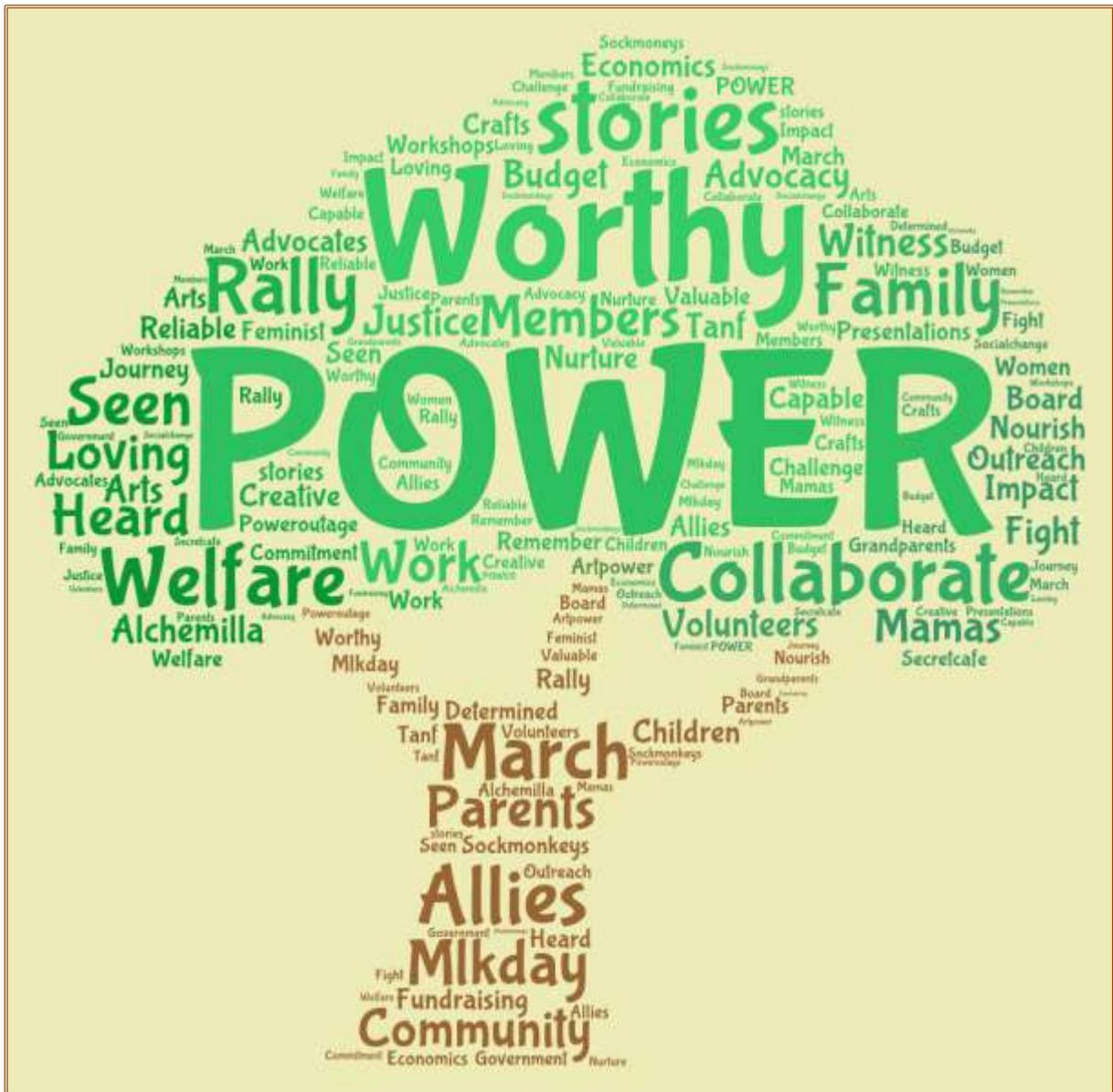


Appendix A: Advancing Voices Website Work Sample



Parents Organizing for Welfare and Economic Rights: A Social Media Marketing Plan

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COMSTRAT 563: Professional Digital Content Promotion

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Executive Summary and Overview

Parents Organizing for Welfare and Economic Rights (POWER) grew up out of the Welfare Rights Organizing Coalition (WROC) in the spring of 2007, continuing WROC's work of organizing low-income parents in Washington State to advocate for a strong social safety net and economic justice. As one of the only low-income member-led organizations in Washington state to fight for economic justice, **POWER is finely balanced between supporting low-income members to authentically engage from a place of personal power with policy makers and program developers shaping the welfare system, and in maintaining a reasonably funded organization that supports its members.**

Currently, POWER operates on a shoestring budget, with an all-volunteer cadre struggling to keep the doors open and services relevant and accessible to not only community members in need, but also to current and future donors. **An analysis of POWER's current communication tactics reveals the need for a coordinated strategic plan that can help elevate awareness, understanding and support of POWER's mission and vision. Additionally, a coordinated communication plan can help generate needed financial support.** POWER supports people's development of leadership capacity and collaboration skills in effecting positive social change -- a strength for any community. However, the community must be given clear information and examples of how POWER does this work in a consistent and routine fashion.

POWER is an organization that cares deeply about social and economic justice for low-income people. There is no doubt POWER currently faces a major challenge to its survival. The hope of POWER lies in its members and allies working together. **Social media is the outward face of the inward organization. Low-cost and free social media marketing options can provide POWER with tools to better position the organization for future security. Those tools and efforts need to be developed and used in a consistent and coordinated way for success.** This is crucial to POWER's ability to reach its vision of a world where children and caregiving are truly valued, and the devastation of poverty has been eradicated.

Goals for POWER's social media marketing plan

Reinvigorate membership and cadre of community volunteers and donors

Streamline communication processes for consistent messaging and community presence

***Strengthen POWER's reputation as a reliable and accessible organization
focused on key mission-driven initiatives***

A Snapshot of POWER

High level profile of organization [name, industry, product]	Name:	POWER (Parents Organizing for Welfare and Economic Rights)
	Industry:	Non-profit organization focused on supporting citizen engagement of women and families struggling with poverty; membership is composed of persons living in poverty and allies
	Products:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skill-building interactive workshops for low-income parents and people who work with low-income families • Welfare witness services for DSHS clients • Community resource referrals • Legislative advocacy and citizen engagement • Rural Needs Assessment for Thurston County
Digital assets [web and social media presence]	Web url:	http://www.mamapower.org/
	Facebook url:	https://www.facebook.com/mamapower.org
	Twitter url:	n/a
	Other...	Listserv presence with monthly newsletters
Promotional assets [current visibility – advertising, PR, awareness]		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly newsletters; handbills/flyers/posters on POWER events/activities • 1:1 street outreach; WOM -- word of mouth • Fundraising activities, including Sock Monkeys for Social Justice • Women's Economic Collaborative; now transforming into the Alchemilla Economic Collaborative
Core audience	Members and allies; opponents must be considered, as well	
Core target market(s)	Thurston county, surrounding counties, some King county	
Main messages [tag lines, popular affiliated phrases]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every mother is a working mother! • Low-income parents and allies advocating for a strong social safety net while working toward a world where children and care giving are truly valued, and the devastation of poverty has been eradicated. 	
Core competencies [what do they do best; better than anyone else]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen engagement of the disenfranchised and marginalized in political life • Hands' on, interactive workshops in poverty awareness, understanding and impact 	

"POWER is a grassroots, member-led organization of low-income parents and allies advocating for a strong social safety net while working toward a world where children and care giving are truly valued, and the devastation of poverty has been eradicated.

POWER educates the public regarding their rights to public benefits, supports them in their struggles to make sustainable lives for their families, provides leadership opportunities, involves them in building community and coalitions, and engages them in democracy, public education, and social change."

Why Communication Planning and Social Media Marketing?

Social media marketing is a crucial strategy for any business communication plan. **Today's "consumer" -- whether services or products -- expects to take an active role in the communication process.** Long gone are the days of passive receptivity to information and messages. However, the social media world rapidly changes. A clear plan is needed to manage the changes. In developing a communication plan, messages and strategies to increase POWER's visibility and grow membership and the donor-base, there are a few key ideas to keep in mind:

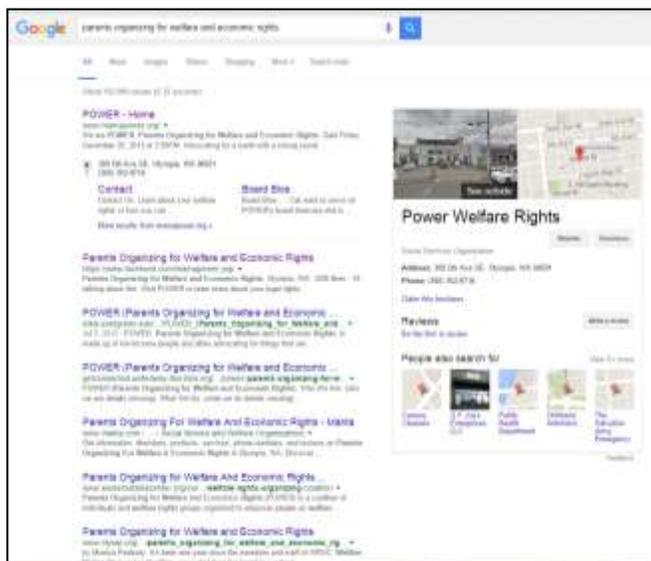
- People may or may not be ready to act (vote, participate, comment, donate, etc). Meet them where they are and offer options.
- People poke around on-line to explore and learn. They are looking for data, quotes, pictures, other like-minded people. Offer them content and relationships.
- Don't talk "at" or "to" people; build a relationship based on mutual interests and concerns which may at first glance appear unrelated to the primary issue of welfare advocacy.

Consider the word-art tree on the first page of this document. What words stand out? What activities result in those words? What do the words say about members and what they think important in their relationship with POWER? Communication content and messaging should reflect those interests and needs.

POWER provides a "niche" service as a non-profit organization. Traditional advertising does not work for niche services and specialized non-profits. However, web-based marketing that delivers useful content to the community member or the potential donor can increase POWER's visibility and presence in the community. **Web-based approaches to communication offer interaction, information, education and choice by telling compelling stories and educating and entertaining the people who view the materials.**

The communication content is not about the service or organization itself, nor about producing spin or hype. People are looking for authenticity and participation. In POWER's role as subject matter experts, the organization is well-positioned to **deliver information and content that invites consideration and participation: people's personal stories as well as people's skills, insights and strengths.** A consistent POWER-theme revolves around supporting members in developing leadership and supportive communities through multiple activities including arts, crafts, and legislative advocacy, to name a few. These sorts of activities are what make POWER stand out as a leader in the community. Communication messages should reflect that expertise and passion.

POWER's Current Internet and Social Media Presence



A basic Google search for "parents organizing for welfare and economic rights" elicited numerous hits; however, **all links and pages on the websites were outdated by at least two years**, with the exception of the POWER Facebook page.

It is worth noting that an incognito search for "welfare rights" on Google resulted in POWER as the first hit, a Wikipedia listing, a Yelp listing for the defunct WROC, and multiple sites in the United Kingdoms. The UK has a far more

liberal approach to welfare rights and advocacy than the United States. It is beyond the scope of this paper, but POWER may wish to spend some time exploring the communications methods and approaches used by sister welfare organizations in other democratic countries.

POWER values coalition-building in the community, shown by the organization's willingness to cross-post event announcements for other community organizations. However, cross-posting can diffuse POWER's visibility, and lead to community confusion regarding POWER's purpose. This should be thoughtfully considered in communication strategies.

POWER does appear in a general Twitter search, but only as a mention in fewer than ten Tweets, with the last mention in 2014, one in 2012 and the remainder in 2011. POWER's current Facebook page has 1,209 "likes" with activity that primarily consists of announcing POWER-sponsored or POWER-endorsed events, and providing some photos and comments of a fund-raising event in October 2015. Engagement is limited mostly to individuals "liking" announced activities or posts but does not currently show many interactive discussions. **Increased interactive discussions are important to increasing POWER's credibility and presence in the local community.**

A POWER board member has begun the process of updating the current website. However, it cannot be stressed enough that **in the absence of up-to-date information and resources, the organization will experience increased struggles in attracting and maintaining both a loyal membership as well as loyal allies willing to donate time and funds** to the success of the organization's mission. Consistent, timely communication is critical to increasing POWER's visibility in the community, highlighting accomplishments and strengthening the organization's reputation and base of support.

Competitive Analysis

Any organization operating primarily on volunteer efforts and extremely limited income faces multiple challenges. **At first glance, a significant drawback for POWER is its reliance on volunteers. On the other hand, social media thrives on the "indie" user to develop and share relevant content which increases an organization's visibility.** POWER is uniquely positioned as an organization that honors the individual voices of its members and its allies, and supports their leadership development. Social media provides an accessible tool for showcasing the value of POWER's work.

POWER has no lack of relevant material and resources to offer to its members, allies or the wider community. **One of POWER's particular strengths is in its ability to listen deeply to people that often have no other outlet for expression, and then help them to tell their stories in meaningful ways.** Platforms such as [Pinterest](#) and [SoundCloud](#) offer POWER members ways to showcase their talents and skills, as well as get their stories shared more widely.

A plus of social media marketing is that so much is free or very low-cost, and is geared towards mobile-friendly applications. This is an important consideration for POWER's target audience.

According to the 2015 PEW Research Report, *6 Facts About Americans and Their Smartphones*:

Latinos (13%) and African Americans (12%) are more heavily dependent on their smartphone for internet access than are whites (4%). Lower-income Americans also rely heavily on smartphones for going online – 13% of U.S. adults with an annual household income of less than \$30,000 are smartphone-dependent, compared with 1% of those whose family household income is \$75,000 or more.

(Retrieved from <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/04/01/6-facts-about-americans-and-their-smartphones/>)

Also, the different platforms are typically familiar to most users and the basics can be easily mastered. The trick is coordinating the use of the different platforms. In POWER's case, the need revolves around:

- ✓ **Updating** the main website and keeping it current.
- ✓ **Creating** an online community forum page for POWER members and allies to share information and gathering feedback on current and potential services.
- ✓ **Expanding** the use of Facebook to include showcasing new key initiatives and encouraging interactive discussions on issues of importance to members, allies and even opponents.
- ✓ **Using** social media platforms such as Pinterest to help POWER members and allies share skills, tell their story, and guide users back to POWER's website, especially the call-to-action
- ✓ pages for volunteering and donating.

A Framework to Consider in Planning Goals and Strategies

Given POWER's **limited budget** (approximately \$3800 available for the next three months which will just meet rent and utilities) and **reliance on volunteers**, it is extremely important that POWER take a strategic approach to communications efforts and the desired outcomes. The table below neatly encapsulates three typical approaches to action and the correlated attitude towards outcomes. It is important to move from a "good to go" viewpoint to a "cover all bases" viewpoint for maximum positive effect. **The key will be in coordinating efforts to share a consistent, current message across selected platforms.** POWER has some key tools in place and committed volunteers. As part of a strategic social media marketing plan, it is suggested that POWER choose no more than two or three social media applications and one monthly event or action, set specific goals, and focus efforts towards communicating those specific events or goals.

Table 1: Approaches to Digital Civic Action

General features
(note that some variation exists by practice)

Approach	Emphasis	Nature of goals / desired outcomes	Orientation towards outcomes
Casual	Ease, efficiency, speed of digital action	General goals; range from implicit to explicit	"Good to go": An assumption or hope that digital actions will lead to end goals
Purposeful	Leveraging technical affordances of digital media for action	Specific goals; often explicit	"Fingers crossed": Awareness that digital action may not be sufficient for achieving end goals
Strategic	Leveraging technical affordances in informed, tactical, and/or creative ways	Specific goals; usually explicit	"Cover all bases": Awareness that digital action may not be sufficient for achieving end goals; additional steps taken to increase probability of meeting goals



Social Media Platform Implementation Examples

POWER WEBSITE

<http://www.mamapower.org/>



Many non-profits experience fragmentation of effort and purpose as they navigate competing priorities, needs and interests on limited resources. **It is critical that POWER update the website to reflect current board member, staffing and program information.**

Potential allies, donors and opponents of POWER rely on this website as their source document for information on POWER's activities, stance on

community events, or to track POWER's community work. The website is one of the most visible aspects of POWER's credibility and reliability, recording the nature and importance of POWER's work.

POWER is also encouraged to **consider adding a mobile-friendly online community forum page for POWER members and allies to share information about welfare rights, advocacy and other topics of interest.** The forum should link to POWER's website which houses resources, information and calls-to-action. The forum can offer an interaction tool to supplement the currently limited in-person office hours. It would also expand POWER's presence and visibility, and provide space for members to further develop their personal leadership and advocacy skills. [ProBoards](#) offers a free, easy to use forum that is mobile friendly. POWER may want to consider communications' interns or work study students interested in developing and moderating a forum for social justice topics.

Another option POWER may consider is using free tools such as [WIX](#) to easily create press rooms to help spread the news about POWER events, such as MLK Day, ArtPOWER or the monthly POWER Outage. On-line newsrooms share specific event details and urge viewers to learn more by linking them back to the main POWER website and Facebook page. WIX can be made both desktop and mobile-friendly. An example of a POWER event newsroom can be viewed at:

<http://smb1969.wix.com/mlkday2016>



POWER FACEBOOK PAGE

<https://www.facebook.com/mamapower.org/>



POWER should expand its use of Facebook to build its community of supporters and followers. A specific goal for the POWER Facebook page should be to **increase interactivity and engagement with POWER members, allies and community members** with interests in social and economic justice issues. A more active presence on Facebook will increase POWER's visibility in the Olympia community as a viable, thriving and relevant organization.

This is crucial to maintaining strong donor relationships. Also important is that Facebook is a very familiar platform, and one that volunteers and board members can easily add to on a daily basis.

- **Post content and pictures of interest each day** for POWER members, allies and others in the community. Examples could include helpful hints for stretching food stamp dollars, announcing free and low-cost family activities, or strategies and reminders for small business owners. People go on-line looking for information and answers to their questions, and stumble across specific businesses.

It's much more rare for them to search for a specific business. This can be content that was developed and shared by POWER members or allies, or it can be linked to from another website or resource.

- **Post calls to action** that specifically support POWER's work, such as invitations to fundraisers, community events or advocacy actions. What about a specific time-limited task or concrete material need that a member or ally could provide? Follow up within one week by posting a picture or tagging the member or ally on Facebook and thanking them for their help. Everyone likes recognition.

- **Post reminders to POWER events, such as fundraisers or community gatherings** including linking viewers back to POWER's website, or a specific POWER webpage or newsroom. People are busy. Reminders can help keep people engaged and interested.

Photo	
Action words and link	You have the power to end poverty. Join us today! http://www.mamapower.org/volunteer/
Facebook message [40-60 words]	Join like-minded community members. Take a stand! Work with us to create a world where children are treasured, caregiving is valued, and poverty eradicated. What talents, gifts, time and experiences can you share?

Pinterest

<https://www.pinterest.com/>



POWER Outage events and fundraisers frequently feature hand-made arts and crafts, which could be easily showcased on Pinterest. For example, POWER could add a webpage to the current website showcasing member-made arts and crafts plus their helpful hints and tips. A POWER Pinterest account would then allow POWER to create Pins featuring DIY crafts such as sock monkeys. These Pins would link back to the specific POWER webpage. In addition to step-by-step directions on making sock monkeys, the webpage can introduce the history and purpose of POWER's *Sock Monkeys for Social Justice* initiative. This **increases POWER's visibility and offers content and resources that are of interest to members**

and allies. It also provides a gentle landing to more in-depth information on social and economic justice. Pinterest is just one way of many alternatives connecting multiple social media applications that is user-friendly and can link back to POWER as the source information.

The following YouTube links provide succinct instructions in creating a Pinterest account and making and using Pins. For Power's purposes, the critical point is to remember to first offer content of interest and then gently direct the viewer to action steps related to POWER's mission and goals:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1VjRmNKorfI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i-HI5uiZ6w0>

Keep in mind that people are looking for information which may not necessarily directly relate to POWER's mission or goals. However, POWER has valuable content they may be interested in, such as DIY tips and tricks. Through this indirect route, **POWER can spark the interest of potential new members and allies, and maintain interactive connections with current members and allies.** The three take-away ideas from the article link below speak to creating Pins that are:

- HELPFUL- Informative and useful to people
- BEAUTIFUL - So compelling and creative you have to look closer
- ACTIONABLE - Helping people take action on their interests

<https://business.pinterest.com/sites/business/files/how-to-make-great-pins-guide-en.pdf>

An Example of a Coordinated Social Media Marketing Approach to a POWER Event: the Annual MLK Day March and Rally

<p>Facebook: Should also include an event invitation, and additional brief posts and pictures from past MLK events posted every day or so.</p>	<p>Photo</p> 	
	<p>Action words/link</p>	<p>You have the power to end poverty. Join us today! http://www.mamapower.org/volunteer/</p>
	<p>Facebook message</p>	<p>Join like-minded community members. Take a stand! March with us in January 2016 and help create a world where children are treasured, caregiving is valued, and poverty eradicated.</p>
<p>Pinterest: Consider creating Pins from MLK sign creation or other prep activities, adding Pins from other social justice advocacy organizations, and Tweeting or sharing on Facebook Pins that address the importance of civic engagement and all the different ways to be involved, whether by attending the MLK rally or donating time or materials, letter writing, phone calls, email, etc., and include "how to"</p>		
<p>Newsroom site: Make the link available to local media for press releases, and also share the link to the site with other community partners, organizers, allies, and include link when using other social media platforms</p>		
<p>POWER Website: Ensure that the webpage "What's New" reflects the most current and specific information about the MLK Day March and Rally. Include hyperlinks to the "get Involved" page and the "Advocacy" page, as well as to POWER's other social media platforms. If a forum is available, point out the conversation and invite folks to participate.</p>		

Remember to close the loop after the event by posting pictures, quotes and other relevant stories from participants, as well as acknowledging volunteers and sponsors. When acknowledging volunteers and sponsors, take the time to link to their business webpage or Facebook profile. Social media acknowledgements are the new thank you cards, and carry a great deal of value as the mention of the donating organizations or volunteers also spreads their visibility in the community.

Monitoring and Measuring Improvement

The success of a communication and social media marketing plan will rest on the commitment of POWER's volunteers and members. The groundwork involves updating and maintaining the POWER website, as a first priority. As discussed earlier and demonstrated in the above example, POWER is well-advised to approach social media and communications in bite-sized portions, choosing no more than two or three social media applications and focusing on one monthly event or action to be highlighted in a coordinated approach across the different platforms.

The following template sample can be used as a planning tool at the monthly POWER board meetings to help plan for communicating POWER events or activities, including drafting a general key message and deciding on a visual to use, dates to post, and who will develop and monitor the final content. Not all platforms need be used every time -- but POWER should at a minimum update the website and Facebook, including post-event communications. Planning and content development should begin three months in advance of the event or activity, allowing board members, volunteers and allies one month to develop content and then fine tune at the next meeting before posting. The person assigned to the specific platform should continue to monitor for interaction, and provide a follow-up posting including visuals of the completed activity or event. This is also an ideal time to acknowledge volunteers or donors who helped make the event or activity possible.

POWER Event/Activity:				
<i>Social Media Platform</i>	<i>Who?</i>	<i>Key Message(s)</i>	<i>Visuals</i>	<i>Post-by date</i>
POWER Website - specific webpage				
Facebook event announcement				
Pinterest				
Cross-posting by other organizations				
Event newsroom				
Other tactics: posters, handbills, fliers				

It is important for any non-profit business, small or large, to monitor their communications and social media marketing efforts over time to see if they are positively impacting membership, volunteers and donors with consistent messaging and community presence focused on key member and mission-

driven initiatives. Given POWER's current financial straits and high potential for board member and volunteer burn-out, it is important to keep goals and measurement realistic and attainable. Some ways that the POWER board might consider on a quarterly basis tracking and evaluating the effectiveness of the communication tactics include:

- Timely completion of communication tasks by board directors, members and volunteers.
- POWER website is completely updated and maintained current.
- POWER's Facebook page shows increased "likes", reach and engagement. This can be monitored through the use of Facebook Insights at: <https://www.facebook.com/help/336893449723054>
- Increased attendance at weekly POWER member meetings, monthly POWER Outage events and other POWER activities and events.
- Increased demand for POWER services and expertise, such as providing "welfare witness" services for low-income persons and poverty awareness workshops for local organizations and educational institutions.
- Increase in monetary donations, volunteer efforts and intern interest.

These recommendations provide the starting place for a coordinated approach to communications with a focus on using social media. Basic social media platforms provide free or low-cost, accessible and familiar tools which a non-profit organization reliant on volunteer efforts can use to set the stage for increased visibility -- essential to maintaining a consistent donor base. By choosing a two or three key platforms, focusing efforts on fewer events or activities, and planning ahead to ensure synchronized up-to-date communications, POWER should be better positioned for organizational stability and eventually, growth.

