

ORGANIZE

Total Time—3 hours

Learning Goals

- Discuss why it's effective when members tell their story to non-members and why members should be involved in helping to organize workers.
- Examine how to overcome workers' fears of joining together.
- Practice initiating first contact during an organizing campaign and moving through a conversation with workers.
- View examples of creative ways members have engaged in actions to support organizing campaigns.

Sections—Time

- I. Welcome, Review Goals of the Training—5 minutes
- II. Being Part of Our Union—10 minutes
- III. Why Organize and Why You—30 minutes
- IV. Overcoming Challenges in Organizing: Facing Fear—30 minutes
- V. First Conversations with Non-Union Workers—30 minutes
- VI. Home Calls—30 minutes
- VII. Home Call Role Play—30 minutes
- VIII. Wrap-Up—15 minutes

Materials Needed

Flip Chart, Markers, Tape

Copies of the Steward Handbook

Internet Connection, Laptop, Projector, Speakers and Screen/Blank Wall

Handouts/Worksheets

Talking Union with Non-Union Workers

A Complete House Visit

Preparing for the Workshop

The facilitation team for this training should include experienced organizers.

The training includes multiple internet videos. A solid internet connection is recommended.

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I. Goals for the Training—5 mins

- Discuss why it's effective when members tell their story to non-members and why members should be involved in helping to organize workers.



- Examine how to overcome workers' fears of joining together.
- Practice initiating first contact during an organizing campaign and moving through a conversation with workers.
- View examples of creative ways members have engaged in actions to support organizing campaigns.

II. Being a Part of Our Union—10 mins

Ask what the participants value about being a part of our union (chart responses and post, for reference later).

III. Why Organize and Why You?—30 mins

Ask: Why do organizing campaigns to bring more workers into our union matter to us? Chart responses.

If participants don't mention these points, explain that:

- Our own self-interest. For all of the reasons we mentioned that being a part of the union matters, we want to insure that we grow to be even more powerful. Bringing new workers into our union can improve our ability to make change at our own workplaces and to negotiate and enforce strong contracts. This, in turn, positively impacts our families and communities and leads to broader social and economic justice.
- Our organizing campaigns are part of a bigger plan to grow the union density (how many people belong to unions) in our industries. This helps to win new protections and to keep the gains we've already achieved, including our benefits, job security, fair treatment, working conditions and wages.

Show the video "This is Why We Fight" <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8TKVsZ4iYaE>. Discuss the video as a large group, reinforcing why new organizing matters to build our power.

Module Icon Key

Flip Chart



Ideas



In Handbook

Worksheet/
Handout

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Ask: How can you connect with people who may not have previous experience with a union (or are unfamiliar with unions in the U.S.)? Could sharing your own story be effective? Chart responses.



If participants don't mention these points, explain that:

- “Showing” (with specific examples) versus just “telling” them that workers are the union/ have power
- Sharing your own experience-no one can tell a story like someone who's lived it. A grocery worker telling her story to another grocery worker is more impactful than someone who's never done this work (and exercised rights under the contract). Your voice is powerful!

Explain that there are two short videos that members created as part of their contract campaigns to share why being a part of a union is important. The first is “One union/One Voice” and the other is “Retail Workers Speak Out!”

Ask the participants to listen closely for the message that the workers convey.

Show the videos: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=endscreen&v=shKuFW8vvJI&NR=1>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=endscreen&v=EGMDPgB6HtY&NR=1>

IV. Overcoming Challenges in Organizing: Facing Fear— 30 mins



Ask: What are some challenges you foresee when trying to talk to non-union workers about organizing? Why aren't more people in unions? Chart responses.



If participants don't mention these points, explain that:

- Fear is a challenge that all workers have to overcome to be successful in organizing a union.

This includes:

- Fear of the unknown (a worker may have never been part of a union and only heard what their bosses say about organized labor)
- Fear of losing their job and what this would mean for them and their families
- Fear through intimidation- after being disrespected and pushed down for so long, it may be difficult to see that there's another possibility (standing together and organizing).

Ask: How can we help people to overcome their fear? What would you do to move non-union workers past their fears so that they can organize together? Chart responses.

Referring to the participants' responses, highlight comments related to anger or hope. If no one identifies anger or hope, explain that:

- When dealing with a strong emotion like fear, we need another emotion just as strong (or stronger) to overcome it. Two powerful emotions, similar to fear, are anger and hope.
- We can use hope and anger to move people to act (not just react) in place of fear. The idea that with unity there is hope can be very powerful. This not only applies to strength in numbers, but also the hope that change is possible.

Refer back to the charted responses about why belonging to our union is valuable and identify hopeful responses (I like having a contract that provides greater benefits for me and my family) or angry responses (I hate the way management treats us and we get to fight back with our union).

Explain that in order to figure out what a person might feel hopeful or angry about, we need to know what they care about. In union organizing, we sometimes call this “finding the issues.” In order to learn about workers' issues, we need to talk with them. One-to-one communication is key.



Ask: Where do you think we can have these conversations?

If participants don't mention these points, explain that:

- Talking with workers in their homes is usually the safest space. If not their homes, another location where we and the worker(s) can talk and listen freely to one another.

Reinforce that one-to-one communication is critical and is the most important role for members during organizing campaigns. By sharing our own stories, we can make the idea of a union real for other workers.

V. First Conversations with Non-union Workers—30 mins

Explain that our first contact with workers is usually quick. Most often it's at a worksite or in a parking area near a worksite. Our goal is to engage the workers enough in this brief exchange to get their contact information and some sense of their key concerns or issues. This will help to lay the groundwork for later conversations.

We often call our organizing conversations (whether quick or more detailed), our “rap.” The “rap” is an outline for the conversation that can help us stay focused and be most effective as organizers.



Distribute and review the Steps in Talking Union with Non-union Workers handout.

Example Role Play

Ask for a volunteer to come up to the front of the room, to play a worker being approached by a union organizer. As the facilitator, you will play the organizer. Explain that this is an example of what the “rap” might look like.

This is a sample script for the role play. It is provided here as a guide; make it your own:

Hi my name is... And I'm a member of the UFCW union from (such and such). Some of your Fresh and Easy co-workers contacted us about... So what's it like working here? Is there one thing that you think would make this an even better place to work? Oh, that makes sense. I can see how that would improve your job. We've been able to make some changes like that with our union at ... and this has helped me/ my family because... Does this sound like something you might be interested in learning more about? Great. I have a lot more to tell you. Can I get your contact info-so we can talk when you're not working?

Role Play in Pairs

Break the participants into pairs. Explain that everyone will have a chance to play a) an organizer and b) a worker being approached. Ask everyone to practice taking turns having an initial contact conversation. Explain that this is their warm-up for the next exercise and should take 10 minutes (5 minutes for each conversation).

Parking Lot Role Play

Once everyone has practiced in pairs, divide the participants into two groups. Explain that one group will play workers who've just gotten off of work and are walking in the parking lot and that the other group will play organizers approaching them. Explain that who they approach will be random, just as it would be in an actual parking lot. Encourage them not to think too much about who they approach.

Remind everyone that the first goal is to approach workers and have an initial conversation. The second goal is to leave with some contact information (name, address, phone number). Explain that they'll have 5 minutes total for the one conversation.

Debrief

Bring everyone back together and ask how they felt about the parking lot role play. Were they able to achieve both goals? What was easy about the exercise? What was challenging? What ideas/tips do they have?

VI. Home Calls (or other extended in-person conversations)—30 mins

Explain that although workers may initially have some questions and/ or concerns about why we've appeared at their door, we'll be able to get past these by having genuine conversations. For the most part, people feel more comfortable talking about their jobs away from their worksite and when they're in their own space.



Distribute and review the handout, A Complete House Visit. Ask what questions the group has about the handout.

Explain that once a worker has let us into their home, we need to start a conversation.



Ask: What do you think are some good first questions? Chart responses.

If participants don't include these questions, mention:



- How long have you worked there?
- If you could change one thing at work what would it be?
- Have things gotten better or worse- if so, how? (for long-time employees)
- Are things better or worse than you expected? (for newer employees)

Explain that, in addition to asking these questions, there are some communication tips that can help our home calls go well.



Pre-Chart the words in bold and review the list with the group:

- **Listen.** Try to listen more than you talk
- **Go deeper, not wider.** If the worker tells you that their employer has a bad temper, don't change the subject to talk about health insurance.
- **Follow a question with a question.** Use follow up as a tool to encourage the worker to share more, and ask questions that make sense.
- **Ask open ended questions.** You can't have a real conversation with a worker if you set things up for them to only respond with a yes or no.
- **You're not taking a poll.** If it starts to feel this way, you may be talking too much
- **If you don't know... ask!** We're organizers, not their co-workers. Don't act like you're an expert and remember that people usually like to explain more about their own experience.

VII. Home Call Role Play—30 mins

Explain that we're now going to practice home calling workers.

There are two facilitation options:

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- If there are enough experienced organizers/facilitators who can help with this section, break everyone into small groups, with each of the experienced organizers playing the workers being home called (as well as leading the group/ keeping the exercise on track).
- If there are only one or two experienced organizers/facilitators, keep everyone together, with the experienced organizer(s) playing the workers and leading the group.

How to lead the role play: Whether in a small or large group, ask the participants to pair up and assign each pair one section of a home call visit—i.e. “getting in the door” “learning about the worker’s issues,” “educating about our union,” “agitation” and so on. The facilitator should play the same worker throughout.

Facilitators may choose to stop after each section of the home call visit to de-brief what worked well and what could have been improved, or to wait to de-brief at the end. Either way, there will be short pauses as the pairs switch out throughout the conversation.

As preparation for the role-play, explain that during the course of conversations with workers, we’re likely to encounter people who have many questions—some that may seem tough to answer.

Remind everyone that we don’t need to know everything; but that we should be honest and provide accurate information—and that it’s always okay to say that you don’t know something, but will try to get an answer (and then follow-up).

Encourage the participants to use their knowledge of their union contract and overall experience as a member and steward in our union to help when answering tough questions.



Explain that it’s also helpful, when faced with tough questions, to think in terms of “AAR”. Pre-chart the words in bold and review the list with the group:

- **Affirm.** Agree that their concern is valid- you may not understand why this is a concern for them but it’s important to affirm/ respect that, for them, this is real.
- **Answer.** Explain how organizing together (and getting a union contract) can help with such concerns. This is where your knowledge as a union steward/protector of worker’s rights can be very powerful
- **Redirect.** Refer back to their issues and challenge them to organize with others to make changes. Like we discussed earlier, when we’re dealing with a strong emotion like fear, we need to draw out emotions just as

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strong to combat it. Remind the worker why organizing makes sense based on what they told you their issues were. Inspire enough anger and/or hope to move past their tough questions/reservations

If time permits, ask the participants to practice “AAR” with common tough questions that they may encounter on the campaign (either ask the group to generate a list of such questions, or provide a list of the most common).

Experienced organizers should play the workers with the tough questions, either in the full group, or in break-outs.

VIII. Wrap Up—15 mins

Remind everyone that as stewards and member activists, they are a critical part of our organizing efforts. Thank everyone for participating in the training and explain that before we leave, we’re going to watch two videos that highlight members’ contributions during organizing campaigns:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uYA3xC_jx2I (UFCW and OUR Walmart members)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SiNJVHQxNvE> (UFCW Local 21 members with Santa)

If time permits, you can also share:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=02zjE-aQ-3w> (Lancaster, CA Walmart action)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=endscreen&v=EnuUN2WxhWk&NR=1> (UFCW Local 400 music video)

HANDOUT: STEPS IN TALKING UNION WITH NON-UNION WORKERS

Introduction

Be clear—who you are & why you’re approaching them.

Identify their main issues and concerns

How do you like it here?... If you could change one thing at work, what would it be?...

Share the campaign’s message

The concise, overall reason that you’re talking with workers.

The “ask”

Something you’re asking them to do...

Would you be interested in making this an even better place to work?...

Would you accept this card that has my contact info on it and be in touch with me so that we can talk further about making change here?...

I know you’re busy, so I don’t want to take up anymore of your time. Can I get your contact info so that we can talk further about making change here?...

HANDOUT: A COMPLETE HOUSE VISIT

1. **Introduction.** Explain who you are and why you're there.
2. **Issues.** Find out what this person cares about, what matters to them and what they'd like to change.
3. **Agitation.** Hone in on what moves them to act by encouraging anger and/or hope.
4. **Education.** Share about the UFCW and how having a union can make a difference.
5. **Call the question.** Ask if they support forming a union at their workplace.
6. **Inoculation.** Prepare the worker for the boss's reaction to them organizing; explain what's likely to happen next.
7. **Assignment/follow up plan.** Provide doable tasks to move the campaign forward.

The way we introduce ourselves on the doors is very important- we typically only have one chance at the door, and this will impact our ability to connect further with the worker.

Steps for Success at the Door:

1. **Introduce ourselves.** Our name and an easy to understand definition of the union—i.e. not just "the UFCW", but "the grocery store workers' union," "the meatpacking workers' union," or "the retail union," etc.
2. **Explain why we are there.** Clear and concise—some of your co-workers want to improve things by forming a union.
3. **Create urgency.** It is important that we talk.
4. **Ask to come in.**

Tips for talking with workers: Trying to have a real conversation with people where you gain their trust and empower them to take action can be challenging. These tips can help you to stay on track.

Remember the 3 C's:

Clear. Choose words that are understandable and get to the point.

Concise. Try to say things once and as simply as possible.

Concrete. Use specific examples (your personal story), when asked questions.