REFLECTION GUIDE FOR ORGANIZING DIRECTORS AND SUPERVISORS

This reflection guide is for organizational leaders of community organizing groups (e.g., executive directors, organizing directors, and lead organizers) who supervise organizers and/or support and influence decisions about organizer training and development.

We structured this guide to give organizational leaders concrete questions and activities that they can adapt to support organizing staff in developing individual development goals and assessing their skill development and growth over time. It also can be used to develop organization-wide strategies for nurturing the growth and development of your organizing staff.

Using this guide requires some understanding about the Phases and Nutrients of organizer growth developed by the **Organizing Learning Project**. We provide a summary of the Phases and Nutrients in this **Overview document**, and a comprehensive description in the **Tilling the Soil report**. The heart of the project findings is that organizers move through a universal arc of growth throughout their careers, regardless of their organizing context and tradition. An organizer's lifecycle is marked by five Phases. Development through these Phases is catalyzed by a set of Nutrients—critical experiences and relationships that propel and guide organizers.

ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERS CAN USE THIS TOOL IN THREE WAYS:

1. **Reflect on the growth** and needs of your current organizing staff that would help them further develop their skills and organizing practice. Below we provide questions for you to use to reflect on the growth, strengths, and challenges of your organizing staff.

2. **Identify practices** that can nurture organizer growth and development. We provide questions to identify learning and developmental goals for your organizers and/or your organization and to monitor how you are meeting these goals.

3. **Strengthen internal efforts** to reflect regularly about organizer development and organizational support. We provide suggestions for reflection activities that you can use to identify and develop the skills and capacities of your organizing team.

1. REFLECT ON ORGANIZER STAFF

In Tilling the Soil, we describe how organizers grow through distinct phases of development that are nurtured by experiences and relationships along the way. As organizers encounter each phase, they acquire new organizing skills while unearthing deeper understandings of themselves and the wider world in which they live and organize. Reflecting on your current organizing staff is a starting point for clarifying and strengthening your organization's approach to organizer development.

We encourage organizations to explore organizer growth with the following questions. These questions can help you prepare for individual meetings with organizing staff members and/or your entire organizing team to discuss organizer learning. They can be used for one-time reflections or built into quarterly meetings to reflect on and monitor organizers' development. They are not intended for performance reviews but rather as a structured, developmental process focused on learning and growth.

What **phases of growth** are each of your organizers in?

What **experiences or relationships** have constrained or limited their development?

What **relationships or experiences have helped** each organizer to develop their approach to organizing and get to their current phase of growth?

Reflecting on all your organizers, what are the **strengths** of your organizing team? ✹ What **challenges** or gaps do individual organizers or the team have? ✹ In what specific ways do your organizers need to **grow** to improve their practice?

2. IDENTIFY ORGANIZATIONAL APPROACHES AND SUPPORTS

How does your organization currently support organizers at the different **phases of development?** Is your organization better at supporting organizers in some phases over others?

What are your organization's **strengths and gaps** in developing organizers?

How does your organization currently support organizers to access the **experiences and relationships** that make a difference in their growth? Reflecting on your organizers' strengths, gaps, and needs, what experiences and relationships would make the greatest difference in their growth?

What **practices, processes, and supports** can you add to fill these gaps and enhance organizer learning across the phases of development?

3. STRENGTHEN INTERNAL REFLECTIVE PRACTICES

The Phase and Nutrients of organizer growth lend themselves to a range of creative and collaborative activities that can support organizational leaders to explore opportunities to better support organizer development. We find that it can be helpful to explore organizer learning in one-to-one settings as well as through group dialogue. These opportunities can foster a culture of reflective practice while building a scaffolding for organizers to reflect on and plan to grow their skills, deepen their organizing practice, and strengthen their awareness and understanding of their development. We provide some activity suggestions below.

One-to-one meetings between organizing director/supervisor and individual organizers:

Set aside time at a regular interval (e.g., monthly, quarterly) to reflect on individual organizers' phases of growth, the experience and relationships helping them to grow, and their gaps and needs.

Identify areas of growth and how you and your organization can support the organizer.

Group reflection with organizing director/ supervisor and group of organizers:

Gather organizing staff to reflect on milestone experiences and relationships that have been important learning opportunities.

Discuss how learning from experiences and relationships shapes organizing practice and strategy.

Identify new / continued learning opportunities from specific experiences and/or relationships that can support organizers' development in phases.

Staff meeting focused on organization's approach and strategy for organizer learning:

Describe how your organization cultivates organizer learning and growth at each phase.

Identify and describe strengths and gaps in existing development approaches and opportunities.

Discuss what process or structures can be added to fill these gaps and enhance learning across phases and through intentional experiences and relationships.

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