

## **Campaign Guide: Ten Steps to a SweatFree Community**

Because political climates and organizing opportunities vary in states, cities and schools across the country, every sweatfree campaign will be different. The steps below are common to many successful campaigns so far. They are not necessarily in linear succession. For example, the goals evolve over time, and the campaigners constantly build the coalition and educate the public, both before the policy is passed and afterwards to ensure implementation and enforcement.

### **1. Define Your Campaign Goal**

Encourage your city to join the cooperative sweatfree procurement contract hosted by the city of Madison, Wisconsin. This “piggy-back” contract is with a vendor that has agreed to key measures for transparency and decent working conditions, including publicly disclosing supplier factories and allowing independent monitors to perform inspections.

If your city does not yet have a sweatfree procurement policy (check the "Policies" tab at [LaborRights.org/SFC](http://LaborRights.org/SFC)), or is not part of the Sweatfree Purchasing Consortium (see [buysweatfree.org/members](http://buysweatfree.org/members)), then advocate for those actions as well.

It may not be necessary for your city to first adopt a sweatfree policy in order to join the cooperative contract; however, it will likely help with the political will to achieve their participation in the contract.

### **2. Build a Coalition**

To ensure your message is strong and convincing, pull together a large and diverse sweatfree coalition. Think broadly. Reach out to local community groups that have overlapping goals with your campaign or have self-interest in the campaign. This will not only deepen their commitment to your campaign but also allow you to reciprocate support for their work. For example: local labor unions; immigrant worker groups; religious congregations; Asian and Latin American solidarity groups; high school youth groups and university student organizations, etc.

### **3. Organize the Group**

Find a couple of people (in addition to yourself) who will take on a leadership role. Find people who will handle the core responsibilities, and others who will help when needed. Set regular meeting location and times. The clearer the expectations of everyone and the clearer the group process, the more comfortable group members will be and the more organized your campaign will be.

### **4. Research: Where Does Your Money Go?**

Research the major purchases of the institution you are targeting. For example, where are your city’s police uniforms made? If you can identify specific brands or factories, find any studies or independent labor rights reports on them. Learn about common sweatshop violations in the regions where the uniforms are made. Be ready with answers to questions about how the institution could purchase more responsibly.

### **5. Evaluate the Political Climate in Your Community**

Who are the members of the elected bodies that control purchasing policies for your city, town, county, or school district? Who will be supportive of your efforts, and who is the best member to sponsor the policy. In bodies whose members represent a variety of political stripes, you might try to get one cosponsor from different

political parties. Also identify political leaders who oppose your efforts. Why are they opposed and how will you counter their arguments?

## **6. Educate**

Build community support for your sweatfree goal. Offer to give a presentation on the campaign at other groups' events and meetings or in relevant classes. You can organize your own speaking events. Show a documentary about sweatshops and host a discussion afterwards. Or contact us at [laborrightrights@ilrf.org](mailto:laborrightrights@ilrf.org) to explore the idea of bringing a speaking tour with a current/former garment worker or a union organizer. Hold a letter writing party. Collecting petition signatures offline can be a great way to involve volunteers and talk to people face to face.

## **7. Mobilize and Work with the Media**

Once you've lined up community support, organize creative actions with your coalition and use the media to let your local officials know that you are serious about ensuring your tax dollars are not supporting sweatshops. Pitch reporters directly or hold a press conference with your coalition and supportive public officials to officially launch the campaign. Members of your coalition can get on talk radio shows, write their own letters to the editor or op-eds and pitch them to local papers. By using the media, you can educate the public about sweatshops and win their support.

## **8. Make Your Case to the Elected Body**

When meeting with decision makers, remember to:

- Present the best-possible policy. It is much easier to negotiate down than to start with a not-so-good policy and try to improve it through negotiation. (See the model policy at [buysweatfree.org](http://buysweatfree.org).)
- Bring evidence of widespread community support, for example, a list of coalition partners or endorsing organizations, petition signatures, or letters of support allies and important political constituents.
- Anticipate challenging questions and be prepared to answer them. If possible, present the decision makers with an attractive and well-organized packet of information that makes your case for the policy.
- At a public hearing, it is key to have testimonies from workers and coalition partners.

## **9. Implementation and Monitoring**

The policy will be symbolic at best if it is not implemented and enforced. Once a policy has passed, work with the administrators and elected officials to develop the implementation plan. In order to enforce the policy, they should commit part of the budget to pay for independent monitoring and possibly additional staff time. Make sure your group stays involved after the policy is adopted by monitoring contracts, researching possible code violations, and helping to resolve issues of implementation and enforcement. Consider building on the momentum you've developed and on your victory by working to get other institutions to adopt the policy.

## **10. Celebrate your victories!**

Celebrate when you reach your objectives, both large and small. Recognize the work of volunteers. Make it fun!

**If you're considering starting a campaign, we'd love to hear from you. Contact us at [laborrightrights@ilrf.org](mailto:laborrightrights@ilrf.org)**

**For campaign resources, visit [LaborRights.org/SFC](http://LaborRights.org/SFC)**

**For policy tools, visit [buysweatfree.org](http://buysweatfree.org)**