

# STEP

# 6.

**Who Will Be Involved  
and What Will They Do?:  
Creating an Organizing Plan**

TIME TO COMPLETE: 1 DAY

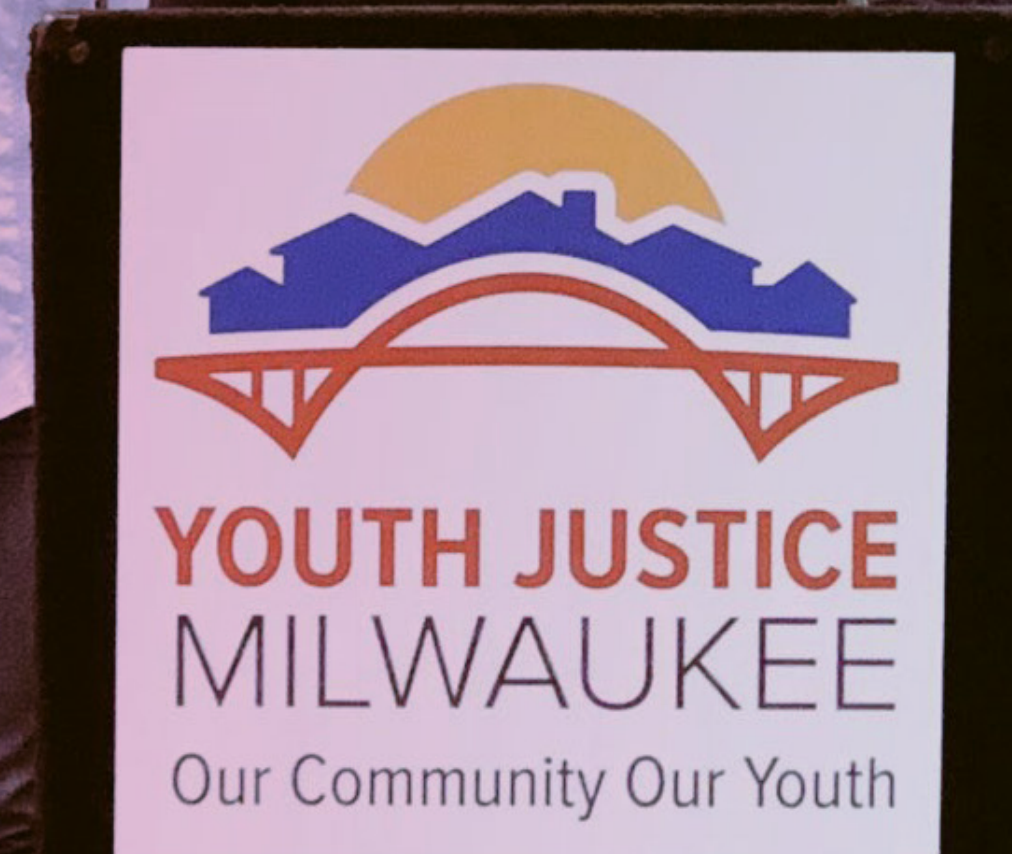


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Once you have figured out what it will take to win, you can answer the question “Who will be involved?” This will include completing a power mapping exercise and creating an organizing plan to identify the allies and constituencies you need to mobilize, and how you will do so.

*Tip:* **Organizing plan vs. campaign plan**

Some elements of the organizing plan may be included in the campaign plan, but the campaign plan is much more focused on moving your targets, while the organizing plan focuses on marshalling and empowering your allies.

The [New York No More Youth Jails] campaign really took the time to truly involve young people in the work and setting the policy and campaign goals. We did a Power Mapping process that really helped young people understand relationships of power. Through this process we broke down who the decision-makers were and how we could build our own power. We had someone else come in and really break down the city budget process for us – the difference

between the capital budget and the expense budget and where the \$65 million could be reallocated. We got a deep education in so many things. We learned things that we never learned in school.

Being involved in the campaign gave a reason, rhyme, and language for me to understand all the things that have happened to me. I now understood internalized oppression. I realized that a lot of things that happened to me were not my fault—how I kept getting arrested for non-violent offenses—how my experiences were part of larger oppressive policies against communities of color.” —**Chino Hardin,**  
*in Breaking Down the Walls*

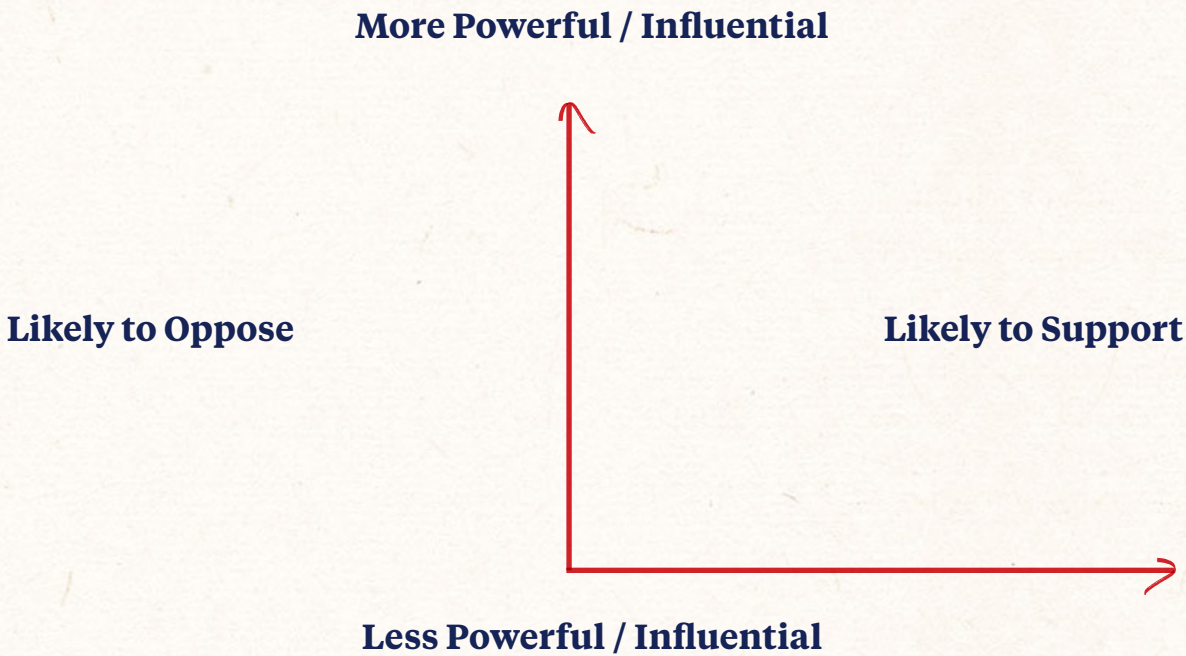


Power Mapping

Completing a power mapping exercise will help you develop an organizing plan. This exercise will help you identify power dynamics among your campaign targets, key influencers, and opponents, which will determine your strategies and next steps. The power mapping exercise will also inform and support your efforts to build power among your allies and constituencies in order to move your targets to your side.

Here is an example of how a campaign could create a power map:

- 1) Identify the **problem** you are trying to solve, e.g., youth in our community are being sent to youth prisons, and your ultimate **goal**. (See Step 3 of this guide for more specific guidance on goal-setting.) *Write out your problem statement/goal at the top of a large sheet of paper/posterboard.*
- 2) Determine who your **targets** are. These are the leaders or influencers who hold power over this problem, e.g., the director of the juvenile justice agency, the leaders of the relevant legislative committees. This includes individual policymakers likely to support your efforts, as well as those likely to oppose. Note that you want individual names listed here, but you may need to start by determining the major institutions, groups, or organizations related to the problem (e.g., the prisons themselves, the state juvenile justice agency, the courts, the legislature, the unions for prison workers) and then conducting quick research to find the names of key leadership within relevant agencies, committees, etc. *Write these names out on post-it notes and place them on an axis similar to the one below:*



3) Think about who **influences** the individuals on your chart but are not yet listed. This includes both their personal and professional relationships. Think broadly, and note areas for further research (e.g., for an elected official, who are his/her major donors or key constituents?) *Add those names to the diagram (using a different color marker or post-it).*

4) Discuss who you expect your **opposition** to be, again thinking broadly. Groups who have opposed past prison closure campaigns in some states include unions, governors, law enforcement, prosecutors, towns where the prisons are located, legislators representing those areas, and juvenile justice agency leadership. (Some of these groups also have supported closing prisons in some states, so make sure to research their position in your jurisdiction.) *Add those names to the diagram (using a different color marker or post-it).*

5) Determine who your **allies or potential allies** are by asking who in your own networks are connected to the individuals listed above (e.g., a former colleague is now chief of staff for an important legislator, or a faith leader we work with has a good relationship with the head of the juvenile justice agency). This can include both current campaign allies and others you know who may not yet have become involved with the campaign. *Add those names to the chart, if they are not already there, using a different color marker or post-it.*

6) Moving beyond individual names, you'll also want to identify your key **constituencies**, or groups that you will need to organize (e.g., impacted youth and families or residents in the town where the prison is located.) *Add those groups to the chart, if they are not already there, using a different color marker or post-it.*

7) Focus on the **relationships** that exist and how to get from your group – the campaign members and supporters – to the individuals who hold the power to fix the problem or to those who could meaningfully interfere with your efforts. *Draw lines on your diagram to visually “map” the relationships and pathways to see how the groups you need to influence are connected (or not) to your campaign members/supporters.*

8) Use the information on your chart to **make decisions about priorities and next steps**. Can some campaign members follow up with individuals who have a lot of lines/connections, while others do some additional research on targets who are deemed high priority but have few or no lines/connections? These next steps will become part of your *organizing plan* and *campaign plan*.

*Tip:* You can also use this exercise to tackle much smaller elements of your campaign (e.g., How do we get supportive press coverage and ensure public opinion is on our side? How do we get a study/reform commission created?)



Creating an Organizing Plan

To achieve your goals, your allies will need to influence the most powerful decision-makers related to youth prisons in your state. To make this happen, you will need to take concrete steps to increase the power of your allies (e.g., move them up the “influence level” axis on your power map). The organizing plan includes the allies and constituencies you need to mobilize, as well as steps for doing so. It also includes tasks that can help create or increase the power of those allies, and it organizes all of this information into a written plan, with timeframes and responsible parties. Here is a sample organizing plan:

Activity	Interim steps	Lead/Others involved	Timeline
Hold visioning sessions with youth and families to get their input and expertise to develop community-driven alternative plan	Set up Youth and Parent Engagement Workgroups to organize visioning sessions  Find location and set date  Develop facilitation plan/ identify facilitator  Publicize/invite attendees  Provide stipends to youth and families  Conduct youth/family surveys	KL  JD  Youth and Parent Engagement Workgroups	October (date/location identified by August 1, publicize starting Sept. 1)
Hold training sessions for system-involved youth and families to engage in the campaign and amplify their voices	Set up a Youth Engagement Workgroup to organize trainings  Set up a Parent Engagement Working Group to organize trainings  Find location and set date  Develop agenda/training materials  Publicize training/invite attendees  Provide stipends to youth and families	KL  JD  Youth and Parent Engagement Workgroups	Bi-monthly starting in November

*Tip:* In addition to organizing/hosting your own events and meetings, your campaign members should regularly attend community and juvenile justice gatherings to network and spread awareness of your campaign and its goals. In the publication Families in Power, Grace Bauer suggests that advocates have a rap, or “30 second commercial about your belief” about what needs to change, which you share both at justice-focused events and in your everyday life (e.g., the hair salon, the PTA). She also suggests bringing flyers and business cards with you at all times, so that you can leave contact info for individuals who might be interested in following up with you, as well as following up directly with anyone who expresses interest.

Develop a concrete outreach plan to bring in potential allies and expand the coalition of groups involved	Create a timeline for activities/public events  Review power-mapping notes and conduct additional research on potential allies  Assign specific campaign members to follow up with specific potential allies	AK  ZL  JR	September
Develop shared principles to create trust and set of values to base the campaign work and outreach	Schedule and hold brainstorming meeting  Identify facilitator	AK  ZL  JR	August
Develop a campaign name and identity to raise visibility	Identify experts on branding who could help (e.g., local university media studies department, communications director from advocacy group, PR/ Marketing firm)  Review examples from other campaigns  Schedule and hold meeting to develop, or discuss at regular campaign meeting  Circulate poll with potential names to gain maximum input	ZL  JR  ED	August



"The outreach for the No More Youth Jails campaign worked really well. As a young person, I learned that we had allies to help us. I learned that it was just not my voice out there alone. I was educated about the youth justice system. There are so many things that youth in the system are not aware of. I was educated on NYPD's "Stop and Frisk" and what to do when you are stopped by the police. I learned that youth in New York's criminal justice system become adults at 16, and I learned about how youth of color are stereotyped in the media. Most of all, I learned that there are really intelligent young people who have been involved in the system. And because I had become involved in the system, it motivated me." — **Andre Holder, in *Breaking Down the Walls***

## Addressing Opposition

Building power among your supporters and bringing those already in power to your side will be cornerstones of your campaign, but there will always be some key individuals or groups that you will not be able to sway. Your campaign will also have to decide how to neutralize, placate, or isolate those stakeholders. In New York, for example, the unions for Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) facilities staff objected to the closure of youth prisons because they feared lost jobs. The Youth First publication *Breaking Down the Walls* explains the different strategies New York's "Empty Beds, Wasted Dollars" campaign took to address this opposition while still achieving their goals:

*OCFS and advocates addressed this by ensuring that jobs would not be lost and that communities where the facilities were would benefit from their closure. To address concerns about job loss, OCFS guaranteed employees a job elsewhere in OCFS or for other state agencies for at least the first three years after closing the facilities. The Governor's office also sent a clear message that if upstate communities needed jobs, they would work to create jobs upstate but not create a local economy on the backs of young people.*

*The Cuomo Administration went on to create a special economic development fund for counties, which put about 13 or 14 million dollars in a fund for counties that were affected by closures so that they could use that money to create other economic development opportunities in the community. The local counties felt that these facilities were an important source of employment and investment in the community. The state invested in the local sewer system and paid for upgrades or taxes to support infrastructure development in these counties. It was successful because when the state closed facilities, people saw these investments in their communities.*

Amoretta Morris, one of the leaders of DC's successful campaign to close its Oak Hill youth prison, recalls the strong opposition their campaign faced, saying in *Breaking Down the Walls*, "It helped to bring in young people, so those who opposed could actually talk to them face to face. What people will say about the young people not in their presence is different from what they will say when they are there."



"Face-to-face visits with other parents is one of the first and most important steps you can take to begin organizing. In my work with [Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children], folks often said that the main reason they came to a meeting and stayed in the organization was because they felt they had a relationship with one of the organizers or other members. Getting to know others and finding out what they believe, what their experience has been, and what strengths they bring, are priceless assets in organizing." — Grace Bauer,  
*in Families in Power*



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