

GETTING THE BOYCOTT

ON TV AND RADIO

FOR FREE

THE ELECTRONIC PICKET LINES THAT CAN REACH MILLIONS

A Handbook on Public Service Access

prepared by

PUBLIC INTEREST COMMUNICATIONS  
1300 Sansome Street  
San Francisco, California 94111

## HOW TO GET THE WORD OUT or how to make effective use of United Farmworkers Media Material

We all know that the boycott is the key to victory for the United Farmworkers. And the boycott will work if we can reach thousands of people with the Farmworker message. The media can be an important tool in your efforts to organize, educate and mobilize public support.

All the other tools like picketing and leaflets at markets, house meetings, and mass rallies are essential. But it is also valuable to begin using the mass media...radio, TV, newspapers and magazines.

### RADIO AND TV

We have prepared public service radio and TV spots as well as some print ads. They are like commercials for the union and focus on the boycott. If we can get them on the air at just one station we can reach thousands.

The task of a media committee is to get the local media to use our public service ads. It should be made up of people from all levels of the community.

Many important members of your community will never come to picket a store but they would be willing to lend their influence to a media committee.

The committee should first contact others in the community (AFL-CIO labor council as well as various union, clergy and church groups and other social concern groups) to explain your plans for a media campaign and to enlist their support. Many unions have their own publications and would be willing to run one of the print ads or even do a mailing to their membership with a letter and reprint of one of the ads. Sometimes many of these groups also have radio or TV programs that they would be willing to use for a discussion of the boycott, etc.

Several influential members of the committee should visit all the stations in town. The person to talk to is called the public service director or community affairs director. Call him or her and briefly explain the Farmworkers movement, stressing whatever the manifestations are in your local community. If you don't

get a commitment over the phone (the commitment should be to run the spots regularly for a specified period of time), set up an appointment so they can hear the tapes or see the film spots. If they seem hesitant at all over the phone, don't press the issue - get an appointment to see them. It is harder for them to say 'no' to your face than over the phone. Impress upon them the importance of allowing the farmworkers to present their own message in their own context and explain that since many in the community are concerned and confused they would be providing an important public service by presenting these materials.

After playing the tapes or showing the spots, you should make it known that the Farmworkers are an important and respected movement. You should simply suggest that by carrying Farmworkers announcements, which urge people to do something useful as citizens about their feelings, they are providing a genuine service in the public interest.

If the stations don't accept the spots there are other methods which should be tried. One of the first is to have the other groups in the community contact the person you spoke with and the general manager of the station. One phone call apiece from labor leaders, business people (who may use the station for their own advertising), clergy and leading civic leaders could impress the station management of the support and importance of the boycott in your community. A telephone campaign from the general public who simply say, "We've heard about the spots and would like to hear them on your station." will add to the pressure.

At the same time this is happening the committee should continue to seek appointments with the station management to discuss the material. If you feel it is necessary, ask a lawyer to attend one of the meetings with you. If you still meet with resistance, you can file a complaint with the FCC in Washington.

While on the picket lines, you can provide lists of the stations (both the cooperating and non-cooperating) and their phone numbers for people to call. You might consider bringing the picket line to the stations.

It is important to remember that the determination of what constitutes public service programming is usually up to the stations. There are no hard and fast rules. One thing is certain. There is nothing in the FCC code that would prevent a station from carrying these spots.

Important: Always remember to write a letter of appreciation to the station for the free air time. It is to your advantage to create a rapport with the media. Also urge supporters to call the stations to thank them for running the material. Stations keep records of calls registering comments on 'controversial issues.'

## HOW TO GET IN PRINT

There are several ways you can go about placing Farmworker print ads, but we suggest that you start by soliciting free space. Be sure and contact college papers and union publications—they are probably more sympathetic. This means that you approach the newspapers and other publications in your area in the same fashion that we suggest broadcasters be approached:

1. Select a committee to visit the publisher;
2. Call or send a letter to request an appointment;
3. Bring a prominent group of citizens to the meeting with the representative(s) of the publication.

Unlike the broadcast media there is no legal provision that requires publishers to provide public service space and so getting free space may be much more difficult.

The only material you really need to take with you are copies of the ads. Start the meeting with a talk about the Farmworkers movement. Tell the publisher that your committee feels that he or she would be performing an important public service by donating space for a Farmworker ad.

(NOTE: If you know that some business people who advertise in this publication are sympathetic to the farmworkers effort, you might approach them before the meeting with the publisher and ask to use their names as "believing this to be an important service for the publication to perform." And if you're turned down by the publisher you might want to ask these business people to contribute space to run a Farmworker advertisement in place of their own.)

If the publisher won't give you an answer on the spot, leave the ads and let him/her know how to reach you for either more information or to let you know that they've decided to give you the free space. Always be sure to send a letter of appreciation for free space as well as having other people write letters or telephone the publication to express their appreciation.

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU CAN'T GET FREE SPACE

If you can't get free space here are some suggestions:

1. List 100 to 300 people you can ask to contribute to the cost of printing the ad. If your group already has a contributor's list you may not need additional names, but you don't have to limit the list to those people you know are "interested" in the boycott.
2. Print enough copies of the ad (see enclosure for proof sheets) to circulate to all the persons on the list.