

**NEW
ERA
OF
PUBLIC
SAFETY**

AN ADVOCACY TOOLKIT FOR FAIR, SAFE,
AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY POLICING

Step 5: Build a Campaign

Reforms are often achieved through strategies and tactics that involve a broad-based and diverse group of people working on a campaign together in coalitions or informal partnerships. You may choose to come together with other community members and organizations to launch a grassroots campaign in your community to make changes to your police department.

A campaign involves setting clear goals for change and agreeing on a set of strategies and tactics that will operate cohesively to achieve your common goals. A campaign also brings together a group of individuals and organizations around a singular set of goals, strategies, and tactics. Once the goal is achieved, the campaign may shift into an implementation phase or the campaign may end altogether. A campaign can be housed at an organization, where it will become a component of the larger body of work or mission, or it can operate through an independent organization created for the sole purpose of implementing the campaign.

Choosing the Correct Target and Pressure Points.

It is important to understand your target and pressure points. A target could be an agency, institution, or decision-maker who has the power to give you what you want. A pressure point may be a relationship you leverage or someone/something you use strategically throughout a campaign. There could be multiple pressure points, whereas there is normally only one target. Your pressure point may shift throughout the campaign, but be clear about who or what you are targeting, and limit it to one individual or institution, if possible.

If multiple law enforcement agencies operate in your area, identify the specific agency you are targeting for reform. Some larger cities may have state police, city police, county sheriffs, private patrols, or campus police all working within the same area. In addition, federal law enforcement agencies (e.g., Immigration and Customs Enforcement; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives; the Federal Bureau of Investigation) may operate in your area. Many constitutionally protected rights are the same when interacting with these agencies, but they all operate under their own policies and are governed differently.

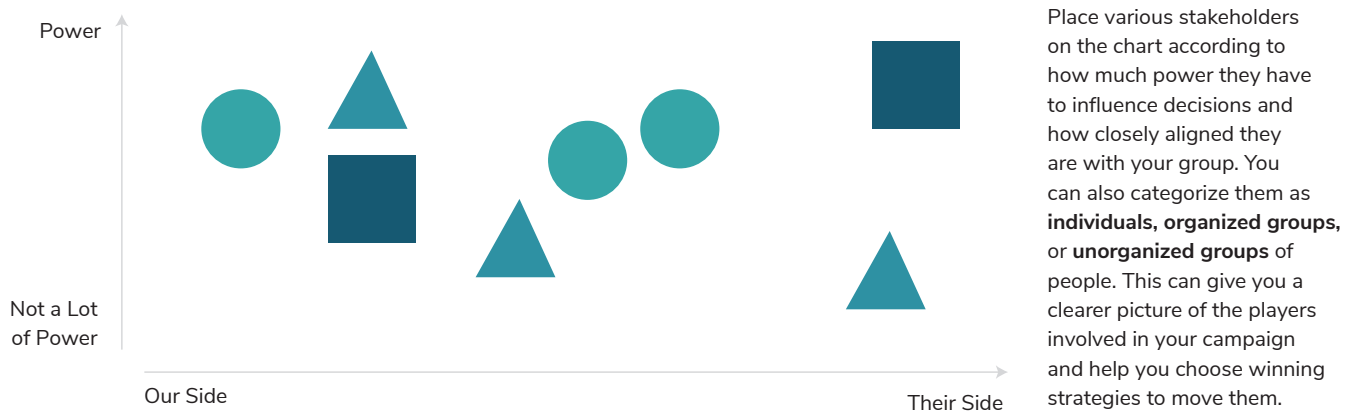
When you have determined which agency, institution, or decision-maker you are targeting, educate yourself on the structure of that agency. If it is your local police department, determine:

- *Who sets the policies for the police department — an elected official or an appointee?*
- *Who controls the budget?*
- *Which other stakeholders have influence on public safety, and what is their role?*

Sometimes, you can find answers to these questions on city, county, or police department websites. It might also help to draw a map of who controls or governs these important areas.

Power Mapping.

To determine pressure points and tactics, try a power-mapping exercise. Place stakeholders on a chart according to how much control they have over a decision or your goal. Categorize them as individuals, organized groups, or unorganized groups. Power mapping yields a clearer picture of the players involved in your campaign and the strategies to influence and move them.



Consider the following questions:

- *What moves the target? What motivates them?*
- *Can you move groups or individuals closer to your side and make them allies?*
- *What relationships already exist among the stakeholders? Do any new relationships need to be developed or cultivated?*
- *Can you use relationships with particular groups or individuals to influence your target or pressure points?*
- *Do unorganized groups exist that you can mobilize?*
- *Where do the media fall on your power map?*
- *What additional information do you need? Who can help you access that information?*
- *With which people or groups do you need to meet to learn more about their position or how they can help your campaign?*

Choosing Your Strategy and Tactics.⁷¹

Next, discuss your strategy — your detailed plan about how to achieve your goals. Your strategy is, in other words, your plan for winning.

When deciding on a strategy, consider your group's strengths and weaknesses, your allies and opponents, your targets, and your tactics. Your strategy should incorporate ways to move your targets and refine your media messaging as well.

WHAT: *What are you trying to achieve?*

WHO: *What staffing needs will the campaign have? Consider the capacity of each individual and organization involved in the campaign. Establish clear roles and responsibilities. Establish effective channels of communication and data sharing among coalition members.*

WHEN: Establish a timeline.

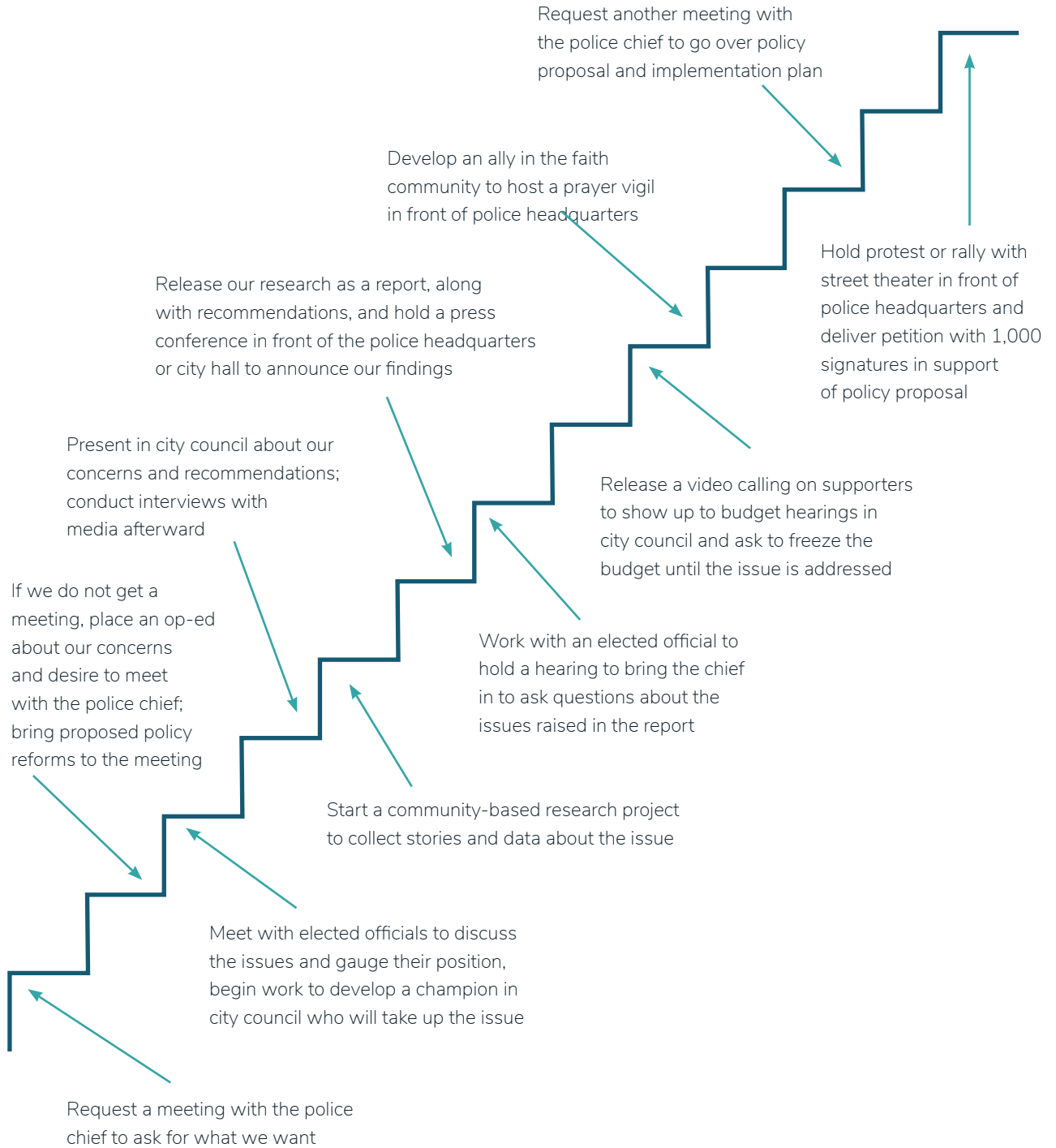
HOW: Conduct a needs assessment to determine what resources you need to successfully complete the campaign.

Identify the tactics you will use to execute your strategy. The tactics you choose depend on your group's preferences, your capacity and resources, the political climate in your area, and how you motivate your target points to action.

The first tactic in a campaign is usually to simply ask for what you want. You can make your request in a meeting with an elected official or the police chief.

If a direct approach is ineffective, an escalating tactics chart can help you determine your next tactic.⁷² An escalating tactics chart is a visual representation of how the campaign can turn up the pressure on each target point over time, depending on the target's reaction to that pressure. The chart ensures that the tactics build on one another in a cohesive way. To make a chart, write down all the possible tactics on paper, and then arrange them according to the order in which you should execute them.

Escalating Tactics Chart



For more information on escalating tactics, see: http://www.bolderadvocacy.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/escalating_tactics_chart.pdf.
 Also see: <https://s3.amazonaws.com/s3.350.org/images/EscalationGuide.pdf>

Tactics should respond to current conditions. Ordinarily, it may not make sense to organize a large, unannounced protest in front of the police department and then request a meeting the next day to discuss policy reforms. But that may be the right choice if a police-involved killing or other high-profile incident has occurred in the community.

There are a number of ways to engage with the stakeholders to gain visibility for your campaign, including:

Community Forums.

Community forums spread awareness about your campaign and hold decision-makers accountable for implementing reforms. These fora are effective at disseminating information to many people at once, particularly those within a specific community. As with any action or event, it is important to identify your goal before hosting a community forum. Note that if elected or public officials are invited to your forum, the media may cover the event, but it may also be more difficult to get firm answers from decision-makers.

Direct Engagement.

Once you have built your campaign with consensus around the policy changes you most want to see, directly engage the department chief and police leaders. Ask for a meeting with the police chief to discuss the policy topics you are most concerned about — and get a seat at the table.

Open the dialogue by discussing the issues and then “make asks.” To make your argument for why change is needed, present the information you have gathered, including stories of people who have been impacted. Be sure to ask for data that is not publicly available. Aim to educate the chief and police leaders you meet with. Be attentive during the meeting and be open to their perspectives. They may have insights on different topics that could inform future engagement.

Rallies, Protests, and Other Creative Actions.

Rallies, protests, and creative actions, such as street theater and cultural performances, can effectively share information about your campaign. Actions with a lot of visuals help attract attention from your target, pressure points, and the media. Some actions, such as marches, may require significant attendance to be effective; others can be effective with a small group of people. Whatever you are planning, be sure that your message and goal are clear to your audience and supporters. As you plan, prioritize everyone's safety, and consider appointing legal observers, police liaisons, and a safety team. Also, obtain any permits required for rallies and protests on public property.

Tactics can be creative, such as:

- Street theater outside city council chambers to call attention to pending legislation.
- Photo campaigns in which people take pictures with signs describing how they would spend the police department budget to advance public safety. Post the images on social media and tag decision-makers.

Creative tactics engage people in the campaign, make it fun, and attract media attention.

Legal observers work to make sure everyone's rights are protected while protesters engage in free speech and other actions. These observers can serve as important documenters when people's rights are being violated and help advocate on defense teams if someone is arrested.

For more information about legal observers, see:
<https://www.nlg.org/legalobservers>

In a protest context, **police liaisons** are individuals the organizers choose to serve as the main points of contact and communication between protesters and the police. They can convey information from the police to the protesters, help facilitate constructive dialogue, and de-escalate situations if needed.

In a police context, police liaison may be a position within the police department designed to facilitate relationships between the broader community or specific segments of the community.

The role of your **safety team** members depends on the type of action or event you are hosting. It could include ensuring that everyone is well hydrated, serving as a marshal for a march, or making sure that a de-escalation plan is in place.

For more information on direct action, see:
<https://organizingforpower.org/action-2/>

Litigation.

Litigation is a go-to tactic when trying to change police department policy or practice. Lawsuits may allege that a particular incident violated the constitution or law or point to a larger systemic issue through a class action lawsuit with multiple plaintiffs.⁷³ Lawsuits can be part of larger grassroots or organizing strategies — or complements to them.

If a lawsuit is being filed by one individual alleging harm against one individual, the goal is usually to get damages or monetary compensation for the person who suffered harm, but remedies may also include training or policy changes.

Collaborating across sectors and fields is sometimes challenging, so lawyers, clients, and organizers should meet regularly to develop trusting relationships, learn about the issues important to those involved, and share information about strategies. It is also important to establish to whom each party is accountable. For example, lawyers may be accountable only to their clients, who may have a different goal than you do. Social justice lawyers familiar with community organizing strategies might see the benefit of close collaboration and may be accountable to their client, as well as to the larger community.

Advancing one cohesive strategy in the courts with local legislators, police chiefs, and mayors, and using similar talking points and messages with all audiences, will help achieve meaningful and sustainable reform.

Department of Justice Interventions.

The DOJ Civil Rights Division is responsible for upholding the civil and constitutional rights of all people and enforcing federal statutes that prohibit discrimination.⁷⁴ Within the Civil Rights Division are two sections that focus on policing issues: The Special Litigation Section and the Criminal Section.

The Special Litigation Section investigates law enforcement agencies to determine whether patterns or practices of constitutional violations exist. The Criminal Section brings federal criminal charges against individual officers for violating constitutional rights during incidents of police misconduct.⁷⁵

The difference between these two types of investigation is important. Because a criminal investigation typically focuses on an incident and the individuals involved, the result of a successful prosecution is prison time for the responsible officer(s). In a pattern or practice investigation, the DOJ will publish the findings of its investigation and usually enter into a court-ordered settlement, or “consent decree,” with the local police department. Rather than going to trial, the parties will agree to a set of remedies, such as policy reforms, community advisory boards, new training, and other changes to the police department.

The Civil Rights Division offers opportunity for community involvement. Community members can inform the investigation, propose language for consent decrees, and meet regularly with representatives from the DOJ to update them on the progress of reforms. In addition, even if the Civil Rights Division does not launch a full investigation and pursue a consent decree, the COPS Office may enter a collaborative process with local agencies to support reform efforts, issue recommendations, and offer technical assistance. Community members can file complaints or alert issues in the community to the DOJ online at <https://www.justice.gov/>.

Method to Engage Stakeholder:		
Pro:	Con:	Issues to Consider:

Choosing Your Communications Strategies, Messaging, & Tactics

A strong communications strategy is key to a strong campaign because it helps drive the public conversation and shift public opinion toward your analysis of the problem and your proposed solution. Your communications strategy has the power to influence other community members, voters, decision-makers, and even the identified pressure points. It can help amplify the campaign, build support for its goals, recruit people for events, and attract new allies to the cause.

You will repeat your message and message frame throughout the course of the campaign. Therefore, you should always deliver a consistent message when discussing your issue, whether during one-on-one conversations in communities, in interviews with the media, or in print materials.

A strong message and frame for your campaign is critical to your campaign's success. To develop a winning message, appeal to values shared by the community members as well as decision-makers and stakeholders. A strong message often builds on the shared values of community and public safety.

Shared values include:

- Safety
- Community
- Accountability
- Transparency
- Fairness
- Respect
- Families and youth
- Civil and human rights
- Ending violence (including violence by police officers)
- Commonsense solutions (or being “smart” when responding to social problems)
- Leadership in adopting best practices or models (particularly those that rely on data or research)

You can adapt your message to your audience, but the core of your message should remain the same. Therefore, it is important to develop a message that has broad public appeal. A strong message and frame also help your campaign “control the narrative” by encouraging media outlets to repeat your talking points and spread your message. Examples of good overall messaging frames include “Safe Streets, Strong Communities” and “We Deserve Better.”

☐ **Talking points** are a few short reasons or factors in bullet form that support your message and cause. These talking points can include examples to better explain your message.

🗣️ **Sound bites** are short, memorable ways of communicating your talking points in the media.

Positioning the members of your group as experts on the issue at hand lends credibility to your campaign or cause. The clearer it is that your group has researched the problem and is providing solutions, the more media outlets and the general public will seek out your group for expertise and guidance. Therefore, your group should include people who have direct experience with the police department. Their experiences should not only inform the campaign’s strategies and goals but also provide expertise on the issue. You can bolster this expertise with data that support your cause, research, and best practice models. These communication strategies are quite different, but with a strong, unifying message, they can work together toward one cohesive and winning communications strategy.

Use your communications strategy to generate coverage in various media outlets. This will bolster your outreach and inform your tactics. For example:

Do you need more community support from young people at events?

Develop a social media strategy, shoot videos, or create shareable memes to attract the attention of younger community members.

Do you want to attract the attention of voters in a specific neighborhood or community?

Place letters to the editor of the local newspaper, develop flyers to post in places community members frequent, or even fundraise for a small billboard.

Do you want to communicate directly to a decision-maker or your campaign target?

Create a sign-on letter or policy brief or generate talking points for use at an in-person meeting.

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Police Reform Campaign Communication Plan Template

OVERVIEW

[What message do you want to communicate to your audience?]

[What are your campaign goals; what do you hope to accomplish?]

[How do you plan to accomplish those goals?]

COMMUNICATIONS GOALS

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

COMMUNICATIONS OBJECTIVES

- [Objective: Plan for fulfilling objective]
 - Example of objectives: create narrative messaging, get involved, sign the pledge, radio/TV

PARTNERS (Local and/or National)

[Make a list of organizations and individuals that you are partnering with for your campaign.]

TARGET AUDIENCES

Policing Advocates:

- [List out all policing advocates you plan to engage in your campaign.]

Policing Stakeholders:

- [List out all policing stakeholders you plan to engage in your campaign.]

Community Members:

- [List out all community members you plan to engage in your campaign.]

KEY REPORTERS

[List individual reporters who discuss policing issues and their outlets.]

LOCAL MEDIA OUTLETS

- [List all local, state, and national media outlets that report on policing and justice reform topics.]

TRUSTED MESSENGERS

- [Are there individuals and/or organizations that you will solicit to be a trusted messenger? How will they lend their expertise to support the campaign?]

CAMPAIGN TIMELINE

Break down your campaign into phases, and then into months, weeks, or days. Explain what activities or tactics you plan to use in each phase to accomplish your goals.

Phase I – Inform and Educate/Advocacy

[Dates]

- Explain activities or tactics (e.g.: event, digital efforts, social, etc.).

Phase II – Engage and Mobilize

[Dates]

- Explain activities or tactics (e.g.: event, digital efforts, social, etc.).

Phase III – Follow Up

[Dates]

- Explain activities or tactics (e.g.: event, digital efforts, social, etc.).

Common Communications Tactics

Two common communications tools are letters to the editor and op-eds, which appear in the opinion section — the most widely read section of the newspaper after the front page.

Letters to the editor are typically written in direct response to a current issue or event or in response to a previous article the newspaper printed. These letters are 150 words or less and summarize one or two key points. They are extremely time sensitive: generally, a newspaper will not publish a letter to the editor more than a few days after the original event or article.

Sample Letter to the Editor

Yesterday, *[this paper published an article stating that ...]*. As a community member working to reform the police department, I *[agree/disagree, insert position]*.

Evidence shows that *[insert data, research, or stories demonstrating the impact of the issue on communities and public safety]*.

[Describe best practices and where they have been successfully implemented.] Adopting policies that address *[issue]* would *[positive impact of proposed solution]*.

It is time *[city or locality]* began adopting commonsense solutions to the issue of *[issue or problem]*, which will result in a more transparent and accountable police department and a safer place for all *[city's or locality's]* residents.

[Insert Call to Action.]

Sincerely,

[Name, contact information]

An op-ed (which stands for opposite the editorial) is typically much longer — 500 to 750 words — and takes a position. It is a good idea to peg an op-ed to a recent issue, incident, article, or story, but op-eds are not as time sensitive as letters to the editor. The usual authors of op-eds are experts or otherwise credible community members who have direct experience and expertise with the issue at hand. Both a letter to the editor and an op-ed can include a call to target, pressure points, other decision-makers, or the community at large.

Depending on your city and news source, you can submit letters to the editor and op-eds online or by mail. Instructions for submission typically appear at the beginning of the editorial section, on the first or last page of the newspaper, or online. Be sure to follow these instructions carefully to improve your chances of publication.

An op-ed should include the following components:

- A compelling first sentence to draw the reader in
- Established credibility and expertise on the issue
- Discussion of the problem
- Discussion of dangers and risks associated with the problem
- Discussion of the solution
- Compelling “kicker” last sentence or paragraph

A sign-on letter is an example of a communications strategy that goes directly to your target. You typically use a sign-on letter to show widespread and diverse support for a solution to an issue. Therefore, it is important to reach out to different types of organizations and communities to ask them to sign on to your letter. You can mail sign-on letters to your campaign target or deliver them in person as part of a meeting, creative action, or press conference.

You can also write a form letter and have each supporter send it individually to the campaign's target. Alternately, you can write a call script that individuals can use when they target key stakeholders, or you can create an online or hard-copy petition and circulate it for signatures.

Sample Sign-On Letter

We, the undersigned organizations and individuals made up of more than *[number]* diverse grassroots organizers, policy advocates, lawyers, lobbyists, policing reform experts, and family members who have direct experience with the *[police department]*, call on the *[campaign's targeted pressure point]* to *[campaign goal]*.

National studies and local data community members have gathered show that *[insert relevant data about the problem.]*. In fact, in *[city or locality]*, *[insert local story about the problem.]*

We know that *[insert problem]* does not make our communities safer. In fact, it can have an adverse effect on public safety. Therefore, to create true public safety in our communities, we must create policy solutions that are informed by directly affected community members and strengthen relationships between the community and the *[police department]*.

A policy that *[insert policy solution and any positive impacts]* will not only improve the lives of our community members who encounter police officers but have a positive impact on our *[city/town/county]* overall.

The *[police department]* has an opportunity to create a transparent and accountable organization that values public safety, mutual respect, and the human rights of all our residents. It can position itself as a national model, built on best practices and commonsense approaches.

We urge you to *[insert campaign goal]*.

Sincerely,

[The undersigned]

Press Conferences and Press Releases.

Press conferences are another important means of distributing your campaign’s message and highlighting important updates or milestones in the campaign’s progress. You can use press conferences to garner mainstream media attention or independently create and distribute media.

Press releases attract media attention: They should answer “who,” “what,” “where,” “when,” “why,” and “how” and be written in the third person. News outlets — particularly ethnic media outlets — may use the press release as a primary source of information and even reprint it without following up with your group for additional quotes or information. Make sure to write the press release in a style that easily lends itself to transformation into an article and include everything you want your readers to know. Consider including one or two quotes from community members or representatives from local organizations as well. Be concise, clear, and timely.

Sample Press Release

HEADLINE [main headline]

SUB-HEADLINE [gives additional context to the issue]

Press Contact: [Name and email/phone]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[Location]

[Date]

The [name of campaign or group] Campaign announced today that it [action or update being shared]. This comes after [background on campaign or issue].

[Name of campaign or group] says that the issue of [issue being addressed] has resulted in [problem being addressed]. [Relevant data about the problem].

[Name of individual], a community member with the campaign, said, “_____.”

Best practices for addressing the issue include [your groups’ solutions, policy proposals, or goals of campaign].

The group plans to [next steps or more information about the current action or event].

[Organization with campaign] is also urging the public to support the cause and said, “_____.”

Online Activism and Social Media.

Much of your campaign's success will come from effective communication strategies, including use of the internet and social media. From email blasts to online petitions to trending hashtags, the internet can be an effective tool for mass mobilization, helping you get your message out broadly and quickly.⁷⁶

Amplifying your message across social platforms is an important part of getting your campaign message out to your target audience. Creating social media posts from your talking points and condensing them into the appropriate character count — and including a call to action — help your audience and those interested in your campaign get involved. Including a hashtag to house your creative information and take the campaign viral spreads your message farther.



#Hashtag

Color of Change

Color of Change is a digital petition and training platform that allows people to organize and mobilize individuals around a variety of racial justice topics.

For more information, visit: <https://www.organizefor.org/>

The average person's attention span is decreasing rapidly; at the same time, our news feeds and inboxes are becoming increasingly cluttered with media competing for our attention. Therefore, it is more important than ever to be able to communicate your message in a compelling and succinct way. Hashtags help by giving you a way to describe the core of your issue in just a few characters while also framing your issue and reaching a wider audience. Images and videos are visual representations of your message, so it is important to keep all social elements cohesive and clear.

Social media is critical for getting the word out about your issue and building broad support for your campaign. Make sure your outreach does not stop there. Through various online platforms, you can create petitions, conduct phone and text banking to turn people out to events, email targets directly with prefilled or custom letters, send emails to supporters in specific ZIP codes to encourage them to contact their representatives, and more.

Social media algorithms that determine your online experience are always evolving, and new online organizing tools are created every day. Check the internet for up-to-date guides on how to use these strategies effectively.

Know Your Rights Trainings

Know Your Rights training is an important part of police reform. These training sessions can get more people involved in your campaign and are an important community education tool. They can also be helpful in explaining new reforms to community members who should understand how police officers are expected to treat them during police stops and encounters. One key to successful *Know Your Rights* training, however, is understanding the difference between “rights” and “reality,” because often what police officers are supposed to do varies from what may occur during an encounter.

VI. Making Change

⁷² See "Escalating Tactics." Bolder Advocacy. July 21, 2010. Retrieved from https://www.bolderadvocacy.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/escalating_tactics_chart.pdf.

⁷³ See "Know Your Rights: Demonstrations and Protests." ACLU. Retrieved from https://www.aclu.org/sites/default/files/field_pdf_file/kyr_protests.pdf.

⁷⁴ See "Civil Rights Division." The United States Department of Justice. Retrieved from <https://www.justice.gov/crt>.

⁷⁵ See "Criminal Section." The United States Department of Justice. Retrieved from <https://www.justice.gov/crt/criminal-section>.

⁷⁶ See "Organize For." Color for Change. Retrieved from <https://www.organizefor.org/>



The Leadership
Conference

The Leadership
Conference
Education Fund

