

Campaign Lab FAQ

(Updated June 2026)

Who is eligible to apply?

- The Campaign Lab is open to NEA state affiliates and local affiliates. NEA caucuses, councils, and other affiliated groups are not eligible to apply for Campaign Lab participation. Applications must be submitted by a state or local affiliate that will serve as the lead organization for the campaign.

How do I apply to the Campaign Lab?

- Applications for the Campaign Lab are continuously accepted.
- Any member may submit an application for Campaign Lab. It begins by clicking the blue “Click Here to Apply to Campaign Lab” button found at <https://www.nea.org/resource-library/campaign-lab>.
- The person who submits the application will be considered the “team lead.” Team leads are responsible for communication with the NEA Campaign Lab and Campaign Lab Coaches.
- The Team Lead can change as long as NEA Campaign Lab is notified. It is the responsibility of the Team Lead to notify the State and Local Affiliates that you are planning to apply and make sure that one or the other are willing to serve as the fiscal agent should you receive any funding from the Campaign Lab. They will need to ensure that they have a W-9 on file with NEA at some point in the future should you receive any funding.
- You must get written permission from your local president to participate in the Campaign Lab.
- Applications are reviewed every two weeks. Upon initial acceptance, the State Affiliate is notified of the application and provided 48 hours in which to deny the application. If there is no issue with the state, the team lead will be notified of acceptance into the Campaign Lab.
- There is no expiration for participation in the Campaign Lab.
- For more information on the application process contact Amanda Kail, akail@nea.org

Will there be funding from NEA to support the local campaigns?

- Yes! Once teams have worked with their coaches to complete an assessment and created a campaign plan, they are eligible to apply for a \$2,500 grant. Grant submission deadlines are February 1st, June 1st, and November 1st.
- Eligible campaigns can be either internal or external, meaning they can focus on just building capacity and engagement, like a membership campaign or surveys, or they can focus on pressuring a target to concede to a demand, like getting a school board to change a policy.
- Strategic Campaigns are typically either state-wide in nature, or from locals that have a history of running multi-issue, multi-partner campaigns. Participation at this level is by invitation only. Contact

Carrie Gleason, cgleason@nea.org for more information.

- **What is the process to apply for the grant?**

1. Campaign teams work with their coach to complete an assessment of their strength and create a campaign plan. Once that is done, leads should email Amanda Kail at akail@nea.org to get a grant request link. Campaign Leads then submit grant request along with a campaign plan summary.
2. You will need to ask your state or local affiliate if they will be your fiscal agent and forward their response by email to akail@nea.org. That means if your request is approved, NEA will send them the money to hold until you are ready to spend it. NEA will send your fiscal agent a W-9 to complete. Once that is done we will transfer the money to them. You will be responsible for following all accounting protocols, such as submitting receipts to that affiliate.
3. Once steps one and two are complete and you have been approved, campaign leads will be emailed a link to input their grant request directly into the NEA system. They will also be emailed links to submit 6-month and 12-month reports.

How will teams be coached?

- Every approved local team will be supported by a coach. The coach and team lead will establish coaching cycles, typically every other week, to support their team.
- Teams will be coordinated into campaign groups based on the issue area they choose and by experience. For example, if there are 12 cities/towns working on fighting school closures, we will introduce them to each other and support them in a way that makes sense. And, if there are 45 individuals completely new to organizing and campaigning, we will support them in a new organizer learning community.
- All team leads, coaches and mentor coaches are required to meet once a month for a networking, skill building, and problem-solving meeting. This is online and is led by NEA Campaign Lab Coordinators in partnership with select coaches and leads.
- State affiliates should work with local affiliates to make sure there are good systems in place for two-way communication regarding what is happening in the Lab. NEA is neutral on the composition of teams, so state and local affiliates should work together to determine who should be on each local team.
- There are three levels of leadership and coaching within the NEA Campaign Lab: Team Leads, Campaign Coaches, and Mentor Coaches.
 - Team Leads are local member leaders who have submitted a Campaign Lab application and have been working with a Campaign Lab Coach. They are focused on developing an Organizing Team and leading that team in designing and implementing an issue campaign cycle. The Team Lead can change once a team is established and upon notification to the NEA Campaign Lab
 - Campaign Coaches are members that have experienced leading an organizing team through

at least two issue campaign cycles. Campaign Coaches commit to growing the capacity of at least one Team Lead to successfully implement a campaign cycle.

- Mentor Coaches are either Affiliate Staff or members who have broader experience with leading teams and locals implementing issue campaigns. Mentor Coaches are committed to growing the capacity of Coaches to move their Team Leads through campaign cycles.

Who are the coaches?

- Most Campaign Lab coaches will be NEA members who have direct and sustained experience with campaigns and organizing. All NEA member coaches will be trained in standard coaching practices. Some coaches may be state affiliate staff or NEA staff. To become a campaign coach please complete the following application: [2026 NEA Campaign Coach Application – Fill out form](#)
- Campaign Lab coaches will be assigned to teams by the Center for Organizing in collaboration with other NEA staff.
- Any member or state affiliate staff person can apply to serve as a coach in the Campaign Lab by completing the following application:

The Commitment for Coaches

- Remotely coach 1-3 participating Campaign Lab teams; coaching 1 team is a ~9 hour per month commitment; coaching 2 teams is a ~15 hour per month commitment.
- Engage in the following activities: coach local teams and team leads; plan, reflect on, and document coaching calls; participate in virtual trainings and workshops; participate in peer-to-peer problem solving calls with other coaches; engage in follow up check ins with local teams between coaching sessions.
- An initial 12 commitment, with the possibility of extending the commitment upon successful completion of an initial coaching cycle.

The Opportunity for Coaches

- A stipend of \$1,100 for coaching 1 local team or \$1,800 for coaching 2 local teams or \$2500 for coaching 3 teams for full year commitment.
- Foundational training in methods and tools for coaching campaigns.
- Biweekly (twice per month) coaching from an experienced organizing coach that will work with you to sharpen your coaching skills and navigate coaching challenges in ways that build the skills, motivation, and strategic capabilities of local team leads.
- The opportunity to participate in a historic national campaign committed to promoting, protecting, and strengthening public education.

Successful coaches will have:

- Demonstrated experience in foundational organizing practices, including holding 1-to-1 organizing conversations, coaching others to hold 1-to-1 conversations, identifying targets, crafting demands, designing escalating tactics, and assessing and debriefing campaigns.
- Previous leadership in issue organizing campaigns in your local.
- A willingness to grow and develop in your organizing and coaching practice through receiving coaching and participating in a national movement-based community of practice.

For more information about coaches, contact Ellen Holmes, eholmes@nea.org

What are the trainings that are provided?

- Campaign Lab trainings are made available to all participants in the Campaign Lab, free of charge, via partnerships with the Midwest Academy ([6 Weeks of Power](#)) and the Berkeley School of Labor ([Skills to Win](#)). Both of these are synchronous, online opportunities.
- NEA offers three, in person Campaign Academies. These two and a half day events are designed for affiliate staff and members that are currently in the NEA Campaign Lab. NEA covers the costs of travel for registered participants. For detailed information, registration, and schedules visit <https://www.nea.org/UD-Org-Support>
- NEA offers online courses that specifically support teams and coaches in the Campaign Lab. These are hosted at [The NEA Professional Excellence Portal](#) and anyone with an account (free to create) can participate. Once you have created an account, search the catalogue using the search terms, "Campaign Lab." All course provide a certificate of completion for contact hours. These online trainings are asynchronous and can be done anytime independently.
- For more information about trainings, contact Ellen Holmes, eholmes@nea.org