Americans For Safe Access
AN ORGANIZATION OF Medical Professionals, Scientists and PATIENTS HELPING PATIENTS

ORGANIZER’S HANDBOOK 101

Preface .................................................................2
Getting Started with Americans for Safe Access .....................3
Working with ASA .......................................................4

BUILDING YOUR CHAPTER
Why an ASA Chapter .....................................................6
Chapter Structure ..........................................................8
Your First Meeting .........................................................11
Outreach and Recruitment ...............................................14
Volunteer Development ...................................................18

ORGANIZING SKILLS
Organizing Public Events ...............................................19
Organizing Turnout at Civic Events ....................................21
Organizing a Demonstration or Rally ..................................24
Tips on Public Speaking ..................................................32
Building Coalitions .......................................................33
Working Together ........................................................34

RESOURCES
Allied and Potential Allied Organizations .............................36
ASA Online Resources ..................................................38

For more information, see www.AmericansForSafeAccess.org or contact the ASA office at 1-888-929-4367 or 510-251-1856.
Americans for Safe Access (ASA) is the largest national member-based organization of patients, medical professionals, scientists and concerned citizens promoting safe and legal access to cannabis for therapeutic uses and research.

ASA works in partnership with state, local and national legislators to overcome barriers and create policies that improve access to cannabis for patients and researchers. We have more than 30,000 active members with chapters and affiliates in more than 40 states.

ASA provides legal training for and medical information to patients, attorneys, health and medical professionals and policymakers throughout the United States. We also organize media support for court cases, rapid response to law enforcement raids, and capacity-building for advocates.

Our successful lobbying, media and legal campaigns have resulted in important court precedents, new sentencing standards, and more compassionate community guidelines.

The mission of Americans for Safe Access is to ensure safe and legal access to cannabis (marijuana) for therapeutic uses and research.

ASA's stand on federal interference with medical cannabis state laws is one of zero-tolerance. ASA invests in traditional, battle-tested tactics such as legislative organizing, community outreach, phone-in days, petition drives, etc., and supports the use of non-violent direct action as means of escalating tactics to reach campaign goals. This is where you come in!

Mostly likely you are reading this because you have decided you can no longer sit back and watch the federal government continue its campaign against cannabis therapies in this country or because you want to engage your local government in creating sane polices for patients and patient access.

Passion is the first step to becoming a great activist, but it is not the only step. This handbook has been created to help you merge your passion with time tested skills that will help you direct your passion into effective action!

ASA's staff is always available to help you through the process of becoming a medical cannabis activist. We are available to help with trainings as well as day-to-day support.

ASA has a plan to end the federal campaign against cannabis therapies once and for all! A major part of that plan is creating a movement that can be ignored!

We hope this handbook provides you with some first steps to get started working with us and our other 30,000 members.
Getting Started

INTRODUCTION TO ASA

ASA’s Beliefs & Values

While many different issues bring people to the issue of medical cannabis, the following are the beliefs and values that guide our work at ASA.

- Cannabis is medicine and the truth is becoming more widely known and recognized
- Government should guide policy on compassion, care and scientific research
- The current federal policy on medical cannabis is hypocritical, immoral and a violation of basic human rights
- Government must be accountable to the people
- Everyone should have the right to produce, acquire and use their own medicine

ASA’s Goals:

There is a variety of work to be done on the issue of medical cannabis. ASA’s campaigns and programs all work to meet the following goals.

- End federal raids and prosecutions of medical cannabis patients and their providers.
- Remove federal barriers for medical and scientific cannabis research.
- Create comprehensive access plan for seriously ill patients throughout the United States.

ASA’s Campaign strategies:

In order to win safe and legal access for all, we must work at all levels of government to generate short-term victories while working towards accomplishing our long-term goals. The ASA campaign:

- Deepens the public’s understanding of cannabis therapeutics through public education, PR and outreach campaigns
- Broadens support on Capitol Hill and in various states to support safe and legal access to cannabis for therapeutic uses and research
- Mobilizes an emergency response network of activists nationwide to respond to federal law enforcement raids on cannabis patients and providers through public protest and non-violent direct action
- Builds broad coalitions with other patient support organizations, medical associations, and public health institutions to support safe access to cannabis for therapeutic use and to appropriately frame cannabis as a public health issue
- Creates, protects and expands safe access to medical cannabis in states that have passed medical cannabis laws

What you can do immediately:

- Become a ASA member: www.AmericansForSafeAccess.org/Donate
- Sign up to get ASA alerts: www.AmericansForSafeAccess.org/EmailLists
- Check ASA’s website to find out if there is an ASA chapter or affiliate near you
- Go to ASA’s website and print out all relevant organizing materials you may need: www.AmericansForSafeAccess.org
- Call a meeting of activists, patients, and all others concerned with medical cannabis access.
- Collect signatures on the "Pledge of Resistance", keep a copy of the list you build for your group, and send another copy to Rebecca at ASA. (Rebecca@SafeAccessNow.org)
ASA's campaigns are extremely inclusive and may be carried out by local ASA groups, local chapters of other like-minded organizations or by motivated individuals.

**ASA Chapters** — If there's not already a local group working specifically on medical cannabis, we encourage you to start an ASA chapter. Starting a new group can be a fun and challenging exercise. ASA chapters have a unique position of being connected to a national medical cannabis campaign, while also maintaining the ability to work on local medical cannabis issues.

**ASA Affiliates** — If you are already part of another like-minded group (SSDP, NORML, ACT-UP, etc.), you are welcome to work on ASA campaigns and serve as an ASA affiliate for your area. We will call on you to help with national actions and lobbying, and you can still do the other work your group does at regular meetings.

**Groups Working on ASA Campaigns** — If you are a part of a group that is not an ASA affiliate, your group can still work on national and local ASA campaigns. Some of our campaigns you can take part in include:

- Rescheduling cannabis
- Emergency response
- State campaigns for safe access

You can find out more about each of these campaigns and others on our website: [http://www.AmericansForSafeAccess.org/article.php?list?type&type=165](http://www.AmericansForSafeAccess.org/article.php?list?type&type=165)

**Individual ASA Activists** — If you are not part of a larger group, there are still several ways to plug into the ASA campaign. Some ways to get involved include:

- Planning an emergency response action after a federal medical cannabis raid
- Circulating ASA petitions and materials in your local community

- Joining a Medical Marijuana Patients' Union

**Benefits of Working with ASA**

- Start-up toolkits including an organizing handbook, media manual, citizen lobbying handbook, medical cannabis fact sheets, and a sampling of ASA literature.
- Monthly mailings from ASA including campaign updates, action ideas, and new literature.
- Consultation from ASA staff on local and national campaigns.
- Trainings lead by ASA staff on topics including lobbying, media, action planning, civil disobedience, and strategy.
- Ability to apply for monetary grants from the ASA office for local ASA work.
- Ability to order ASA literature, shirts and stickers at wholesale price for dissemination and/or fundraising.
- Networking opportunities with other ASA chapters and affiliates, including a monthly national organizers' call and membership to ASA's organizers' email list.
- Space on the ASA national website to post local activities, meetings and information.

1. **BECOME AN ASA MEMBER**

Becoming a member of ASA means you are not just supporting the medical cannabis movement, you are becoming a part of it. For as little as $35 a year you can ensure that ASA will be here to both support medical cannabis patients across the country and to fight to change the laws in order to achieve safe access. If you already believe in this work, become part of it. (Fill out the membership form in this section or donate online at [AmericansForSafeAccess.org/donate](http://www.AmericansForSafeAccess.org/donate))
2. APPLY TO BE AN ASA AMBASSADOR
ASA Ambassadors are a key part of the national movement for safe access to medical marijuana. They are also important community representatives for ASA’s campaigns. ASA relies on our Ambassadors to lobby elected officials, educate peers, and alert ASA staff to important political developments. Upon being accepted into the program, ASA Ambassadors receive online trainings, political updates, and the opportunity to regularly interact with other ASA Ambassadors across the country.

To learn more, visit: AmericansforSafeAccess.org/ambassador

3. APPLY TO START AN ASA ACTION GROUP
ASA Action Groups are informal clusters of activists who work together to stand up for safe access to medical cannabis. ASA Action Groups work on medical cannabis issues at the local, state, and national level. ASA Action Groups are more informal than ASA Chapters and they don’t have the same requirements for elections, etc.

To learn more, visit: AmericansforSafeAccess.org/actiongroups

4. START OR JOIN AN ASA CHAPTER
In the next section, "ASA Chapters 101," you will learn about the focus, purpose, and drive ASA Chapters provide to our movement and why they are the best way to get involved to secure safe access for our community.

5. ASA AFFILIATES
If you are already part of another like-minded group (SSDP, NORML, ACT-UP, etc.), you are welcome to work on ASA campaigns and serve as an ASA affiliate for your area. We will call on you to help with national actions and lobbying and you can still do the other work your group does at regular meetings.

To find out more, e-mail action@AmericansforSafeAccess.org.

BUILDING YOUR ASA CHAPTER

WHY AN ASA CHAPTER?

A. What does a great chapter look like?
Launching an ASA chapter is a great way to formally bring together like-minded activists in your community to work together toward ensuring safe access to medical cannabis. ASA chapters are part of a national network of ASA activists and staff who work together on a regular basis to achieve shared goals.

A great ASA chapter brings together vibrant activists in an environment of mutual respect, shared responsibility, and constructive political activism and creates a space for new advocates to plug in to the movement. The ideal ASA chapter is networked into the larger community and is a constructive voice for patients and providers of medical cannabis.

The best ASA chapters combine the art of conversation with skilled activism. They are considered by elected officials to be a principled voice and smart resource for community leaders who are interested in addressing the question of medical cannabis.

B. Focus on Medical Cannabis
ASA is solely focused on expanding safe access to medical cannabis. This means that ASA does not have a position for or against legalization of cannabis for non-medical purposes or on related issues, such as incarceration or sentencing standards for recreational drug use.

This also means that ASA chapters are not permitted to campaign for or against drug legalization measures or proposals. ASA and its chapters do not have a stand on cannabis legalization or laws related to other controlled substances.

For more information, see www.AmericansForSafeAccess.org or contact the ASA office at 1-888-929-4367 or 510-251-1856.
C. Nonpartisan
ASA and its chapters cannot endorse candidates for elected office. This would be a violation of the organization's nonpartisan and nonprofit status. ASA and its chapters are also not allowed to use funds to make contributions to candidates' political campaigns.

However, it is acceptable—and highly encouraged—to seek candidates' positions on medical cannabis issues. It is also highly encouraged to invite political candidates to chapter meetings or even host a meet and greet with candidates so they can get to know patients and ASA members in their community.

In addition, it is perfectly legal for ASA chapters to campaign for or against ballot initiatives, referenda, state constitutional amendments, bond measures, or similar measures. Any position that an ASA chapter takes should be in line with the ASA organization's focus on expanding safe access to medical cannabis. ASA chapters cannot take stands for or against efforts to legalize cannabis outside of a medical scope.

D. ASA chapters are NOT:
• One person
• Groups that dispense medication
• Groups that are linked to an individual medical cannabis provider
• Commercial entities or groups that make commercial endorsements or promotions

E. ASA resources and support
ASA chapters can depend on ASA for support, guidance, and encouragement. We want to provide you with the materials and tactical guidance to help you succeed. We also want to get you networked into our national community of chapter leader ASA activists.

Specifically, here are some of the resources ASA can provide as you build and maintain your chapter:

1. Online materials and support for newly forming chapters
2. Nationwide chapter leader conference calls
3. E-mail updates on local, state, and national ASA issues
4. Phone-based trainings on lobbying, media, action planning, civil disobedience, and strategy
5. Materials online:
   - Start-up toolkits including this organizing handbook, a media manual, citizen lobbying handbook, medical cannabis fact sheets, and sampling of ASA literature
6. Space on the ASA national website to post local contact information
7. Occasional opportunities to publicize your chapter's efforts via e-mail to ASA's large network of online activists

F. What makes a good chapter leader?
A good chapter leader sets the tone for respectful communication, fiscal integrity, and transparency in decisions and plans. Chapter members have a clear sense of how chapter funds are spent, how chapter decisions are made, and why they are all valued members of a team.

In addition, a good chapter leader keeps up with ASA alerts/actions, participates in national chapter conference calls, regularly submits new chapter sign-ups and memberships to ASA, and maintains written records of chapter income, expenses, and assets.

I. HOW DO I GET STARTED?
A. Check to see if there is already an ASA chapter in your community

With ASA chapters all over the country, it is worth taking a look online to see if there is already an ASA chapter in your community. To do so, go to http://www.americansforsafeaccess.org and click on "Community." Within that section is a list of all ASA chapters, affiliates, and other regional contacts nationwide.

B. Email action@safeaccessnow.org to apply to start an ASA chapter.

Send us details about your region, goals, and the people who are interested in participating.
C. Wait for our feedback

ASA approves requests to start new chapters based on a careful evaluation of the goals, accomplishments, skills, and enthusiasm of those involved. We want to make sure that our new chapters have the best guarantee of success, which means that we want to encourage committed local activists with a track record of collaborative work to apply.

We promise to give your application full consideration, but we can't promise that every single application to start a chapter is automatically approved.

If you want to follow up on your application, please send an e-mail to action@AmericansforSafeAccess.org.

Chapter Structure

II. CHAPTER REQUIREMENTS

• 10 ASA members who have made an annual membership contribution to the national ASA organization. Standard contributions are $35 per person, and there is a sliding scale for low-income contributors. The minimum individual contribution is $10.

To confirm that you have met this requirement, email action@safeaccessnow.org.

• Chapter Coordinating Committee: At least five members, including the Chapter Chair and any Vice Chairs.

• A Chapter Chair, elected by the full chapter.

• If needed, one or more Chapter Vice Chairs, depending on the chapter’s needs. Vice Chairs are also elected by the full chapter and are part of the chapter coordinating committee.

• A roster of meeting attendees. To participate in annual chapter elections, one must be a "chapter member" and attend at least two chapter meetings a year. The chapter election meeting is not included in this "two meetings" attendance requirement.

• Meetings that are at least monthly, publicized, and open to the public.

• A liaison between ASA and your chapter.

Ten ASA Members:

To start an ASA chapter, you need to bring together 10 ASA members who have made a financial contribution to ASA. ASA wants to ensure that our chapters adequately represent groups of ASA members in the communities where they are launched.

Chapter Coordinating Committee

The Chapter Coordinating Committee is the core leadership group of your chapter. These are the folks who communicate between chapter meetings and help streamline the process of running a good ASA chapter. Not every chapter member may want to deal with every detail of running an effective ASA chapter. This is the group of people that makes sure that chapter meetings are planned and that nitty-gritty decisions get made.

The Chapter Coordinating Committee is elected by the full chapter and must be at least five people. These five people would include the chair and any vice chair positions. Some of our best ASA chapters organize their Coordinating Committee with no single leader and make all decisions by consensus. If there is no single leader, one of the Coordinating Committee members should act as the ASA liaison.

Some chapters are on the smaller side of things—as few as 10 members total. If you have a small chapter, the Coordinating Committee can simply be the entire chapter.

Why is a Chapter Coordinating Committee useful? As your ASA chapter grows, you could eventually find yourself with as many as 25, 50, or more people attending your monthly meetings. It is important to have a core group that can communicate with each other and help keep the larger chapter running smoothly. Responsibilities may include coordinating
local volunteer positions, creating the agenda, email alerts, announcements, reminders, etc.

**Chapter Chair**

The full chapter should also elect a Chapter Chair who is the official coordinator of the chapter. Please note that the Chair should not make decisions without the approval of the Chapter Coordinating Committee. The Chair position should be viewed as the spokesperson for the group for the chapter, not a "boss."

**Vice Chairs**

The full chapter can also elect any Vice Chairs that the group agrees are necessary. Vice Chairs could include people focused on fundraising, chapter finances, community outreach, or even specific campaigns. The Chapter Chair and any Vice Chairs are part of the coordinating committee.

**Consensus-Based / No leader**

Some of our best ASA chapters organize their Coordinating Committee with no single leader and make all decisions by consensus. We highly recommend you implement this structure. One of the Coordinating Committee members should act as the ASA liaison when using this leadership model.

**Chapter Members**

One must be a Chapter Member to vote in annual chapter elections. To be a voting Chapter Member, one must attend at least two chapter meetings in the previous year, not including the annual chapter elections. The Chapter Coordinating Committee should track chapter membership with a monthly sign-up sheet for all meeting attendees.

**III. ELECTIONS**

Within a year of a chapter’s launch, the Chapter Coordinating Committee should hold elections in which the whole ASA Chapter membership participates. ASA Chapter elections should be held for the Chair, any Vice Chair positions, and remaining Chapter Coordinating Committee seats, or for the members of the Coordinating Committee if following the No Leader Consensus model.

**IV. CHAPTER DECISION-MAKING**

**A. Consensus:**

Both the Chapter Coordinating Committee and the full chapter should strive to make decisions through a process of consensus. Sometimes, relying on a majority vote is inevitable. However, the healthiest and strongest chapters arrive at their decisions through a process that is inclusive of the collective wisdom of the membership.

**B. Quorum:**

For a Chapter Coordinating Committee to make decisions, there must be a quorum present. A quorum is defined as a majority. That means that if your Chapter Coordinating Committee has five members, at least three must be present to make any decisions.

**C. Conflict resolution:**

As a rule of thumb, conflicts are best resolved in person. E-mail disputes rarely resolve peacefully, primarily because it is easy to read whatever emotion one wants into a text-based message. Only by sitting in front of somebody is it truly possible to emotionally understand where that person is coming from and how they are feeling.

**D. Dealing with problematic individuals and leaders**

Ideally, interpersonal conflicts with individuals who demonstrate problematic behavior patterns can be addressed through direct conversation, without involving the entire group. Sometimes, however, there are "problem" individuals whose behavior is repeatedly disruptive to the productive functioning of an ASA Chapter.

Examples of such behavior can include repeated unilateral decision-making, extreme argumentativeness, ongoing insults, or even threats.
In such cases, it may be necessary to remove a chapter member from the chapter entirely. Doing so requires a vote by two thirds of the entire Chapter Coordinating Committee. Please note that the two thirds vote must include all members of the Chapter Coordinating Committee. This means that a five person Chapter Coordinating Committee would need at least four people to vote to expel a chapter member.

When removing someone from the chapter, the Chapter Coordinating Committee should be clear with the individual as to what standards of behavior were violated. The Chapter Coordinating Committee should also provide a written notice articulating the behaviors in question and why those behaviors were unworkable.

Such a vote must not be taken over e-mail. The vote must also be documented and provided to the national ASA staff: action@AmericansforSafeAccess.org.

E. ASA Authority and Chapter disputes

ASA reserves the right to disband or otherwise intervene in ASA Chapter affairs. ASA staff prefer not to engage in such efforts, and our goal is to support ASA chapters as best we can.

ASA staff intervention or disbanding of chapters may occur in serious situations that include a breakdown of chapter leadership, irreconcilable chapter disputes, or chapter actions that violate the standards and policies outlined in this manual.

ASA generally commits to giving a chapter advance warning before intervening or disbanding the chapter. Advanced warning can include specific steps the chapter can take to address a specific problem and a timeline to do so. In extreme cases, ASA may make a unilateral decision without providing advance warning.

If an ASA chapter or individual disagrees with an ASA decision or warning, the chapter or chapter leaders may request a review by the ASA Associate Director or Executive Director.

Such a review may be requested by phone or email. The decision of the Executive Director is final in these cases.

V. ONGOING CHAPTER REQUIREMENTS

A. Community level:

Community Responsiveness

ASA Chapters have a primary goal of supporting medical cannabis patients and advocating for safe access to medical cannabis in the communities where they exist. This means that being responsive to the community is important.

At a minimum, ASA Chapters should maintain publicly available contact information on the ASA webpage and in any other appropriate community venues.

Public Meetings

ASA Chapters are required to hold meetings at least once a month. Meetings should be publicly announced at least two weeks in advance. Chapter meetings must also be held in a publicly accessible location that is accessible to those with disabilities.

ASA Chapter meetings should, if possible, not be held at a dispensary or other commercial medical cannabis location. This is to prevent ASA Chapters from being seen as explicitly or implicitly endorsing a specific medical cannabis related business entity. Also, we want to ensure that supporters and family members are welcome at these public meetings, not just patients and caregivers. If it is absolutely necessary to hold a chapter meeting at a dispensary location, the meetings should rotate among dispensaries so that it is clear that the chapter supports all of the local facilities.

Elections

Every ASA Chapter must hold annual elections that are publicly announced at least one month in advance. ASA staff must also be included in this notification. The results should be announced at the elections themselves, and the results should be publicly
announced within a week of the elections.

**B. With National ASA:**
ASA Chapter participation in monthly ASA conference calls: Every ASA Chapter should have at least one person from the chapter participating in national ASA monthly conference calls for chapters and affiliates.

**National ASA campaigns:**
All ASA Chapters must participate in national ASA campaigns and actions.

**Check-ins:**
ASA Chapters should be available for consultations and check-ins with national ASA staff.

**Yearly reporting:**
All ASA chapters must complete a yearly summary of the following:
1. Goals
2. Key accomplishments and challenges for the year
3. List of members
4. Name and contact info for the five Coordinating Council members and officers, if designated
5. Simple financial statement of income, expenses, and assets
6. Goals for the coming year
The national ASA staff will provide a report form. Reports are to be submitted by January 30th, following the close of the year.

**C. FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS:**

**Chapter bank accounts**
If needed, ASA Chapters should store their funds in a bank account that has two chapter signatories.

ASA does not provide bank accounts for ASA chapters or hold ASA chapter funds. Exceptions shall be made for one-time projects of $10,000 or more, where a donor would like to receive a tax deduction. ASA can administer such a fund for a small administrative fee.

Your chapter bank account is not a National ASA bank account. You should speak to a qualified accountant or tax advisor about the tax liabilities that may arise from opening a chapter bank account.

**Fundraising**
Local ASA Chapter fundraising is allowed and encouraged. When engaging in local fundraising, chapters should be clear to contributors that their contributions:
- are not going to the national ASA organization.
- do not count toward ASA membership.
- are not tax-deductible and do not receive a 501(c)(3) tax write-off.

**Incorporating as a Separate Entity**
ASA chapters are not allowed to incorporate as separate nonprofit entities. ASA chapters that are interested in doing so are encouraged to become ASA affiliates and incorporate as separate, non-ASA organizations without the ASA brand. Alternatively, ASA Chapters may ask another nonprofit to be their fiscal sponsor. A quick google search on "fiscal sponsorship for nonprofits" will yield important resources to guide you in this process.

**VI. PLANNING AND EXECUTING YOUR FIRST MEETINGS**
Talk to your friends and other like minded individuals. Even if you begin with only two or three people, don't be discouraged. Pick a meeting spot and begin advertising your meeting at least two weeks before it actually occurs. Hang flyers in targeted areas, call local papers and radio stations to get listed in their events calendars, and don't forget to tell

**Successful Meeting Tip #1**
Before the meeting plan a solid agenda, set out refreshments, learn people's names as they arrive, and introduce them to each other. Set out literature and a sign-in sheet.
Setting Meeting Rules

At the beginning of each ASA meeting, the facilitators should set ground rules for the meetings. Here are some basic rules that help meetings run smoothly:

- Do not interrupt others while they speak
- Raise your hand to speak
- Assume best intentions
- Be respectful when disagreeing
- Do not repeat others

In addition to these rules, facilitators should ask the rest of the group to provide ground rules for the meeting.

Sample Agenda

**It is most important to do two things during this first meeting: collect contact information and set the next meeting time and place.**

1. Pick a facilitator or two and a note taker. It is the responsibility of the facilitator to keep a meeting moving along on time, and to make sure the meeting sticks to the agenda so that everyone who wants to speak gets an opportunity. It is important the facilitator not "police" the meeting but guide it.

2. Read meeting ground rules and get a consensus from the group that they will be respected. The group may decide to add rules as well. It will be up to the facilitator to gently remind people of the ground rules if they are broken to keep the meeting running smoothly.

3. Introduce the agenda and ask for any additions. It is a good rule of thumb to have "announcements" as the last agenda item. This gives members the opportunity to talk about other items without filling
up meeting time to do so. Then go through each item and give a rough estimate of how long you want to spend on each item. It will then be the facilitator's duty to remind the group if they are going over time. If an item is taking more time than allotted, the facilitator should ask the group if they want to agree to add more time to the item or move on.

4. Do a go-around of introductions, including name, affiliation, and interest in the issue (be sure to specify that each intro should be limited to 2 minutes or this could take up your entire meeting). Pass around a sign-up sheet and collect numbers, email addresses, etc.

5. Read ASA’s mission and goals to the group to make sure that everyone is on the same page from day one!

6. Review ASA campaigns, how they apply to your group and what other challenges your community faces. Check with ASA staff before your meeting to get a list of most recent campaigns. Pass around Pledge of Resistance cards & collect signed ones later in the meeting to send to the ASA office.

7. Review upcoming events and actions that both ASA national are planning as well as local events such as city council meetings, court hearings, etc.

8. Brainstorm a list of tasks and steps that you need to accomplish for the items discussed in item #7 and get volunteers to take on items. Some examples of such tasks might be:
   - Media: Do you need a press release? Do you need media talking points for participants?
   - Outreach: Contacting other like minded groups to join you in your efforts, making flyers to ensure greater turnout, etc.
   - Art and visuals: Do you need signs, banners, t-shirts, or other visuals for the event?
   - Materials: Do you need something to hand out at the event to educate target audience?

9. Is everyone on e-mail? Do you need a listserv to stay in touch? Should you have a phone tree?

10. Dispatch: Review who is going to do each thing, including send out the notes and a list of contacts, and pass the hat for costs. Don’t forget to set the next meeting date and place! Close your meeting, thank the facilitators and participants.

11. Announcements: This is a time to allow those who want to share items that may be outside the realm of the agenda

12. Socialize afterward!

**Successful Meeting Tip #6**

Take notes and distribute to everyone soon afterwards. Start an email listserve to facilitate future organizing.

**Successful Meeting Tip #7**

Pass the hat at meetings to cover minor copying costs and materials for actions. Small donations can go a long way!

**VII BEYOND THE FIRST MEETING**

Before your second meeting, you should phone everyone in the group to remind them of the next meeting and try to get people to personally commit to attending. At the second meeting, decide on some action items to get started. You may want to host a benefit or other type of event to get your feet wet. This also empowers your membership to go on to bigger things. Look through the campaign strategy and the event options in this booklet and discuss them with your group;

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settle on one, develop an action plan, and follow through on it.

If your group is working well together, a good way to keep people committed and engaged may be to create committees or working groups to tackle major items. You can have break outs at these meetings for these groups to meet and report back to the main group. Some examples of working groups you may choose include:

- Media working group
- Outreach working group: Everyone should do this, but a group can schedule tabling and leafleting opportunities. Setting up a table is a great way to get free admission into events!
- Art in action working group: People who can put the time into making props, puppets, planning street theatre, music, etc.
- Alliance-building working group: Unlike outreach, this involves going to other existing groups, offering your group’s support, and soliciting theirs. These are the ambassadors—a very important and often-neglected role.
- Fundraising working group: Planning fun events that can support your work.
- Education working group: May plan forums, curriculum, develop leaflets, etc.

The working groups depend on the interests and abilities of your membership. Make sure one person is the primary contact for each workgroup and that that person’s contact info is included in the notes and available to all chapter members and the national office.

Remember to network with the national ASA office so we know what local groups have formed and can facilitate communication among groups. Please make copies of your participant lists and send them to us so that we can add the names to our national list. Copy the “Pledge of Resistance” and collect signatures, and send copies of that to the national office as well.

**Outreach and Recruitment**

Movements are not created overnight and they do not last without a constant flow of new participants and members. Outreach and recruitment is the most vital part of movement building. While one or two committed people can be effective in their advocacy, the struggle for safe and legal access requires diverse community input and includes several stages.

Don’t be intimidated; this issue carries 80% support nation-wide. That means that a large portion of people you will encounter already agree with you. It is your responsibility as an advocate to tell them how they can put their support into action! Remember, you are not begging for support, you are offering individuals an opportunity to participate in a movement that they already believe in!

Outreach and recruitment is often overlooked during intensive campaigns so make sure that you include components in all of your campaigns that will draw in new members and give them a way to participate. Solid outreach strategies will add new strengths and talents to your efforts and will ensure longevity.

Make it fun! While our work is serious and at times heart-breaking, outreach and recruitment is a way for you to meet new people, see new parts of your community, and spend time together. This section offers a few ideas for outreach and recruitment...

**A. USING THE INTERNET FOR OUTREACH AND ORGANIZING**

The Internet creates endless tools and opportunities for community outreach. Below are a list of Internet based opportunities to communicate with your members, supporters, volunteers, and the media.

**EMAIL**

1. Using your regular email software. The
simplest way to create and use email lists is to use your regular email software. This is a good choice for individual activists and for organizations in which the staff has little technical expertise and if your list has only a couple hundred subscribers.

For example, if you want to send out press releases, set up a personalized address book labeled "Media" that includes the email addresses of all the interested reporters you know. To send a press release to your "Media" list, put your own email address in the "To" field, and type "Media" in the "Bcc" field of the message header. That way, all of the reporters will receive the message, but only your email address will be disclosed.

**ALWAYS use the "Bcc" (blind carbon copy) field if you are creating an email list in your address book so that the email addresses are hidden to your recipients to uphold patient confidentiality.**

2. Activist E-mail Account and List Providers. There are organizations that offer free mailing lists to activists like Rise Up (www.riseup.net) and TAO (www.tao.ca). These organizations are far more trustworthy and sympathetic to activists than capitalist E-mail services but they have limited resources. Americans for Safe Access provides announcement-only email lists to active chapters across the country.

**Types of email lists**

**Announcement-only email lists:** This configuration provides one-way communication from the list owner to the list subscribers. This configuration is good for distributing electronic newsletters, action alerts, etc. When you configure a list for announcements only, you need a password in order to post messages so that you can determine who can post messages to the list. This type of list is best for a general alert list. People will unsubscribe to your list if their inbox fills up with emails.

**Moderated email lists:** A moderated email list allows for controlled two-way communication. Any subscriber can post a message to the list, but the list owner decides whether or not to post it. This gives the list owner nearly as much control over the content as the owner of an announcement-only list. The main disadvantage is that you'll have to read every reply you get from list subscribers in order to decide whether or not to post them.

**Unmoderated email lists:** In an unmoderated list, any subscriber can post a message to the list for everyone to see. This configuration gives subscribers the most freedom to communicate and requires very low maintenance, but it also gives the list owner the least amount of control over the content. This type of list is usually best for small groups like workgroups or committees.

**Open subscription process** (anyone can participate): An open subscription list allows anyone who is interested to subscribe without approval from the list owner.

**Membership-only lists** (subscription approval, password-protected Web sites): When you set up a list to require subscription approval, all subscription requests are forwarded to the list owner who will choose whether or not to approve them.

[Adapted from "The Virtual Activist" http://www.netaction.org/training/v-training.html by Shawn Ewald]

**SOCIAL NETWORKING**

1. FACEBOOK  Facebook is a great social networking tool that allows community members to connect with each other and share information.

Creating Groups on Facebook  Chapters and affiliates are able to create medical cannabis based groups for local patient advocates and chapters to engage in the online medical cannabis community. Members of the group are able to post events, articles, and information related to the medical cannabis community that other people can share among their friends. Proper outreach can become virtually unlimited.

For more information, see www.AmericansForSafeAccess.org or contact the ASA office at 1-888-929-4367 or 510-251-1856.
Creating Events on Facebook  Facebook allows people to create events to notify others of meetings, hearings, opportunities for court support, and other forms of activism. In turn, other members of the facebook group or community can share these events with their friends. Facebook allows for continual engagement with potential activists who might not otherwise be engaged.

2. YouTube The idea that one can "broadcast" themselves across the Internet provides endless opportunities for organizers. Chapters and groups can provide virtual updates or "broadcasts" about what is going on in their area. These area specific broadcasts can then be shared among the youtube community, email, Facebook, and other internet networking tools for all to see. Many local news stations also employ the use of YouTube or other social networking tools during news broadcasts.

B. PUBLIC OR EVENT OUTREACH: TABLING

Why Table? Setting up a literature and merchandise table at pertinent events provides outreach opportunities for your group, provides activities for members looking for something to do, and makes money. All of these benefits are essential for building your group and keeping it strong.

Where to set up a table—All of the following events and locations are useful and beneficial to some degree. The following is a list of opportunities, in order of political impact, that provide various benefits to coalition building: A. Big political events, demonstrations, and marches; B. Events of your own; C. Small events; D. Specific locations in your community. It is best to start with no more than one event or tabling effort per month and build up your momentum.

Supplies you will need—In order to successfully table and accommodate your volunteers, you should obtain the following (lightweight, durable materials are the best):

- Portable Tables (if none are available, a tarp laid out on flat ground will work)
- Folding Chairs
- Milk Crates (for transport; can double as chairs)
- Rubber Bands (wind is always a nuisance)
- A Cash Box and $20 in Small Bills for change (round your prices off to the dollar; it’s much easier). The cash box should also contain pens, pencils, tape, scratch paper, etc. As the day goes on, if you are accumulating a considerable amount of money in the cash box, take out all cash except what you need to make change and put it in a safe place. Keep careful records of financial transactions while tabling, with separate columns for donations, memberships, sales, and sales tax.
- Clipboards (for pledges of resistance and contact sheets)
- Literature Racks (not essential, but highly useful, especially if space is limited)
- Tarps and Rope (in wet climates)
- A durable hand truck with straps for transport is essential.

Presentation—Be sure that the name of your group appears on a sign or banner prominently displayed and visible from a distance. Make the table display as attractive as possible. A tablecloth and a variety of colorful books, shirts, eye-catching signs, posters, etc. will draw people to your table. Straighten lit-
erature periodically. For outdoor events, have with you a plastic sheet of some kind for a quick cover if it rains and a bunch of clean rocks (or rubber bands) you can use to keep pamphlets from blowing away. Take an up-to-date price list of all merchandise. All items should be marked with the price, whenever possible.

Outreach—The most important reason to table is to outreach and ORGANIZE! As people approach the table, stand up and engage them in friendly conversation. Talk about the issues and let them know how they can help organize or participate. Have cards with your next meeting date and location available. Always provide a sign-up sheet that offers further contact.

[Adapted from "Guidelines for Tabling" www.ivu.org/vuna/guidelines.html and from Steve Ongerth, East Bay IWW by Shawn Ewald]

C. PUBLIC PETITIONING

A great way to do public outreach is through petition gathering. Petitioning is a simple and effective alternative to tabling, especially for individuals or small groups. Here are some quick tips for successful petitioning:

• Choose high traffic areas to petition such as concerts, political events, college campuses or busy areas in your community.
• Print out several copies of a petition. You can use a petition found on the ASA website or one of your own.
• Rubber-band the petitions to pieces of cardboard. These handmade clipboards are often easier to handle than store bought clipboards.
• Make sure to have several extra pens on hand in case a pen is lost or runs out of ink.

• Greet people with a catchy line such as, "Help protect medical marijuana patients!"
• Be friendly and outgoing.
• Have fun!

D. APPROACHING OTHER GROUPS

Doing outreach to like-minded groups is essential to getting a new group off the ground or to expanding an existing group. When approaching other groups, always think about how you would like to be approached. Do research into their beliefs, goals and campaigns and try to see how your group’s work fits into those. Attend one of their meetings and introduce yourself. Ask if they would be willing to co-sponsor an event.

MEDIA OUTREACH

Think about utilizing local media not just as a tool for public education, but also as a tool for community outreach about your specific group. Write letters to the editor in response to medical cannabis stories and make sure to affiliate yourself with your group. Ask friendly journalists to write about your group before a meeting or event to publicize the event beyond your circle of activists. Send out press releases about your group’s activities and post the press releases on Facebook and other social networking sites to get the community excited about what you are doing.

Community Awards

A great way to recognize members publicly is to give out awards. Give awards to outstanding volunteers, accomplished leaders, etc. Name awards after past leaders or give awards creative names.
Volunteer Development

Chapter members and volunteers are the life-blood of ASA. It is important to remember that people come to ASA at different levels, and each type of member may have different needs. For example, new members can often feel overwhelmed and lost at meetings, while veteran members may feel bored or disconnected. Here are some tips on how to develop and retain effective volunteers:

Cultivating New Members

- Always begin meetings with introductions. Introduce the campaign and have a go-around for chapter introductions.
- Create an open environment geared towards education. Encourage questions and offer explanations.
- Give new members responsibility. People often will not continue activity with an organization unless they feel they are needed. Ask members to prepare a news summary for a meeting, create flyers, do phone banking, etc.
- Call new members to invite them to the next meeting. Since they have not yet made ASA part of their routine, they may forget.

Keeping Members Interested

- Focus meetings on action. While meetings can be educational and fun, always plan or execute some type of action. This will help members feel that they are involved in a campaign and not just hanging out with like-minded individuals.
- Ask for input from all members. A few vocal individuals can easily dominate a meeting. Make sure that all members know that their input is welcome. Designate a facilitator to ensure that nobody dominates and that all voices are heard.
- Recognize members for their efforts, publicly and privately. While you know how talented and committed your members are, they need to hear this. Give credit when someone has excelled on a project or committed energy towards ASA.
- Encourage members to socialize. People come to activist organizations for the politics, but they stay because it’s fun. Host social events after meetings or on the weekends. Go to movies or sporting events. Be creative and have fun!

Developing Leaders

- Find out about members’ skills, interests, and connections. You will never know until you ask. Someone might have media experience. Another member could like to talk on the phone. Maybe a member has a connection to a local politician. Find out and make use of these skills.
- Create distinct positions and responsibilities. This will help foster accountability. Some ideas are coordinators for media, fundraising, event planning, and recruitment.
Successful advocacy work requires a strong public education component. Public education campaigns help to enhance the broader community's understanding of the issues and facts at hand and influence policies and practices concerning safe access. Public education can happen a variety of ways, but a good event will do some or all of the following: project your group's political power, strengthen your group's cohesiveness, promote activism, gain new members, raise consciousness, and raise money.

**Teach-ins** can be held virtually anywhere and rely mostly on local talent. A teach-in has two parts: a learning or information sharing section and an interactive section to put the information into action (e.g., letterwriting or planning future actions). An interesting and fun agenda will draw a larger audience.

**Panel discussions** involve the public in your event. Experts on your issue each give a very brief presentation, and then answer questions from the audience. A successful panel discussion takes a lot of planning, but tends to draw new people to an issue.

**Debates** are similar to panel discussions except that they present opposing sides of a single issue. Opponents can be drawn from law enforcement, academia, politics, or criminal law. Be sure your side is both qualified and prepared on the issue. Practice role playing the debates. Don't be afraid to play the moral high card; behind those statistics are jailed medical patients, first time non-violent offenders, broken families, and other collateral damage of the ill fought war on drugs.

**Skillbuilding Workshops** can help to enhance the quality of volunteers engaged in your chapter or affiliate. Successful advocacy stems from a strong foundation of knowledge acquired by constantly learning new information, ideas, and people. Skill building helps to increase credibility and is a great way to improve the confidence of your volunteers. When advocates are confident in their activism, there is no limit to their potential for success!

**MEDICAL CANNABIS UNIVERSITY**

Host a teach-in with classes on legal issues, medical issues and political issues. Use doctors, lawyers and professors to teach classes. Give certificates to those who attend.

**Townhalls** are small and well-organized events designed to focus on a specific topic or singular issue affecting your local medical cannabis community. Town hall forums generally featuring a panel of legal, medical, or community leaders, educators, and/or professionals assembled before an audience to discuss problems and solutions concerning the forum's topic of choice. Well organized and highly attended town hall forums can provide support for the advocacy campaigns with which you are engaged, may provide a platform for highlighting interesting scientific development, an opportunity to highlight injustice, and to rally the support necessary to advance safe and legal access.
DOCUMENTARY FILM VIEWINGS

Documentary films that focus on some aspect of the medical cannabis movement can be an effective way to enhance the public's understanding of about the use of cannabis for therapeutic purposes and breakthrough negative stereotypes. Medical marijuana advocacy is a dynamic and interesting subject matter -- and documentary filmmakers are taking note. For example, Jed Riffe's award winning film "Waiting to Inhale" has been featured at events across the country and provides an excellent introduction to the issue. All that is required is a space which accommodates some basic audio/visual technology. To go the extra mile, you might consider inviting speakers to discuss relevant ideas highlighted by the film.

GENERAL TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL EVENTS

- **Be inclusive.** Think of ways to appeal to the interests of like-minded groups. Encourage participation by a range of community leaders, including patients, physicians, supportive lawmakers, and coalition partners.
- **Ask for action.** Always include a political action in your event, even if it is primarily a social or educational event. Pass around petitions, generate letters to lawmakers or to the editor of your local newspaper.
- **Promote, promote, promote.** The most common mistake made in advocacy is to spend too much time planning an excellent event and leaving little time to spread the word. A well planned event is only successful if people show up. Try to spend as much energy promoting an event as you do on planning it.

PUBLIC EVENT CHECKLIST

- 1. Determine topic
- 2. Determine target audience
- 3. Determine what kind of education event you want to hold to effectively convey your message?
  - a. Teach-in
  - b. Panel Discussion
  - c. Debate
  - d. Skill building Workshop
  - e. Town hall
  - f. Documentary or Film viewing
- 4. Create a Meeting Agenda
- 5. Define the action you want taken by the community at the public event.
- 6. Determine time date and location for event (keep in mind finding handicapped accessible location, and be respectful of people's schedules)
- 7. Determine what experts or speakers are needed if necessary
- 8. Assign roles and tasks, for example:
  - a. Community outreach coordinator
  - b. Event Promotion
  - c. Logistics coordinator (location, AV equipment)
  - d. Speaker or expert coordinator
  - e. Welcome or tabling volunteer
- 9. Get the word out!
  - a. Emails
  - b. Social Networking
  - c. Posters and Fliers
- 10. Compile all materials for event
  - a. A booth or table (if necessary)
  - b. Educational handouts
  - c. Sign up sheets

For more information, see www.AmericansForSafeAccess.org or contact the ASA office at 1-888-929-4367 or 510-251-1856.
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Civic meetings are an important venue for medical cannabis advocacy. We do a lot of work out of the public spotlight, but public meetings are a chance to articulate our message to elected officials and the community at large. Whether you are raising the issue on its own or chiming in on a legislative proposal, it is always a good idea to have a respectable showing at civic meetings. Turning out a crowd at City Council, Boards of Supervisors, or other public meetings is one of the most important strategies a grassroots organizer can use.

Public shows of support at civic meetings do not just happen spontaneously. If you have ever seen labor union members, parents, or housing advocates en masse at a meeting of the City Council or State Legislature, you can be sure that someone worked hard to make that happen. Grassroots organizers try to turn out crowds because it makes an impact. Elected officials and the media are more likely to take an issue seriously if they understand that a large number of community members care enough to come to a public meeting. This can have a dramatic impact on the decisions they make.

As a medical cannabis advocate, you will almost certainly need to organize or participate in turning out a crowd for a civic meeting at some point. It can be hard. Even those who believe in safe access have other priorities, including work and family obligations. You will also find that some potential supporters are reluctant to participate in public meetings because they fear reprisals. Sometimes you will change their minds. But even if you do not, there are many people who are able and willing to be part of a crowd supporting medical cannabis.

There are some basic steps you can take to turn out a crowd for civic meetings. How many people you can motivate depends on the lead time you have, the number of supporters, and how easy you make it to participate in a meaningful way. The most important thing you can do to mobilize a crowd is to build a community of supporters. You may find kindred spirits in your friends, neighbors, church members, or social groups. You may also network with potential supporters by organizing or participating in grassroots political groups, especially local ASA chapters. And finally, you may turn to traditional and online media, including an array of social networking sites, to find people like you who will show up for public meetings.

When you are ready to mobilize a crowd to make a difference, follow these simple steps:

1. **Find out when and where.** Check the agenda of your City Council, Board of Supervisors, State Legislators or other body to find out exactly when and where the meeting is happening. Participants will be discouraged if they have to dig for the time, date, and address themselves. Always clearly say what, when, and where in announcements about civic meetings. Think about special parking issues or other things people will need to know.

2. **Determine exactly what is happening.** Medical cannabis may be a general topic of conversation at a civic meeting, or
there may be a specific question or vote before the group. Ask meeting organizers or staff if there is a specific agenda. Are they voting on a resolution, recommendation, policy, or ordinance? If so, get a copy of any printed materials so you can be clear if you support, oppose, or have general comments. Always speak to the specific issue being discussed at the meeting. Getting off topic wastes your time and frustrates listeners.

3. **Make an announcement or invitation for supporters.** Write a short and clear event announcement. Be sure to include the specific what, when, and where information, and also be sure to tell those you are inviting why the event is important and what you want them to ask. Be ready with printed announcements to pass out in person and a digital version you can email and post online.

4. **Publicize the event.** Distribute announcements at medical cannabis facilities or other appropriate locations, post the information online, send emails, and use social networking sites to promote the event. Don’t forget to publish the event in community calendars in local print and online media. And of course, recruit your like-minded friends to spread the word. Nothing is more effective than a face-to-face invite.

5. **Meet early.** Ask your supporters to meet early to plan the event—maybe even a day or two before the meeting. You can use this advance time to agree on talking points and messages. You may also want to discuss and prepare for other strategies. Will you all dress in the same color, wear ribbons, or carry signs? Be sure everyone is on the same page for maximum effect. Check with the organizers or staff in advance if you plan to take signs or any other visual aids to a public meeting. These are sometimes prohibited in government meetings.

6. **Bring handouts:** Many advocates may show up without a clear idea of what is on the agenda. Bring a handout that has information about what is on the agenda, sample talking points, and next steps (date and location of next ASA chapter meeting).

7. **Arrive early.** It is important that you are there to organize and greet your supporters if you are part of the team organizing a turn out. Leave plenty of time for parking and finding the right room.

8. **Be friendly and respectful.** Others may disagree with you. Always be friendly and respectful to those with differing opinions and be careful to follow the meeting rules. You will alienate potential supporters if you are rude or disruptive. That is the opposite of what you are trying to accomplish!

9. **Collect contact information.** Have a sign-in sheet for those who support your position on medical cannabis. This will make follow up for future meetings easier. Get names, emails, addresses, and telephone numbers. Time permitting, you may also want to send a note or email thanking participants. This makes people feel good about their decision to participate and builds rapport among community members. Share this information with ASA so that we can help you build a strong local base of support.

You may have the opportunity to bring experts to your civic meetings. These could include doctors, scientists, legal experts, and other community leaders who may offer a unique and authoritative perspective on the topic being discussed. If you don’t know experts, use online resources or coalition building tools to make these contacts. You should talk to these experts before the meeting to make sure they are on the same page as advocates. You may need to provide them with background materials in advance.

Do not be discouraged if turn out at your first civic meetings is not as big as you hoped. It takes time to build a grassroots base. Others will see your early efforts and jump on board.
for future events. Elected officials and others at civic meetings will notice, too. The voice of an individual advocate is valuable, but decision makers are often more easily influenced by many voices. They know that ten people at a civic meeting represent a much larger base of support that is not present. Imagine what they think when you turn out 100 supporters!

Turning out a crowd is a great step in advocating for medical cannabis, but remember that follow up is just as important. You can use the attention your group gets to suggest solutions for medical cannabis and build support in the community. Do not be afraid to talk with the media at and after a civic meeting or to engage community members who have questions or concerns. The goal is to influence people after all. You can use civic meetings as an important part of your local medical cannabis campaign.

Resources for Promoting a Civic Meeting:

- Talk to friends, loved ones, church members, etc.
- Distribute invitations at medical cannabis facilities, etc.
- Join or start a local ASA chapter
- Use the ASA Discussion Forums—www.AmericansForSafeAccess.org/punbb
- Facebook.com, Twitter.com, MySpace.com, and other social networking sites
- Free calendars online or in newspapers
- Email your friends and ask them to spread the word
- Put up posters (with permission, of course)
- Call in to talk radio shows
- Pass out flyers in public places (get permission on private property)
- Ask to set up an information table at public events
- Use paid advertising, if possible
- Contact ASA at info@safeaccessnow.org or toll free (888) 929-4367
The people’s right to peaceably assemble and to "petition the government for a redress of grievances" is one of the most important freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution's Bill of Rights. The right to freedom of association is a bedrock requirement of a functioning democracy. Without this right, the people lose one of the best tools for making their views known to those who hold power. Marching in the streets, holding demonstrations, staging protests—these are some of the most effective ways of at once showing support for a cause, drawing new people to that cause, and attracting the attention of those in positions of power.

The street march and the corner demonstration have a proud place in US history and in the history of social movements around the world. The abolitionist movement, the women's suffrage movement, the labor movement, Gandhi's anti-imperialist movement, the civil rights movement, and the movement against the Vietnam War all made good use of marches and demonstrations. Today, that tradition is alive and well, from the streets of Seattle to the avenues of Washington, DC.

A. SOME TYPES OF DEMONSTRATIONS:

- **Vigil.** Candlelight vigils are a well-known way to remember lost lives or commemorate other kinds of victims. They are generally solemn and reflective and intended as a way to honor a person or a group of persons. Community members and media feel a natural kinship and sympathy for these events.

- **Picket Line.** This type of demonstration consists largely of a group of people holding signs and chanting and marching outside a building or office. If you have ever seen workers on strike, you have probably witnessed a picket line. Some picketers try to physically prevent others from entering the targeted facility, while others simply try to persuade them not to do so. Regardless of your tactic, ASA always advocates for peaceful picketing. You may be engaging in peaceful civil disobedience (breaking the law) if you block a sidewalk or entrance. Read more in "How to use the Tools in Your Toolbox."

- **March.** A march is much like a picket line—people hold signs and shout chants—except that the crowd is walking from one designated point to an agreed upon destination. Marches are usually a good idea when you are expecting a particularly large crowd or when you want to convey a message in the selection of your route or your destination. An example of a march is any of those that occur on the National Mall in Washington, DC such as the Million Man March.

- **Sit-ins and Other Types of Civil Disobedience.** When an injustice becomes so great that people of conscience can no longer tolerate it, non-violent civil disobedience can be a crucial tactic. Pioneered by American author Henry David Thoreau and made popular by Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., non-violent civil disobedience offers a way of taking direct action without resorting to force.

For more information, see www.AmericansForSafeAccess.org or contact the ASA office at 1-888-929-4367 or 510-251-1856.
Probably the most well-known type of civil disobedience is the sit-in. Typically, protesters occupy the space of a decisionmaker—a corporate executive, a university president, or an elected official—make a demand, and refuse to leave until the demand is met or negotiated.

In recent years, civil disobedience has become more creative. Sometimes protesters chain themselves together to block an intersection or lock themselves to a building’s entrance. Sometimes protesters scale down buildings to unfurl giant banners.

Important note: Civil disobedience is by definition unlawful. If you plan to organize a sit-in or similar demonstration, we encourage you to obtain legal advice in advance. We suggest the American Civil Liberties Union or the National Lawyers Guild.

B. ORGANIZING A DEMONSTRATION OR RALLY

Identify why you are having an event is the most important step: An effective protest or rally must have a clear target and message (see the worksheet in this section). A clear target and message will help with the following steps:

- Identify and reach out to supporters/Create a coalition: As with organizing any event—whether a house party, teach-in, or protest—it is essential to bring together a key group of people who are committed to the project. It is also useful to reach out to other groups to see if they would like to contribute to the demonstration. Campaigns work best when they are anchored by a coalition of groups and individuals. Who else might be interested in helping to plan the demonstration? What natural allies do you have in the community? Try to find coalition partners sooner rather than later. Coalitions work best when everyone is involved in the process from the beginning.

Building coalitions among different constituencies is not only key to organizing a big demonstration, it is also essential to forming an energetic and broad-based grassroots movement.

- **Assign tasks and determine roles.** It is useful to make sure everyone knows their assigned tasks. When organizing a demonstration, you probably want one person responsible for MCing the protest itself; one person in charge of getting the required permits and, if necessary, being in contact with the police; one person responsible for working with the media; and one responsible for signs, art, and chants. Everyone should be responsible for spreading the word to the general public.

- **Location-location-location.** Permits and officials: You want to hold your demonstration where there is a lot of traffic—auto traffic, pedestrians, or both. Because you want to connect with as many people as possible, visibility is the key. A lousy location can undermine even the most well-organized demonstration.

It is important that you know your rights regarding the use of space, whether you are organizing a demonstration on a college campus or along a public street. Many towns require permits for demonstrations, especially if you will be using amplified sound such as bullhorns. Permits are almost always required for marches since they may disrupt traffic. Talk to the campus or community police about your demonstration and determine what permits you will need. You may not need a permit for a protest of rally on public land, but there may be other laws that impact your assembly. It is almost always illegal to
trespass on private property, block entrances to buildings, or impede traffic on a sidewalk or street.

If you are planning to risk arrest, you should make extra arrangements. It is a wise idea to have trained legal observers on hand to take notes and document the event. The National Lawyers Guild can provide suggestions on finding legal observers: www.nlg.org or 212-679-5100. Never engage in violence (verbal or physical) or vandalism. This will upstage your message and complicate your legal situation.

- **Get the word out:** Turnout is crucial. Having a large number of people at your protest demonstrates broad public support for your cause. Both the media and the decisionmakers you are trying to influence will be looking closely at the number of people at your protest to see if you have real community backing. Develop a specific strategy for outreach and publicity and set a goal for the number of people you want at the demonstration. Then create a plan for reaching out to 10 to 100 times as many people as you hope will be there. Assume that only a fraction of the people you contact will actually show up.

Key to a successful outreach strategy is the production of materials like event fliers, direct mail invitations, email invitations, and public service announcements. Distribute the fliers as much as possible among friends and colleagues to be disseminated publicly at coffee shops, community centers, bulletin boards, cultural centers, other events, churches, schools, universities, etc. In this day and age, you should also be using web pages, social networking sites, and email to promote your event.

You can use the press as a tool to get the word out. Write a press release and send it to campus and local media to get the media to cover the event. Send a flier or public service announcement to radio stations and community newspapers to get the event announced on the air or in the events section of the newspaper. The sooner you have materials ready, the better, especially in regard to media.

- **Speakers and Schedule:** Whether you’re holding a solemn vigil or a loud march, you will want speakers at your event. Gather a group of people representing a wide range of constituencies—young people, old people, people of color, working class people, professionals, etc. Just as a large number of attendees illustrates support for your cause, so does a diverse range of speakers. Decide on the order in which you want your speakers to address the crowd. Give each speaker about two or three minutes and ask them to keep it short. Remember that this is a demonstration, not a teach-in.

Also, always make sure you have an emcee who is in charge of the speakers’ order. It’s this person’s responsibility to bring a bullhorn or amplifier and to keep the program moving smoothly. Letting an uninvited speaker address the crowd is risky. You never know what an un-vetted speaker may say. Try not to let strangers, sartorial nonconformists, or malcontents get control of the microphone unless you have given the matter very careful consideration.

- **Slogans and Chanting:** Don’t assume that you will suddenly think up chants in the heat of the protest. This won’t happen, so you need to prepare chants beforehand. A few days before the demonstration, set aside some time to brainstorm catchy slogans that can be learned quickly by a crowd. Be as creative as you can. Even if you’re working on a
very serious issue, it's always a good idea to come up with a chant that might make people smile. Keep in mind that the passersby are people you want to educate, not alienate. Do not use profanity or otherwise offensive language.

Make copies of the chants to give out to fellow demonstrators. If you are not an extrovert, have someone in charge of leading people in the chants.

- **Signs and other materials:** Colorful signs are essential for capturing people's attention. Make signs that have bold letters and clear messages—the fewer words, the better. You can paint your signs by hand or enlarge photos that illustrate your issue. Make sure your signs are legible from far away and make for good photo-ops. As with chants, the use of sarcasm or a play on words can be an effective way of communicating (see Art and action section below).

- **Puppets and other props.** Life-size puppets offer a fantastic way to dramatize your issue, and they make a great visual for television cameras. Other kinds of props like giant banners will also enliven your demonstration. Making art a central part of your protest will help you attract more attention. Art will also make your demonstration more fun for those involved. Plan ahead to make art and visual aids before the event (see Art and action section below).

- **Creative actions, skits and songs:** It's always a good idea to think of new ways to express your point of view. Maybe you don't want to have another protest with people chanting and shouting. Perhaps you want something more original.

Skits and other kinds of performance provide an excellent way to grab people's interest. Write and perform a short play that explores your issue. For example, anti-sweatshop activists have organized "sweatshop fashion shows" to show people who the real fashion victims are. A song and dance performance is another fun way to attract attention and get your point across.

- **Literature and handouts.** A bright, colorful sign may catch someone's attention, but then what? Most people won't have the time to stop and chat about your cause. That's why it's important that you bring educational materials to hand out—some sort of postcard, fact sheet, or flier that discusses your issue. The average person on their lunch break may not be able to hang out and learn about the issue, but if you give them something to stick in their back pocket, chances are that they will read it later.

- **Invite the media/prepare press packets:** A well-organized demonstration on a busy street corner can communicate with hundreds of people. But if the media covers your demonstration, you can reach 1,000 times as many. Make sure you designate someone to be responsible for doing outreach to the media. For details on how to do effective media outreach, see the Media How To in this guide.

On the day of the demonstration, make sure you have plenty of press packets prepared. A
press packet should have all the background material a reporter would need to cover your story. Include your original press release about the event (which should explain why you are protesting) and also any fact sheets or other campaign materials you may have. At least one person should be responsible for handing out press packets to reporters and also getting the reporters’ names so you can contact them about future events.

(excerpted from Global Exchange “how to organize a demonstration” www.globalexchange.org/war_peace_democracy/oil/howtoden.pdf)

C. UNDERSTANDING CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

Make sure you understand the difference between non-arrestable actions and civil disobedience. Civil disobedience is any action that involves breaking a law in order to change the law. Protesting in public is not civil disobedience. However, forming a human blockade to disrupt entrance and exit from a government building is. Specifically, civil disobedience constitutes incommoding, disorderly conduct, or trespassing. Civil disobedience has a long and sometimes controversial history in the United States—a tactic used frequently during the Civil Rights Movement, anti-war activism, global justice and HIV/AIDS advocacy.

Let’s be clear on one point—any individual in possession of a state medical marijuana license that authorizes the use, acquisition, cultivation or distribution of marijuana is committing an act of federal civil disobedience. Under the right circumstances and when it is appropriate, ASA encourages peaceful and non-violent acts of civil disobedience. ASA does not endorse or engage in any acts of violence or vandalism.

Any tool you use—direct or symbolic—can be lawful activism or civil disobedience. It is important that you are clear on which tool you are using, when, and why. Direct action incorporating civil disobedience is a relatively confrontational approach to activism. You can be cited, arrested, even go to jail for engaging in civil disobedience. Some activists never use these tools because they do not fit with their values or comfort levels. And, that is OK.

Organizing a Demonstration CHECKLIST

1. Fill out action planning worksheet
2. Identify other groups who may want to co-sponsor
3. Determine roles and assign tasks.
   a. MC
   b. Logistics coordinator: (Permits, water, bullhorns)
   c. Police Liaison
   d. Art committee
   e. Outreach and promotion committee
   f. Media liaison
4. Prepare a press kit and why we are here flyers for the event
5. Get the word out
   a. Emails
   b. Social Networking
   c. Posters and fliers
   d. Press advisory
6. Compile day of demonstration materials (Leaflets, sign-in sheets, copies of slogans and chants, signs, props, and banners)
7. Have fun!
D. ACTION PLANNING WORKSHEET

1. Action Targets
   a. ____________________________________________
   b. ____________________________________________
   c. ____________________________________________
   d. ____________________________________________

2. Key Messages
   a. ____________________________________________
   b. ____________________________________________
   c. ____________________________________________
   d. ____________________________________________

3. Action Themes
   a. ____________________________________________
   b. ____________________________________________
   c. ____________________________________________
   d. ____________________________________________

4. WHEN AND WHERE:
   Location: ______________________________________
   ______________________________________________
   ______________________________________________
   ______________________________________________
   Date and time: ____________________________
   ______________________________________________
   ______________________________________________
   ______________________________________________

5. Visuals (Signs, Banners, Puppets, etc.)
   a. ____________________________________________
   ______________________________________________
   ______________________________________________
   ______________________________________________
   ______________________________________________

6. Slogans
   a. ____________________________________________
   ______________________________________________
   ______________________________________________
   ______________________________________________
   ______________________________________________

7. Chants
   a. ____________________________________________
   ______________________________________________
   ______________________________________________
   ______________________________________________
   ______________________________________________
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For more information, see www.AmericansForSafeAccess.org or contact the ASA office at 1-888-929-4367 or 510-251-1856.
E. CREATING ART FOR ACTIONS

1. Art Should Communicate Your Message...Not Blur It.

When organizing an action, make sure that your political message will be understood in every possible photograph that can be taken of your action. Make sure that signs, leaflets, banners, and t-shirts are all on message.

For example:
- If we are asking for compassion, does it make sense to have a sign that says "F*** the DEA"?
- If we are saying that medical cannabis is a separate issue from legalization, should we wear shirts that say "legalize pot"?

It is helpful to 'think backwards'—imagine what the picture is you most want to see on the front page of the paper the next day and tailor your message toward that end. Accept it: You're not going to be able to communicate all the points and shades of gray about the issue you'd like to. Figure out the most important point and how to convey it concisely.

Examples of Effective Messages:
- Hands off our medicine!
- Safe access: It's the law
- We are Patients, Not Criminals

2. Types of Action Art

a. Leaflets

One of the most important tasks that is often overlooked is leafleting the public during demonstrations and actions. Activists too often end up leafleting other activists about other issues of possible interest, instead of concentrating on communicating to the as-yet-unconvinced or not yet organized. A good leaflet should include a number of elements:

1. Visual appeal. Make it pretty and legible and people will want to read it.
2. Explain clearly what the demonstration is about, in as few words as possible. People either read a leaflet immediately upon receiving it, or not at all. Try and make it as 'catchy' as possible. If more explanation is desired, put that on the back or include a web address, and those that are drawn in will read the details.
3. Include what our arguments are to our opponents; give information and facts that they can use themselves.
4. Include your group's contact information and any action that allies could take: i.e., your next meeting time and place, names and numbers of representatives that should be called, etc. Use leaflets as a tool to organize, not only to inform!

b. Signs

There are a variety of ways to make signs. Here are some possibilities:

1. Choose your canvas. Poster board works well, but cardboard cut from old boxes can be just as useful and is much more cost effective. Not all signs have to be square; think about shapes that can further your message, like stop signs, a pill bottle etc.
2. Lettering. Use paints or thick markers. Choose bold colors (red, black, dark green) or bright colors (yellow, orange, pink) outlined in black.
4. Images. These can add to or take away from your message. Again, simplicity is often more effective. Use images that are obvious, such as a marijuana leaf with a red cross or a picture of a well-recognized public official.

c. Making Protest Banners

1. Choose strong material. Paint drop cloth works great. You can usually pick this up at a hardware store for about $20, which buys you a 9'x12' canvass.
2. Cut the 9'x12' canvass in half and tie (or sew) together the pieces to form a longer 4.5'x24' long banner.
3. Attach grommets, which are also available at a hardware store. It's best to place the grommets about 3 feet apart from one another along the top of banner.
4. If the banner is to be hung, use rope or zip-ties.
5. Remember, it is illegal in some places to affix timber or metal poles to protest banners or signs in street marches. This can be overcome by using the cardboard tubes from rolls of cloth.

6. Paint your lettering! Keep it simple and short so that it can be seen from long distances. Black or red on white background is the easiest to see.

7. If the banner is to be out in the weather for some weeks, then it is advisable to paint all the material with a coat of paint before adding the text to prevent mildew.

8. Weights: You want to attach weights to the banner to prevent it from flapping or blowing in the wind. The cheapest solution is to attach plastic bags filled with some rice or sand to the bottom of the banner. WARNING: Make sure these weights are securely attached. It is a felony to drop or throw something from an overpass into moving traffic.

9. If you are making several banners at the same time, it may be advantageous to make a stencil and use a small paint roller. Banners made using a stencil usually look better but it still takes time to make a stencil and then touch up the banner where the paint has run under the stencil.

d. T-shirts

Labor Unions have used matching t-shirts for years as a way to highlight their numbers in a crowd and give participants a sense of solidarity. Matching t-shirts make good action visuals because they identify each individual as a part of a large group and provide another opportunity to display messages. You can have t-shirts made, but if cost is an issue, you can also just write on plain t-shirts with markers or use paint and stencils.

e. 2D Effigies: Making giant puppet-head likenesses of specific people

by David Solnit

Instructions for making a two-sided flat head with cardboard hands, a standard frame, and basic tunic costume.

1. Find & clip a photo of person you want to puppetize. A head-on shot that is black & white and clear is best.

2. Enlarge image at copy shop with oversize printers. Enlarge repeatedly on regular machine until you fill the space of an 11 x 17 sheet.

3. Then enlarge this sheet on an oversize printer to the desired size. For a ten to twelve foot puppet we usually enlarge the head as big as will fit on a 36 inch wide paper. Make two.

4. Cut the image out. Round out the hair. Trace around the edge of the face onto 2 sheets of cardboard without folds. Cut out with sharp utility knife.

5. Wheatpaste the face onto the cardboard, trying to avoid wrinkles.

6. Make a cardboard tube to fit the puppet frame. Glue & staple or tape the tube vertically on the back of your face, wheatpasted to cardboard once it is dry. Now glue & staple or tape your second piece of cardboard onto the back, stapling and gluing around the edges.

7. Paint, like paint by numbers, using watered down latex or acrylic paints. Highlight the light areas and darken the shadows. Leave the texture of the photocopy visible through the paint.

Puppetry & Street Theatre Resources

The Puppeteers Cooperative
www.gis.net/%7Epuppetco/index.html
This web page has tons of sketches showing how to make various kinds of puppets.

Wise Fool Puppet Intervention
www.zeitgeist.net/wfca/wisefool.htm
Wise Fool Puppet Intervention make beautiful puppets, as well as masks, stilts, and other street theatre props. A handbook is available through the website.
PUBLIC SPEAKING

Giving speeches and presentations is one of the most basic ways that an activist can communicate ideas. Every activist should have at least a little experience with public speaking, whether it is at a public meeting, chapter meeting, community group or elsewhere. Public speaking is not the same as casual conversation—although it is always OK to be yourself. Public speaking in the context of advocacy is specifically intended to inform, motivate, and persuade. But do not think you have to be a great orator to be an effective speaker. Just use these tips and keep practicing. For most of us, it is an acquired skill.

The key to being more comfortable with public speaking is to keep practicing. No one starts off as an expert. You just have to keep doing it until you feel relatively comfortable speaking in front of others. Don’t feel bad if you’re nervous. Even the best and most experienced public speakers feel butterflies in their stomach when they step up to the podium. The famous writer and lecturer Mark Twain once said, “There are two types of speakers: those that are nervous and those that are liars.” Feeling some nervousness before giving a speech is natural and healthy. It shows you care about doing well.

SPEAKING TIPS
Here’s how you can control your nervousness and make effective, memorable presentations:

1. Know the room. Be familiar with the place in which you will speak. Arrive early, walk around the speaking area and try practicing using the microphone and any visual aids.
2. Know the audience. Greet some of the audience as they arrive. It’s easier to speak to a group of friends than to a group of strangers.
3. Know your material. If you’re not familiar with your material or are uncomfortable with it, your nervousness will increase. Practice your speech and revise it if necessary.
4. Relax. Ease tension by going for a walk, doing some basic stretching, chatting with colleagues.
5. Realize that people want you to succeed. Audiences want you to be interesting, stimulating, and informative. They don’t want you to fail.
6. Don’t apologize. If you mention your nervousness or apologize for any problems you think you have with your speech, you may be calling the audience’s attention to something they hadn’t noticed. Avoid pointing out your own imagined inadequacies; your audience has a higher opinion of you than you think.
7. Concentrate on the message—not the medium. Focus your attention away from your own anxieties, and outwardly toward your message and your audience. Your nervousness will dissipate.
8. Turn nervousness into positive energy. Harness your nervous energy and transform it into vitality and enthusiasm.
9. Gain experience. Experience builds confidence, which is the key to effective speaking.

[Tips adapted from "10 Tips for Successful Public Speaking" www.toastmasters.org/tips.htm.]

TIPS FOR HANDLING Q & A

• If you don’t hear the question or
understand it, ask the questioner to repeat it.

- Try to keep calm, even if your audience is hostile or upset.
- Always respect the questioner, even if you do not like the question or the manner in which it is posed.
- Don’t feel offended if someone asks you a question that you feel you already answered in your presentation or a previous question. They may not have heard or understood the information previously presented.
- Honesty is the best policy. If you don’t know the answer to something, admit it— you can always offer to contact the person later with an answer.

[From "Handling Q & A" www.ecn.ab.ca/toast/qa.html]

There are also some very basic precautions you can take when you have to speak:

- Plan your comments in advance and take notes with you, even if you don't need them.
- Practice in front of a mirror, on tape, or with friends in advance.
- Offer eye contact with the audience, but don’t get fixated on any one individual.
- Smile when you speak. Listeners can "hear" a smile.
- Go slow, pause when needed, and remember to breathe deeply.
- Do not panic if you mess up. Just start again as if nothing happened. Most listeners will not remember.

WHAT IS A COALITION?

A coalition is a group of organizations and individuals working together for a common purpose. There are two types of coalitions:

1) "One issue" or event coalitions where all of the participants have agreed on one particular issue. The coalition is dissolved when the particular issue at hand has been solved or the event has been coordinated.

2) "Multi issue" coalitions have related issues. This more permanent type of coalition recognizes the value of mobilizing together for action over a longer time frame. To be effective, the "multi issue" coalition should have a date or multiple dates set for work to be completed. The coalition can always be reorganized and reconfigured if there is still a need for movement.

THE VALUE OF COALITIONS

Coalition building is needed when one organization recognizes it alone does not have the technical capability or people power to have a real impact on an issue.

Coalitions assist in:

- Setting priorities for action
- Helping to identify specific data and the informational needs from other groups and agencies
- Sharing resources and expertise
- Broadening the development of new audiences
- Improving the chances that the issue (or issues) will get coverage in the media

ANALYZE YOUR OWN ORGANIZATION BEFORE YOU BEGIN

The self-interests of your own organization should be analyzed before asking other groups to join a coalition. Ask yourselves these questions:

- What can be gained from joining with others?
- Will the advantages outweigh the
disadvantages?
• How can we best communicate the demands of other groups to our members?

IF YOU JOIN A COALITION, WHAT ARE YOU PROMISING?
Continual assessment of your position as it relates to the position of others in your coali-
tion is essential to creating an effective move-
ment. Successful coalition building is contingent upon the following rules of commitment. These rules should help keep all groups on the same track.
• Each organization must be committed to the problem.
• Each organization must be committed to coordinate to solve the problem, not just gain public recognition.
• Each organization must be committed to the belief that every other organization has the right to be involved.
• Each organization must be committed to open communication.
• Each organization must be committed to coalition recognition, not individual recognition.

In order to build a non-discriminatory world, we suggest the following principles and practices in our lives and in our work.

Working together: anti-oppression principles and practices

PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES
Power and privilege play out in our group dynamics and we must continually challenge when and how power and privilege play out in our practice.

We can only identify how power and privilege play out when we are conscious and committed to understanding how white supremacy, patriarchy, heterosexism and all other systems of oppression affect each one of us.

Developing an anti-oppression practice is lifelong work and requires a lifelong commitment. No single workshop is sufficient for learning to change one’s behaviors.

Dialogue and discussion are necessary and we need to learn how to listen non-defensively and communicate respectfully if we are going to have effective anti-oppression practice.

Personal Practices
• Challenge yourself to be honest and open and take risks to address racism, sexism, and homophobia head on.
• When you witness or experience an abuse of power or oppression, interrupt the behavior and address it on the spot or later, either one on one or with a few allies; this is about ways to address oppressive behavior that will encourage change.
• When challenging people’s behavior, try to be sensitive to promote open dialogue.
• Don’t generalize feelings, thoughts, behaviors, etc. to a whole group.
• Don’t make people "prove" their experience of oppression by challenging, calling them divisive or diminishing what they say. Give people the benefit of the doubt and don’t make assumptions.
• Challenge "macho bravado" and "rugged individualism" in yourself, your friends, and in activism.
• Take on the "grunt" work of cooking, cleaning, set up, clean up, phone calls, e-mail, taking notes, doing support work, sending mailings. Take active
• Be conscious of how much space you take up or how much you speak in a group
• Be careful of not hogging the show, speaking on every subject, speaking in capital letters, restating what others say or speaking for others
• Respect different views and opinions
• Balance race, gender and age participation
• People who haven’t yet spoken get priority
• Racist, sexist, ageist, homophobic remarks must not be tolerated

Organizational Practices

• Commit time for organizational discussions on discrimination and oppression
• Set anti-oppression goals and continually evaluate whether you are meeting them
• Promote an anti-racist and anti-sexist message and analysis in everything we do, in and outside of activist space
• Remember, these are complex issues and they need adequate time and space
• Create opportunities for people to develop skills to communicate about oppression
• Respect different styles of leadership and communication
• Don’t push people of color to do things because of their race (tokenism); base it on their work, experience, and skills
• Make a collective commitment to hold people accountable for their behavior so that the organization can be a safe and nurturing place for all

Meeting Practices

• It is the role of the facilitator to make the space safe and welcoming for everyone
• Become a good listener
• Don’t interrupt people who are speaking
• Be conscious of how your use of language may perpetuate racism, sexism, homophobia or ageism
• Try not to call people out because they are not speaking

For more information, see www.AmericansForSafeAccess.org or contact the ASA office at 1-888-929-4367 or 510-251-1856.
Allied and Potential Allied Organizations

**AARP**
www.aarp.org/

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization for people aged 50 and over. AARP is dedicated to enhancing quality of life for all as we age. They lead positive social change and deliver value to members through information, advocacy, and service.

**American Academy of HIV Medicine**
www.aahivm.org/

The American Academy of HIV Medicine is an independent organization of AAHIVM HIV Specialists™ and others dedicated to promoting excellence in HIV/AIDS care. Through advocacy and education, the Academy is committed to supporting health care providers in HIV medicine and to ensuring better care for those living with AIDS and HIV.

**American Civil Liberties Union**
www.aclu.org/

The ACLU works daily in courts, legislatures and communities to defend and preserve the individual rights and liberties guaranteed to every person in this country by the Constitution and laws of the United States. Their job is to conserve America's original civic values: the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

**American Public Health Association**
www.apha.org

The American Public Health Association (APHA) is the oldest and largest organization of public health professionals in the world, representing more than 50,000 members from over 50 occupations of public health. APHA brings together researchers, health service providers, administrators, teachers, and other health workers in a unique, multidisciplinary environment of professional exchange, study, and action.

**Drug Policy Alliance**
www.drugpolicy.org

The Alliance is a high profile organization working to end the war on drugs. The organization envisions new drug policies based on science, compassion, health and human rights and a just society in which the fears, prejudices and punitive prohibitions of today are no more.

**Interfaith Drug Policy Initiative**
www.idpi.us/index.htm

The Interfaith Drug Policy Initiative was established in November 2003 to mobilize people of faith and religious groups behind more compassionate and less coercive alternatives to the war on drugs.

**International Association for Cannabis as Medicine**
www.cannabis-med.org

The International Association for Cannabis as Medicine (IACM) is a scientific society advocating the improvement of the legal situation for the use of the hemp plant (Cannabis sativa L.) and its pharmacologically most important active compounds, the cannabinoids, for therapeutic applications through promotion of research and dissemination of information. The IACM declares that it is the right of doctors to be able to discuss the medicinal use of cannabis with their patients.

**International Cannabis Research Society**
www.cannabinoidsociety.org

The ICRS is dedicated to research in all fields of the cannabinoids, ranging from biochemical, chemical, and physiological studies of the endogenous cannabinoid system to studies of the abuse potential of recreational cannabis. In addition to acting as a source for impartial information on cannabis and the cannabinoids, the main role of the ICRS is to provide a forum for researchers to meet and discuss their results.

**Lymphoma Foundation of America**
www.lymphomahelp.org/

Lymphoma Foundation of America is the national organization devoted solely to helping lymphoma patients and their families.
They are dedicated to helping you find the best care available for your type of lymphoma. They offer support, experience, advice, and a helping hand. All programs and services are free.

**Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies**
www.maps.org

The Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies (MAPS) is a membership-based non-profit research and educational organization. They assist scientists to design, obtain approval for, fund, conduct, and report on research into the healing and spiritual potentials of psychedelics and cannabis.

**National Association of People with AIDS**
www.napwa.org

The National Association of People with AIDS is a non-profit membership organization that advocates on behalf of all people living with HIV and AIDS in order to end the pandemic and the human suffering caused by HIV/AIDS.

**National Multiple Sclerosis Society**
www.nmss.org

The mission of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society is to end the devastating effects of MS. The Society and its network of chapters nationwide promote research, educate, advocate on critical issues, and organize a wide range of programs— including support for the newly diagnosed and those living with MS over time.

**The November Coalition**
www.november.org

The November Coalition is a non-profit organization of grassroots volunteers educating the public about the destructive increase in prison population in the United States due to our current drug laws. They alert their fellow citizens, particularly those who are complacent or naive, about the present and impending dangers of an overly powerful federal authority acting far beyond its constitutional constraints.

**Patients Out of Time**
www.medicalcannabis.com

The mission of Patients out of Time is the education of health care professionals and the public about the therapeutic use of cannabis. Their leadership is composed of medical and nursing professionals with expertise in the clinical applications of cannabis and five of the seven patients (two wish to remain anonymous) who receive their medical cannabis from the US government.

**Students for Sensible Drug Policy**
www.ssdp.org

Students for Sensible Drug Policy is committed to providing education on harms caused by the War on Drugs, working to involve youth in the political process, and promoting an open, honest, and rational discussion of alternative solutions to our nation’s drug problems.
ASA Online Resources

**POLITICAL**

**Resources for Organizers**
www.AmericansForSafeAccess.org/Resources

Everything you need to be an effective activist: handbooks, outreach materials, graphics and more.

**Online Action Center**
www.AmericansForSafeAccess.org/OnlineAction

Online action items to make our voices heard. Identify your representative and send a free message.

**10 Ways to Get Involved**
www.AmericansForSafeAccess.org/10Ways

Ten ways you can get active in the campaign for medical cannabis patients' rights.

**Campaigns**
www.AmericansForSafeAccess.org/Campaigns

Here are the different strategic campaigns we use to achieve our goals of safe and legal access.

**MEDICAL**

**Join a Patients' Union!**
www.AmericansForSafeAccess.org/PatientsUnion

ASA is working with patients to form Medical Cannabis Patients' Unions based on shared diagnosis. Condition-based groups are now forming across the U.S. Patients' Unions are a support network for patients and caregivers fighting for the use of cannabis as medicine as well as a vehicle for lobbying and public education.

**Condition-based Booklets**
www.AmericansForSafeAccess.org/ConditionBooklets

We have produced a number of highly informative booklets on the use of cannabis to treat specific conditions. You can download free PDFs of booklets on HIV/AIDS, Multiple Sclerosis, Aging, Arthritis, Gastro-Intestinal Disorders, Movement Disorders, Cancer and Chronic Pain.

**LEGAL**

**Upcoming Court Dates**
www.AmericansForSafeAccess.org/UpcomingCourtDates

Here is a list of upcoming court dates of medical cannabis patients, caregivers, or doctors. Please support these members of your community.

**Write to Medical Cannabis Prisoners**
www.AmericansForSafeAccess.org/WriteToPrisoners

Show solidarity and support for incarcerated medical cannabis patients by writing to people on our list of Medical Cannabis Prisoners.

**MEDIA**

**Media Resources for Grassroots Organizers**
www.AmericansForSafeAccess.org/GrassrootsMedia

Helping local ASA affiliates get the message out is part of how we keep the issue before the public, with guidance on writing press releases, OpEds and letters to the editor, as well as getting media to events.