



**BARGAINING
FOR THE
COMMON GOOD
RACIAL
JUSTICE GUIDE**

NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

The National Education Association is the nation's largest professional employee organization, representing more than 3 million elementary and secondary school teachers, higher education faculty, education support professionals, school administrators, retired educators, and students preparing to become teachers.

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Executive Director

Karen M. White
Deputy Executive Director

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For more information:

Mary Kusler,
Senior Director for Center for Political Action and Advocacy
mkusler@nea.org

Ashley Powell
Creative Services Specialist
apowell@nea.org

Dale Templeton,
Director of Collective Bargaining and Member Advocacy
dtempleton@nea.org

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FOREWORD

Since the 17th Century, our nation's system of public education has been the undisputed foundation of an inclusive democracy, economy, and society. Public school classrooms are where our students first learn how democratic systems of government work, and where they develop an understanding of the principles and practices that will allow them to participate in the operation of the U.S. government.

Unfortunately, when they should be working to strengthen our democracy, some far-right politicians, policymakers and pundits are actively working to dismantle it. Their weapon? Escalated attacks against public education. From attempting to whitewash the nation's history to eliminating the contributions and lived experiences of Black people and communities of color, to maligning and marginalizing LGBTQ+ students and educators, these attacks are only intended to fulfill the self-serving desires of the attackers and their wealthy donors.

Their efforts are rooted in the fertile ground of this sad truth: Inequity is sewn into every social system in our nation. These inequities make their presence known at every schoolhouse door, and in every other element of far too many communities.

With 3 million members, NEA is the nation's largest labor union. As education professionals devoted to ensuring that the nation's 50 million public school students receive the support, access, and opportunities they all need and deserve, we have not—and we will never—allow these unfounded and harmful attacks to go unanswered. We will continue to follow the North Star of our shared vision: to unite not just our members, but the nation to reclaim public education as a common good, as the foundation of our democracy, and then transform it into something it was never designed to be—a racially and socially just and equitable system that prepares every student, every one, to succeed in this diverse and interdependent world.

This Bargaining for the Common Good Racial Justice Guide represents a critical step toward the achievement of that vision.

The principles of Bargaining for the Common Good (BCG) are fastened to the belief that just as inequity is woven through the fabric of many communities, the collective bargaining process must have woven through it the unique needs and aspirations of the community that encircles the educators and students whose needs are represented at the bargaining table.

In addition to examples of how NEA state affiliates have bargained for the common good in schools and communities nationwide, this guide contains a roadmap for creating campaigns built from intentional, long-term partnerships between unions and community organizations. It also provides information about how those relationships can help to facilitate bargaining proposals designed to end the systemic patterns of racial inequity and injustice that hamper the progress of far too many students, educators, and public schools.

As parents, educators, and communities, we have a shared responsibility to ensure that every student—Black, White, Brown, Indigenous, or AAPI; students from underserved neighborhoods, LGBTQ+ students, and students who are disabled—all of our students—have the joy, justice and excellence they all need and deserve. Through bargaining for the common good, NEA is transforming that desire into a reality for students, educators, and communities across our nation.



Rebecca S. Pringle

President

National Education Association

PURPOSE OF THE RESOURCE GUIDE



INTRODUCTION TO RACIAL JUSTICE CENTERED EDUCATION

National Education Association (NEA) locals across the country are at the forefront of moving strategic demands grounded in racial justice that dismantle historical and pervasive racist structures in education. Locals are building with parents, students, and community partners to fight for a system where all students can thrive no matter their race, gender, or immigration status.

But for years, corporate actors and political players have stood in the way by defunding public schools and privatizing education, disproportionately impacting communities of color and low-income neighborhoods, implementing hurtful discipline policies that predominantly target students of color, and more recently censoring teachings about racial justice and the histories of Native People, Asian American and Pacific Islander, Black, Latino/a/x, Middle Eastern and North African populations.

We must unite to take on these challenges. Union members are recognizing their dual roles as both workers and key leaders in their communities. In a changing and stratified economy, we are expanding collective bargaining, policy fights, and corporate campaigns to address the challenges we face as workers, neighbors, and families. **Labor and community organizations are collaborating to advance unified demands that are relevant to both workers and the broader community.** This way of coming together is called Bargaining for the Common Good (BCG).

In 2022 and 2023, we saw the power and energy of BCG in Oakland, St. Paul, Minneapolis, Los Angeles, and in growing numbers of states. These campaigns brought community members to the bargaining table with unions and thousands into the streets to take on corporate power and fight for the schools, housing, and cities we all deserve.

How are unions and community groups Bargaining for the Common Good?

At the center of BCG campaigns are intentional, long-term alignments between unions and community organizations advancing racial justice demands. Connecting at all levels starting with membership, they build strong, lasting partnerships based on trust and a shared analysis of the systemic problems we are confronting and the solutions necessary to transform our communities. BCG campaigns are centered around joint community-labor planning that brings diverse partners to the table in union bargaining, policy fights, and corporate campaigns that build power and address the crises we all face. BCG work centers racial justice because we must collectively confront structural racism to create a powerful, unified movement.

Building strong, sustainable relationships is not easy. **Effective BCG campaigns require unions to use the bargaining process as a tool to engage members in their dual identities as workers and community members. Community organizations must also educate its members about unions and how they can bargain together.** Both groups must work to overcome any historic animosity or mistrust to develop a shared framework, from membership to leadership, that sees corporations and the wealthy elite as the perpetrators of injustice in our communities and workplaces.

In this resource guide, you will learn more about what makes a Bargaining for the Common Good campaign, along with tools and resources that your local can use to work with partners in your area to run a BCG campaign.

THE RESOURCE GUIDE IS BROKEN UP INTO THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS WITH KEY TAKEAWAYS



SECTION 1: PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

Explains Bargaining for the Common Good and the framework principles that are essential to accomplishing our vision of racially equitable and just schools.

Takeaways:

- We need to run Bargaining for the Common Good racial justice centered campaigns because class and race are not separate.
- If we want to win real people power, we have to build campaigns that include racial justice.

SECTION 2: ELEMENTS OF A BARGAINING FOR THE COMMON GOOD CAMPAIGN

Provides tools and resources to run a Bargaining for the Common Good campaign through the lens of the five elements of BCG.

Takeaways:

- Bargaining for the Common Good campaigns are rooted in building power in our local unions and communities.
- The five elements of a BCG campaign are:
 - Center racial justice in demands
 - Engage community allies as partners in issue development and the bargaining campaign
 - Expand the scope of the bargaining beyond wages and benefits
 - Expose bad actors
 - Strengthen internal organizing, membership, and member engagement
- Community building is an integral part of the strategy and tactics, which means it takes time to develop, create and build, and move forward. To build a BCG campaign, planning begins two years in advance.
- We need to clearly express who the bad actors—the real decision-makers that affect our workplaces and our communities—are and ensure there is a clear connection between the bad actors and the demands.
- Bargaining for the Common Good campaigns require ongoing organizing, base-building, and leadership development.

SECTION 3: SUCCESS STORIES

Shares stories of locals succeeding in building people power in their area.

Takeaways:

- Victories are feasible in different political conditions.
- Organizing doesn't end when we settle the contract or win the campaign. These victories are possible only if organizing is ongoing.

SECTION 4: RESOURCES

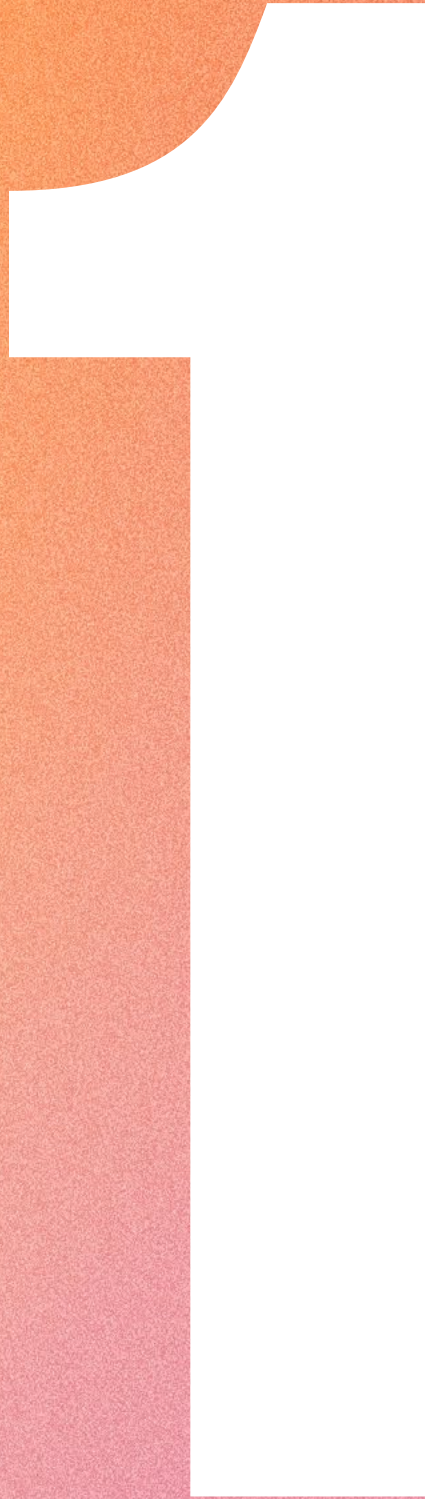
Shares links to tools and resources provided in Sections 1-3.

Takeaways:

- A compilation of BCG tools and resources developed by NEA locals.
- Includes a glossary of racial justice language.



PRINCIPLES AND VALUES



BARGAINING FOR THE COMMON GOOD

With Bargaining for the Common Good, union members partner with the community around a long-term vision for the structural changes they want to see in their communities. Together, they use collective bargaining and advocacy as critical components in a broader campaign to win that change, advance racial equity, and build people power.

Educators partner with parents and community members in order to identify issues and utilize bargaining, or other forms of advocacy, as a vehicle to make demands for the entire community.

In states with collective bargaining, contract negotiations provide an opportunity for educators and their unions to involve the larger school community in the vision they want for their school and neighborhood. Instead of going to the bargaining table alone and isolated in negotiations, unions join together with parents and the community, which builds our power. In states without collective bargaining, unions and community groups align to push for policy changes that require school districts and corporate actors to meet the demands of the community.

When we expand the continuum of bargaining, we build power and go on the offense in order to fight for social and racial justice for our students, schools, communities, and the future.

With Bargaining for the Common Good, we not only fight for better pay and benefits for educators, we also fight for students and communities. When stakeholders come together, they can determine what their community needs. NEA members have successfully used the Bargaining for the Common Good strategy to win:

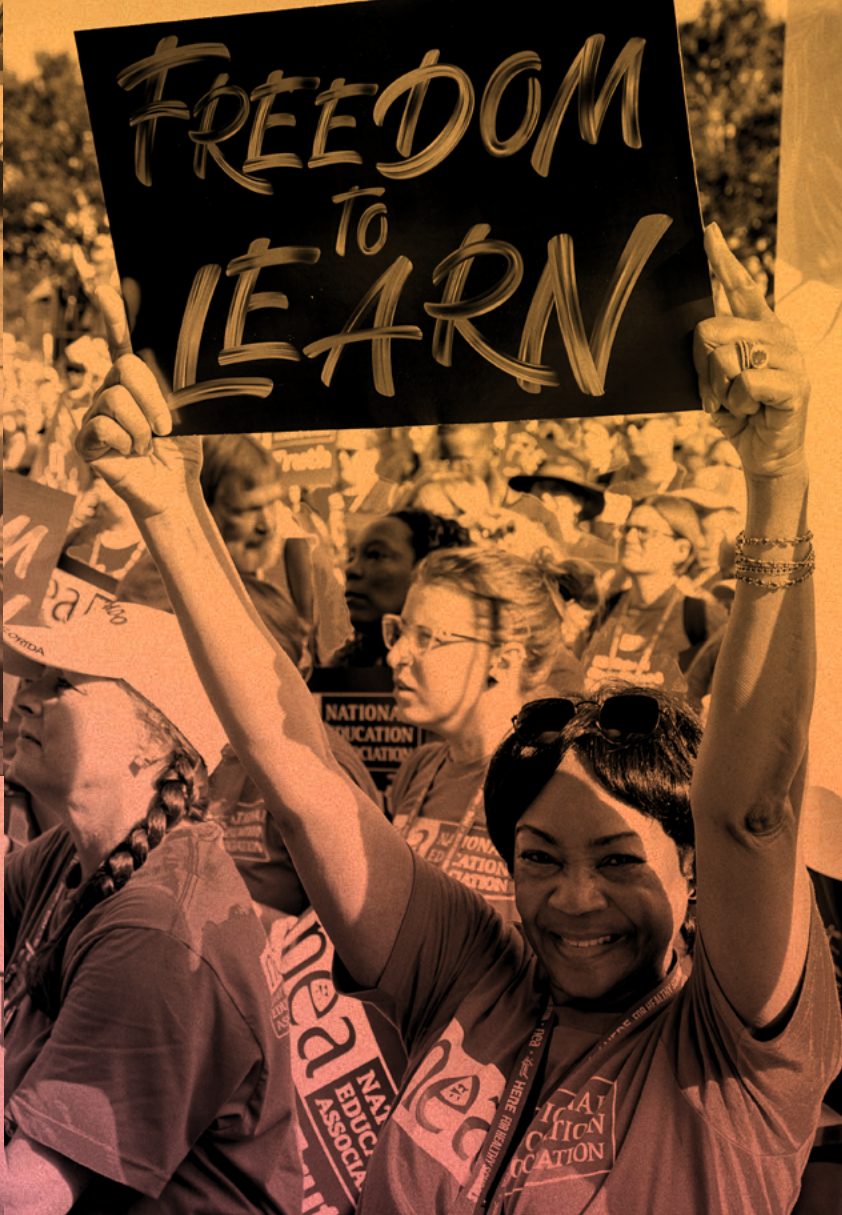
- Less testing
- Smaller class sizes
- Educator recruitment and retention programs
- Equitable school discipline policies
- Mental health support
- More nurses and counselors
- No ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) collaborations
- Implementation of restorative justice
- End random backpack checks
- Institute and/or expand ethnic studies for students

Bargaining for the Common Good works in both areas that have collective bargaining and areas that do not. The mechanics may differ, but the fundamentals are the same.



“In addition to salaries that keep up with inflation and smaller class sizes, Oakland educators held the line for almost seven days on what are known as, ‘common good demands.’ Common-good bargaining refers to agreements that go beyond issues of wages and benefits in an attempt to have a positive impact on the broader community. Under the new tentative contract, the Oakland Unified School District agreed to educators’ demands to utilize unused school buildings for nonprofit housing developments, provide resources for unhoused students, and fund programs such as the Black Thriving Community Schools that would empower Black students with leadership opportunities . . . The groundbreaking common-good demands won in Los Angeles and Oakland are proof that by standing together, educators have the power to effect change outside of normal bread-and-butter issues. Now, students and communities will benefit from the hard work that educators have put in to achieve these victories.

- Cecily Myart-Cruz, President of UTLA and Bargaining for the Common Good Advisory Committee member, “The California Teachers’ Strikes Have a Vital Lesson for the Labor Movement.” The Nation, May 19, 2023.



RACIAL JUSTICE IN EDUCATION FRAMEWORK PRINCIPLES

NEA has a vision for quality public education for every student. We know that institutional and structural racism are barriers to achieving our vision. We will leverage the power and collective voice of our members to end the systematic patterns of racial inequity and injustice that affect our Association, schools, students, and education communities.

It is our belief that these Framework principles are essential to accomplishing our vision of racially equitable and just schools:

- Our collective work promotes a vision for public education that advances inclusion, equity, and racial and social justice in our schools, Association, and society.
- Our collective work must dismantle white supremacy, and ensure that bigotry and discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, disability, or national origin is not part of our Association, classrooms, educational curricula, classroom management, school policies, and discipline practices.
- Our Association and schools must be safe for all students, and free from state-sanctioned, racialized, and gender-based violence. Our work must actively divest from prison cultivation and invest in counselors and positive discipline practices.
- Our work must result in action—programs, campaigns, policies, and capacity-building efforts for local NEA members that dismantle institutional racism now and into the future. Initiatives should create sustainable infrastructures that can continue to create systemic change and hold decision-makers, elected officials, and institutions accountable.
- Our current governance leaders must recruit, engage, and promote leadership by educators of color to share the ladder of opportunity because we are stronger together.
- Programs, campaigns, and projects must be driven by goals that are clearly outlined, tracked, and measured, and that have accountability systems that explicitly promote racial justice.
- Our work must promote education policies, professional practices, and curricula that highlight and honor the histories and cultures of Native People and People of Color.
- We must work to ensure that all students have access to a safe and quality education, regardless of their country of origin or immigration status.
- Our work must promote and support the engagement of students of color and LGBTQ students in shaping policies that directly impact their educational experience and foster safe and inclusive schools.
- We must work to dismantle discipline systems that create the School-to-Prison Pipeline and replace them with practices that encourage inclusion and are free from racial and ethnic bias.

CONNECTING FRAMEWORK ELEMENTS

Throughout our history, the NEA has joined in partnership to move policies that would address inequities in education, but we understand now that racial justice in education requires movement beyond racial equity. A lack of movement will keep us at the precipice of doing a lot with limited ability to sustain it.

It will require that:

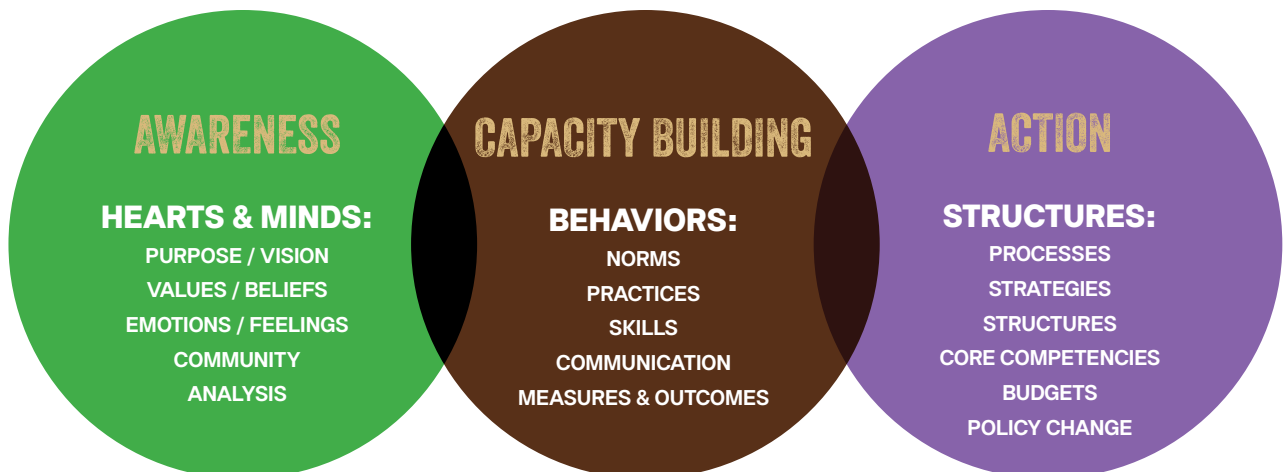
- We have a deep understanding of racial history and the associated trauma and are able to acknowledge the presence of this trauma within current systems, norms, practices, and policies.
- We focus on solutions that will build power (e.g., political, economic, civic, community) for the most sharply impacted communities and people.
- We effectively use racial impact assessment tools and develop racial justice action plans.
- We shift and share power, programs, and resources.
- We adopt anti-racist and racial justice protocols and practices.
- We shift culture and narrative.
- We use data to drive results/impacts.

The NEA Racial Justice in Education Framework was developed in conjunction with the principles and concepts embedded in the “Wheel of Change” model (adapted from the Rockwood Wheel of Change). This Framework centers and guides our systems change work, including our approach and implementation of Bargaining for the Common Good campaigns.

AWARENESS

Goal: Develop and strengthen our collective awareness and understanding of the causes and impacts of systemic (i.e., institutional and structural) racism in education and both the necessity and centrality of racial justice in achieving NEA’s mission.

- Build racial equity awareness and analytical capacity across our Association.
- Foster understanding of key concepts such as systemic (institutional and structural) racism, implicit bias, racial equity, and multiracial systemic solutions.
- Develop shared knowledge and conceptual clarity that supports normalizing explicit and constructive conversations about race.



CAPACITY BUILDING

Goal: Equip and prepare members and leaders with skills to use the strategies to take action to advance racial justice.

- Equip members, leaders, staff, and partners with the skills, tools, strategies, resources and relationships to be effective leaders and advocates in the fight for racial justice in education.
- Develop tools and resources to support organizational and cultural change through policy, practice, and behavior changes.

ACTION

Goal: Equip members and stakeholders with tools and skills to advocate, organize, and mobilize to disrupt institutional racism and advance racial justice in education.

- Engage and activate members, leaders, and stakeholders in on-the-ground efforts to combat institutional racism and advance racial justice.
- Support external organizing efforts to advance changes in our schools and communities.
- Support internal opportunities to implement equitable practices that positively impact the Association's work and promote culture change.

SECTION 1: PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

TAKEAWAYS:

- **We need to run Bargaining for the Common Good racial justice centered campaigns because class and race are not separate.**
- **If we want to win real people power, we have to build campaigns that include racial justice.**

**ELEMENTS
OF BARGAINING
FOR THE
COMMON GOOD**

2

CENTER RACIAL JUSTICE IN YOUR DEMANDS

Campaign demands should address the role that employers play in creating and exacerbating structural racism in our communities.

What does it mean to center racial justice demands?

Racial dynamics, disparities, and divisions permeate our society, communities, schools, and classrooms. Systemic racism is so deeply rooted in our history, culture, and institutions that there is no escaping it. Visible or not, the impacts are ever-present. Racial justice is the systematic fair treatment of people of all races, resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all. Racial justice (or racial equity) goes beyond “anti-racism.” It is not just the absence of discrimination and inequities, but also the presence of deliberate systems and supports to achieve and sustain racial equity through proactive and preventative measures.



To engage in a systems analysis of a racial issue and develop solutions or to test if the campaign demands center racial justice, good discussion questions to have with partners and union members include:

- **Problems:** What racial inequities are you noticing or experiencing? What are the impacts on different racial groups? Who benefits most and who is hurt most?
- **Causes:** What institutions, policies, or practices are causing or contributing to the inequities? What social norms, popular myths, or cultural biases may be contributing?
- **History:** How did things get this way and are things worsening or improving?
- **Solutions:** What solutions could address the root causes and eliminate the inequities? How would different racial groups be impacted by the proposed solutions?
- **Strategies:** What strategies and actions could be used to advance the solutions?
- **Leadership:** Who are the stakeholders most affected by the inequities? Are they involved in naming the issues and solutions? What kinds of active leadership roles could they take to advance the proposed solution?

Source: <https://neaedjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Racial-Justice-in-Education.pdf>



OTHER TOOLS YOU CAN USE TO ENSURE A DELIBERATE ANTI-RACIST CAMPAIGN

RACIAL EQUITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

A racial equity impact assessment is used for making decisions with deliberate attention to racial justice, social justice, equity, and inclusion. It provides a guide and protocol for race- and equity-conscious decision-making that is thoughtful, transparent, participatory, and systematic. This type of tool can be used to analyze policies and contract language, institutional practices, programs, plans, and budgetary decisions.

Fix L.A. was a community-labor partnership that fought successfully for:

1. The creation of 5,000 jobs, with a commitment to increase access to jobs for Black and Latino/a/x workers.
2. The defeat of proposed concessions for city workers.
3. A commitment from the city to review why it was prioritizing payment of bank fees over funding for critical services.

“Bargaining for racial justice is a radical idea and will not be easily won. It will require concerted direct action targeting the real decision makers in both the public and private sectors that have a vested interest in keeping racial inequities in place.”

- Maurice Weeks and Marilyn Sneiderman, In These Times, “Why Labor and the Movement for Racial Justice Should Work Together”, September 02, 2016.

BARGAINING FOR THE COMMON GOOD DEMANDS:

Bargaining for the Common Good campaigns are rooted in winning racial justice demands. Many have generated amazing wins and demands across the country.

This booklet provides concrete examples of common good demands that unions and community groups have bargained for across the country. Some of these demands have been won in bargaining or outside the negotiations table, and some are still being fought for.

NEA locals have been at the forefront of winning BCG campaigns. They have identified and won racial justice demands across the country. Demands can be about a range of issues from public health and safety, safe working and learning conditions, academic success, and social and emotional well-being. The list of sample demands includes:

- Acknowledge the pandemic was not experienced equally by all communities and populations, particularly in rural areas and communities of color. Listen and learn how different families handled virtual learning.
- Provide and prioritize housing, food, health, dental, and job services in neighborhood schools because it is a common-sense way to begin to address racial justice issues and the racial inequities they create and exacerbate.
- End attempts to re-segregate our school communities with charters, vouchers, and other privatization schemes that funnel resources away from public schools.
- Ensure school plans for in-person instruction are inclusive and equitable for all educators and students by humanizing learning environments and designing spaces that are situated in the experiences of communities of color, not just through white, cis-hetero, and ableist lenses.
- Ensure adequate time is provided for classroom community-building activities and consider additional staff to allow for the development of restorative practices in schools.
- Prioritize hiring, retaining, and promoting educators of color.

BUILDING YOUR RACIAL JUSTICE TEAM:

Building the right team to make decisions and move this work is critical. Your racial justice campaign team should include a leadership team, organizing/mobilizing team, communications team, political team, and in a collective bargaining campaign, a bargaining team. There should also be team members who lead the research work and legislative/policy development.

- The **leadership team** will direct and oversee the entire campaign. They have a bird's eye view and focus on advancing the campaign forward. They provide the vision and make the tough decisions with input from the rest of the team.
- The **organizing and mobilizing team** is responsible for recruiting impacted people and new partners and mobilizing members and activists. They communicate frequently and engage members and activists in two-way conversations about the campaign's vision, strategy, and action plan.
- The **communications team** drives the internal and external communications. They educate and agitate activists and members, work with the media and develop social media to define the narrative, and build public support.
- The **political team** leads the efforts to build support from elected officials, work with political partners who support the campaign, and hold those who do not accountable.
- The **research team** is responsible for pulling together information, data, and facts to support the campaign. They ensure that any data being shared is sourced legitimately and correctly. They are critical in identifying and building a case around the bad actors.

None of these teams work in silos, they work together. They can be a combination of staff, paid release members, and/or volunteer teams. It may be that the political team is from a community partner group and the research team is from the local union. Either way, the teams should understand their roles and how they interact with each other.

It is important to note that sometimes a team is one or two people depending on resources, size of the local, and staffing capacity. The different teams should develop the racial justice demands and be able to drive the campaign forward through a racial justice lens.

CENTERING LEADERSHIP OF NATIVE PEOPLE AND PEOPLE OF COLOR:

The term Native People recognizes the first people of this land, having sovereign national and tribal status, as well as a racialized identity. The term People of Color refers to Asian American and Pacific Islander, Black, Latino/a/x, Middle Eastern and North African, and Multiracial populations. It isn't enough to have Native People and People of Color activists in the campaigns. Centering means Native People and People of Color have a leading voice, are listened to, trusted, and have decision-making power within the partnership.

ENGAGE COMMUNITY ALLIES AS PARTNERS IN ISSUE DEVELOPMENT AND THE BARGAINING CAMPAIGN:

Bring in community partners on the ground floor and develop issues, goals, and strategies together. Common good is about building long-term community-labor power.



BUILDING LONG-TERM COMMUNITY-LABOR POWER TAKES TIME.

Community building is an integral part of a Bargaining for the Common Good campaign, which means it takes time to develop, create, build, and move demands forward. It is important to remember that organizing does not end when the contract is settled or the campaign demands are met or won. As shown in the timeline below, before the launch of a campaign, there are a few steps that can take anywhere between six months to a year or more.

COMMUNITY BUILDING IS THE FIRST STEP:

Whether you live in a big city, a suburban town, or a rural community, there are people who care about the same issues and share your values. But to build a sustainable, long-term relationship, work is required upfront. This may include many 1-on-1 meetings, group presentations, follow-up calls, and more follow-up calls, Zoom calls, emails and more follow-up calls. It is not just about building your member list, but also building relationships. What do the leaders care about? Why do they do this work? What problems are their communities facing? What solutions do they see? Where do you share common ground and where do you have differences in your organization?

BASIC STEPS TO A BARGAINING FOR THE COMMON GOOD CAMPAIGN:

This outlines steps starting about 1.5 years before bargaining to after settling the contract. Bargaining for the Common Good campaigns are about building long-term power and changing the power dynamics in our communities, so it is important to think about the work as multi-year that continues after the contract campaign ends.

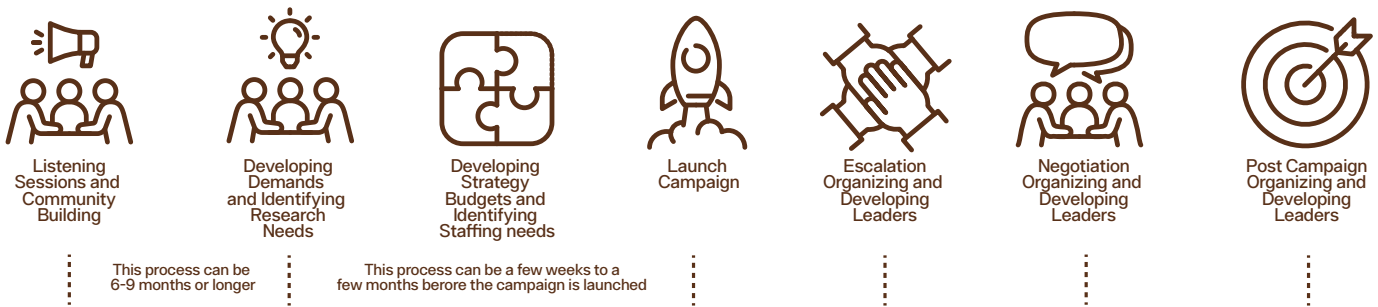
BARGAINING FOR THE COMMON GOOD ASSESSMENT TOOL:

This tool is to help reflect on how to build and strengthen a Common Good strategy for your organization or union. This will help you assess where to focus your time and resources to build towards developing transformational relationships, running strong campaigns, and winning Common Good demands!

COMMUNITY MAPPING:

Community mapping is about learning about your community and identifying resources and important networks and relationships. Community mapping includes:

- Surveying your membership and identifying where you have existing relationships and connections to community leaders, organizations, and networks.
- Developing lists of key contacts/social networks—this is the organizer’s network of power.
- Proactively developing relationships with these existing networks and organizations makes it possible to mobilize their resources around a shared campaign.
- Prioritizing and focusing outreach to build relationships with the networks that most deeply represent the community, not just those that are familiar and comfortable.



COMMUNITY LISTENING TOURS:

Listening sessions are helpful to build relationships and understand partners' interests, the problems they see in the community, and potential solutions. Listening sessions can be conducted through one-on-one meetings, community meetings, or surveys.

- **Community Listening Session:** Sample list of questions developed by the Saint Paul Federation of Educators (SPFE) to learn more about the community interests and concerns.
- **Community Survey - Family Version:** Survey for families and parents about their interests and concerns.
- **Community Survey - Community Version:** Survey for community members about their issues and concerns.
- **Community Survey:** Sample survey developed by the Fix L.A. coalition.
- **Parent Interviewing:** A sample video of a meeting with parents to better understand their needs, opinions, and resolutions.
- **Parent + Small Biz Organizing Conversation:** Sample conversation with questions to engage parents and small businesses.

ENGAGING COMMUNITY LEADERS AND RANK AND FILE MEMBERS:

These are not transactional “we do this for you and you do that for me” relationships. These are sustainable relationships built on trust, respect, and a shared analysis of the conditions and mutual goals to build people power. It is critical that community and labor develop and build the campaign together from the beginning. These relationships will continue after the campaign, so it is important to start with a solid foundation and build with intentionality. This includes:

CREATING A SHARED VISION:

Working with union and community partners to identify priority issues, solutions, and a vision for the campaign is crucial in creating a shared vision. Union members and community partners understand the problems that they are facing in their workplace and communities and have ideas for solutions. It is important for rank and file members and community activists to assist in identifying priority issues and solutions, including why and how it will benefit workers and the community at large, and the vision for building long-term power.

Watch a webinar that shows how a strong community-labor partnership works in action and wins people power! United Teachers Los Angeles former President Alex Caputo-Pearl; Ruby Gordillo, Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) Parent, Rudy Gonzalves of the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE); Amy Schur of the Alliance of Californians for Community Engagement (ACCE), and other community leaders and parents discuss the strategies and lessons learned from the recent victorious Bargaining for the Common Good campaign and strike.

<https://vimeo.com/319978916>

DEVELOPING A JOINT STRATEGY:

The strategy is your guiding star of how to win the demands. You may choose to launch a corporate campaign, or push the school board to change a policy or a town council to pass legislation, or fight for state funding. All partners must be clear about the pathway to winning and decisions stemming from the strategy. Strategies may need to change if an assessment is made that they are not effective or a campaign may have multiple strategies. For example, a campaign may call on the state legislature to fulfill its constitutional funding requirement for public education and target the corporations that do not pay taxes.

Developing a plan in partnership takes time. There are many decisions to make such as assessments, organizing plans, communications strategies, and more. A written plan is critical to ensure that all stakeholders understand the decisions made, what is happening next, and the campaign progress. Review the following to help develop your campaign plan:

- **Local campaign plan:** A comprehensive campaign planning tool for locals and partners.
- **Power Mapping Activity:** Sample exercise developed by the Colorado Education Association to analyze the power structures, influencers, and stakeholders in your community.

DEVELOPING AN ORGANIZING PLAN:

Organizing gets people fired up (agitated) and identifies what is at stake so that participants understand how the cause is personally relevant to them and take action. At the beginning of a campaign plan, start with mild actions and escalate. Examples of mild forms of action are collecting petition signatures or wearing a union button at the workplace. Strikes or civil disobedience are bold actions.

- Use the issues that are happening in the BCG campaign to motivate members to take collective action.
- During the life of a BCG campaign, members should be able to articulate why they are taking action and what they hope to achieve before taking action.
- Different tactics will be required to move different targets.
- Evaluate in real time if the actions are helping, hindering, or not effective and why.

Escalation tactics or direct actions are important to any campaign that is designed to build long-term power. The goal of escalation tactics or direct actions goes beyond highlighting the problem and getting media attention. Escalation tactics or direct actions have four key elements:

- **ESCALATE THE CRISIS:** Deliver a message that exposes the crisis. Create the narrative about who is responsible for that crisis—target.
- **ESCALATE THE TARGET:** Expose the target; turn the target toxic. Cost the target resources—votes, money, time, influence, etc.
- **ESCALATE YOUR VOICE:** If the target ignores the tactics/actions, escalate the tension on a specific demand. Force the target to choose between ongoing direct action or meeting the demand.
- **ESCALATE YOUR BASE:** Develop and energize your leaders and base.

“Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and foster such a tension that a community which has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue.”

- *Martin Luther King, Jr., Letter from a Birmingham Jail*

Possible actions may include:

- Walking out of a meeting en masse
- Speaking to the media
- Calling a meeting of supporters
- Reaching out to parents
- Meeting as a small group
- Striking
- Running a social media profile picture campaign
- Wearing red on Thursdays
- Stickers up
- Circulating a public petition and deliver it to the school board
- Rallying, for example, have staff rally outside school before the start of the school day and walk in together
- Presenting signage and/or protesting in a high-visibility public space
- Red out: staff decorating their rooms in union colors
- Distributing flyers to parents at the school choice fair
- Informational picketing
- Open bargaining
- Setting up lawn signs
- Visiting corporate actors defunding public schools/ supporting charter schools

IDENTIFYING CLEAR ASKS:

Not many people spontaneously get involved. It takes an invitation to participate or an ask for people to take action. Most people will volunteer or donate to a cause that shares their values when asked. In campaigns, the same principles apply. If you can connect to their value systems and the ask is clear and concise, people will get involved. Recruiting activists, rank and file members, and members of the public to join the campaign means having a clear ask and showing why their involvement matters.

Affirm, Answer, and Redirect is a useful organizing tactic when faced with an individual who blocks or objects to the vision of the campaign or action plan.

1. Affirm:

Although you may disagree with the person, or not share their experience, it is important to show that you hear their frustration, and try to understand where they are coming from.

2. Answer:

It is very important to give an honest answer. If you can give them information that responds to their question, or helps them see the issue differently, do it. If you made a mistake, own it. If there is information that you do not know, tell them you will research it and get back to them (and make sure you do).

3. Re-direct:

At the end of the day, the power to win depends on one thing: the involvement of the people—union members and community partners. So look for ways to re-direct their frustration towards participating in a collective project that will help them see that the campaign is powerful (like the next action). Then repeat your ask.

EXPAND THE SCOPE OF BARGAINING BEYOND WAGES AND BENEFITS:

Identify issues that resonate with members, partners, and allies and that impact our communities. Put forth demands that address structural issues, not just symptoms of the problem.

DEVELOP AND DEEPEN LEADERS' SHARED POLITICAL ANALYSIS:

With an intentional approach to developing and deepening leaders' shared political analysis, BCG campaigns move away from short-term mobilization efforts that develop little to no power and instead harness collective power to develop long term and major wins for our schools and communities. This can take form in different ways like short workshops, training sessions, organizing conversations, and more.

Political education should:

- Be grounded in the racial justice demands and explain the racial dynamics that the demands are addressing.
- Articulate a clear connection between Bargaining for the Common Good demands and the problems workers and communities are facing.
- Include space for labor and community partners to share their stories, interests, and lived experiences that build trust and connections across all participants.
- Build activists' confidence and effectiveness in engaging hesitant colleagues and recruiting members of the public to join the campaign.
- Make it clear what is at stake, who the bad actors are, why the target has power, and how the campaign plan will motivate the targets to meet demands.
- Meet people's education level, literacy proficiency, and language needs. It may mean investing in translators and interpreters and/or an experienced popular educator.

EXPOSE THE BAD ACTORS:

Go on offense in your campaign by identifying, exposing, and challenging the real villains; the financial and corporate actors who profit from and increasingly drive policies and actions.

DO THE RESEARCH:

Scarcity politics and financialization of the economy have devastated our communities and schools for decades and driven funding to the one percent. Research to identify who and how divestment happened in your community is key. Groups like [LittleSis](#) and [Hedge Clippers](#) are good sources to help map out the financial and corporate actors.

Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA) called on state and federal elected officials to fund public education through progressive revenue. The MTA and its partners identified 19 billionaires in Massachusetts whose wealth grew while state coffers were depleted during the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. They used the data to agitate and gain the public in support of the campaign's three key demands.

source:

<https://massteacher.org/-/media/massteacher/files/initiatives/education-funding/now-more-than-ever/net-worth-of-massachusetts-billionaires.pdf?la=en>

source:

https://massteacher.org/-/media/massteacher/files/initiatives/education-funding/now-more-than-ever/mta_tax_flyer.pdf?la=en

TARGET THE POWER BROKER:

Identify the decision-makers who can meet the demands. Power mapping can help identify and map the power relationships, who influences power brokers, and your groups' relationships to them. Some general questions to start the identification process include:

- Is it a corporate entity and who in the corporation has the power? Is it the CEO of the bank?
- Is it a government entity? Is it one person or a group of decision-makers? Is it the mayor or city council? Is it the school board?
- Where do they get their power? Who is in their circle of influence?
- What do they care about?

POWER MAPPING:

The [Power Mapping tool](#) can help the campaign identify the power dynamics within your community, including allies, opposition, decision-makers, and influencers.



GENERATE PUBLIC SUPPORT:

Building public support is about agitating the public against the bad actors. Be clear in your messaging as to why the bad actor is responsible. Your communications team can help generate stories for traditional outlets like radio and newspaper. Rank and file members and activists can use social media to build up the campaign. The message and narrative should be clear, concise, and consistent across platforms. The following are samples and guidelines for effective messaging:

- Social media posts and news story highlighting the same message:
 - Seattle Education Association
 - Recess, it's important, does your child get enough of it?
- Campaign websites:
 - San Antonio Alliance, Local 67
 - Reclaim Our Schools LA
 - Higher Education Labor United (HELU).
- Messaging and Media Relations Toolkit: Helps develop an effective messaging strategy and build relationships with different news sources
- Digital Best Practices: For Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and other social media outlets

STRENGTHEN INTERNAL ORGANIZING, MEMBERSHIP, AND MEMBER ENGAGEMENT:

These campaigns must deeply engage the memberships of both unions and community organizations, and there must be opportunities for deep relationship building and joint visioning among the members of the different organizations.

Engaged groups produce transparent, useful, relevant, and frequent member communications, such as printed or electronic newsletters. Most importantly, leaders should be open and transparent, which means producing relevant and frequent updates to keep members engaged and active. You should feel comfortable contacting your state/national affiliate communications department for assistance and best practices.

CONTRACT ACTION TEAM (CAT):

Establish a new internal union network of member activists to engage and activate members using a two-way pipeline of communication. The union's ability to successfully win demands for members and the community depends upon the union's strength and power. Strength and power derive from a solid foundation of organizing union members and community stakeholders that increases activism, engagement, and solidarity.

By creating vital new roles and delegating responsibilities, your local can position itself to build capacity and develop enough power to win demands. It also enables your local to identify new activists and leaders to continue to build on its successes for the future along with a strong and sustainable democratic movement.

STEWARD/MOBILIZER:

Your members, especially your stewards or mobilizers, are crucial to the success of the campaign. This requires continually building the team and communicating with them frequently, so they can organize at their workplace and in their communities. Stewards should have a WhatsApp or Signal group and an email list for their building. They should have a weekly plan of how they will communicate with other members, updates and an action plan for the day or week and an explanation of why the action is important, and a role for the members.

1-ON-1 ORGANIZING MEETINGS:

The heart of organizing is about building relationships, which means 1-on-1 organizing conversations. A strong organizing conversation is not like a chat with a friend or loved one. It's a guided conversation that builds connection, engages people in collective action, and helps develop leaders. When a worksite has good, strong leaders who can educate and move their co-workers into action, it's harder for the boss to pit workers against each other.

10-MINUTE MEETINGS:

A fundamental way to disseminate information and empower leaders at the worksite level is to develop a 10-minute meeting system. Short, concise, and frequent meetings increase attendance. Be sure your 10-minute meetings make time for two-way communication. Campaign updates can easily be broken into basic 10-minute meeting agendas. You can break up complex topics related to contract proposals, legislative initiatives, or policy demands into bite-sized pieces within these meetings. Plus, it allows decentralized conversations and a place for local action-taking/planning for early tactics such as button wearing, petition circulation, etc.

GROUP TEXTS:

Texting is an immediate communication tool for quick updates, reminders, and time-sensitive information sharing, but it does not replace the face time necessary for developing relationships and trust with members and community allies.

Before you send your first text message—remember that there are federal laws that prohibit bulk text messaging. Contact your attorney, as well as your state affiliate or NEA, to learn more about different texting platforms you can use to reach our members and supporters within the law.

WEBSITE/ONLINE RESOURCE:

Creating a landing place for members and allies to reference information can be important for the campaign, but it isn't always necessary. Only use a website if your campaign would benefit from a landing page to publicly post resources or documents. Always add a link or directions for how to take action.

SOCIAL MEDIA:

Use social media platforms that make sense to our audience—members/potential-members and community supporters. It is also a great tool for producing media during various parts of the campaign. NEA offers local leaders and staff a variety of additional [social media best practices](#).

Tools and Materials:

- [Sample 10-minute meeting agenda](#)
- [1-on-1 Organizing Conversation Guide](#)
- [Build the CAT structure](#)

SECTION 2: ELEMENTS OF A BARGAINING FOR THE COMMON GOOD CAMPAIGN

TAKEAWAYS:

- **Bargaining for the Common Good Campaigns are rooted in building people power in our local unions and communities.**
- **The five elements of a BCG campaign are:**
 - **Center racial justice in your demands**
 - **Engage community allies as partners in issue development and the bargaining campaign**
 - **Expand the scope of the bargaining beyond wages and benefits**
 - **Expose bad actors**
 - **Strengthen internal organizing, membership, and member engagement**
- **Community building is an integral part of the strategy and tactics, which means it takes time to develop, create, build, and move forward. To build a BCG campaign, planning begins two years in advance.**
- **We need to clearly express who the bad actors are and ensure there is a clear connection between the bad actors and the demands.**
- **Bargaining for the Common Good campaigns require ongoing organizing, base-building, and leadership development.**



SUCCESS STORIES

3

SUCCESS STORIES

Columbus, Ohio

The Columbus Education Association (CEA) won an agreement to help address racism and racial disparity. As part of their newest contract, CEA earned professional development opportunities for bargaining unit members in the school board's ongoing Strategic Plan.

Source: <http://www.ceahio.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/MOU-Re-2021-2022-School-Year-Final-Signed.pdf>

Jefferson County, Colorado

The Jefferson County Education Association fought successfully to implement a staffing and classroom diversity program, including recruiting and retaining staff that reflects the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of the student body, and a mentorship program for staff of color. In addition, they formed an Equity Accountability Committee responsible for addressing equity in the district, which would engage the school community.

Source: https://cdnsm5-ss12.sharpschool.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_627881/File/Print%20Agreement%20JCEA%20Final%2007.2023%20Website.pdf

Minneapolis, Minnesota

The Minneapolis Federation of Teachers (MFT) established the Anti-Bias Anti-Racist Educator Development and Support Council, which set up sub-committees specifically tasked with recommending establishing initiatives for recruitment, retention, and development of educators of color and the improvement of district-wide climate and culture. These sub-committees will continue to work to instill a sense of permanency in anti-bias anti-racist initiatives and development.

Source: https://www.mft59.org/files/ugd/bf7435_4a4f8e-50f33e4777a22b23c598e1641e.pdf

St. Paul, Minnesota

Read about how St. Paul teachers, parents, and students organized for the schools their students deserved and won: "Teacher-Community Unionism: A Lesson from St. Paul: How one teachers union brought parents and students into the bargaining process—and won."

Source: <https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/teacher-community-unionism-lesson-st-paul>

Seattle, Washington

Following a weeklong strike by more than 6,000 educators of the SEA, a new three-year contract was settled with major wins for both the students and educators of Seattle Public Schools (SPS). Seattle was facing a multitude of systemic problems such as increased class sizes, workload, and staffing cuts; racial inequality of resources and services; unsafe learning and working conditions; unaffordable cost of living for many lower-wage staff; and a looming educator shortage crisis. They established a Joint Task Force for multilingual education and language immersion to improve inclusionary services and student equity and create incentives for teaching.

Source: <https://vimeo.com/208734309>

Sacramento, California

The Sacramento City Teachers Association included parents, business leaders, and community members in their contract negotiations in their bid to make Sac City the destination district in California for students and educators.

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBPNX-tajjO>

San Diego, California

In coordination with community partners, parents, and students, the San Diego Education Association (SDEA) identified several bargaining goals with a heavy emphasis on racial justice. To address historical divestment across districts in schools located within communities of color, demands will focus on curriculum, ethnic studies, allocation of resources, educator pipelines, restorative practices, and support for educators and students of color. All these issues run parallel to their advocacy for community schools, staffing, and class size. Bargaining by the local is underway as of summer 2023.

Source: <https://www.sdea.net/2023/04/san-diego-community-schools-coalition-demands-more-after-school-opportunities-in-san-diego-unified/>



SECTION 3: SUCCESS STORIES

TAKEAWAYS:

- Victories are feasible in different political conditions but we have to plan and organize.
- Organizing doesn't end when we settle the contract or win the campaign. These victories are possible only if organizing is ongoing.

RESOURCES

4

RESOURCES

ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR RACIAL EQUITY:

Provides discussion questions to have with partners and union members.

RACIAL EQUITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

Is used for making decisions with deliberate attention to racial justice, social justice, equity, and inclusion. A guide and protocol for race- and equity-conscious decision-making that is thoughtful, transparent, participatory, and systematic.

BARGAINING FOR THE COMMON GOOD DEMANDS:

Concrete examples of common good demands that unions and community groups have bargained for across the country. Some of these demands have been won in bargaining or outside the negotiations table, and some have only been introduced.

RACIAL JUSTICE DEMANDS:

List of racial justice demands that local unions and community partners can develop together.

BASIC STEPS TO A BARGAINING FOR THE COMMON GOOD CAMPAIGN:

Outlines steps starting about 1.5 years before bargaining to after settling the contract.

BARGAINING FOR THE COMMON GOOD ASSESSMENT TOOL:

This tool helps organizations or unions reflect on how to build and strengthen a Common Good strategy.

COMMUNITY MAPPING:

Worksheet to map out the community networks of members and activists.

COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSION:

Sample list of questions developed by the Saint Paul Federation of Educators (SPFE) to learn about community interests and concerns.

COMMUNITY SURVEY - FAMILY VERSION:

Survey for families and parents about their interests and concerns.

COMMUNITY SURVEY - COMMUNITY VERSION:

Survey for community members about their issues and concerns.

FIX L.A. COMMUNITY SURVEY:

Sample survey to gather information about the community.

PARENT INTERVIEWING:

A sample video of a meeting with parents to better understand their needs, opinions, and resolutions.

PARENT (AND SMALL BUSINESS) ORGANIZING CONVERSATION - GUIDE:

Sample conversation with questions to engage parents and small businesses.

LOCAL CAMPAIGN PLAN:

A comprehensive campaign planning tool for locals and partners.

COLORADO EDUCATION ASSOCIATION POWER MAPPING ACTIVITY:

Sample exercise developed by the Colorado Education Association, which can be used to analyze the power structures, influencers, and stakeholders in your community.

POWER MAPPING TOOL:

Can help the campaign identify the power dynamics within your community, including the allies, opposition, decision-makers, and influencers.

MESSAGING AND MEDIA RELATIONS TOOLKIT:

Designed to help develop an effective messaging strategy and build relationships with different news sources.

DIGITAL BEST PRACTICES:

For Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and other social media outlets.

NEA GUIDE TO TRANSFORMATIONAL

ORGANIZING CONVERSATIONS:

1-on-1 organizing conversations guide to help you start recruitment conversations and navigate the tough questions that members and non-members raise.

SAMPLE 10-MINUTE MEETING AGENDA:

Sample worksite meeting agenda to help disseminate information and mobilize workers quickly.

BUILD THE CAT STRUCTURE:

Internal union network of member activists.

SECTION 4: RESOURCES

TAKEAWAYS:

- A compilation of BCG tools and resources developed by NEA locals.
- Includes a glossary of racial justice language. See next page.



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Glossary of racial justice language

Understanding the context and historical background that many terms convey is essential to encouraging usage that reflects cultural and racial awareness. Using shared language builds a strong foundation among campaign partners, helps prevent translation issues, and empowers workers and activists to speak with confidence and knowledge.

Sources: [Equity in the Center](#) and [Dismantling Racism Works](#)

Affirmative action – This term describes policies adopted since the 1960s that require “affirmative” (or positive) actions to ensure people of color and women have opportunities equal to those of white men in promotions, salary increases, school admissions, financial aid, scholarships, and representation among vendors in government contracts. Although they have been effective in redressing injustice and discrimination that persisted in spite of civil rights laws and constitutional guarantees, these policies have been attacked because of perceived “reverse discrimination.” The Supreme Court has not ruled all affirmative action unconstitutional, but it has limited the use and ways in which policies can be written and applied. See “Reverse Racism.”

Anti-racism – The work of actively opposing racism by advocating for changes in political, economic, and social life. Anti-racism tends to be an individualized approach to oppose individual racist behaviors and impacts.

Civil rights – A group of laws designed to protect various groups against discrimination based on race, sex, religion, age, national origin, and other characteristics. Often used in connection to the civil rights movement, widely recognized as taking place from 1954 to 1968, which included issues and practices such as school desegregation, sit-ins, Freedom Rides, voter registration campaigns, and acts of civil disobedience to protest racial discrimination.

Class – Classism is the systematic oppression of subordinated class groups, held in place by attitudes that rank people according to economic status, family lineage, job status, level of education, and other divisions. One’s race can be a major determinant of one’s social or economic class. The variables of race and class, though closely connected, each need distinct attention.

“Colorblind” – A term used to describe the act or practice of disregarding or ignoring racial characteristics, or being uninfluenced by racial prejudice. The concept of colorblindness is often promoted by those who dismiss the importance of race in order to proclaim the end of racism. It presents challenges when discussing diversity, which requires being racially aware, and equity that is focused on fairness for people of all races.

Colorism – Discrimination based on skin color, which often privileges lighter-skinned people within a racial group, positioning people with darker complexions at the bottom of the racial hierarchy. It is an example of how white supremacy can operate amongst the members of a single racial or ethnic group. This form of prejudice often results in reduced opportunities for those who are discriminated against, and numerous studies have revealed differences in life outcomes by complexion.

Cultural appropriation or “misappropriation” – Adoption of elements of a culture that has been subordinated in social, political, and economic status by a different cultural group. It may rely on offensive stereotypes and is insensitive to how the culture of a group has been exploited by the culture in power, often for profit.

Discrimination – Treatment of an individual or group based on their actual or perceived membership in a social category, usually used to describe unjust or prejudicial treatment on the grounds of race, age, sex, gender, ability, socioeconomic class, immigration status, national origin, or religion.

Diversity – There are many kinds of diversity, based on race, gender, sexual orientation, class, age, country of origin, education, religion, geography, and physical or cognitive abilities. Valuing diversity means recognizing differences between people, acknowledging that these differences are a valued asset, and striving for diverse representation as a critical step towards equity. See “Equity.”

Equity – Equity means fairness and justice and focuses on outcomes that are most appropriate for a given group, recognizing different challenges, needs, and histories. It is distinct from diversity, which can simply mean variety (the presence of individuals with various identities). It is also not equality, or “same treatment,” which doesn’t take differing needs or disparate outcomes into account. Systemic equity involves a robust system and dynamic process consciously designed to create, support, and sustain social justice. See “Racial justice.”

Ethnicity – A socially constructed grouping of people based on culture, tribe, language, national heritage, and/or religion. It is often used interchangeably with race and/or national origin but should be considered an overlapping, rather than identical, category. See “Racial and ethnic categories.”

Hate crime – Criminal acts, motivated by bias, that target victims based on their perceived membership in a certain social group. Incidents may involve physical assault, damage to property, bullying, harassment, verbal abuse, offensive graffiti, letters, or email. Hate crime laws enhance the penalties associated with conduct that is criminal under other laws.

Implicit bias/unconscious bias – Attitudes that unconsciously affect our decisions and actions. People often think of bias as intentional, i.e., someone wanted to say something racist. However, brain science has shown that people are often unaware of their bias, and the concept of implicit bias helps describe a lot of contemporary racist acts that may not be overt or intentional. Implicit bias is just as harmful, so it is important to talk about race explicitly and to take steps to address it. Institutions are composed of individuals whose biases are replicated and then produce systemic inequities. It is possible to interrupt implicit bias by adding steps to decision-making processes that thoughtfully consider and address racial impacts.

Minority/minorities – A term that has historically referred to non-white racial groups, indicating that they were numerically smaller than the dominant white majority. Defining people of color as “minorities” is not recommended because of changing demographics and how it reinforces ideas of inferiority and marginalization of a group of people. Defining people by how they self-identify is often preferable and more respectful. The term “minority” may be needed in specific cases (such as “minority contracting” and “minority-owned businesses”) to reflect data that is collected using those categories. See the term “People of color.”

Mixed race, biracial, multiracial – Generally accepted terms to describe a person who has mixed ancestry of two or more races. Many terms for people of various multiracial backgrounds exist, some of which are pejorative or are no longer used. The U.S. Census first gave the option for a person to identify as belonging to more than one race in 2000, at which time approximately 9 million individuals, or 2.9 percent of the population, self-identified as multiracial.

Multicultural – Involving various cultures in a society, usually with the intent to promote tolerance, inclusion, and equal respect for cultural diversity. Does not include an explicit racial lens. Multiculturalism often focuses on interpersonal interaction and communication between people of different cultures rather than a systemic approach to advance equity.

People of color – Often the preferred collective term for referring to non-white racial groups, rather than “minorities.” Racial justice advocates have been using the term “people of color” (not to be confused with the pejorative “colored people”) since the late 1970s as an inclusive and unifying frame across different racial groups that are not white to address racial inequities. While “people of color” can be a politically useful term, and describes people with their own attributes (as opposed to what they are not, e.g., “non-white”), it is also important whenever possible to identify people through their own racial/ethnic group, as each has its own distinct experience and meaning and may be more appropriate.

“Post-racial” – A term used to describe a time in which racial prejudice and discrimination no longer exist. Deep racial disparities and divisions exist across our society, and some are even widening. Much like the notion of “colorblindness,” the idea of a “post-racial” society does not acknowledge that racism and inequity sit at the core of many of our nation’s deepest challenges. See “Colorblind.”

Privilege – A set of advantages systemically conferred on a particular person or group of people. White people are racially privileged, even when they are economically underprivileged. Privilege and oppression go hand-in-hand: They are two sides of the same power relationship, and both sides of the equation must be understood and addressed. People can be disadvantaged by one identity and privileged by another. See “Intersectionality” and “White supremacy.”

Race – While often assumed to be a biological classification, based on physical and genetic variation, racial categories do not have a scientific basis. However, the consequences of racial categorization are real, as the ideology of race has become embedded in our identities, institutions, and culture, and is used as a basis for discrimination and racial profiling. How one is racialized is a major determinant of one’s socioeconomic status and life opportunities. See “Racial and ethnic categories.”

Racial and ethnic categories – System of organizing people into groups based on their identified race and ethnicity, with categories that may change over time. Data is derived from self-identification questions; however, people often do not get to select the categories from which they must choose, making most methods of categorizing and counting highly political and often problematic.

Racial hierarchy – Ranking of different races/ethnic groups, based on physical and perceived characteristics. Racial hierarchy is not a binary of white vs. non-white, but rather a complex system where groups occupy different rungs of political, economic, and cultural power. Racist ideology relies on maintaining hierarchies, even among racial groups.

Racial justice – The systematic fair treatment of people of all races, resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all. Racial justice—or racial equity—goes beyond “anti-racism.” It is not just the absence of discrimination and inequities but also the presence of deliberate systems and supports to achieve and sustain racial equity through proactive and preventative measures.

Racial profiling – The discriminatory practice by law enforcement officials of targeting people of color for suspicion of crime without evidence of criminal activity, based on their perceived race, ethnicity, national origin, or religion (e.g., “stop-and-frisk”). Racial profiling is ineffective, damages community-police relationships, and is being litigated around the country as a violation of constitutional rights. However, law enforcement authorities at the federal, state, and local levels continue to use racial profiling.

Racial slur – Derogatory, pejorative, or insulting terms for members of a racial or ethnic group. While some slurs, like the “n-word,” are understood as such and are avoided, some slurs are still used in everyday speech, with little understanding of their harm.

Racism – A historically-rooted system of power hierarchies based on race—infused in our institutions, policies, and culture—that benefits white people and hurts people of color. Racism isn’t limited to individual acts of prejudice, either deliberate or accidental. Rather, the most damaging racism is built into systems and institutions that shape our lives. Most coverage of race and racism is not “systematically aware,” meaning that it either focuses on racism at the level of an individuals’ speech or actions (individual-level racism), dismisses systemic racism, or refers to racism in the past tense.

Racist – Describes a person, behavior, or incident that perpetuates racism. Stories of race and racism that focus on personal prejudice (“who’s a racist?”) get a disproportionate share of attention in the media. This reinforces the message that racism is primarily a phenomenon of overt, intentional acts carried out by prejudiced individuals who need correcting and/or shaming and tends to spark debates of limited value about that individual’s character. Media and racial justice advocates should use a systemic lens when producing race-related stories and topics to examine systems, institutional practices, policies, and outcomes.

“Reverse racism” – A concept based on a misunderstanding of what racism is, often used to accuse and attack efforts made to rectify systemic injustices. Every individual can be prejudiced and biased at one time or another toward various people and behaviors, but racism is based on power and systematic oppression. Individual prejudice and systemic racism cannot be equated. Even though some people of color hold powerful positions, white people overwhelmingly hold the most systemic power. The concept of “reverse racism” ignores structural racism, which permeates all dimensions of our society, routinely advantaging white people and disadvantageous to people of color. Structural racism is deeply entrenched and in no danger of being dismantled or “reversed” any time soon.

Stereotype – Characteristics ascribed to a person or groups of people based on generalization and oversimplification that may result in stigmatization and discrimination. Even so-called positive stereotypes (e.g., Asian Americans as “model minorities”) can be harmful due to their limiting nature.

Systemic analysis – A comprehensive examination of the root causes and mechanisms at play that result in patterns. It involves looking beyond individual speech, acts, and practices to the larger structures—organizations, institutions, traditions, and systems of knowledge.

White supremacy – A form of racism centered upon the belief that white people are superior to people of other racial backgrounds and that white people should politically, economically, and socially dominate non-white people. While often associated with violence perpetrated by the KKK and other white supremacist groups, it also describes a political ideology and systemic oppression that perpetuates and maintains social, political, historical, and/or industrial white domination.

White supremacy culture – Characteristics of white supremacy that manifest in organizational culture and are used as norms and standards without being proactively named or chosen by the full group. The characteristics are damaging to both people of color and white people in that they elevate the values, preferences, and experiences of one racial group above all others. Organizations that are led by people of color or have a majority of people of color can also demonstrate characteristics of white supremacy culture.



