



A Campaign Approach to Ending the  
Practice of Prosecuting Youth as Adults

START-UP GUIDE

The Campaign for Youth Justice (CFYJ) is a national advocacy organization committed to ending the prosecution and incarceration of youth under the age of 18 in the adult criminal justice system. We partner with states to pass legislation that (1) keeps youth in the juvenile justice system, where they receive age-appropriate services; and (2) protects youth who are charged as adults, ensuring they are protected while in custody. Since we opened in 2005, 27 states have passed more than 40 pieces of legislation limiting the prosecution of youth as adults.

*A Campaign Approach to Ending the Practice of Prosecuting Youth as Adults* is intended to provide advocates with a step by step guide to getting started and building a successful campaign.

Why should states launch a campaign? Changing the status quo is always hard. The change we seek – getting juveniles out of the adult court system – is especially large, both politically and culturally. A couple of polite phone calls or letters and a meeting or two with someone influential will probably not be enough. (If it is, great! Do it.) For the most part, affecting this kind of big change will require prolonged persistent pushing from multiple directions – a campaign.

This guide is meant as a primer to help state advocates get campaign-ready. For more in-depth support, state advocates can contact CFYJ for technical assistance and support.

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## The Issue: Why Start a Campaign in Your State?

There are many reasons to start a campaign in your state. An estimated 200,000 youth are tried, sentenced, or incarcerated as adults every year across the United States. Most of the youth prosecuted in adult court are charged with non-violent offenses. Youth of color are over-represented at all stages in the justice system, including those prosecuted as adults.

**Treating Kids as Adults Doesn't Make Communities Safer.** Research shows that young people who are kept in the juvenile justice system are less likely to re-offend than young people who are transferred into the adult system. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, youth who are transferred from the juvenile court system to the adult criminal justice system are approximately 34% more likely than youth retained in the juvenile court system to be re-arrested for violent or other crime.

**Treating Kids as Adults Is Bad for Kids.** Youth housed in adult jails and prisons are at a higher risk of violence and suicide than those in the juvenile justice system. For example, youth housed in adult jails are 36 times more likely to commit suicide than are youth housed in juvenile detention facilities. Youth sentenced as adults receive an adult criminal record, and as a result are often denied employment and educational opportunities, and can be barred from receiving student financial aid.

**Disproportionate Impact.** Youth of color are disproportionately impacted by policies that require the prosecution of youth in adult court and placement in adult jails and prisons.

**Research Strongly Supports Calls for Reform.** Research has definitively shown that sending youth to adult criminal court actually increases crime. Major research institutions, the US Department of Justice, the Centers for Disease Control, and heads of national professional associations and organizations have all stated unequivocally that prosecuting youth in adult court does not work.

**The Dividing Line.** The point at which youth are placed in the adult criminal justice system is a major dividing line between whether our society "gives up" on a child or not. Essentially, when a child is placed in adult criminal court we are saying as a society that this young person is beyond rehabilitation, that this child is not worth investing in, that this child's life is not worth saving. It is a "point of no return" as most state laws do not allow for sending children back to the juvenile justice system once they are under adult court jurisdiction.

**Long-term Negative Consequences.** The consequences of prosecution in adult criminal court for youth are life-long. When sentenced in adult court, children are precluded by law from participation in rehabilitative programs and receive a permanent criminal record. These children bear this scarlet letter for the rest of their lives – a letter that is virtually impossible to erase, following them whenever they apply for employment, education, or other opportunities.

**You Can Win!** In the past five years, some states have made major changes to their policies and nearly a third of all states enacted incremental changes of some form. This echoes what public opinion, brain science, and even the Supreme Court have recognized: kids are different. Recent polls show that the public strongly supports investing in rehabilitative approaches to help youth, not prosecuting them in adult court or placing them in adult jails and prisons.

## Key Features of Successful Campaigns

In our experience working with states around the country, we have noted a number of key features in successful campaigns. Most important are the five core functions of a campaign: Organizing & Direct Action, Coalition Building & Outreach, Media & Communications, Research, and Policy Advocacy & Lobbying. These functions mutually reinforce one another, making the campaign stronger, and all of them should be featured in your campaign if you want to achieve sustainable legislative wins.



In addition to the five core functions of an established campaign, here's our "top ten" list of components of a successful campaign:

### Clear Goals

Campaigns often use the "SMART" goal test: Is your goal Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Targeted? If your big goal is longer-term and more challenging, it is important to develop SMART medium and short-term goals, so that your campaign can accumulate wins and gain momentum. For example, you might launch a "Raise the Age" campaign with the overall goal of increasing the age of juvenile court jurisdiction to 18, with shorter-term goals of increasing the age just for those charged with misdemeanors, or packing a committee hearing room with supporters, or getting a major newspaper editorial endorsement. Or you might launch a "Jail Removal" campaign to end the practice of housing youth pending trial in adult jails, with the intermediate goal of ending the practice for those charged with non-violent offenses. Whatever you decide, it is vital to ensure that your goals are clearly spelled out from the start.

### Established Timeframe

The campaign should set a reasonable timeframe in which it is trying to achieve its goal. We find that most campaigns take years to achieve bigger goals, so plan accordingly and be patient! Many campaigns target one to two years for a short term planning and three to five years for a long term goal of legislative change.

### **“Heart” Involvement**

Youth, parents, and families most directly affected by transfer policies as well as allied individuals, organizations, and networks should be the heart of your campaign. Their stories and experiences help ensure that your goals are on target and meet the most pressing needs of impacted youth. Their stories are often the most impactful for motivating lawmakers and others to take action.

### **Identity**

Your campaign is an independent vehicle, solely focused on its established goals. It may have a physical presence such as an office, website, dedicated staff and/or volunteers and should have an "identity" of its own, such as a name and logo, so that participants can take ownership in the campaign. It may be housed in an allied organization, but maintaining its own identity is critical.

### **Clear Decision Making Process**

Once you have identified a group of likeminded people who are interested in building a campaign, it's important to agree on how decisions are made. This should be done very early in your campaign's development and the decision-making process you choose should be clear, fair, timely, and transparent.

### **Dedicated Financial Resources**

Your campaign will need its own dedicated financial resources to propel the effort. You may need financial resources for things like an office (or at least office supplies), website/communication tools, staff, miscellaneous operating expenses like postage, travel, and organizing activities.

### **Core Functions**

In addition to a Campaign Manager to manage, coordinate, and assess overall progress, your campaign should have people doing the work of the five core functions:

1. Organizer: someone who can develop and maintain relationships at the grassroots level and put together events
2. Coalition Liaison: someone who focuses on your campaign's relationships with other allied groups
3. Media and Communications Director: your campaign's first point of contact with the press, who develops and manages contact lists, promotes your cause on social media, and issues action alerts
4. Researcher/Policy Director: your go to expert on the issue
5. Advocacy Director: someone who understands and can provide your campaign with guidance on legislative or executive branch advocacy

One person can perform more than one of these functions, though, of course, that is not ideal. As you expand, possibly into a broader coalition of groups, keep in mind that all five core functions should be given equal attention. Consider adding faith and civil rights leaders, members of the academic, legal, and mental health communities, families who have been affected, and service providers to your group to build a broad and effective coalition.

### **Strategic Plan**

Your campaign should have an articulated strategy and plan, written on paper and that campaign participants have developed cooperatively, on how it is going to accomplish its goals. The strategic plan should include your goals, a timeline, the identities of key policymaker targets, an assessment of allies and opponents, an honest assessment of your available resources, and a process for adjusting and responding to unforeseen developments.

### **Evaluation & Documentation**

Your campaign should consistently evaluate its progress towards its goal and assess the effectiveness of its strategies and tactics. Also, your campaign from start to finish should ensure that its activities are documented, through blog posts, pictures and timeline documents. This will help you remember what actions were taken and why, and to evaluate whether or not they worked.

### **Celebration**

For your campaign to be successful, celebrating the intermediate victories as well as the big win is really important. Recognizing your key leaders, volunteers, and allied organizations during moments of success can build a strong morale that will help your group weather the more difficult times you will inevitably face.

## Getting Started

How do you initiate a campaign? Here are five steps to get started:

### **1) Find others**

Identify and talk to other people who may be interested in the issue of youth in the adult criminal justice system. Start with your family, your neighborhood, your place of worship or other community groups you belong to. Not sure on how to make this first step? Contact us for some ideas.

### **2) Make a contact list**

Include everyone you've talked to who is interested, noting their names, phones, and emails. Start an email list. Send out regular updates as you meet new people.

### **3) Host a Small Gathering or Meeting**

Invite everyone on your contact list. Gather people to talk about the issue and ways you might work together on it. Another idea is to host a film screening to show *Childhood Interrupted*, a 20 minute video about youth in the adult criminal justice system. To order a free copy, visit <http://www.cfyj.org/state-work/advocacy-tools>

### **4) Gather the Facts**

What is your state law? What state data is available? Consider partnering with a local university to assist with gathering data. Have any reports been issued on this issue? Put together a fact sheet with any information you've been able to gather. Share the facts with everyone on your contact list. Ask your contacts for any information they may have. To learn more about state statistics and reform efforts visit [www.campaignforyouthjustice.org](http://www.campaignforyouthjustice.org).

### **5) Start a Story Bank**

If you have been personally affected, consider sharing your story. Ask others to share their stories. Enlist everyone on your contact list to share their stories and to help with collecting other stories. Stories can be written, taped, or filmed. To see examples of families and youth sharing their story, or to learn more about how to share your story, visit <http://campaignforyouthjustice.org/take-action/share-your-story-testimonials>



## Getting Started: Engaging Stakeholders & Allies

Now that you have reached out to others and identified 8 – 10 people who are interested in the issue, you will need to think about how to get people engaged as part of a campaign. Here are five steps to think about:

### **1) Talk to each person one-on-one**

Find out why they are interested in this issue (e.g. has someone in their family been tried in adult court? Do they represent youth in adult court? Do they provide services to these youth?) Ask what they'd like to see happen (e.g. are they just interested in establishing a network of people to share information and support each other, or are they interested in changing your state's law on prosecuting youth in adult court). If they'd like to be part of a campaign, ask them what kinds of collective actions they would be most interested in. Find out how they'd like to make a contribution (e.g. could they host gatherings, make outreach calls, write up personal stories, contact media, call state and local officials, or write letters and facts sheets?)

### **2) Ask everyone to attend a gathering to talk informally together**

After you have a sense of what each person's interests are, what goals they'd like to pursue and how they'd like to contribute to the effort, schedule a date and time to bring everyone together for a conversation. For this first gathering, you may want to call each person to invite them individually to be sure they can participate. This personal outreach is really critical when you are first building relationships.

### **3) Invite everyone to make a contribution**

People are more likely to show up, feel involved, and actively participate if they have a role. You might consider asking each person to sign up for one of these tasks: Host the meeting by providing space; Co-facilitate the discussion with you; Bring food/snacks; Bring beverages; Bring plates, napkins and cups; Bring materials such as fact sheets or other information; Assist with set up; Assist with clean up; or Document the discussion by taking notes.

### **4) Set a timeframe and agenda**

For a first gathering, you might consider scheduling a two hour timeframe. Provide time for brief introductions and devote most of the gathering to discussing what kinds of collective actions the group would like to undertake, building from the ideas that people shared with you beforehand. Include some time for networking and refreshments. Before wrapping up the meeting, be sure to set a date and time and a location for your next gathering. Invite everyone to sign up to attend the next gathering.

### **5) Follow up**

Be sure to follow up within a week of the gathering. Timely follow up ensures that people stay connected, feel involved, and will actively participate in the campaign. Consider making a personal phone call to each person to ask how they thought the meeting went, to invite their input for the next gathering, and to reaffirm their support for participating in the campaign.

## Getting Started: Setting Goals

As the first part of your campaign strategy, you will need to set goals. Here are a few key steps:

### **1) Think Big and Bold!**

Consider what it is that you really want your campaign to accomplish. You are focusing on how to end the prosecution of youth in adult court, so what goal would have the most impact? Don't limit your thinking at this stage in the process. Consider the biggest and boldest goals as your long-term goals, and then consider medium and short term goals that will help you get there. If you would like to talk through your legislative options, please call us for a policy consultation.

### **2) What is a "Win"?**

In addition to setting big and bold goals to accomplish in the long-term, you will need to consider what a "win" is at every stage of your campaign. If your campaign was able to get a new law passed to substantially limit the types of cases automatically prosecuted in adult court, you should consider that a "win." You will also want to set internal goals, like growing the number of your supporters, or increasing the number of people who attend your events. If you achieve these goals, that too should be considered a "win".

### **3) Use the SMART Goal test**

One way to think about setting goals for your campaign is to use the SMART Goal test. As you consider setting your campaign goals, you will need to ask whether the goals you set are specific, measurable, achievable, results-oriented, and time-specific. Consider having the Campaign for Youth Justice facilitate a Campaign Planning session for your group.

### **4) Take a Look Around**

See what other campaigns have accomplished and what goals they set. Reach out to leaders of similar or related campaigns and ask to speak with them. Did they accomplish what they set out to do? How long did it take? What were the long-term, medium-term and short-term goals that they set? What have they considered a "win" at each stage of their campaign? And would they change the goals they set upon reflection? For contacts in states working to reduce the prosecution of youth in adult criminal court, visit <http://www.cfyj.org/state-work/state-snapshot>.

### **5) Organize a Brainstorming Session**

One of the best ways to figure out how to set goals that will work for your campaign is to organize a brainstorming session with your group. Bring the tools and information you have learned about. Set an objective for the session, such as establishing mutually agreed upon goals for your campaign. To inspire your group, consider sharing information from other successful campaigns or inviting a campaign organizer from a nearby state to talk about his/her experiences. Be sure to involve everyone in your group in the preparation for the session and the follow up activities afterward.

## Getting Started: Preparing to Launch Your Campaign

You will need to set up benchmarks to help you get ready to publicly launch your campaign. Here are a few key steps:

### 1) Start at the End

To figure out what your benchmarks are, skip forward to when you want to launch your campaign. Envision what you want to have happen on that date. Do you want an event where you announce your campaign name, legislative champions and policy agenda? Do you want to have a specific number of organizations and individuals in support of your campaign? Will you want media to cover the event? What kind of social media presence do you want to have? As you think about the launch date, you'll want to start making a list of all the pieces you want in place by then and factor those into your plan. You will want to establish some goals for your launch date based on your vision for the day.

### 2) Create a Calendar

After you've set the launch date, you'll want to create a calendar working backwards from that date. Post activities and deadlines on the calendar that will help you get to the launch date with all your ducks in a row. Be sure to include regular check-ins with your team. Give yourself some wiggle room on the calendar in case things don't go according to plan and you need more time. Ensure that you have factored in holidays and other non-campaign activities that you or others have going on. Ask others to look at the draft calendar so that all the steps are included. Consider printing a large calendar and posting it in a place where everyone working with you can see it.

### 3) Divvy up Launch Day Responsibilities

As you approach your launch date, you will want to divvy up launch day responsibilities such as grassroots and coalition partner outreach, media and social media coordination, event logistics, outreach to legislators or other targets of your campaign, and spokespeople. You might even consider establishing small working groups or committees for each area and encouraging campaign volunteers and allies to join. Share the calendar with each working group, and invite them to add and edit the calendar. Put all working group meetings or conference calls on the calendar.

### 4) Set Benchmarks

Now that you have set a launch date, created a calendar, and engaged your team to work on various aspects of the effort, you are ready to set some benchmarks. Again, you will want to start at the end of your calendar and work backwards. Look at each two-week period and ask yourselves, "What do we want to have accomplished by this date?" And then ask yourself, "How will we know when we have made that accomplishment?" The answers to these questions are your benchmarks. Be sure to put them on the calendar.

### 5) Flexibility is Key!

As you work to launch your campaign, having a flexible approach is key! Setting benchmarks will help you ensure that you are making progress towards your campaign launch goals, but you must factor the unexpected into your plans. You will want to build in flexibility to change a benchmark, revise your end goals, or consider an alternative activity if what you're doing isn't working according to plan. Build in a regular check-in on your calendar to assess your progress on meeting your benchmarks and adjust your plans accordingly.

## Key Strategies: Growing Your Campaign Network

To build your campaign, you will need a strong network of volunteers across your state to manage, support, and expand your efforts. It is crucial that your campaign network thrives and grows. Here are a few important steps:

### 1) Articulate and Advertise Campaign Roles

To draw in volunteers to work with your campaign, you will need to clearly articulate the campaign roles that you are looking for volunteers to fulfill. Some roles might be: Outreach Coordinator, Media and/or Social Media Coordinator, Direct Action Organizer and Phone bank Captain. Your descriptions of each role should include the number of hours per week you'd like your volunteers to support the campaign, the qualities you are looking for in a volunteer and some background on your campaign goals. Consider advertising your campaign roles on your website, Facebook, Idealist ([www.idealists.org](http://www.idealists.org)), and any list-serves in your area. You might put together an outreach flyer inviting volunteers to join your campaign. Think about hosting an initial volunteer orientation session to provide basic information on the campaign, answer questions, and invite volunteers to sign up for various roles. Once you have a core group of volunteers, work with these volunteers to host regular volunteer orientation sessions (e.g. once a week or every other week) so that new volunteers can continually join the campaign.

### 2) Empower Your Volunteers

Your campaign volunteers will need to feel that they are making a real contribution to the effort. If not, they won't stick around long. Be sure to create space to hear their ideas and feedback. Give them choices in how they might contribute to the campaign, and be flexible in creating new opportunities for them to contribute. Volunteers want to feel a sense of purpose and accomplishment, sentiments that are crucial to your campaign. Here's a great tip sheet online, "What Do Your Volunteers Want: 10 Ways to Make Your Volunteers Happy" at: <http://nonprofit.about.com/od/volunteers/tp/whatvolunteerswant.htm>.

### 3) Communicate, Communicate, Communicate

Regular, in-person conversations and meetings will keep your volunteers coming back. People want to feel "connected" to the cause through the people they work with. Be sure to build in time and space to engage volunteers in discussion about why they want to support this cause, what makes them want to contribute, and what ways the campaign can create new opportunities to expand the base of volunteers.

### 4) Provide Training & Support

Volunteers may not have all the tools and skills to carry out all of the tasks needed in the campaign. Build in regular training sessions on key tasks. Be sure that every volunteer has a go-to person on the campaign with whom they consult and provide feedback on how it's going. Volunteers will need more support at the beginning of their time with the campaign. Volunteers who have been around longer can be tasked with recruiting and managing other volunteers.

### 5) Recognize & Thank Your Volunteers!

It is very important to recognize and thank your campaign volunteers for their contributions. Praise them at campaign meetings and in campaign communications. When you've accomplished a major campaign goal or benchmark, consider hosting a volunteer recognition event.

## Key Strategies: Gearing Up for a Legislative Session

To gear up for the next legislative session in your state, here's a sample timeline with three key activities for each month [most, but not all, state legislative sessions start in January]:

### August

- Identify all the possible legislative recommendations that you might consider making to legislators during the session.
- Gather background information on the legislative process, timing of moving a bill, and the key players on the committees that would consider your legislative recommendations.
- Find out which of your allied statewide organizations have scheduled advocacy days at the capitol in the next session.

### September

- Schedule a strategy session with your core group to decide on and prioritize your legislative recommendations.
- Contact allied statewide organizations that have scheduled advocacy days at the capitol in the next session and see if you can get your legislative recommendations on their agenda.
- Map out your base of allies with all the key legislators who have decision making power over your legislative recommendations. Organize events and meetings in their districts to introduce the issue and begin lining up supporters and possible sponsors. Begin following key legislators and key journalists who cover the issue on Twitter and Facebook.

### October

- Host a legislative strategy session with your core group and allies to decide how you will push your agenda.
- Create an Action Team with your core group and allies to build and strengthen relationships with key legislators. Continue planning events and meetings with these legislators.
- Write your legislative recommendations into legislative language or ask an attorney to write on a pro bono basis.

### November

- Organize a legislative training session for your Action Team.
- Identify who may oppose your legislative recommendations and discuss how you will overcome that.
- Create and/or update your media contact lists.

### December

- Vet your bill with other groups and line up their support.
- Identify and recruit bill sponsor(s).
- Create a timeline for legislative session.

### January

- Create a fact sheet on your bill(s).
- Write a media release to use with the introduction of your bill(s).
- Draft an action alert to send to your networks to support the bill once introduced.

## Key Strategies: Utilizing National Youth Justice Awareness Month (YJAM) to Grow Your Campaign Network

Every October is National Youth Justice Awareness Month, which presents a great opportunity to grow your campaign network. Here are a few recommendations to consider:

### 1) Outreach to New Potential Supporters

Use October to focus on outreach to broaden and diversify your base of supporters and allies. Set an internal goal for how many additional contacts you want to make throughout the month. Contact members of your network and ask them to spread the word that now is the time to join your campaign. Host a phone bank night and/or write a short outreach email or blog and ask your network to forward it to their contacts, write about it on Facebook, tweet about it on Twitter, and generally share it wherever they can.

### 2) Table at Events

Consider tabling at upcoming gatherings, conferences and festivals! It is a great (and fun) way to meet new potential supporters. Look at your calendar to see what might be coming up. Check out the local newspaper to see what might be happening in your community in the next month. Make a priority list of events. Contact event organizers about hosting an information table at their event and, if they say you can, ask your current network to help you staff the table. For your table you'll need copies of a one-page informational flyer about your campaign goals and upcoming activities, a sign-up sheet or petition and pens, and a bowl of candy or campaign swag. If you have time, make a display board with pictures and other eye-catching information.

### 3) Meet with Reporters

This is a great time to build relationships with the media. Don't be shy about scheduling meetings with reporters. Be prepared to talk about your campaign's goals and who is involved in the effort. Encourage reporters to write up piece about your campaign and include contact information about how to get involved. This added visibility may draw in additional support for your campaign.

### 4) Write about Your Campaign

Write a short piece (200-500 words) about your campaign that spells out what you are working to change and how others can get involved. Ask faith groups and allied organizations to put this in their October newsletters. You can also use this piece as a blog, whether for your own campaign or on a partner organizations' website. Provide a picture especially if it includes community members. Be sure to include contact information about how to get involved.

### 5) Create a Bookstore/Library Display

Talk to libraries and local bookstores to see if they'd host a display of books about youth in the justice system and information about your campaign. You might consider offering to discuss youth justice issues with their readers sometime during October. Leave a stack of cards and a box or bowl for individuals to leave their information or business cards for follow up. Need a book list? Check out this list: <http://astore.amazon.com/campforyout05-20>

### **6) Call on Faith Leaders**

Ask your community's faith leaders to talk about this issue with their congregations during the month. Offer to meet with their youth group or to be available to talk to constituents after services. Provide key facts on youth in the justice system for faith leaders to use in their services, prayer sessions, or in newsletters. Be sure to have a sign-up sheet or way to gather contact information.

### **7) Host an Open House**

Too busy to organize a big event? Consider hosting an 'open house' at your campaign office, a partner organization's office, or just in your home. Ask members of your network to each bring a friend. This is an informal and low-key way to bring new allies to join your campaign efforts.

### **8) Get a Local or State Proclamation**

For more information and a resolution passing specific guide, visit:

[http://cfyj.org/images/Guide\\_to\\_Passing\\_a\\_YJAM\\_Resolution.pdf](http://cfyj.org/images/Guide_to_Passing_a_YJAM_Resolution.pdf)

## Key Strategies: Documenting Your Campaign

As you get your campaign underway, it is crucial that you document your campaign to track the actions you've undertaken, the people involved, and your successes and challenges. As you recount the story of your campaign's successes, as well as the challenges you've faced, having documented your work all the way along will help facilitate the sharing of your experiences. This kind of reporting is also crucial for fundraising purposes. And, you will help to grow the movement by sharing your experiences with new campaigns that are just starting up. Here are a few ways to consider documenting your campaign:

### **1) Invite campaign volunteers to write brief updates about campaign activities and events**

- Share these with campaign supporters and allies in an email and through Facebook, Twitter and other social media.
- Send a newsletter regularly to your supporters.

### **2) Take pictures at every event and activity**

- Ask volunteers who is interested in photographing activities and events.
- Share the photos with your network.
- Consider starting an online photo album or an Instagram account where you can share your photos.

### **3) Keep a press clippings file**

- Save hard copies of all press clippings about your campaign.
- PDF the articles and save electronically as well.
- Frame select clips and place around the campaign office.

### **4) Take video footage of key events such as hearings**

- Ensure key events such as hearings are on video (if allowed).
- Post hearing testimony on YouTube.
- Post video of speakers at events you organize.
- Create short testimonials to capture participants' reactions to events.

### **5) Organize a documentation file**

- Start a hard file in your office of all of the above listed items.
- Keep electronic files of photos, videos, press clips, articles and other documents.
- Make duplicate copies and maintain a list of everyone involved.



## Get Inspired: Celebrating Your Successes

As your campaign gets underway and you meet one or more of your goals, be sure to take time and celebrate your success! Here are some ideas on how to celebrate:

### **1) Thank everyone involved**

Call, write a short email, or send a hand written note to everyone who was part of achieving your goal! A thank you makes people feel appreciated for their contributions and keeps people engaged and enthusiastic in the work! Don't forget the legislators who helped get the bill passed.

### **2) Publicly recognize your supporters**

Consider listing your supporters in an email, newsletter or website thanking them for their contributions. Write a short article about the effort and include brief quotes from some of the individuals involved.

### **3) Include a celebration in a regularly scheduled activity**

If your coalition meets monthly, include a celebration as part of the agenda. Bring a cake, cupcakes or other snacks. Create space for participants to share stories of the success and recognize people for their efforts.

### **4) Host a celebration**

We are sometimes so caught up in the work that we keep going without taking time to smell the roses. Planning a celebration can be fun and engaging and an opportunity to put your creativity to work.

### **5) Document your success**

Take a photo of the celebration, the cake, and the people involved! Post video of the event. Keep a list of people that were part of the effort and what they contributed. If time permits, write a short report capturing the success. These photos, videos and documents will help you to remember what you've achieved and also get you through the difficult moments when it feels like success is far away.

## Resources

Who else has resources, advice and support? Check out these other great organizations who are experts in organizing for social justice causes and reform:

### **TRAINING RESOURCES:**

Beyond the Choir: <http://beyondthechoir.org/>

Center for Third World Organizing: <http://www.ctwo.org/>

The Highlander Center: <http://www.highlandercenter.org/>

National Organizer's Alliance: <http://noacentral.org/page.php?id=1>

National Organizing Institute: <http://neworganizing.com/>

Midwest Academy: <http://www.midwestacademy.com/>

Movement Strategy Center: <http://movementstrategy.org/>

Project South: <http://www.projectsouth.org/>

Rant Collective: <http://www.rantcollective.net/>

Ruckus Society: <http://www.ruckus.org/>

School of Unity and Liberation (SOUL): <http://www.schoolofunityandliberation.org/>

Social Justice Leadership: <http://www.sojustlead.org/>

Training for Change: <http://www.trainingforchange.org/>

Wellstone Action: <http://www.wellstone.org/>

Western States Center: <http://www.westernstatescenter.org/our-work>

We've compiled a resource notebook for campaign organizers working to end the practice of trying, sentencing and incarcerating youth in the adult criminal justice system. Don't see a resource you use often? Please let us know!