

How to Pass a Local Government Resolution in Support of Medicare for All

Working to pass a resolution through your city or town council is an important way to build momentum toward Medicare for All while at the same time empowering members of your community to make your voices heard.

There are several steps you can take along the way to help things go smoothly and create the grassroots energy necessary to secure your resolution's passage. Those steps are outlined below. They are not all-inclusive, but are meant to provide guidance. Feel free to adapt to your community's circumstances.

Here are the steps and a suggested timeline:

1. Find a Council Member to Introduce Your Resolution

The first step in the process is to find a council member to work with in drafting and passing the resolution.

- You can begin by scheduling a meeting with the council member who represents you.
- If s/he is not interested in taking the lead on this issue, ask which colleague would be likely to do so.
- If you are having trouble getting a meeting with your council member, try to meet with another member.
- Remember, council members are often busy and have a lot on their plates, so you may have to try e-mailing and calling a few times to set up your meeting. Be respectful, but be persistent.
- Reach out to a council person who you think is most likely to take a stand on this issue. If you do not know, you could contact a community organization that might be able to point you in the right direction.
- Bring sample resolutions to discuss with your council person.
- During your meeting, make sure to ask about the council's schedule and discuss a timeline for introducing and passing your resolution.
- Check with a city council aide, the city clerk, or the town manager's office to learn the correct procedure for introducing a resolution before you city council, county commission, etc. It may have to go before a committee prior to consideration by the local legislative body.

2. Plan an Organizing Party to Set Your Plan in Motion

Organizing parties are a great way to bring the activists in your community together to coordinate, get to know each other and engage directly in your efforts by taking on a specific role.

Week 1

- Schedule a meeting with the council member you believe will be spearheading your effort (do this right away). When you meet with the council member, invite her or him to attend your organizing party and publicize that s/he will be attending.

- Reserve a library or café for your party if you do not want to have it in your home.
- Create a Facebook page for your organizing party. This will make it easier for those who want to attend to spread the word and give people a place to learn more about what you're doing.
- Send out e-mail invitations to friends, family and community groups.
- Post information about your organizing party to online and newspaper event and calendars.
- Record a Public Service Announcement at your local radio or television station.
- Make announcements at the meetings of local organizations. Ask local organizations to sponsor your organizing party, support the effort to pass a resolution and publicize the information to their members.
- Make a flyer for your party. You can use our sample flyer and plug in your information, or make your own flyer.
- Make copies and post them in local cafes, stores, libraries, interfaith centers, etc.

Weeks 2 and 3

- Continue outreach as described in week 1.
- Follow up with local organizations that are considering getting involved. Don't feel bad about calling/e-mailing more than once. People are busy, even if they want to support you, and will appreciate the reminder.
- Hold a meeting with your council member and schedule another one if the first person says "no." Try to recruit a diverse group, in terms of gender, race, and interest-groups (labor, community, business, faith, health care professionals, etc.) for your meetings.
- Make announcements and hand out flyers at organizational meetings in your area.

Week 4

- Make reminder calls and send reminder e-mails about your organizing party.
- Ask people who confirm that they are coming to bring something to share. This helps to make sure that they come, as they will feel responsible for their contribution.
- Look at resources for hosts and prepare documents and an agenda for your organizing party.
- Look at our sample agenda for your party and modify it as you see fit.
- Host your party.
- Send a follow up e-mail to attendees thanking them for attending and reminding them of your next meeting date and the commitments that they made.
- If you have confirmation from your council member about when s/he will be introducing the resolution, this might be a good time to reach out to well-known people (such as organizational leaders, clergy, musicians, etc.) to find out if they would be willing to attend a teach-in or press conference to announce the resolution when it is introduced.

3. Launch Your Resolution with a Press Conference

Weeks 5 Through 7 (or when your resolution is introduced in council)

- Reserve a place for your teach-in or press conference.
- If necessary, hold a follow-up meeting with your council member to discuss the wording of the resolution. While language is important, do not get too hung up over what your resolution will say. The specific language of each resolution is less important than passing a large number of resolutions and educating local government officials and the public about Medicare for All along the way.

- Reach out to individuals who you want to speak at your press conference or teach-in.
- Make sure you have a good group of people who will be attending. If you are planning a teach-in, use outreach strategies discussed above to ensure your teach-in is well attended. Also, try to get media in advance of your event to drive up attendance.
- If you decide to do a teach-in as part of announcing your resolution, schedule a room at your city/town hall or local community or interfaith center, plan speakers and use our sample flyer to advertise your event.
- Use other outreach ideas, such as sending e-mails and setting up a Facebook page to do outreach for your event.
- Ask organizations to let you speak to their groups about your event and send message to their listservs.

Week 8

- Follow up with your council member and make sure everything is on track to introduce the resolution along the timeline you have discussed. Again, don't feel bad about being persistent to make sure you get confirmation. Even the best-intentioned council member likely has many issues on her or his plate, and might have forgotten to take the steps necessary to introduce the resolution.
- Make follow-up calls to find speakers for your press conference.
- Send out a media advisory about your upcoming press conference. A sample will be posted online and sent to you.
- Call the media to let them know your press conference and/or teach-in is coming up the following week.
- Create a banner to put behind your speakers at the press conference.
- Confirm your reservation/permit for your press conference.
- Apply for a permit or reserve city/town hall steps to hold a rally prior to your city/town council vote.

Week 9

- Send out agenda for your press conference to speakers.
- Make reminder calls and e-mails to make sure local residents will be in attendance.
- Prepare press packets. They should include a copy of your press release, a copy of the resolution, fact sheets from our website and anything else you think is pertinent.
- A few days before the press conference, call the media and encourage them to attend.
- On the day of the press conference, send the press release to local media (but wait until the press conference is over so as not to suppress media turnout).
- Make follow-up calls to media who attended your press conference to make sure they have the information they need.

4. Pass Your Resolution

Demonstrating public enthusiasm for the resolution encourages council members to pass the resolution and gives them the political capital to do so. During this time, you can collect signatures, gather organizational letters of support and organize constituent visits to council members. You also should be planning to turn lots of people out for the vote at your city/town hall and hold a rally and another press conference prior to the vote.

Week 10

- Hold an organizing meeting for your group to check in on the progress of your resolution and make a plan for the rest of the month.

- Schedule meetings with a few of your group members and council members to encourage them to pass the resolution.
- Begin gathering petition signatures in support of your resolution.
- To gather signatures, you can table at farmers markets, flea markets and supermarkets, or stand on a busy street corner with clipboards.
- Ask local organizations to endorse the resolution and send letters of support to the council.
- Distribute flyers for the rally you will hold before the council meeting when the vote will occur.
- Use outreach ideas discussed above to make sure your vote is well attended.

Weeks 11 and 12

Continue to build support for the resolution. Remember, this includes:

- Gathering petition signatures in support of your resolution,
- Gathering organizational letters of support, and
- Meeting with city/town council members to encourage them to vote “yes” and work to address their concerns.
- Get members of your group to prepare public comments in support of the resolution. Recruit people to speak from various points of view and interest groups.

Week 13

- Send out a media advisory and begin making calls to the media.
- Make reminder calls and send reminder e-mails to turn people out for your rally.
- Hold a meeting to take care of last-minute logistics for your rally.
- Assure that you have speakers lined up and a sound system reserved if appropriate.
- Go over your contingency plan for bad weather.
- If necessary, hold follow-up meetings with city/town council people who are on the fence.

Week 14

This is when all of your hard work finally pays off! This is the target week for passage of the resolutions.

- Send out reminder e-mails and make reminder calls for the vote.
- Work to get media coverage before your vote to help draw attention and increase turnout for the vote.
- Send out an advisory about your pre-vote press conference and rally and make calls to media.
- Prepare a press packet; it should include a copy of your press release, a copy of the resolution, fact sheets from our website, and anything else you think is pertinent.
- Take pictures and video of your rally, press conference and vote, and share them later with national organizers.
- Have a place for media to sign in and follow up with media after the event.
- Make sure to contact media outlets that didn't show and fill them in on what happened.
- Present public comments in favor of the resolution if applicable. Often local governments vote on resolutions in bunches at a time, accepting public comment prior to the vote. Some require that those wishing to speak sign in. Pay attention to these procedures so you don't miss your chance.
- Take time to celebrate with your group after the vote!

- Make sure to send a thank you to your contacts and to the legislative body.

5. Share the resolution with your federal representative and senators.

Your resolution will have even more impact if you make sure your federal elected officials know about it and if you engage your local government champions in your advocacy with your Representative and Senators.

Week 15 and beyond

- Get an official copy of the resolution from the city or county clerk (usually available in a week or so after the vote) and send copies to the representative for your congressional district, your senators, state legislators as appropriate, and other influential groups, such as local unions.
- Ask the local council members who supported the resolution to join a delegation to meet with your federal elected officials to explain why they passed the resolution and to urge support for the federal legislation.