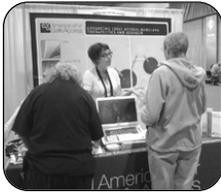


**The Medical Cannabis Advocate's Handbook**

**OUTREACH AND  
RECRUITMENT**



# 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.

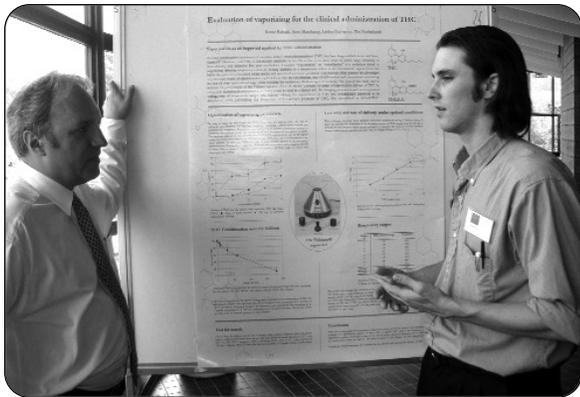
For example, if you want to send out press releases, set up a personalized address book labeled "Media" that includes the email addresses of all the interested reporters you know. To send a press release to your "Media" list, put your own email address in the "To" field, and type "Media" in the "Bcc" 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](http://www.riseup.net)) and TAO ([www.tao.ca](http://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 mes-



sages 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.

**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 literature 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/guide/guidelinest.html](http://www.ivu.org/vuna/guide/guidelinest.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

*Everybody can be great because everybody can serve.* —Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

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. For ideas on groups to approach, refer to the allied and potential allied organization list in the Coalition Building section of this handbook.



#### **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. For ideas on outreach, use the Media 101 section of this handbook.