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Consulting & Technical Assistance for Unions

The Labor Studies Center provides planning and consulting services that speak to the many issues confronting union leadership. Assistance can range from technical consulting on a single issue, to the development of a contract campaign or a comprehensive strategic plan for a local. The amount of support can also vary, ranging from informal assistance communicated to a single officer or committee, to formal "off-site" planning sessions that involve the entire union leadership.

Contract Campaigns

Effective bargaining is not just a matter of negotiating skills, it's a matter of power. A key lesson that the labor movement has learned in recent years is that mobilizing the members in an escalating contract campaign is the best way to build the union's power and educate management about the true cost of steamroller tactics. A united and active membership that demonstrates its collective support of the bargaining committee is the first step.

We can help unions develop the strategic and tactical planning for such a campaign, including strategies for the recruitment and training of an activist core of workplace mobilizers. Case studies and discussion exercises drawn from the widening experience of the labor movement can get you started. For more information contact David Reynolds at 313.577.2191 or aa2589@wayne.edu.

Steward System & Grievance Handling

An effective steward system is critical to the success of the union. The Center can assist you in assessing your current steward system, developing a systematic approach to recruitment, training and recognition of stewards, and developing a steward training program tailored to the needs of your union. For more information contact Gayle Hamilton at 313.577.2191 or av6012@wayne.edu.

Strategic Planning

Unions today face an increasingly challenging environment which requires them to think and act strategically as never before. The Center can assist you in designing and implementing a strategic planning process which will strengthen the union and its capacity to compete for the future. For more information contact David Reynolds at 313.577.2191 or aa2589@wayne.edu.

[Download](#) an introduction to strategic planning (in pdf format).

Political Education

Political action does not have to be a "dirty word" for union members or local officers. We can help you design a member political education program that will not only increase member's political engagement but also deepen their connection to the union. For more information contact David Reynolds at 313.577.2191 or aa2589@wayne.edu

Organizing

As unions increase their capacity to organize non-union workers, the Center can assist you in developing training for staff and member volunteers on organizing workers in traditional-NLRB and non-board campaigns, targeting and campaign planning, and conducting basic research. For more information contact Gayle Hamilton at 313.577.2191 or av6012@wayne.edu.

Family & Medical Leave Act

The Family Medical leave Act of 1993 (FMLA), which provides workers job security when dealing with their own serious health condition or that of an immediate family member, is considered to be one of the most pro-worker pieces of legislation since 1935. Due to the technical language of the regulations, many local unions have faced difficulty fully enforcing members' rights under this Act. The Center can assist you in examining the implementation of absentee policies and identifying areas of conflict with FMLA regulation, developing strategies for effectively enforcing legal and contractual rights of members, and designing FMLA training to improve awareness / substitution settlements involving FMLA-related absences. For more information contact

FMLA training to improve grievance / arbitration settlements involving FMLA related absences. For more information contact Gayle Hamilton at 313.577.2191 or av6012@wayne.edu. [Click here for our online resources on FMLA](#)

Managing Diversity

An increasingly diverse workforce poses both opportunities and challenges for union leaders and staff. The Center can assist you in assessing the climate of the workplace, training union representatives on the union's legal responsibilities, and developing policies and practices to ensure that all members are treated with respect and that diversity is a source of strength for the union.. For more information contact Gayle Hamilton at 313.577.2191 or av6012@wayne.edu.

Privatization

Privatization means transferring the production of goods and services from the public to the private sector. It is a complex and controversial process that is being increasingly considered by public sector managers. The notes provided in the pdf file below provide an overview of privatization, how to evaluate a privatization proposal, and strategies for preventing privatization. [Download Understanding and Preventing Privatization.](#)

Membership Surveys and Focus Groups

Surveying the members about workplace issues, health and safety problems, contract language or political concerns is a good way to start building membership activism. Instead of preaching to the members, a survey distributed and collected in the workplace can get people talking with each other and the union about the issues featured in the survey. It is an especially good way to get a dialogue going with the "passive middle" who don't bring their grievances to the union but would welcome the invitation to contribute. Focus groups can be a complementary way to find out what members are thinking, how they react to union initiatives, and for encouraging them to become more involved.

Contact David Reynolds at the Labor Studies Center for assistance in designing, costing, and using membership surveys and focus groups. 313.577.2191, aa2589@wayne.edu.

[More on membership surveys](#)