

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING BASICS

Community Organizing Basics is a two-day, interactive training with staff and leaders of community-based organizations from throughout the city, facilitated by organizers/former organizers and social justice activists. Using popular education techniques, we will establish a working definition of community organizing; review essential components of organizing; compare organizing to other approaches to addressing community problems; and explore the concept of power. We will review examples of campaigns with organizers from the field. This training includes a hands-on field experience—we will engage in outreach activities to practice organizing skills as we directly support the work of a local organization. Though the training is primarily skills-based, throughout the two-day session we will explore and draw from a range of topics relevant in the field, such as the relationship between local work and broad-based movements for justice.

Objectives

By the end of this two-day session, participants will have:

- Compared a working definition of organizing to their own experiences.
- Practiced applying different approaches to solving community problems.
- Considered how they think about power and looked at some ways it manifests in society.
- Examined how organizations build their base and move it to action in a campaign.
- Reviewed how to get names and contact information in outreach.
- Practiced a core outreach/base building skill.
- Solidified their learning from a field activity.
- Participants will have reflected on their learning and applied it to their own situations.
- Participants will have considered the bigger picture in which they do their work, and how to support their own goals for continued development in organizing.

Advanced preparation required

Each organization will be asked to fill out an assessment form. Keep in mind that this is a basic course. There is an assumption that the people coming are not expert community organizers but, organizers new to community organizing, community leaders and activists with an interest in doing organizing, doing it more effectively or integrating community organizing with their service delivery. Organizations are limited to sending one representative.

Co-Presenters and facilitators

Joan Minieri is the co-author of *Tools for Radical Democracy: How to Organize for Power in Your Community* (Jossey-Bass 2007), a how-to-book about organizing that is widely used in both academic and community settings. Joan has a long background as an organizer, in starting-up and leading organizations, as well as in writing and teaching about community organizing. She was a co-founder of Community Voices Heard (CVH) and is a Solidarity Board member with CVH. She is a Senior Fellow with the Research Center for Leadership in Action at NYU/Wagner where she also currently co-teaches a field-based course in advocacy skills. She received a Union Square Award for her work with the New York City Organizing Support Center and a Leadership for a Changing World Award as part of a team of staff and leaders from CVH. Joan is also a former Charles H. Revson Fellow at Columbia University.

Henry Serrano is the Senior Organizer at Community Voices Heard (CVH), where he has been on staff since 2001. In addition to his own organizing work, supervises and guides the work of our other organizers. He is also responsible for developing and leading our Voter Engagement Project. His early work for Community Voices Heard was as the organizer working on winning implementation of the Transitional Jobs Program and organizing Parks Opportunity Program workers. His previous organizing experience includes 2 years of neighborhood-based grassroots organizing in Brooklyn for ACORN on issues including housing, education, and neighborhood services.

John Blasco joined the FIERCE staff in January 2009 as an organizer after over a year of being an active member. John graduated from high school in New York City in 2008 where he helped to coordinate his school's gay/straight alliance. He has also been active in HIV/AIDS peer education and prevention outreach since he was 17 and lives in the Lower East Side. John is currently the Lead Organizer of FIERCE.

Sandra Killelt is a leader at Community Voices Heard, where she is a Solidarity Board member and co-chairs the Community Voices Heard Power 501 (c) 4 Board. Sandra serves on the Task Force for Racial Equity at New York City Children's Services (ACS); the Parent Advisory Work Group at New York City Children Services; and is a recent board member of the Child Welfare Organizing Project. She is a member of the Undoing Racism Group to organize and undo structural racism in systems that affect communities of color, and is a former member of the Human Resource Administration Advisory Group under Commissioner Doar. Since getting involved in 1998 as a leader at Community Voices Heard, Sandra has attended the World Social Forums in Brazil and Venezuela and the U.S. Social Forum in Atlanta,

Georgia, experiences that allowed her to speak globally about issues that affect all of us here at home. She is a single mother of two boys and works as a Parent Advocate in the field of child welfare.

Cherylynn Mena is an active member of FIERCE. She joined in June 2010 and she quickly became part of the active membership and takes part in the outreach team and campaign steering committee. Cherylynn is currently also the Treasurer of Da Urban Butterflies; a young women of color leadership development project. She is currently a senior at St. Johns University where she is working towards achieving an undergraduate degree in Psychology.

Carmen Pineiro is the Sustainable Communities Campaign organizer at Community Voices Heard. The project engages the long time residents of Harlem. It brings together low- and moderate income people to address all issues that affect the community such as housing, workforce development, job creation, and anything that is essential for a vibrant and thriving community.

Damaris Reyes is the Executive Director of Good Old Lower East Side (GOLES) and has been with the organizations since 2000. She is a lifelong resident of the Lower East Side and has been involved in community organizing and housing issues both locally and nationally for more than a decade. She sits on the Boards of the Pratt Center for Community Development (Advisory) and the Association for Neighborhood Housing and Development. Reyes is the recipient of the 2006 New York Women's Foundation's Helen La Kelly Hunt Neighborhood Leadership, the 2008 Urban Agenda Visionary Award, and is the proud winner of the 2009 Jane Jacobs Medal from the Rockefeller Foundation and the Municipal Arts Society.

Jeremy Saunders has been organizing in New York City & state since 2001. He has worked at ACORN, Community Voices Heard and the North West Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition. He is currently the lead organizer for VOCAL New York, formerly the NYC AIDS Housing Network (NYCAHN), which organizes low-income New Yorkers living with HIV/AIDS; formerly incarcerated as well as active and former drug users.

Program Format

The workshop will be held on Friday, April 1 from 9:00am to 5:00pm and Saturday, April 2 from 10:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Who Should Attend: Board members, staff and/or leaders of organizations that want to use community organizing more effectively in their work and who are grantees of Daphne Foundation, New York Foundation, the New York Women's Foundation, North Star Fund, Stonewall Community Foundation, or Union Square Awards.

When: **April 1, 9:00am – 5:00pm**

Location: New York Foundation
10 East 34th Street, 10th Floor
Between Fifth Avenue and Madison Avenue, Manhattan

When: **April 2, 10:00am – 5:30pm**

Location: Community Voices Heard
116 East 106th Street, 3rd Floor
Between Park Avenue and Lexington Avenue, Manhattan

How to register: **FAX or EMAIL** the registration form and assessment by **Friday, March 25, 2011** to Isabel Rivera, New York Foundation
Fax: (212) 594-5918
Email: irivera@nyf.org

For more information: Contact:
Kevin Ryan, New York Foundation at 212-594-8009 or kryan@nyf.org

SPECIAL NOTE: Your fee for the workshop will be paid in full by Daphne Foundation, New York Foundation, the New York Women's Foundation, North Star Fund, Stonewall Community Foundation, or Union Square Awards, but **you must be registered and complete the pre-assessment to attend. Each organization is allowed to bring two people to the training.**