

NETWORK Squads Start Guide



Welcome to NETWORK Squads! NETWORK Squads are small, local groups that take action together once per month to engage their local communities, build power, and create change with guidance and support from NETWORK.

NETWORK organizers are here to support your work organizing in your community. Each month, the NETWORK team will offer three #SquadGoals and provide you with everything you need in order to complete that activity. All you have to do is print materials, grab some friends, and take action.

#SquadGoals are designed to be done in community, to share a narrative of the world we're working to build, and to bring more people in. More people means more power in your community. And NETWORK organizers will be here with you every step of the way!

Why NETWORK Squads matter

Organizing is about building power and transforming our communities through relationships. When we act together and invite others to join us, we can build power to make concrete changes in the world around us.

NETWORK Squads make organizing easier by giving you the guides and materials you need to invite others to take action with you.

What to expect

Each month, you'll have three actions (**#SquadGoals**) to choose from. The NETWORK team will provide all the materials you need to be successful (may require some printing), including how-to guides, talking points, signs, zines, and more!

Each month will also begin with an optional **Squad Huddle**, where Squad leaders and Squad members across the country can join in a live Zoom meeting to debrief the previous month's actions, share tips and tricks they're learning, and begin planning for the next month.

The NETWORK organizing team will also be available to meet one-on-one for additional coaching and guidance.

Beyond the specific actions, this guide will give you some of the core tips and tricks of relational organizing.

Possible #SquadGoals you might see

- Host a letter to the editor (LTE) writing party
- Host a mini-rally (stand at an intersection and hold some signs)
- Host a backyard party to meet/connect with your neighbors and friends
- Host a movie screening and conversation
- Do some neighborhood issue canvassing or canvass at a local event
- Connect with a local nonprofit
- Visit your Member of Congress' local office
- And more!

Mobilizing and Organizing: Two Approaches, Both Needed

Mobilizing is getting people who already agree with you to take action. Mobilizing efforts include events like No Kings Day or door-to-door canvassing. **Organizing** takes those mobilizing moments and uses them to create opportunities for deeper relationship-building, leadership, and even transformation about the issues themselves.

Over time, your Squad will build more power as you attract more people to your actions, build relationships, and develop leadership among your fellow Squad members. This is the work of organizing – transforming communities and supporting people in seeing the power they can have and build to create the world we all want to live in.

And remember: Every task you share with someone else on the team gives our whole movement for justice the opportunity to go deeper. Through this approach, your Squad may eventually turn into 2, 3, or 10 Squads within your community, all doing great work that complements each other and strengthens our impact!

Getting People to Return for the Next Action

After you take action, invite your participants to reflect on their experiences before inviting them back to the next action. Whether it's going out for coffee or pizza and debriefing your action together or calling those who participated within a few days to ask them to reflect over the phone, the opportunity to reflect and make meaning of what happened has been shown to increase the likelihood that a participant will come back for the next action.

Moving People up the Ladder of Engagement

Over time, as you gather the same (or a similar) group of people together each month, you can start inviting participants to take on additional roles. It can start simple – inviting someone to be responsible for printing or choosing the location of your event – and move into more leadership roles, like following up with new participants in an action (if relevant). Small expansions of roles over time can help people to develop the confidence they might need to start their own Squad – and expand our collective power.

Connecting with NETWORK

NETWORK organizers each work in a specific geographic area. Reach out to connect with your NETWORK organizer as you're getting started and then continue to use us as resources! We're here to listen, coach, brainstorm, troubleshoot, or support in whatever way you need!

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