



*Great Public Schools for Every Student*

## **BALLOT MEASURE ASSISTANCE APPLICATION**

Guidelines for the NEA Ballot Measures/Legislative Crises Fund require that affiliate requests for assistance be drafted in consultation with the NEA Campaigns and Elections field staff member assigned to the state. The NEA field staff member will submit completed applications to Campaigns and Elections for consideration by the Ballot Measures/Legislative Crises Oversight Committee in accordance with the Fund Guidelines.

Applications will also be reviewed by the office of the NEA General Counsel to ensure compliance with all state and federal campaign finance law and reporting requirements.

Grant applications must include a campaign plan, budget and calendar, and should provide answers to the questions listed in Attachment A. Applications should also address how the grant will strengthen the affiliate by building, sustaining and/or renewing the elements of organizational capacity outlined in Attachment B.

When funding requests include significant vendor contracts, NEA will review the vendor contracts, including but not limited to paid communications (media, mail and phone), to ensure they align with NEA contracting standards regarding the payment of fees and commissions.

Payments for grants may be transmitted in one single installment or two or more installments tied to benchmarks, accountability requirements or other conditions agreed to in the approval process.

States receiving grants shall schedule periodic updates and a final debrief with appropriate campaign employees and consultants and Association staff. Grant recipients shall also provide a final report that provides:

- election results and analysis
- all public opinion polling for submission to the national Polling Consortium data bank (description and instructions outlined in Attachment C)
- copies of print, broadcast and internet advertising, direct mail and other campaign communications
- opposition research and materials
- field program materials, such as volunteer training guides, and phone bank and canvass plans, schedules and results
- final contribution and expenditure reports

A brief assessment of the Ballot Measure Grant shall also be included as part of the end-of-year review of the affiliate's Comprehensive State Plan.

## **STATE AFFILIATE BALLOT MEASURE FUND APPLICATION ATTACHMENT A**

*Along with the campaign plan, please provide the following information. (Responses may be submitted in narrative form or in a question-and-answer format.)*

### **Nature and Status of the Ballot Measure**

1. What issue does this ballot measure address?
2. Is it an initiative, referendum, or constitutional amendment?
3. At what stage is this campaign? (Is it in the drafting stage? Has it qualified for the ballot? Has the title of the ballot measure been challenged and/or approved?)
4. When (which election) does the state affiliate expect this measure to be on the ballot?
5. Does the state affiliate want a yes or a no vote on this ballot measure?
6. Provide the text of the ballot measure, if available.

### **Major Players**

7. Who qualified this measure? (What interests, groups, and/or funders initiated it?)
8. Who is supporting this ballot measure? (What is the coalition of organizations, interests, and funders behind it?) Include national as well as state-based actors.
9. Who is opposing this ballot measure? (What is the coalition of organizations, interests, and funders against it?) Include national as well as state-based actors.

## **IMPORTANCE OF THE BALLOT MEASURE**

### **Internal Association Impact**

10. Why is this ballot measure important to the state affiliate?
11. How does this ballot measure impact Association members, membership loss or growth, other state affiliates, local affiliates, or a combination of these?
12. How will the Association be strengthened by the actions and activities planned? How will data be captured, recorded and utilized? What will be the affiliate's increased capacity as a result of this campaign, regardless of the outcome?
13. Will the Association have an internal member plan? If funds are being requested for it, please attach the plan and budget.
14. Is the ballot measure part of a legislative or other multi-year state affiliate strategy?
15. What will the state affiliate gain strategically if it succeeds in this ballot measure campaign?
16. What is the risk of going forward with this campaign if the state affiliate loses?

### **External Impact**

17. Is the state affiliate's primary reason for assisting this ballot measure campaign to support a coalition in which the affiliate participates?
18. Does the measure have national impact on public education? Regional impact?

### **Status and Expectations of Ballot Measure Campaign**

19. Is the campaign winnable? Provide polling and other research to support this conclusion.
20. Describe how the state affiliate is organizing for this campaign and its role within the campaign.
21. How is the campaign being run? Who makes the decisions? Has a professional team been hired to conduct the campaign? If so, who is on it?
22. Have identical ballot measures or substantially similar ones already qualified or been voted on in this state or in other states? Has this measure, or a substantially similar one, been proposed as legislation in this or other states?
23. If the answer to any portion of question 22 is "yes," how is the state affiliate using information and learning from those experiences?
24. What dollar amount and percentage of the campaign budget will the state affiliate be expected to contribute? Please include draft of the campaign plan, budget and fundraising plan if funds are being requested
25. Provide a realistic assessment of the fundraising capacity of the campaign/coalition and the partners' ability to fulfill their commitments, both in-kind and monetary. Is there a plan to deal with a budget shortfall?
26. Are there any non-traditional members in supporting coalition? And are there traditional partners on this issue or strategy not participating?
27. Provide an assessment of the opposition, their coalition and financial ability. Are any traditional allies of the Association opposing our efforts in this campaign?

**NEA Assistance**

28. What in-house consulting, technical assistance, communications and/or campaign staffing does the state affiliate need?
29. What financial assistance is the state affiliate requesting from NEA? Will this be used to purchase services for the campaign, as a direct contribution to the campaign or coalition, or for member-to-member mobilization and communications?
30. If requesting a contribution to a campaign committee, please provide the following:
  - a. Name and address of committee
  - b. Agency with which the committee is registered
  - c. IRS Employer Identification Number of the committee ( W-9)

## **STATE AFFILIATE BALLOT MEASURE FUND APPLICATION ATTACHMENT B**

The attached composition outlines 10 elements of capacity that are essential to building organizational power. It is included with the application materials to provide background and context for affiliates as they formulate plans and respond to application questions related to strengthening the organization.

In reviewing funding requests, an overarching consideration of the Ballot Measures/Legislative Crises Oversight Committee is the lasting impact a grant will have in building an affiliate's organizational capacity. Please address the categories that apply:

- Members
- Leaders
- Staff
- Message
- Finances
- Reputation
- Relationships
- Programs
- Technology
- Planning

## **AFFILIATE ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY**

**BY JOHN STOCKS**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

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People create organizations to accomplish things that cannot be achieved by the effort of individuals.

Organizations come in a variety of forms: corporations, cooperatives, unions, associations, etc.

The effectiveness of any organization depends upon its capacity to accomplish what it has set out to do: its mission or purpose.

Organizational capacity is the manifestation of an organization's power to achieve its mission or purpose.

An organization's capacity is always in a changing, dynamic state. It ebbs and flows throughout the life of the organization. Consequently, as organizational leaders and staff, we must pay keen attention to our organizations' capacity. Effective organizations have consciously developed systems to build, sustain and renew their capacity throughout the lifecycle of the organization.

For membership-based advocacy organizations, I believe there are ten elements of organizational capacity that are essential to building organizational power. These elements are: membership, leadership, staff, message, finances, reputation, relationships, programs, technology and planning. The systematic building of organizational power requires the development of organizational strength in these ten elements. The synergistic integration and alignment of these ten elements of organizational capacity throughout an organization's systems, plans, programs and campaigns is essential to effectively exercising organizational power. As capacity is built, it must be periodically marshaled and expended through the exercise of organizational power in order to advance the organization's purpose. Organizations that can build, sustain, expend and renew their capacity are high performing.

## **MEMBERS**

Members are the fundamental building block of our organization. Affiliate membership development plans must address the recruitment, retention and engagement of members. They must provide an environmental scan of the threats, opportunities and barriers to membership development. Membership development programs must be data driven. Ideally, data collected for affiliate membership development programs should include: demographic trends in student and adult populations; membership growth/loss over time in all membership categories; market share penetration; attrition and retention rates; reasons for eligible members dropping their membership; assessment of membership recruitment systems; survey of member attitudes; analysis of policy barriers to membership development; membership counts and locations of competing organizations; opportunities to enter into or expand traditional; and non-traditional markets.

We must assist affiliates in creating comprehensive year-round membership development programs that take into account these data and map out strategies for long term growth and retention.

## **LEADERS**

The ongoing development of leaders at all levels of our organization is critical to building, sustaining and renewing organizational capacity. Few leaders are born with an innate set of leadership qualities necessary for leading an organization. Organizational leadership is generally cultivated through the intentional development of an individual's skills, knowledge and experience.

Our work with affiliates must identify, recruit, train and organize new and emerging leaders and provide them with opportunities to develop their leadership skills, knowledge and experience.

## **STAFF**

Professional staff plays an essential role in developing the systems for building, sustaining and renewing an organization's capacity. Staffs design systems and processes to recruit members, develop leaders, monitor the organization's financial health and deliver its programs. As organizations get more complicated, the breadth of knowledge and the depth of staff skills become increasingly critical to the success of the enterprise. Our work with affiliates must incorporate the ongoing development of staff skills, knowledge and experiences as an essential element of capacity.

## **MESSAGE**

Every organization needs to develop a message and deliver it with discipline to its intended audiences. Advocacy organizations incapable of delivering a clear, concise and consistent message are increasingly irrelevant in the cluttered day to day discourse of public affairs. An organization's message should promote its desired image or ideally, its brand, and articulate its vision for change to its intended audiences.

Message development, delivery and discipline are often foreign concepts to our affiliates. An organizational commitment to develop and deliver a message with discipline is critical to being an effective advocate on behalf of our members. It is an essential element of organizational capacity for affiliates attempting to brand their identity with their intended audiences.

## **FINANCES**

Complex organizations can't exist without money and financial accounting systems to monitor and track their overall fiscal health. Close monitoring of annual revenue (dues) and expenditures (budget) is no longer sufficient to ascertain the financial health of our affiliates. In addition to adopting organizational budgets and setting dues rates, affiliate leaders and executive staff must become familiar with a variety of other financial data and indicators. These include: membership/revenue projections; non-dues based revenue; balance sheets and the ratio of assets to liabilities; pension liabilities; post retirement health care commitments; year to date budget expenditures; monthly cash flow projections; debt service on borrowing and net assets.

The overall financial health of an organization is critical to building and sustaining its organizational capacity. In some cases it may forecast an organization's very existence overtime. Increasingly, we must pay keener attention to the financial systems, position and health of our affiliates.

## **REPUTATION**

Whether we like it or not, every organization has a reputation. An organization's reputation may be different for different audiences. Members are likely to perceive their organization differently than the public at large. Leaders and staff perceive the organization differently than the general membership. An organization's reputation amongst key political decision-makers will differ from its reputation with its coalition allies.

As a key element of organizational capacity, an organization's reputation is sometimes ignored, often neglected, and frequently left for others, including our enemies to define. It is critical for an organization to articulate its desired reputation, cultivate it amongst its key audiences and protect it in the face of any attempt to damage it.

Our affiliates often neglect to intentionally develop their reputation which makes the job of building and sustaining the other elements of organizational capacity more challenging.

## **RELATIONSHIPS**

The value of building and maintaining organizational relationships both internally and externally is critical to building effective results-oriented organizations. Internally, the quality of member to leader, leader to leader, leader to staff, and staff to staff relationships is critical to the success of an organization.

Increasingly, membership-based advocacy organizations are finding that "going it alone" isn't working to achieve desired results. The conscious and intentional development of external relationships with other organizations around common issues or concerns is a critical element of an organization's capacity to winning issues that are of concern to its membership.

We must assist our affiliates in assessing their internal and external relationships. Are these relationships an asset or a detriment to achieving desired results? Do they add value to the overall enterprise or do they waste precious time and resources to maintain?

## **PROGRAMS**

Our affiliates vary widely in their capacity to develop and deliver programs to members and leaders. Common affiliate programs include: legal services, membership development, legislative and political action, communications/public relations, professional development, collective bargaining, human and civil rights, research, community relations/external partnerships, etc. Affiliates often try to provide more programming than their resources (time, staff and money) can afford. We must be able to assess the efficacy of affiliate programs in the context of the available resources. We should ask the question, "Are affiliate programs producing the desired effect or achieving the desired results?" Affiliate programs should be designed to help build, sustain and renew the elements of the organizational capacity.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

The development, application and use of modern technology are critical to the productivity and performance of membership-based advocacy organizations.

Our organizations must be able to use technology to gather and analyze data, share information and communicate efficiently and effectively. We must be able to assess the technological capacity of our affiliates data gathering, storing and information sharing systems, local and wide area networks, web sites and communication tools. We must also be able to assess the application of our affiliate's technological capacity to their organizational systems, plans, programs and campaigns.

### **PLANNING**

Planning is an essential element of organizational capacity. In order to achieve desired results, an organization must be able to articulate its strategies, tactics and activities in written plans. Written plans must address commonly held assumptions, specific outcomes, strategies, tactics and activities, budget and staff resource allocations, in the context of time. Committing plans to writing promotes discipline in the effective application of critical organizational resources like time, money and staff. Once a plan is written, close attention must be paid to its implementation. Plans are useless without a process for evaluating their impact.

### **CONCLUSION**

I believe these ten elements of organizational capacity are essential to building, strong, sustainable member-based advocacy organizations. They represent a framework for assessing the inherent power of our affiliates to be effective in representing the interests of our members.