

GETTING PEOPLE INVOLVED

Gather endorsements: Elected officials are innately aware of the public's interest — that's what we pay them to do! Creating a statement of support and asking those in your network to sign can show the large and diverse body of constituents who are interested in the issue.

☐ **Craft a Statement of Support/Advocates Sign-On Letter**

- ☐ Describe the issue in a few sentences, using details that evoke an emotional reaction in the reader.
- ☐ Share why this is important, and connect it to other well-known issues or movements, if possible. Make the issue timely and relevant to the prevailing narrative.
- ☐ Paint a picture of an effective alternative — what kind of change is possible, and what would that look like?
- ☐ End with a call to action, including specific details about how interested people can get involved. The call to action may be different depending on what type of change you seek.
- ☐ Include the exact reference to the policy (i.e., bill number, regulation number).
- ☐ Create a [Google Form](#) you can send to advocates and organizations for quick sign-ons. The link will take you to a sample sign on.
- ☐ Share the document with individuals and organizations who you think might be willing to publicly support your position.
- ☐ Use your statement of support, including the signatures, to disseminate to the policymakers office.
- ☐ For more information on shaping narratives, review “Communications and Values Based Messaging” in [Tools of the Game, Volume One](#).

☐ **More on Sign-on Letters:** These are letters you can write or use language from policy campaign materials to garner support in two specific ways:

- ☐ Advocate-led
 - ☐ List of recommendations with partner organizations signed on
 - ☐ Shows sector support behind recommendations and a clear message
 - ☐ Can be circulated to target elected officials
- ☐ Policymaker-led (Sometimes called “Dear Colleague” letters): Must use a legislator who supports your legislation to get this started. They will then help do the work internally to get others to sign on.
 - ☐ List of recommendations with other elected officials signed on
 - ☐ Legislator will work to garner sign ons — you may be able to work from the outside to push other legislators to sign on, as well

☐ **Examples:**

- ☐ [Take Action](#): Sign on to Support the Reentry Act
- ☐ [Sample Form Letter](#): Public Comment to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development



Leverage connections from your own network:

Have you worked in coalition with other organizations? Reaching out to them and getting them involved can help maintain and uplift your relationships.

Sometimes it can be as easy as picking up the phone:

- **Look at your contacts list** and send friends, family, and key stakeholders a quick text or even a call to tell them what you are working on and how you can use their support.
- **Cold call elected officials' offices** and talk about your issue with a Legislative Aid or Policy Director. This can help get your issue on their radar and create an opening for future interactions or partnership. Oftentimes, they will ask for a follow-up email with details. You can follow up by requesting an official meeting to discuss further.
- **Email** use listservs and coalition groups to post information regarding your campaign and how people can get involved.
 - Great way to disseminate your social media toolkit.
 - Search: Use your email correspondences as a jumping off point to find stakeholders who may be interested in helping to push your issue. A quick search through your emails can sometimes reveal people you would not have previously considered.

Get creative! As you build your momentum, feel free to try anything — from contacting friends and family to cold-calling phone lists. Your personal contacts list of emails and phone numbers can be the greatest tool in bringing awareness to this campaign. Above, we mentioned getting a list of organizational endorsements; you can do the same with your personal friends and family. Using the same statement of support you can create a sign-on letter or petition to help drive awareness of your issue.

Issue Identification

- A **problem** is a large-scale system, political situation, structure, social condition, etc. How a problem is framed is strongly connected to how stakeholders might respond.
- **Framing** is the lens through which a policy issue is seen — and that lens influences what actions are taken, who has access, and who benefits.
- An **issue** is *part* of a larger problem, for which we can propose (and win) a specific solution.
 - For example, the school-to-prison pipeline is a “problem,” and how a school district handles expulsions is an “issue.”
- **Why do issue identification?** Issue ID:
 - Helps us focus on real and specific changes
 - Allows us to align goals with our shared values and long-term vision
 - Lets you weigh competing priorities and how best to balance them
 - Creates a team-based structure for evaluating ideas
 - Creates space to surface different opinions, knowledge, and open questions

How to Use This Tool with Your Community or Coalition

- First, talk to your group to decide which criteria are important to all of you to consider. You may want to delete many of the criteria listed here, or add some of your own. What matters is figuring out what's important to *you*.
- Next, rank criteria (rows) in order of importance, with the most important ones at the top.
- Make copies of your chart for each issue you'll be considering.
- Evaluate each issue according to the criteria you've set out. The meeting organizers may want to include preliminary notes that address each of the criteria, or you can surface comments during a group discussion. Then, rate how well that issue meets each criterion from 1 to 5 (with 1 the lowest, 5 the highest).
- Tally up the total ranking for each issue.
- Repeat this process for every issue you're considering.
- Compare the total rankings for each issue, then review your highest-ranked issues by considering the rankings going down the chart. Are the rankings high on your high-priority criteria? If not, you may want to deprioritize that issue even if its total ranking is high.

ISSUE IDENTIFICATION CHART

Issue ID Chart: [POTENTIAL CAMPAIGN/ISSUE]

Make a Copy for Each Issue

CRITERIA FOR ISSUE SOLUTION	NOTES	RANK IMPORTANCE FROM 1-5 (1=LOW, 5=HIGH)
Promotes healing, restorative justice, and collective wellness.		
Benefits the people most impacted		
Values people over property and profit		
Prioritizes economic mobility and access		
Advances a budget that reflects our human needs		
Promotes cooperative ownership and shared decision-making with directly impacted voices		
Inclusive of environmental justice, green space, and land ownership		
Reduces reliance on incarceration		
Urgency. How urgent is this issue?		
Variety of tactics. Does the issue lend itself to a variety of tactics, such as base-building organizing, legislative advocacy, mobilizing, etc?		
Leads to other issues. Would focusing on this issue set us up to tackle related issues in future (by building a track record, base of people, and knowledge that's transferable to other issues)?		
Mobilizing. Will this issue move large numbers of people to action? Is this an issue that will allow us to expand our coalition, campaign or organization?		
Stands to benefit from a larger coalition? Are more voices necessary? Or is smaller strategic?		
Winnability. How difficult will it be for us to win it? Do we have enough power to win it? (1=very hard to win and we don't have enough power; 5=easy to win)		
TOTAL SCORE		