

Choosing a Target: Ten Questions to Ask*

- 1. Does this target relate to your current base?** What industry is it? What type of employer – private sector or public? What types of workers are there – what do they do? What are the worker demographics? Where is it located – are there multiple locations? What is the relationship between this employer and other employers where you represent workers – is this an unorganized unit in a workplace where you already represent some workers, is it part of the same corporation, is it a competitor, is it a supplier or a customer, or is there some other relationship?
- 2. Will you be able to win recognition?** How strongly will the employer resist unionization? What is the employer's labor relations history – other units, previous organizing attempts, ULPs, etc.? What else do you need to know about the employer to estimate how strongly it will resist? Will you be able to develop and sustain solid majority support? Are there direct pressure tactics and/or indirect leverage options that will cause the employer to be neutral or grant recognition?
- 3. How long do you estimate it will take to win recognition, and what will it cost?** Based on what you know about both the workers (including number, locations, how easy or difficult it will be to contact them, etc.) and the employer, what is your plan? What is your budget? Do you have the necessary staff and/or volunteer member organizers? Will you be able to get support (staff, financial, research, etc.) from your national union, the central labor council or other organizations?
- 4. If you will need to negotiate a first contract after winning recognition, will you be able to negotiate one that contains real improvements, how long do you estimate it will take, and what will it cost?** In addition to basic factors such as the employer's ability to afford improvements and your experience with similar employers, do you know enough about the employer to make a reliable estimate? Are you prepared for a lengthy fight that will escalate over time?
- 5. Will winning this target alter the relations of power in the industry or region?** How will this change the union density, i.e. the percentage of organized workers? Will it put you in a position to put more pressure on other employers, either directly or indirectly?
- 6. Will your current members support organizing this target?** What will need to be done to gain and maintain support from members, elected leaders and staff?
- 7. Will winning this target improve your chances of winning similar targets?** Will it make a difference in how other workers and/or employers perceive you? Will it result in greater access to other targets? Will it increase the likelihood of card check recognition agreements? Will it yield greater knowledge of other targets?
- 8. Will working on this target help you develop more organizers?** Will you be able to train and/or use volunteer member organizers? Do you have other potential organizers that can be used effectively on this target? Is this an appropriate target for Organizing Institute interns or apprentices?
- 9. Will winning this target improve your financial capability to organize other targets?** What is the size of the target? Are there other larger targets that would make more sense? Or, if this target is too large for your current staff and resources, will you be able to increase your staff and resources to deal with it?
- 10. How does this target relate to your overall strategic organizing plan?** Does it fit in your plan? If so, does it make sense to start it at this time, or are there other targets that should be given higher priority? If not, is it going to take staff and resources away from more strategic targets?

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