

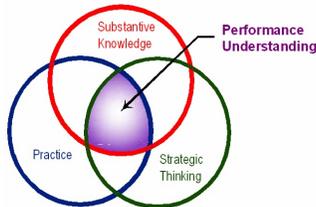
NSO's ORGANIZING FOR POWER!



“*Organizing for Power!*”™ is the National Staff Organization’s (NSO) professional development program on organizing for power. It is about union representation, union advocacy, union solidarity, and union capacity building. Simply, this approach builds more powerful and effective locals through organizing. *Organizing for Power!* explains, teaches, and prepares participants in the what, when, how, whether, and why of effective organizing. *Organizing for Power!* is based on our multimedia publication, ORGANIZING: A GUIDE FOR STAFF UNIONS.

Objectives:

The multi-part *Organizing for Power!* program prepares participants to become “working organizers” (i.e., people who know and can practice their craft effectively). It focuses on mastering the *performance understanding* required for effective, sustainable organizing. The three essential preconditions for this understanding are:



- Subject matter or conceptual **Knowledge** of organizing concepts, principles, dynamics, and processes.
- Insights from the **Practice** of organizing to experience, learn, and internalize the skills, procedures, and practices. These insights develop large repertoires of recognizable organizing fact, behavior, and response patterns required for effective organizing.
- Disposition to **Strategic Thinking** to promote and maintain integrated patterns of thought and behavior for mindful assessment, reasoning, judgment, and decision-making.

Organizing for Power! enables participants to understand and utilize each of these three interrelated dimensions to build and maintain power in their union locals and to effectively create a “culture of organizing.”

Approaches:

Organizing for Power! differs significantly from other union representation approaches, including “Organizing the Unorganized” (i.e., organizing to increase market share or density), “Business Unionism,” and other service or advocacy approaches. Organizing for power ensures an essential **outcome**: the capacity to apply principled power. It builds the long-term, sustainable union power necessary to achieve shared union goals based on members’ mutual self-interests. *Organizing for Power!* uses a practical **process**: the Constant Organizing Goals (COG) method. It ensures continuing progress through continuous cycles of four interconnected steps: **LISTEN**, **PLAN**, **ACT**, and **EVALUATE**. Together, organizing for power and the COG method create a cogent, consistent, mutually reinforcing approach for building and applying union power. In combination, organizing for power using the COG method unites and balances ends and means. Together, organizing for power and the COG method combine **outcome** and **process** in a systematic unity of purpose, direction, and action. Organizing practice repeatedly demonstrates organizing for power using the COG method is a system that ensures powerful, effective, sustainable organizing.



Organizing for Power! Instruction differs from annual “event-based” training sessions and conferences. This multi-part, sequenced, intense professional development program begins with the fundamentals and progresses through the requisites needed to ensure a successful organizing campaign. The progression is systematic: One module builds on another to combine *understanding* (i.e., knowledge, skills, and capacity) and *utilization* (i.e., inclination, application, and adherence) through instruction, experience, and skills development.

Knowledge:

Organizing for Power! explores both the foundations and advanced applications of organizing for power using the COG method. It explains the concepts, principles, and dynamics of organizing and the processes, procedures, and practices of the COG method, including how to:

- Systematically create, target, and manage the conflict required for progress and to achieve the union’s objectives, using the “**Educate** → **Agitate** → **Evaluate** → then **Escalate**” organizing dynamic.
- Effectively employ the five Constant Organizing Goals and the four steps in the COG method: **LISTEN**, **PLAN**, **ACT**, and **EVALUATE**. And then, identify members’ vision, interests, goals, and mission for their own union.

- Build power from the “bottom up” by creating and maintaining *public* relationships with the union’s rank-and-file members and the union’s community allies.
- Apply power to influence union employer opponents and other adversaries.
- Prepare and deploy effective union action through understanding and use of the three functions of organizing Acts: *Relational* organizing functions, *Interpretive* organizing functions, and *Influential* organizing functions.
- Strategically plan and navigate toward achieving the union’s objectives; and then to
- Employ effective strategies and deploy influential tactics to mobilize union power.

Organizing for Power! employs a range of adult learning techniques to “acculturate” participants in organizing. By acculturation, we refer to integrated patterns of thought and behavior that “bind together,” enable, teach, lead, and direct union organizers, leaders, and members to effectively respond to problems, exercise power, and create progress by organizing for power using the COG method. This “culture of organizing” permits unions to engage in powerful advocacy and effective representation. It avoids the need to depend on less effective approaches, like the Business Unionism practices of servicing members, “selling” membership, or lobbying. Rather, it assists unions to develop a representation program which achieves progress through organizing by balancing advocacy using litigation and service using bargaining and other representation activities to effectively promote union members’ interests.

Skills:

Organizing for Power! provides participants the skills needed to teach, lead, and assist union members to run effective bargaining, political action, and issue organizing campaigns. The practical, proven organizing skills and methods taught ensure union locals can resolve workplace problems and wages successful campaigns. They build participants’ *performance understanding* of organizing.

Modules:

The three modules in the *Organizing for Power!* program combine knowledge, skills, and strategic thinking in systematic progression. The initial module covers the foundations of Organizing for Power and the COG Method. The following two modules teach practical, hands-on applications of the organizing concepts, principles, dynamics, and processes introduced in the first module. These modules detail the steps in planning, preparing, and executing an effective, powerful organizing campaign. However, the focus of these two module shifts to using the proven organizing tools, actions, and methods refined by master organizers. Our step-by-step approach details each these tools as a progression of the actions necessary in a campaign. Use of our tools avoids “reinventing the wheel.”

Attitudes and Learning Methods:

Organizing for Power! is based on three assumptions: (1) Knowledge, experience, and strategic thinking are required for *performance understanding* of organizing; (2) A learning discipline should be woven into a union’s organizing efforts work which integrates “day-to-day work” with building greater capability; and (3) Like organizing, itself, learning organizing is best done by teams. *Organizing for Power!* promotes an experiential, facilitative, supportive, dynamic learning environment. *Organizing for Power!* relies on four broad instructional techniques:

- Instructor **Explanation** of the concepts, principles, and dynamic of organizing for power and the processes, procedures, and practices of the COG method.
- Instructor (and experienced participant) **Modeling** and demonstration of both organizing activities, processes, patterns, and practices as well as strategic thinking approaches, procedures, and dispositions.
- Participant **Practice** in the tools the actions, procedures, and practices of organizing through simulations and realistic exercises.
- Peer learning **Interaction** augmented by instructor and experienced participant **Feedback** to foster, direct, correct, and adapt participants’ subject matter knowledge, skills and practices, and strategic thinking.

Instructors *explain* and then *model* a wide range of listening, planning, environmental assessment, relational, interpretive, influential, strategic, tactical, and evaluation skills, techniques, and practices. After these demonstrations, participants *Practice* to directly experience, apply, and practice these skills. Through *interaction* and *feedback*, instructors and participants work together to learn from one another.