To strengthen your position and help insure victory you need to involve your community. Employers are often too big to fight alone, so you must ask allies to join your campaign.

What is an ally?

An ally is another person or group that shares an interest with your campaign goals. They can be other unions, community groups, retirees, environmentalists or any group that you can work with to achieve mutual goals.

How can allies help?

1. Provide people to take part in actions such as rallies, town hall meetings and press conferences. Often, their presence will create additional publicity.
2. Help increase political pressure on your employer by supporting resolutions that reinforce your issues or assisting your outreach efforts to area politicians.
3. Supply information and other resources including assistance on environmental and health issues. If you are involved in a work stoppage, community, labor and religious organizations can assist through food banks and fundraising efforts as well as joining picket lines.
4. Demonstrate to your membership that they are not alone in the fight by circulating support petitions, writing a letter to the editor, requesting a meeting with management or placing a support sign in the window of a business, office or home. This will boost morale and help sustain and build your campaign.

Who are potential allies?

There are numerous potential allies from all different areas. Here is a short list, and there is a more extensive list on your Resource CD:

- The most important is other unions within the same company or organization even if they aren’t USW. They have a direct interest. They can provide solidarity and assistance (see page 47 for examples). In reaching out to other locations, do not forget their operations outside of the U.S. and Canada.
Other unions and constituency groups in your area are very important – the AFL/CIO in the United States or the CLC in Canada, SOAR (Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees), Central Labor Councils, Jobs with Justice (www.jwj.org), and other local unions.

Community groups - civil rights, women's, environmental, civic, neighborhood, farmer, and senior citizen groups are all potential allies. In many cases members of your local are already involved in these groups.

Politicians - community, city, county, state, province and federal elected officials can strengthen the campaign.

Religious - Religious leaders can dramatize the importance of adequate health care, safe working conditions, and other key issues. Once again, you already have members active in their churches, synagogues, mosques or other places of worship. Also, look for chapters of Interfaith Worker Justice in your area (www.iwj.org).

How do you work with allies?

Start now to develop relations with potential allies in your area. Waiting until you are in trouble is not an effective way to involve allies. Where possible develop long-term relationships with allies. Remember, if you expect them to assist your local, you must be willing to assist them too.

During a contract campaign it is important to maintain ongoing contact with potential allies to keep them informed of your activities. With some allies it is possible to work together to develop strategies to build and strengthen your campaign.

□ Remember: The key to building a powerful relationship with an ally is to develop a long-term, mutually beneficial relationship. When an ally asks for your help, you need to make sure you are there to help them.
## Identifying Allies (Activity 1—Step 6)

**Instructions:**

1. In a small group discuss potential allies. List all the potential allies you can think of in the first column. You may want to refer to the list of potential allies on the Resource CD. Don’t limit yourself, be creative.

2. Once you’ve listed your possible allies, think about what bargaining issues you will talk about when you approach them. Refer back to your issues and goals (Step 3). In the second column, list at least one issue you could use in your approach to that potential ally. For example, adequate, affordable healthcare for families and retirees is a great issue to use when you approach members of the clergy or retiree groups.

3. Based upon your answers, have your group select the five most important potential allies and circle them in this chart.

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<tr>
<th>Potential Ally</th>
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Approaching Allies (Activity 2—Step 6)

1. Using your Communication Action Team, distribute the Community Connections survey (located on your Resource CD – Step 6) to determine if you have a USW member that has an affiliation with one or all of the top five allies you just identified in the previous activity. Because we are likely to be more effective, determine if the member is willing to be responsible for outreach to the ally.

2. Determine which actions the union will request the ally to participate in. For help, see the list of potential action ideas on your Resource CD (Step 6). Are you going to have a rally or ask for a support letter? Are you going to conduct more than one action? If so, make sure you have a timeline when contacting the ally, so they can answer your requests and you can provide them a timeframe in which you will check back with them.

3. Print the Outreach Tracker chart which includes a phone script from the Resource CD (Step 6) and give these tools to the USW member or members who are responsible for reaching out to your ally or allies.

4. Have the USW member use the phone script to make the initial call to your ally. Follow the detailed directions on the phone script and make sure that all responses are recorded in the Outreach Tracker chart. This will ensure that the union will always be able to identify what the next step is for working with a particular ally. If contact information is needed for your ally, use the phone book or internet to locate the necessary information.

Approaching Allies

The easiest way to approach an ally is through a member of that organization. Members of your local are already active in local politics, churches and other groups.

These members should be asked to assist the union leadership in reaching out to these community groups.

To help you identify which members are active in which groups, you should use the Community Connections survey on your Resource CD (Step 6).