

The Three C's of Issue Campaigns

1. Communications

An issues campaign is a highly visible undertaking. It uses every available channel (like social media, public relations, advertising, Speaker's Bureaus, United Way's workforce campaign, etc.) to **put public attention on the issue**. It uses grassroots organizing methods (working through places like libraries, beauty shops, companies and anywhere people live, work, play or pray) and opinion leader outreach (through community boards and professional, civic, faith and philanthropic organizations and companies) to get the message out. The message is targeted to community segments, requiring deeper understanding of, and a more strategic relationships with, the individuals that make up your United Way's "friends and family" list.

2. Coalitions

No individual can wage an issue campaign alone. The Rev. Martin Luther King, Gandhi, Bono and other change agents built broad, deep coalitions of supporters. An early grade reading coalition includes existing partners, volunteers and supports as well as new allies who come on board because they are passionate about the issue and the solution strategies. But the coalition also includes individuals, like parents or teachers or students. Building or joining a **community-wide coalition of individuals and institutions** is critical to launching an effective issues campaign. The coalition continually grows, and is part of the process of elevating the issue, assessing the community landscape, and co-creating solution strategies that everyone can help advance.

3. Call to Action

An effective issues campaign does more than decry the problem. It highlights both the community **challenge and the opportunity**, offering people from every walk of life a way to be part of the solution. It urges them to take meaningful action, in ways that advance research-based strategies rooted in (and co-created by) the community. Whether people are volunteer reading buddies, "book raising" to make sure disadvantaged kids have books at home, advocating for local school board support of school literacy programs or giving to a new early grade reading initiative, the call to action must drive strategies your community believes will work. Take a look at the national Grade-Level Reading Campaign (www.gradelevelreading.net), of which United Way is a founding partner, to see how the early grade reading challenge and opportunity is framed.