

# Building an Effective Advocacy Campaign

National Health Care for the Homeless Conference  
New Orleans - May 29, 2014

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# MINNESOTA COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS

- ▶ Advocacy organization established in 1984
- ▶ New strategic direction in 2011 – to focus on specific advocacy campaigns
- ▶ 4 full-time staff
  - ▶ Executive Director
  - ▶ Communications Director
  - ▶ Membership Director
  - ▶ Policy Director
- ▶ 150 member organizations
- ▶ 12-member board of directors

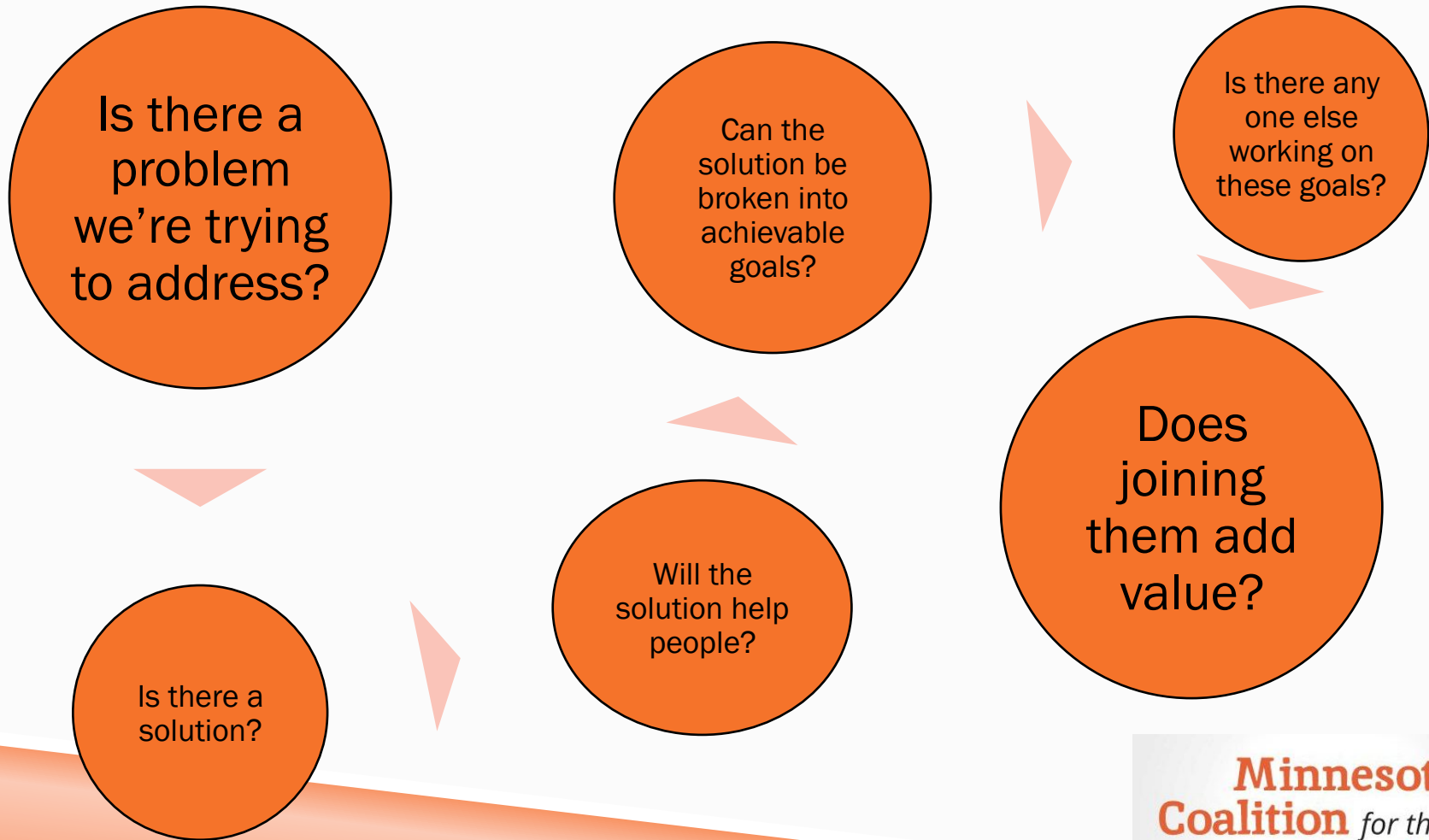


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# LEADING EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY IN CHALLENGING TIMES

- ▶ \$100 million for housing in state's bonding bill (2014)
- ▶ Eliminating time limits on education for moms and dads on public assistance (2014)
- ▶ 24% increase in housing funding; 42% increase in homeless funding (2013)
- ▶ Increased welfare cash grant by \$110/month "housing allowance" (2013)
- ▶ Repealed "Family Cap" on public assistance (2013)
- ▶ \$37 million for housing in state's bonding bill (2012) – previous average ranged from \$0 - \$8 million

# CUTTING THE ISSUE



# ANALYZE STRATEGICALLY

Can you  
build a  
coalition to  
work on  
these goals?

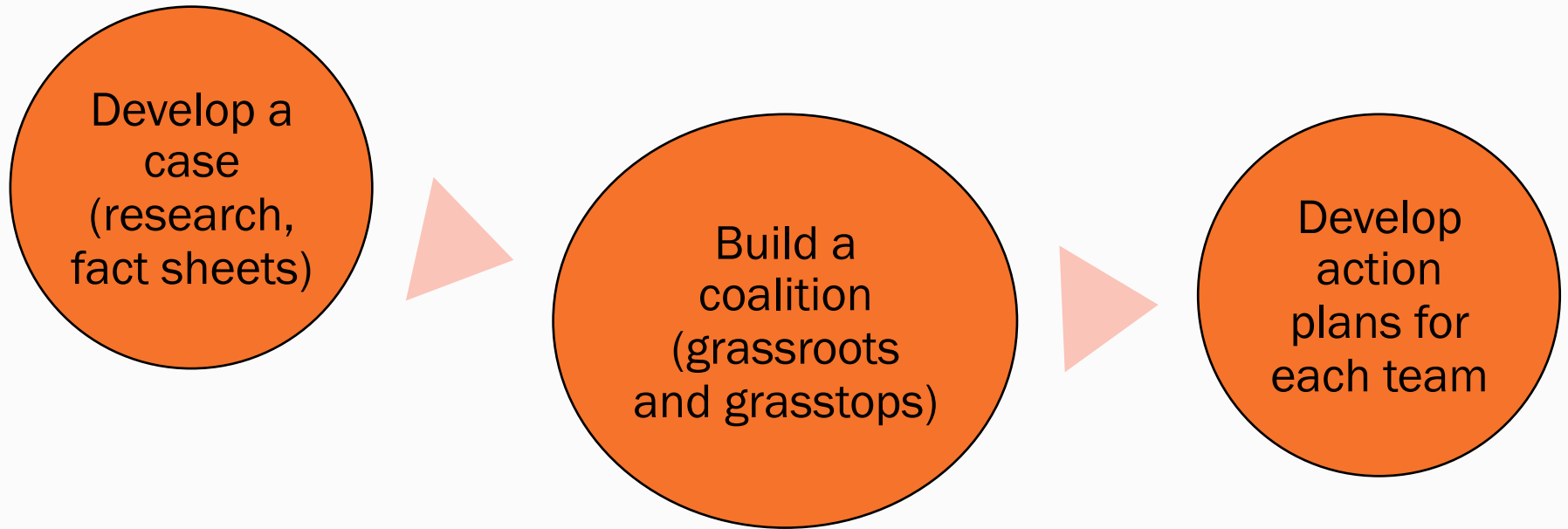
Does working on  
these goals build  
movement  
strength?

Is the goal  
big enough  
to challenge  
and inspire?

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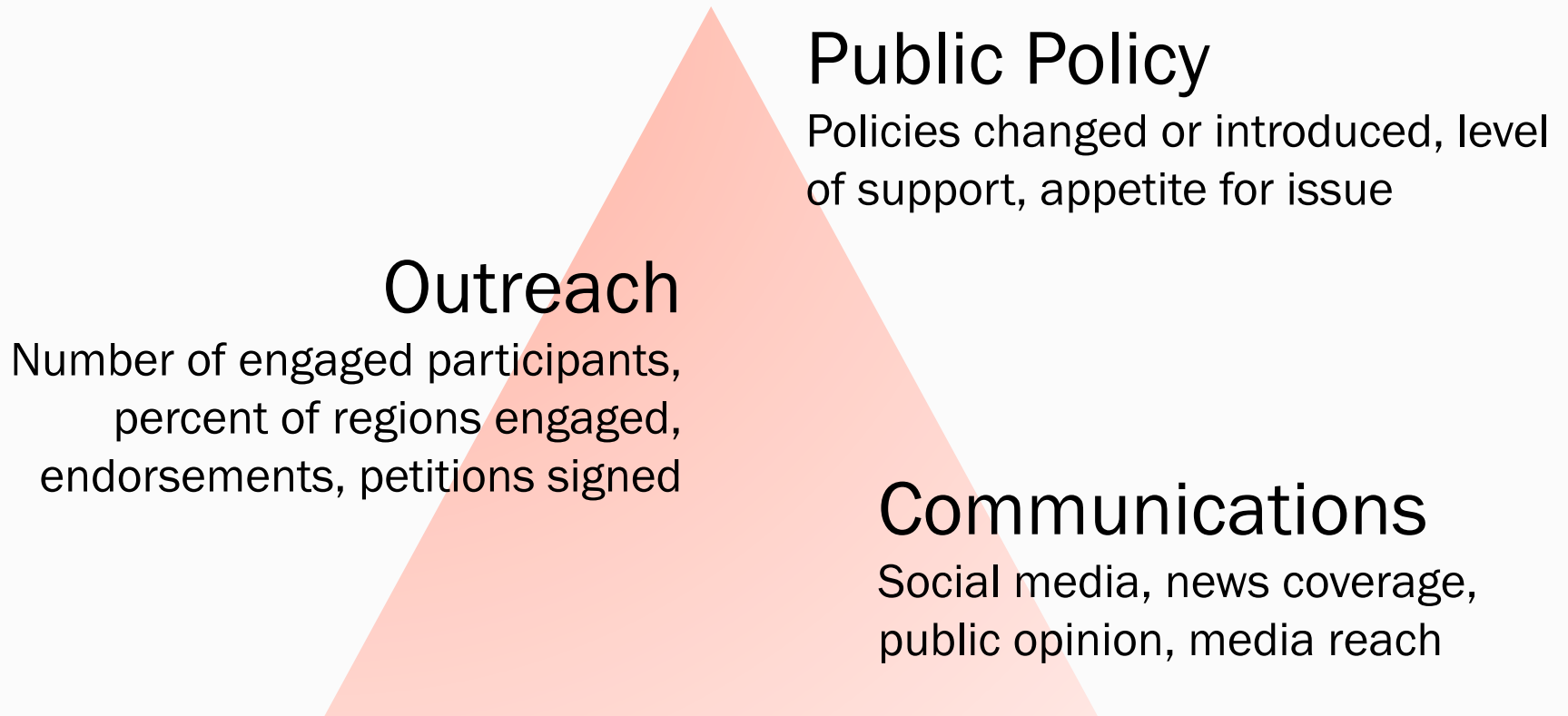
# GO, FIGHT, WIN!



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# CAMPAIGN PLAN BASICS

## Build evaluation into your plan



# POWER MAPPING EXERCISE

Who are the primary and secondary change-drivers?

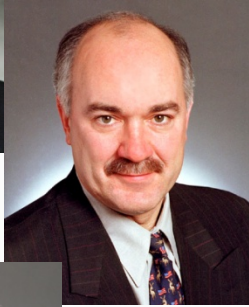
Power



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# CAMPAIGN PLAN : COMMUNICATIONS

## Tailor to Your Audience



- ▶ How do they prefer to get their information?  
Ex: Fact sheets, experts, constituents, trusted allies, concrete examples, broad theories
- ▶ How do they prefer to make decisions? Ex: Head (objectively) or heart (personal or group values)?

# CAMPAIGN PLAN : COMMUNICATIONS

## Understand Frames



- ▶ [Frameworks Institute](#)
- ▶ [Spitfire Strategies](#)
- ▶ [Don't Think of an Elephant by George Lakoff](#)
  - ▶ If a lens doesn't work with your issue, it's time to reframe the issue
  - ▶ Don't reinforce a frame that doesn't work
  - ▶ Reframe by changing your words, your attitude, and narrative

# CAMPAIGN PLAN : COMMUNICATIONS

## Keep it Simple



- ▶ Avoid the “curse of knowledge”
- ▶ *Made to Stick by Chip and Dan Heath* – **SUCCES**
  - ▶ Simple
  - ▶ Unexpected
  - ▶ Concrete
  - ▶ Credible
  - ▶ Emotional
  - ▶ Stories

# CAMPAIGN PLAN : COMMUNICATIONS

## Keep it Simple – Case Study

*Homes for All supports \$100 million in bonds for housing.*

*Housing is the foundation for stable families, strong communities, and a competitive state.*

*In the last decade Utah quietly decreased homelessness by 78%. Lawmakers knew it was a dollars and cents issue: investing in housing is cost effective.*

### A Winning Message for Minnesota Lawmakers

- ▶ We lead with the most important information
- ▶ Housing is framed as a common-sense community issue.
- ▶ It's accompanied by an unexpected story

# CAMPAIGN PLAN : COMMUNICATIONS

## Make media work for you

- ▶ Traditional Media
  - ▶ Have coffee with reporters who cover your issue
  - ▶ Send news statements
- ▶ Social Media
  - ▶ Use Twitter – be respectful, credible, and timely
- ▶ Build an Echo Chamber
  - ▶ Stay on message, bring in new and unexpected messengers





# CAMPAIGN PLAN : COMMUNICATIONS

## Plan and evaluate

- ▶ Use your campaign goal to guide communications activities.
  - ▶ Craft and test your message.
  - ▶ Share the message with allies to create an echo chamber.
  - ▶ Build relationships with reporters, editorial boards.
  - ▶ Use reports, anniversaries, ground-breakings, and ribbon cuttings for media opportunities. Link to campaign goal.
  - ▶ Stick to your message. Freshen it with new facts, stories, and messengers.

# WORKING IN COALITION

- ▶ Obvious allies
  - ▶ Make it easy to join
  - ▶ Focus on areas of agreement
  - ▶ Identify & utilize strengths
  - ▶  $1 + 1 > 2$
- ▶ Unlikely allies or community partners
  - ▶ Identify self-interest
  - ▶ Make them look good
  - ▶ Utilize their knowledge & connections
- ▶ Move forward respectfully



# SMALL GROUP EXERCISE

- ▶ Identify your issue – bold but achievable
- ▶ Identify potential partners – which ones do you have good relationships with now; which ones can you build relationships with
- ▶ Frame your issue in a way that will speak to your audience
- ▶ Identify your target(s)
- ▶ What can you accomplish – set one-year goal, broken up into monthly steps
- ▶ What will you measure to see if you're on track

# RESOURCES

- ▶ [The Lobbying and Advocacy Handbook for Nonprofit Organizations](#) by Marcia Avner
- ▶ [Advocacy Progress Planner](#) (Julia Coffman, Center for Evaluation Innovation)
- ▶ [Advocacy Capacity Tool](#) (Sue Hoeschstetter, Alliance for Justice)
- ▶ [What Makes an Effective Coalition?](#) (California Endowment, March 2011)

# STAY IN TOUCH

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