

STEP

10.

**Securing the Nuts and Bolts:
Ensuring You Have the Necessary
Staff and Infrastructure**

TIME TO COMPLETE: ONGOING

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Creating Infrastructure

Your campaign may not be able to raise enough money to hire staff until after it gains some visibility and traction, so you may need to launch your campaign solely relying on volunteers and small donations. Ultimately, however, your goal should be to use the visibility from the campaign launch to generate broader interest and support, including private funding that would allow you to hire full-time staff. Having a base of operations, full-time paid staff, and other “infrastructure” will allow you to take your campaign to the next level and achieve your goals. Even if you are not able to hire paid staff and rent or purchase infrastructure for your campaign prior to launch, these components should still be part of your planning process.

Staff

Although volunteers will power most of your campaign, it is important to have at least one or two people who are paid to focus on your campaign, rather than helping as they can around other professional and personal commitments. Roles you may wish to hire for include:

- Campaign Director
- Campaign Organizer
- Policy/Legislative Advocate
- Communications Coordinator

These job descriptions can be posted on job websites, and you also can ask your campaign members and any local/state youth advocacy groups to share it with their networks.

Your campaign leadership, including directly impacted youth, should help with refining the job description and interviewing/selecting candidates.

Tip: If your campaign has already started establishing a social media presence, posting job descriptions on Facebook, Twitter, etc., is a great way to find candidates and let supporters know that your campaign is growing.

Organizational partners who are part of your campaign may be willing to commit some of their staff’s time to take on these tasks. To ensure that you will have the necessary resources to accomplish your goals, and to prevent confusion down the road, ensure that everyone is on the same page about these commitments by agreeing to a written description of roles, tasks, and time (e.g., A.K. will serve as Communications Coordinator for the Campaign at 40% FTE (Full Time Equivalent), per the position job description, with X Organization paying her full salary and benefits).

Office/meeting space and equipment

At the very least, your campaign will need to have a physical address for mail delivery, but ideally you also will be able to secure dedicated office space for your staff as well as access to larger areas for meetings, materials prep, etc. Ask if any of the organizations that are part of your campaign are willing to donate these as part of their support for the campaign. If not, contact local nonprofit/community organizations to see if they have a spare office to rent inexpensively. Other facilities that may offer free or low-cost meeting or work space include:

- Public Libraries
- Churches/Places of Worship
- Schools/Universities
- Youth/Recreation Centers
- Civic or Community Centers

If there are local businesses or law firms that are already providing you with in-kind support, consider asking them for meeting/work space as well. In choosing a location for meetings, consider accessibility for campaign volunteers who may not have access to private transportation.

The office equipment you’ll need to secure, through in-kind donations or purchase, will include:

- Desk(s)
- Landline phone(s)
- Cell Phones with e-mail/web access for staff
- Laptops
- Business cards
- Printer/copier (or regular/reliable access to one)

If you cannot have these items donated, find out if any of your supporter organizations have a bulk/business purchasing discount you can use, or take advantage of low-cost providers such as Vistaprint. Note that you may be able to avoid paying sales tax on these items if you (or your fiscal sponsor) are a tax-exempt 501(c)3 organization and/or state-recognized nonprofit organization. You will need to show a copy of the relevant paperwork.

Tip: Once you have your campaign team on board, there are many free/low-cost and useful tools that will help you communicate and work together more effectively, such as:

- Google Calendar for scheduling meetings
- Freeconferencecall.com for group calls
- Gotomeeting for webinars
- Skype, Google Hangouts, or Gotomeeting for video calls
- Google Groups or Yahoo Groups for listservs (group e-mail lists)
- Google Docs or Dropbox for sharing/editing documents

Essential Strategy: Engaging Volunteers and Other Supporters

To build your campaign, you will need a strong network of volunteers and supporters across your state to manage, strengthen, and expand your efforts. For the purposes of this guide, supporters are individuals who believe in your campaign and are willing to donate funds or take limited action (e.g., sign a petition, attend an event). Volunteers are individuals who are willing to make a more intensive time commitment (lead or participate in a committee, plan or staff events).

The role of volunteers

Once you have hired paid staff according to your needs and resources, you will need to build a strong team of volunteers to complete all of the other work of your campaign. These dedicated individuals will be the backbone of your campaign. You will need to clearly articulate the campaign “roles” that you are looking for volunteers to fulfill and specify how these interact with your paid staff positions (e.g., will one staff member supervise all volunteers or will volunteers work with different staff according to their role?). Examples of campaign roles often filled by committed volunteers include: Outreach Coordinator, Media Assistant, Social Media Coordinator, Direct Action Coordinator, and Phonebank Captain. Here are some tips for filling these positions:

- Put together an outreach flyer inviting volunteers to join your campaign.
- Host an initial volunteer orientation session to provide basic information on the campaign, answer questions, and invite volunteers to sign up for various roles.
- Create a “job description” for each role, including the number of hours per week you’d like your volunteers to support the campaign, the qualities you are looking for in a volunteer, and some background on your campaign goals.

- Advertise these campaign roles on your website, social media, community listservs, and websites like Idealist.org and VolunteerMatch.
- Once you have a core group of volunteers, work with these volunteers to host regular volunteer orientation sessions (e.g., once a week or every other week) so that new volunteers can continually join the campaign.
- “Promote” volunteers by changing titles and increasing responsibilities as they become more experienced and ready to take on more ownership of campaign work.
- Make special efforts to recruit youth volunteers by holding recruitment events and advertising positions at schools, youth centers, etc.

Tip: Campaign volunteers who feel that they are making a real contribution to the effort will stick around and see the campaign through. Be sure to create space to hear their ideas and feedback. Give them choices in how they might contribute to the campaign, and be flexible in creating new opportunities for them to contribute.

Remember that volunteers may not come to you with all of the tools and skills to carry out all of the tasks needed in the campaign. Build in regular training sessions on key tasks. Be sure that every volunteer has a go-to person on the campaign whom they can consult with and get feedback from. Volunteers will need more support at the beginning of their time with the campaign and when roles change. More seasoned volunteers can be tasked with recruiting and managing other volunteers.

Tip: It is very important to recognize and thank your campaign volunteers for their contributions. Praise them at campaign meetings and in your newsletter. When you’ve accomplished a major campaign goal or benchmark, consider hosting a volunteer recognition event.

Outreach to other organizations

Other organizations can be valuable members of your coalition, and their supporters/constituents may be interested in supporting your work as well. Here are some types of organizations you should try to connect to. For more information and help locating local organizations of each type, visit www.youthfirstinitiative.org.

Statewide organizations

Regional & local organizations

Grassroots groups

Community organizations serving communities most impacted by incarceration

Children's advocacy groups

Civil rights/racial justice organizations

Anti-poverty/economic justice advocates

Human rights groups

Disability rights advocates

School/education improvement/rights groups (including those working to fight the school-to-prison pipeline, and higher education institutions and groups)

Higher education organizations (community colleges, universities)

Legal community (e.g., public defenders)

LGBTQ+ groups

Mental and physical health professional and advocacy groups

Parent and family groups (particularly those for parents whose children are/have been incarcerated)

Student/youth groups (particularly groups for currently or formerly incarcerated youth), youth service providers

Arts groups

Faith groups

Restorative justice organizations

Job training organizations

Social workers

Volunteer groups

Building your supporter base

In addition to targeted recruitment of volunteers who can devote significant amounts of time to your campaign, you should, throughout your campaign, devote time and energy to building support in the community and among key stakeholders. Some of these activities will have the additional value of leading to interested individuals volunteering for the campaign. Some methods to consider include:

- Outreach workshops for youth and families
- One-on-one meetings with community leaders or other individuals who express interest in your campaign
- Leadership training for impacted youth and families

Tip: Different types of people will come to this work from different places—some may be personally affected or motivated by their faith, others may connect to you because they see the impact on their community or business (e.g., schools who are losing students to mass incarceration or government officials who realize that their community does not have the workers they need.)

Tip: Public statements and community actions also can spur ideas for contacts with key targets or influencers—for example, a local company that has expressed concerns about a shortage of qualified workers may be interested in supporting the campaign based on the fact that youth prisons—and the damage they cause to young lives—are depriving them of their future workforce.

Partnering with youth in your campaign

Young people will bring energy, enthusiasm, and creativity to your campaign. Those who have been personally impacted by incarceration also will bring the insights and first-hand knowledge of their lived experiences. Partnering with youth—and providing them with education, training, and leadership development—will allow them to contribute to your campaign and have an impact on their own communities. Youth partnerships are also an important sustainability strategy—long after your campaign successfully closes your state's youth prison you will have a pipeline of committed leaders who remember how and why they were closed and can fight backsliding as leadership and political climates change. Here are some strategies for recruiting youth and keeping them engaged.

- Go to places where young people already are (schools, youth programs) to talk about your campaign.

- Hold meetings at times and places that are accessible for youth, and provide food and transportation assistance.
- For youth who are contributing substantial amounts of time, provide monetary stipends.
- Offer leadership development and skill-building training in areas such as public speaking, working with media, and organizing, as well as education on substantive areas like the juvenile justice system and youth rights.
- Let youth know how much you appreciate their everyday efforts, and celebrate small wins and major accomplishments.

"My advice to adults starting campaigns is to involve young people in the system. Young people know other young people who are in the system and can bring them in to the campaign."

— **Andre Holder,**
in *Breaking Down the Walls*

Staying in touch with your campaign network

As you continue to build your network of campaign volunteers and supporters, there are many tools you can use to keep people connected and engaged:

- Social media platforms (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram) and cross-network management tools (e.g., Hootsuite)
- Listservs (e.g., Google Groups, Yahoo Groups)
- Newsletter and e-mail/contact lists (e.g., MailChimp, Constant Contact)
- Websites, blogs (e.g., Wordpress, Wix.com)

"The initial meetings were during the day downtown, primarily with people participating as part of jobs. When we involved young people and families, we had to change meetings to the evenings in a community location, and the nature of meetings shifted. They were more interactive. People did check ins. There was small group work. The meetings became more fun even though they were about a serious topic. When you have to create a meeting for a young person to be interested in, oftentimes it becomes a more interesting meeting for adults at the table too."

— **Amoretta Morris,**
in *Breaking Down the Walls*

Ways to build awareness about, and engagement in, your campaign

Youth Justice Action Month (YJAM) in October and the Week of Action Against Incarcerating Youth in May are two great opportunities to shine public attention on your campaign and recruit supporters and volunteers. Strategies to use, tied to these events or others, include the following:

Set an outreach goal/time period (e.g., 100 new campaign supporters added during October/YJAM). Contact members of your network and ask them to help spread the word to their contacts to help grow your contact list. Host a “phonebank” night and/or write a short outreach email and ask your network to email it to their contacts.

“Table” at conferences, festivals, and other community events. Ask your current network to help by contacting event organizers and hosting an information table at the event. In addition to your signup sheet, campaign flyer, and other brief materials, try to bring some candy to draw people in. If you have time, make a display board with pictures and other eye-catching information.

Meet with reporters: Reporters may respond more quickly to information tied to an event like YJAM or the Week of Action. Issue a media advisory and/or reach out to request small group meetings with reporters at their offices. This added visibility may draw in additional supporters to your campaign.

Write about your campaign: Nonprofit organizations and weekly newspapers are always looking for content for their printed publications, e-newsletters, blogs. This is a terrific avenue for spreading the word about your campaign. Write a short piece (200-500) words about your campaign that spells out what you are working to change and how others can get involved. Ask allied organizations to put this in their newsletters and blogs in advance of YJAM, the National Week of Action, or other key event. Reach out to weekly newspapers in your area and ask them to run the article. Provide a picture that includes community members and/or an eye-catching infographic.

Create a bookstore/library display: Talk to libraries and local bookstores to see if they would host a display of books about youth in the justice system and information about your campaign. Ask if they will let you discuss youth justice issues with their readers at a book discussion or other type of event.

Call on faith leaders: Ask your community’s faith leaders to talk about this issue with their congregations tied to your key event. Offer to meet with their youth group or to be available to talk to constituents after services. Provide key facts on youth in the justice system for faith leaders to use in their services, prayer sessions, or in newsletters.

Host an open house: Too busy to organize a big event? Consider hosting an “open house” at your campaign and asking members of your network to each bring a friend. This is an informal and low-key way to bring new allies to join your campaign efforts.

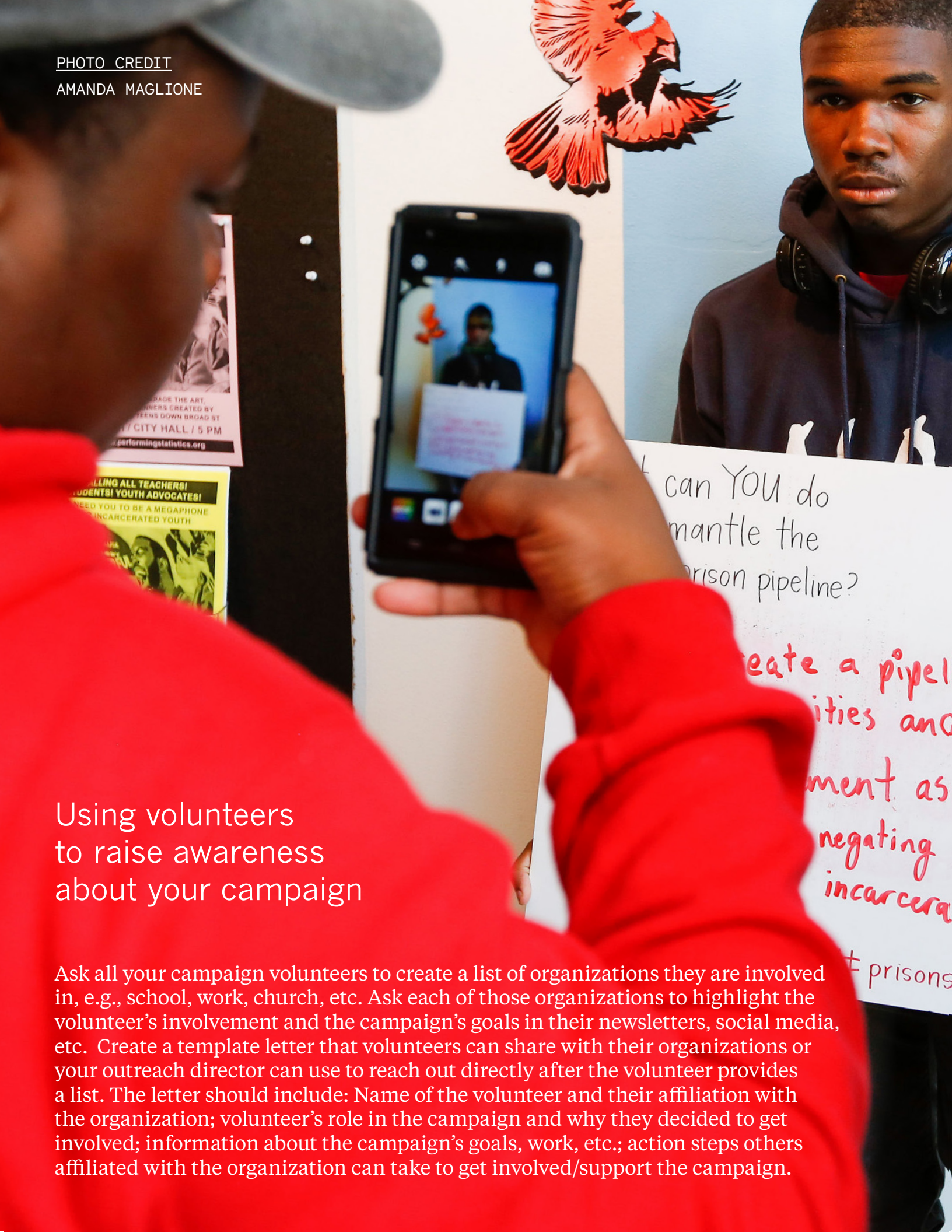
For all of these strategies, make sure you *include information on how to get involved with your campaign*, and try to *collect contact information* from those who might be interested in supporting your work. When gathering supporters, highlight the fact that there are many ways to engage with the campaign, from spending one minute participating in a social media campaign (e.g., Tweetstorm or Thunderclap) to holding a volunteer position that involves several hours of work per week.

Individual engagement

Connecting with people one-on-one will be an important way to gain campaign volunteers and supporters, particularly in the early stages of your campaign. During initial conversations, consider asking the following:

- Why are you interested in this issue? (e.g., Has someone in their family been in the juvenile justice system?)
- What would you like to see happen? (e.g., Would they be interested in establishing a network of people who have been affected by this issue to share information and support each other? Would they like to see increased access and visitation hours for families to see their children in juvenile prisons or changes in your state’s law on incarcerating children?)
- Would you like to be part of a campaign? What kinds of collective actions would you be most interested in?
- What would you like to do to make a contribution? (e.g., Would they like to host gatherings, make outreach calls, write up personal stories, contact media, call state and local officials, or write letters and fact sheets?)

As your campaign grows, you will need to rely more heavily on e-mail lists and other less personal methods of communication, but as your time allows, look for opportunities to continue to make individual connections, such as a personal note asking someone to attend an event or a phone call after an event asking for feedback.



Using volunteers
to raise awareness
about your campaign

Ask all your campaign volunteers to create a list of organizations they are involved in, e.g., school, work, church, etc. Ask each of those organizations to highlight the volunteer's involvement and the campaign's goals in their newsletters, social media, etc. Create a template letter that volunteers can share with their organizations or your outreach director can use to reach out directly after the volunteer provides a list. The letter should include: Name of the volunteer and their affiliation with the organization; volunteer's role in the campaign and why they decided to get involved; information about the campaign's goals, work, etc.; action steps others affiliated with the organization can take to get involved/support the campaign.

"We created colorful flyers for various meeting topics. We would flyer at the Metro (subway) and outside of school. We would go to various neighborhood and community meetings where we thought people who are interested in these meetings would be present. We flyered at libraries. In sum, there was a lot of outreach to get the word out about organization, about the work, and about the things we were talking about. The important part about this work was that it wasn't just about being able to build membership but also was about building political consciousness and awareness."

— Amoretta Morris,
in *Breaking Down the Walls*

Campaign Inventory Worksheet

This worksheet can help you track and ensure you have the elements you need to undertake your campaign.

1.) Independent Structure/Entity

The campaign is an independent structure or entity with a governance structure such as a Steering Committee that is diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, geography (i.e., statewide constituencies) and includes youth and families who directly impacted and individuals from the most impacted communities.

Our Steering Committee includes these individuals:

Mission. Our campaign mission is:

2.) Campaign Plan

Annual group process to create/update the plan.

We met on to create our campaign plan.

Our next plan will be updated on:

Midwest Academy Chart. Our campaign plan is attached.

Timeline. Our timeline is attached.

3.) Dedicated and Trained Campaign Staff

Full-time Campaign Director.

Our Campaign Director is:

Full-time Campaign Organizer(s).

Our Campaign Organizer(s) is/are:

4.) Community Organizing Approach

_____ An organizing plan that includes an intentional focus on engaging impacted communities, particularly young people and families involved in the juvenile justice system. Our organizing plan is attached.

_____ Annual leadership training for youth and/or families. We held our annual leadership training on _____. Our next leadership training will be held on _____.

_____ Directly impacted youth are represented on the Steering Committee. The youth are: _____

_____ Directly impacted parents/families are represented on the Steering Committee. The parents /families are: _____

5.) Communications

_____ Campaign brand name and tagline.

Our campaign brand name is: _____

Our campaign tagline is: _____

_____ Campaign logo. Our logo is attached.

_____ Steering Committee listserv

_____ Campaign email list

_____ Regular communications to campaign email list (e.g., 2 x month)

_____ Website

Our campaign website is: _____

_____ 1 x day posts on social media: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.

Campaign staff who are responsible for social media are: _____

_____ Regular campaign staff meetings (e.g., 1 x week)

_____ Regular campaign steering committee meetings (e.g., 2 x month)

_____ Regular campaign coalition meetings (e.g., monthly or quarterly)

_____ 2 x media activities per month (e.g. press release, op-ed, event)

Campaign staff who are responsible for media outreach are: _____