

Crisis Strategies/Crisis Tips

1. Bargaining prior to Mediation and/or Strike

- Encourage affiliates to be patient, take their time and not rush to a settlement due to artificial deadlines or bargaining limits that the Employer attempts to impose (ex: the need to settle by the end of school or the beginning of school, or the Employer's attempts to limit the number of issues to be discussed)
- Time is usually on the side of the affiliate
- Recognize or admit that bargaining is not moving forward or the parties are stuck or unwilling to move and start to discuss the option of mediation.
- Don't bargain to avoid a strike. Making concession after concession in the hopes of reaching a settlement without crisis weakens the affiliate's position. Once the union has bargained away everything, mediation and/or a strike are no longer effective tools for a reasonable settlement.
- Get the Crisis team in place early to begin planning and organizing for a strike.
- Begin taking small actions to let the state organization's members know that the employees are working without a contract. These activities should be coordinated by the crisis team.(ex" Informational Picketing, flyers distributed or mailed to BOD members, attending Board meetings, and gradually becoming more vocal)

2. After Mediation begins

- Hold a membership meeting for an update on where the parties currently stand in the bargaining process. Provide information to the members, and gather specific input on key issues to guide the bargaining team.
- Begin "backward" planning: identifying the pressure points that exist and how to utilize them. Identify a specific date or time period when the strike will begin if necessary. The bargaining team can then begin to communicate to the members at a deliberate pace the prospect of a strike. By the time the team asks for a strike vote, members will be well aware of the situation.
- Tie everything to the main talking points, every flyer, every media story, and every forum.
- Start formulating the document that might eventually end up as a public posting. In addition to minimizing stress, this allows the more time to help on communications and PR.
- Hold forums to reach members.
- Foster a positive relationship with the local media.
- Make it clear who will call the strike and who will determine the end of the strike. Affiliate members should understand who that is and how it be communicated.

3. Once on Strike:

- Keep the Negotiations team focused on bargaining and let the Crisis committee handle strike activities.
- Hold a membership meeting daily/regularly or have some tech system to provide and update, bond and keep morale up.
- Have a forum to offer information on the history of the negotiations process and to continue to deliver the focused message.

4. Once the strike ends:

- Hold the ratification in a reasonable amount of time, but don't rush. Finalize the language before the contract is ratified.
- Celebrate, reflect and recognize everyone's efforts.

Remember, the strike, bad or good, belongs to the members. The members make the decision about whether to strike and, while NSO can provide assistance and resources, the work falls to the members.