

# Checklist for Choosing an Issue

A good issue is one that matches most of these criteria.

The issue should:

1. **Result in a Real Improvement in Peoples' Lives**  
If you can see and feel the improvements, then you know you have won.
2. **Give the Members a Sense of Their Own Power**  
We should approach issues in a way that people develop "ownership" of the issue and come away from the action with a sense that the victory was won by them. This builds confidence and loyalty to the Union.
3. **Alter the Relations of Power**  
Building a strong Local Union with involved members creates a new center of power that is beneficial to those members and contributes to a strong statewide organization.
4. **Be Worthwhile**  
Members should feel they are fighting for something about which they feel good and is worth the effort.
5. **Be Winnable**  
It is essential that we take on "winnable" issues. The members must be able to see from the start there is a good chance of winning, or at least we have a good strategy for winning. Ask who else has won on this issue and how and get advice from people with experience. Don't become patron saints for lost causes.
6. **Be Widely Felt**  
Many members must feel strongly about the issue. It is not enough that a few people feel very strongly about the issue.
7. **Be Deeply Felt**  
People must not only agree, but feel strongly enough to do something about it. It is not enough that many people agree, but do not feel strongly.
8. **Be Easy to Understand**
9. **Have a Clear Target**  
The target is the person who can give you what you want.
10. **Have a Clear Time Frame that Works for You**  
Your strategy should have a timeframe.
11. **Be Non-Divisive**  
Avoid issues that divide the membership. Also watch out for issues that might divide us from the clients or the public.
12. **Build Leadership**  
There should be many roles for members to play.
13. **Have a Pocketbook Angle**  
Issues involving money usually are more widely or deeply felt.
14. **Be Consistent With the Union's Values**  
The issues we invest the Union's time and energy on should be ones that reflect our values.

Adapted from: [Organizing for Social Change](#), Midwest Academy