1. Start with your values

What organizational values are expressed in your mission? Ask yourselves whether the organization's treatment of workers falls short of those values in any way.

Think about everything you want for the community members or constituency you serve. Are these goals reflected in the compensation and working conditions of all your employees and contractors?

2. Identify key areas of concern

Think about the most common concerns of organizers and other staff. (If you're a manager or board member and don't know what employees find unsustainable about their jobs, your first step could be a confidential survey, listening sessions or another way of gathering staff input.)

Of the 10 Key Areas listed in this toolkit that make jobs burnout-inducing or unsustainable, pick two or three to read first where you see red flags in your organization.

Skim the other tables for additional problematic practices.

3. Do a detailed self-assessment

Use the PDF tables as checklists for organizational assessment.

- Which problematic practices in the left columns ring true for your organization?
- What basic practices in the center columns are missing from your organization's HR policies, compensation system, internal communications or culture? Are there other solution ideas you would add?
- Of the aspirational practices in the right hand columns, are any desirable or feasible, now or in the long run?

Similarly, are there items on the DEI checklists in this toolkit you aren't doing now that could make a difference?

What problems do you see that aren't covered in this toolkit? Try drafting a similar table, with problematic practices in one column and solutions to their right.

Print out, download or recreate the relevant tables and rows, and mark them up to share with others in your organization.

4. Make easy fixes

Find some low-hanging fruit: improvements to organizers' and others' jobs that can be easily made by someone in the organization, without a major decision-making process.

5. Gather stakeholders for solution-oriented discussions

Who needs to be at the table to make major changes happen? Include decision-makers (board members and top managers), as well as organizers and other non-management staff who may have unsustainable jobs.

Provide stakeholders with self-assessment materials that juxtapose current policies (e.g., personnel policy or employee handbook, pay structure, DEI commitments) with the recommendations in this toolkit and other ideas for improvements. Circulate the results of any staff survey(s).

If major restructuring is on the table, click through the relevant links in the Reducing Hierarchy page and/or Unionization page to seek expert advice.

Aim for agreement on a list of goals. For each next step towards those goals, designate who will do it by when, including who will draw up the additions to the budget they would require, and create a tracking system for follow-up communication.

Consider inviting Staffing the Mission, All Due Respect or another organizational development outfit (such as Roadmap's list) to contract with your organization for ongoing consulting.

6. Implement changes

Consider forming an ongoing Change Team to guide the process over time, with members from all levels of the organization.

Communicate the change goals and their rationales to your funders, and ask for their support in future grant cycles, if not in the current one.

Discuss measurable benchmarks for how you will know the impact of the changes you make. For example, if one goal is to reduce organizer turnover, is this year's retention rate better than last year's? Consider surveying staff before and after the changes.

Remember to disseminate and celebrate any positive change in the organization. Your organization can be a role model for others!

> **Sound like a lot?** Yes these conversations can be complex—and they are well worth the energy. This process could take as little as 1 or 2 months with a concerted effort. The positive results will be noticeable within a year or less.

An organizer with a sustainable job

1. Is paid well and fairly
2. Has affordable health insurance and other benefits
3. Is surrounded by respect for all identities, and by efforts to rid the organization of oppressive dynamics
4. Is supported by thoughtful supervision
5. Has channels for their input to be heard and considered by decision-makers
6. Gets clear, transparent communication from top managers and the board
7. Has opportunities for in-service learning, professional development and promotion
8. Has a workplace conducive to physical and emotional well-being
9. Works reasonable hours, with enough paid leave to support a healthy work/life balance and to meet personal and family needs
10. Gets support to deal with the specific stresses of organizing.