

Proposal: Western Wisconsin Organizing Cooperative Victory Lap

Kevin Kane, July 2016

Just a handful of months into the Citizen Action Organizing Cooperative of Western Wisconsin's life we have a lot to be proud of. A growing organization that has achieved victory as a major partner on the Eau Claire County Living Wage Ordinance, we have also helped to promote a progressive world view through getting positive media coverage on issues ranging from payday lending to Family Medical leave and more!

As the Organizing Cooperative model begins to spread to new areas - we are hopeful for Green Bay, another in Southeast Wisconsin and another TBA - we want to continuously highlight the model you all have developed that blends city, suburb and rural communities as something worth emulating.

To do that we need to do some vital house cleaning. We need another 100 members paying \$20 a month to be truly sustainable (to make up for those who pledged but never paid, whose credit cards went bad, or who paid one time but weren't followed up with), another 38 to begin to pay for 10% of my time (everything Citizen Action has done thus far is in-kind because we believe in this, but in the meantime I have to reallocate resources and my time from other projects), we need to have a program of deepening relationships one-on-one and mapping all of our current members, we need an election plan for the next 3 months, and we need to finish the deliverables for the two grants we have agreed to (payday and family medical leave). This is somewhat serious, as by November if we don't change anything there won't be enough monthly revenue coming in to keep Jeff full time.

But the good news is that we are in a strong position to do it. The choice was made to focus on living wage and come back to this, and I believe that was the right call, but now is the time to get the house in order. We are on the wave of our current Living Wage victory and we have proven that we can work on real, local, projects. Which is why I propose the following "Victory Lap" effort to accomplish the above and build off of our living wage ordinance instead of focusing on what we're behind on.

As I am tasked with providing day-to-day administrative direction to the organizers, I propose the following for you to consider. If you approve, as you are the deciding body, I will work with Jeff closely over the next three months to accomplish these.

Victory Lap: By the end of October:

1. Launch a new organizing drive to begin in August to recruit ²⁰~~150~~ new members and ²⁰~~70~~ old members whose payments are overdue to cover Jeff, Kevin and create a small surplus for steering committee to utilize.

2. Hold two community events with 9to5 Staff in Chippewa Falls and Wausau with 15 people each to achieve the goals of the grant and receive the 2nd half of the funding (+\$750)
3. Collect 150 pledge cards in person (might be 100, I forget) to help 9to5 achieve their other grant and receive the second \$500 check for your co-op from them.
4. Through a combination of online petitions and offline cards, collect another ~350 comments on the payday issue to make sure we don't have to return the \$4,000.
5. Personally reach out to every member of the Western Co-op by phone to deepen relationships, see what they are concerned with, if they'd host/attend a local event and have heard of all we've already done. Attempt to meet 1-1 with as many as possible before November.
6. Set up small group meetings (at least one) in every county where members live in consultation with a local member to discuss living wage victory, what we could do next and build local networks. Make sure each event personally invites at least 10 more people by phone from the county who are not co-op members but are in Citizen Action's email database.
7. Schedule an all-member assembly for mid September or early October with plenty of heads up to discuss the Co-op, celebrate victories, energize the group, welcome next members, and prepare for the final election GOTV push. GOAL: 70+ total attendees.
8. Work with members and Citizen Action staff to develop an electoral program that engages members beyond Eau Claire to organize locally. Especially explore connection with anti-outsourcing election issue that Milwaukee Co-op is seeking to work on with Western co-op
9. Ensure that 100% of all upcoming membership meetings are posted online on Citizen Action's upcoming events Web page and event map for all to see.
10. Schedule 1-3 trainings for members with at least 3 weeks notice on (a.) Relational Community Organizing, (b.) Messaging/Community Theory, (c.) Election Best Practice, especially Deep Canvassing, (d.) Online Organizing/Social Media, or whatever else is requested. Led by Citizen Action staff with at least 15 members at each.
11. Work with Kevin to develop a system to engage hot leads discovered through online organizing/social media/petitions/etc and personally event them to join the co-op within a week of identifying them, and ideally within 48 hours.
12. Identify local elected official champions in 3-5 localities that would publicly support exploring the introduction of living wage ordinances following Eau Claire county
13. Work with Citizen Action staff and a co-op leader to develop an op-ed that builds off of living wage victory and makes messaging connect between living wage and other areas of economic justice that must come next - ending outsourcing, addressing minimum wage, stop rigging of the economy, etc
14. Work with members to submit 20+ letters to the editor together with existing writing projects Joe Plouff has been involved with to make similar living wage/wider economic justice struggle mentioned above.
15. Build a team of 2-10 members that will help Jeff with the recruitment, lead generation and event turnout