



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS

STEP-BY-STEP PLAYBOOK FOR LOCAL IAFF AFFILIATES

Mar. 30, 2026

WHY POLITICS?

- For most IAFF members, **being involved in politics was not the job** you signed up for.
- **Every decision** made about our work lives is made by **someone who was elected** to office or appointed by someone elected.
- **Politics is a tool that we can and must use to improve the lives of our members.**



STRATEGIC PLANNING

Why Strategic Planning

**In the fire service, we have a
plan for everything.**





Why Have a Strategic Plan





**Do you have a
plan for this?**



...or this?



STRATEGIC PLAN

**Strategic Planning is Pre-Incident
Planning for Your Union!!**



WHAT IS STRATEGIC PLANNING?

1. A time-based to-do list
2. Reflective of your mission, values & priorities
3. Executed in order of importance



STEPS

1. *Define your mission, values, and priorities.*
2. Create a Calendar
3. Conduct an honest analysis of current situation.
4. Create a plan. Write it down.
5. Obtain buy in for the plan from members.
6. Provide updates on plan progress.



MEMBER

ENGAGEMENT

“

“The enemy was the collective spirit. I got a hold of that spirit and while it was a seeding; I poisoned it, choked it, bludgeoned it if I had to, anything to be sure it would never blossom into a united workforce...Likewise, as the consultants go about the business of destroying unions, they invade people’s lives, demolish their friendships, crush their will, and shatter families.”

Martin Jay Levitt-Confessions of a Union Buster



ISSUES

LEADERS

MEMBERS

FIND ISSUES

- Popular Examples:
 - Wages
 - Benefits
 - Retirement
 - Safety
 - Staffing
 - Equipment



IAFF BARGAINING SURVEY



Name: _____ Years of Experience as FF/EMS: _____

Job Classification: _____ Hourly Rate of Pay: _____

Department: _____ Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

STAFFING

Is the department staffed with enough fire fighters and/or emergency medical personnel?

- Yes No. If no, please explain:

TRAINING

Does the department properly train its staff to respond to calls for service?

- Yes No. If no, please explain:

SAFETY

Do fire fighters and/or emergency medical personnel feel safe when responding to calls for service?

- Yes No. If no, please explain:

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IAFF BARGAINING SURVEY



IAFF BARGAINING SURVEY



YOUR ISSUES

Please rank the following issues, 1 being the most important and 10 being the least important.

- Wages
- Health Insurance
- Retirement
- Staffing
- Safety
- Training
- Seniority
- Differentials & Certification Pay
- Scheduling
- Other (Please Explain): _____

Are you and your coworkers ready to **take action** to fix these issues?

- Yes, I'm committed to taking action to improve my department. No, I'm okay with the current issues at my department.

Do you know any fire fighters and/or emergency medical workers at non-union departments?

- Yes No

If you answered "Yes," please list the name, phone number, and email address of the department.



Learn more about **JOINING THE IAFF!**

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MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

- Wish more members were involved?
- What would be the impact if a culture was created to work on issues together?
- Can we change the view of members that the Union is like a vending machine?

The way to get members to stop thinking of the union as a vending machine is to stop acting like one!



ORGANIZING

IAFF Locals need to develop a plan to become a stronger union through **internal organizing**. Simply put, internal organizing means building the strength of your union through **effective communication, education, and maximizing member mobilization.**



ORGANIZING

- Consider the ever-present attacks on organized labor and especially public sector unions. (Ex: RTW, Paycheck Deception, etc.).
- Member education is paramount in this fight and should be part of a daily initiative in member communication.
- To be best prepared for any legislative or legal changes, the Local should effectively communicate and educate the benefits of union membership now.



MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

- Effective education and communication is key so that any changes to a law will not affect members' attitudes or positions of union support.
- Member education and mobilization can play a key role in solidifying union support.
- By utilizing stewards, organizing committees, and members that are informal leaders, a Local can shore up loyalty and support.
- These member-leaders can play a key role in thwarting attacks, developing a proactive political program, and build community-wide support for your local.



MEMBER ENGAGEMENT (INTERNAL ORGANIZING)

- **More Effective:** An Employer is more likely to bargain fairly or have more meaningful discussions for change if there is a clear indication that a large number of members are involved in and behind the union.
- Gives members a sense of power as a group, by letting them share in the decisions and victories.
- Educates members about disputes and issues so they know the facts of the issue(s).
- Involvement of members keep them from seeing "the union" as a transactional situation and separate from them. They learn how the union works, how gains are won and why compromise is sometimes necessary.



SERVICING MEMBERS IS INTERNAL ORGANIZING

- Representing IAFF members to the fullest is a form of internal organizing.
- The work Locals do every day is a form of internal organizing and it needs to be a daily priority every day.
- Introduce yourself and the Local Union to new members of the department.
- See and talk to members when there are no problems or issues.
- Keep a calendar and schedule regular visits to each station on a consistent basis.
- Have a strong, educated, and assertive stewards at each job site.



INTERNAL ORGANIZING

Focusing on organizing every day will provide members with better representation and will build a stronger membership and union in size, strength, and political influence.



ORGANIZING PLAN: ISSUES, LEADERS, MEMBERS

- ID and engage members who are most likely to drop their membership.
- **Identify issues** to move members to action AND address their interests through collective action.
- **ID potential leaders and activists. (Organic Leaders)**
- Know how to talk to non-members and **convert them to members.**
- Track members who join and get engaged in the Local Union.



CONTINUE TO ASSESS THE LOCAL

- Assess you Local's union's history and performance.
- History with the fire administration? City elected leaders?
City municipal officials?
- How has the membership and the local leadership changed with time?
- Knowing the background on the local will help organizers and member-leaders explain the past accomplishments and efforts of the Local.
- The information will be vital in teaching new members about the success of the local, as well as energize other members about the gains they have made in their job due to the work of the Local.



COMMUNICATE

- Talk to workers, both members and non-members.
- Train Organizing Committee, Local Union leaders, and reps on how to communicate the union's message to members and potential members.
- Reach out to the IAFF for assistance to develop the right message.
- Develop a message of what value your Local brings to the members.
- Committee should make a list of all the questions or responses they come about through conversations and brainstorm on answers.



TIPS FOR ONE-ON-ONE COMMUNICATION EFFECTIVENESS

- **Listen:** This is the most important thing to learn. Show them empathy on what they think.
- **Don't interrupt:** When you interrupt, you don't get to hear a person's real concern.
- **Don't make assumptions:** Often the issues you think are important are not important issues for your co-workers or members. Keep an open mind.
- **Don't argue:** If someone makes a negative comment, try to find common ground. Don't make the other person defensive.
- **Don't evade tough questions:** If you don't know the answer, don't try to fake it. People respect honesty. Get back with them to answer.
- **Get a commitment:** Make the ask! Get them to make a commitment to their union!



OTHER WAYS TO COMMUNICATE THE UNION'S MESSAGE

Most people don't come to regular membership meetings and never will. Even though the Local leadership may be doing a great job, many will not know about it.

Create a greater visibility for the union. Have a presence which people can identify with:

- **E-mails and Social Media:** Embrace technology. Send alerts, news, and updates to all members electronically. Use robo calls and text messaging as well. Use closed Facebook pages to communicate and share information to members.
- **Newsletters and Bulletin Boards:** Spotlight personalities, publicize successes, and change often.



OTHER WAYS TO COMMUNICATE THE UNION'S MESSAGE

- **Stewards or Shift Reps:** The first, and most vital, contact between members and their union is the IAFF steward or shift rep. Stewards have duties that include solving issues at the shift level, educating members, and communicating the Union's message to the members. Stewards are the cornerstone of the Local!
- **Member-Leaders:** A successful internal organizing campaign will generate new energy and ideas to the Local. It will also identify members who want to be more involved in their union, either through various committees or political action.
- **Member Surveys:** Whether on paper or on the web, survey allow members to express their opinion, share their issues and offer input to their Local.

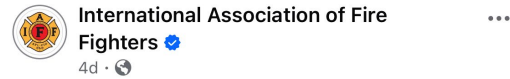


OTHER WAYS TO COMMUNICATE THE UNION'S MESSAGE

- **Firehouse Kitchen Table and Learn:** The firehouse kitchen table is a great place to communicate , educate, and engage members. If there are no other topics, focus on labor history, history of the IAFF and your Local.
- **Station Meetings and Visits:** Members should see their stewards and Union elected leaders in good times and bad. Develop a schedule and make sure all stations and shifts are visited.
- **Local Union Website:** You should have an internet presence. The members should be able to learn about their Local on the website.
- **Membership Meetings:** Make the meetings easy to attend for the most people. Provide food, keep meetings brief, advertise topics to be discussed, give specific info to members they wouldn't have had if they didn't attend.



VICTORY!



HISTORIC ELECTION VICTORY IN ATLANTA, GEORGIA! 🔥

Atlanta Professional Fire Fighters Local 134 overwhelmingly won their representation election today by a 97% margin for 851 sworn fire fighters at Atlanta Fire Rescue.

Ballots were counted this morning in the official election administered by the American Arbitration Association, which certified #IAFF Local 134 as the exclusive legal bargaining representative!

Using the Georgia Firefighters Mediation Act, the Union will move forward in their bargaining of the FIRST EVER collective bargaining agreement in the history of the City of Atlanta Fire Rescue Department.

#IAFF12thDistrict #PFFG #OrganizeTheSouth #UnionStrong



413 33 comments 49 shares
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NEWLY ORGANIZED LOCALS

APRIL & MAY 2024

- GLASBORO PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTERS Association, NJ Local 5484
- KITTERY PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTERS Kittery, ME Local 5294
- PREQUE ISLE PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTERS Preque Isle, ME Local 5490
- TOWN OF LISBON FIRE DEPARTMENT Lisbon, ME Local 5451
- SABATHUS PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION Sabathus, ME Local 5454
- PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS OF HERMON Hermon, ME Local 5458
- WINLOW FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION Winlow, ME Local 5479
- ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTERS & EMS PROVIDERS Lexington, VA Local 5485
- PATOKA TOWNSHIP FIRE FIGHTERS Princeton, IN Local 5487
- HEMELVILLE PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTERS Hemelville, IN Local 5489
- CLEVELAND TOWNSHIP PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTERS Elkhart, IN Local 5495
- TIPP CITY PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTERS Tipp City, OH Local 5491
- NORTHWESTERN FIRE DISTRICT Raymond, OH Local 5493
- BRECKVILLE PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTERS Breckville, OH Local 5500
- ROCKY FORD PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTERS Rocky Ford, CO Local 5497
- PROFESSIONAL COOLIDGE FIRE FIGHTERS Coolidge, AZ Local 5486

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VISIT IAFF.ORG /JOIN TO ORGANIZE WITH THE IAFF!

HOT LABOR SUMMER

FIRE FIGHTERS THROUGHOUT THE SOUTH ARE FIGHTING AND WINNING.

GEORGIA JUNE 2024
Professional Firefighters of Athens-Clarke County Local 2795 win first ever union contract in the department, including protections for safety, staffing, and pay.

TEXAS JUNE 2024
City council approves new union contract won by Houston Professional Fire Fighters Association Local 341. The deal includes a massive \$1.5 billion pay settlement for fire fighters, including \$650 million in backpay and 34% in future pay increases over 5 years.

NORTH CAROLINA JUNE 2024
Historic 22% pay raises won by fire fighters by the Professional Fire Fighters of Durham Local 668.

TENNESSEE JUNE 2024
Fire fighters, lieutenants, and captains at Volkswagen Chattanooga Fire Department vote unanimously for IAFF representation in NLRB election.

FLORIDA JUNE 2024
Palm Coast Professional Firefighters Local 4807 win defined benefit pension for fire fighters in the city.

UNION POWER
IAFF representation offers fire fighters a united voice on important issues such as pay, safety, equipment, retirement, staffing, and more.
Visit IAFF.org/join to organize your department.

ATLANTA FIRE FIGHTERS VOTE 97% 'UNION YES!'

Atlanta Professional Fire Fighters IAFF Local 134 overwhelmingly won their representation election on Sept. 27, 2024 by a 97% margin for 851 sworn fire fighters at Atlanta Fire Rescue.

Ballots were counted this morning in the official election administered by the American Arbitration Association, which certified **IAFF Local 134** as the exclusive legal bargaining representative!

Using the Georgia Firefighters Mediation Act, the Union will move forward in their bargaining of the **FIRST EVER COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT** in the history of the City of Atlanta Fire Rescue Department.

LEARN HOW TO ORGANIZE YOUR DEPARTMENT AT IAFF.ORG/JOIN.

WISCONSIN ORGANIZING VICTORY!

Fire fighters and captains at the Appleton International Airport Fire Department voted 100% YES to join the IAFF in an NLRB-supervised election held today at the fire station.

Despite opposition from Pro Tec and its union-busting lawyers, fire fighters voted UNANIMOUSLY to join the IAFF and begin contract negotiations to improve safety, staffing, pay, and benefits.

#ProfessionalFireFightersOfWisconsin #IAFF5thDistrict #UnionStrong



International Association of Fire Fighters

Sep 19 · 🌐

FEDERAL SECTOR ORGANIZING VICTORY IN MARYLAND!

Congratulations to IAFF Local F-319 at Warfield Air National Guard Base on Martin State Airport in Baltimore, MD. On September 12, 2024, fire fighters voted UNANIMOUSLY to join the IAFF in an FLRA election!

#IAFF16thDistrict #UnionStrong



188 13 comments 4 shares
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International Association of Fire Fighters

2d · 🌐

Congratulations UAW International Union on the historic organizing victory at Volkswa... See more



Jennifer + 308 13 comments 40 shares
Like Comment Copy Share

POLITICAL ACTION AND LOBBYING

GETTING INVOLVED

- 1. Be politically savvy and skillful.** This will make your support a must-have for local elected officials and give you more access to those decision-makers.
- 2. Use the legislative process.** Talk to your elected officials about your issues, identify those that are open to persuasion, and find ways to make your issues relatable to them.



GETTING INVOLVED

- 3. Get community validators to back you up.** With the right pressure applied to the right leaders, the solution to your issue can sometimes be found without going the electoral route, which involves much more time, effort and money.
- 4. Engage in electoral politics to change who makes the decisions.** If the legislative route fails, use electoral politics to change who makes decisions about your issues.



BE POLITICALLY SAVVY AND SKILLFUL



BE POLITICALLY SAVVY AND SKILLFUL

- **Be present.** Attend meetings, get to know people, speak up, have an online presence.
- **Map social networks.** Map your knowledge of who knows who to understand the connections and flow of resources.
- **Deliver an audience.** Turn people out for events – political leaders need people to speak to.



BE POLITICALLY SAVVY AND SKILLFUL

- **Deliver Key Donations.** Be seen as a source of contributions for campaigns; this makes you someone the candidates need to have on their team.
- **Know the Terrain and Voter File Data.** Study the geographic boundaries of the relevant districts in your area. Know which neighborhoods are represented by which officials and the election results from those areas.



BE POLITICALLY SAVVY AND SKILLFUL

- **Know Your Neighbors.** Hear different points of view and be able to provide information to leaders about how they and their policies are seen.
- **Become a Trusted Information Source to People in Your Networks.** Share information in a way that boosts your credibility and helps allies. Just don't gossip.
- **Cut Through the Complications – Learn the Processes and Regulations.** Learn the rules on voter registration, early voting, campaign finance, etc. and be a resource.



BE POLITICALLY SAVVY AND SKILLFUL

- **Deliver Petition Signatures.** Helping in this crucial moment to make sure your measure or supported candidate gets on the ballot can increase your credibility.
- **Learn All Elements of the Campaign.** Understand how the money, message, organizing, and get-out-the-vote functions work.
- **Train and Lead Volunteers.** By training and leading volunteers in effective action, you help the campaign meet their goals.



BE POLITICALLY SAVVY AND SKILLFUL

- **Get Elected to Office.** At a certain point, the skills you hone will make you a viable candidate for office. It's not always the right step, but you may find that you can advance the issues better yourself than through other people.



USE THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS



USE THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

- **Campaigns are expensive.** Try making changes through the legislative process or other avenues.
- **Be flexible.** Change doesn't happen overnight.
- **Keep messaging consistent.** Have clear messaging and ensure members are delivering the same message.
- **Raise awareness** and advocate on policy goals.
 - How to lobby and use the legislative process are in other modules but the next slide has some quick tips.



USE THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

- **Know the process.** Find out who makes decisions and when they're made, structure of government, and meetings and calendar for your local government.
- **Know your issues.** Set a legislative agenda, know how much your asks cost, who's best person or agency to deliver.
- **Know your elected officials.** Schedule meetings with your elected officials, bring them information to educate them, and bring a few members with you to show strength in numbers.
- **Prioritize your needs.** Identify what you are asking for, articulate your argument, have data to back up, use personal stories.



LOBBYING

- Lobbying lets you tell your story and fight for what matters to you and your members.
- The IAFF can assist in preparing for these meetings and developing lobbying strategies.
- All IAFF members are encouraged to attend the annual Alfred K. Whitehead Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C., where we actively lobby nationally elected officials.



USE THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS AND LOBBYING

- **Research what type of government you have** – strong mayor, council, fire district, county commission.
- **Find out who the main players are and build relationships.**
 - Have you endorsed them before? Candidate questionnaire?
 - The IAFF can help you research who to reach out to if you don't know. We have tools such as Leadership Connect which will send you the organizational structure, staff contact info, etc.
- **Write and track info.** Elected and staff contact info, PAC contributions, endorsements, etc.



MEETING PREP

Know your goals and have a clearly defined solution.

- ***What is it that you hope to achieve?*** Sometimes you may have a specific “ask” for your elected official, and other times you may just be looking to build a relationship. Both are good reasons to lobby your elected official, but these two goals have very different preparation needs.
- ***What are your asks?*** Sometimes you may need your elected official to introduce a bill, cosponsor a bill, vote on a bill, etc. Clearly and directly ask for what you need from your elected official. While you always want to be polite, now is not the time to be timid about what your local needs.



QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF TO PREP

- What is the issue that needs to be addressed?
- Why is this issue important?
- How can I demonstrate this issue?
- What local impacts have occurred as a result of this issue?
- How can the elected official be most helpful in solving the problem?



KNOW YOUR ISSUE/ASK

- Do research ahead of time so that you feel you have a confident grasp on your issue and or ask.
- Remember that your elected official will look to you for your expertise and recommendations on the topic.
- Develop a one-page summary of the issue and explanation of your ask. Contact the Government Affairs Department if you need a summary.
 - The IAFF maintains one-page summaries of our top priorities that IAFF members can use when meeting with their members of Congress.



PERSONALIZE YOUR ASK

- Add personal testimony and anecdotes to your presentation to humanize your issues and provide real-world examples of how fire fighters in your local are being affected by this issue.
- Personal stories make for more compelling arguments.
- Elected officials and their staff look to experts like yourself to educate them on the issue and explain how it impacts fire fighters in their district. Your one-page summary may be the briefing document that an elected official brings with them to inform their vote on a bill.



KNOW YOUR ELECTED OFFICIAL

- Do you have a prior relationship with this elected official? If so, is it positive or negative?
- Have you worked with this elected official or their staff before?
- Has this official supported or opposed this issue in the past?
- What committees does this official serve on? Is this official in a leadership position on the committee?



DURING MEETING

- **Know the current status** of the bills, issues, etc., you are advocating for. Be able to articulate arguments in favor of your issues and stay consistent and clear with your “asks” and messaging.
- **Start with a brief description** of the issue and its impact on your local’s members.
- **Explain the issue’s impact with a personal story.** Elected officials always want to know the specific impact of an issue in their district or state.



DURING MEETING

- **Give arguments in favor** – but make sure to also know the opposition’s arguments and prepare for any pushback you may receive.
- **Listen and respond to their questions or thoughts.** You may want to take notes for future conversations.
- **Get a firm commitment on next steps.** Elected officials, and their staff, may not be able to give an immediate answer to your “ask.” However, try to understand how their decision process works and how you can best influence it.



DURING MEETING

- **Take notes.** Write down any questions or concerns for follow-up conversations.
- **If you do not know the answer to a question, it's ok. Make sure to follow up later.**
 - You can simply say, “I am not sure, but I would be happy to find out and get back to you.”
 - Under no circumstances should you make up an answer or lie. You want to establish yourself as a trusted source of information.
 - Being authentic and doing follow-up research is a great way to build your position as a trusted advisor.
- **Reiterate the official's commitment** or next steps and any ways you can help in their research and decision-making.



POST MEETING

- **Debrief with those who attended the meeting:**
 - Did you deliver your message?
 - Did you present a clear “ask?”
 - What feedback did you receive?
 - Were there questions that you need to follow up with an answer?
- **Send a written Thank You**
 - Email is acceptable
 - Thank the elected official on social media for meeting and/or commitments



THINGS TO CONSIDER

- The best way to achieve lobbying success is to develop productive, long-term relationships with elected officials and staff.
- Officials want and need knowledgeable people they can trust on selected issues.
- Relationship building takes time, effort, and repeated interactions.
- Accept that you may not always agree with your official, but it pays to have a positive relationship.
- A “no” on one ask doesn’t mean a “no” on others



MAINTAIN RELATIONSHIPS

- Continue to engage and build relationships with your elected officials and staff outside of meetings.
- Don't wait until you have an ask to engage. Here are some ways to build and maintain these relationships:
 - Invite your officials to station visits
 - Invite your officials to do a ride-along
 - Attend fundraisers and community events for your officials
 - Attend town halls for your officials
 - Tag officials on social media when applicable



GET COMMUNITY VALIDATORS TO BACK YOU UP



USE COMMUNITY VALIDATORS

- **Keep a social media presence.** Don't rely on social media to communicate your issues when you need something from your community. Post about your community events, big fires, feel good stuff, profile members, etc.
- Over the last couple of election cycles, social media has taken off as a way to communicate with voters.
- Like direct mail, you can target your communication to your voters.
- However, don't expect everything you post to "go viral."
- Unless you're paying for ad exposure, you're going to have to work hard to build your social media presence



SOCIAL MEDIA: THE BASICS

- People are receiving information extremely different from how they received it just 10 plus years ago.
- Here are some things we know about how voters are engaging online:
 - According to a PEW Research Center study: Over half of the U.S. consumes political news via social media.
 - Preferred Platforms: digital devices (53%), TV (33%), Radio (7%), Print (5%). PEW Research Center "News Platform Fact Sheet." Sept. 20, 2022.

You've got to build your audience before you need it.



USE COMMUNITY VALIDATORS

- **Be a spokesperson.** Have consistent messages so your validators know your talking points when they're speaking on your behalf.
- **Attend community events and meetings.** Be visible in the community and stay involved. Keep up with local news, showcase your softball games on social media, make your presence in the community known.
- **Be a good ally.** Attend labor events, community roundtables, find out how to can help each other to achieve your goals. You don't only want to use people when you need them.



ESTABLISH YOUR EXPERTISE

- **You are the public safety expert. Develop your brand.** Keeping a social media presence, being involved in your community, and having a website, establishes you as the public safety expert who should be called upon when decisions are made.

The IAFF Strategic Campaigns team can help you set everything up and develop messages!



POWER MAPPING

Power mapping puts this all together!

Power mapping is simply a way to identify ***who has power in the community***, and to figure out what will move those individuals or institutions to do whatever it is you want them to do.



POWER MAPPING

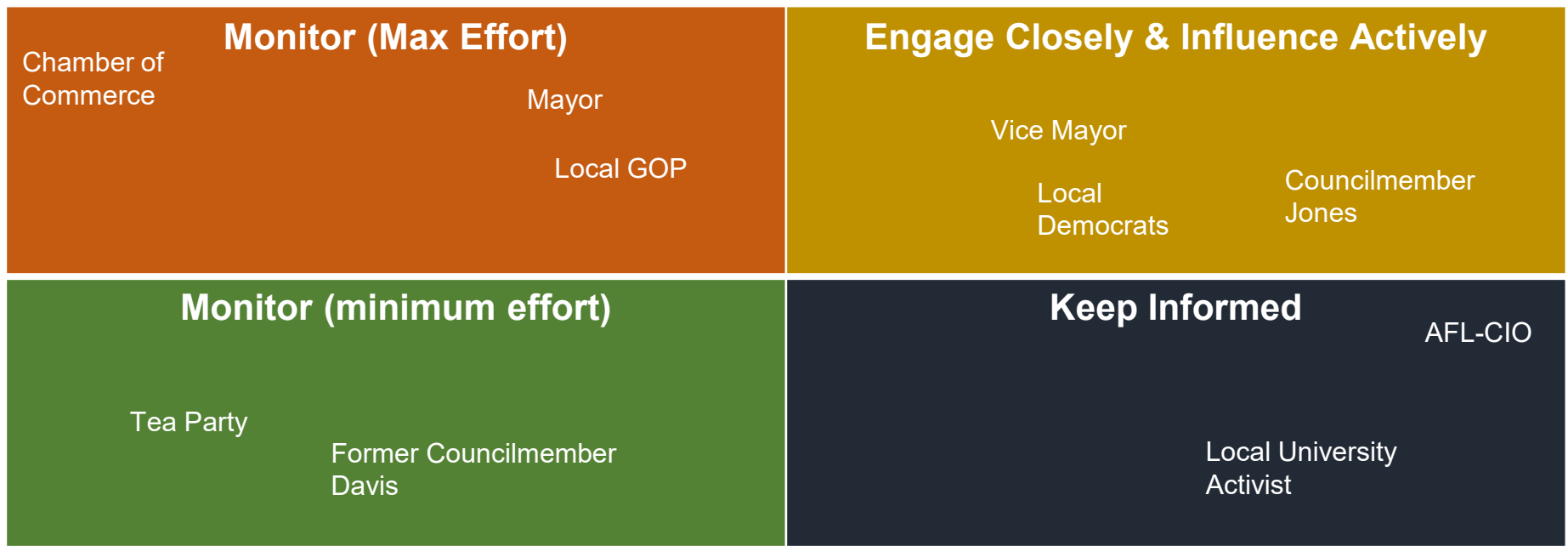
Creating a power map will help you answer these important questions:

- Who are some key potential allies in your community— individuals and organizations who are likely to be on your side and who can influence others?
- Who might oppose your plan, and who is in the middle who could be brought over to your side?
- What are effective ways to communicate with your community?



POWER MAPPING EXAMPLE

Most influential or powerful (in terms of your objective)



Least influential or powerful (in terms of your objective)



ENGAGE IN ELECTORAL POLITICS TO CHANGE WHO MAKES THE DECISIONS



ELECTORAL CAMPAIGNS

- **You should care about electoral campaigns.** Everyone who makes decisions about our profession is an elected official or answers to one.
- **Campaigns are different from politics or lobbying.** Campaigns allow you to spend time communicating with voters to inform them of your issue and why they should care.
- **Campaigns are focused on changing how people vote in elections and getting them to support your issue.**



ELECTORAL CAMPAIGNS

- **It is your job to inform the voter of how the issue and/or candidate being elected affects them.** You must sway more voters to your side than your opponent does. And once you've persuaded them, you must plan a path to ensure the voter goes out for you or your issue.
- **Working on campaigns is a practice in resource management.** Communicating about your issue or candidate, persuading voters, and creating plans of action all require a lot of *time, money, and people.*



ELECTORAL CAMPAIGNS

- The IAFF Political Department has [sample campaign documents and guides](#) to help you get started including a:
 - Campaign Plan** with everything you need to get started and think about before you even file your paperwork.
 - Finance Plan** including how to fundraise for your campaign and sample budget.
 - Communications Plan** including how to develop messaging, sample events to communicate around, and the difference between earned and social media.
 - Field Plan** with how to calculate your vote goal and win number, and how to recruit members and volunteers.



ELECTORAL CAMPAIGNS

- What kind of campaigns do our members engage in?
- **Candidate**
 - Candidate campaigns
 - IAFF members running for office
- **Local Ballot Measures**
 - Proposition
 - Amendment
 - Referendum
 - Initiative
- **Independent Expenditures**



CANDIDATE CAMPAIGNS

- **Supporting candidate campaigns**
- **Endorsements** don't cost anything but can go a long way.
- **Financial contributions** are a good way to show your support without spending too much time or worker power.
- **Volunteering** on a campaign can make change and show your support without spending too much money.



CANDIDATE CAMPAIGNS

IAFF Members Running for Office

- Evaluate what it will take to run a successful campaign. Running for office is a lot of work – we want you to win!
- IAFF members and their immediate family members running for publicly elected office are eligible to request a FIREPAC contribution.



LOCAL BALLOT MEASURES

- A **ballot measure** is a law, question, or issue to be approved or rejected by voters.
- Ballot measures can also be referred to as propositions, questions, referendums, amendments and initiatives.

Proposition: A new piece of proposed legislation to be approved or rejected by voters. It is sometimes referred to as a ballot measure or question.



LOCAL BALLOT MEASURES

Amendment: A proposal to repeal or change existing laws or constitutional amendments to be approved or rejected by voters.

Referendum: Voters decide whether to approve or disapprove a law passed by the local legislative body (city council, commissioners, etc.). If disapproved, the law does not go into effect.

Initiative: Citizens propose a new law, which becomes effective if voters approve. That new law could be an amendment to the charter or a new city ordinance.



LOCAL BALLOT MEASURES

- Before you start the ballot measure process, make sure to **check if this kind of measure has been brought to the ballot previously.**
- **Check not only your local jurisdiction but also statewide.** You will want to find out if the measure or a similar measure has been brought to the voters before to lower your chances of facing a legal challenge.
- **Challenges can be brought from entities around the state** and can be based on similar measures.



LOCAL BALLOT MEASURES

- While searching for similar ballot measures across the state, **look for language from previous ballot measures** to use on your measure that have proven successful and withstood legal challenge.
- The best way to make sure you are successful and meet all requirements is to **consult with a lawyer who specializes in ballot measures** in your state.



LOCAL BALLOT MEASURES

Here are some questions to ask before you launch a ballot measure campaign:

- What are you trying to achieve and for what purpose (what are you trying to get passed)?
- When do you need to run the ballot measure?
- What election do you want to target for your ballot measure? (e.g., primary, general, presidential, municipal, special)?
- Can this be done by passing legislation at the state, county, city or fire district level without running a ballot measure?
- Who would support or oppose the campaign?



LOCAL BALLOT MEASURES

- What do you need to amend? A state constitution, city charter, fire board regulation? Is it a combination?
- What would the title and summary of the initiative look like, and would that guarantee your goal of running this ballot measure as written?
- Who puts together the official petition?
- How many signatures do you need?
- When are signatures due? Are they due all together or in batches?
- Who can circulate petitions?



PROP FUND

The purpose of the **Political Referendum Operations Partnership (PROP) Fund** is to provide interest-free loans to assist state or provincial associations and local affiliates in campaigns related to referenda, ballot initiatives, and Constitutional or charter amendments.

- Notify your DVP
- Apply with your E-board
- Work with IAFF Political Department



INDEPENDENT EXPENDITURES

- An **independent expenditure campaign or IE campaign** is a political campaign that is not made in cooperation or consultation with the candidate or issue you support or oppose.
- IEs are not contributions to a campaign or issue.
- Not every jurisdiction permits an IE campaign. Check your local or state's municipal campaign finance laws and consult an expert or attorney.



INDEPENDENT EXPENDITURES

- **Evaluate what resources your local has to give** to the existing candidate or issue campaign before starting an IE campaign.
 - For example, if your local does not have a lot of money but plenty of eager volunteers, it might be best and more efficient to send your members to the existing campaign.
 - If you have a lot of money and a specific message that will assist your specific objective, then starting an IE may be best.



POLITICAL ACTION FUNDS (PACS)

- PACs are a great way to increase your local power to influence elections and support candidates who will support you.
- Remember, everyone who makes decisions about our profession is an elected official or answers to one.
- The goal is not to build power for the sake of power, but for what we can achieve with political power: safe working conditions, better staffing, retirement security, etc.

Growing your PAC will help grow your power and influence.



CHOOSING YOUR CANDIDATE

- Questionnaires are a good way for your local to become familiar with the candidate and their views.
- Questionnaires take time to create and distribute but can provide you an opportunity to establish a relationship with the candidate and their team.
- Prepare questionnaires that address your local's issue. Be specific and ask them if they would or would not support you. But also keep questions open ended to allow for explanations.



CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRES

- Distribute questionnaires to all candidates running and allow for enough time to follow up by email or phone.
- If you want to publish the candidate's response, tell the campaign beforehand. Don't want any surprises.
- Questionnaires are also an opportunity to use candidate answers/views on a vote guide.



GET INFORMED! IAFF EDUCATION AND TRAINING



IAFF TRAININGS

- The IAFF Political Department is committed to providing high-quality training programs to our members in order to strengthen their political skills.
- All workshops provided in the IAFF trainings are designed to be interactive and engage our affiliates.
- Workshops are delivered by trained instructors and experts who have experience on all aspects of running a successful campaign.



POLITICAL TRAINING ACADEMY (PTA)

- A. Michael Mullane Political Training Academy educates and assists campaign veterans and political newcomers alike on how to run for elected office, manage a political campaign or direct an affiliate's political action program.
- IAFF members or family members running for public office, managing a campaign or implementing a political program for an IAFF local are encouraged to apply.
- Includes classroom seminars, small-group skill practice sessions and a full campaign simulation.



PTA

Some topics include:

- Developing an Effective Campaign Plan
- Targeting Voters
- Recruiting Volunteers
- Mastering Polling
- Fundraising and Budgeting
- Developing an Effective Message
- Working With the Press
- Getting Out the Vote
- Complying With Campaign Finance Laws



STATE/PROVINCIAL TRAINING ACADEMY

We've taken core elements of PTA and developed the two-day IAFF State/Provincial Elections and Political Capacity Development Program. The goals for State PTA are:

- To provide members modern and up-to-date campaign skills, building a network of local leaders capable of managing small-scale local campaigns or playing key roles in larger state/provincial wide efforts.
- To enhance, and where absent build, increased political campaign capacity and structures in the state/provincial associations.



OTHER TRAININGS

- STRIVE. The IAFF Political Department normally offers many classes at the annual Strive for Excellence conference.
- Partnership Education Program (PEP). State and District level PEP deliveries sometimes include political modules. To see if upcoming PEP's in your area offer political components, please visit the IAFF Partnership Education [page](#).



CONTACT US

For more information or to access all the information in today's presentation, **please visit the IAFF dashboard and click the “Politics & Legislative” section** and check out our links.

- Email politics@iaff.org or contact Chris “Blue” Bartley at cbartley@iaff.org
- Request Assistance: <https://www.iaff.org/request-assistance-from-the-iaff-political-department/>





THANK YOU!
ANY QUESTIONS?

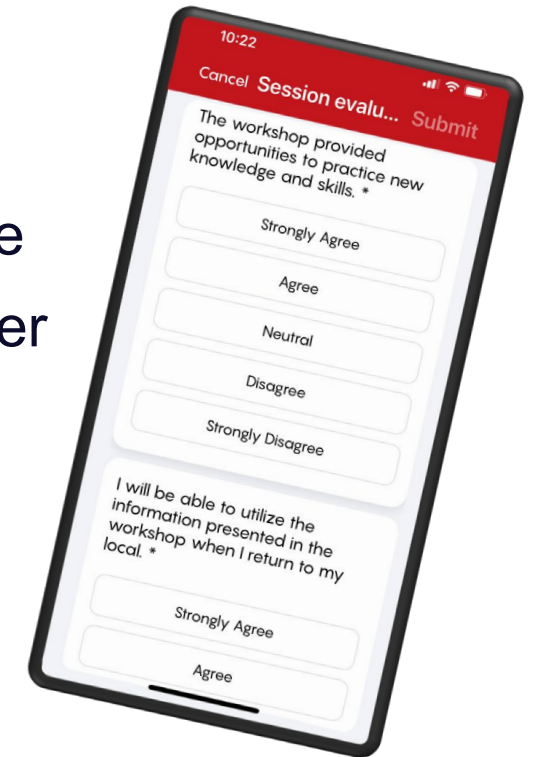


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EVALUATION AND WIN AN IPAD!

- **Submit your workshop and overall evaluations to be automatically entered in two drawings for a new iPad!**
- **Complete your evaluations using the IAFF app:**
 1. Download the IAFF app and sign in with your iaff.org username
 2. Tap the 2026 Strive for Excellence Summit event image to enter the event's dashboard
 3. Tap "Sessions" and tap on the workshops you attended
 4. Tap "Evaluation" and complete the evaluation
 5. Tap "Submit"



For the event's overall evaluation, follow steps 1 and 2, then tap "Event Evaluation" located in the event's Dashboard.

