

The People's Recipe

Yields: Power for the long haul + concrete changes along the way

Ingredients:

• Base-building

What: We build and strengthen our base by reaching new people and developing capacity with our existing base.

Examples: Petitions, postcards, photo petitions, surveys, organizing meetings, community meetings, door knocking, tabling at events, etc.

• Human Rights Framework

What: We use a principled framework that is based on human rights, as both an organizing tool and a tool for creating and evaluating policy.

Examples: Having organizing conversations based on our values, and the notion of rights rather than focusing on specific policy initiatives; a policy committee and other working groups that use the human rights framework (based on the principles of universality, equity, transparency, accountability, and participation) to evaluate and propose legislative policy and talking points

• Holding Power-Holders Accountable

What: We put direct pressure on those who make decisions that impact our rights (politicians, bosses, etc.)

Examples: candidate forums; accountability meetings with elected officials; direct action (such as the May 1st Rally, strikes, march on the boss); call in days; reclaiming political spaces (like packing the Statehouse).

• Winning the Battle of the Story

What: We recognize that successful movement organizing is more than just moving bodies, it's about moving hearts and minds, and changing the dominant stories that prop up current oppressive power structures. To do this, we tell our own stories and create our own media.

Examples: multi-media testimony collection (e.g. Put People First Stories Project); creating podcasts, videos, photo collections; communications and narrative trainings, Letters to the Editor, Editorial Board Meetings, spokesperson trainings.

• Grassroots Fundraising

What: Through a variety of means, our communities and members fund our movement (in other words, a broad base of donors, coming from our own communities)

Examples: monthly sustainers; fundraising events (house parties, auctions, etc.); fundraising drives (e.g. Race for Human Rights, dance-a-thon, etc.).

• Political Education

What: We believe we must develop a sophisticated understanding of the systems of oppression we face, how they were created and are maintained, and develop the and analysis to dismantle them and build more just systems grounded in human rights. We also must have an understanding of history so that we don't repeat mistakes or fail to harvest lessons from past social movements.

Examples: Weekend political education trainings; educational activities at organizing meetings; leadership retreats; collective study; movie nights with discussion.

• Solidarity and Movement Building

What: We build long term relationships with other organizations and networks across issue areas, to learn from each other, develop shared strategy and tactics and people power and capacity to change systems

Examples: Participating in national alliances; exchanges with organizations in other states; solidarity with workers' struggles; the Vermont People's Convention for Human Rights.

This People's Recipe was developed by the Vermont Worker' Center through our Health Care is a Human Right campaign and the Put People First campaign, and by learning from other people's organizations and movements.