

ANTI-ALEC ORGANIZING PRIMER

PART I – FORMING A UNITED FRONT

Anti-ALEC organizing is only as effective as its ability to make legislators feel heat for being a part of it. To those ends, these organizing efforts need to be local and very much owned by you – all efforts should reflect the uniqueness of your community. In this sense, bringing together other like-minded citizens in your area to organize against ALEC is the only way to make an effective impact.

Before jumping right in and forming an Anti-ALEC chapter. You should first check and see if there is already Anti-ALEC organizing taking place in your community – organizations like Sierra Club, Common Cause, and the NAACP, for example, may have chapters nearby engaging in Anti-ALEC organizing that you can join. If there isn't an existing group near to you, it's time to form one.

HOW TO FORM A GROUP

- I. **Do Your Research** – Take a look at what groups are already active in your area and create a list of local organizations and activists who are affected by ALEC's agenda. Call them and ask if they are already familiar with ALEC and whether they are already engaged in any Anti-ALEC work. From there, you will be able to decide whether a new group is necessary or whether you and your friends can work with pre-existing groups to take on ALEC's power locally.
- II. **Don't Do it Alone** – Once you've made a list, reached out to folks, figured out who is doing what, you need to bring some friends along. **It's critical that you have a few folks working together as a leadership team.** Things just work better when you have a group pulling together to do the work. By enlisting a few dedicated friends from across the community, you'll be able to distribute the work evenly to make sure everything that needs to get done, does get done.
- III. **Use the Internet** – Once you and your friends have set up a leadership team, its time to expand the circle and reach out to your social media network. You and the other leaders should send a message to everyone you know letting them now you are starting an exciting new project to take on ALEC's power. You should also post about it publicly.
- IV. **Getting Everyone Together** – Once you have a list of people interested, it's time to organize a kickoff meeting! Bring everyone who was interested to sit down in a room together to talk about things. The single most important thing to remember is that, much like dating, first impressions matter. This will be the first time that anyone has a chance to think about and be a part of what you are trying to do. Your first meeting will define the way people think and feel about your efforts. If your meeting is organized, inclusive, fun, informative, and mindful of others' time, people will be excited to join you and keep coming back.
- V. **Agreeing on Principles** – This is your chance to say what your group stands for. We recommend two guiding principles:
 1. **ALEC has too much power in your state – your local politicians MUST oppose ALEC's harmful agenda.**
 2. **ALEC affects everyone – every single constituent in your legislator's district must know that they are a part of ALEC's anti-democratic political establishment.**
- VI. **The First Meeting** – The first meeting should only be an hour and while there is a lot to get through, it's important to do so respectfully and never assume knowledge. Folks who attend the first meeting will be at different levels of understanding, either on ALEC or politics in general. Do not let folks talk in political jargon and remember to include members who aren't asking questions or speaking up. Don't hesitate to ask people to clarify their points and don't be afraid to point out that some in the room might be new to this fight.

VII. Defining the Jobs – Everyone in the room will have different interests and different skills. It's important that folks skills and interest match up to what needs to be done as much as possible. Some folks aren't natural communicators and would rather set things up or manage deadlines, others are powerful speakers who will be great to have knock doors or talk to press. **The key to successful organizing is being able to play to your team's strengths through sustained and committed action.**

1. It's helpful to consider jobs in 'Buckets' as a general organizing principle. The job of the co-leaders isn't to tell others what to do per se, its to manage each "bucket" and ensure that each bucket is working well with the others, that deadlines are met and folks feel like they are contributing to the success of the group.
2. Potential 'Buckets', other than Leadership, include: Communications, Logistics, Scheduling and Organizing.

VIII. BE MINDFUL OF OTHERS' TIME – When thinking through what needs to be done, remember that this is a committed group of friends and volunteers with lives and jobs and needs. Jobs should be structured so that they can be accomplished in small amounts over the course of the week, much like a hobby is something that you dedicate a small amount of time to each week to build or create something bigger.

IX. Setting Up Group Communication – The easiest way to distribute information and foster a sense of community is to set up a Google Group, Slack channel, group text, or another online, real-time way for everyone to chat with one another. It's important to set that at the end of the first meeting so folks understand that they will be getting regular emails (or texts) from everyone.

X. Expanding Your Circle – One of the very first priorities of your new group will be to have volunteers in your group out to their networks as well. Part of good organizing is to keep recruiting more and more people who might be interested in helping. Even if folks decide they aren't interested, you will still be educating them, showing them that you care about something important which will make them feel like they should care.

REMEMBER: ALEC'S AGENDA AFFECTS ALL, YOUR ANTI-ALEC WORK SHOULD TOO.