

What Community Organizing Is

“If you are not at the table, you are on the menu.”

Simply put community organizing is a process where people come together into an organization that acts in their shared self-interest in order to build a coherent strategy for gaining power and for making specific social changes. The development of durable "power" and influence is a key aim of community organizing. Building collective power for the powerless includes:

1. Involving a constituency in identifying problems and solutions.
2. Identifying people and institutions (your targets) who are the decision-makers , such as government, corporations, institutions.
3. Pressuring the targets through education, negotiation and sometimes confrontation.
4. Building a democratically controlled organization that is controlled by and run by the constituents, thereby creating durable power for the organization.
5. Training the constituents to understand the history of their issues, to get the skills needed to be successful at solving issues and building power.
6. Developing new and skilled local **leaders**, facilitating coalitions and assisting in the development of campaigns.
7. Creating a vehicle for ordinary families to participate in the political process.
8. Creating a plan, as a group, that includes strategies and tactics to gain power and influence and above all win concrete solutions.

What are ways to pressure the decision-makers?

- Pickets
- Demonstrations
- Boycotts
- Sit-ins
- Petitions
- Running for office

How do you build a base?

- Holding social gatherings like spaghetti dinners and movie nights.
- Calling for public meetings.
- Knocking on doors.
- Building coalitions with allies, including neighborhood associations, labor and faith-based organizations.
- Using social media.

Why are their dues?

- To maintain their independence.
- To build civic engagement and a sense of belonging.
- To build trust.

Adapted from Wikipedia

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community_organizing