COMPETENCY: ORGANIZING

• Indicate all of the competency progression level(s).
  Level 1: Foundational & Level 2: Mobilizing & Power Building

• Please indicate all of the themes within the competency that your presentation is designed to address.
  – Engages different and diverse audiences in the community to identify common issues.
  – Develops a successful campaign using organizing skills to engage members in key issues.
What is Degrees Not Debt?

Degrees Not Debt is an **organizing tool** that focuses on the following:

- Educating current members and future members on federal student loan repayment and forgiveness programs.
- Promoting college affordability policy solutions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SERVICE</th>
<th>ORGANIZING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reactive</td>
<td>Proactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent upon management</td>
<td>Independent of management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union officers “solve problems” for members in response to complaints</td>
<td>Actively involves members in all decisions</td>
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<tr>
<td>or requests</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total reliance on grievance and arbitration</td>
<td>Creates many activities in workplace</td>
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<tr>
<td>Waits for regularly scheduled contract dates</td>
<td>Constantly negotiating for improvements</td>
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<td>Total reliance on union staff, “experts” and lawyers</td>
<td>Develops the skills and abilities of the members</td>
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<tr>
<td>Union info is considered privileged and kept secret to a small group</td>
<td>Open communications channels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive membership</td>
<td>Active membership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centralized union structure</td>
<td>Decentralized union structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top-down decisions</td>
<td>Bottom-up decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basically isolated from other activity</td>
<td>Regularly supports other unions</td>
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Key Points

- Social & education justice centerpiece
- Student-centered demands
- Parents’ support
- Political actors’ support
- Community support
- Implemented best practices (i.e. CTU tactics)
BRAINSTORM!
Degrees Not Debt Organizing

Why Use Degrees Not Debt as an Organizing Tool?

- Teacher shortages
- Steady teacher attrition rates
- Anticipated loss of fair share payers
- Engage early career educators
- 42 million student loan borrowers
- $1.3 trillion total student debt
Student Debt Facts

- $1.3 in total student debt
- Student debt is the 2nd largest class of consumer debt, second only to mortgage debt.
- 42 million student loan borrowers.
- 7 million borrowers are in default; $85 billion past due.
- 70 percent of borrowers who are in default qualified for federal income-driven repayment programs.
- Average monthly student debt repayment of $404 eclipses the average monthly grocery bill.

Student Debt Heat Map: Dallas, TX
Organizing for Education Justice: Race & Student Debt

- Higher student debt averages for communities of color.
- Higher default rates for communities of color.

Degrees Not Debt & Community Organizing

Almost 50% of HCEA members cannot afford to live in Howard County, MD.

A majority of these members are early career educators.

HCEA joined their Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), PATH, People Acting Together in Howard.

PATH & HCEA are fighting for more affordable housing in Howard County.
Organizing Future Educators

- **Organize** Future Educators

- DnD can serve as a pipeline organizing tool to connect Future Educators to the Association.

- **Host** DnD boot camps/workshops for graduating seniors and obtain contact information.
Session Outcomes (final slide)

• The content from this session can be used in the following ways in your current position/role:
  – Organize early career educators, particularly educators of color.
  – Organize potential members to increase union density.
  – Organize existing members & identify emerging leaders.
  – Organize community and exogenous political actors to support union’s goals.
Please complete the evaluation for this breakout session!