HOW TO DO STRATEGIC TURNOUT FOR EVENTS AND MEETINGS

The following are some key components when it comes to thinking about turnout for a meeting:

1. **Planning Turnout:** In order to have a meeting that is made up of the leaders, organizations and individuals you are trying to reach, it is going to take some planning. Sending out an email or something in the mail should be only the first step in assuring you have strong turnout.

2. **Set a turnout goal.** Your turnout goal can help you prioritize and focus, and will help you determine whether you need more people on your team. Whatever that goal number is, you should recruit **double** that number. So, if you would like 50 people there, you need to recruit 100 to attend. You can use people you recruit to help you meet this goal by asking those who commit to attending to then commit to bringing a friend.

3. **Brainstorm a list of possible audiences.** An "audience" should include those leaders, organizations and individuals that you have identified as important people to engage in your project.

4. **Call contact people for each group on the list.** Building and leveraging personal connections is the key to good turnout. Your brainstorm list can be the foundation of your outreach. The easiest way to do this is to divide the list amongst your team if possible. If your group is small, you may need to prioritize the list first so that the most potentially responsive groups are highest on the list. Use talking points to guide your conversation. The goals for this call are:
   - To let them know about the meeting and why it's important to have high turnout.
   - To ask them if they have a newsletter, email listserv, or upcoming events or trainings, and ask them to promote the meeting using those communication vehicles.
   - To ask them to attend the event.
   - To ask them to personally recruit a certain number of people (5-10) from their networks (personal or professional) to attend the meeting.
   - To get full contact information, including email addresses.

5. **Send supporting materials to allies.** Provide a newsletter/listserv sample article and some talking points to all contacts who agreed to help spread the word. This will make it easy for them to drop it into their newsletter, email update, or remarks at the beginning or end of a training or event. Try to get them to commit to a deadline date (send the email by x date) if possible. Know the drop dates of their newsletters. Thank them for their help.

6. **Make recruitment calls.** If you obtained lists and you have the resources, call through them to ask the people on the list to attend the meeting. A group of 3-8 people with a script and a few phones can make up to 200 calls in a two hour period. This can greatly increase your chances of high turnout, because people respond best to personal contact.

7. **Build and obtain lists.** Keep track of the people who agree to attend the forum and the people who agree to personally recruit others to attend. If possible, get membership and volunteer lists from allies.

8. **Make confirmation calls.** Contact everyone who committed to attend and/or help spread the word; again, divvy up the list with your team. In the calls, thank your allies for their help and make sure they have what they need. Remind them of what they said they would do. Emphasize why their help is making a difference—for them and for you.

9. **Mail reminder postcards or emails.** Particularly for those who agree to attend the forum or recruit others to do so, multiple reminders greatly increase the chances that they'll follow through.

10. **Collect data of those that attend or don't show.** It is critical that you record the data for those that attended the meeting as well as to recognize those who didn't show up so that you can follow up with both groups. You should also report this data into the accountability matrix that was hopefully established during the planning process.