

GOVERNING POWER TOOLKIT



**Grassroots
Power Project
& Grassroots
Power Program**

TABLE OF CONTENTS



1

INTRODUCTION

- How to use this toolkit..... 1
- Definition 3

2

ASSESSMENTS + EVALUATIONS

- Arenas..... 7
- Strategic Shifts..... 11
- Campaign Strategy Screen..... 13

3

FIVE STRATEGIC SHIFTS

- **Governing Power Analysis**..... 16
 - Guiding Questions
 - Mapping Our Electeds

- **Long Term Governing Agenda..... 22**
 - Neoliberalism Case Study + State-Level Discussion Questions

- **Leveraging Narrative to Govern..... 28**
 - Exposing Dominant Narratives
 - Integrating Narrative Strategy

- **Developing Independent Political Infrastructure + Co-Governing..... 37**
 - Independent Political Organization Development Chart
 - Our Relationship to Electeds: Power Spectrum

- **Building Majoritarian Power..... 45**
 - MOVE's Base-Building Assessment



HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT



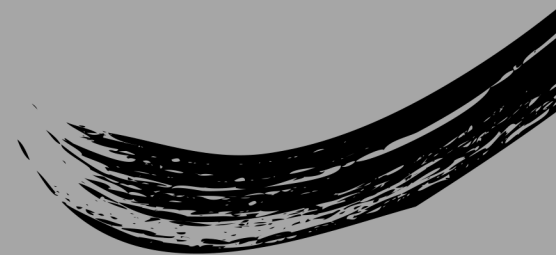
The Governing Power framework came out of reflection on grassroots organizing groups' work to build power on the ground and to move towards governing at the state level. This toolkit is an attempt to support those same groups in continuing on that path with even clearer strategy.

This toolkit is not meant to replace the Governing Power paper, but to accompany it. If you have not yet read the paper, please do so first in order to fully grasp the framework in all its depth. With a baseline understanding of the governing power framework, this toolkit is meant to help you, your organizational staff, and your member base to dig in and wrestle with it. There are a number of tools including assessments, brief popular(ish) education guides, worksheets and discussion questions and more. Feel free to pull out individual pieces and use them on their own or build them on top of each other. Please take note of a few things:

- Building governing power is challenging work! We are under no illusion that we can hand you a formula to achieve it, but we're **offering some ways to take steps toward that north star.**

- Exploring some of the tough questions included in this toolkit **will be best in the context of a strategic accompaniment process with plenty of direct support** from Grassroots Power Project. That said, we wanted to put out some things that folks could experiment with on their own.
- You should not feel as though your organization must navigate all of this on your own. **No single organization can win governing power.** Most of these tools are best suited to explore in collaboration with a broader alignment of strategic allies or a statewide formation.
- Please feel free to **adapt anything** contained in this toolkit to your needs, giving credit to GPP.
- This is very much an **initial cut**. It is our attempt to respond to the ask for tools that we have heard from all of you. We have more in mind, but wanted to test these out to see what is most useful to those of you leading the work on the ground. Let us know what you think and what would be helpful going forward!

**GOVERNING POWER IS THE
ABILITY TO [1] WIN AND
SUSTAIN POWER WITHIN
MULTIPLE ARENAS OF
DECISION-MAKING SO AS TO
[2] SHIFT THE POWER
STRUCTURE OF GOVERNANCE
AND [3] ESTABLISH A NEW
COMMON SENSE OF
GOVERNING**



**AND IN SLIGHTLY LESS
JARGONY TERMS... IT IS
ESSENTIALLY THE POWER TO
CONTROL AND RESHAPE
GOVERNMENT IN ORDER TO
MAKE OUR AGENDA REAL IN
THE WORLD.**





**ASSESSMENTS +
EVALUATIONS**

ASSESSMENT 1: ARENAS



USE THIS TOOL TO: Assess the power of your organization (or alignment table, etc) in relation to that of your opposition and to guide your strategy in different arenas.



DIRECTIONS: Using the scale below, move through the elements under each arena and assign a number that best reflects your organizational status. Discuss the questions that follow.

| | | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|---|--|
| <p>0 = There is resistance to the idea of developing capacity in this area of work.</p> | <p>2 = We have not even considered developing capacity in this area of work.</p> | <p>4 = We have a clear desire to develop capacity in this area of work.</p> | <p>6 = We have developed capacity in this area of our work, but it rarely if ever allows us to exercise decisive influence over decisions in this arena.</p> | <p>8 = We have well developed capacity in this area of our work, and it occasionally allows us to exercise decisive influence over decisions in this arena.</p> | <p>10 = We have extremely well developed capacity in this area of our work, and it consistently allows us to exercise decisive influence over decisions in this arena.</p> |
|---|--|---|--|---|--|

ELECTORAL

This is the arena where voters have a direct say in who is elected to public office or where voters directly approve or reject laws by referendum. To build power in the electoral arena, we can educate and turn out voters in support of candidates who share our values, run referendum campaigns, and recruit and develop candidates from our base who are committed to our agenda. In order to govern in this arena, we will have built a majoritarian bloc of voters that can decide the outcome of key elections.

1. **TURNING OUT VOTERS IN SUPPORT OF CANDIDATES WITH ALIGNED VALUES** _____
2. **RUNNING + WINNING REFERENDUM CAMPAIGNS** _____
3. **ELECTING CANDIDATES RECRUITED AND DEVELOPED FROM THE BASE** _____
4. **WHAT IS THE STRENGTH OF OUR OPPOSITION ON THIS FRONT (CIRCLE ONE)?**
 VERY WEAK WEAK STRONG VERY STRONG

LEGISLATIVE

This is the arena where elected leaders convene to create or change laws. To build power in this arena, we can partner with legislators and take a co-governing approach with elected champions to pass policies that shift wealth and power and to create new systems and institutions that increase democratic participation. In order to govern in this arena, we will have built sufficient electoral power so that our elected champions are leading the dominant caucuses in both legislative houses, and we have real influence in the executive branch.

1. **STRATEGICALLY COLLABORATING WITH LEGISLATORS TO PASS POLICIES THAT REFLECT ALIGNED VALUES AND AGENDAS (INCLUDES THROUGH BUILDING GRASSROOTS LOBBYING CAPACITIES, POLICY EXPERTISE AND PUBLIC PRESSURE CAMPAIGNS)** _____

2. ORGANIZING CAUCUSES (OR TEAMS) OF ELECTED LEADERS TO ADVANCE OUR AGENDA THROUGH STRATEGIC NEGOTIATIONS _____

3. USING LEGISLATION TO WIN SMALLER STEPPING STONE VICTORIES TO CREATE THE CONDITIONS TO WIN LARGER MILESTONE VICTORIES _____

4. WHAT IS THE STRENGTH OF OUR OPPOSITION ON THIS FRONT (CIRCLE ONE)?

VERY WEAK

WEAK

STRONG

VERY STRONG

ADMINISTRATIVE

This is the arena where the directives of the electoral and legislative arenas are transformed into actionable rules and where the process of implementation is shaped. To build power in this arena, we must develop knowledge of the legal parameters and bureaucratic structures in order to shape administrative rules and intervene in implementation and enforcement processes. In order to govern in this arena, we would have sufficient influence with elected executives to appoint trusted leaders who are allied with power-building organizations and who have the skills and expertise to shape policy, to effectively implement it and to enforce the laws and regulations around it.

1. UNDERSTANDING THE LEGAL PARAMETERS AND BUREAUCRATIC STRUCTURES RELATED TO THE POLICIES WE ARE FIGHTING FOR IN ORDER SO THAT WE CAN SHAPE THE IMPLEMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENT OF LEGISLATION WE PASS. _____

2. DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY INFLUENCING ADMINISTRATIVE APPOINTMENTS RELATED TO THE POLICIES WE ARE FIGHTING FOR (INCLUDING BY RECRUITING AND DEVELOPING PEOPLE FROM OUR BASE TO FILL ADMINISTRATIVE POSITIONS). _____

3. WHAT IS THE STRENGTH OF OUR OPPOSITION ON THIS FRONT (CIRCLE ONE)?

VERY WEAK

WEAK

STRONG

VERY STRONG

JUDICIAL/CONSTITUTIONAL

This is the arena where laws and rules are interpreted and applied. To build power in this arena, we can engage in strategic litigation to advance our agenda; monitor the decisions of a particular court; or train and develop judges to be seated on the bench. In order to govern in this arena, we would need to be able to place enough judges on the bench (via elections or appointments) who share our agenda to shift jurisprudence.

1. ACTIVELY MONITORING HOW THE DECISIONS OF PARTICULAR COURTS ARE IMPACTING OUR AGENDAS AND ISSUES _____

2. ENGAGING IN STRATEGIC LITIGATION TO ADVANCE OUR AGENDA (IE. FORCING THE APPLICATION OF REGULATIONS ON LARGE CORPORATIONS) _____

4. CREATING PIPELINES TO BE ABLE TO TRAIN AND DEVELOP ALIGNED JUDGES TO BE SEATED ON BENCHES AT ANY LEVEL. _____

5. WHAT IS THE STRENGTH OF OUR OPPOSITION ON THIS FRONT (CIRCLE ONE)?

VERY WEAK

WEAK

STRONG

VERY STRONG

WORLDVIEW

This is the arena where different ideological and political interests deploy narratives to shape popular values, beliefs and what we come to understand as “common sense.” To build power in the arena of worldview, we can unmask dominant narratives and expose their contradictions, and we can lift up narratives that reflect our beliefs and animate people to unite with each other toward solutions that are reflected in our agenda. In order to govern in this arena, we would need to establish a new popular “common sense” that reflects our deeper beliefs and values.

1. UNMASKING DOMINANT NARRATIVES AND EXPOSE THEIR CONTRADICTIONS. _____

2. LIFTING UP NARRATIVES THAT REFLECT OUR BELIEFS AND ANIMATE PEOPLE TO UNITE WITH EACH OTHER TOWARD SOLUTIONS THAT ARE REFLECTED IN OUR AGENDA. _____

3. WHAT IS THE STRENGTH OF OUR OPPOSITION ON THIS FRONT (CIRCLE ONE)?

VERY WEAK

WEAK

STRONG

VERY STRONG

ECONOMIC

This is the arena where our wages, work-life and consumer choices are decided. To build power in the economic arena, we can wage campaigns to organize workers into unions to collectively bargain. We can also wage policy campaigns that expand worker control of the economy, and that empower the government to reign in corporate power. In order to govern in this arena, we would need to have a large proportion of the workforce organized into unions, and to have sufficient electoral and legislative power to radically extend democratic control over the economy.

1. WAGING AND SUCCEEDING IN CAMPAIGNS TO EXPAND WORKER POWER (FOR EXAMPLE, LAWS THAT STRENGTHEN THE ABILITY OF UNIONS TO ORGANIZE WORKERS TO COLLECTIVELY BARGAIN FOR WAGES, BENEFITS, WORKING CONDITIONS, AND EXPANDED COMMUNITY DEMANDS). _____

2. WAGING AND SUCCEEDING IN CAMPAIGNS TO REIGN IN CORPORATE POWER (FOR EXAMPLE, REGULATION OF CORPORATE POLITICAL DONATIONS, ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATIONS, LABOR STANDARDS, ETC) _____

3. WAGING AND SUCCEEDING IN CAMPAIGNS TO INCREASE DEMOCRATIC CONTROL OVER THE ECONOMY IN ORDER TO REDUCE INEQUITY (PROGRESSIVE TAXATION, WAGE STANDARDS, SOCIAL HOUSING, CLIMATE INVESTMENTS). _____

4. WHAT IS THE STRENGTH OF OUR OPPOSITION ON THIS FRONT (CIRCLE ONE)?

VERY WEAK

WEAK

STRONG

VERY STRONG

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Based on this assessment, use the following questions to help focus your work:

- In which arena are we strongest? How did we build this strength and are there lessons we can draw and apply in other arenas?
- In which arena are we weakest? What are our opportunities to build strength in this arena?
- In which arena is our opposition strongest? How did they build this strength and are there lessons we can draw and apply on our behalf?
- In which arena is our opposition weakest? What are ways that we can take advantage of this weakness?
- What are concrete steps we can take to strengthen in each arena?

Given the answers to the above questions, and given the conditions in our state, in which 1-2 arenas should we focus on building our power in the coming period?

ASSESSMENT 2: STRATEGIC SHIFTS



USE THIS TOOL TO: Assess the level of development or strength of your organization (or alignment table, etc) on each of the strategic shifts discussed in the governing power framework.



DIRECTIONS: For each prompt check the box that best corresponds to how developed your organization or alignment table is. A snail might mean you're working on it but at a slow pace with much ground to cover, a horse would mean you're a bit more advanced, and a cheetah would mean you are charging ahead at full speed! At the end, tally up your boxes and see how fast your'e moving across the shifts as a whole or within each. You might be a snail on one, but a horse over all!



TARGET FOCUSED ANALYSIS --> GOVERNING POWER ANALYSIS

- To what degree do we push past a typical power analysis of a target to assess the forces that influence them and give them their power (corporate forces, constituencies, other decision makers, etc)?

SHORT TERM CAMPAIGN --> LONG TERM GOVERNING AGENDA

- To what degree are we thinking in terms of an extended strategic time horizon? (snail 1-3 yrs, horse 5-10 yrs, or cheetah 10-20 yrs)
- To what degree have we charted out stepping stone and milestone campaigns that will help us build power and make more possible in the path toward our long term agenda?
- To what degree do we have clear power-building goals for each of our policy or corporate campaigns?
- Are we successfully able to retain and expand our power (base, alliances, etc) from one campaign to the next?
- To what extent do we plan in advance for moments of crisis (i.e. financial shocks, climate disasters, pandemics, war etc.) that may create new dangers and opportunities to advance our work?
- Do we devote resources to tracking the enforcement/implementation of the policies we win?



TACTICAL MESSAGING--> LEVERAGING NARRATIVE TO GOVERN

- To what degree do we invest in building internal ideological alignment and making shared meaning of current events amongst our base and allies?
- Are we clear on our underlying narratives that reflect our core values and that we want to advance in order to shift common sense?
- To what degree does our organization invest in advancing those narratives externally, in connection to but also going beyond short term messaging?

WINNING ONE OFF ELECTIONS --> DEVELOPING POLITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE + CO-GOVERNING

- To what extent do we engage in direct electoral work via 501 c4s, political parties, political action committees or other formations?
- To what degree do we have influence in setting the electoral and issue agenda of progressive politics in our state?
- To what degree do we co-conspire/strategize with public officials to advance our agenda?

NARROW BASE BUILDING --> BUILDING MAJORITARIAN POWER

- To what extent do we invest in deep leadership development (ideology, strategy, and practical skills) to prepare leaders to effectively organize and lead others?
- To what extent have we identified constituencies needed to win a majority in the state?
- To what extent are we prioritizing campaigns that bring those constituencies together and fosters cross constituency relationships?
- To what extent do we forge alliances to lead broader strategies that aggregate and expand movement power?

ASSESSMENT 3: CAMPAIGN STRATEGY SCREEN/ CHECKLIST



USE THIS TOOL TO: Assess the extent to which your campaign aligns with governing power strategy, and consider any ways to strengthen



DIRECTIONS:

- For each prompt, check the box to answer yes or no. We recognize it may not be that simple, but try your best to make a definitive answer.
- Use the answers to engage in further discussion on campaign strategy.

YES!

NO!

GOVERNING POWER ANALYSIS

- In crafting this campaign, have we looked beyond our immediate targets to identify other forces that are influencing them or exercising power over them (for example, the impact of corporate power on a legislator)?
- Have we identified our opponents and their long-term goals?

BUILDING LONG TERM POWER + ADVANCING A LONG TERM AGENDA

- Will this campaign push us to extend our strategic time horizon (beyond at least 5 years), and will it make it possible for us to exercise more power in the future?
- Does this campaign have clear goals to build and sustain power? Examples of power building include:
 - Adding new people to our base and having a plan to retain them (people who identify and act with our organization)
 - Developing new leaders and having a plan to sustain their involvement and leadership (leaders organize and move their followers to act)
 - Building and deepening organizational alliances beyond this campaign
- Have we considered how to embed community-driven enforcement and implementation into our demands so that we can use this win to expand our base and build power?
- Is our organization and/or allies prepared to play a role in monitoring, enforcement and implementation of your campaign demands?
- Do our demands create “stepping stones” that help to lay a pathway towards structural reforms to our democracy or economy (reforms that “un-rig” the rules of the electoral/legislative process or shift power and resources from the wealthy few to the rest of us)?

LEVERAGING NARRATIVE

- Have we screened our campaign demands to ensure that they don't reinforce the dominant narrative or play into our opponents' frames? For example, some campaigns reinforce anti-tax narratives when they argue that they will "cost taxpayers less."
- Will this campaign present a compelling alternative narrative to the "dominant narrative" (the way that our opponents talk about the issue and about human nature, race, gender, government and the economy)?
- Do we have concrete plans to advance our narrative through the campaign's demands, strategic communications, actions and training member-leaders as narrative champions?
- Do we have concrete plans to build our internal ideological alignment and make shared meaning with our base and allies through this campaign? (For example, education on corporate targets that deepens their understanding of the economic system or processes to help members deepen their understanding of the connection between economic and racial justice)
- Will this campaign help to push the boundaries on what media, elected officials and the general public consider to be "politically possible"? (Note: This requires a dynamic balance between pushing the edge of the possible and being able to bring home concrete wins.)

YES!

NO!

BUILDING POLITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE + MOVING TOWARD CO-GOVERNING

- Will this campaign build, strengthen or deploy independent political infrastructure? For example, will we form a new political action committee to increase pressure on candidates or coordinate a field campaign to talk to voters directly about our issue?
- Will this campaign strengthen our relationship with our allies and other electoral organizations and put us in a better position to move our agenda in the future?
- Will this campaign increase our political influence by building the power of champions who have already been elected, and/ or removing opponents?

BUILDING MAJORITARIAN POWER

- Will this campaign help us to build our base by bringing in more members?
- Will this campaign help us build a list of voters that we can ask to fight with us next time?
- Does this campaign create opportunities to develop our leaders by giving them expanded roles and responsibilities to organize others? Will this campaign open up space to organize new constituencies or build power in new geographies?
- Will this campaign help us to build both short-term coalition relationships (that might be "transactional," but also important to help us win on our immediate campaigns) and long-term alignments built on deeper trust and shared strategic assessments?



**5 STRATEGIC
SHIFTS**

1. FROM A TARGET FOCUSED ANALYSIS TO A GOVERNING POWER ANALYSIS



GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR A GOVERNING POWER ANALYSIS



USE THIS TOOL TO: Engage in a deeper power analysis that pushes past our targets to identify the sources of their power.



DIRECTIONS:

- Use the second set of questions to guide a discussion with your organizational/alignment staff and members.
- If available, ahead of discussion, seek additional support in providing background research.
- Once you've interrogated the questions to better understand the landscape of power, use the reflections questions to think about implications for your work.
- Pro tip – Refer to the governing power paper case studies to see how a similar set of questions was used to advance a governing power analysis in Colorado.

Standard power assessments and analyses are typically done in the context of building a campaign. They are useful tools that help us identify decision makers that have the power to give us what we want, and thus become our targets. Most power analyses engage a set of questions similar to the following:

STANDARD POWER ANALYSIS QUESTIONS

- 1.** What is the issue we are trying to solve?
- 2.** Who are the stakeholders?
- 3.** Do they agree or disagree with us?
- 4.** How much power/influence do they have?
- 5.** Who is our primary target and how might we move them?

A governing power analysis is different. It can and should be used at various stages of strategy development and is intended to give us a broader and deeper picture of the landscape. It helps us to identify not only our individual targets in a given campaign, but also the structures and forces that empower those decision makers in the first place. Seeing a more complicated web of relationships and answering questions regarding not only who sets the agenda, but also who benefits from it, helps us to better craft strategies aimed at shifting power. Some potential questions for a governing power assessment include the following:

GOVERNING POWER ANALYSIS QUESTIONS

- 1.** What are the dominant sectors of our state's economy? How does this relate to the major corporate actors in the state (or beyond)? What constituencies are impacted by these sectors as workers or consumers, and what are their geographic concentrations?
- 2.** Who holds extreme wealth in our state, including individuals, corporations, and large employers?
- 3.** How are the extremely wealthy connected to each other? What business, political, and cultural institutions do they influence or control?
- 4.** What are the key elements of the overall political and ideological agenda of our state's ultra-wealthy forces, and what are their policy priorities in the short-term and long-term?
- 5.** Who is currently or would benefit from this agenda? Among these benefactors, are there issues on which they are divided that can be advantageous to us?
- 6.** Who is currently or would be hurt by this agenda? Are they organized? What is their stake in fighting against this agenda?
- 7.** Who are the biggest political and campaign donors in the state, and which parties, candidates, think tanks, etc. are those donors affiliated with?
- 8.** Who has control of the State Senate, House of Representatives, and Executive branch? How has this changed over time?
- 9.** What is the ideological composition of our state legislature? How many legislators do we consider to be: *(*feel free to adjust the options below to best suit your state)*
 - Progressive Champions
 - Corporate Liberals
 - Corporate Conservatives
 - MAGA/Right Wing
- 10.** What are the voting trends in our state? What do recent elections tell us about how various constituencies and geographies are moving?

BEYOND RED + BLUE: MAPPING OUR ELECTEDS



USE THIS TOOL TO: Take a closer look at the balance of power in your states, push beyond a red/blue analysis to understand the ideology/perspective of your electeds, and further sharpen your strategy and orientation to them.



DIRECTIONS:

- Using the suggested spectrum below (or your own adaptation) determine what categories you will use to analyze your legislature.
- Use the empty bar graph to apply these categories to your state house, senate and governorship.
- Use the reflection questions that follow to discuss the implications of this analysis for your organizing.

For the most part, we live in a two-party system in the United States, and this makes it easy for us to analyze politics through a “red-versus-blue” lens. This lens encourages us to treat these political parties as monoliths, even though they function more like coalitions of different forces. This limits us in immediate campaigns, where we need to break the political parties down in more detail to figure out how to advance particular policy objectives. This also makes it nearly impossible to get clear on what it would look like to truly exercise governing power in the legislative arena. We saw this with crystal clarity in the “blue trifecta” moment in 2020, when a Democratically-controlled Congress and Presidency could not align to advance a strong program because progressive forces and corporate forces in the Democratic Party had irresolvable differences, represented by Senators Manchin and Sinema.

It is important for organizers to develop a more complicated analysis of the different political forces, going beyond a red-versus-blue analysis to one that names the different forces that make up each party's coalitions. For example, in looking at the Democratic party, we can see a spectrum of forces from "Progressive" to "Moderate Democrat" to "Corporate Liberal" within the Democratic Party, and we can see a spectrum from "Corporate Conservative" to "Right Wing / Make America Great Again" in the Republican Party. This allows us to be clear about our real champions, forces we can win over to our agenda, and splits we can drive in our opposition.

Here is an example of what it would look like to analyze a state legislature through a typical strict blue-red dichotomy:

BALANCE OF POWER IN STATE HOUSE (118 Total - Need 60 votes to pass)

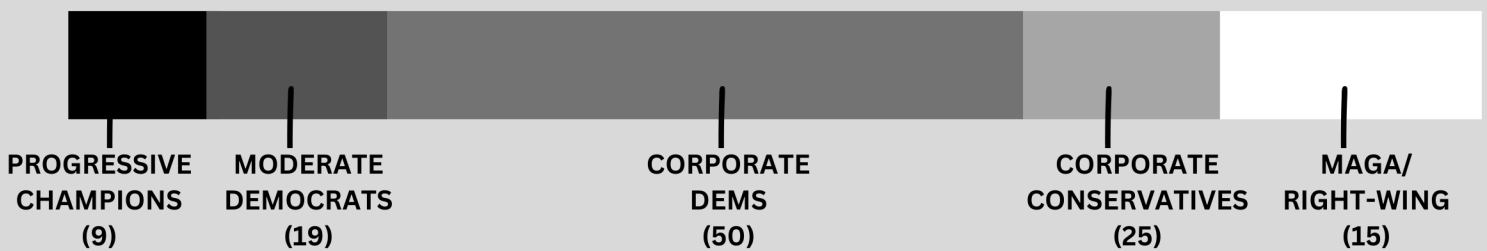
DEMOCRATS: 78

REPUBLICANS: 40

Here is one alternate way we could break these different forces down:

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Progressive Champions</p> | <p>Actively leading or supporting the advancement of an agenda that: redistributes wealth and regulates corporations; seeks racial, economic and gender justice; and expands democracy</p> |
| <p>Moderate Democrats</p> | <p>Supports moderate levels of corporate regulation as well as the protection of democratic rights and more moderate solutions to racial and gender justice. These forces tend to shift position based on the political climate.</p> |
| <p>Corporate Liberal</p> | <p>Hostile to economic redistribution and corporate regulation, while advancing corporate-driven solutions to climate change, protecting democratic rights, and promoting stronger representation of women, LGBT people and people of color.</p> |
| <p>Corporate Conservative</p> | <p>Supports narrowing democratic rights, but opposes the undermining of established institutional norms. Seeks to expand corporate profitability and control. Opposes the expansion of racial, gender, and ecological justice.</p> |
| <p>Right Wing/Make America Great Again</p> | <p>Actively works to undermine established democratic institutional norms under various banners, including white nationalism and Christian fundamentalism. Denies the reality of climate change. Speaks in the voice of working people, but tends to oppose economic redistribution and corporate regulation.</p> |

Here is what it could look like to analyze a state legislature through this more complex lens:



The categories we offer above are only one way to approach this more nuanced approach to analysis. We have seen organizations use a range of different kinds of criteria, including:

- Level of Collaboration: How many legislators are aligned with and actively fighting for our agenda? How many co-govern with us?
- Position on Issues: Where do different legislators in each party stand on economic issues? Where do they stand on race, gender, sexuality and other axes of oppression?

Using whatever spectrum makes sense for your context, chart out below the balance of forces in your state, beyond red and blue.

State House

State Senate

Governor

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- 1.** What electoral work do we need to invest in to create more favorable terrain to move our agenda? Think both in terms of electing more champions *and* reducing the numbers of corporate and conservative forces.
- 2.** What investments do we need to make to build our bench of progressive champions who are being recruited and developed for state office?
- 3.** What structures do we need to build to strengthen (1) our relationships with our elected champions (for example, regular strategy sessions), (2) the influence of our elected champions (for example, formal caucuses or informal strategy groups), and (3) support champions to lead effectively (for example, experienced legislative and research staff, training and mentorship from experienced legislators)?
- 4.** What can we do to divide our legislative opponents and their supporters?

2. FROM SHORT-TERM CAMPAIGNS TO A LONG TERM GOVERNING AGENDA



NEOLIBERALISM CASE STUDY + STATE-LEVEL DISCUSSION



USE THIS TOOL TO: Develop a shared understanding of the importance of advancing a Long Term Agenda.



DIRECTIONS:

- Review the case study in the following pages on the rise of neoliberalism at the national level. You could do it in many ways — read it aloud together, pass out a hand out and read it in small groups, or read silently.
- Then use the reflection questions on this page to consider 1) how neoliberalism shows up in your state and 2) what the rise of neoliberalism tells us about a long term governing agenda.

GENERAL REFLECTION

1. What are your reactions to this history? How do you feel, hearing this story?
2. What are some lessons we can take from this history?

GOVERNING POWER ANALYSIS

1. What has the neoliberal agenda looked like in our state? How has this history affected our communities?
2. Who are the ultra-wealthy forces in our state, and what agenda (neoliberal or otherwise) are they moving today? How do we understand that agenda as part of a longer term plan?

LONG TERM GOVERNING AGENDA

1. How does seeing the neoliberal agenda as an integrated 50-year project make us think differently about our work?
2. How did neoliberals use a stepping stone approach to build momentum for larger structural reforms?
3. What would it look like to take this kind of long view in our work? What challenges and opportunities would it create?
4. What would it look like to make power building as important as a campaign win? How might we embed goals to organize more people, build or strengthen new alliances, and change the narrative into our existing campaigns?
5. Among the issues we are fighting for now, what could it look like to embed power building and enforcement mechanisms in the implementation of our policy victories?

CASE STUDY: THE NEOLIBERAL LONG TERM AGENDA

the ultimate issue may be survival
enterprise system,
its movement insist
textbooks

in our universities and schools.

FROM: Lewis F. Powell, Jr.



It's June 2022. These are the headlines:

On June 23rd, the Supreme Court decided to expand gun rights just weeks after a devastating school shooting at an elementary school in Texas.

On June 24th, the Supreme Court overturned Roe Vs Wade and tore apart abortion rights in this country.

On June 30th, the Supreme Court limited the power of the Environmental Protection Agency's to regulate greenhouse gas emissions and laid the basis for rolling back all kinds of governmental regulations on big corporations.

These major changes in our country took place over the course of a week, but they were the result of a decades-long strategy that was developed by the richest people in our society. To understand that strategy, we need to look back to its origins in the 1930s.

Over the course of the last century, movements of poor and working people built a serious amount of power, enough power to start bringing home some real victories for our people. In the 1930's, poor and working people built the labor movement and won victories for working people like the minimum wage, overtime and the right to

unionize. They won the social safety net that provided things like welfare and social security.

Together these victories were the basis of what has been called the "American Dream" – the idea that, if you worked hard, you could build a comfortable life for your family. But that dream wasn't a dream for everyone; many communities of color and women were excluded from those rights.

So in the 1960s, the civil rights movement fought to end legal segregation in this country and won new political rights for Black people and other communities of color like the Voting Rights Act. The women's movement fought and won a wave of changes, including the Equal Pay Act and abortion rights. Movements also won major environmental regulations in that period, like the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act, which gave government agencies the ability to regulate corporate polluters.

Corporations and wealthy individuals saw these changes as a threat. And they decided to act. In 1971, a corporate lawyer and future Supreme Court Justice, Lewis Powell, wrote a strategy memo to the Director of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, which is a national organization for corporations. The Powell Memo was a warning to corporations

that they must take the fight for power as seriously as the drive for profits.

Corporations and their operatives took that advice seriously. They developed a long-term strategy to take power. And it worked. They rebuilt our economy and society to serve the interests of the wealthiest people in this country. So, how did they engage in this long-term strategy?

- **They built a daunting corporate infrastructure.** Ultra-wealthy donors invested hundreds of millions of dollars in foundations and other private vehicles that, in turn, invested in a large network of think tanks, advocacy groups, grassroots organizations, universities and fellowships for students. This infrastructure was built with the expectation that it would take a generation or more to remake the country in their interests.
- Corporations didn't fight alone. **They built alliances to win majorities.** Corporations didn't do this alone. The wealthy few built alliances with the Christian Right (whose main interests were to take away abortion rights and limit the rights of LGBTQ and transgender people) and white nationalists (whose main interests were to roll back the victories of the civil rights movement). This governing alliance was the bedrock of the conservative movement, which invested heavily in building a grassroots base and ultimately took over the Republican party. By 1980, this majoritarian power bloc was able to exercise its electoral power to not only elect local candidates around the country but also to bring conservative hero, Ronald Reagan, to the presidency.
- **They built power in many arenas.** In the electoral arena, these billionaires supported work to cultivate and elect candidates committed to their agenda at

at all levels of government. One key political organization, Americans for Prosperity, built immense electoral power and elected right-wing candidates across the country. Today, 31 state legislatures are in Republican hands. In the legislative arena, corporate funders built the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), where major corporations and state elected officials develop model legislation together to advance the corporate agenda. ALEC has affiliated state legislators in all 50 states. In the judicial arena, they built the Federalist Society, an organization which promotes neoliberal interpretations of the law with law students, lawyers and judges. The Federalist Society has had a major impact over the last decades. It has identified, trained and placed judges on the bench at all levels of the judiciary, including all of the conservative justices on the Supreme Court. And in the worldview arena, they built right wing think tanks and media outlets like Fox News, and they have had a dramatic impact, driving the dominant narrative to the right.

- **They made power-building as important as the win.** They structured their legislative efforts so that their wins helped them to build durable power, year after year. For example, they worked to include the "Charitable Choice" provision into Clinton's Welfare Reform Bill in 1996. Charitable Choice enabled religious organizations to receive federal funds to provide social services, allowing many socially conservative Christian Coalition members to advance conservative

religious and political perspectives (like abstinence-only sex education) while they were providing government-funded services. This built a stronger base for the Christian Coalition, and it deepened the investment of the Christian Coalition in supporting the broader neoliberal agenda.

- **They embedded power building + enforcement.** Neoliberal strategists made clear plans to sustain the policies and power that they won. They created self-reinforcing policies, for example ensuring that the War on Drugs was fully implemented by making it the channel for the largest federal grant programs to local law enforcement. They literally funded their enforcement apparatus through local law enforcement.
- **They invested in narrative change.** Neoliberal strategists set out to win the “hearts and minds” of poor and working people in this country by spinning out their story about the source of our social problems and about the best solutions. They attacked government programs and unions, saying that they were destroying our economy and our moral fabric. They told us that big business would save us and that, when rich people do better, we all do better. They intentionally used the logic of racism to divide us from each other, attacking government programs and building support for policing and prisons among poor and working white people. These ideas have become dominant with decision-makers and the broader public. They continue to shape what is considered politically possible.

The most important thing to remember is that the wealthy few aimed to govern.

They started by taking over the Republican Party. By the 1970s, the Republican Party had become the political party of big business. They fought hard on the local level, winning local and state offices so they could move their agenda town by town, city by city and state by state: from local utility boards and school boards to mayor’s offices and state legislatures. As of 2022, Republicans had “trifecta” control in 22 states; that is, they control both houses of the state legislature and the governor’s seat. But controlling the Republican Party and dominating in states wasn’t enough for the wealthy few. They started to work to take over the Democratic Party, too. There is now a strong corporate wing within the Democratic Party.

Where we are today is no accident. The fact that we live in an incredibly unequal society, where the wealthiest people control huge amounts of the country’s wealth while our people struggle; the fact that racism continues unabated; the fact that the attacks on women and queer people and transgender people are on the rise... these are all the result of a deliberate long-term strategy developed by the richest people in our society. While neoliberalism might be destabilized in this moment, organizers today have important lessons to learn from its rise: it demonstrates what it takes to build the power to govern and shift the governing paradigm, and fundamentally change what is politically possible.

3. FROM TACTICAL MESSAGING TO LEVERAGING NARRATIVE TO GOVERN



EXPOSING DOMINANT NARRATIVES



USE THIS TOOL TO: Build a shared understanding of the core elements of the current dominant narrative, and to begin a conversation about its impact and what it might look like to advance our own.

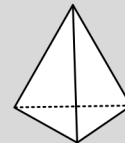


DIRECTIONS:

- Gather markers and butcher paper
- Use the script below to walk through a front-of-the-room participatory conversation to map out the dominant narrative.
- Engage in the discussion questions below, in small group or all together, to begin to collectively process implications and work toward building your own counter narrative.

As organizers, we need to do at least two things to exercise our power on the terrain of narrative. First, we need to work internally to deepen our ability to make meaning of the broader dynamics in the world around us with our leaders and members in our organizations. This means understanding and exposing the dominant narratives that benefit the 1% so that we can connect them to the policies and actions that harm us. It also means identifying the values and beliefs that we share within and across communities, so that we can really understand our shared interests and be moved to act in ways that are ideologically aligned. Through this process, we will get clearer about what we are fighting against and what we are fighting for.

DRAW: A three sided pyramid like this one up on butcher paper



- SAY:**
- **Human beings are meaning-making creatures.** And we make meaning out of what goes on around us through what we call “common-sense” thinking. These common-sense ideas don’t just happen; they can and have been shaped, by us and by our opposition. That is what the battle of big ideas is about – how to shape how people make meaning and understand their circumstances.
 - These kinds of **ideas shape the terms of what is considered politically possible** because the terms of political debate are largely limited by prevailing notions of what’s right vs. wrong, the “proper” way things should be done, what’s “normal” vs. “extreme.” They also shape how much support there is inside of our communities for the kinds of policies that we are fighting for.
 - **There is a larger dominant narrative that has been strategically promoted by our enemies and that has gained wide cultural dominance.** Again, common sense doesn’t just happen; it can be shaped as part of an intentional political effort. Advocates of neoliberalism, libertarianism and right-wing populism have different sets of ideologies, but they’ve told stories or narratives with shared overarching themes. Those stories have shaped dominant worldview or understanding of social and political issues. Let’s look at some of those core themes...

ASK: What are the common stories we hear from our opposition about government?
Think about what you hear about programs like education, hospitals, food stamps.

NAME/PULL OUT:

- Government is corrupt.
- Government programs are inefficient.
- Government programs make people lazy.

WRITE: "Anti-Government" on one point of the pyramid

SAY: These stories seed and fuel the idea that Government is inefficient and wasteful and that its intervention in society should be minimized

ASK: What stories does our opposition tell about the economy and the market?

NAME/PULL OUT:

- A rising tide lifts all boats.
- What's good for rich people is good for everyone - because they are job creators.
- Profits and wealth will trickle down

WRITE: "Free Market" on the second point of the pyramid

SAY: These stories reinforce the idea that the free market is inherently efficient, and that competition and choice provide the appropriate and natural way to judge and reward the winners versus the losers in society.

ASK: What stories does our opposition tell about human nature ?

NAME/PULL OUT:

- Competition is human nature
- It's a dog eat dog world
- Compassion is weakness

WRITE: "Hyper-Individualism" on the third point of the pyramid

SAY: These stories erode the notion of society and being part of a greater whole, instead placing outsized emphasis on hyper-individualism

ASK: What stories does our opposition tell about race, gender, sexuality and who we are as a country?

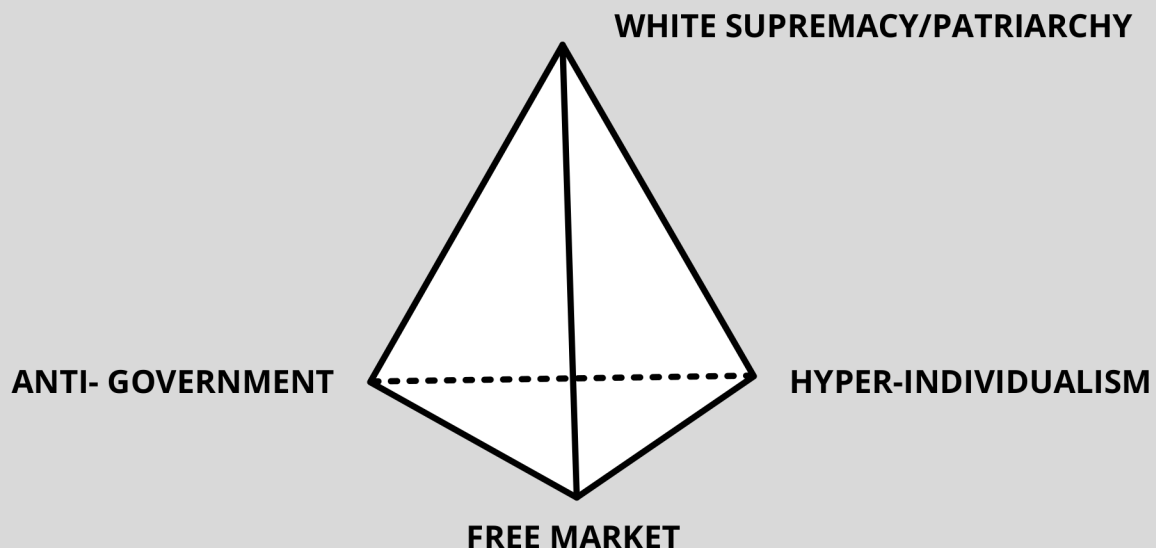
NAME/PULL OUT:

- Racism is all about individual bias.
- Black people are criminals. Muslims are terrorists. Immigrants are a drain on our society.
- The man is the head of the household. Women are weak and need protection. Men are job creators, politics is naturally their realm.
- The traditional family is under attack by the LGBTQ agenda.

WRITE: “White Supremacy/Patriarchy” on the fourth/top point of the pyramid

- SAY:**
- This piece of the prism or pyramid is the linchpin - the piece that powers the rest of the dominant narrative.
 - In the dominant narrative, appeals to white supremacy and patriarchy are sometimes blatant and sometimes coded.
 - Consider the narrative about “takers” and “makers.” The “takers” are dependent on the government – people who are on welfare or social security or disability, people who receive food stamps or public housing assistance, people who are on Medicare or Medicaid. The dominant narrative tells us those folks are by and large people of color, even though the data tells us something different. The dominant narrative tells us that their dependence hurts them and wastes the resources that are generated by more productive wealth-makers, who are assumed to be white, able-bodied men

SHOW: The full dominant narrative prism/pyramid



SAY:

This dominant narrative is incredibly powerful and has fundamentally ordered the way many people see the world and make sense of everything happening within it. In so many ways it shapes the terrain of our organizing and what is possible to push for. It even often shapes and limits our thinking about our own work and the solutions we propose (give an example from your context).

But the dominant narrative can and should be actively challenged. Making transformational change requires that we understand this narrative and can recognize and expose when and how it is being deployed to shape the meaning that people are making of events unfolding and policies enacted in our society. It is our task to find vulnerabilities to take advantage of, and to be persistent in putting forth our own narrative reflective of our values.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1.** How do these different ideas relate to each other?
- 2.** Who does this dominant narrative benefit and how?
- 3.** Where do we see parts of this dominant narrative reflected in our work/issue campaigns?
- 4.** How do these narratives impact our organizing?
- 5.** Where have we unintentionally replicated some of these narratives, and how can we safeguard against that?
- 6.** Where do you see cracks or vulnerabilities in the dominant narrative that might be an opportunity to advance our alternatives?
- 7.** What are the core tenets of our alternative narrative?

*(*You could spend significant time on this last question and name that, in addition to being clear and practiced in recognizing and exposing the dominant narrative, in order to move towards governing power we must also invest more in the external work to advance an alternative narrative that reflects our values. This means more than coming up with the right words or frames for our political vision. It also means waging persistent, artistic and durable campaigns that repeat our narrative themes over and over to a wider public audience, until they are absorbed into the popular consciousness. We need to do this, not just to advance "right ideas," but to draw people in and to shift the terrain of what is politically possible.)*



INTEGRATING NARRATIVE STRATEGY



USE THIS TOOL TO: Consider how to integrate narrative and center values in crafting political strategy.



DIRECTIONS: Read through the example below and then use the worksheet to consider a values-centered approach to an issue or campaign you are currently working on.

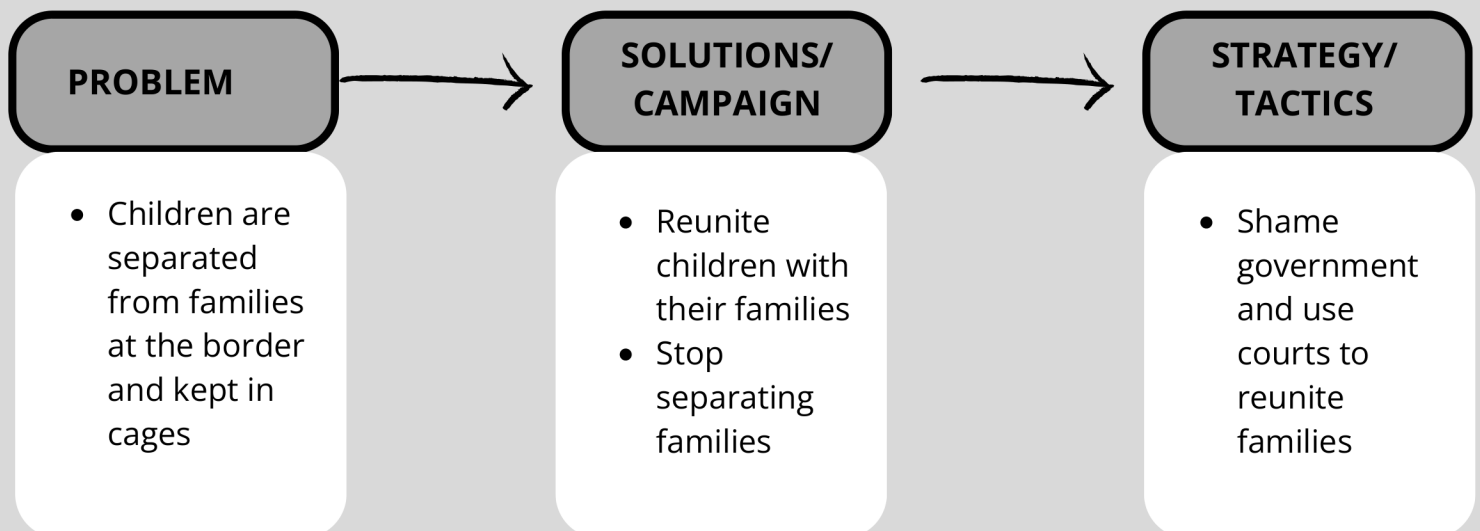
**Credit to Our Minnesota Future for this tool!*

Once we have gotten clear on our values and the narratives or stories we want to tell, we cannot be content to tactically cycle through them. Instead, we have to better integrate them into our overall strategy in order for them to be durable and to ultimately begin to shift the dominant narrative and replace it with an alternative narrative that reflects our values instead.

Once you have discussed your alternative narrative, use the values you identified and the worksheet below to think through a values centered approach to an existing campaign.

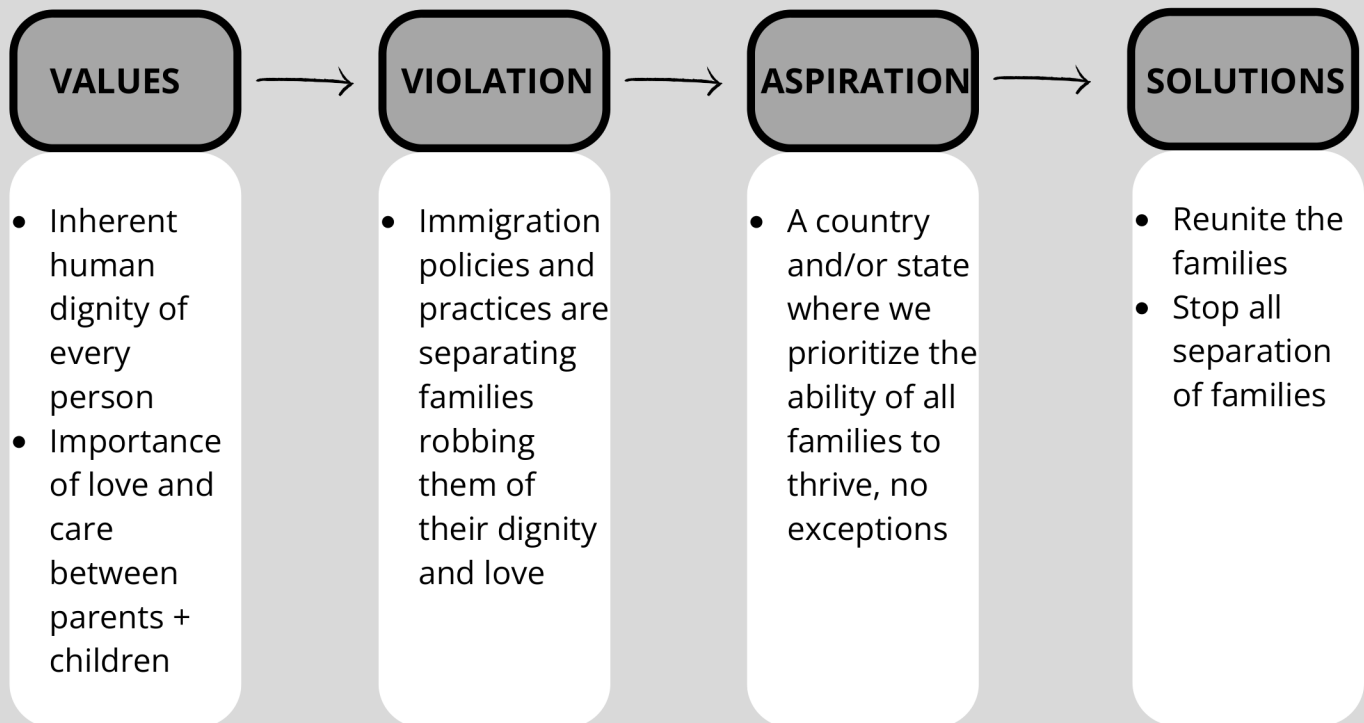
TRADITIONAL ORGANIZING MODEL

The traditional organizing model in labor and community organizing has focused on activating anger around a problem, identifying a potential solution and designing a winnable campaign around a narrowly defined demand. The example below shows how the traditional model would approach the situation where children are being separated from their families at the border.



VALUES-CENTERED ORGANIZING MODEL

The values-centered organizing model builds on the strengths of the traditional model by supplementing anger with hope. Instead of focusing exclusively on the problem, the values-centered model frames the problem as a violation of widely shared values. This model not only enables organizers to craft winnable campaigns, it also enables organizers to sequence campaigns within a longer arc that leads to deeper and deeper realization of shared values. The example below shows how the values-centered model might approach the situation where children are being separated from their families at the border.



CONSIDER

How might the values-centered organizing model might be applied to an issue we are currently working on? Use the worksheet on the following page to think it through.



**WINNABLE
CAMPAIGNS**

[Empty rounded rectangular box for notes]



SOLUTIONS

[Empty rounded rectangular box for notes]



ASPIRATION

[Empty rounded rectangular box for notes]



VIOLATION

[Empty rounded rectangular box for notes]



VALUES

[Empty rounded rectangular box for notes]

**4. FROM WINNING ONE-OFF ELECTIONS
TO DEVELOPING INDEPENDENT POLITICAL
INFRASTRUCTURE + CO-GOVERNING**



INDEPENDENT POLITICAL ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT CHART



USE THIS TOOL TO: Reflect on the stage of development of your Independent Political Organization (IPO).



DIRECTIONS:

- Within each row, circle the column or number that best describes your level of development.
- Then answer the questions in the final column.

“Infrastructure” is a wonky term from political science that essentially refers to a network of structures, organizations, or institutions. There is already a large and complex political infrastructure in place across the country, both at the national level and in many states. There are many different pieces of that infrastructure, and they play critical roles in everything from data management to research, and from securing electoral wins to actually governing.

By and large, this political infrastructure is controlled by and accountable to the established political parties, which is to say that, generally, existing political infrastructure is accountable to establishment candidates and their donors. While there may be some shared interests between people’s organizations and that infrastructure in the short term, in the long term, we know that their agenda is not the same as ours.

In order to advance our own agenda we know that we must increase the scale of influence of our political work. That means our organizations need to align with each other through shared political vehicles, like alignment tables, political action committees, legislative coordinating tables and even political parties, like the Working Families Party. But those alliances are only as strong as the organizations that participate in them. That’s why the first step to building greater political power is to build independent political organizations, or IPOs.

An IPO is an organization that has (1) has a base that it is accountable to, (2) an agenda to win policy or corporate campaigns, and (3) engages in electoral politics autonomously from major political parties in order to advance that agenda. The political influence of an IPO comes from its ability to primarily move people, as well as other resources like money, to affect the outcome of elections and advance its agenda.

| | 1= We are in the early stages | 3= We have a strategy to use elections to build our power but we're not there yet | 5= We have and continue to build independent political power | Questions to consider |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|--|---|
| Volunteers | We share opportunities to support candidates with our members. | Our members and leaders understand our electoral strategy and they mobilize with us to engage voters. | Our members and leaders help set our electoral strategy, and recruit others to mobilize and engage voters. | How can member-leaders help to scale up our organization's electoral work? |
| Brand + owning our victories | We are not credited with any candidate's victories. | Some political insiders think the electoral work we do is important. | We are publicly understood to be important electoral players and we are credited with electoral victories. | Who are targets or leaders that we want to know about our organization's electoral impact? |
| Voter base | We are not actively cultivating a voter base. | We aim to talk to the same voters (and more) in the same districts over time. | Voters in our key districts know who we are; their vote is impacted by our endorsement. | What base of voters do we need to organize to move our agenda forward? <i>(can be defined by district or geography, demographics, frequency of voting, etc)</i> |

| | 1= We are in the early stages | 3= We have a strategy to use elections to build our power but we're not there yet | 5= We have and continue to build independent political power | Questions to consider |
|----------------------------|--|---|--|---|
| Agenda and strategy | We get involved in elections if we get asked by a donor, ally, candidate or political party. | We get involved in elections to help us win on our immediate issue priorities. | Our electoral program priorities, including the candidates we endorsed, is guided by our long-term goals and set by our organization's members and leaders. | What specific issue or campaign demand are we trying to advance through our electoral work? |
| Data and tools | We don't have access to OR we don't keep track of our voter contact data. | We have access to voter contact data and use it to inform our organizing, issue-based and electoral programs. | We own and maintain our voter contact data and tools and use it to build power through our organizing, issue-based and electoral programs over time. | How could we use voter or issue data to target our campaigns more strategically? |
| Staff and expertise | We don't have staff who work on elections. | Our staff are excellent at some parts of electoral work (field, candidate recruitment, etc.). | Electoral politics is integrated into the work of most, if not all, of our staff. Our staff know how to win elections and are strong political strategists . | What is the next step our staff need to take to build their electoral skills? |

| | 1= We are in the early stages | 3= We have a strategy to use elections to build our power but we're not there yet | 5= We have and continue to build independent political power | Questions to consider |
|--|--|--|---|--|
| Electeds | We do not have access to elected officials and/or only work with ones whose agenda lines up with our agenda. | We have some elected officials who we helped win their races and who we can move to support our positions. | We have elected officials who carry the banner of our organization's agenda, are interdependent with our organizations, and rely on us to win elections. | Which elected leaders do we want to cultivate co-governing relationships with? |
| Coalitions & Institutional Allies | We don't participate with other organizations in political work. | We participate in electoral strategies created by the coalition(s) we are a part of - but we don't shape those strategies. | We work closely with key allies to develop and execute shared electoral and power building strategies. This may include forming our own political action committees, independent expenditures and political parties | What organizations do we want to most closely collaborate with? Why? |

As you look back on your assessment, take note of the following to make meaning and draw out implications for your work:

- The low end of the spectrum might mean you are not taking a power-building approach to electoral work. It's not deeply integrated into your power-build strategy.
- The middle of the spectrum might mean you are getting involved in elections to build power, but there is room to grow in-terms of independence, infrastructure and agenda setting.
- The higher end of the spectrum might mean you have a long-term power-building approach to electoral work, with the infrastructure, autonomy, and power to win and set the agenda.

Don't just default to doing this all on your own. There are some things that do indeed need to be done inside of specific organizations. But you should also consider how you can address gaps in coordination with your strategic allies and/or with a shared political vehicle, like the Working Families Party.

OUR RELATIONSHIP TO ELECTEDS: POWER SPECTRUM



USE THIS TOOL TO: Reflect on the power you have in relation to a specific elected official.

DIRECTIONS:

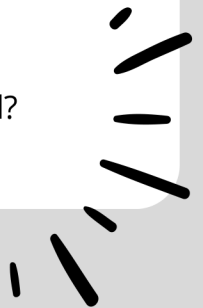


- Use the spectrum below to assess what resources you have to make a fire. With a particular elected official in mind, how much power your organization/alignment table has in relation to them.
- Once you have identified where you fall on the spectrum, use the questions that follow to discuss implications.
- *Pro tip!* To add complexity to this assessment, consider layering on the beyond red and blue spectrum on page 19 and/or an additional question of how much power the elected official has externally in the landscape as a whole.

The governing power framework outlines the ambition of co-governing with our electeds. While it is an important goal, it is also for many of us quite far away. It can be helpful to understand the levels between where we are at now and co-governing in order to help us chart out and navigate a path forward.

As organizers we can commonly mistake access to elected officials for power. We need to have a more critical and discerning eye and to consider not only our proximity to elected officials, but also our influence or power in relation to them. We often worry about being co-opted by elected officials and people in power. Having a more complex understanding of the types of relationships can help us to remain accountable to our base, while also thinking about the way in which to build with elected officials that grows our power and influence

So, how much power do we have? What resources do we have to get the fire started?





ON THE OUTSIDE

It's cold out and there's not much we can do.

We hear about a decision after it's made, likely at the same time that everyone else does.



ACCESS

We've got a couple sticks we can rub together.

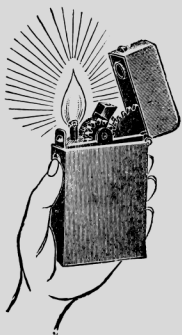
We get a call about a decision once it has already been made.



INFLUENCE

We are in a position to set some sparks and maybe get something slowly burning.

We are consulted before a decision is made, and decision makers ask our opinion.



SERIOUS INFLUENCE

We have some tools to really light it up!

The decision isn't made without first negotiating with us.



CO-GOVERNANCE

The fire is roaring!

We are the decider, or we are making the decision together with the decider.

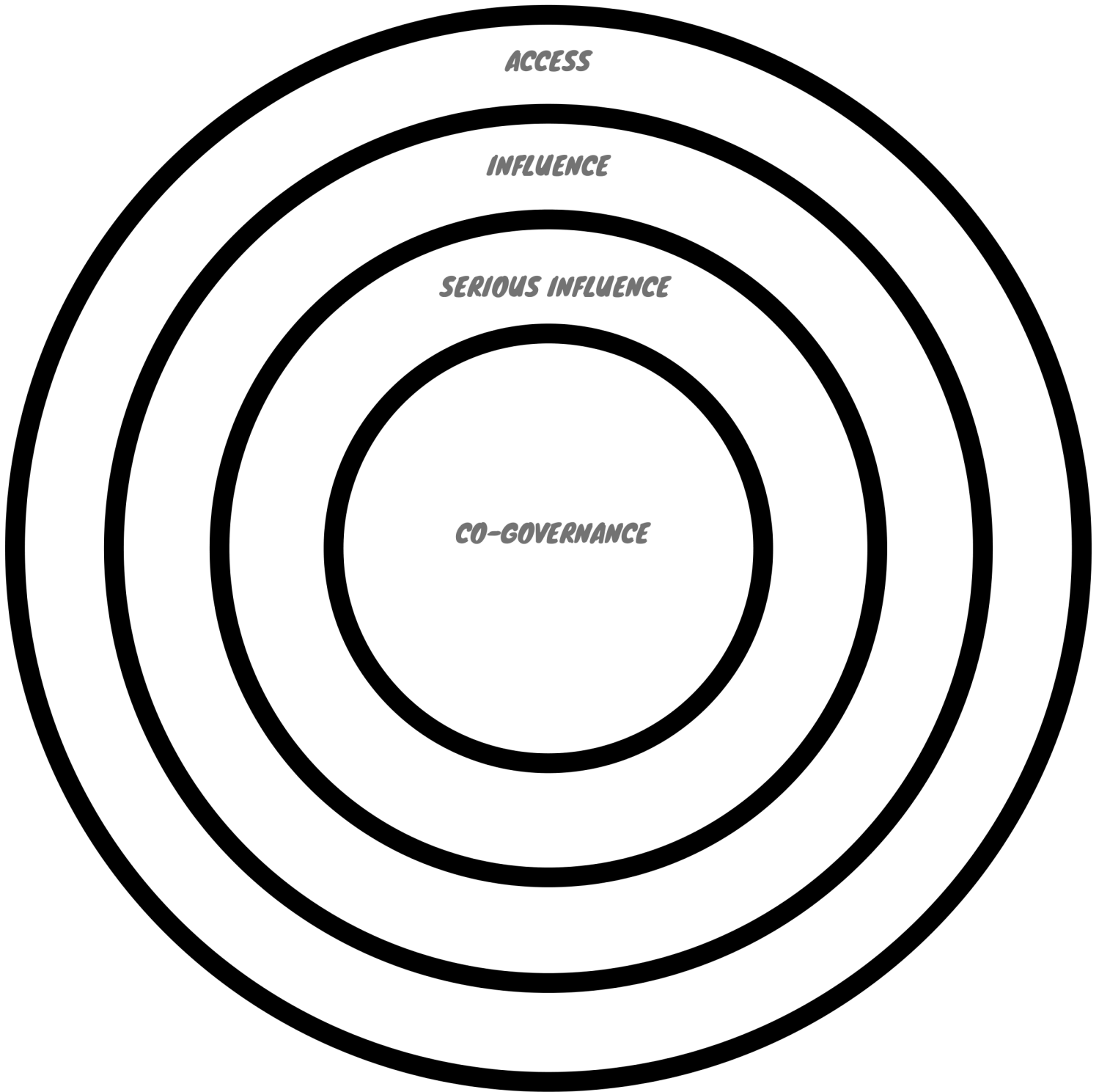
REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- How much power do we currently have?
- What does this mean for our work? What does it make possible? What remains difficult?
- How much power do we actually need to win the core elements of our agenda?
- What concrete steps could we take to level up our power?

OUR RELATIONSHIP TO ELECTEDS: POWER SPECTRUM

Place your elected officials on the following chart, based on how much power your organization or alignment table has in relation to them.

ON THE OUTSIDE



Credit to People's Action for this variation on this tool.

5. FROM NARROW BASE BUILDING TO BUILDING MAJORITARIAN POWER



BASE BUILDING ASSESSMENT



USE THIS TOOL TO: Take a closer look at and assess the strength of your base.



DIRECTIONS:

- Review the diagram on the following page from the Missouri Organizing and Voter Engagement Collaborative (MOVE)
- Work through the reflection questions at the bottom of this page to reflect honestly on your base and to think about how to move up their level of engagement.

A hard fact about our movement's approach to base building is that we do more mobilizing than organizing. As a result, we are nowhere near the scale of power we need to advance a governing agenda. We often struggle to hold onto our members, who are the basis of our organization's power. Another limit on many of our organizing models is that we have often prioritized developing leaders as representative voices for our communities, rather than aiming to develop leaders who are organizing others in their communities to act effectively for change. As a result, we have built organizations that can advocate to people in positions of formal power, but we have not built the constituency-wide power we need to shift the terrain of power itself.

While there is more to building majoritarian power, for many of our organizations, strengthening our base building is a critical place to start.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- 1.** Using the diagram on the following page, how many members/voters do we have at each level of the tornado?
- 2.** How many people are in the constituency that we organize? What percentage of the constituency can our organization reach?
- 3.** What type of engagement/which pathways drew our core leaders in?
- 4.** What opportunities can we forecast to create more opportunities/expand access to those pathways and move more people to deeper leadership?
- 5.** What systems do we have in place to track their participation and the progression of their engagement? How might those systems be strengthened?

MISSOURI ORGANIZING AND VOTER ENGAGEMENT COLLABORATIVE (MOVE): ORGANIZING TORNADO

Voter Engagement Strategies

Classic voter engagement strategies include door-door canvassing, phone calls (hand dials or the predictive dialer), mailers, literature drop, and initiative petition signature gathering. We can also talk to these voters using email, Facebook, other social media, and even mass communication strategies (like radio and TV).

Organizing Strategies

We organize these voters typically using face-to-face methods that can develop leadership, establish accountability, and drive greater capacity. Common strategies include 1-1 conversations, trainings, workshops, actions, research meetings, strategy meetings, etc. Getting to scale will require deepening the number of high level leaders in strategic geographies. Getting to scale will also require bridging the gap between activist voters and volunteers/members.



The group of voters you will “target” to try to talk to. You could have multiple universes of voters you want to talk to in different ways.

The group of voters you successfully directly engage in conversation, for example a conversation at the door or via phone. This does NOT include people you only mail or email.

The group of voters who name support for your issue priorities or values. It is important that support is narrow enough to be meaningful (i.e. support for workers may be too vague, instead try support for \$15/hr).

The group of voters who have taken action on an issue or campaign because of your contact with them. This could include making a patch-through phone call, sending an email, or writing a letter. This also includes petition signers.

This group may be classified differently for various organizations, but it is essentially the group that will “show up” sporadically for key events or calls to action but is not actively working to drive strategy or power building for the organization.

Leaders are defined differently in each MOVE organization, but this group comprises individuals who drive work and can be held accountable to key organizational goal and strategy priorities. Leaders can bring other people into the work.

Core leaders are able to negotiate power and strategy with core leaders of other organizations. Ideally, core leaders are able to develop teams of leaders who can exponentially engage other people.

ORGANIZING TORNADO: WHERE ARE WE TODAY?

**WHAT IS OUR UNIVERSE
OF VOTERS?**

**HOW MANY VOTERS CAN WE
DIRECTLY CONTACT?**

**HOW MANY VOTERS HAVE
BEEN SUPPORTIVE?**

**HOW MANY VOTERS
HAVE WE ACTIVATED?**

**HOW MANY VOLUNTEERS
MEMBERS DO WE HAVE?**

**HOW MANY LEADERS
DO WE HAVE?**

**HOW MANY
CORE
LEADERS?**

ORGANIZING TORNADO: WHAT WILL WE BUILD THROUGH THE NEXT ELECTION?

**WHAT IS THE UNIVERSE OF
VOTERS WE WILL TARGET?**

**HOW MANY VOTERS WILL WE
DIRECTLY CONTACT?**

**HOW MANY SUPPORTIVE
VOTERS WILL WE ID?**

**HOW MANY VOTERS
WILL WE ACTIVATE?**

**HOW MANY VOLUNTEERS /
MEMBERS WILL WE RECRUIT?**

**HOW MANY LEADERS
WILL WE DEVELOP?**

**HOW MANY
CORE
LEADERS?**



**Grassroots
Power Project
& Grassroots
Power Program**