

Notes for trainers:

In the first part of the session, the trainer should explain the importance of one-on-one organising conversations: both seasoned union organisers and trade union researchers agree that in-person contact, and one-on-one conversations in particular, are far more effective than more distant forms of communication, such as emails and text messages. Explain that almost everyone feels a bit uncomfortable or awkward at first approaching colleagues to have these conversations but that with a little bit of practice, it will soon feel quite easy and normal. The purpose of the session today is to give participants the opportunity to practice in order to feel more confident doing this.

Next, go over the guidance sheet in depth. Note: the single most important step is “the ask”. For the more abstract “tips” on the second page, please provide concrete examples from your own experience to illustrate what these tips means/why they are important. (For example, when we say ‘be honest’, this means to not oversell what we can achieve as a union but to simply make the point that our strength is in our numbers as a collective and that if we don’t fight, we’ve already lost.)

Please then provide participants with the opportunity to read over the FAQ’s and raise any additional difficult questions that they have received or expect to receive from non-members. Give the group the opportunity to then respond with suggestions on how to address the question(s) raised in the session.

The trainer should then model a few one on one organising conversations with a couple of volunteers from the audience. The trainer will be the recruiter and the volunteers will be non-members on the other end of the organising conversations. The trainer should model both good and bad ways to go about having organising conversations. For example, in one model conversation, the trainer could be nervous, rushed, lacking in conviction, forget to make “the ask” etc, while in another model conversation, the trainer could be calm, clear, confident, validating and follow the guidance sheet. Do not tell participants in advance whether you will be modeling good or bad organising practices. Simply ask them to pay attention to what you say, how you say it and your body language and make some observations about what worked well and what didn’t. Participants will then provide feedback as a group on what went well, what didn’t go well and what they would do differently. Ask participants to look over the second page of the guidance sheet if they are having trouble assessing how it went.

In the remainder of the session, participants will have the opportunity to practice this themselves. Training participants should be divided into groups of four. Each member will act out 1 scenario as the recruiter, 1 scenario as the recruitee, and will be an observer in the other two scenarios. After each role play, the participants should debrief with one another to say what went well, what didn’t go well and what they would do differently next time – observers should be encouraged to take life notes as they are observing the interactions.

At the end of the session, participants should come back to the group as a whole and do a debrief altogether. What did you learn? What surprised you? What advice would you give someone doing this for the first time?

Be sure to follow up by email with materials covered in the training and to offer to answer any questions/concerns that arise from doing recruitment.