Recruiting Constituents for Collective Action

SIGN ME UP—I WANT TO LEARN MORE

Lorena, a single mother working for minimum wage, can’t make her rent and goes to the welfare office for help. When she gives her application form to the caseworker, the caseworker yells at Lorena in the middle of the office, telling her she should learn to manage money—it’s her own fault she’s in trouble.

At the same welfare office, Renee, a Community Voices Heard (CVH) organizer, is signing up people for a new campaign to create jobs for people on welfare. After Lorena finishes with the caseworker and starts to leave, Renee stops her and starts a conversation, asking Lorena what happened. Lorena tells her and asks if Renee can help with her case.

Renee explains that she is not a caseworker, but that she works with a group of people on welfare who just stopped the governor from cutting welfare benefits by protesting in Albany and meeting with legislators right here in the Bronx. Even though Lorena is thinking about the money she needs, she’s angry. “I’ve worked for eight years at every job I could so I wouldn’t need welfare,” she tells Renee. “My rent went up three months ago and I had to come here. But she made me feel like I don’t deserve help.” Renee asks Lorena why she thinks caseworkers do that and what she thinks would make the system better. They talk for a few minutes. Renee pulls a postcard from a stack on her clipboard. “These are for the mayor,” Renee says, “telling him we want jobs with decent wages so that people on welfare can really support themselves.” Lorena readily agrees to sign a postcard. Renee invites Lorena to come to a meeting at CVH to work on the campaign, but Lorena is unsure about doing that. She agrees to give Renee her name, address, and phone number and says it’s OK if Renee wants to call her.
As Renee walks away, she jots a number “2” next to Lorena’s name, meaning that on a scale of one to three, Renee’s quick assessment is that Lorena’s potential to move to action is in the middle. Lorena was engaged, angry, and asked questions, all signs of interest, but since she didn’t say she wanted to get involved, maybe she will or maybe she won’t. Renee will call Lorena the next day to explore her potential further.

What Is Recruitment for Base-Building and Why Is It Important?
Recruitment is the process of meeting people, assessing their potential to get involved in collective action, and recording their contact information. You can only build a base for power by constantly going out and bringing new people who are affected by the issues into your campaign and your organization.

Recruitment includes not only building a list of names, but also starting to “work the list” by following up with people so they become members of your organization. In addition, issues change over time, so you keep bringing in new people who are affected in new ways.

How Do We Conduct Recruitment?
You conduct recruitment by going out to find constituents where they live, work, socialize, or spend time, or by inviting people to teach-ins, house meetings, and other small-group events.

The first process, which organizers refer to as “going out in the field,” is described here. Later in the chapter we discuss recruiting people through teach-ins and house meetings. See Tool 3.1 for a handout covering dos and don’ts of successful recruitment in the field.

1. Before You Go Out
   - Understand the campaign. When you conduct recruitment, you are building not only the organization but usually a campaign as well. Before you go out, be clear about the goal and demands of the campaign, how many people you need to recruit, and which constituents are directly affected. (For more about campaigns, see Chapters Seven through Thirteen.)
   - Identify good points of entry. A point of entry is a place where you can meet people affected by the issue your organization is addressing. A good point of entry allows you the freedom to talk to many people in a short period of
time. At most points of entry you meet “cold contacts.” A cold contact is someone who has no knowledge of your organization. A point of entry could be a social service site, a workplace, or a park. In a rural setting, it is likely to be a church, a school, or a gathering in someone’s home. You go where constituents are at the time they are most likely to be there, not just where and when it is most convenient for you. For example, doorknocking, or going door-to-door to talk to people at their homes, can be a good point of entry. The best time to knock on doors, in most communities, is Sunday evening, between 5 P.M. and 9 P.M., clearly outside what many people would consider a regular work week. Finding a good point of entry takes some research, trial, and evaluation. See Tool 3.2 for a sample worksheet you can use to guide organizers to plan where, when, and how they will do recruitment.

Identifying Points of Entry

For the CVH campaign to win real jobs with good wages and benefits for people on welfare, CVH uses Work Experience Program (WEP) worksites as the main point of entry. (See the Story of Community Voices Heard for background information about the jobs campaign and WEP program.) WEP workers, the constituents of the campaign, must perform work activities in exchange for welfare benefits, but they do not receive a paycheck. They often work right alongside union members and others who are doing exactly the same thing but are getting paid a full salary.

CVH organizers use investigative skills to find WEP workers, going to parks, recreation centers, and office buildings and asking where the workers are. They learn that the WEP workers usually do cleaning and maintenance. Because outsiders can only legally talk to workers before their shifts, during lunch hours, or after the work day, the organizers learn when these times occur. They find out where workers take smoking breaks and where their locker rooms are. Sometimes they enter buildings and organize impromptu meetings while people are working. This action violates city regulations but ends up recruiting a lot of workers, using the setting of group meetings to get people to think collectively. For example, when at City Hall for a public hearing—a building that is normally off limits for organizing—an organizer may go up to some WEP workers who are cleaning the bathrooms and try to recruit them.
• Set numeric goals. Organizing is all about numbers. You set goals for the number of people you need to sign up every time you go out. At the start of a new campaign, an organizer, preferably someone with experience, may try to recruit people at different points of entry in order to establish the average number of people he or she can sign up in an hour. This is one way to determine a standard that everyone who is doing recruitment can follow. Whether you start with an end goal, such as five hundred contacts, or with a site-specific goal, such as ten people at a worksite, clear numeric goals give you the ability to evaluate the effectiveness of your daily and weekly recruitment.

• Practice a rap. Construct the outline of a rap, a five- to seven-minute conversation that prepares you to talk with someone you don’t know and helps you assess if a person you’re speaking with will move to action. More on this important tool follows later in this chapter.

• Prepare materials. Keep materials to a minimum so you don’t overwhelm people. If you want to distribute anything besides what we describe here, such as a brochure, keep it simple and highlight any accomplishments you have.

Adapt the following materials based on the campaign and its progress or by evaluating what gets people to respond.

Data-collection sheet. A data-collection sheet, also referred to as a sign-up or contact sheet, is a sheet (usually carried on a clipboard) on which you record name, contact information, personal characteristics, and your assessment of whether or not a person will move to action.

Commitment cards. A commitment card or pledge card is a good engagement tool. It is a form of collective action. A commitment card is a sheet of paper that states a commitment to come to an action or support a campaign: “I will be at City Hall on October 5th to fight for jobs!” It includes information about the time and place of the action that you give to the contact as well as a tear-off sheet that the person fills in and gives you. Another kind of commitment card is a “membership card,” set up in a similar way, stating that the person wants to be a member of the organization or be considered a participant in the campaign. A commitment card gives you something concrete to follow up on in a phone call:
“Thanks for signing our pledge yesterday. I’m calling to remind you to come out to City Hall on Friday!” It gives you something to show allies and people in power as you implement your campaign: “More than five hundred people have signed our action pledge to fight for jobs now!”

Flyer. Create a simple, attention-getting flyer about the campaign or an upcoming event that conveys three points. First, it highlights an organizational accomplishment to show people that others just like them won something that made their community better. Second, it agitates people with a bold heading or question, such as, “What does your drinking water smell like?” Third, it includes your contact information.

• Determine a call to action. Decide on a concrete act a potential member can take. It could be writing a letter on the spot, calling a local legislator on an offered cell phone, completing a survey, or signing a petition to a landlord. (Tool 7.2 in Chapter Seven provides a sample survey.) Taking such an action deepens commitment, helping a person to feel that she did something useful. If she does take such an action, it clearly indicates to you that she wants to do something to change her condition. Like signing a commitment card or pledge, taking an action is an initial form of collective action.

• Show you are proud of your organization. You don’t need ID cards or credentials, your legitimacy comes from your organization’s accomplishments and the power of collective action. A button or t-shirt with the name of the organization on it can help people understand that you are part of an organized group and show that you are proud to be a part of it. Do not wear buttons or t-shirts if you do not want your presence to be known by those who don’t want you talking to people at the site.

2. Out in the Field

• Listen for readiness and potential. You look for people who have an appetite to do something with others and who openly question the way things are. You also look for people who are ready but hesitant, due to fear or inexperience from not knowing what to do or feeling like there is no use. It is the role of the organizer to move people who feel this way—to get them to see that collective action makes a difference. You offer people a chance to participate in something big and exciting. This offer starts with your rap. You offer possibilities for real change.
• **Explore self-interest.** A person’s self-interest is what she needs to get out of the time and energy she puts into being involved. Having self-interest is different from being selfish. Self-interest is a natural, guiding force. If someone really wants and needs something—a job, a place to live, a good education for her children—she puts time and energy into activities that get those needs met. Self-interest also includes wanting to learn new skills or build personal networks. When you understand someone’s self-interest, you can use it to get her involved.

• **Conduct research.** By listening, you learn more about the issues and how they are affecting people. You note trends and common concerns, not individual anecdotes.

• **Get a commitment.** Getting a commitment is the key to follow-up. If someone just says, “I’ll call you,” chances are she won’t. If someone says she will do something, you can call and ask her to do it. You can use a commitment card or make a direct request you determined in advance. Keep in mind that recruitment commitments are “soft commitments.” The person has conveyed interest but you have to confirm it. Some organizations ask for member dues during recruitment as a way of not only raising money but also getting a commitment. Giving money is a stronger commitment, but still requires follow-up.

• **Form assessments.** Throughout the conversation, you look for the person’s analysis of the issues and a desire to get involved, not just wanting to talk or get help. You form an initial assessment about the person’s potential to get involved, using the tips described in Tool 3.3. Many groups use a rating system such as the following to evaluate the likelihood that a person will get involved:

  1: Very likely to get involved. A “1” engages in a dialogue. She understands the need for collective action to address community problems. She is deeply concerned about the issue. You prioritize “1s” for immediate, intensive follow up.

  2: Maybe will get involved. A “2” has self-interest in the issue but lacks urgency or deep connection to your offer for collective action. You con-
tact “2s” to follow up, but may not do so intensively, especially if you have many “1s.”

3: **Unlikely to get involved.** A “3” gives you her contact information but does not express any fire. She would rather resolve the problem alone. You do not prioritize “3s” for follow-up, but keep them on your list for surveys and similar efforts.

Making an assessment is not about whether or not you like a person. It is not about who is the most talkative or whether or not you think someone has a good heart. It is an objective assessment about the potential of that person to move to collective action with your organization.

- **Record contact information.** On your data-collection sheet, you clearly write down a name, address, phone number, rating, and comments for everyone who stops and has a conversation with you. It is better for you to do the writing, going through each category for thoroughness, rather than have people fill out their contact information themselves. You write legibly so you can read the information later. Without records to which you and other organizers can later refer, it is not worth having the conversations.

- **Keep moving.** It can be tempting to stay with someone you think has a great analysis of the issues, or someone you think you can convince if you can keep the conversation going, but limiting the time you spend with each person is absolutely essential. If someone has potential, you will follow up later. If someone is not interested, say thanks and move on. With experience, you learn to assess real interest in two or three minutes. You stay with one person for no more than five to seven minutes. You can accomplish a great deal in that short period of time. Always remember your numeric goals. There are other people you need to meet.

- **Don’t promise what you can’t deliver.** You don’t get involved with people’s personal problems or promise that if they get involved in a campaign, they will definitely win. The only promise you can make is, “If we don’t act, nothing will change.”

3. Back at the Office

- **Reflect on your field work.** If you have someone with whom you can debrief, do so. A debrief is a conversation in which you review the facts of what you
experienced and then look at the implications. If you are alone, think critically for a moment and make notes in your organizer notebook. Who was a good potential leader and why? (For more on leadership identification, see Chapter Five.) What did you learn about the issue? How well did your rap work? How was the turf—the geographic area where your organization’s members live or where you are looking for new constituents? Were the constituents you were looking for actually there and could you talk with them? Has another organization tried to organize people there? Talk or think about whether or not you met your numeric goals and why. Reflect on the positive experiences—the people who said yes, not just those who said no.

- **Enter contacts and assessments into the database.** You put the information from your contact sheets into the database. A database is a computer software program that keeps track of information about people. (For more on establishing and using a database, see Chapter Six.) You are building your list, which refers to the names and information you have about constituents. Your job is to work this list—to turn names and numbers into members.

- **Use visual aids to share information.** In addition to entering contact information into the database, writing on wall charts the numbers you contacted helps communicate progress, shares information with other staff and with members, and visually highlights the importance of doing ongoing recruitment.

- **Reflect on your assessments.** As you put your assessment notes in the database, you reflect further: Why do you think a person is likely or not to get involved? What did she specifically say or do? This reflection is part of the critical thinking that an organizer develops. It helps you to decide realistically how much time you will spend trying to involve each person.

- **Follow up.** Adhere to a twenty-four- to forty-eight-hour rule: Within twenty-four to forty-eight hours, you call people with potential and have a deeper conversation. If you wait too long, people are likely to forget about your conversation and the interest they experienced when speaking with you face-to-face. Send a follow-up letter and information about your organization. Immediately schedule to visit anyone you ranked as a “1.”
Bringing Information and People into the Organization

In recruiting for the Transitional Jobs Campaign, CVH organizers leave the office in the mornings with clipboards stacked with pledge cards people can sign saying they support the campaign, information about WEP workers’ rights, and flyers about upcoming meetings or actions. Organizers urge people to come out to actions. They get signed pledge cards so CVH can show city officials and labor unions that WEP workers are organized and want real jobs.

At the end of each day of recruitment, organizers come back to CVH with their pledge cards, their notes about WEP sites, assessments of the people they met, and notes about what people agreed to do. They talk with each other about what they experienced in the field. Organizers are learning what affects WEP workers on the ground.

What Are Some Other Ways We Find People?

*Sometimes people come to you, but you still have to do the work of recruiting them.*

Constituents you have never met before may attend your actions, such as public meetings or rallies. They may call the office or stop by. These are potential members. No matter where or how you meet a potential member, the process is always the same: you make an assessment and get contact information so you can follow up.

Recruiting Someone Who Contacts You

Jacqueline is a WEP worker in a city agency. She is angry that she has been pulled out of college and forced to work for free, and she is struggling to get child care for her son. One day she sees a flyer about a meeting of WEP workers and she calls the number on the flyer. An organizer answers the phone. Instead of just telling Jacqueline what time the meeting will be, he talks with her about CVH and the campaign and finds out where she works. He tells her someone will be there the next morning to talk with her about her WEP site. He takes her name and contact information. The next day, an organizer goes to her site. Jacqueline talks with the organizer and agrees to organize a meeting at her site. Even though the other
workers do not get involved, Jacqueline goes on to play a core leadership role at CVH, speaking out in public, doing strategic planning, and eventually serving on the board of directors—all because a staff member engaged her in a chance phone call and got the information to follow up.

How Do We Talk with Someone We Don’t Know?

*Effective initial recruitment, the first time you talk with someone, is characterized by a strong rap.*

A rap is the five- to seven-minute conversation that introduces you and the organization. It is your tool for approaching a person you don’t know and engaging him or her in a dialogue.

You approach a person confidently. Never ask, “Can I talk to you?” The best approach is: “I’m Mary from Community Voices Heard and I am here talking to people about their thoughts about ____________________. I’d like to know what you think.” Introducing yourself, the organization, and your reason for being there immediately clarifies why you are stopping this person to talk or why you need him to keep the door open. Anything you can say about the accomplishments of your organization—“what people like you have already won”—encourages him to talk with you.

In your rap, you test whether or not the issue resonates. Does it affect this person and does she care about it? You listen for the connections she may have in the community—through a workplace, neighborhood association, or institution such as church or school. A rap includes political education, so that you can both motivate someone to engage with you and assess how she analyzes the problem.

You talk *with* each person and show that you are listening—make eye contact, smile, reflect back what you hear. You don’t talk *at* people or lecture them. You only ask questions to engage a person in a conversation. If you want something, don’t ask. Instead, you say, for example, “Let me write down your name and number.”

A rap is not a script. It is nuanced, directive, yet fluid enough to accommodate responses. A rap is somewhat like poetry. It encompasses the voice of the organizer and organization. It sounds real and natural. A great rap motivates people to engage with the larger world. The more you do a rap, the more skilled you become at having this conversation with people.
The sample rap in Exhibit 3.1 shows the elements of a rap in the order that is most effective. You can refer to this sample to create a rap that works for you. See Tool 3.4 for a blank form for writing a rap and Exercise 3.1 for a scenario to train people to think about elements of a rap in relationship to other recruitment tools. See Exercise 3.2 for how to train people to do a rap.

**Exhibit 3.1**

**Sample Rap**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Introduction</strong></th>
<th>I am Mary from Community Voices Heard, and I’m talking to people today about the mayor’s proposal to provide $600 million in city funds for a new stadium in Manhattan.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-interest</strong></td>
<td>Do you think the mayor should be giving the wealthy owners of a sports team city funds to build a stadium—while he proposes cutting city services in this neighborhood?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accomplishments</strong></td>
<td>The members of Community Voices Heard, who are all people just like you, successfully pressured New York City to create ten thousand jobs for people on welfare and improve services at city antipoverty programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Political education</strong></td>
<td>The mayor says he wants people on welfare to get jobs and that’s why he is giving this money to the sports team to build the stadium. Yet there are no job guarantees or any legal commitments to hire unemployed people on welfare or to pay living wages with benefits. Why do you think that is?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agitation</strong></td>
<td>What do you think about city money being given to sports teams and tax breaks to wealthy developers while our neighborhood schools are overcrowded and don’t have enough textbooks?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Call to action</strong></td>
<td>These petitions will go to the mayor, showing him that people are opposed to this funding of the stadium. It would be great if you’d sign one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Commitment</strong></td>
<td>We are having a meeting in two weeks to talk more about this issue and how it affects our community. I hope you can come.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data collection</strong></td>
<td>I’d like to write down your contact information: name, address, phone number, e-mail, and best time to reach you.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What Makes Someone “Recruited”?

You consider a person to be recruited when she or he publicly aligns as a member of your organization.

Recruitment begins when you get someone’s name and contact information and continues as you move the person to take a step that your organization recognizes as indicating “I am now part of this organization.” In some organizations the step is going to a meeting or participating in a collective action. In others, it is attending an orientation. In some organizations the step is signing a membership card or paying dues. Whatever the step, once the person you are recruiting takes it, she becomes part of your membership and you work to involve her, as we describe in Chapter Four.

What Are Some Additional Tools to Recruit People?

You bring people into your organization through group meetings.

CVH uses two different types of group meetings to recruit people: teach-ins and house meetings. A house meeting or teach-in provides you with a ready-made group of people. These settings allow you to spend more time with people and see how they act in a group. You explain the campaign and issue in more detail and hear more about people’s thoughts and ideas. You begin the process of getting people to think about the systemic reasons for their problems. House meetings and teach-ins offer roles for members and leaders of your organization, providing excellent opportunities to develop their skills. In rural areas or in organizations where constituents are spread over a large distance, group meetings also serve as a way for organizers to meet and recruit new people. Exercise 3.3, the Community Voices Heard Community Teach-In, provides a sample teach-in curriculum. (See Chapter Seven for more information on how to conduct a house meeting.)

Tool 3.5 provides a summary of key recruitment tools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHALLENGES TO RECRUITMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“We keep interrupting people who are having dinner.” This is good. You’re reaching people when they are home. Ask for a specific time to return and go back at that time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Workplace security won’t let us in.” You don’t ask for permission. You walk in confidently and start talking with the people you want to recruit. If someone blocks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tools for Radical Democracy
your access, you engage the person rather than demanding your rights. For instance, you politely say why you’re there and that you’d appreciate a space to talk to people on their break.

“Isn’t it easier to find people through the Internet?” Web sites, e-mail, and other technology, such as text messaging, are not for recruitment. These are tools to help you mobilize people after you meet them, just like the telephone. You recruit people face-to-face.

“Everyone says no.” Check your rap and the skills of the organizers. More likely, if everyone is saying no, the campaign may be seeking something people don’t want—or something they don’t want enough to fight for. Or you might be recruiting people who are not being affected by the issue. In these cases, you make changes to the campaign.

Sometimes people just won’t talk with you. They may have been burned in a previous campaign that ended badly or by an organization that betrayed their trust. The community may be intimidated by someone in power, such as a landlord or employer. In these cases, you can usually find someone you can probe to assess if the campaign is possible. If you recruit the right people for the right issue with a positive, open attitude, you will get names and numbers.

### Essential Elements for Effective Recruitment

- **Set numeric goals.** Set realistic but ambitious goals for the numbers of people you need to meet and bring into your organization.
- **Go out and talk with people.** Talking with hundreds of individuals face-to-face on a regular basis is the only way to build the power of ordinary people.
- **Get a commitment.** Getting people to commit to something you can follow up on is the key to effective recruitment.
- **Assess potential and get contact information.** No matter how or where you meet a new person, whether it’s in the field or through a phone call at the office, the fundamental process is the same: make an assessment about her potential to get involved and get her contact information so you can follow up.
- **Follow the twenty-four- to forty-eight-hour rule.** Contact a person with potential within twenty-four to forty-eight hours of meeting her.
Tool 3.1
The Dos and Don’ts of Successful Recruitment

You can use the following as a handout for training people to conduct recruitment.

DO!

Do know why you are talking to this constituent. Why are you recruiting members at this site, and for what purpose?

Do use a rap. Before you go out, practice a rap. Play out different statements and questions, with someone else if possible.

Do listen. Good listening helps you to learn about the issue and make a connection with each person. Smile, make eye contact, stay cheerful.

Do agitate. Ask probing questions to elicit a person’s true feelings about an issue and how deeply she cares. Look for anger, an important indicator that someone may move to action.

Do offer an immediate opportunity for action. Many people want to get involved but don’t know how. Provide an opportunity to do something now.

Do be clear about collective action. Make sure a person knows you are offering an opportunity to build power, not one-on-one help with her problems.

Do get a commitment. It is harder for an individual to get out of something she commits to. If she makes a date to come to something, then all you do is follow up with a confirmation call.

Do write down contact information. Write down a name, address, phone number, and your assessment of this person’s potential. Write clearly and neatly on a uniform contact sheet.

Do follow the twenty-four to forty-eight-hour follow-up rule. Good follow-up is the key to effective recruitment. Within twenty-four to forty-eight hours, make a thank you or reminder call and send a note.
Tool 3.1
The Dos and Don’ts of Successful Recruitment, Cont’d

DON’T!

Don’t start with, “Do you have a minute?” Always begin with a confident statement: “I’m here talking with people about . . . and I would like to know what you think.”

Don’t carry too much material. Too much written information overpowers people and is ineffective. Take only what you need. Be sure you can be physically relaxed and able to easily write on a clipboard.

Don’t be a salesperson. Organizing is about relationships and working together, not selling a product. People are turned off if you sell the organization too aggressively.

Don’t spend time convincing someone who isn’t interested. If someone is clearly not interested, say thanks, and walk away. If she wants personal help and your organization offers referrals, give the person a phone number and move on.

Don’t spend too much time with anyone. Don’t stay with any one person for more than five to seven minutes. If someone seems great, make a note and follow up later!

Don’t offer empty promises. Be honest. Don’t tell a person that you or your organization will do something you can’t do.

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Tool 3.2
Point of Entry Recruitment Chart

You can use the following worksheet as a training exercise with a group or as an individual planning tool. Individually or in staff teams, it guides organizers to think about and record where, when, and how they will do recruitment. In a group training with members and staff, it enables members to contribute information about where to find other constituents and to understand the recruitment process better. Participants fill in the following information:
### Tool 3.2

**Point of Entry Recruitment Chart, Cont’d**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site:</th>
<th>One</th>
<th>Two</th>
<th>Three</th>
<th>Four</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Where will we go?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Who will we meet?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How often will we go?</td>
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<td>(daily, weekly, etc.?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What time? (10 A.M., 3 P.M.,</td>
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<td>and so on)</td>
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<tr>
<td>How many contacts</td>
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<tr>
<td>needed in that time?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Who will go?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What is the call to action?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What is the commitment?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rap points:</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
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<td>4.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools we’ll bring:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(survey, other?)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tool 3.3
Tips for Assessing Interest and Potential

Look for “we” versus “me.” Does she say “me” throughout the conversation, or does she say “our community,” “us,” “my neighbors,” or “the building.” Does she suggest collective solutions? Plural language communicates that she understands that the problem and the solution are bigger than her own individual condition and that she has potential to get involved.

Listen for hope. Does she say things can improve and that she wants to play a role in making that happen? If so, she could have potential.

Watch for active listening. Active listening is a very good indicator of interest. To find out if someone is participating in active listening, ask a focused, direct question and see if she responds. Does she ask about your views? Does she refer back to what you say?

Make eye contact. Look directly at the person. If he looks you in the eye, smiles, and nods, he is interested in the conversation. Don’t assume that if his arms are crossed or he looks stern that he is not engaged.

Acknowledge distractions. If he is looking at something else, he might not be interested. If he does give you his contact information, he might just be distracted. You take the information and ask for a better time to come back.

Notice how the conversation ends. Once you get contact information, the end of the conversation ultimately determines how you assess a person. The following are common responses and what they generally mean:

“Put me on the mailing list.” Many people say this. Without a commitment, this usually means a person won’t get involved, especially not soon. Sometimes she will say “I can’t get involved until a certain date, call me then.” Take note of the date and contact her then.

“I’m not sure.” You try to agitate someone who is hesitant and see how she responds in order to make the best assessment.

“I have my own plan.” She is unlikely to get involved.

“I want to get involved.” This statement, along with a commitment to do something, is the best indication that someone will get involved.
Tool 3.4
Rap Outline

You can use the following outline as an individual planning tool to prepare organizers to conduct recruitment. Participants write phrases, in their own words and voice, for each point. Ideally, they should practice the rap before using it.

Your name:

The name of the organization and why you are there talking to people:

An open question that assesses self-interest:

A follow-up question:

Organizational accomplishment:

Information about the problem—political education, agitation, proposed solution:

The call to action:

The commitment:

Name, address, phone number:

Thank you and follow up:

Quick notes and rating:
### Tool 3.5
#### Tools for Effective Recruitment

The following table provides a summary of key recruitment tools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Contact Type</th>
<th>What It Is</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Where You Do It</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collective action</td>
<td>Cold contacts and general members</td>
<td>An invitation to participate in a collective action—rally, march, accountability meeting.</td>
<td>Introduce people to the organization and get them involved</td>
<td>At a point of entry, over the phone, through a mailing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community survey</td>
<td>Cold contacts</td>
<td>A series of questions you can ask people about an issue—a questionnaire</td>
<td>Identify or better understand issues and new constituents</td>
<td>At a point of entry, especially door-to-door</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House meeting</td>
<td>Referrals—friends of current members</td>
<td>A one-hour meeting at someone’s home</td>
<td>Bring people together to identify issues and introduce the organization</td>
<td>The home of a member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach-in</td>
<td>Cold or referral; people associated with a community organization</td>
<td>A one- or two-hour training session about policy issues</td>
<td>Educate people about issues, build a list of people to follow up with</td>
<td>A service, advocacy, religious, or educational group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Exercise 3.1**

**The Fundamentals of Recruitment:**

**Develop, Don’t Destroy! Part One**

You can use the following as a training exercise to review the fundamentals of recruitment. Part Two of this exercise, which reviews how to involve members, follows Chapter Four.

**Scenario:** Your organization wants the state legislature to adopt its plan to develop affordable housing and locally controlled stores in an up-and-coming area of your state, just outside the small city where your constituents live. At the same time, a rich developer is proposing to build luxury housing and big-box stores in the same area, with no commitment to hire locally and a weak promise of including some affordable housing units. Your organization is planning a mass meeting with Speaker Morgan, a key legislator, in three weeks. You need to sign up 150 new people for your organization in order to get enough people to the meeting and to build the campaign.

**Task:** Answer the following questions:

- What do you need to know before you go out to recruit people?
- What’s your point of entry—where will you go to recruit people and why?
- What are the main elements of your rap?
- What is an engagement tool you can use?
- How many days will you have to spend doing recruitment?
Exercise 3.2
The “10 in 60” Organizational Rap

(Used by permission of Community Voices Heard)

The following exercise trains people to be focused and to see how much they can say in a short time.

Time: About 45 minutes for small groups of five.

Materials: For each group, one-minute hourglass timer or other simple device that can clearly mark a minute in a way that everyone can see. Watches or clocks are not the best choice. Handout or chart with the ten questions. Paper and pens for each participant to write a “10 in 60.”

Roles: Overall facilitator, timekeeper, and facilitator for each group.

Room set-up: Movable chairs or break-out rooms. If everyone will be in the same room, needs to be large enough for each group to talk without interfering with the others.

• Participants form small groups of at least three and not more than five people.
• Facilitator describes the goals: To practice being focused; to see how much can be said in a short time.
• Facilitator describes the basic exercise: Participants will say 10 things about themselves and their organization in 60 seconds.
• Facilitator posts or hands out the following topics. Based on these topics, each person takes ten minutes to write a “10 in 60.”
  1. Your name and role, and the name of the organization.
  2. The problem the organization addresses.
  3. The solution the organization proposes.
  4. Why the organization addresses the problem.
  5. Primary constituents and location of the organization.
  6. Why you are involved in the organization.
  7. A strategy the organization uses.
  8. One accomplishment of the organization.
  9. One of the organization’s greatest challenges.
 10. An engaging question to the group members who are listening.
Exercise 3.2
The “10 in 60” Organizational Rap, Cont’d

- Facilitator tells the group that everyone will take turns delivering their “10 in 60” to their small group. A timekeeper in each group keeps track of the sixty seconds for each rapper as well as the three-minute debrief following each rap. The small-group facilitator keeps the process moving and makes sure the group addresses each of the debrief questions (see below).
- Each group selects its own timekeeper and a facilitator.
- Each person delivers a “10 in 60.” After each rap, the group debriefs for three minutes, using the following questions:
  - To the group: What did you like about the “10 in 60”?
  - To the rapper: What was difficult for you about doing the “10 in 60”?
  - To the group: Did the presenter cover all ten points? Were the points logical and connected?
  - To the rapper: What would you do differently?
- The groups come together to talk about what participants learned in this exercise.

Exercise 3.3
The Community Voices Heard Community Teach-In

(Used by permission of Community Voices Heard)

The following discussion and example of the community teach-ins used by Community Voices Heard (CVH) can serve as a sample teach-in curriculum. The curriculum illustrates just one way to use this tool. You can use the model for a range of purposes, including sharing specific information about a law or policy, as well as for broader political education.

Time: About one hour.

Materials: Chart paper and markers. Pledge cards, notepaper, and pens. Flyers for upcoming actions, with the name and contact information for the organization.
Exercise 3.3
The Community Voices Heard Community Teach-In, Cont’d

Roles: Facilitator.

Room set-up: Any arrangement of chairs or tables placed in a circle or half-circle if possible. Large, empty space on the wall for hanging the problem tree.

A CVH teach-in is a participatory education workshop, meaning that participants are active in learning, not just listening to a lecture and taking notes. The goals of CVH teach-ins are to recruit new CVH members and develop a network to mobilize for collective actions. Usually, a teach-in is one to two hours long. Although organizers usually facilitate, experienced CVH leaders sometimes take on key facilitation roles. CVH’s first teach-ins were about welfare reform proposals in the early 1990s. Organizers went to community groups, including shelters and social service programs, and educated people on welfare about what was happening with the reform proposals. They asked what low-income people on welfare truly needed.

CVH teach-ins now include a discussion of how CVH is led by its low-income members. They also include power analysis, looking at who can make decisions about the policies being discussed and how much power these decision makers do or do not have to provide what the members of CVH want. Facilitators usually offer people a Call to Action, such as writing a letter to an elected official, and ask participants to sign a pledge card to come to a collective action.

As in any recruitment effort, facilitators write down names and contact information and note if participants want to get involved with CVH. Organizers often build relationships with staff at the sites where they hold teach-ins to invite participants to collective actions.

The following shows a sample format for a basic one-hour teach-in designed to introduce people to CVH and get their contact information.

Introduction: What is CVH?

- On chart paper the facilitator writes five things about CVH, noting these are based on core organizational principles developed through an extensive board, staff, and member planning process. Examples: led by low-income people; fights to change public policies that its members choose to focus on; has a core value of respecting all people equally.

- Facilitator notes that, at CVH, the focus is on “member led” and “wins.” (“Member led” especially gets people interested and builds credibility.)
Exercise 3.3
The Community Voices Heard Community Teach-In, Cont’d

Exercise: Problem Tree
- On extra large chart paper, facilitator posts a simple outline of a tree.
- Leaves signify individual problems: Let’s hear what your “leaves” are. Call them out as “I” statements (“I need a job”).
- Trunk and branches are immediate causes: Let’s hear your “trunks” and “branches.” Call them out as “We” statements or problems (“We need more decent jobs in this city”).
- Roots are “big picture” causes: Let’s hear what’s at the root of these problems. Example: “The government is not for the people” or “racism.” (Some will be “isms,” but not all.)
- Facilitator reviews the components of the tree and guides participants back over the process—beginning with root causes to “we” problems and then to “I” problems. Talks about how CVH focuses on the “we” while keeping in mind the “I” and “roots.” Gives examples of the tools CVH uses, such as member-led campaigns and creative actions.

Our Campaign: What Are We Trying to Win?
- The facilitator reviews the goals and objectives of the current campaign, including providing political education on the political or economic source of the problem. The facilitator asks about participants’ experiences related to the issue.
- Participants engage in a discussion about the issue and the campaign.
- The facilitator offers a Call to Action, such as signing postcards to elected officials.

Closing: Collect Contact Information
- The facilitator distributes pledge cards where participants can commit to come to a future meeting or action and fill out their names, contact information, and interests. (The facilitator can later call and follow up. If she is building for an action, she may also call the person who invited her to do the teach-in and ask for help mobilizing people.)