don’t we sing anymore? Why should we sing? [5 min]

Often, public displays of passion and moments where we are in the spotlight make us nervous and afraid. Some of you might have gotten to an age where it became 'uncool'. Maybe some of you think you cannot sing. But songs are essential for our movements if we want to win! Why should we sing in movements?

Answers should touch on: songs connect us to our history, music is messaging in a succinct and powerful form, songs allow us to resonate emotionally and connect as a group, songs create better movement culture and more exciting actions.

What are moments or situations where we need good songs? How have you seen songs used in movements? *Write a few answers on a flip chart.*

3. Songs are Culture [5 min]

For as long as there has been organized struggle, there have been people singing about it. When we sing songs, we are calling upon a deep movement culture and history. It is important that we say where songs are from, how we learned them, and a bit about their history when we sing them. We do this to preserve history, to avoid appropriation, and to honor our movement ancestors.

Many of our movement tactics come from the civil rights movement and the labor rights movement, and singing songs is no exception. Many of these songs are rooted in African American spirituals, gospel, and folk music. People can spend their whole lives studying movement songs – today, we are going to listen to just one, and hear a little about it from NPR. This comes from [The Inspiring Force Of 'We Shall Overcome'](#). You can follow along in your Sprog book if you want to.

Make sure participants are close enough to hear, and begin to play "We Shall Overcome" (song begins at 0:34). You can use your smartphone, or a speaker if you have it. After the first stanza, begin to read this passage:

' "We Shall Overcome" began as a folk song, a work song. Slaves in the fields would sing, 'I'll be all right someday.' It became known in the churches. A Methodist minister, Charles Albert Tindley, published a version in 1901: "I'll Overcome Someday."...The first political use came in 1945 in Charleston, S.C. There was a strike against the American Tobacco Co. The workers wanted a raise; they were making 45 cents an hour. They marched and sang together on the picket line, "We will overcome, and we will win our rights someday."...In 1947, two of the union members from South Carolina traveled to the town of Monteagle, Tenn., for a workshop at the Highlander Folk Center. Blacks and whites had been meeting together about labor issues at the Highlander for many years....The tobacco workers brought their song to Tennessee, and Zilphia Horton, Highlander's music director, started using it in workshops in Tennessee and beyond.

In 1947, Horton went to New York City, as she did every year, to raise money for Highlander. She sang the song there for Pete Seeger, who adopted it and added his own touches..."I remember teaching it to a gang in Carnegie Hall that year, and the following year I put it in a little music magazine called People's Songs," Seeger adds...

Organized in Albany, Ga., by the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, The Freedom Singers were Cordell Reagon, Charles Neblett, Rutha Harris and Bernice Johnson-Reagon... Johnson-Reagon was a preacher's daughter and knew the song as "I Will Overcome." She recalls the change to "We Shall

Overcome" as a concession that helped bring whites and blacks closer in the civil rights struggle.

On March 15, 1965, President Lyndon Johnson appeared before Congress and 70 million Americans watching on television, calling for legislation that would ensure every citizen the right to vote. "It is the effort of American Negroes to secure for themselves the full blessings of American life," Johnson declared in the speech. "Their cause must be our cause, too, because it's not just Negroes, but really, it's all of us who must overcome the crippling legacy of bigotry and injustice. And we shall overcome." "...There may have been some in the civil rights movement who felt that President Johnson co-opted the phrase. But John Lewis watched the speech that night with Martin Luther King Jr. About the president, Lewis later wrote, "His were the words of a statesman and, more, they were the words of a poet," adding, "Dr. King must have agreed. He wiped away a tear at the point where Johnson said the words 'We shall overcome.'"

The song was carried by the civil rights movement throughout the South, a song that rose in air that was tinged with tear gas, that was a murmur of men and women at night in a Southern jail, and an affirmation sung by hundreds of thousands within sight of the Capitol dome.'

Apply: The APPLY step invites learners to utilize the new information in a task, challenge, or focused conversation. (e.g. practice, application, case studies, compare, etc.)

4. Song Writing Activity [20 min]

Now we are going to write songs for our own movements. Here is how it is going to work:

- 1) Pick a tone or moment you want your song to capture. [5 min]
- 2) Pick an existing song or melody to work with. You should pick it and stick with it. We're gonna come around in five minutes and make sure you have picked a beat. When we've seen this done before, the songs that work best for remixes are songs with slower beats that make it easier for people to catch on. Old folk songs are great. So are a lot of hip hop songs. [3 min]
- 3) Remix by changing the words for your campaign. [10 min]
- 4) Sing and prepare to teach it to the group. [2 min]
- 5) In 20 minutes, you will teach perform and teach it to the group. Go!

Give the group some guidance around where they should be. After five minutes, remind them to move from picking a tone to picking a song. Then 3 minutes later, remind them to start changing the words of the song. With 2 minutes left, remind them to be ready to sing the song shortly!

5. Song Performance [5 mins]

Have each group perform their song and teach to the group.

Away: The AWAY step invites learners to connect their new understanding to the real world context of their lives. (e.g. a personal action plan, commitment, projection into future, etc.)

4. Group Reflection [10 min]

Ask the group: What is one of the most important things that you learned from this session and would like to share with the rest of the group? *Take a few hands.*

Ask group to turn to a partner and reflect on how this training might make your future organizing different. Ask them to make sure to reflect on each of the sessions. After about five minutes, take a few hands for answers folks would like to share with the group.

5. Pluses and Deltas! [5 min]

Review how the training session went by asking participants for training pluses (things that went well) and deltas (things that could have gone better/could be improved/that are growth zones).