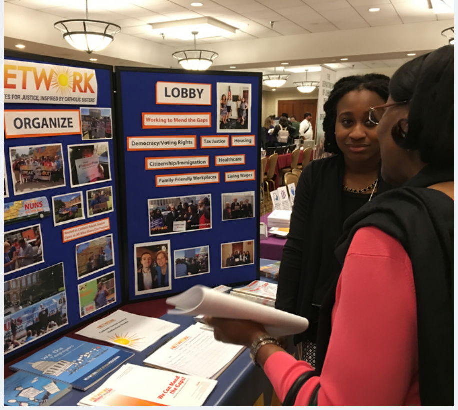

NETWORK ADVOCATES HANDBOOK

NETWORK

ADVOCATES FOR JUSTICE, INSPIRED BY CATHOLIC SISTERS

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How to Use this Handbook

The NETWORK Advocates Handbook aims to equip Advocates and Advocates Teams for strategic and effective advocacy and organizing and to enhance understanding, cooperation, and collaboration across NETWORK's field.

In this handbook, you will find information about educating others, communicating for justice, building an Advocates Team, influencing your members of Congress, utilizing NETWORK resources, and working with NETWORK staff. Use this handbook as a ready reference whenever you have questions or are looking for guidance.

NETWORK Grassroots Mobilization team members are also a resource for you! Don't hesitate to reach out to your NETWORK organizer or email info@networklobby.org with comments, questions, or ideas. We are here with you to advance policies that build our nation's structures anew and serve the 100%.

______________________________,

NETWORK Advocate

NETWORK
ADVOCATES FOR JUSTICE, INSPIRED BY CATHOLIC SISTERS
1972–2022: Celebrating 50 Years

Introduction

Welcome! It is an honor to know that you share and support NETWORK's mission to advance justice by influencing our federal policies. Every NETWORK advocate contributes directly to our shared mission and vision. Your wisdom, energy, and commitment to a just society keep NETWORK going. Your role in shaping our country's policies and values to promote the common good is critical to our success.

About NETWORK

NETWORK, a Catholic leader in the global movement for justice and peace, **educates**, **organizes**, **and lobbies** for economic and social transformation.

Founded by Catholic Sisters in the progressive spirit of Vatican II, NETWORK works to create a society that promotes justice and the dignity of all, shared in the abundance of God's creation.

Inspired by our founders and the leadership of the women who followed, we faithfully embody Gospel justice as we ignite hope in the world. We are rooted in the Catholic Social Justice tradition and open to all who share our passion.

Believing in the power of community, our Spirit-filled network of justice-seekers shapes federal policies to be consistent with the values we hold. NETWORK sends out action alerts so you can contact your members of Congress at critical times in the legislative process, organizes in-district lobby visits, creates educational resources, organizes events and campaigns like Nuns on the Bus, and more!

At NETWORK, you will find support and community as you:

- Uphold the dignity of each person as an equally valuable member of the human family.
- Embrace our right and responsibility to participate with others in our shared public life.
- Act in solidarity with those who are living in poverty in the struggle against structures of injustice.
- Bridge division, rising above individual interest for the good of the whole community.
- Unite with workers to build an economy that puts people, not profit, at the center.
- Nurture the earth, recognizing that we are interdependent with the rest of Creation.

Our Values

We believe:

- A just society includes everyone and values people over the accumulation of profits.
- A just society ensures that all people – the 100% - have what they need to live dignified lives.
- A just society recognizes that we live in an interconnected world.

Open to All

Founded by Catholic Sisters in the progressive spirit of Vatican II, NETWORK is open to all who share our passion for justice.

- We value women's leadership.
- We accept and appreciate people from religious as well as secular backgrounds.
- We welcome and affirm members of the LGBTQ+ community.
- We engage in the ongoing work to become a multicultural, antiracist organization.

BUILD ANEW
A JUSTICE AGENDA FOR ALL OF US

In the face of growing economic disparity and excessive individualism, we call for federal policies that dismantle systemic racism, eliminate the wealth and income gap, improve the well-being of our communities, and allow all people to thrive—especially those most often left out: women, people of color, people on the economic margins, and those at the intersections of these identities.

Emerging from our encounter with families and communities, **the Build Anew Agenda** is a pathway to realizing our vision of a just and inclusive society. Our current calls not for simple reforms but for transformation. Four cornerstones, grounded in the principles of Catholic Social Justice, establish our foundation.

Build Anew Policy Areas

We build our country anew by prioritizing racial equity, caring for the Earth, and improving the well-being of all people and communities through legislative advocacy for:

Economic Security: Individuals and families deserve to live in dignity with economic stability. We advocate for just working conditions, paid leave and accommodations for parents and pregnant workers, and workers' ability to organize and collectively bargain. We call for equitably-implemented wage increases indexed for cost of living.

Housing, Health Care, and Food Security: Everyone deserves access to safe and affordable housing, health care, and food. We work to eliminate racial and class disparities in these areas. We call for expanding Medicaid, achieving universally accessible health care, expanding housing vouchers, funding public housing repairs, ending racist zoning practices, and expanding food security programs to reach all vulnerable people and families.

Immigration Reform: We are called to welcome immigrants, modernize our immigration system, ensure racial equity in immigration policy, and create a pathway to citizenship for our undocumented neighbors.

Criminal Legal System Reform: We are called to dismantle the system of mass incarceration that targets Black and Brown communities. We urge Congress to eliminate racial inequities in sentencing, demilitarize law enforcement and reduce spending on prisons, invest in rehabilitation, and support citizens' reentry.

Tax Justice: Instead of preferential treatment for wealthy people and corporations, our tax policies must reduce disparities, including the racial and gender wealth gaps, and raise revenue to invest in people and communities. We support expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit and tax reforms that ensure everyone pays their fair share.

Democracy: A truly representative, multi-racial democracy welcomes and facilitates the participation of voters, limits the influence of the powerful, and holds government accountable for advancing the common good. We must restore and strengthen the 1965 Voting Rights Act, make voter registration accessible, and address money in politics.

Focus on Federal Advocacy

While NETWORK's foundresses knew the importance of local and state-level politics, they created NETWORK to work on the federal domestic policies responsible for the injustices they saw across the country. Today, NETWORK continues directing our energies at influencing **federal policies**, seeking national solutions to national problems. At the same time, NETWORK recognizes the enormous impact state and local decisions have on peoples' lives. If one of NETWORK's policy issues is stalled in Congress but moving at the state level, NETWORK organizers may engage the field on that issue.

Catholic Social Justice

NETWORK's mission and values arise out of the rich tradition of **Catholic Social Justice**, which encompasses the teachings of the Church and the witness of all people of faith committed to proclaiming the love and the justice of God's kindom in the public sphere. We are inspired in a special way by Catholic Sisters' commitment to living out Gospel justice. Catholic Social Justice is not a theory or an intellectual exercise; it is how we are called to live the Gospel in a broken and suffering world.

Foundations of Catholic Social Justice

Scripture: Catholic Social Justice is grounded in scripture—both the wisdom of the Hebrew prophets and in the person and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth. The Hebrew Scriptures both denounced injustice and announced a new way of being in the world and of relating to God. In the Christian Scriptures, Jesus identifies with and fulfills the Jewish prophetic tradition saying, "The Spirit of God has anointed me to proclaim liberty to captives" (Luke 4:18) and gives his followers a new commandment: "Love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12). Likewise, we are also called to denounce injustices where we see them and to announce new, just ways of living together in community.

Catholic Social Teaching: Catholic Social Justice is shaped by Catholic Social Teaching, or the official instruction of popes and Catholic bishops on social issues. In *Gaudium et Spes* (1965), one of the four constitutions of the Second Vatican Council, we are called to address current social and economic problems, as it is the responsibility of Christians in every age to "scrutinize the signs of the times and interpret them in the light of the Gospel." The document emphasizes essential teachings of the Church, instructing us to face global inequality and poverty in order to overcome injustices. More recently, Pope Francis has challenged us to work together to build an economy of inclusion.

Catholic Social Tradition: Catholic Social Justice also looks to the public witness of people who have embodied its principles as sources of guidance, inspiration, and instruction. This includes individuals like Sr. Miriam Theresa, SNJM (Caroline Gleason), who fought for decent working conditions and the country's first minimum wage in Oregon, and Sr. Antona Ebo, FSM, who advocated for racial equality. Catholic Social Justice is inspired not only by the examples of vowed religious women and men, but also people like Dorothy Day and Cesar Chavez, who showed us how people of faith can work to create a just, more peaceful society.

Lived Realities: As Pope Francis said in *Evangelii Gaudium*, "realities are greater than ideas" (2013). Accordingly, our understanding of Catholic Social Justice is informed by the experience of those who suffer injustice and their prophetic calls for change—especially women, communities of color, Native Americans, the economically exploited, and all those whose dignity is denied by unjust systems and structures. Catholic Social Justice always witnesses and prioritizes people's voices and lived realities.

NETWORK's Principles of Catholic Social Justice

Uphold the dignity of each person as an equally valuable member of the human family.

Catholic Social Justice teaches that all people are made in the image of God and so possess an equal and inalienable worth. Because of this essential dignity, each person has a right to all that is needed to allow them to live their full potential as intended by God. God is love, and we were created to love and be in relationship with each other. Human dignity is upheld when each person's needs are met and when they live in harmony with others in a community that together pursues the common good.

Embrace our right and responsibility to participate with others in our shared public life.

Catholic Social Justice teaches us that we have a responsibility to participate in politics out of a concern for and commitment to the good of the whole community. This means that we cannot be bystanders who scoff at the political process. Instead, we are called to vote, to inform ourselves about the issues of the day, to engage in serious conversation about our nation's future, and to learn to listen to different perspectives with empathy. This responsibility to participate means each person also has a fundamental right to participate and must be equipped with the resources needed to do so.

Be in solidarity with those living in poverty in the struggle against structures of injustice.

Catholic Social Justice teaches us to look at reality through the eyes of those who have been made poor by oppression and injustice. We do this when we join together to end poverty. People forced into poverty have the single most urgent claim on the conscience of the nation because they are denied the right to a life consistent with their inalienable dignity. The responsibility to uphold the dignity of each person means that we must judge our lifestyles, policies, and social institutions in terms of how they affect those suffering from the injustice of poverty.

Bridge divisions, rising above individual interest for the good of the whole community.

Catholic Social Justice teaches us that all people are children of God, so every person belongs to a single and interconnected human family. As siblings, our needs are met in relationship with one another. When making individual and collective decisions, we have a responsibility to consider the good of the community, because our true health is mutually dependent. Authorities at every level must work together for the good of the entire community. A just community is united in creating the conditions for every person to flourish and realize their full human potential as children of God.

Unite with workers to build an economy that puts people, not profit, at the center.

Catholic Social Justice teaches us that work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God's creation. Work should enhance the dignity of the person by allowing all workers to express their uniqueness in a way that contributes to the common good. The community must also recognize the dignity of work by ensuring that it is justly rewarded with a living wage. As human beings are social, they have a fundamental right to organize collectively to create better working conditions for themselves and others.

Nurture the Earth, recognizing that we are interdependent with the rest of Creation.

Because human beings are intimately connected with all that exists, our health and well-being are dependent upon that of the Earth and all its creatures. We must cultivate and care for the Earth in such a way that its bounty can provide for and sustain future generations. Creation was entrusted to all of God's children, and thus all people have an equal right to breathe clean air and drink clean water. Because those pushed to the margins of our society are disproportionately affected by environmental degradation, concern for creation is inseparable from concern for justice.

NETWORK ADVOCATES FOR CATHOLIC SOCIAL JUSTICE

NETWORK History

NETWORK has worked for justice in federal policies since 1972, and the 'Advocates Team' model of uniting justice-seekers around the country has been with us since the inception of NETWORK.

Women Religious Called to Action

In the 1960s, Pope John XXIII convened the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II), calling all the bishops of the world to Rome for four sessions of conversation. During this time, they issued documents that opened the Church to the world and revolutionized how the Church understood itself. As Catholic Sisters engaged = the world and encountered poverty in new ways, many questioned the systems keeping people in poverty and looked to engage the legislative process to address these issues.

Two documents were released in 1971: Pope Paul VI's *Call to Action* and the Synod of Bishops' *Justice in the World*, which stated that "action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world" is "a constitutive dimension of preaching the Gospel." Inspired by these documents, the reforms of Vatican II, and Catholic Social Teaching, a group of Catholic sisters met at Trinity College in Washington, D.C. in December 1971. These 47 sisters decided to create a nationwide "network" of women religious to engage in politics on behalf of social justice. "The Network" (now called NETWORK) officially opened its doors in April 1972. The first staff members, all sisters supported by their congregations, initially lived and worked in the same house, which also served as a place for local activists to gather for Saturday night liturgies and other events. Together they organized, educated, and informed their new members about what they would term "political ministry."

A Lobby for Catholic Social Justice


Legislative Seminar participants, 1974

NETWORK justice-seekers quickly expanded beyond women religious to include male religious, clergy, and non-vowed religious people united by a belief in the call for justice exemplified in the Catholic Social Justice tradition. To train advocates, NETWORK sponsored legislative seminars to educate participants about Catholic Social Teaching, political ministry, organizing, and the legislative process. These conferences also gave members the chance to discuss and choose policy issues to focus on.

The first NETWORK newsletter outlined NETWORK's early lobbying priorities: poverty, government reform, minimum wage, child care, consumer protection, farmworker rights, health care, opposition to the Vietnam War, prison reform, tax fairness, welfare reform, and women's rights. The issue agenda evolved as new issues, including immigration reform and federal budget priorities, arose.

After the heady optimism of the 1970s, the 1980s brought new challenges. Catholics were deeply shocked by the murders of Archbishop Oscar Romero and the four US Churchwomen in El Salvador, and NETWORK lobbied against U.S. support of dictatorships in Central America. NETWORK also advocated on behalf of a moral budget when the Reagan administration increased military spending while making deep cuts to social programs.

The 1990s began auspiciously when the Family and Medical Leave Act, a piece of legislation NETWORK strongly promoted, passed Congress. However, "welfare reform" pushed more people into poverty, which NETWORK raised awareness of through the coalition-based Welfare Reform Watch Project.

NETWORK's consistent stand on issues of social justice was recognized in January 2001, when President Clinton presented the Presidential Citizens Medal, our nation's second-highest civilian honor, to Sr. Carol Coston, OP, NETWORK's first director and the first Catholic Sister ever to receive this award. He noted that she "helped to create NETWORK, a national Catholic lobby that has mobilized thousands of nuns and lay people to fight for social progress."

In 2000s, NETWORK's issue agenda continued to focus on economic justice, federal budget priorities, health care access, immigration reform, and ecological justice. Legislative successes in these areas were difficult to achieve under a new administration and a two-front war, but hopes were high in 2008, when Barack Obama became president.

Healthcare reform took center stage, and NETWORK, which had long promoted universal access to quality, affordable health care, lobbied strongly for the Affordable Care Act. After the Catholic Health Association publicly supported the legislation, Sr. Simone Campbell, SSS, NETWORK's then-Executive Director, composed a letter of support signed by Catholic Sisters in leadership positions. When the Affordable Care Act passed, many attributed its passage to Catholic Sisters, including NETWORK, who spoke out in support of the bill.

Driving for Justice

In April 2012 (four days after NETWORK celebrated its 40th anniversary), the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued a doctrinal assessment and Mandate of the Leadership Conference of Women's Religious (LCWR). Catholic Sisters in the U.S. received enthusiastic support from people across the country and across the world. NETWORK began a new form of political ministry, educating people about economic injustice by organizing the "Nuns on the Bus" campaign. "Nuns on the Bus" tours became an important tactic for NETWORK's, even operating virtually in 2020. Each trip has a different theme: the federal budget (2012), immigration reform (2013), voter engagement (2014), transforming politics (2015), mending the gaps (2016), tax justice (2018), and multi-issue voting (2020).

The bus tours, which have already brought together justice-seekers and Catholic Sisters in more than half the states in our nation, gave NETWORK the opportunity to encounter peoples' stories and lived experiences and find much-needed solutions to the serious issues we face.

This and other NETWORK activities continue to serve our mission of working for justice. We remain committed to NETWORK's founding principles: advocacy rooted in Catholic Social Justice, power and sustenance found in collaborative work, and community reflection on our mission and goals based on listening and responding to the needs of our members and individuals living on the margins.

From 47 sisters, NETWORK now has more than 100,000 members and supporters in all 50 states. NETWORK Advocates and Advocates Teams represent the best in NETWORK's long history, and we seek to provide the same spiritual and political nourishment to team members that allowed a group of sisters to create and grow our nation's first Catholic Social Justice lobby.

Sister-Spirit

Since NETWORK's founding, its staff and Board membership has grown far beyond those who are Catholic Sisters. Remaining faithful to our founding while living into our current reality, NETWORK named the concept of ***Sister-Spirit***, the radical, joyful, and inclusive energy that motivated NETWORK's founding and continues to animate NETWORK's political ministry today, illustrated in this word cloud:

What Does Sister-Spirit Look Like?

Since Sister-Spirit is a lived reality, Here are 10 ways that Sister-Spirit is lived out.

We live out Sister-Spirit when we…

1. Listen with curiosity and humility and are open to learning.
2. Root our understanding in encounter, not ideology.
3. Approach situations and people with hope and welcome.
4. Act out of a grounded spirituality rooted in contemplation and reflection.
5. Pursue Gospel justice with joy and persistence.
6. Prioritize the well-being of others, especially those at the margins.
7. Work collaboratively in community, not "presiding over."
8. See team members/co-workers/everyone as people first, not just roles.
9. Trust our instincts, are bold, and are willing to do the unpopular.
10. Celebrate together, use humor, and are feisty.

NETWORK Advocates root their work in Sister-Spirit and live out Sister-Spirit in their advocacy, their participation on Advocates Teams, and their encounters with others.

Meet the NETWORK Board and Staff

You can meet the NETWORK board at https://networklobby.org/about/board/ and the NETWORK staff at https://networklobby.org/staff/.

Racial and Gender Justice

NETWORK's efforts to protect human dignity, celebrate racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity, and promote the common good demand we pay special attention to the people and communities most marginalized by our systems and structures. Our work must center and support members of the Black, Latinx, Native American, Asian American and Pacific Islander communities, women, members of the LGBTQ+ community, people experiencing poverty, and people at the intersections of those identities.

Racial Justice

While NETWORK has been committed to social and economic justice from the beginning, in recent years, we have striven to be more intentional about our commitment to racial justice and becoming a fully anti-racist, multicultural organization. This means we intentionally prioritize dismantling systemic racism and white supremacy in our political system as well as our economic and social structures.

It is not enough to be not racist, because racism is not about individual actions. Racism is systemic and implicit, embedded into the very systems and power structures of our society, especially our political and economic systems. As people committed to racial justice, we must recommit to our shared connection as members of one human family while naming, recognizing, and valuing the diversity of cultures and experiences we each bring to the table.

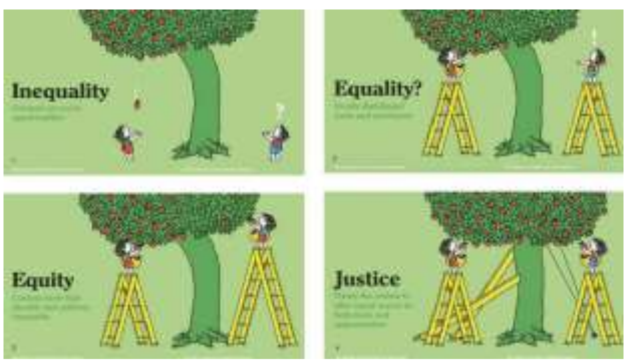


Image credit: 2019 Design In Tech Report | "Addressing Imbalance"
Illustrations by @lunchbreath

Racism is about power and privilege, systems and structures. It is also about the unspoken ways we experience the world, the unconscious assumptions we make. We must consistently examine our own hearts and minds, our socialization, as well as the world around us, in order to be anti-racist.

We focus on promoting federal policies that will build our society anew, with a special focus on dismantling systemic racism, cultivating inclusive community, rooting our economy in solidarity, and transforming our politics. We cannot do this effectively without considering the disproportionate impact policies have on communities of color and how they exacerbate systemic racism. We must pay attention to unintended consequences and ensure the policies that we support get to the root of the problem of systemic racism in our nation and world. We do this in a way that is responsive to, and follows the leadership of, communities of color.

At NETWORK, we continually examine our practices to ensure we are living out our mission in the most equitable way possible. Additionally, we expect NETWORK staff and NETWORK community members to invest in ongoing development and learning about racial justice We aim to equip you, NETWORK Advocates, to do the work of economic and racial justice, organize in solidarity with people of color, and educate yourselves and others in your communities about systemic racism. NETWORK has resources to support you, including workshops (the Racial Wealth and Income Gap Workshop and Tax Justice for All: Unveiling the Racial Inequities of the U.S. Tax Code), reflection guides (Recommit to Racial Justice), and additional articles and podcasts in our Resource Library to engage as a group or on your own. NETWORK staff are available to facilitate workshops or assist with your racial justice journey.

Racial Justice Definitions

When talking about racial justice, it is important to be sure all conversation participants are operating with the same understanding and definitions of key terms. These are the terms and definitions NETWORK uses when discussing racial justice.

Race: An arbitrary socio-biological category created by Europeans (white men) in the 15th century and used to assign human worth and social status with themselves as the model of humanity, with the purpose of establishing white skin access to sources of power.

Prejudice: The favorable or unfavorable opinion or feeling about a person or group, usually formed without knowledge, thought, or reason. It can be based on a single experience, which is then transferred to or assumed about all potential experiences.

Power: The legitimate control of, or access to, institutions sanctioned by the state; the capacity to act.

Racism: Race prejudice + institutional power (=misuse of institutional, systemic, and social power).

White Supremacy: The ideology of racial hierarchy born out of historical European domination that drives the system of white superiority, power, and control in our country. This ideology is often unconscious and impacts class and social status for whites and non-whites.

White Privilege: The product of white supremacy that confers unearned societal benefits – tangible and intangible – on white people because of the color of their skin.

Oppression: Systematic marginalization and domination of the psychological, emotional, and/or physical nature of a person or group by a person or group.

Institutional Oppression: The systematic mistreatment of people within a social identity group, supported and enforced by the society and its institutions, solely based on the person's membership in the social identity group.

Identity: Belonging to or relating to the experience(s), tradition(s) of a single or multiple communities.

Intersectionality: The belief that our multiple identities must be recognized to understand our experiences with systems of power, privilege, and oppression.

Equity: The condition that would be achieved if one's racial identity no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one fares (Center for Assessment and Policy Development)

Equality: Equally distributed tools and assistance regardless of circumstances

Inclusion: A state of being valued, respected, and supported with a focus on the needs of every individual and ensuring the right conditions are in place for each person to reach their full potential

Racial Justice: The systematic fair treatment of people of all races, resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all; rather than just the absence of discrimination and inequity, racial justice requires the presence of deliberate systems and supports to achieve and sustain racial equity through proactive and preventative measures

NETWORK's Racial Justice Shared Agreements

Shared agreements are a set of principles established by a group of people in a specific space to ensure their discussion can be productive and healthy. Often, things can be misunderstood or miscommunicated during discussions around topics as sensitive as race and racial justice. To support conversations around racial justice at NETWORK, we established the following shared agreements that we review and agree to before starting the conversation. Use them, add your own, or create your own.

Speak up/make space.

This is a different iteration of what some people call "step up/step back" that is more mindful of physical ability (that not everyone can or will step). It exists to dismiss the idea that "moving back" is what people need to do. Speak up/make space means that those of us who are quiet might challenge themselves to share. Those of us who speak a lot and take up a lot of space can "lead" by watching our time and making space for other voices.

We are each experts on our own experiences.

We can only speak to our own lived experiences, and nobody can invalidate the things that we have seen, heard, smelt, or touched. Be sure that we are only speaking as ourselves and not speaking for someone else or their intentions. *Example: 'When this happened, I felt this way.'* It's also important to listen deeply and respect others' experiences. During vulnerable conversations in particular, it is important to give your full attention to the person who is sharing so that they feel heard and honored.

Respect confidentiality and continue the conversation.

Another way of saying this is "What's said here stays here. What's learned here leaves here." While we want the conversation to transform us and, ultimately, our world, it is also important that we respect the sacredness of each other's stories. We should not share another person's story without their permission. As we continue the conversation, we must do so in a way that respects those who have shared their experiences with us.

Whether or not it has been named, the personal manifestations of power are present.

White supremacy and racism are embedded within every institution within the United States. Every person is living in that social context, which bestows an amount of privilege or disadvantage on each person in the room depending on their identities. It is important to recognize your identity and the identities of those you are interacting with and recognize the intersectionality of identities. Also remember that aspects of people's identities that may lead them to experience oppression may not be visible or immediately apparent. Be especially conscious of the ways you hold power and how that may impact the conversation.

Embrace and express discomfort.

We don't grow without experiencing, embracing, and expressing some degree of discomfort. Lean into the discomfort of talking about racial justice and interrogate your feelings internally and externally.

Practice self-care.

Examining white privilege and racism can be emotionally taxing. While we wish for everyone to lean into their discomfort in order to learn, we recognize that for some individuals this can bring up trauma, and no one can learn when they are traumatized. If necessary, take a break away from the activity to collect yourself.

Resolution will not happen today.

We are not going to solve racism in one conversation or in one day, and that's okay. We cannot let that stop us from using today to learn and grow. We must be patient with the process.

Make space for evaluating progress and tension.

It's important in the slow work of transformation that we acknowledge the ways we are growing and the tensions that we experience. Evaluation fosters a culture of honesty, accountability, and community. We want to create a space where it is safe to express and evaluate those tensions together.

Reflection Questions

There are a variety of experiences that make up who we are as individuals, and these experiences are often tied to our racial backgrounds. Recognizing this, as well as the weight of dismantling white supremacy and racism, we encourage everyone to reflect on the following questions occasionally:

- What is my racial identity? How do others identify me?
- What racialized messaging have I been exposed to throughout my life? How have I accepted and internalized those messages?
- What privileges or disadvantages result from how I identify or how others may identify me?
- What type of social power might I bring with me when I walk into a room, a store, or down the street?
- What fears or anxieties do I have talking about racism to my family, friends, and colleagues? What are some steps I can take to move past them?

Gender Justice

NETWORK prioritizes a feminist model of leadership. We encourage NETWORK Advocates to recognize the effect of gendered messaging and implicit bias in collaborative spaces and to develop mechanisms of interaction that strive to control for these factors to ensure all participants have an equal voice. Throughout this handbook, you will find models of conversation and decision-making that take gender dynamics into account. We encourage you to use them.

Prioritizing Encounter-Based Advocacy

> *"To speak of a 'culture of encounter' means that we, as a people, should be passionate about meeting others, seeking points of contact, building bridges, planning a project that includes everyone. This becomes an aspiration and a style of life. The subject of this culture is the people, not simply one part of society that would pacify the rest with the help of professional and media resources."*
>
> -Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti* #216

Pope Francis often speaks of the importance of creating a "culture of encounter" to bridge differences and divides. Catholic Social Justice calls us to act in solidarity with those most marginalized in our society. In other words, the best solutions to our social problems will come not from the outside but from those who are most directly impacted by the problems.

In our advocacy, we continuously strive to center the voices of those most directly impacted by the injustices we seek to end. Lived experiences are the most important component of the meaning-making that informs our advocacy. In that spirit, we:

- Look first to resources, skills, and perspectives held by the impacted communities.
- Reject a deficit-based approach; instead, recognize the assets already existing in communities.
- Center peoples telling their own stories and sharing their lived experiences in our advocacy.
- Involve impacted communities in devising solutions to the challenges they face.
- Recognize that impact is more important than intent and approach each situation with intentionality around recognizing and addressing unintended consequences.

NETWORK Advocates Teams

Building community. Learning together. Advocating for justice. Influencing policy.

Advocates Teams

Advocates Teams are composed of NETWORK members and supporters who live or work in a shared geographical region. Some teams are centered around a specific city or town; others include people across the entire state. Regardless of location, team members are united by their passion for justice, desire to learn, and commitment to advocacy!

Advocates Teams welcome people with all different levels of experience and backgrounds. Some team members have been involved with NETWORK for decades, while others are new to advocacy. NETWORK—and our Advocates Teams—are open to all who share our passion for justice.

With the support from NETWORK staff and one another, team members grow in their understanding of federal policies that support the common good. They participate in strategies that have a national impact—at a level far beyond individual or uncoordinated efforts. Much of this impact can be attributed to the meaningful relationships team members develop with their Members of Congress and their staff. By regularly communicating a strong faith/moral message to the offices, team members become trusted messengers whose perspectives and concerns are valued and appreciated.

National Organizing Model

NETWORK is currently developing Advocates Teams in 12 strategic building states:

- California
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Kentucky
- Michigan
- Missouri
- New Jersey
- New York
- Ohio
- Pennsylvania
- Texas
- Virginia

These states were chosen after considering factors including: the geography of the NETWORK field (both current and growth potential), Congressional leadership, key committees and other Hill targets, as well as NETWORK's legislative priorities, election work, and more.

NETWORK's organizing efforts, however, are not limited to the strategic building states. NETWORK has more than 100,000 members and supporters across the country with a presence in nearly every congressional district. The commitment and dedication of these advocates—who make phone calls, send emails, sign petitions, attend town halls, participate in lobby visits, and more—make NETWORK a well-known and powerful presence on Capitol Hill.

Joining an Advocates Team

Advocates Team activities vary based on the availability, interests, and creativity of the team members, but all team members are encouraged to engage in:

- Monthly Advocates Team meetings either in-person or online
- Regular communication with Members of Congress via email, phone calls, town halls, etc.
- Two in-district meetings a year with your Members of Congress or their staff
- Communicating through the local media via letters to the editor, interviews, etc. [*continued*]

- Involvement in coalition work and/or community outreach
- Participation in NETWORK programs, trainings, events, and campaigns
- Recruitment to grow your Advocates Team's size and power

Advocates Teams receive robust support from NETWORK staff, including:

- Regular policy briefs and legislative updates
- Opportunities to strategically engage in advocacy at the federal policy level
- Advocacy, organizing, and media trainings
- Educational content
- Catholic Social Justice resources
- Materials for reflection and contemplation

Leading an Advocates Team

A **NETWORK Advocates Team Coordinator** is a volunteer who is passionate about NETWORK's Build Anew policy agenda, committed to long-haul social justice work, and excited to build relationships with and engage their Members of Congress. Above all, an Advocates Team Coordinator is a "people person" who can organize justice-seekers in their region to engage in advocacy with NETWORK.

An Advocates Team Coordinator should be committed to living out "Sister-Spirit" and doing anti-racism work. While they do not have to be Catholic, an Advocates Team Coordinator should be comfortable talking about NETWORK's "Build Anew" issues from a place rooted in their faith tradition or belief system, as well as engaging in spiritual reflection and contemplation. They are strongly encouraged to be a dues-paying member of NETWORK.

Advocates Team Coordinator's responsibilities include:

- Helping recruit members for the Advocates Team
- Working with NETWORK staff to organize monthly Advocates Team meetings
- Working with NETWORK staff on Advocates Team monthly meeting agenda
- Coordinating Team activities (see description under "NETWORK's Advocates Teams")
- Serving as the primary liaison between the NETWORK staff and the Advocates Team: providing team members' contact information, minutes from meetings, report backs from in-district meetings, key updates, etc.
- Provide reminders and opportunities for team members to become dues-paying members of NETWORK

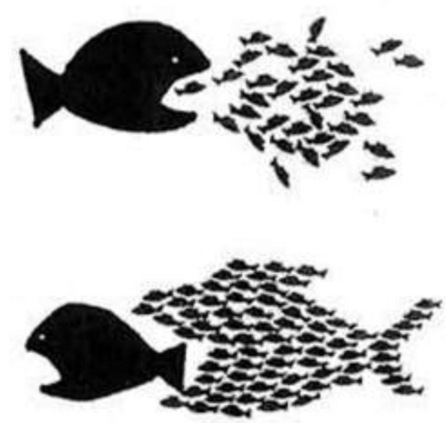
If you live in one of NETWORK's strategic building states and would like more information about joining or starting an Advocates Team, contact NETWORK's field organizers by emailing info@networklobby.org. ***We'd love to talk with you!***

Organizing: The Basics

Organizing is about building power to effect positive change in our political structures. When NETWORK members and advocates work together, especially in coalition with other groups, we have a lot of power. With this power, NETWORK advocates and partners have saved the Affordable Care Act, passed a fair and just Farm Bill, and elected Members of Congress who share their values.

Organized Power

There is a reason organizers around the world—from Saul Alinsky and Catholic priests on Chicago's West Side to *campesinos* in El Salvador—have used this graphic of fish for more than 50 years to illustrate what community organizing is and how it works.



Think about the big fish as any system, group, or person who holds power in society and you can see how that power is used against the smaller fish. If the big fish is going after the little fish, we will assume it doesn't share our belief in a more just society. The big fish could be:

- A member of a city council who wants to tear down housing in a lower-income neighborhood to build another parking garage
- A corporation that violates labor laws and engages in wage theft
- A member of Congress who votes against bills that protect immigrants
- A healthcare system that excludes people who are poor and the sick

The smaller fish represent those with less formal power in a society. As the first image shows, the big fish can come after them if they're all individuals. They're in trouble, and some might not even know it. They are not in relationship with the other fish around them.

In the second image, the small fish band together to stand up for themselves collectively. They are in relationship with each other and have coordinated a response to the big fish. How did this happen? Perhaps one or two fish started talking. When they realized that they were both worried about the big fish eating them, they reached out to all of the other fish. Once enough of the little fish agreed that the big fish was a threat to their very existence, they arranged themselves so that they could be effective against the big fish. Together, they became larger than the big fish, so they could stand up to it.

The picture of the little fish working together to stand up to the big fish represents the power of community built through organizing.

Jobs with Justice defines community organizing as the act of building "principled and ordered **sustained relationships** around **self-interest** and **shared values** in order to build **power**."

Power in Community

Many of us have been taught that power is a bad force that corrupts leaders and hurts others. We need to let go of that idea. As Pax Christi USA states, power is "the ability to influence and produce an effect." As a community-based organization, we believe that power is collective and shared. Power relies on connections and relationships. Put simply, power can be understood with this formula:

Power = Organized People + Organized Money

NETWORK works to build the power to influence federal legislation for the common good. The NETWORK staff leverages a much larger network of advocates to influence members of Congress.

Our **organized people** are our members and supporters—all of you! Your actions in calling or visiting your Senators and Representatives, writing letters to the editor, attending town halls and prayer vigils, and so much more show legislators that NETWORK has power in their districts. Your actions get legislators to listen and to be in relationship with NETWORK.

Of course, **organized money**, which comes from NETWORK members, donors, grants, and foundations, sustains NETWORK and helps us continue building power.

NETWORK's Advocates Teams, in particular, are an important part of our **organized people**. Each team is an organized school of smaller fish that comes together to build power in their state or Congressional district. The teams also reflect our belief about power, held by many organizations out there that share our values: **Power is collective and shared — not held by an individual or exclusive group**.

At NETWORK, we are always developing new leaders so that our power continues to grow and is shared with all who share our passion. **Developing new leaders is a key component in the work of organizing.**

Components of Organizing

Organizing requires ongoing building work. Every action you do should have a building component. Are you building new relationships? Reinvigorating existing relationships? Getting people to take action?

Organizing uses many different tactics depending on what is strategically appropriate.

These tactics can include:

- Canvassing
- Hosting town halls
- Conference calls
- Demonstrations/sit-ins
- Organizing a group to write letters
- Engaging the media
- Organizing online (social media)

In the following pages, you'll learn more about the components of organizing.

Self-Interest

In the work of organizing, it is critical that you clearly understand your **self-interest** in the work you're doing. Why are you here? What ties you to this work? How are you going to benefit from this work?

Okay, but aren't we supposed to be selfless?

No! *Self-interest is not the same as selfishness.* Selflessness harms the long-term work of the movement (through frustration, an inflated sense of self-importance, or burnout). There's no place in community organizing for either selfishness *or* selflessness.

Self-interest is about recognizing your own needs and desires amidst the needs and desires of the others alongside whom you are working.

To put it simply:

Selfishness is a concern with self only.
Self-interest is a concern with self *and* with others.
Selflessness is a concern with others only, an unawareness of self.

We connect and create community in the area of **self-interest**.

Naming our self-interest enables each of us to enter the work from a place of authenticity. Self-interest is relational and recognizes that we are all in this together. Self-interest serves as the primary motivator that drives us to act within *and* beyond our own wants and needs in order to work for the common good. When grounded in justice, self-interest recognizes that our good is interdependent with the good of others.

As a network of Spirit-filled justice-seekers, we name and work from a place of self-interest because we believe, to quote the poet Emma Lazarus, "Until we are all free, we are none of us free."

Reflection

The organizing that we do and the change we make allows us to be, to quote Richard Rohr, OFM, **"whole and holy together"** (*Great Themes of Paul: Life as Participation*). "To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the **common good**" (1 Cor 12:7).

This spirit is a gift that is given to you not just for your own self, but to ***build up the community****, to build up society. So we, in our* ***corporate wholeness****, are the glory of God, the goodness of God, the presence of God. As individuals, we* ***participate in that wholeness****, and that is* ***holiness****. That's the only holiness we'll ever know. It's not my private holiness; it's our* ***connectedness together****.*

Community organizing is holiness through wholeness. It's our "connectedness together" that fuels our power. So how do we build those sustained relationships? First, we must gain clarity around our self-interest — what is it that I want to get from this initiative. Then we need to help others uncover their own self-interest.

Uncovering Your Self-Interest

Your self-interest is shaped by the many things that make you who you are, including your public persona, your values, and your personal experiences. It's not, however, that those things *are* your self-interest. Despite how straight-forward it may seem, it isn't always easy to discover your own self-interest. Even when it is, it can be even harder to claim.

Knowing and claiming your own self-interest is critically important because self-interest becomes the positive motivating force for your work.

So how do you discover your self-interest?

That's a little more complicated. Let's start with a brief reflection on three things that can shape your self-interest.

Self-Interest Reflection

1) Public persona:

- With whom are you in relationship (organizations, people, jobs, communities)?
- How do your neighbors and colleagues know you?

2) Values:

- What guides your relationships and actions?
- What kind of world do you want to see?
- What would you want a child to learn so that they become a "good" person?

3) Personal experiences:

- What moments or role models have had a significant influence on you?
- What moments have shaped you?
- Who are you at your deepest center?

All of these things contribute to your understanding of why you're here. Still, they don't, by themselves, identify your self-interest. Self-interest ties directly to the work itself. Self-interest identifies specifically how *you* benefit from the work. For example, your self-interest could be that you once experienced houselessness and you want to be sure that never happens to you or your family again. Your self-interest could be that your voice and contributions have been downplayed much of your life, so you want to claim your voice. Your self-interest could be that it is through this group working for justice that you have found authentic community.

In addition to self-interest, having a story from your own personal experience can help keep you grounded and motivated in the work. It can create a personal sense of accountability around the urgency and importance of the work at hand. You may have to be intentional about returning to that story regularly in order to keep yourself motivated.

Sample Reflection

Public persona: I've been an activist for at least 25 years of my life. I'm known for my organizing around the rights of immigrants and refugees. In the past, I was the Justice for Immigrants coordinator for the Archdiocese of St. Louis and helped start a community theater company whose mission was to educate its audiences about the need for immigration reform. I currently work for NETWORK and help guide the advocacy efforts of NETWORK-connected advocates across the country.

Values: I believe we must welcome immigrants and love our neighbors. My work in immigration is an expression of my Catholic faith. My family also taught me to support immigrants and refugees and include them in my day-to-day life.

Personal experience: When I was a kid, my Grandpa Bob – who I now realize is a very important figure in my social justice formation – always invited refugee families to my family's Thanksgiving. I come from a large Irish Catholic family, and we already had 50+ people at my grandparents' house, but it was always clear that we needed to include families who were new to the U.S., far from their homelands and other family members, at our gatherings so that they would feel welcome in their new community.

When you act strategically, all of your actions will relate back to building power in order to achieve what is in your self-interest.

Once you begin to gain clarity around your own self-interest, it's time to go out and learn about the self-interest of those around you. You will bring your understanding of your own self-interest into every conversation you have. You will also spend a lot of time seeking to understand the self-interest of others and thinking about how your self-interest and others' self-interests work together.

One-on-Ones

One-on-ones, individual conversations between two people, are where the real work of organizing happens. They're where you learn about others' self-interest and where you build relationships. One-on-ones are the first step you can take in building or expanding your Advocates Team.

When you think about asking for a one-on-one, you want to be strategic. In the organizing world, one-on-ones have four specific goals:

1. Building relationships:

Relationships cultivate possibilities. When people are in relationship, they can share, plan, create, and get things done. In community organizing, building relationships is the key to building power. Once you build a relationship with someone, they are more likely to respond to an invitation to attend a meeting or work on a campaign. (Note: With one-on-ones, you're building public relationships, not private relationships. You don't have to be best friends with or want to spend your free time hanging out with the people with whom you have one-on-ones. The purpose of public relationships is to develop clarity around mutual self-interest in order to build power.)

2. Uncovering self-interest:

Self-interest is what a person is passionate about and what motivates them. People will get involved in things that reflect their self-interest. In a one-on-one, you want to learn if this person will join your efforts.

3. Developing clarity:

One-on-ones allow people to express their feelings about important issues, which may help them develop a clearer understanding of what motivates them or why an issue matters. Some people will even talk themselves into changing their perspective on an issue. (Often, this is a part of a longer conversion, even if it's a critical part of the conversion. See NETWORK's Transformative Conversations for Bridging Divides workshop and resources for more information.)

4. Gathering information:

One-on-ones are an opportunity for you to gather information about a person, community, neighborhood, organization, or campaign. You will find out what's going on, where there are overlaps in your work and interests, and – most importantly – how people are thinking and feeling about important issues.

Guidelines for One-on-Ones

One-on-ones can be very effective and important organizing tools — or they can be a huge waste of time. The following guidelines will help to ensure that your meetings are effective and useful for building your Advocates Team and the broader movement for justice.

- Be clear in the invitation: you want to get to know the person better for the sake of your organizing.
- Schedule 45 minutes for the meeting. Keep the meeting itself to about 30 minutes.
- Do more than 70% of the listening and less than 30% of the talking.
- Practice holy curiosity and be courageous with your questions; don't pry or psychoanalyze.
- Practice active listening.
- What is shared here stays here, but what is learned here leaves here.

After your one-on-one:

- Thank them for their time.
- Ask who else you should talk to.
- Establish a follow-up if needed/appropriate.
- Reflect and evaluate.

Remember that one-on-ones can be sacred. Someone is sharing their story with you, and that comes with vulnerability. It is sacred when someone trusts you with a deep and personal part of themselves.

Tips for Active Listening

As you meet with people, remember that you are seeking to build trust and empathy as you build this relationship. It is important for you to acknowledge emotional content and understand how your conversation partner is feeling. It is also crucial for you to practice ***holy curiosity***, to ask courageous questions and not to be judgmental or psychoanalytical.

- Make **eye contact**, if you are able.
- **Respond** intentionally and supportively.
- Ask open-ended questions.
- **Acknowledge** how the speaker seems to be feeling.
- Encourage them to illustrate with **personal stories**.
- **Paraphrase** and/or repeat important points to make sure you are understanding correctly.
- **Ask** agitational questions – questions that might make them a little bit uncomfortable and lead them to dig a little deeper. These are the kinds of questions that require courage. There's a cost to the movement when we don't ask these kinds of courageous questions.

Effective Meetings

Meetings either build power or lose power. Think about meetings you attend. How many of the following statements are true?

- You show up because you will feel guilty if you don't.
- Everything feels disorganized. People talk on and on and may even argue with each other.
- After the meeting, a few attendees gossip about what others said or did.
- It feels like nothing ever gets done, even after months and months of meeting.

These are all qualities of bad meetings. When we have bad meetings, people can't connect or take action together, they might feel their time is being wasted, and they may end up walking away from your team or organization. These are meetings where you lose power.

Good meetings are where we connect, build power, and decide how we are going to put our faith and values into action to transform the world around us.

In order to have a good meeting, you must start with a good reason to have a meeting. There are three power-building reasons to have meetings:

- To **plan** an action.
- To **do** an action.
- To **evaluate** an action.

Elements of an Effective Meeting

Good meetings share many of the same elements. Some critical elements of a good meeting are:

1. **Self-preparation:** A few weeks before the meeting, spend at least 15-30 minutes thinking through the meeting. Make sure you know why you're having the meeting. Decide what your goals are, envision what it will look like, be clear on who needs to be there, and draft an agenda. NETWORK's Grassroots Mobilization team is always available to help you with this process.
2. **Pre-meeting with key leaders:** Who is presenting at the meeting with you? Whether it's one person or several, members of your team or guests from a different organization, these co-presenters are the key leaders. It's important for all of you to be on the same page, to come to an agreement about the goals and the agenda for the meeting, and to decide how you will handle the challenges that may arise. The pre-meeting is also the place where the key leaders divide the work of phone call or email reminders, photocopies, refreshments, or other steps that need to take place before the meeting.
3. **Agenda:** Having a printed agenda keeps everyone focused. It also lets all of the participants know what they are committing to in terms of time and goals. It's important that each item on the agenda is time bound; this helps everyone be accountable for ending the meeting on time. The time-bound agenda helps to keep someone from hijacking the meeting. The agenda should be sent out to all of the participants beforehand, but you should also review it at the beginning of the meeting. (It can be particularly helpful to be clear on the purpose of conversations during the meeting. Are you setting the stage and having a general conversation to help people think about things? Are you sharing perspectives with each other? Are you trying to make a decision? Are you brainstorming possibilities? Clarity around the purpose of any particular conversation can help to set the expectation and facilitate healthier conversation.)
4. **Next Steps/Commitment:** The point of a meeting is to bring about actions that help the group to accomplish its larger goals. These actions could include securing an LCD projector for a workshop on income inequality, inviting 20 people to attend a town hall, researching a Representative in preparation for an in-district meeting with them, or meeting with a leader of a local organization with similar goals. **Action steps should be stated clearly and directly during the meeting so that participants know what they are committing to, and everyone's commitment should be recorded so that they can be held accountable.** *It's important to remember that "no" is an acceptable answer; it is much better for a person to say, "I can't commit to that" than to commit and be unable to follow through.*
5. **Evaluation/Debrief:** Every meeting and event should be evaluated, as it is through evaluation and reflection that we learn from our experiences and grow. Evaluation also helps to foster a culture of honesty, accountability, and community. Plus, if it doesn't happen in the room with everyone present, it will happen in the parking lot. A good team recognizes that we all strive to grow and approaches evaluation as an opportunity to invest in each other by helping each other spot behaviors by pointing to specific examples.

Sample Meeting Agenda

Scranton NETWORK Advocates Team meeting
Date, location (or call-in number and access code), time

Introductions (facilitator)	7:00-7:05
Review Agenda and Minutes (facilitator)	7:05-7:10
Opening Prayer/Reflection (name)	7:10-7:15
Internal/Team Education (name)	7:15-7:25
Policy Update & Action Alerts (name)	7:25-7:30
Group Activity Planning (name)	7:30-8:00
Looking Ahead (What's on the Radar?) (name)	8:00-8:05
Clarify Decisions, Next Steps, Responsible Parties	8:05-8:10
Announcements	8:10-8:15
Debrief/Evaluations (facilitator)	8:15-8:20
Assign Roles for Next Meeting (facilitator)	8:20-8:25
Closing Prayer/Reflection (name)	8:25-8:30

Meeting Roles

A particularly helpful practice for healthy meetings is to have clarity around roles. Some roles may always be played by the same person, and some might rotate among team members. Whichever way your team decides to assign these roles, be sure to have someone filling each of them:

Facilitator: It's especially important for the role of the facilitator to be chosen well in advance of the meeting. The facilitator is responsible for preparing the agenda and touching base with other key meeting leaders prior to the meeting. They introduce the agenda, the goals, and the speakers. They are responsible for keeping the discussion on topic and making sure that everyone is heard. If an agenda item seems like it requires more time than it was allotted on the agenda, the facilitator checks in with the group to make sure that everyone's okay with the meeting going beyond its set ending time.

Timekeeper: The timekeeper is responsible for helping the facilitator to make sure each item on the agenda stays within its assigned length of time and letting presenters know how much time they have left. All meeting participants can assist the timekeeper, but it's particularly helpful to have someone specifically tasked with this job. As they say, if it's everyone's responsibility, it becomes nobody's responsibility.

Note Taker/Minute Taker: It's important to have a record of what was discussed at the meeting, especially who was there and what commitments participants made. If it's not in the minutes, it didn't happen! The minutes do not need to record everything that was said at the meeting. The primary focus should be on **key decisions** and **next steps** (and **who committed** to those next steps). It's sometimes healthy to include a sense of the discussion if it's something that the group will continue considering in future meetings or actions.

Evaluator: The evaluator leads the group debrief or evaluation at the end of the meeting. The evaluator should be a different person than the facilitator.

Questions for Debriefing and Evaluating a Meeting

The four key parts to evaluating a meeting are:

Feelings: Ask each person to say one word that best describes how they feel about the meeting or event. The words should be specific; "good" or "okay" don't tell us much. The person leading the evaluation can then go back to ask a few people to "unpack" or explain their feelings. Don't shy away from asking about negative feelings—it's especially important for a person who's frustrated or discouraged to share that with the whole group. **This is not, however, a place to "fix" or even comment on people's feelings.** If someone didn't speak during the meeting, asking them to unpack their word could be a good way to hear from them.

Performance: This is a time to reflect on how both individuals and the group as a whole carried out their roles. The evaluator should ask people who played significant roles in the meeting, and then allow others to comment on the people's roles. Then the group evaluates themselves as a whole: How was the energy in the room? Did everyone get a chance to speak? Did everyone work to stay on track? The evaluator should stick with the question of improvement until at least two answers come out from the group. They should not linger on the answers themselves, simply restating them to ensure clarity. Remember: we consider constructive feedback to be an investment in the leader and their skill development.

Tension: The word "tension" often carries negative connotations, but we can also think about tension as something that causes us to stretch and grow. With this perspective, we can see tension as something that helps us continue moving forward in our work as justice-seekers. Certainly tension can happen when there is disagreement, but tension can also be created when the group or an individual commits to a new and challenging action or when members of the group are vulnerable and take risks. Even when the tension is related to disagreement, we can embrace this as *creative tension*, which acknowledges the truth present in all perspectives and aims to hold it in balance by creating a new response or altering the proposed response to account for some of the concerns.

Political or theological education: The person leading the evaluation or one of the meeting's facilitators should end the debrief with a short, pointed statement about the political or theological lesson of the meeting. This statement should not try to wrap up the issue neatly or solve the problem. Instead, it should be *a summary of what we as a group uncovered or learned during our discussion and acknowledge our feelings about the work itself.*

Sample Reflection

There are four basic feelings humans experience: mad, sad, glad, and scared. Feelings within these categories exist on a continuum. For example, mad exists on a continuum from mildly annoyed to rage. The following list (from *Rosenberg, Marshall B. Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life*) of feeling words may be a helpful tool as your team begins engaging in a different way.

aggravated	encouraged	mad
agitated	energetic	mellow
alarmed	enthusiastic	nervous
alive	exasperated	optimistic
amazed	excited	overjoyed
angry	exhausted	overwhelmed
annoyed	exhilarated	panicky
anxious	fascinated	peaceful
appreciative	fearful	pessimistic
apprehensive	frustrated	pleased
ashamed	fulfilled	proud
bewildered	furious	refreshed
bitter	glad	relaxed
blah	grateful	relieved
buoyant	happy	resentful
calm	helpful	sad
comfortable	hopeful	satisfied
concerned	hostile	serene
confident	hurt	skeptical
curious	impatient	surprised
dejected	inspired	thankful
delighted	intrigued	thrilled
despairing	invigorated	tired
disgruntled	irritated	touched
disheartened	jealous	trusting
eager	joyful	uncomfortable
ecstatic	leery	upset
embarrassed	lonely	uptight

NETWORK ADVOCATES FOR CATHOLIC SOCIAL JUSTICE

Why We Mobilize

The goal of organizing is to get other people to join us in working for a more just world. Though the specifics vary depending on what strategy is appropriate, everything we do should have a building component—helping us to build relationships and power. An event can be part of a building strategy or an influencing strategy or both.

If we're not paying attention to bringing more people into the movement, we're building a campaign without a strong foundation—and that's how you find yourself burned out.

Propositions

Getting people to join your movement is not about recruiting; it's about propositioning. Propositions require a thorough understanding of self-interest, both your own and the other person's.

A **proposition** is an intentional conversation that invites someone into a well-defined role based on their self-interest.

One-on-ones are important because they set you up for propositions. Through the one-on-one, you've built a relationship and come to understand someone's self-interest. In the proposition, you have the opportunity to invite them to the work of fulfilling their self-interest.

A proposition happens in three phases.

1. Find their self-interest.
2. Tell them your self-interest in the request.
3. Proposition for a *specific* role.

You want to clearly answer the questions, *What do I want to change in the world*? and *Why you*?

When you ask someone to fill a specific role, be sure to be clear about the role and its responsibilities. Be clear about the impact of this role on the goal of the action, which itself must be aligned to the shared self-interest of those involved. Also be clear about what support you can offer to this person to help them accept and successfully fulfill the role.

In the appendix, you will find a worksheet to help you gain clarity around these questions so that you can go to a propositioning meeting prepared. Show up to the propositioning meeting with a typed explanation of the role and responsibilities as you envision it, and be willing to negotiate the terms. Perhaps they can succeed at filling most of the responsibilities and want to give up or modify others.

You may not get an answer to your proposition right away. Be open to giving them time to think or pray. Before you leave the conversation, agree on a time to check back in on their decision. A shared sense of clarity around expectations is critical to accountability and a successful public relationship.

Remember, we are building relationships and organizing people in order to build power — to be able to achieve our goals. Clear expectations and accountability are critical to building power.

**See Appendix for a worksheet to help you plan an effective proposition.*

Hosting a NETWORK Workshop

NETWORK has a number of workshops, and we are always working to add more. We offer both topic-based and skill-building workshops. Here are our current offerings:

About NETWORK: Learn about NETWORK's mission, values, history, "Nuns on the Bus" campaign, our Build Anew public policy issues, and how you can join us in our advocacy work!

Catholic Social Justice: Learn about how the Gospel, Catholic Social Teaching, Catholic Social Tradition, and responding to the "signs of the times" call us to work for economic and racial justice.

Intro to Faith-Based Advocacy: Using NETWORK's "Educate, Organize, Lobby" model, advocates and activists learn about a variety of activities and tactics to build or participate in a justice campaign.

How to Lobby/Prep for Lobby Visit: Whether you want to learn more about influencing your Member of Congress or are getting ready to meet with your Member of Congress on the Hill or in-district, NETWORK can equip you for success!

Build Anew Policy Briefing: Learn more about the public policy issues NETWORK works on, the current state of play in Congress, and actions you can take to Build Anew!

Racial Wealth and Income Gap: An interactive experience that offers participants an understanding of 12 federal policies from Slavery to present day that have created the wealth and income gap between Black and white Americans.

Human Bar Graph on Income Inequality: A fun, interactive workshop that teaches participants how the past 40 years of economic policy in the United States has created today's vast income inequality.

Town Hall for Tax Justice: Created for the 2018 Nuns on the Bus Tax Justice Truth Tour, this interactive—and at times humorous—workshop shows how the 2017 Tax Law has drastically exacerbated our nation's wealth and income inequality, and provides timely legislative actions you can take to Build Anew.

Transformative Conversations to Bridge Divides: This workshop equips participants to engage friends and family members in healthy dialogue in these challenging political times.

Tax Justice for All: Unveiling the Racial Inequity of the U.S. Tax Code: This workshop follows five families/individuals with different racial, ethnic, and gender identities through a lifetime of tax code impacts and explores the inequity baked into the institutions that determine the taxes we pay. It then invites participants to re-envision the tax code to make it more equitable.

Your NETWORK organizer will be more than happy to work with you to present to your group or help your group to host a workshop on your own.

Debrief with NETWORK Staff

How do we continue to learn and grow? Through feedback and our own reflection. NETWORK's Grassroots Mobilization team members are always happy to help you debrief any meeting or event so you can continue to grow and improve your organizing skills or problem-solve around an issue you may be noticing within your team.

Whether it's talking through a challenge you've encountered or exploring training needs, we're here to help.

Organizing: Next Steps

Teams work best when there's a shared goal and shared trust. Facilitation is about paying attention—to coordination, to conflict, and to being human (and being humans) in relationship with each other. As adrienne maree brown says, this is "a magnificent, mysterious ever-evolving dynamic in which we must involve ourselves, shape ourselves and each other." In this section, you'll learn skills to grow your team.

Building a Team Foundations

A lasting structure needs a strong foundation. Sometimes it can be helpful to reassess and firm up your foundation. This foundation helps to ensure you're set up and able to have potentially hard conversations and to hold each other accountable to the work. After all, real lives are at stake.

Foundation-building is an ongoing process, especially as new members join or leave your group. When this happens, it can be important to host social events to develop relationships and provide good onboarding training for new members to introduce them into the culture, especially around processes like contemplative dialogue and consensus that will be discussed later.

For the founding group, it can be equally important to have founding conversations. How are we building relationships with each other? What are the group's values? What can members expect of each other? How do we establish a group culture and hold each other accountable?

This foundation is essential for the working of the Advocates Team. Having a strong foundation makes it easier for the group to enter into the consensus process when you need to make a big decision. It helps to control the flow of the meetings and ensure you remain productive. Some questions to consider in building and strengthening the team's foundation (from Tree Bressen):

- **What is the common purpose of our group?** A good purpose statement provides a clear and shared understanding of your team's purpose, how you plan to accomplish it, and how it connects to the broader goals of societal transformation.
- **How do we orient individuals who are new to our group?** Joining a new group with a unique culture can be challenging. It's important to provide new members the tools to enter the culture and to continue to build it toward healthy and just ways of creating social change.
- **How is the self-awareness of each person supported?** What do we do to help our members step toward personal growth?
- **How are friendships nourished among our members?** Which relationships most need support? What would help improve relationships, and what can we do to make that happen?
- **What spirit do our meetings convey?** Do they feel safe and welcoming? What is the energy?
- **How do we work with dissent?** Do we have a healthy balance between expecting cooperation and honoring legitimate differences, in service to the whole? What is the menu of options for constructively addressing concerns? How do we invite genuine consent rather than coercion? What is our robust procedure to deal effectively with inappropriate blocks? Do we have a healthy relationship with dissent?
- How does the group learn together for continual improvement of its decision-making system? What feedback loops are in place? How does change happen?

The structure and culture these questions address will be regularly evaluated as you live into them. Developing a team culture with conversations like this is beneficial to your team's long-term health.

Introduction to Contemplative Dialogue

> *"This world is what we have made it. If it is ruthless today it is because we have made it ruthless by our attitudes. If we change ourselves we can change the world, and changing ourselves begins with changing our language and methods of communication."*
>
> - Arun Gandhi, founder/president, M.K. Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence

Contemplation: "the act of looking thoughtfully at something for a long time," "deep, reflective thought" (Google)

Contemplation: "a long, loving look at the real" (Walter Burghardt, S.J.)

In Christian circles, contemplation is a form of prayer that can be similar to meditation. It is based on a deep listening and an opening of the whole self to God. "It is the opening of Mind and heart — our whole being — to God, the Ultimate Mystery, beyond thoughts, words, and emotions." (Thomas Keating, "The Method of Centering Prayer: The Prayer of Consent")

Contemplative dialogue builds on these concepts by placing them in the presence of dialogue with others. It is built on the idea that meaningful conversations require deep listening — both to self and to others — and that thinking together creates shared meaning to strengthen relationships and allows the creative work of the Spirit to be present in a unique way in the shared space.

"Listening to the Divine within oneself, others, and in experience is the primary call and the foundation of dialogue." -Mary McCann, IHM ("Being Present to a Process" in *Crucible for Change: Engaging Impasse through Communal Contemplation and Dialogue*)

If we build our concept of contemplative dialogue around Jesuit theologian Walter Burghardt's definition as a "long, loving look at the real," we build on three key components: **long**, **loving**, and **real**. *Contemplative dialogue is a process that takes time, is founded in non-judgment, hope, and forgiveness, and is based in reality and honesty, no matter how messy that reality is.*

As humans in our Western, U.S. culture, we have been trained to "win" conversations and thus, to listen to respond. Far too often, we spend more time formulating a response than actually listening to what someone else is truly saying. This is natural, but it gets in the way of true understanding and relationship.

Instead of listening to win, the contemplative dialogue approach challenges us to listen to varying perspectives from a space of curiosity. In doing so, we allow ourselves to be open to ideas that may contradict or stand in conflict with what we believe or perceive to be true.

It is when we are open to silence and deep listening that we open space for something new to emerge, whether that be a stronger conviction, a new belief, or a question to grapple with. In an age in which there is a strong emphasis on individualism, contemplative dialogue calls us to pause and push for something more, something deeper. Liz Sweeny, SSJ, says "Contemplative dialogue is a means of readying the ground for collective transformation, for helping shift from *I* to *we*, from individualism to communion."

Unlike the consensus model, the purpose of contemplative dialogue does not rest upon reaching a solution or uniformity. Instead, this practice is intended to create a space that allows participants to feel safe and heard.

Contemplative dialogue is a great method to use when introducing a difficult subject. This practice has effectively assisted individuals and group leaders in creating a deep experience of community where division or misconceptions and prejudices may have been hindering progress. There are many forms of contemplative dialogue, and it is perfectly acceptable to adapt these principles to fit the needs of your group.

Especially as you first begin to flex the muscles required for contemplative dialogue, a formal process can be helpful. The formal process will help you to slow the pace of the conversation, integrate comments and perspectives, and allow new insights to emerge.

Contemplative Dialogue Process

1. Opening contemplation helps the group to settle themselves into this place and time and open their hearts to the working of the Spirit in the voice deep in their own hearts and in the voices and offerings of others.
2. Simple sharing gives each member of the group a chance to share directly without receiving feedback and sets the stage for listeners to focus on what is being communicated instead of on how to respond. This whole process is repeated for each member of the group.
    a. One person shares for a set amount of time (no more than 5 minutes)
    b. 30 second pause to allow those listening to sit with their feelings and identify what resonated with them
    c. Up to 1 minute of clarifying questions
    d. 30 seconds to 1 minute pause for silent reflection to allow what has been shared to sink in beyond an intellectual level
3. After each person has an opportunity to share, the group can identify common themes and areas for further exploration.

Contemplative dialogue can be used for relationship building or as a first-step approach to build toward consensus.

Tools for Contemplative Dialogue

- Slow the pace of the conversation
- Help each other to bring underlying assumptions into individual and group consciousness
- Build on insights offered within the conversation
- Deal with difference
- Clarify the communal question

Reflective Listening Guidelines

- Keep your attention focused on the other person (don't go into your own story)
- Be non-judgmental
- Listen with compassion
- Seek the essence of what the other person is trying to convey **From Tree Bressen*

For more information on contemplative dialogue or alternative processes of contemplative dialogue, check out the Institute for Communal Contemplation and Dialogue, founded and directed by former NETWORK National Coordinator Nancy Sylvester, IHM at iccdinstitute.org.

Approaches to Facilitation

Facilitation can make or break a meeting. Facilitation isn't always easy, but it is a skill that, like any other skill, can be learned. Below are a few approaches that you can use to help guide your facilitating. Most importantly, don't be afraid to assert yourself, especially to keep someone from derailing the conversation.

Some of these facilitation techniques are guides of the whole process. Others are tools that you can pull out as needed within any conversation.

Five basic principles of facilitation:

1. You are the servant of the group, the steward of the process.
2. Plan ahead and work outside the meeting.
3. Help each person feel heard.
4. Work with all of what's in the room.
5. Listen for common ground and reflect it back to the group, as often as necessary.
   **Source: Tree Bressen Group*

Mutual Invitation

In order to ensure that everyone who wants to share has the opportunity to do so, the process of mutual invitation can be used. It goes like this:

1. The leader or a designated person will share first.
2. After sharing, they then invite another to share. Who you invite to share does not need to be the person next to you.
3. If you are not ready yet, say "pass for now" and then invite another to share. You will be invited again later.
4. If you don't want to say anything, simply say "pass," and invite another to share.
5. After each person has shared, they invite another to share.

We do this until everyone has been invited to share.

Circle Process

The Circle Process as developed by Christina Baldwin and Ann Linnea is based on the principle of "a leader in every chair" and strives to build collaborative conversation and democratic learning processes. It's a loose process designed to be adaptive and invite all participants to take responsibility for the process and the outcomes of the conversation. (Source: thecircleway.net)

Components of the Circle Process

- **Circle shape**: practically, the circle shape enables all participants to be present to another; each person can share their thoughts and receive others' contributions; symbolically, we put the purpose of our gathering in the middle of the circle and participants form the rim, or container, for the conversation
- **Preparation:** intentional and thoughtful preparation, with attention to who will be there and the topic of conversation
- **Willingness:** participants approach the conversation with a receptive attitude *[continued]*

- **Intention**: there is a goal of the circle, which informs who is invited and what kinds of outcomes to expect
- **Welcome**: some sort of ritual shifts participants' attention to the formal conversation
- **Center**: the center holds the energy and intentions of the group; to help people remember the center, it can help to place a symbol in the center to represent the intention of the circle
- **Check-in**: A check-in provides the setting and recognizes that each participant is a whole human being with a life outside of this conversation; helps to set the frame of mind for conversation participants
- **Agreements**: there are shared understandings of group expectations
- Three Principles:
    1) Leadership rotates among all circle members
    2) Responsibility is shared for the quality of the experience
    3) Reliance is on wholeness, rather than on any personal agenda
- Three Practices:
    1) *Speak with intention,* noting what has relevance to the conversation in the moment
    2) *Listen with attention*, respectful of the learning process for all group members
    3) *Tend to the well-being of the circle,* remaining aware of the impact of our contributions
- **Guardian**: one circle member volunteers to watch and safeguard the group's energy and process; the guardian can use a gentle noise-maker to invite a space of silence and then explain why they invited the pause (any member may ask for a pause)
- Types of Councils
    1) <u>Talking piece council</u> can be used to check-in, to check-out, and to slow down the conversation or ensure everyone has a chance to speak
    2) <u>Conversation council</u> can be used to encourage reaction, interaction, and interjection of new ideas, thoughts, and opinions
    3) <u>Reflection or silent council</u> gives participants time and space to reflect — to discern a role, to realign with the group intention, or to sit with a question
- **Check-out and farewell**: there is a space to reflect and comment on what was learned and what participants will take with them

Building Consensus

Consensus is a cooperative decision-making process in which a group of people come together to make and support a decision that is agreed to by all involved. **Consensus is *not* the same as a unanimous vote.**

In seeking to approach the process of the work of justice in the same spirit by which we approach the outcomes, NETWORK strives to integrate human dignity, participation, cooperation, and mutuality into the way we do our work. Consensus-building, along with shared accountability and planning processes, reflects NETWORK's collaborative model.

The consensus model is also important because it ensures all voices are listened to. In a study on the role of gender dynamics on group dynamics, researchers at Brigham Young University discovered that the decision-making process assigned to a group had drastic impacts on whether women in that group were listened to and affirmed or ignored and interrupted. In contrast to a majority-rule group dynamic, women in groups assigned to consensus decision-making participated nearly as much as men, were positively interrupted more frequently (as opposed to negatively interrupted about 70 percent of the time), and were considered more influential. (When Women Don't Speak)

Consensus is a *process*, not just the outcome of a vote. It is a creative and dynamic way of reaching agreement between all members of a group instead of resting the decision in the hands of a few or even the majority. It requires deep listening to each other and a shared understanding of the team's mutual self-interest as well as the self-interest of each person involved. It's founded in and helps to build shared trust among team members. It invites creativity and an openness to surprise. And, in the end, it can result in high quality decisions, better connection among team members, and more effective implementation of the decision.

Basic Principles

- **Cooperation is the basis of consensus-building.** Consensus is for people who are genuinely trying to work together and requires the group to search *together* for the best solution for the group.
- **We all get more of what we want when we cooperate.** In his recent *New York Times* article "In Negotiations, Givers Are Smarter Than Takers," organizational psychologist Adam Grant explores the results of several studies that indicate being a giver is a sign of intelligence. In particular, he notes that good negotiators "used their brainpower to expand the pie, finding ways to help the other side that cost them nothing."
- **Consensus seeks to draw from the wisdom of the entire group.** We all know the adage "The whole is greater than the sum of the parts." Consensus seeks to put this into practice. The more perspectives we can incorporate, the stronger the proposal will be.
- **Successful consensus is egalitarian, inclusive, and participatory.** No member's perspective matters more than another's, and all members are actively invited or encouraged to speak. When it comes to decision-making, participants must clearly state their decision.
- **The spirit and process of the system are more important than the structures.** There's no replacement for trust, a positive attitude, and openness to the ideas, feelings, and experiences of others. Any attempt at consensus must begin with a good-faith effort at achieving full agreement.

Deciding When to Use Consensus

The consensus model is not appropriate for every decision. In general, the consensus process should be used when the decision will:

- Impact all members of the team
- Involve a drastic change that requires full participation of all members of the team
- Will create a lasting impact on the team and team dynamics

How to Set Your Consensus Process up for Success

There are a few conditions that must be present for any group to embark on a successful consensus process.

Necessary Conditions for the Consensus Process

Common Goal: Everyone present at the meeting needs to share a common goal and be willing to work together toward it. Don't just assume that everyone is pulling in the same direction; spend time together defining the goals of your group and the ways you can get there. If differences arise in later meetings, revisiting the common goal(s) can help to focus and unite the group.

Commitment to Reach Consensus: Consensus can require a lot of commitment and patience to make it work. Everyone must be willing to give it a good-faith effort. This means not only being deeply honest about what it is that you want or don't want but also being able to listen deeply to what others have to say. Everyone must be willing to shift their positions, to be open to alternative solutions, and to be able to reassess what they consider to be their needs. It would be easy to call for a vote at the first sign of difficulty, but in the consensus model, differences help to build a stronger and more creative final decision. Stay in the tension. Theologians call it "creative tension" for a reason.

Trust and Openness: We all need to be able to trust that everyone shares our commitment to creating true consensus decisions. This includes being able to trust people not to abuse the process or to manipulate the outcome of the discussion. If we're scared that other people are putting their own wishes and needs before everyone else's, then we're more likely to become defensive and behave the same way ourselves.

Making decisions by consensus is based on openness. This means learning to express openly both our desires (what we'd *like* to see happening) and our needs (what we *have* to see happen in order to support a decision). It takes time for us to learn to distinguish between our wants and needs, especially since most of us are used to decision-making in which one person wins and the other loses. In this kind of adversarial system, we are often forced to claim that we need more than we really do so that we can concede points without giving up any significant ground. But if everyone is able to talk openly then the group will have the information it requires to take everyone's positions into account and to come up with a solution that everyone can support.

Sufficient Time: It's important to take the time to make a good decision, especially when you're still learning to work through the consensus process. Taking the time to make a good decision now can save wasting time revisiting a bad one later.

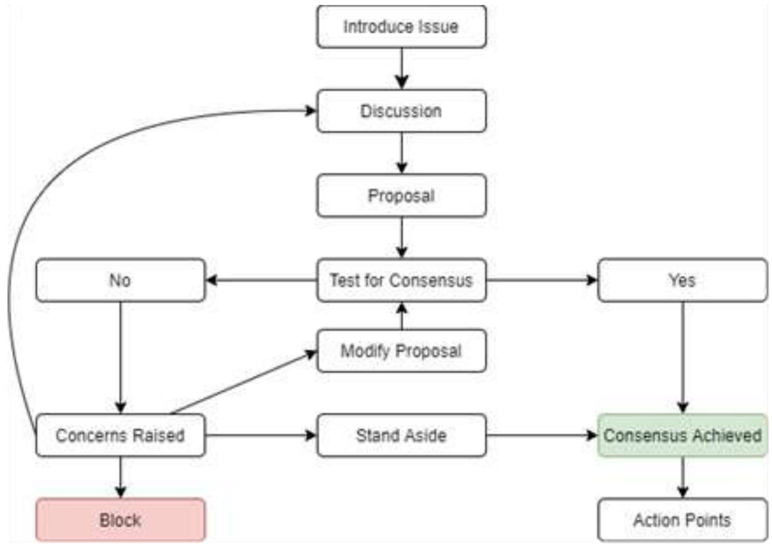
Clear Process: It's essential for everyone to have a shared understanding of the process you're using.

Steps of the Consensus Process

While there's no substitute for the spirit and willingness of the group, having a clearly-defined process can help any group to achieve consensus in a clear way. This is a basic outline of the consensus process to help guide your conversation.

1. Introduce the issue. Someone, preferably not the facilitator for the meeting, introduces the issue or challenge facing the group, explores why it matters, and explains the history of the issue, particularly within this particular group. It's helpful to identify the goal for this item at this time:
[*continued*]

Is this a brainstorming session? Is there hope that the group will come to a decision by the end of the meeting? Are we aiming for a temperature-check — to get a sense of opinions in the group? The presenter may have a proposal ready for conversation or may simply be asking about a particular issue. If the presenter is ready to seek a decision and move forward, a proposal may be appropriate. If there's not a solution ready for conversation or if the group is just starting to explore the issue, it will likely be brought up without a prepared proposal. Remember, it may take a series of meetings to reach consensus. At this point, participants can ask clarifying questions. The first questions offered should all be related to understanding the proposal or issue, not offering feedback.



2. Discussion. At this point, others in the group begin to share relevant information and questions beyond simple clarification can be asked. The discussion should seek to bring out a diversity of ideas, concerns, and perspectives. The facilitator should be careful to ensure that no one person or small group dominates the conversation and that all people have the chance to—and are encouraged to—share their perspectives.

It's helpful in the flow of the conversation to deal with the question of values or the big picture before delving too deeply into details. As the discussion progresses, the facilitator should identify points of agreement and disagreement as well as the underlying reasons for them. The facilitator should be sure the group spends some extra time with points of disagreement and *especially* the underlying reasons for the disagreements. This will help bring clarity to the conversation and will help the group to ensure they're addressing the real concerns being addressed.

The goal of the discussion phase is to identify the general direction of the group and what potential proposals for action are surfacing.

3. Proposal. Once there's some agreement on the general direction, the group can move toward capturing that direction in a formal proposal based on the conversation. As the proposal is articulated, it facilitates further conversation to tweak it into something that addresses the concerns of all members of the group. As the conversation begins to wind down, a formal proposal is captured and offered for consideration.

4. Test for Consensus. The facilitator re-states the proposal and calls the group to test for consensus on the proposal offered. All participants should actively affirm, register concerns, stand aside, or block the proposal. This can be done by roll call or through an established hand gesture or colored cards method. (See "Decision Point Structure" sidebar for more information) If consensus is achieved at this point — if everyone agrees to abide by the proposal and work toward its implementation — then the group can move on to put the proposal into action. If not, proceed with the next steps.

5. Concerns Raised. Anyone who does not affirm the proposal has the opportunity (and obligation) to explain their concerns to the group. This is important even if the person has opted to stand aside rather than block the proposal. Addressing any concerns raised can only serve to strengthen the overall proposal. If the concerns are significant, the group returns to discussion. If they're relatively minor and can be addressed through modifying the proposal, the group modifies the proposal. Concerns should be noted in meeting minutes.

6. Modify Proposal. Any needed adjustments to wording to additions to the proposal are added.

7. Call for Consensus. The facilitator calls for consensus again. The process proceeds as before with the option to end the conversation if someone does not agree but chooses to stand aside. At this point, the decision may then move forward to action, with the names and reasons of anyone who chooses to stand aside recorded in the meeting minutes.

8. Consensus Achieved and Action Steps. Once consensus is achieved, the notetaker records the decision and reads back the key components (**decision**, **tasks**, **timeline**, and **implementation roles**) for clarification and affirmation.

It is possible that some people use blocking in inappropriate ways. This leads to a dysfunctional consensus process. It's helpful for groups to have both cultural and procedural ways to address this behavior. Some examples of cultural approaches to address inappropriate blocking:

- Appropriate training in the process of consensus for new members.
  - An expectation that anyone who blocks a proposal is responsible for helping to work out an alternative.
  - Develop a sense of a lifetime quota of blocks.
  - Keep talking about the issue even after a proposal has been blocked.

Decision Points

Because consensus process requires all participants to recognize their position on the proposal, there are three options for participants to declare their consent (or lack thereof).

Agree: General alignment with the group. Because consensus is not the same thing as a 100% unanimous vote in a majority-rule structure, this is not the same thing as getting everything you want. It is a declaration of willingness to move forward with the proposal as a group.

Declare Reservations: Willingness to let a motion pass and go along with it but with a desire to register concerns. These concerns may or may not be addressed, but they must be recorded.

Stand Aside: Willingness to let the group proceed, while personally not feeling aligned with the direction of the proposal. The choice to stand aside may be based on perspective or when a participant doesn't feel capable of adequately understanding or participating in the proposal. If someone chooses to stand aside, the group records their name and reason in the minutes. The person who stands aside will not have a lead role in implementing the decision but is still bound by the decision.

Block: Declaration to prevent the decision from moving forward. When a consensus process runs well from the beginning, there is no need to block because early concerns are integrated into the proposal. There are legitimate and illegitimate reasons for blocking, and groups should be careful that blocking isn't abused to create a tyranny of consensus. Blocks should be used by a member who has serious concerns about the impact of a proposal or its alignment (or lack thereof) with core values and principles of the group.

NOT valid reasons to block:

- to get your way
- to fulfill your personal moral values or how you want to live
- because things have always been done this way
- because the proposed action doesn't fit your personal needs
- because you'd have to leave the group if the proposal passed
- to prevent the group from taking a risk

Strategies for Addressing (Potentially) Invalid Blocks

- Facilitator overrule
- Refer unresolved blocks to a coordinating committee or steering committee for possible overrule
- Blocks only count if the rest of the group agrees that it's principled
- Blocks only count if at least one other group member agrees that it's principled
- Fallback to super-majority vote
- Require the blocker organize meetings with others to find alternative solution

Tips

- Prior to the meeting, provide information that identifies the decision to be made or the proposal and is thorough enough that group members can come to their own sense of understanding prior to the meeting.
- During the discussion phase, don't record names in the meeting notes. The ideas and the concerns all belong to the whole of the group.
- Limit the number of times each person can speak until everyone has had a chance to speak to ensure each person is fully heard and to promote a diversity of thought.
- Consider the role of facilitator as a role of serving the group.
- Articulate points of agreement and disagreement as they become clear in the discussion and record these articulations in the notes.
- Assigning roles ahead of time can help the flow of the meeting. Some common roles are:
    - Facilitator or co-facilitators: Responsible for sticking to the timed agenda, ensuring the group sticks to the mutually-agreed upon consensus process, and suggesting alternative discussion/decision-making techniques if necessary. Co-facilitation can help relieve perceived concentration of power or enable sharing of duties
    - Timekeeper: Keep agenda on schedule. Common techniques include frequent time updates, ample warning of shortness of time, keeping speakers from taking too long.
    - Empath ("vibe watch"): Monitor the emotional climate of the meeting via body language, tone of voice, or non-verbal cues; defuse potential conflicts, addressing intimidation, and paying attention to potentially-harmful power dynamics.
    - Secretary (notes-taker): Document decisions, discussion, and action points.
- Consider rotating the roles throughout the group between meetings in order to build experience and skills and prevent perceived concentration of power.
- Use visuals to help get a general read of the group. These could include colored cards or hand signals to indicate the type of response someone would like to offer or to get a quick sense of what group members are thinking about the proposal.
- Beware of potential for groupthink. Groupthink doesn't serve the best interests of the group as a whole and blocks the creative process. Consider unanimity or the appearance of unanimity as a potential indication of intimidation, lack of imagination, lack of courage, failure to include all voices, or deliberate exclusion of contrary views. Catholic Sisters often view appropriate dissent in discernment conversations as an essential part of their vow of obedience. Try to find ways to reach for or encourage dissenting views or expression of concerns.
- Beware of the potential to preference or reward the least flexible members of the group.
- Send out an agenda in advance to give people time to think ahead or to ensure that all people have the opportunity to be present for the consensus process on an issue of concern.
- Seek ways to develop creativity and courage among members of the group.

Other Tools for Facilitation

Having a wide array of facilitation tools at your disposal can be particularly important when attempting to keep a conversation on track and ensure your meeting is effective and productive. It is particularly important to be clear on the *goal* of various components of your meeting. Are you attempting to make a decision? Are you looking to generate ideas? Are you trying to deepen relationships and understanding among group members?

These tools may help in the middle of a conversation or to plan for an effective conversation:

Brainstorming

The key piece of brainstorming is that any and all ideas brought to the group are recorded without judgment. Questions about an idea are limited to clarifying questions to promote free-for-all idea generation.

Parking Lot

The parking lot is a simple concept. Often, conversations start to stray from the topic at hand. When this happens, the facilitator or anyone present may suggest putting the side topic in the parking lot in order to return to the topic at hand. The topic may be written down, and the group can return to the parking lot for further conversation if there's time after they've completed conversation about the primary topic.

Dot-Mocracy

A form of voting that uses a visual and active component using dot stickers, with participants having more than one vote each. The dot voting system can provide options for ranked voting or be a simple count. The visual nature of this exercise can be helpful.

Fist-to-Five

Another visual voting technique, fist to five is an easy way to do a quick group temperature check, especially at the start of the conversation or after an initial round of discussion. Someone calls for a fist-to-five vote, and everyone holds up their hands with 0-5 fingers showing. The fist (0 fingers) indicates a strong opposition to the proposal, while a 5 indicates a strong support and willingness to take a leadership role in its implementation.

When used for an initial temperature check, the fist-to-five method can also be used to identify who might need to speak as part of the conversation. In particular, someone in strong opposition might be asked to offer an initial reaction to the proposal. Be aware, however, that you shouldn't only include perspectives of those with strong opinions. A 2 or 3 may actually indicate not ambivalence but mixed feelings, and it can be really helpful to the group dynamics to talk through those.

Find more facilitation techniques ideas at authenticityconsulting.com/misc/facilitation-techniques.pdf

Assessing Your Leadership Skills

As an organization founded and inspired by Catholic Sisters, NETWORK sees leadership as **a responsibility that is shared among and developed in all members of a team** rather than a top-down responsibility of one person or a small group of people. As a member of a NETWORK Advocates Team, we encourage you to both take on leadership roles and look to your fellow spirit-filled justice seekers for wisdom and guidance. In addition to being faithful to our belief that the Spirit works in and through all people, this model helps to build and sustain the team for the long-term work of justice.

- ***Motivates, inspires, & develops others*** A good leader motivates, inspires, and develops others. A good leader listens to and learns from others around them and fosters a sense of community and collaboration.
- ***Values & Vision*** Good leaders are clear about their values and have some idea about what they would like the world to be like. A good leader is committed to working to advance those values and vision.
- ***Positive Outlook*** Leaders look for solutions to problems instead of focusing on the difficulties and approach situations and people with hope and welcome.
- ***Confidence*** A leader who is confident will understand their weaknesses and ask for help when they need it.
- ***Trust in people*** Good leaders believe in people. They encourage, listen to, and respect others. They see potential in others and want to help them use that potential to the greatest degree possible.
- ***Anger at injustice*** Anger can propel you to act. Anger can be helpful and constructive when it is focused and aimed for good.
- ***Courage*** A leader has courage and is willing to take risks. As the saying goes, "Nothing ventured, nothing gained." A good leader is willing to be bold and do the unpopular when it's necessary or helpful for achieving key goals.
- ***Imagination*** Good leaders rely on their imaginations to find creative solutions to problems and to think of solutions they've never tried before.
- ***Sense of humor*** A sense of humor is a way of staying motivated during the struggle for social change. Good leaders can sit back and laugh once in a while.

In the appendix, you can find a worksheet to help you assess your leadership qualities and skills based on this list.

Other great leadership development tools are available through Brene Brown's *Dare to Lead* and its accompanying online tools, including the Daring Leadership Assessment.

Joining Coalitions

Coalitions can be strategically powerful alliances in which multiple groups work together toward a common goal. As you consider whether to invite an organization to join a coalition with you or to join an existing coalition, consider the following questions:

- Who shares your values?
- Who else cares about your issue?
- Who is directly impacted by your issue?
- Who might be able to contribute resources to support your work? (Time, space, materials, connections, etc.)
- Who has the ability to influence your legislative target?

As you build your coalition, you want to invite a multitude of voices and experiences and make sure that everyone has a place at the table.

Tips for Effective Coalition Work

- Recruit the right people
- Create a culture of **transparency** and **accountability**
- Clearly define your purpose and goals
- Set expectations from the beginning
- Only call meetings when necessary
- Set guidelines for meetings
- Respect organizations' own missions and cultures
- Share leadership and power around the table
- Commit to on-going evaluation

How to Have a House Party/Friend-Raising

> *"The future of humanity does not lie solely in the hands of great leaders, the great powers and the elites. It is fundamentally in the hands of peoples and in their ability to organize. It is in their hands, which can guide with humility and conviction this process of change."*
>
> - Pope Francis

What Is a House Party?

At NETWORK, we believe that ordinary people exercise tremendous power when they organize and work together. More than that, we believe that we — as people of faith — are called to respond to the needs of the world by working for justice. We encourage you, our members, to share your knowledge of our issues and passion for justice by hosting a NETWORK House Party. It is an opportunity to educate friends and colleagues in your personal network about NETWORK and one of our Build Anew federal policy issues. It is an opportunity for sharing stories and engaging in dialogue. Above all, it is an opportunity to participate in meaningful social action.

Why Host a House Party?

Hosting a NETWORK House Party is a great way to…

- Educate others about NETWORK and one of our Build Anew issues
- Share about Catholic Social Teaching
- Encourage others to engage with their elected officials and influence federal policy
- Grow your Advocates Team
- Take action on a specific NETWORK Build Anew issue
- Enjoy fellowship and community

House Party Planning and Preparations

It is important to give yourself plenty of time to plan your House Party and to consider the following details. (*See also: Planning a House Party Worksheet in Appendix*):

- **Venue**: Who is going to host the event? Is this location convenient and accessible for your guests? How many people can fit comfortably into the designated space? Is the location accessible by public transportation? Is there parking available?
- **Guest List**: Who are you going to invite (friends, family, neighbors, colleagues, church members, contacts from other social justice organizations, etc.)? How many people are you going to invite (remembering that invitees don't always translate into attendees)? Are you going to line up a speaker? Will a NETWORK organizer be attending (either remotely or in person, as appropriate)? Are there other NETWORK members living in your region who might like to attend? (If you're unsure, NETWORK organizers can provide you with this information.) Would it be helpful to offer childcare?
- **Date/Time**: What is the best day to host the event? Would a weeknight or weekend work better? What time will the event start? End? What do you know about the availability of your participants?
- **Invitations**: Will you send paper or email invitations? When will you send those invitations? Does your invitation provide a clear description of the event and its purpose? Who should people RSVP to? Who will complete follow-up/reminder calls? Would it be helpful to include driving directions?
- **Planning an Agenda**: What are your personal goals for this event? Which Build Anew topic are you planning to engage? Does NETWORK have any "talking points" or "leave-behinds" prepared on that topic? Do you need any special materials (name tags, markers, pens, paper, NETWORK handouts, NETWORK sign up sheet or interest cards, etc.)? Will food and/or drinks be served? Who will bring these items?

Sample House Party Agenda

While the configuration of your event could take many different forms, some combination of the following activities is helpful:

7:00-7:30 PM - Guests arrive, mingle, and enjoy dessert items, hot drinks, and/or other beverages

7:30-7:35 PM - Host formally welcomes guests and shares an outline of the evening's agenda

7:35-7:45 PM - Guests provide quick introductions (if necessary)

7:45-8:05 PM - Host or speaker shares presentation about one of NETWORK's Build Anew issues

8:05-8:20 PM - Questions from guests

8:20-8:35 PM - Small group conversation using prepared discussion questions

8:35-8:45 PM - Large group debrief and pass out NETWORK materials and "interest cards"

8:45-8:55 PM - Host: Thank you and invitation to action

8:55-9:00 PM - Collect "interest cards" from guests

9:00 PM-ish - Guests depart at their leisure

Event Follow-Up

Following your NETWORK House Party, it is important to…

- Thank your guests and speakers for attending
- Share issue news updates and/or answers to any questions you may not have been able to answer
- Provide NETWORK with an event recap and the sign-in sheet or contact information found on your guests' "interest cards," as appropriate
- Follow-up on any activism initiated at the NETWORK House Party
- Invite guests to attend your next NETWORK Advocates Team meeting

Tools for Effective Advocacy

While NETWORK lobbyists in D.C. work to influence our federal policies, the constituent advocacy of our members and supporters across the country is critical to our success. Regularly communicating with your Members of Congress is one of the most important ways you can support NETWORK and our democracy. In this chapter, we will look at ways to build relationships with your Members of Congress, tips for lobby visits, the pros and cons of different communication tactics, and more!

The Importance of Constituent Advocacy

> *"A good Catholic meddles in politics, offering the best of himself, so that those who govern can govern."*
>
> -Pope Francis, September 2013

Your elected officials cannot know whether they are accurately representing (or completely misrepresenting!) their constituents if they do not hear from you. They need to hear what you, their constituent, think about the issues they work on and how these issues affect your community.

Suppose that your Senator or Representative supported a bill that has had a positive impact on your community. They might not know the full extent of the bill's impact, which might influence whether or not they support similar bills in the future. On the other hand, your Senator/Representative may have voted against a bill you support, because the only constituents to communicate with their office were those who oppose the bill. This is why it's important for you to advocate for your priorities!

Sharing Stories Is Powerful

If you only remember one thing from this chapter on advocacy, let it be this...

STORIES ARE A POWERFUL ADVOCACY TOOL.

Storytelling is an effective and powerful way to get legislators and staffers to think differently about an issue you are advocating. There is a tendency for legislators to become so focused on the numbers and data at the risk of neglecting the humans behind those figures.

Stories help elected officials do their job. Elected officials want to hear from their constituents so they know the impact of their decisions on real people. They pay attention to which programs work in their communities and which ones do not. At NETWORK, we keep stories central in all our discussions, recognizing the federal policies we advocate for affect real people.

Acting out of Sister-Spirit requires that we always root our understanding in encounter. We may believe a policy is just or unjust, but unless that conviction stems from real experience, we cannot know with certainty. Something may sound great in theory but have detrimental consequences if enacted. How are the policies we are advocating for going to influence those who are pushed to the margins? On a more personal note, how will these policies affect you and your community?

In addition to keeping peoples' lived experiences at the center, storytelling serves other purposes. We understand the world through both our head (analysis) and through our heart (empathy and emotion). Elected officials and their staff are people, susceptible to the same emotions that we are. Our brains are wired to remember stories. If we understand that, we can see why storytelling is an effective means to connect or make a difference.

Each of us has a story that can move others to action. As you learn the skills of advocacy, you will learn how to effectively utilize stories to open hearts and ultimately impart change. Broadly speaking, we can think about the functions of storytelling as Learning, Organizing, Educating, and Advocating—thereby effecting change in public attitudes, behavior, and policy.

Impactful stories will be concise while also detailing the positive or negative implications of a piece of legislation on you and/or your community. There is a difference between telling a story and a telling memorable story. Memorable stories have:

1. An introduction to the protagonist and why they are relevant to the listener
2. Short background information with enough details that allows the listener to relate to the characters
3. A conflict or challenge that raises either positive or negative emotions
4. A connection to policy

Ethics of Storytelling

Consider whose stories you want to tell and how that matches our mission. If you are sharing a story that is not your own, be sure to ask permission of the person whose story it is for how their story will be used. Respect privacy and avoid using names if obtaining consent is not possible.

"Until the lions have their own historians, the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter." —Proverb cited by writer Chinua Achebe

How can we tell stories in a way that does not exploit a person's story, but honors them?

One question to ask is whether you are accurately and fairly representing someone (the answer should be yes); another is if you purport to represent another person or people with a story you tell (the answer should be no). Ask for input on whose stories to tell and how from the people most directly impacted by the social issue you are dealing with.

Communicating with Members of Congress

There are many ways to express your position on an issue, show gratitude for a specific action, or address a recent vote you cared about, including: phone calls, emails, participating in lobby visits, writing Op-eds and letters to the editor (LTEs), attending a town hall, or posting on social media.

That said, not all methods of communication are appropriate for every scenario. For instance, if there is a major vote taking place *today*, calling your member of Congress is far more appropriate than writing a letter to the editor. Additionally, not all methods are equally effective. The following pages will cover:

- Email
- Phone Calls
- Lobby Visits
- Town Halls
- Site Visits
- Op-eds and LTEs
- Social Media

Emailing Congress

Email is a fast and simple way to communicate with your Representative or Senators on issues and bills that are important to you. Often, NETWORK's Action Alerts will direct you to email Congress. To contact your Members of Congress about something not listed in NETWORK's Action Center, every Member of Congress has a place on their website for constituents to email them about their concerns.

Emailing Congress via NETWORK Action Alerts

By signing up for NETWORK's Action Alerts, you will receive alerts on issues that need your advocacy directly to your email inbox. You may also visit NETWORK's *Action Center* on our website (networklobby.org/actnow) anytime to participate in our current actions.

- Click the link in the email you received from NETWORK or on NETWORK's website. This will take you to a webpage with the action alert and some background on the issue.
- Enter your full nine-digit zip code so that your message is addressed to the appropriate recipients. A pre-filled email, along with the names of the elected officials who will receive your email, will appear.
- ***Important*: Edit and personalize the email!** Emails that include a unique message or individualized information have significantly more impact on the decision-making of Members of Congress than identical form messages. Do this by:
    - Including one or two personal lines at the beginning, perhaps saying where you live,
    - Thanking them for their work,
    - Discussing how the bill or issue affects your district or community,
    - Or sharing a personal story that illustrates why you support or oppose the bill or issue.
- Fill out your contact information. Sometimes elected officials require additional information, such as "topic" or "salutation," and those additional boxes will appear.
- Click "send."
- Amplify your impact! Share NETWORK's action alerts with others in your life who may be interested in advocacy via email or on social media.
- If you receive a response explaining why your Congressperson agrees or disagrees with the viewpoint you shared, please forward it to NETWORK. This information helps our lobbyists gain insight into Congress's position on an issue. You can email responses to the Grassroots organizer you work with or to info@networklobby.org

We track the participation of our members and supporters across the country on each action alert. Then, when our lobbyists meet with offices on the Hill, they are able to share how many constituents engaged with each office. By participating in NETWORK's Action Alerts, you have twice the impact!

Email Congress via your Elected Officials' Websites

You are always welcome to email your Senator or Representative through the portal on their website. As you will not be able to edit your letter, be sure to write it in a program like Microsoft Word first, and then copy and paste it into the website's form. Guidelines for writing your own email are the same as if you were taking action through NETWORK's Action Center.

- Email your Congressperson about one bill or issue at a time. These messages are often shared with the "Legislative Assistant" for a specific issue area, and we want them to reach the correct person. [*continued*]

- Identify where you live in the district or state.
- If you have a title, like "Sister," use it. It is powerful!
- Mention any groups or communities you are a part of. There is power in numbers!
- Be courteous and express appreciation for your legislator's work.
- Cite the bill number or title and your position. Ask them to take a specific action, such as voting "no" or co-sponsoring a bill.
- Mention how the legislation affects your community, i.e., Cincinnati has the country's fourth highest rate of childhood poverty, or, 11 Federally Qualified Health Centers are in our district.
- Share your personal story about how the legislation affects you.
- Restate your Ask.
- If your Ask is related to one of NETWORK's policy priorities, share any response you receive with NETWORK! Email the Grassroots organizer you work with or info@networklobby.org.

Calling Congress

Phone calls are a quick and easy way to communicate with your Senator or Representative. Calling Congress is most effective right before a vote, and sometimes you can speak directly to a staff person who will note of the number of constituents who support or oppose a bill. Members of Congress have told NETWORK's staff that the phone calls they receive from their constituents just prior to a vote have heavily influenced their final decision, and phone calls are often one of the first things NETWORK lobbyists hear about when they meet with an elected official or their staff.

When a matter is time-sensitive, a NETWORK Action Alerts will often ask you to call your Members of Congress instead of emailing them. NETWORK frequently hosts call-in days in collaboration with our partners, which can build a groundswell of support or opposition to a piece of legislation.

You can sign up to receive call-in alerts from NETWORK via email or via text.

How to Call Congress from a NETWORK Action Alert

1. Read over the talking points and directions provided in the Action Alert.
2. Dial the number provided in the Action Alert. You will hear a message recorded by NETWORK staff that reviews the talking points and gives you a few pointers.
3. You may be prompted to type in your zip code to connect with your elected official's office. After you have used our system once, it will remember your phone number so you will not have to re-do the process. You could also get connected to the Capitol Switchboard. If that happens, do not panic. Instead, ask the operator to connect you with the elected official you are trying to reach.
4. Relay your message to the person who answers the phone. NETWORK will provide you with a sample script. If you would like, you can read that or you can ask to speak to the staff person who handles the issue you are calling about.
5. ***Important***: If NETWORK has asked you to call more than one member of Congress, **redial the number and repeat the steps.**
6. If you called from your cell phone, you will receive a text thanking you.

When you call, be sure to:

- Identify your name, your hometown, and say that you are a member of NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice. If you have a title such as "Sister," remember to use it, it carries power.
- Identify the bill or issue about which you are calling.
- State your position and how you want your member of Congress to act.
- Mention a brief personal reason for why you support or oppose the bill.
- Express gratitude for your elected official's work.

Tips for Calling Congress

- If you are asked to leave a message, do so! Depending on the timing of the vote (and sometimes votes have significant unexpected delays!), there could be time for a staffer to hear your message.
- If you are unsuccessful in getting through to an office, try calling back a little bit later. It is possible the phone lines will be less busy at another time.
- As with emails, when there is an action alert, NETWORK carefully tracks the participation of our members and supporters across the country. Then, when our lobbyists meet with offices on the Hill, they are able to share how many constituents called each office. By participating in NETWORK's Action Alerts, you have twice the impact!

Using Lobby Visits to Advocate

To be an effective advocate, it is strategic to develop a relationship with your Members of Congress and/or their staff members. You want them to know who you are, your values are, and which issues you care about. You want to serve as a trusted messenger—bringing their constituents' lived realities and concerns to their door.

Meeting with your Member of Congress and their staff is the most effective way to build relationships and influence policy. All Members of Congress have an office in Washington, D.C. on Capitol Hill and one or more offices in their home district or state. Whether you come to Washington, D.C. or meet with your Member of Congress in the district, a lobby visit will provide you with the opportunity to express the human side of policy impact and foster a working relationship.

In-District Lobby Visits with your Member of Congress

In-district lobby visits can be very effective, as you usually have a good amount of time to meet with your Member of Congress (or their staff) and their home offices are not as busy as their office on Capitol Hill. Because district offices are local, you also have the opportunity to bring a group of people to advocate with you. Congress has a long recess, or "district work period" in August, but NETWORK can let you know other times during the year when the House and/or Senate are on break. (You can also meet with district staff members any time—whether or not the Member of Congress is in town.)

In-District Lobby Visits with a Staff Member

In-district staffers are day-to-day members of your community and are probably familiar with your parish, your workplace, etc. You can be an important touchstone for them to help them understand the issues in and needs of your community. When initially building a relationship with in-district staffers, learn where they are connected in the community and their concerns for the district/state.

Remember that in-district staffers are the ones who serve the constituents directly—they receive phone calls about social services, for example—and you can be a valuable resource to them for information about services, stories, and facts/statistics about programs (how many children receive food stamps, etc.). Invite them to tour agencies and facilities, and make sure that they are on your mailing lists to receive newsletters.

Because district staffers are not always policy experts, they might not be comfortable telling you the legislator's position on an issue or bill. During your visit, you will be providing them with information that they can pass along to policy specialists in the D.C. office. If you want to build a relationship with your Member of Congress, their in-district staff is a great place to start!

Plan your In-District Lobby Visit

Gather your group

- Invite fellow constituents who are passionate about the issue—and in full support of NETWORK's position on it.
- While it is good to have some issue experts in the room, NETWORK will provide you with all of the background you need on a bill to have a successful visit.
- Invite constituents from a variety of backgrounds, such as faith leaders, heads of organizations, people who work in direct service, and people who are directly affected by the issue.

Request an appointment

- Find the district office number on your Congressperson's website.
- Let the scheduler know who will be present at the meeting and what issue you will discuss.
- The district office may ask you for a written request via email.
- Call and confirm the meeting and the number of attendees a few days before your visit.

Prepare for the visit

NETWORK is happy to assist with:

- Researching your member of Congress, so you have a sense of where they may be on an issue or bill. (Also, look at NETWORK's Congressional Voting Record from the previous year in *Connection* magazine to see how they scored networklobby.org/newsroom/connection.)
- Reviewing the legislation and providing talking points.
- Determining what the legislative "ask" will be (i.e. co-sponsoring a bill or voting "yes" or "no").
- Providing a "**Lobby Visit Planning and Reporting Sheet**" (see Appendix) to prepare.
- Preparing a document with NETWORK's position to leave with your Member of Congress.

Attend the visit

- Dress professionally and arrive on time.
- Have people BRIEFLY introduce themselves, sharing their name and where they are from, name the groups/organizations you represent and how many people are involved in each.
- Start off saying something positive about the elected official, even if it is thanking them for a bill that is completely unrelated to the issue you are talking about today or simply thanking them for their work—it's a tough job!
- Explain why you are here and provide some background on the bill. [*continued*]

- Have each person briefly explain why they support or oppose the bill, using a personal story to illustrate their points.
- Make the "ask." Give the person you are meeting with some time to respond, but try not to let them get off track!
- Record key points of the conversation and take note of questions that you cannot answer. Offer to find information and follow up with unanswered questions.
- Give your member of Congress and/or the staff the leave behind.
- Thank the person you met with for their time. Be sure to get a business card from the staff.
- If you met with a staff person, find out the next time the member of Congress will be in the district and set a tentative time to meet.
- Try to get a group photo with your elected official, so NETWORK can share it on social media!

Debrief with the group

- What did we hear?
- How do we feel?
- How did it go? How did we do as a team?
- Plan next steps.

After your visit

- Write a thank you note to your member of Congress or the staff with a summary of the visit.
- Email answers to any questions you said you'd research. (NETWORK can help with this!)
- Pay attention to see if your elected official followed through on your "ask" (ie., vote on a bill or co-sponsor it).
- Continue the dialogue with your member of Congress and their staff.

Report back: When you meet with a member of Congress or their staff about one of NETWORK's issue areas, please let us know how your visit went and what you learned!

Washington, D.C. Lobby Visits

While traveling to D.C. to meet with your members of Congress takes time and/or resources to do, it is a very powerful experience. If you are going to make the trip, please let NETWORK staff know so we can help you prepare—and welcome you to the NETWORK office, which is right near Capitol Hill!

Washington, D.C. Lobby Visits with a Staff Member

If you plan a lobby visit in D.C., it is likely that you will meet with someone on the Member of Congress's staff. Here are some things to know about meeting with a staff person:

- Congressional staff are political strategists and policy experts who often specialize in one or two policy issues and help write legislation.
- They may or may not be from the home state or district of their Member of Congress.
- They do less relationship building with constituents than their in-district counterparts.
- Let NETWORK know if you find yourself meeting with a Hill staffer on one of our issue areas. Whenever possible, we like to send one of our lobbyists to accompany you and help answer any tricky policy questions the staffer may have.

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Plan your Washington, D.C. Lobby Visit

Request an appointment

- Contact the scheduler in your Congressperson's office for an appointment with your member of Congress or the legislative aide (often referred to as the "LA") who handles the issue you want to discuss.
- Tell the scheduler the dates you are in D.C., the issue you will discuss, and who will be present during the visit. They may need a written request as well. Follow up with a call to confirm a date. Be polite, but persistent—this process often takes some back and forth!
- Confirm the visit by phone a day or two before the appointment.

Prepare for the Visit

NETWORK's staff is happy to assist you with:

- Researching your member of Congress, so that you have a sense of where they may be on an issue or bill. (Also, look at NETWORK's Congressional Voting Record from the previous year in *Connection* magazine to see how they scored networklobby.org/newsroom/connection.)
- Reviewing the legislation and providing talking points.
- Determining what the legislative "ask" will be (ie. co-sponsoring a bill or voting "yes" or "no").
- Providing a "**Lobby Visit Planning and Reporting Sheet**" (see Appendix) to prepare.
- Preparing a document with NETWORK's position to leave with your Member of Congress.
- Attending the meeting with you, or facilitating the scheduling of a D.C. lobby visit.

Attend the Visit

- Dress professionally and arrive on time. The Congressional office buildings are confusing! Give yourself lots of time between meetings.
- At the beginning, ask how much time you have with the staff person.
- Have people briefly introduce themselves by sharing their name and where they are from. Have everyone name the groups/organizations they represent and tell how many people are involved in each.
- Start off by saying something positive about the member, even if it's thanking them for a bill that is completely unrelated to the issue you are talking about today or simply thanking them for their work—it's a tough job!
- Explain why you are here.
- Have each person briefly explain why they support or oppose the bill, using a personal story to illustrate their points.
- Make the "ask." Give the person you are meeting with some time to respond, but try not to let them get off track!
- Record key points of the conversation and take note of questions that you cannot answer. Offer to find information and follow up with the staff.
- Give the member of Congress and/or the staff the leave behind.
- Thank the people you are meeting with for their time. Get a business card from the staff.
- If you met with a staff person, find out the next time the member of Congress will be in the district and try to get a commitment to set up a time to meet.
- Try to get a group photo so NETWORK can share it on social media!

After your visit

- Write a thank you note to your member of Congress or the staff with a summary of the visit.
- Email the answers to any questions you said you would research. (NETWORK can help with this!)
- Pay attention to see if your elected official followed through on your "ask" (ie., vote on a bill or co-sponsor it).
- Continue the dialogue with your member of Congress and their staff.

Report back: When you meet with a member of Congress or their staff about one of NETWORK's issue areas, please let us know how your visit went and what you learned!

Virtual Lobby Visits

Because of the pandemic and lingering security concerns following the January 6th attack, many Members of Congress' offices now offer constituents the opportunity to meet virtually on video and conference call platforms. These options can make lobby visits more accessible to more people!

Request the appointment

The process for scheduling a virtual lobby visit is very similar to scheduling an in-person one.

- Three weeks out, call the district or D.C. office using the number on your Congressperson's website. (NETWORK can help advise you about which you should meet with.)
- Let them know who you are, that you are a constituent, and what issue you will discuss.
- Find out whom the request should be sent to, their email address, and which virtual meeting platform the office prefers to use.
- NOTE: Some offices use their own platforms or accounts, while other offices will expect you to set up the call. NETWORK may be able to host the call on one of our Zoom accounts; check with NETWORK staff to ensure availability.
- Send all of the meeting information to the staffer indicated. Follow-up with phone calls and emails, as necessary, until the meeting is scheduled. Staffers are very busy, and sometimes persistence is required!
- After the visit is scheduled, be sure to call and confirm a few days prior to your meeting.

Prepare for the visit

Preparing for a virtual lobby visit is very similar to preparing for an in-person one. NETWORK staff is happy to assist you with:

- Researching your member of Congress, so that you have a sense of where she or he may be on an issue or bill. (Also, look at NETWORK's Congressional Voting Record from the previous year in *Connection* magazine to see how they scored networklobby.org/newsroom/connection.)
- Reviewing the legislation and providing talking points.
- Determining what the legislative "ask" will be (ie. co-sponsoring a bill or voting "yes").
- Providing a "**Lobby Visit Planning and Reporting Sheet**" (see Appendix) to prepare.
- Preparing a document with NETWORK's position to leave with your Member of Congress.

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Tips for Virtual Meetings

- As much as possible, ensure all participants will be somewhere with a strong internet connection or phone signal.
- Be prepared/flexible/ready to takeover if a member of your group's technology fails them.
- If video-conferencing, avoid background clutter and background noises, avoid distractions, plan for good lighting, and dress professionally.
- Remind everyone to mute when not speaking.

Attend the Visit

- Have all members of your group sign-on 5-10 minutes early and address any tech difficulties.
- Check how much time you have with the staff person.
- Have people briefly introduce themselves by sharing their name and where they are from. Have everyone name the groups/organizations they represent and tell how many people are involved in each.
- Start off by saying something positive about the member, even if it's thanking them for a bill that is completely unrelated to the issue you are talking about today or simply thanking them for their work—it's a tough job!
- Explain why you are here.
- Have each person briefly explain why they support or oppose the bill, using a personal story to illustrate their points.
- Make the "ask." Give the person you are meeting with some time to respond, but try not to let them get off track!
- Record key points of the conversation and take note of questions that you cannot answer. Offer to find information and follow up with the staff.
- Email the member of Congress and/or the staff the leave behind.
- Thank the people you met with for their time. Get the staff's contact information to follow up.
- If you met with a staff person, find out the next time the member of Congress will be in the district and try to get a commitment to set up a time to meet.
- Ask about taking a screenshot of the group to share on social media.
- ***Important:** Do NOT record the meeting without explicit permission. (There is really no reason to anyway!)

Follow up after your visit

- Write a thank you note to your member of Congress or the staff summarizing the visit.
- Email the answers to any questions you said you would research. (NETWORK can help!)
- Pay attention to see if your elected official followed through on your "ask" (ie., co-sponsor a bill or vote "yes" or "no").
- Continue the dialogue with your member of Congress and their staff.

Report back: When you meet with a member of Congress or their staff about one of NETWORK's issue areas, please let us know how your visit went and what you learned!

Using Town Halls and Site Visits to Advocate

Attending a Town Hall

Whether virtual or in-person, town halls are wonderful opportunities for constituents to engage with their Members of Congress, learn about their position on one or more issues, and share their own perspectives with them. The format usually includes a 15–30-minute presentation by the Member of Congress followed by some time for Q&A with constituents. To make the most of your town hall experience, preparation is key!

Preparing for a Town Hall

- Research: What is the date/time/location for your Member of Congress' next town hall? Some Members of Congress announce their town halls early and broadly. Other Members of Congress share the information with a more limited audience to suppress turnout. If you have difficulty finding your Member of Congress' next town hall, you can call the office to request the information and/or ask that you be added to the email notification list.
- Research: What procedures will be in place? For example, is there a sign-up sheet for folks who want to ask questions? Know what to expect.
- Research: Is the town hall focusing primarily on one issue or theme?
- Research: What statements has your Member of Congress made on the issue or legislation you hope to discuss? How have they voted in the past on similar legislation?
- Share information about the upcoming town hall with NETWORK (we can help prep you!) and, if you are on an Advocates Team, other team members (who can show up in support of you/your position).
- Practice: What do you plan to say? Are your points concise? Is your question clear?

Tips for Attending a Town Hall

- Arrive early.
- Find good seats.
- If attending with a group, spread out. If a Member of Congress notes that unsupportive questions or comments are coming from a certain part of the room, they may just skip over you.
- Mingle. Get to know who else is present and what issues they represent. Network!

When speaking...

- Always be respectful.
- Introduce yourself and any group affiliations (including NETWORK).

Be sure to lift up:

- Information that is timely
- Local impacts
- Personal stories and accounts
- Relevant data

Keep questions concise, clear, to the point!

After the Town Hall

- Stay to introduce yourself to the Member of Congress, staffers, and other attendees.
- Bring printed materials on your issue to share with the staffer accompanying the Member of Congress. NETWORK can assist with this!
- Send a "thank you" via email
- Lift up your experience on social media
- Report to NETWORK! We want to hear about the experience and intel you may have gathered.

Hosting a Site Visit

Many NETWORK members and supporters are connected to direct services organizations (food pantries, homeless shelters, immigration services, etc.) in the community. Inviting a Member of Congress and their staff to a Site Visit is a great way to lift up peoples' lived realities, advocate for needed policies, and strengthen relationships with elected officials. To plan a site visit:

- Talk with your non-profit partner about whether they would be interested in hosting a Member of Congress at their facility.
- Let a NETWORK organizer know about your plans, so we can help support you!
- Ask the site's staff what messages they would like to convey and their hopes for the visit.
- Familiarize yourself with the Member's voting record as it relates to the topic of the site visit.
- Research when the Member of Congress will be home in your state or district based on the Congressional calendar. (NETWORK can help with this.)
- Send an invitation in writing to the scheduler at least six weeks out. Follow-up as necessary.
- Members of Congress are extraordinarily busy, so be flexible; but if there is a particular program or event you want the Member to experience, be specific about that timing.
- Confirm date, time, address, and participants (both theirs and yours) with the scheduler.
- NOTE: It is great if you can get the Member of Congress. However, if they unavailable, hosting staffers is also valuable. Staffers may be looking for opportunities to get out of the office and engage with the community. If the site visit goes well, they may give an enthusiastic report, and this enthusiasm can lead to member-level visits later.
- Confirm whether the site visit will be open or closed to the press. Coordinate with the Member's and site's Communications Director or Press Secretary on media advisory needs.
- Write a detailed "Run of Show" that describes every minute of the visit, based on your conversation with the site's staff and the tips below. Plan talking points and discussion topics.
- Prep the site's staff and clients for what to expect.
- Prior to the visit, send an email to the Member's scheduler with the "Run of Show" and any written materials about the organization.
- Prepare a folder of printed materials to share on the day of the visit.
- Do a complete walk-through of the visit the day before.

Executing the Site Visit

- Offer a warm welcome! Consider making a large sign or banner to display somewhere visible.
- Have someone familiar with the site give a tour of the facility.
- Create moments of encounter. Offer opportunities for the Member of Congress to speak with both clients and staff members to learn about the impact of the organization and its services.
- Highlight both the effectiveness of programs and success stories, as well as the challenges that your community faces. Make an "ask" if you have one. (NETWORK can help with this!)
- Take lots of photos (being mindful of client confidentiality) for social media.
- Be mindful of time, follow your "run of show," and end on time!

After the Site Visit

- Amplify the Member's visit on your personal, the site's, and NETWORK's social media.
- Send a follow-up email with photos and links to any press coverage and a thank you note.
- Tell NETWORK how the event went!

Advocating through the Press and Social Media

Make your voice heard through your local paper and on social media. Op-eds and LTEs are ways you can be published in print or online, and social media allows everyone to join into the conversation. Members of Congress listen to what their constituents are saying in the press and on social media.

Writing an Op-Ed

An "Op-ed" is an opinion piece by an author or group not affiliated with a publication's editorial board. The name comes from the historic placement of the pieces opposite the editorial page of a newspaper. Op-eds are typically longer than LTEs and written by someone notable or someone with subject matter expertise.

Tips for Powerful Op-Eds

- Start by looking at the submission guidelines provided by your local paper (word count, author guidelines, etc.)
- Focus your Op-ed on one specific issue or subject.
- As with LTEs, timeliness is key. Newspapers prefer Op-eds connected to current events.
- Start with a hook that will capture the readers' attention.
- Introduce yourself and your experience/expertise early on in your piece.
- Be clear about your position.
- Offer a fresh perspective.
- Know your audience. Use talking points that will appeal to the readers and simple language. An Op-ed is not the place to get super wonky or technical.
- That said, do your research and include evidence!
- Stories are powerful! Consider including a personal narrative related to the topic.
- End with a call to action. What would you like to see happen?
- Have someone read your piece for clarity/edits prior to submission. NETWORK is always happy to help with this!

When your Op-ed is published, let NETWORK know! Send a link or a scanned copy of your Op-ed to the NETWORK staff member who works with your Advocates Team or to info@networklobby.org.

Writing a Letter to the Editor

Letters to the editor (LTEs) are a powerful advocacy tool. They are among the most widely read sections of newspapers and magazines and are closely monitored by Members of Congress to find out what their voters are thinking. When LTEs are strategically coordinated and published, they can strengthen the impression of widespread support or opposition to an issue or piece of legislation. Often times, they can influence editorial writers to take a stand or influence other members of the media to probe an issue more deeply. While they start out as one voice, LTEs can build a movement!

Tips for Powerful LTEs

- Follow guidelines of the publications to ensure you have the correct length, style, and format. Remember that most publications prefer letters to be 250 words or less.
- Timeliness is key. Many newspapers publish letters responding to articles, editorials, or other letters the day after they appear. [*continued*]

- Frame your letter in relation to a recent news item or topic. A letter is more likely to be published when it is written in response to something that has appeared in the publication.
- Use local, specific information whenever possible.
- Be aware of your audience: use talking points that will appeal to the readers, avoid jargon and abbreviations, and do not engage in personal attacks.
- Include your credentials.
- If you are using a sample letter from an organization, do not copy talking points verbatim. Papers can search for canned content after it is published one time.

Sample LTE

Start with your qualifications

As a multi-issue Catholic voter, I cannot stay silent while Congressman Jones vilifies people who are incarcerated in his Feb. 10th op-ed "Criminals Don't Deserve Handouts.

Tell them what you think!

Federal policies and harsh sentencing laws have led to the U.S. having the highest percentage of people who are incarcerated in the world. A focus on punishment rather than rehabilitation has taken its toll on vulnerable communities by deepening racial divides and reinforcing a cycle of poverty.

Bring it together with a legislative ask

I pray that Congressman Jones opens his heart and listens to his constituents. We cannot continue to tolerate racism in our criminal legal system or the loss of another generation to mass incarceration. Catholic voters like me expect Congressman Jones to support the EQUAL Act.

Sister Jane Smith, NETWORK Advocates Pennsylvania Team

When your LTE is published, let NETWORK know! Send a link or a scanned copy of your LTE to the NETWORK staff member who works with your Advocates Team or to info@networklobby.org.

Engaging on Social Media

Your presence on social media can be a powerful tool for educating, organizing, and lobbying to build anew. Millions of people use sites like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram every day to track news, updates on the Hill, and for advocacy.

Facebook: 1.9 billion daily active users, approximately 247 million U.S.-based users
Twitter: 206 million daily active users, approximately 36 million U.S.-based users
Instagram: 500 million daily active users, approximately 240 million U.S.-based users

At NETWORK, we use our Facebook account for longer posts about policy updates and current events. Twitter is great for rapid-response updates, engaging with organizational partners, and connecting with advocacy leaders and elected officials. Instagram is useful for sharing photos from events, hosting Live videos, and receiving updates from relevant community partners. NETWORK uses YouTube to host videos and Flickr to share images.

Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram can be good places to share your beliefs about policy, advocate for policies that Build Anew, and engage with other NETWORK members. With so many people following conversations on social media, there are many opportunities to have your message heard. Even members of Congress listen to what their constituents say on social media!

Social Media Basics

Navigating social media can be overwhelming. Consider using video tutorials as you set up your social media accounts and begin sharing.

Ways to Get Your Message Across

Think about what makes you stand out

- Your unique individual or organizational perspective is unique and important – use that to your advantage!
- Add something different to the conversation by telling a story or lifting up voices that are not usually heard.

Include images in your posts

- Pictures and graphics draw people to your posts and quickly engage your audience.
- Consider sharing quotes in the form of graphics to highlight important text.

Add emotional appeal

- People are more likely to interact with and share posts that make them feel something or touch them on a personal level.

Keep track of major events and what people are talking about

- Share news stories that reinforce your message and values.
- If there is a hashtag for a particular event, issue, or campaign, use it! (Check NETWORK's accounts to see what hashtags we are using, like #PaidLeave, or #BuildAnew)
- More people may be active on social media during major events (the State of the Union, for example) — take that opportunity to get involved in the conversation.

Engage with individuals and organizations who you want to hear your message

- If you are particularly concerned about the vote of particular members of Congress, tweet at them by using their handle (@Sen_JoeManchin) and tag them in your Facebook posts.
- Consider tagging or tweeting at organizations that share your message or may have followers who you can engage with your work.
- Reply to or share/retweet interesting tweets or posts.

Engage with NETWORK

NETWORK has a very active social media presence on multiple platforms. Follow us to share content that resonates with you and join the conversation.

Facebook
facebook.com/NetworkLobby
Like and share our posts!

Twitter
twitter.com/networklobby
Retweet us!

Instagram
instagram.com/network_lobby
Like and share!

Yes, Please Contact Your Member of Congress "Even If"

As organizers, two of the most popular questions we are asked include:

"Should I still contact my Member of Congress even if they ALWAYS agree with me?"

AND "Should I still contact my Member of Congress even if they NEVER agree with me?"

And our response is always the same, "YES! Absolutely! Please, please, please! Call them! Email them! Let them know what you are thinking!" Here's why…

If your Member of Congress "always" agrees with you, contact them! Why?

- Every point of contact is an opportunity to be in relationship with your Member of Congress and their staff, and we know that relationships are POWERFUL. You want them to know exactly who you are and what you believe in. You want them to pick up the phone when you call and help you to get the lobby visit that you need. You want to be viewed as a both resource and trusted messenger. Relationships are power.
- There is always the opportunity to address an angle or perspective that they might have not considered before. Several years ago, one of my NETWORK Advocates Teams met with a Democratic Senator's staff about the importance of fully funding the U.S. Census. The staff indicated it was the first time anyone had addressed the issue with them but promised to investigate it further. That same Senator ended up being a HUGE advocate for making sure the U.S. Census had the funding it needed to be successful. Members of Congress and their staff work hard and are very knowledgeable about many things. However, it is a mistake to assume they know everything: you could be the one to bring an issue or piece of legislation to their attention!
- Members of Congress have to make hard choices about what gets included in legislation. Even if they generally agree with you, it is important for them to hear what YOUR policy priorities are. If they are picking from a list of 25 generally good priorities, you want them to pick the five that matter most to you. Similarly, it can be an opportunity to tell them where you would like to see them provide leadership.
- Stories are powerful, and Members of Congress want to hear them! I am convinced that one of the major strengths of NETWORK's field is how connected our members and supporters are to their communities. You all know and love your neighbors so well. You know, in a very real way, how different policies might help or harm your community. Members of Congress need to hear that. They need to hear about the lived experiences of their constituents. Furthermore, it is not uncommon for them to then take those same stories to the Floor to share them with their colleagues. Again, stories are powerful!
- Share your faith perspective! It is important to let Members of Congress know that people of faith care about an issue and are holding them accountable on it. This can be particularly important if another group from your faith perspective is advocating on the other side of an issue. Help them to understand that your faith does not take a singular position. You can be the one to provide them with cover! Beyond all that, it is particularly powerful if you can get a group of folks from diverse religious traditions advocating together on an issue.
- You better believe they're getting calls and emails from folks with perspectives different than your own. Members and their staff need to hear your perspective too!
- Working for a Member of Congress is a tough job. Supportive calls mean a lot to staff morale!

If your Member of Congress "never" agrees with you, contact them! Why?

- Even if you do not always agree with one another, relationships are POWERFUL. Many of our advocates have found that a relationship with the local state or district level staff is both possible and meaningful (as long as they are respectful in sharing their views). In the past, these relationships have helped our advocates both to more easily schedule lobby visits with staff and to better understand a Member of Congress' policy position (which often helps the NETWORK staff). Plus, you never know, you may agree on something! That leads me to my next point…
- It is possible to find common ground! In 2021, NETWORK hosted a Virtual Lobby Day focused on the EQUAL Act (legislation addressing racial sentencing disparities in the criminal legal system). As part of this event, over 120 NETWORK advocates went on 50 lobby visits with both Democratic and Republican Members of Congress. In the days following the event, the EQUAL Act gained 10 new co-sponsors (3 Republicans and 7 Democrats). Don't give up—your Member of Congress might surprise you!
- You can help gather intel for NETWORK. If your Member of Congress opposes a piece of legislation, find out why! Do they have a specific concern? Is it something we can fix? As constituents, you sometimes have more information available to you than the NETWORK staff. Your report-backs can help us tremendously!
- Stories are powerful! Share your stories, and share your community's stories! Remind them of the impact of their actions. You never know what seeds you will plant or what the impact will be.
- Share your faith perspective! It is important to let Members of Congress know that people of faith care about an issue and are holding them accountable on it. This can be particularly important if another group from your faith perspective is advocating on the other side of an issue.
- Changing policy positions is possible! My favorite example is related to health care. As it turns out, Americans like having their pre-existing conditions protected and are not shy about saying so. They called their Members of Congress en masse, wrote letters to the editor, rallied, and marched in the streets! A 2018 Kaiser Family Foundation poll even found that 75% of respondents supported the Affordable Care Act's protections for pre-existing conditions. In response, a number of GOP candidates suddenly came out in loud support of the same protections they had once fought to end. It was all due to public opinion and pressure!
- As people of faith, we are people of hope. The work of advocacy is often long and difficult, but we can take comfort in knowing that we do not journey alone. We are accompanied in our efforts by NETWORK advocates from across the nation and are guided by the many saints who have come before us. Most importantly, the Holy Spirit is present with us each time we pick up the phone, write an email, or attend a rally. With that in mind, I believe it is possible to change hearts, minds, and votes!

Finally, in our increasingly polarized society, it seems like everyone puts their Members of Congress into one of these two categories. If we write our elected officials off that easily, they will never hear from us. So, YES, please contact your Members of Congress *even if* they "always" agree with you or "never" agree with you. Your advocacy matters!

Influencing Policymaking on Capitol Hill

The process of making federal policy can be complicated–sometimes deliberately. Wealthy corporations and industries have their lobbyists, so it's important for us to make our voices heard on Capitol Hill too. Here are the basics for advocates to get involved and change the outcomes of our federal policy deliberations.

How a Bill Becomes a Law

1. **Idea for a bill -** A constituent, interest group, or Congress person has an idea for a bill.
2. **Writing the bill -** A member of the House or Senate can draft (write) a bill. The primary person drafting the bill is called the "Sponsor."
3. **Introducing the bill -** The bill's sponsor (and co-sponsors, if applicable) then introduces the bill in the House or Senate. After a bill is introduced, it gets a bill number (H.R. = House Bill, S. = Senate Bill) You can track any bill that is introduced on congress.gov, the official website for U.S. federal legislative information run by the Library of Congress.
4. **Referred to Committee(s)** - Once the bill is introduced in either the House or the Senate (or both), it is referred to a committee, or committees, for further consideration. The committee will closely examine the bill and may hold hearings to understand the implications of the bill. NETWORK staff have been invited to testify at committee hearings before, which is a great way to be heard by Congress and build NETWORK's clout on Capitol Hill. At a hearing, views of the executive branch, experts, other public officials, supporters and opponents of the bill are put on record.
    a. If the committee does not act on the bill, it is considered "dead."
    b. A bill might be referred to one of the committee's subcommittees for further study and hearings
    c. After the subcommittee hearings, the committee meets to "mark up" the bill. They might make changes or amendments before voting to send the bill to the floor.
5. **Floor debate and consideration -** Once the bill is sent to the floor, the full House or full Senate chamber debates and votes to approve any amendments. If passed with a majority of votes, bill is sent to the other chamber. **In the Senate, the motion to hold the final vote can be killed with a filibuster, which requires 60 votes to overcome.*
6. **Passage in the other chamber -** In the other chamber, once again, the bill is referred to a committee and works its way through the committee then the full chamber for approval.
    a. If there are differences between the House and Senate versions of the bill, a Conference Committee, a temporary, bicameral (House and Senate) committee established to resolve differences between two versions of a bill, may be formed to resolve or reconcile the differences.
    b. Both the House and Senate must again vote to approve the the consensus bill (known as the "conference report.")
7. **Sent to the President -** If the bill is passed by both the House and Senate, it is sent to the President who will sign the bill into law or veto it. The President has 10 days to sign it into law.
    a. Congress can override a veto with a two-thirds majority vote in both the House and the Senate.

**See the Appendix for a glossary of political terms.*

The 3 P's: Policy, Process, and Politics

What do you need to know when preparing for a lobby visit about a specific bill with one of your elected officials? This three-step method used by NETWORK's Government Relations team will help you analyze the bill in a larger context as you prepare for your meeting.

Policy

For this first step, analyze the content and impact of a bill, considering the cornerstones of NETWORK's Build Anew Agenda:

- Dismantle systemic racism
- Cultivate an inclusive community
- Root our economy in solidarity
- Transform politics

Questions to ask:

- What is included in the bill?
    - How is this bill a solution to a problem?
    - What does it accomplish?
    - Why do we need this bill?
- What are the policy arguments and implications for this bill?
- If you have one, what information is provided on the NETWORK leave behind?

Process

For the second step, look at how far along the bill is in the federal policymaking process.

- Where is this bill in Congress?
- Who introduced the bill?
    - In the Senate?
    - In the House?
- Who are the co-sponsors?
- Does it have bipartisan support?
- What is our ask?
    - If your Member is already a co-sponsor, thank them for their support and ask them to invite colleagues to co-sponsor the bill.
    - If your Member is not a co-sponsor, ask them to consider co-sponsoring the bill.
- Encourage your Member to support the bill when it comes to a vote.

Politics

Now, we need to understand the Congressional politics at play. It's time for you to conduct a little research about your member of Congress. Look into:

- How will the Member you are visiting view this bill?
- What is this Member's party?
- Is this Member a sponsor or co-sponsor? Are other members of their party co-sponsors?
- Is the Member you are visiting a person of faith?
- Is this person a Senior Member of the House or the Senate or up for re-election?
- Is the Member on a committee? Do they hold any leadership positions?

NETWORK
NETWORK ADVOCATES FOR CATHOLIC SOCIAL JUSTICE

Collaborating with NETWORK

When we have consistent messaging and visual branding across NETWORK advocates, staff, and Board, we amplify one another's voices and work together cooperatively to advance justice in our federal policies. The language, tone, and style we use to make our arguments matters, so we must be intentional about choosing accurate, inclusive, justice language. Using the NETWORK logo identifies you with a nationwide community of justice-seekers, but there are some considerations to be aware of so our voice for justice remains unified. This section includes directions for messaging, branding, and collaborating with the NETWORK staff so your advocacy is strategic, informed, and coordinated.

Communicating for Justice: NETWORK Style

Language shapes the way we think and understand the world. Using accurate language is important for communicating about people respectfully and for crafting effective arguments our audience trusts.

The Basics

- Speak confidently!
- Harness the power of your unique voice.
- Share stories– they are powerful.
- Answer the question you want to answer, not necessarily the question you're asked.
- Keep it brief.

NETWORK Messaging Rules

- Use person-centered language
  - Use phrases like "Families experiencing poverty" or "people experiencing homelessness" instead of "the poor" or "the homeless"
- Don't assume white as your audience's default and be specific when talking about race
  - When racial descriptors are relevant to an issue area, be as specific as possible to avoid inaccurate or generalized statements
  - Capitalize B in Black and/or Brown and lowercase w in white
  - Avoid abbreviating to BIPOC, say Black, Brown, and Native American
    - For U.S. federal policy: Native American is more relevant than Indigenous
  - Do not use the term "minority" which lacks specificity, devalues communities of color by positioning relative to the white population, and is outdated and soon to be inaccurate as the Latinx, Black, Asian, Native American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities together will soon outnumber white people in the U.S.
- Use gender neutral pronouns
  - NETWORK often uses singular 'they' ie: "Call your Representative today and tell *them* to reject H.R. 1"
  - Don't default to masculine pronouns for God: God is God, not "He" or "Him" or "Father"
- When talking about bills or Members of Congress, be as specific as possible
  - Include bill names, party/district, etc. in the first mention

Continued...

- ***Do Not Use*** **Presuming or disempowering language**. NETWORK does not use "speak for/voice for the voiceless" or "empower them" as people already have their own voices and their own power, it's more likely they are not listened to by those holding elected office and/or the media.
- ***Do Not Use*** **Ableist words or phrases,** including "stand in solidarity, turn a blind eye, that's crazy," which reinforce bias against people with disabilities NETWORK does not use 'stand in solidarity'– one can be in solidarity without the physical act of standing. Use "act in solidarity"
- ***Do Not Use (or avoid when possible)*** **Sisters and Brothers:** While very common in faith language (prayers and otherwise), this is not inclusive because it excludes people outside of the gender binary. Try using language like "human family" or "siblings" instead.
- ***Do Not Use (or avoid when possible)*** **Welcome the stranger:** While this is a popular biblical quote to justify faith support for immigration, consider how this may unintentionally distance immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers for your audience. A stronger biblical reference is "love thy neighbor," which emphasizes that many immigrants are already here, part of our communities, and deserve respect and love. You can use "welcome the stranger and love thy neighbor" together.
- ***Do Not Use (or avoid when possible)*** **Least of these:** Another biblical quote, this phrase is not person-centered, but more significantly, it implies judgement and rank.
- ***Do Not Use (or avoid when possible)*** **Americans**: Use "people in the United States" or similar. People living in South, Central, and North America are all "Americans" and using it to refer to just one country is incorrect.
- ***Do Not Use*** **Excessive violent language.** While it is okay to "fight for" something, phrases like "Front lines of this battle," "target list" etc., it should be done sparingly
- ***Do Not Use*** **Myth busting:** Avoid mythbuster-type fact sheets when possible. Studies show people are more likely to remember the myth than the real fact.

NETWORK FAQ

What is NETWORK?

NETWORK is a national organization of social justice advocates founded by Catholic Sisters 50 years ago to educate, organize, and lobby for social and economic transformation.

Why was NETWORK founded?

In the aftermath of the Second Vatican Council, Catholic Sisters reflected on how the people who they served in their ministries were being affected by federal policies. The name "NETWORK" reflects their vision of influencing legislation through a national network of participation.

What is Nuns on the Bus?

Nuns on the Bus is a campaign of NETWORK that was started in 2012. NETWORK has organized seven bus trips that traveled to 35 states focusing on different policy priorities.

Is NETWORK partisan?

NETWORK is a non-partisan organization that meets with Republican, Democratic, and Independent elected officials to advance issues central to our justice agenda.

How is NETWORK funded?

NETWORK receives donations from members inspired by Catholic Sisters, congregations of Sisters, other partners, and grants.

Additional Considerations

- **Political candidates:** NETWORK does not endorse political parties or candidates. If you engage in partisan political activity, please make sure that it is clear that you are acting in your own individual capacity and not on behalf of NETWORK or a NETWORK Advocates Team. If you are tabling at an event on behalf of NETWORK and/or your Advocates Team, do not display partisan paraphernalia or candidate campaign literature.
- **Position on state-level politics:** NETWORK Lobby does not participate in state or local-level politics. If you are working on a local coalition or event that addresses one of NETWORK's issues areas, using your Advocates Team name shows that it is not the national organization.

Issues NETWORK Does Not Work on or Comment On

To be effective at advancing our policy agenda and avoid potentially dangerous messaging missteps, we do not comment on issues outside of NETWORK's federal policy agenda. This includes abortion, international violence and war, and Catholic Church policies like women's ordination or married priests. Recognizing our limitations, we focus on our mission to work for social and economic transformation in our U.S. federal policies.

Guidelines for Using NETWORK's Name and Logo

When you make a public appearance to advocate for one of NETWORK's policy areas, identify as a member of NETWORK and your Advocates Team. It's important for Members of Congress and their staff to know that the NETWORK lobbyists in D.C. have constituent support, and naming that you're part of a national organization and a local team builds your power and helps you become a more influential constituent. Some examples of when to introduce yourself as a member of NETWORK:

- Attending an in-district meeting
- Participating in a town hall
- Writing a letter to the editor

Presentations and workshops are another chance for you to identify as a member of NETWORK. If you are hosting a House Party or educating a group about immigration, health care, or one of NETWORK's other policy priorities, introduce yourself as a member of NETWORK and your Advocates Team.

Times when you should use the NETWORK logo include lobby visits with your Members of Congress or their staff on one of NETWORK's policy priorities. On those occasions, make sure you have, a NETWORK-branded leave-behind. If your Advocates Team is hosting an event or workshop with NETWORK materials, such as a House Party, and you want to make a flyer or advertise it in your community's newsletter, let Grassroots Mobilization know and we will send you NETWORK's logo and flyer template.

If you are tabling at a conference or community event to raise awareness or recruit people for your Advocates Team, Grassroots Mobilization will send you NETWORK materials for your table. Each time you use our logo in a new public capacity, check in with someone on NETWORK's Grassroots Mobilization team. If you have questions or concerns about using NETWORK's name or logo, reach out to us! NETWORK is happy to provide the NETWORK logo, flyer templates and graphics for events organized by NETWORK Advocates and Advocates teams that advance the NETWORK policy agenda. Email the Grassroots organizer you work with or info@networklobby.org for assistance.

Before using the NETWORK logo, be aware of the following considerations and guidelines.

NETWORK Lobby [501(c)(4)] and NETWORK Advocates [501(c)(3)]

NETWORK LOBBY FOR CATHOLIC SOCIAL JUSTICE	NETWORK ADVOCATES FOR CATHOLIC SOCIAL JUSTICE
NETWORK Lobby is a 501(c)(4) nonprofit organization and as such focuses primarily on advocacy and lobbying. Contributions to NETWORK Lobby support: • Lobbying Congress directly in support of our issues • Providing legislative support for bills that further our mission • Organizing calls to action for our base of activists • Educating voters about candidates' policy positions (without endorsement) Contributions are **not** tax-deductible.	NETWORK Advocates is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and as such focuses primarily on education initiatives. Contributions to NETWORK Advocates support: • Developing educational resources, such as study guides, toolkits, and fact sheets on an issue (not specific legislation) • Creating and distributing educational workshops like How to Advocate, and The Racial Wealth and Income Gap • Training activists to articulate faith values in connection with public policy Contributions **are** tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

When to Identify as your NETWORK Advocates Team

Your activism and justice-building happens in your community, and we encourage Advocates Team members to represent their team at public events and in coalitions. **NETWORK Lobby does not participate in state or city level advocacy or activism**, and using your team name instead of "NETWORK Lobby" shows that this is not the national organization coming into your state or city to work on an issue. Your Advocates Team name is comprised of putting the name of your city or region in front of "NETWORK Advocates Team." Examples of this are Pittsburgh NETWORK Advocates Team and Eastern Kentucky NETWORK Advocates Team.

If you are participating in a local coalition or event that clearly addresses one of NETWORK's policy areas, identify yourself as a member of your NETWORK Advocates Team. Examples of this are:

- Attending coalition meeting about creating sanctuary for immigrants in your city
- Walking workers back to their jobs the day after a Fight for $15 strike
- Participating in a rally to expand Medicaid in your state
- Testifying at a hearing about building low-income housing in your town
- Speaking on a panel about the need for automatic voting registration

If your team is going to sign onto a letter or officially join a coalition, make sure your team members have reached consensus, then let NETWORK's Grassroots Mobilization Team know before making officially signing. When you sign onto a state or local effort, use your team name, such as Albany NETWORK Advocates Team or Northern Virginia NETWORK Advocates Team.

When <u>not</u> to Identify as NETWORK or your NETWORK Advocates Team

As NETWORK advocates, you know our mission and our Build Anew agenda—and you know that NETWORK's policies likely don't include every issue you work on or cause that is important to you.

Do not use NETWORK's name, the NETWORK logo, or your Advocates Team name if you are advocating for an issue that is not one of our policy priorities (Economic Security, Health care, Housing, and Food, Immigration, Criminal Legal System Reform, Taxes, and Democracy). This includes, but is not limited to:

- Gun Violence
- Environmental justice/climate change
- Nuclear disarmament
- International affairs
- Reproductive health

Also, do not identify as NETWORK if you are speaking on issues in the Catholic Church or commenting on bishops' or priests' statements or activities.

How to Identify as NETWORK

When talking to the media, elected officials, or other advocacy partners, say "I'm [name] and I'm a member of NETWORK Lobby with the [Town] Advocates Team and I care about" or something similar.

Working with the NETWORK Staff

As NETWORK Advocates, your primary point of contact is the Grassroots Mobilization (GM) team. However, the Government Relations (GR) and Communications teams are available to support your efforts too! Below are the primary ways each team serves NETWORK Advocates. NETWORK's Grassroots Mobilization staff will bring in other teams as needed, and they will gladly connect you with GR or Communications staff at your request!

Grassroots Mobilization (GM) Team

- Identifies and supports Advocates Teams facilitators and assists with building teams
- Conducts lobby and organizing trainings
- Facilitates webinars, policy briefings, and other trainings for advocates
- Creates educational materials

Government Relations (GR) Team

- Conducts policy briefings and research on Members of Congress
- Creates leave-behinds and talking points for lobby visits
- Connects Members of Congress and their staff with additional research/data about legislation
- Follows up with appropriate Hill staff and/or members of Congress after an Advocates Team visits an office in-district

Communications Team

- Conducts social media, media, and messaging trainings
- Edits and/or provides drafting assistance on Op-eds and LTEs for advocates
- Promotes Advocates Teams' activities to press and via the NETWORK social media, website, or *Connection* magazine

Advancing Justice through Elections

While NETWORK does not endorse candidates, our elections and who we elect to represent us are extremely important to our work for justice. While NETWORK is not partisan, that does not mean that NETWORK stays out of elections. During elections, NETWORK Advocates and staff lift up issues that are important to us and the policies we hope to see candidates support to move us closer to racial equity and economic justice.

NETWORK's Congressional Voting Record

Every year NETWORK publishes a voting record that scores each Member of Congress on how frequently they voted in accordance with Catholic Social Justice on key votes the previous year.

If your Members of Congress scored well, you can lift that up and talk about why it was important that they supported or opposed those pieces of legislation. If your Members of Congress did not score well, you can lift that up and talk about the harmful impacts of the bills that they supported or opposed.

For example, ahead of the 2018 Midterm elections, NETWORK lifted up the harmful votes from Republican House members who voted "Yes" on the 2017 Republican tax law, sharing the ways it hurt those Representatives' constituents.

View previous Congressional voting records in *Connection* magazine: networklobby.org/newsroom/connection

NETWORK's Equally Sacred Scorecard

In 2020, NETWORK published the "Equally Sacred" scorecard, which allowed voters to compare candidates' positions on the issues Pope Francis names as "equally sacred" to the defense of the unborn. The quotes used in the Equally Sacred scorecard come from four sources of Pope Francis's speaking and writing:

- *Gaudete et Exsultate* "Rejoice and Be Glad" Apostolic Exhortation published March 2018
- *Evangelii Gaudium* "The Joy of the Gospel" Apostolic Exhortation published Nov. 2013
- June 3, 2020 General Audience
- *Laudato Si'* "Praise Be to You" Encyclical published May 2015

Non-Candidate Specific Election Talking Points

- We need moral leadership from candidates who will pass policies that advance racial equity and economic justice.
- Pope Francis urges us not to ignore injustice or act as though one issue is more important than others. Instead, Pope Francis calls us to prioritize the sins of racism, economic inequality, xenophobia, and more.
- I encourage fellow people of faith to listen to their conscience and elect candidates who bring us closer to a truly representative, inclusive, multi-racial democracy that works for all of us.

At election time, use a tone that is **confident, unified, and future-looking**. Cynicism and fear demobilize and disengage people. Acknowledge people's fears and frustrations with politics, but don't fuel them, talk about moving forward together through voting to choose who represents us.

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Appendix

Political Glossary

Act A measure that is passed by one or both chambers that is signed into law by the president or passed over a veto.

Amendment Any change to a bill or resolution.

- *Committee Amendment* An amendment proposed during a committee meeting
- *Floor Amendment* An amendment that is proposed during a committee meeting
- *Striking Amendment* An amendment that removes everything after the bill's title and inserts an entirely new bill in its place

Appropriations The provision of funds for federal agencies to make payments out of the Treasury. They are usually divided into thirteen separate bills: Agriculture, Commerce/Justice/State, Defense, District of Columbia, Energy and Water, Foreign Operations, Interior, Labor/Health and Human Services, Legislative Branch, Military Contruction, Transportation, Treasury/Postal Service, and Veterans' Affairs/Housing and Urban Development.

Bicameral A system of government that has two Houses (Senate and House of Representatives.)

Bill A proposal to enact or repeal a law introduced by a member of the House or Senate

Budget Resolution A measure (created by the Congressional Budget Act of 1974) that sets a congressional budget plan, including aggregate budgetary levels, which may be enforced during the subsequent consideration of spending and revenue legislation. It is in the form of a concurrent resolution (e.g., an H.Con.Res or an S.Con. Res), not a law-making vehicle; as such, it is not submitted to the president.

Caucus An official organization of all members of a political party who serve within the House or Senate

Censure A formal statement of disapproval that is adopted by one or both chambers of Congress. It is less severe than expulsion.

Cloture A procedure in the Senate used to overcome a filibuster by placing a time limit on the consideration of a bill.

Committee A group of the House or Senate that is created for the purpose of considering legislation, conducting hearings and investigations, and carrying out other assignments as instructed.

See House Committees and Senate Committees for a full listing of committees

Executive Orders A signed, written, and published directive by the President of the United States. They are not legislation and do not require approval from Congress.

Expulsion Provided by *Article 1, Section 5* of the *U.S. Constitution*, the House or Senate can, with a two-thirds vote, expel a sitting member for disorderly behavior. This is rare

Filibuster An attempt in the Senate to delay or block any bill or other matter by debating it at length, offering many procedural motions, or by any other method of delay or obstructive actions.

Hopper A wooden box on the House floor into which measures are dropped for formal introduction

Impeachment The House of Representatives has the sole power of impeachment (*Article 1, Section 2*) and the Senate has "sole Power to Try all impeachments…[but] no person shall be convicted without the concurrence of two-thirds of the Members present" (*Article 1, section 3*)

Joint Resolution A resolution passed by both the House and Senate

Joint Session A session during which the Senate and House meet together to conduct formal business or to hear an address by the President (ex/ State of the Union)

Lame Duck An outgoing elected official who is still in office after their successor has been elected

Lame Duck Session The time after November general elections in even-numbered years when some lawmakers will not be returning for the next session of Congress.

Law A bill that has been passed by both the House and Senate and has been approved by the President

Majority In the House, a bill needs a simple majority (218 out of 235) to move to the Senate. In the Senate, a simple majority (51 out of 100) passes a bill.

Majority Leader Leader for the majority party

Markup The process by which congressional committees and subcommittees debate, amend, and rewrite proposed legislation.

Minority Leader Leader for the minority party

Motion A formal proposal by a Member that the House or Senate take a certain action.

- *Motion to Proceed* A proposal typically offered by the majority leader of the Senate to bring a measure, nomination, or treaty to the floor for consideration, debate, and vote.
- *Motion to Reconsider* A proposal to revisit any question previously decided by vote. It can only be offered once after each vote and must be offered by a member of the winning side.
- *Motion to Recommit* A motion in the House that is offered by a member of the ignoring party at the end of floor consideration that, if adopted, returns the measure to the legislative committee
- *Motion to Table* A non-debatable motion in the House and Senate through which a simple majority agrees to negative and permanently dispose of a question.

Nomination An appointment by the President to an executive or judicial office. It is subject to Senate confirmation.

Omnibus A proposed law that covers a number of diverse or unrelated topics. In the United States, omnibus bills are sometimes known as "Big Ugly" bills. Examples include reconciliation bills, combined appropriations bills, and private relief and claims bills.

Parliamentarian The Nonpartisan Senate or House adviser on the interpretation of its rules and procedures. The Parliamentarian also refers bills to their appropriate committees.

Ranking Member The highest-ranking (and typically the longest-serving) minority member of a committee or subcommittee

Reconciliation An optional process established by the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 through which Congress changes existing laws to conform tax and spending levels to levels set in a budget resolution.

Recess A temporary break in House or Senate proceedings for a few hours, overnight, or a longer break such as over a holiday period.

Roll Call Vote A voting process during which each Senator or Representative votes “yea” or “nay” as their vote is called by the clerk

Sponsor The member of the House or Senate who introduces a bill or resolution.

- *Co-sponsor* Representatives or Senators who formally sign on to support a bill or resolution

Supermajority A vote requiring more than a simple majority of those present, meaning that a 2/3 majority (67 out of 100 in the Senate and 290 out of 435 in the House) are needed to pass a matter.

- A *supermajority* is needed to impeach a president in the Senate, expel a member of Congress, override a presidential veto, suspend the house rules of debate and/or voting, or end the filibuster, amend or ratify and amendment to the Constitution, and the removal of a President from Office under the 25th Amendment.

Veto A procedure by which the President prevents the passage of a bill or joint resolution. A veto can be overridden by a two-thirds vote in *both* the House and Senate.

- *Line item Veto* A veto of part rather than all of an appropriations act. Currently, the President may not issue a line-item veto.
- *Pocket Veto* A veto that occurs if the President does not sign a bill within 10 days of receiving it and Congress adjourns during those 10 days.

Whip The assistant to the majority or minority leader who is elected by their party conference.

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Name ______________ **Date:**_______________

Leadership Qualities & Skills Self-Reflection

What strengths do you bring to your NETWORK Advocates Team? How would you like to challenge yourself? In which areas would you like to grow? This self-reflection is a tool for you and your team members to communicate about the teams' collective interests and skills, as well as a way for your team to let NETWORK staff know how we can better support you and provide you with the appropriate trainings and resources.

NETWORK Leadership Qualities

Motivates, inspires, & develops others *A good leader motivates, inspires, and develops others. A good leader listens to and learns from others around them and fosters a sense of community and collaboration.*

Values & Vision *Good leaders are clear about their values and have some idea about what they would like the world to be like. A good leader is committed to work to advance those values and vision.*

Positive Outlook *Leaders look for solutions to problems instead of focusing on the difficulties and approach situations and people with hope and welcome.*

Confidence *A leader that is confident will understand their weaknesses and ask for help when they need it.*

Trust in people *Good leaders believe in people. They encourage them, listen to them, and respect them. They see the potential in others and want to help them use that potential to the greatest degree possible.*

Anger at injustice *Anger can propel you to act. Anger can be helpful and constructive when it is focused and aimed for good.*

Courage *A leader has courage and is willing to take risks. As the saying goes, "Nothing ventured, nothing gained." A good leader is willing to be bold and do the unpopular.*

Imagination *Good leaders rely on their imaginations to find creative solutions to problems and to think of solutions they've never tried before.*

Sense of Humor *A sense of humor a way of staying motivated during the struggle for social change. Good leaders can sit back and laugh once in a while.*

Refer to the list of "Leadership Qualities," or brainstorm your own.

1. Which three leadership qualities do you consider your strengths? Why?

1. ____________________
2. ____________________
3. ____________________

2. Which two or three leadership qualities would you most like to work on strengthening over the next 12-18 months? Why?

1. ____________________
2. ____________________
3. ____________________

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Answer the following questions with Yes, No and I'd like to, or No and I am not interested in that challenge yet. (**Yes = Y, No, but I'd like to = N1** , **No, and not interested in that challenge yet =N2**)

I build and nurture community:

a. I am a good listener ________
b. I have done one-on-ones with members of my team_________
c. I have done one-on-ones with people who I think could be good additions to my team__________
d. I have invited others to team meetings and/or NETWORK events__________

Leaders are optimistic.

a. I can ask and ask again – when I hear "no," I stay optimistic _________
b. I am in it for the long haul – I am not easily discouraged _________
c. I can handle setbacks and learn from mistakes ________

Leaders help build their organization.

a. I make reminder calls to turn people out for an event or meeting __________
b. I make presentations at group meetings ________
c. I facilitate meetings _________
d. I invite others to speak in meetings _________
e. I have hosted a house meeting or house party to engage others in NETWORK's advocacy efforts________
f. I have helped plan an event at my parish/congregation or community _________
g. I evaluate my own role in events or activities __________
h. I helped evaluate an event or activity as part of a group _____________
i. I have helped our team set clear goals and been part of evaluating progress towards meeting those goals over time __________

Leaders are able to do outreach and communicate about issues.

a. I talk to people I know about issues I care about ____________
b. I talk to people I *don't* know about issues I care about __________
c. I ask others to do outreach around issues we both care about ____________

Leaders are personally organized and accountable.

a. When I say I will do something, I keep my word _______
b. I hold others accountable to their commitments _______________
c. I think about which activities I can delegate to others ______________
d. When I delegate to others, I follow up and support them _________

Leaders communicate with members, the media and allies.

a. I share my personal story at an event _______
b. I write letters to the editor or op-ed pieces ________
c. I invite and help others to write letters to the editor or op-ed pieces ________
d. I speak at press events/actions _________

Leaders build relationships with and hold public figures accountable.

a. I talk to elected officials about an issue I care about ______
b. I have testified at a public hearing on an issue I care about _______
c. I have invited an elected official to an in-district meeting with constituents ______
d. I have invited others to an in-district meeting with an elected official _________

Leaders help plan and carry out strategies to move NETWORK's legislative agenda forward.

a. I have implemented advocacy tactics_________
b. I have brainstormed advocacy tactics________
c. I understand the legislative process _________
d. I understand the electoral process and how electoral campaigns work _________
e. I have participated in a power analysis of a member of Congress________
f. I understand the power relationships that impact work on issues _________
g. I see the links between different issues and connections to broader systemic problems ______

Leaders understand and can help participate in coalitions.

a. I understand how coalitions work, and the benefits and tradeoffs of joining them _______
b. I have networked with other organizations and built relationships ________
c. I have participated in a coalition ________
d. I have been a leader in a coalition ________

3. Which two or three leadership skills do you consider your strengths? Why?

1. ____
2. ____
3. ____

4. What two or three leadership skills would you most like to work on strengthening over the next 18 months? Why?

1. ____
2. ____
3. ____

With your organizer, brainstorm this part together: These are the 2-3 activities I'm going to work on to build the skills we've talked about building over the next 18 months.

1. ____
2. ____
3. ____

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The Effective Proposition: A Worksheet

Person I am planning to proposition: ______________________________
Phone number: __________________

Have I done a one-on-one and developed a relationship with this person? Yes / No

*If **no**, stop here and do a one-on-one before inviting them into a role.*

This person's self-interests are: ____
____

My proposition is, specifically:

Vision I have for you as a powerful leader: ____

Role: ____

Responsibilities of the role: ____
____

What I am willing to do (training/coaching/agitation/accountability): ______________________
____

Self-Interest

This proposition is in their self-interest because: ______________________________________
____

This proposition is in my self-interest because: ____
____

The obstacles to this proposition may be: ____
____

My plan to address the obstacle is: ____
____

Our plan for accountability is: ____
____

Evaluate the Conversation

1) **Seriousness** Was this conversation scheduled and face-to-face?
2) **Clarity** Was the proposition clearly stated? Did the person understand what I wanted? Was I direct and straightforward?
3) **Self-interest** Did I state why this person was in my interest? Did I tell them why I thought this proposition was in their self-interest?
4) **Agreement** Did I reach clarity with this person about their commitment, my commitment, and the next steps? Did I give them room to explore their doubts, negotiate, and accept or reject the proposition?
5) **Accountability** Do we have an agreed-upon plan for accountability? How will I keep up my end of the bargain? What next step could I take to confirm what was agreed to?
6) **Relationship** Was our relationship strengthened as a result of this conversation? Why? How? Do I need to go back and clean up any pieces of the conversation?

**Adapted from the Gamaliel Network.*

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Planning a House Party Worksheet

"The future of humanity does not lie solely in the hands of great leaders, the great powers and the elites. It is fundamentally in the hands of peoples and in their ability to organize. It is in their hands, which can guide with humility and conviction this process of change."

- Pope Francis

What's your goal?

____

____

____

Type of event

- ☐ Film screening
- ☐ Presentation: speaker or panel discussion
- ☐ Book discussion
- ☐ Meet-and-greet
- ☐ Workshop
- ☐ Webinar or online meeting

Location ____

- Is it convenient and accessible for your guests? ____________________
- How can people get there? __________________________________
- How many people can this space accommodate comfortably? __________

Date and time __________________________________

- What do you know about the schedules of your target audience? ________________
- ____
- Daytime or evening? ________________
- Weekday or weekend? ________________
- What other local (or non-local) events should you consider to avoid conflicts?

  ____

  ____
- How much time do you need to get the event together? ______________________

Event promotion

- How much advance notice do potential participants need? __________
- Personal invitation: **paper** or **digital** (email, social media, text)? *(**Canva** is a free app/website to create promotional graphics.)*
- Social media (Facebook event, timeline post, etc.)
- Phone calls
- Does the invitation/promotion provide a clear description of the event

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Guest List

Who would be interested in participating in this event?

- People from church
- Neighbors
- Family members
- Friends
- People from another local organization

Brainstorm a guest list here: ____

____

____

____

____

____

Other factors to consider

- Do you need to consider providing child care? ____________________
- If so, who could you recruit to do this? _______________________________
  ____
- Do you need people to RSVP? _______
- If so, who will collect the responses? _____________________________
- Does a NETWORK staff member need to be there (in person or via phone/video)? _________
- What NETWORK materials would you like to offer guests?
  ____
  ____
  ____
- Have you communicated this request with a NETWORK staff member?
- Will you serve food or drinks? ______________
- If so, who will provide them? ____
- **Always have a sign-in sheet for your guests. Assign someone to make sure everyone has signed in so you can track attendance and follow up.** _________________

Equipment needed - who will provide it?

- Television - ____________________
- DVD player or computer and hookup to television - __________________
- Sound system: microphone and speakers - ______________________
- Tables - ________________________
- Chairs - ________________________
- Sign-in sheet - __________________
- Name tags - ____________________
- Pens and/or markers - ____________
- Food and/or drinks - _____________
  ____

Roles

- Emcee - ______________________________
- Host - ______________________________
- Communication with NETWORK staff (before and after) - ______________________________
- Child care - ______________________________
- Ensure everyone is signed in - ______________________________
- Primary event (technology or presentation) - ______________________________
- Invitations - ______________________________
- RSVP collection - ______________________________
- Turnout/reminder phone calls - ______________________________
- Guests

Create Your Agenda/Run of Show

Time	Activity	How long?	Responsible Party
	Arrival		
	Welcome		
	Introductions		
	Main event		
	Q&A or Conversation		
	Thank you/call to action		
	Commitment cards		
	Departure		

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Lobby Visit Planning and Reporting Sheet

______________________________	______________________________
Elected Official	**Office Location**
______________________________	______________________________
Staff Attending Meeting	**Date and Time of Visit**

1. **The issue or bill you are talking about:** ______________________________

2. **Facts about the Member of Congress**

   Party: ________________ Hometown: ______________________________

   Religion: ____________ When Elected: __________ When up for re-election: ____________

   Committees:

   ____

   Record on related legislation:

   ____

   Other Positive Contributions:

   ____

3. **People attending this visit:** **Organization and/or Title:**

______________________________	______________________________
______________________________	______________________________
______________________________	______________________________
______________________________	______________________________
______________________________	______________________________

Tip: Have each person introduce her/himself by sharing name and where they are from. If you are a constituent, say so. Name groups you represent and tell how many people are involved in each.

Introducer ______________ Note-taker ______________ Timekeeper ______________

Who's making the ask? ______________________________

Tip: Say something positive about the Member at the beginning of the visit to break the ice.

Tip: Don't let the Member/staff person take the conversation off track!

Speaker: **Chosen Talking Point about the Issue/Bill:**

____________________	____
____________________	____
____________________	____
____________________	____
____________________	____

Tip: Tell a personal story that connects you with the issue.

4. **Make the Ask (Write the question down here):**
____

Answer:
____

Tip: End the meeting by thanking the Member/staff for their time and consideration. Don't forget a group photo!

5. **Follow Up**
Who will write the thank you email? ____

Does additional information need to be sent to the Office?

____

____

What is the next step?

____

____

What did the Member/staff commit to do?

____

____

Was there anything particularly interesting that needs to be shared with NETWORK or clarified?

____

____

***Please remember to send the names & contact information of each person in the lobby visit, plus the group photo AND notes from the meeting to NETWORK staff and** info@networklobby.org*