

Rapid Response Network (RRN) Organizing

6 Steps: Build the Power of Many in your Workplace & Community

What is a Rapid Response Network?

A Rapid Response Network is an organizing committee and rapid response team of labour and community activists that deliver prompt solidarity actions in response to cuts and privatization efforts by Doug Ford's PC government.

What does a Rapid Response Network do?

- Activates and connects with local labour unions, rank-and-file members, community allies, family, friends, neighbours and the general public;
- Plans and executes local actions, canvasses, and outreach to the public;
- Identifies and recruits new volunteers and leaders from workplaces and communities;
- Builds local contact lists to move people to act and reach the more than 400,000 swing voters and 1.6 million people across Ontario who voted in the last election; and
- Coordinates with the OFL central campaign as well as driving solidarity and helping support affiliate and ally campaigns.

How do I set up a Rapid Response Network?

Step 1: Call a meeting

Work with your local labour councils to call for an RRN meeting. Invite labour and community to attend. In your meeting, express urgency by highlighting the issues you plan to act on. Meetings are an opportunity to inform activists about what's at stake, identify and select organizing strategies, and build local energy and momentum for the campaign.

Use digital tools to bring people together, not just face-to-face but also remotely via webinars and video conferencing calls for greater access.

Make sure new volunteers sign up to be RRN members at www.powerofmany.ca.

Step 2: Map your workplace and community

At your RRN meeting, facilitate a discussion with participants about what relationships people have in their workplaces and community. Make sure to identify what rank-and-file members, local union leaders and community members could be involved. Make a plan to reach out to them and bring them to the next RRN meeting.

Step 3: Define the victory and your goals

Define what a victory for your network is. The ultimate victory is stopping Ford's agenda and of course, winning better conditions for workers in Ontario. In the meantime, what does it take to get there and how do we measure that? What are some achievable, easy to measure goals that we can set?

For example, a clear victory is growing participation in events and actions – whether it's at a phonebank, a canvass/outreach effort or rally outside of your local PC MPP office. Growing numbers even by just a few people is something to celebrate.

All these steps build the movement we need to achieve the end goal.

Be sure to review your goals at your next meeting so you can celebrate the wins or learn about what can be done better next time.

Step 4: Plan an action

Choose your target. Think strategically about what target will make the biggest impact. Is it an MPP office? Do you know where the PC MPP will be speaking that day? Be mindful not to alienate the public – a high-road action that does not attack the individual but their position on the issue is important.

Identify your audience and spokespeople for your action. Who do we need to win over in order to stop cuts or achieve a victory? With the PCs holding the majority in the legislature, it will be hard to convince them to change their minds on their corporate agenda unless they feel threatened that they won't win the next election, or that they are alienating the voters that put them in power. Influencing public opinion on cuts and attacks is key. The public is our audience. How do we win the public?

For example, on cuts or privatization of health care, make sure the spokespeople for the action are those impacted by the cuts – frontline workers such as nurses or PSWs are experts in care and are trusted by the public. They can speak to the effects that cuts or privatization will have on quality of care. Patients affected by cuts to healthcare can also be powerful speakers.

Create strong messaging. To win, we need the public's support. For example, on potential cuts to full-day kindergarten, getting parents to be outraged is important. How we frame the issue matters. A slogan like "Cuts to schools hurt kids" speaks to what parents care about.

Be creative. Effective actions are creative and fun. For example, with attacks on full-day kindergarten, you could gather small children and parents to fill the office of a PC MPP and record the action or have a Facebook Live event to broadcast it.

Be visible. Make *handmade* signs and big banners with a clear message so it is visible to the public. Invite the media. Take lots of pictures.

Do turnout. Organize phonebanks and use digital tools like Call Hub to encourage activists to call through your lists and your base. Use social media like Facebook to create events for your actions.

Build your lists. We need contacts to organize and increase our reach. Use a database program to keep track of your lists, manage them and give access to organizers and activists to use for mobilizing. After every outreach action, or when collecting petitions, recruit volunteers to help enter data into your database.

Step 5: Take Action!

Actions should grow in number and escalate. Here is a list of potential actions you can take:

- Visit an MPP office with 5 or 6 people to send a message. Organize a delegation with community, religious organizations, and/or people affected by the issue.
- With careful planning, occupy a PC MPP office with a group of people.
- Rally in front of a PC MPP office or other location with 10 or more people. Make it as big as you like. Make sure to do some chanting!
- Drop a banner over a busy highway/intersection. You'll get a lot of honks!
- With a large enough crowd, take over a busy intersection with a large banner during rush hour. Bring bullhorns, signs, pots and pans. Make noise.
- Do outreach at busy transit stops, give out flyers, collect signatures on a petition and stick posters around the area.
- In the workplace - do a lunch and learn, pass out leaflets at entrances, do a button action or wear t-shirts with your message, organize a delegation to management, sign petitions. With greater planning, do an action outside of your workplace.

Step 6: Meet again and debrief

Regular meetings to debrief on your actions help build momentum and accountability. This is where you can see where things went well or could improve in terms of turnout, messaging and the effectiveness of your efforts.

Plan your next move as soon as you can.

Connect your Rapid Response Network with others around Ontario.

List your actions and events on:

Powerofmany.ca