





# LOCAL ORGANIZING CHECKLIST

*This checklist is intended to assess the level of organization within your Local, Chapter or worksite. It should assist you and other leaders where you work in identifying your strengths and weaknesses in maintaining Union Identity and power in the workplace.*

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
1. Does your Local/Chapter maintain a non-member file?	_____	_____
2. Does a steward or officer contact a new worker immediately upon his/her coming to work?	_____	_____
3. Does your Local/Chapter conduct Union orientation at all new employee orientations?	_____	_____
4. Do stewards/officers regularly contact fair share payers on the job?	_____	_____
5. Are all stewards and officers supplied with membership literature and applications?	_____	_____
6. Has your Local/Chapter charged stewards with organizing in the workplace?	_____	_____
7. Have all stewards been informed of the Local's organizing situation and received training on how to sign up non-members?	_____	_____
8. Does your Local/Chapter have regular stewards meetings to discuss and plan organizing activities?	_____	_____
9. Does your Local/Chapter make an effort to invite fair share payers to participate in union activities?	_____	_____
10. Has your Local/Chapter checked to see if any stewards need help?	_____	_____
11. Have your stewards all received stewards training?	_____	_____
12. Does your Local/Chapter consult with individual stewards about the problems they are encountering?	_____	_____
13. Has your Local/Chapter identified Union activists in the workplace?	_____	_____
14. Is organizing on the agenda of every executive committee and membership meeting?	_____	_____
15. Does your Local/Chapter have an organizing plan?	_____	_____
16. Does your Local/Chapter have an organizing committee?	_____	_____



## Recipe for **TURNING OUT MEMBERS TO EVENTS**

- ① Don't do it all by yourself. Recruit several officers, stewards, co-workers or even friends to help. If possible, recruit a diversified group from among all work areas.
- ② Delegate tasks among the officers, stewards, co-workers or friends. Assign each person a specific task. Assign each person to cover a specific work area. Ask each person to commit to following up in their area. Give each person a list of all workers in a given area.
- ③ Set realistic goals for participants.
- ④ Provide volunteers with the tools to assist them in doing their tasks (petitions, pledge cards, leaflets, phone lists, etc.) Explain how their job fits in with the big picture.
- ⑤ Each volunteer should be able to:
  - ✓ Contact each co-worker
  - ✓ Follow up with each co-worker
  - ✓ Talk about how this event affects the co-worker
  - ✓ Use the tool provided (leaflets, etc.)
  - ✓ Do these things in person
  - ✓ Be enthusiastic
  - ✓ Ask people to commit
  - ✓ Ask for help if there is a problem
  - ✓ Follow up, follow up, follow up
- ⑥ Follow up with your recruit to see if s/he needs help.
- ⑦ Hold volunteers accountable. Ask them to report on who was contacted and who is coming.
- ⑧ Recognize and reward volunteers who turned out members for the event.

## HOW TO HAVE YOUR "CAKE" FALL FLAT

- Produce a leaflet and mail it to all members.
- Do as much of the work as possible by yourself.
- Don't bother mentioning the meeting or event to your co-workers.
- Keep a supply of AFSCME literature with you, but give it to a small, select group of activists.
- At the last minute, call up some people who helped you in the past and ask for their help.
- Blame the members for not coming.



# **ORGANIZING WORK SITE ACTIONS**

## **A QUICK AND EASY CHECKLIST**

- 1. Choose the right issue**
  - ▶ Strategic
  - ▶ Winnable
  - ▶ Popular
  - ▶ The rank and file's; not just yours
  
- 2. Use the issue to identify and develop work site leaders by involving them in:**
  - ▶ Designing the campaign or plan or action
  - ▶ Analyzing the campaign/action throughout
  - ▶ Steering the campaign/action
  - ▶ Communicating progress and victories
  
- 3. Make the leaders or potential leaders the backbone of the campaign/action**
  - ▶ Give them responsibilities
  - ▶ Assign achievable tasks
  
- 4. Be creative - keep the action fun!**
  
- 5. Design the action for where the workers are: be out in front of them, but not too far**
  
- 6. Claim victory!!!**





Gord  
Simpson  
© 1988

“Let me guess. Is this another one  
of your group grievances?”



# **ORGANIZING QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

**Unions are fine in private industry, but they have no place in the public sector.**

Public and private sector workers share similar on-the-job problems: Favoritism, pay equity, lack of promotional opportunities, unfair treatment and low wages are not problems exclusive to private industry.

That exact attitude is the reason public employees lag so far behind industrial and craft workers in organizing collectively. The disparity in wages, benefits and contract language between the private and public sectors reflects that lag time.

**I had a bad experience with another union.**

(Probe for details; this is usually a pat answer based on a faulty perception.)

Unions, like all organizations, run by people, are not perfect. Sometimes mistakes are made. AFSCME is run by the members and is responsive to their needs and desires. We like to think mistakes are minimal in AFSCME.

We've all had bad experiences with car accidents, insurance claims and failed romances. You can't write off automobiles, hospitalization or relationships because of one bad experience.

**I had a bad experience with AFSCME.**

(Usually the reason for the bad experience can be traced back to management and not to the union. Some workers get a bad deal from the boss and blame the union for not righting the wrong, even though they didn't bring the problem to the attention of the union or were unwilling to file a grievance. There are no pat answers to specific problems, so probe for details.)

We are always striving to improve AFSCME. It's a better organization today than it was a year ago. We hope it will be better in a year than it is today. We're not perfect and sometimes we make mistakes.

**I'm happy with the way things are and don't have any complaints.**

(There is no such thing as "cheap and contented labor." Probe and you will find some area of dissatisfaction; motivate around that area.)



**My supervisor would not like it if I join AFSCME.**

Your supervisor shouldn't care whether you join the PTA or what church you attend. It's none of your supervisor's business whether you join AFSCME.

If you have to worry about your supervisor's approval of you exercising your rights under the law, that is ample evidence that you need the protection of a union.

**Unions have outlived their usefulness. They are not needed in this time of modern, sophisticated management/labor relations.**

Unions dragged management kicking and screaming into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Unions forced management to modernize and become more sophisticated.

If unions went out of business tomorrow, it wouldn't take management long to revert back to the "good old days."

**AFSCME is only interested in protecting incompetent workers.**

AFSCME has a legal responsibility to represent all public employees covered by our collective bargaining agreements. Each year, AFSCME successfully reverses hundreds of unfair decisions by management. In most cases, outside arbitrators agree with AFSCME's position.

On occasion, AFSCME must tell members that they don't have a legitimate grievance.

AFSCME's job is to make sure that the contract is enforced, past practices are followed and employees are treated fairly. A bad grievance resolution can come back to haunt good employees. Everyone with a good grievance deserves a defense and we must protect our contracts of all of our members.

**If I join the union, it will hurt my chances for a promotion.**

Management is always looking for proven leaders. Each year, many AFSCME activists are offered promotions. AFSCME loses many experienced leaders as a result of promotions outside the bargaining unit. In fact, several past AFSCME Presidents have been promoted into management positions - some while they were in the middle of their term in office.

Promotions within the bargaining unit are regulated by the Collective Bargaining agreement. Union membership or lack of membership has no effect on promotional opportunities.



## DO

**DO** be a good listener. Be courteous. Be positive. Be friendly. Talk benefits. You have a right to ask your fellow workers to sign membership applications.

**DO** talk about the Union at all times. As long as you are permitted to talk on the job, you can talk Union.

**DO** explain the Union program. There are so many good things to be told about the Union that you should never run out of conversation.

**DO** get correct answers from the Union office.

**DO** get as many of your fellow workers as possible to help you get signed membership applications.

**DO** get all the people you can to attend meetings.

**DO** keep a record of your daily activities and any conversations you have with your supervisor concerning the Union.

**DO** learn all you can about the rights of the workers on the job and help them obtain all that is due to them!

## DON'T

**DON'T** argue. Don't lose your temper or become belligerent. Don't exaggerate or gloat over victories. Don't threaten or promise anything that you can't fulfill.

**DON'T** argue with prospective members.

**DON'T** bet on the outcome of any Union activity. Once a person has a bet against you, you cannot get him or her on your side.

**DON'T** give information that you are not certain of.

**DON'T** depend on people mailing their own membership applications. Pick them up and mail them to the Union office yourself.

**DON'T** believe the rumors that you hear concerning the Union. Get the facts from the AFSCME office.

**DON'T** get discouraged if things don't move as fast as you think they should.

**DON'T** let your supervisor discourage you or frighten you. If you think they you are being pushed around, talk it over with your fellow workers, shop stewards, business agent or organizers.

