

POWER MAPPING: A QUICK GUIDE

Power mapping is a simple and effective way to (1) understand the power relationships that currently exist in a community, (2) identify the most important organizations and leaders to connect with, and (3) craft an effective strategy to grow community power.

Power mapping is most effective when it's done by a group of people in the community. All you need is a big sheet of paper and a few markers.

There are many ways to power map, but here's a one simple method:

- 1. Write the name of your organization(s)** near the center of the sheet of paper. Put a rectangle around each of them. If you've got multiple organizations, draw lines showing the ways they're connected. (You may also want to label the lines to explain the connection.)
- 2. Write the names of the most important leaders of each organization** just outside the rectangle, and draw a line connecting these leaders to their organization, and to each other as appropriate (again, label the lines when helpful).
- 3. Write the name of the other organizations, projects, and individuals** that have important connections to these organizations and leaders. Put rectangles around organizations and circles around projects; individuals are indicated by not having a shape around them. Then draw all the lines you need to explain how they all are connected, and label those lines when helpful.
- 4. And so on:** keep adding organizations, projects, and individuals—and the lines connecting them—until you feel like you've got a map that represents all the important players. Think about all your current and potential *allies*, *opportunities*, *obstacles*, *resources*, *advocates*, *threats*, and how they're all connected.

Once your power map is done, make sure to review and reflect on it as a group. What do you see? What's surprising, exciting, frustrating? What new possible assets, needs, relationships, projects, sources of strength, and challenges can you now identify?

And maybe most importantly: **who are the people (potential and current leaders) you need to do one-to-ones with**, and maybe invite to a meeting, a story circle, a project-planning session, or otherwise into the work?

