



SECTION

**5a**

# GETTING STARTED ON YOUR FIRST CAMPAIGN

## IN THIS SECTION, YOU WILL

- Develop a first campaign goal to create concrete change in your community
- Start thinking about how you use a campaign to grow your team and gain supporters.



This section should get you started on designing a first campaign.

Once you have some experience working in the community with decision-makers to effect concrete change that is a step toward a transition off fossil fuels to renewable energy, you will be ready to delve into a more comprehensive campaign design process.

See Section 5b) for guidelines on that more advanced level of campaign planning.

## **I. HOW TO CHOOSE YOUR FIRST CAMPAIGN GOAL**

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One of the most powerful ways to grow your numbers and get public recognition is to achieve something tangible in your community that wouldn't have happened if you hadn't pushed for it. For example:

- Moms in Lexington, Massachusetts learned that a proposed solar field needed approval from the town's government. Not all Town Selectman were in support. The mothers organized to educate the community, meet with elected officials, turn out supporters and testify at a key hearing, resulting in unanimous support for the solar field. Moms in two other Massachusetts towns faced a similar opportunity and tipped their municipal government in support of renewables.
- Moms in Cambridge, Massachusetts learned that their municipal electricity was provided by tar sands exploiting giant TransCanada. They worked with their city councilors to pass a resolution breaking the municipal contract with TransCanada and replacing it with 100% renewable energy.
- Mothers in a number of Massachusetts towns took up the call of ally Mass Energy, a non-profit dedicated to creating new renewable energy in the state, to get their municipal governments to adopt "Community Choice Aggregation" (CCA). A CCA plan allows municipalities to use their bulk purchasing power to negotiate an electricity contract with the provider of their choice, often increasing the percentage of renewables in their energy mix. This required educating voters to create political support for the initiative, then working with elected officials to pass local legislation.

In all these cases, there was:

1. An existing opportunity to increase the town's renewable energy supplies and displace the use of fossil fuels.
2. A elected-official "champion" or an allied group to show moms new to this work the "the ropes."

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3. A short-term time frame for action like a public hearing where the decision would be made or a town meeting vote.
4. Moms who were ready to show up in support and testify in favor of the change.

In some cases, other Mothers Out Front towns had successfully undertaken a similar campaign (for example, Community Choice Aggregation). New teams drew upon their knowledge and resources to replicate the campaign in their community. They didn't "reinvent the wheel!"

Moms in these communities came upon these opportunities by talking to allied groups, reading the newspaper, and talking to elected officials. And then they just jumped in. Through this process they developed relationships with key decision-makers and allies, and developed a reputation for "getting things done" – which paved the way for more ambitious campaigns.

So jump in! It's the best way to learn and start having an impact.



## **II. CRITERIA FOR CHOOSING YOUR FIRST CAMPAIGN GOAL**

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As you consider possible campaign opportunities, review each one with your team by asking yourselves these simple questions. The answers will help you choose an effective goal. Would this opportunity:

- Result in switching energy in your community from dirty fossil fuels to clean renewables?
- Provide an opportunity for moms to play a role in achieving the goal?
- Provide an opportunity to leverage moms' voices and call to protect all children against the ravages of fossil fuels and climate change?
- Appeal to other moms in your community and allow you to engage them?
- Have an impact that can be achieved in a timely manner?
- Offer a chance to get press coverage and raise the visibility of your group?
- Demonstrate that there is political support for moving away from our reliance on fossil fuels and increase demand for renewable energy?

Once you and your team members have identified a campaign goal, you could try filling out this survey form. This could help you flesh out your thinking and/or identify whether there are other possible aspects to consider about the basic components of your campaign.

### **III. USING THIS FIRST CAMPAIGN TO BUILD YOUR PEOPLE POWER AND POLITICAL CREDIBILITY**

Once you decide what to work on, consider how you can use your campaign to:

1. Add new members to your Community Team and grow your base of volunteers and supporters. What events and outreach efforts can you organize that will provide volunteer opportunities for new moms?
2. Introduce Mothers Out Front to elected officials and other community leaders and build relationships that will help you in the future.
3. Increase your knowledge of the issue and the community so you can take on a more ambitious goal in the future.
4. Increase public visibility of Mothers Out Front in your community.





## **IV. PLAN TO EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATE ABOUT YOUR FIRST CAMPAIGN TO RAISE YOUR VISIBILITY AND HAVE THE BIGGEST IMPACT.**

Think about how you will communicate about your effort to the community-at-large, other moms, and decision-makers you want to support, influence and “get on your side.” Asking these basic questions will help. (For a more thorough step-by-step guide for developing a comprehensive communications plan, see Advanced section of Section 5.)

Consider the following:

- WHO should be given specific information?
- WHAT information will be shared?
- WHEN should that information be delivered?
- HOW will you deliver the information?

Who is your audience (and how does your message and the way you deliver it change)?

- Volunteers
- Potential volunteers
- Decision-makers
- Press
- General public

What is your key message (depending on your audience)?



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- Why does this issue matter to Mothers Out Front?
- What 1-2 key points do you want people to remember? (Each message should have 3-5 talking points.)

Messages will be delivered to decision-makers, the media, volunteers, and the general public. Knowing your talking points for each message will help volunteers effectively deliver the message whether in written or spoken form. Here are some tips to develop good talking points:

- A talking point should be clear, direct and easily transferrable to different voices. It should be easy to personalize, or “make your own.”
- It can be used for in-person and written communications.
- The message should be clear and accessible. It should highlight what is unique about Mothers Out Front.

What materials will you develop to communicate your message? (Specific guidance on how to develop these can be found in the Communications Folder of this Toolkit.)

- Printed materials: flyers, brochures, stickers, postcards, banners
- Call scripts: volunteers, legislators
- Website: event posting, project information
- E-mail: monthly updates, action alerts
- Social media: Tweets, Facebook posts, blog entries
- Photos, video
- Press Advisory vs Press Release

For specific ideas of actions to take and how to organize your work, go to Section 6: Taking Action!