



Partnering with the Columbia University Labor Lab

What can Labor Lab offer your organization?

We are a team of social scientists based at Columbia University spanning labor economics, political economy, and sociology who are interested in partnering with worker organizations on questions of mutual interest. We bring rigorous, data-driven social science methods to the specific problems and questions worker organizations face, while working to build more general knowledge about best practices for strengthening the U.S. labor movement.

Using tools such as quantitative analysis of big data, surveys, and randomized control trial experiments, we can help your organization answer questions such as:

- What strategies and tactics work for organizing new units?
- How can worker organizations identify workplace leaders who have not been previously involved?
- What types of training are most likely to deepen members' involvement in the organization?
- What types of organizing strategies are most likely to contribute to successful union drives and elections?
- What appeals are most effective for encouraging workers to sign up for a union and pay dues? To contribute to COPE funds/PACs?

We have experience working with local unions, international and national associations, and worker organizations spanning a variety of sectors and occupations. In these partnerships, we regularly enter into data-sharing and data-use agreements with those organizations to respect member confidentiality and privacy.

Our outputs include accessible, actionable memos, slide decks, and briefings that summarize key insights relevant for the worker organization we are partnering with.

Depending on the scope of the project, partnering organizations may either fund the work directly or Labor Lab will coordinate with you to approach outside funders for project support.

What makes for a successful partnership?

Labor Lab partnerships are most successful when the partnering organization meets some of the following conditions:

- Has well-defined problems or questions that are answerable through social science research (e.g., what is the sequence of activities through which leaders become involved in my organization?);
- Collects and maintains data on members and member activity and/or could merge data from other, external sources on membership and member activity. Scale is important, and projects covering at least 100 (and ideally at least 1000) individuals are preferred;
- Is planning new or expanded initiatives where researchers could work together with the organization to design how the initiative is rolled-out (e.g., randomizing elements of who is reached by a campaign, or when workers are reached as part of a randomized control trial experiment); and
- Can commit time to working with the Labor Lab to design and implement the project.

What should a potential partner bring to Labor Lab?

For an initial conversation with Labor Lab, it is helpful to bring the following pieces of information:

- What are the problems or issues you are looking to solve and what kind of information would be most actionable in response to those problems?
- Are there opportunities for Labor Lab researchers to provide input into how new or ongoing initiatives are designed and rolled out?
- What data do you already collect on members, and in what format?

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