



**Americans For Safe Access**

AN ORGANIZATION OF MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS, SCIENTISTS, AND PATIENTS HELPING PATIENTS

# CHAPTER HANDBOOK

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## Preface

**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 40,000 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 policies 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](http://www.AmericansForSafeAccess.org/Donate)
- Sign up to get ASA alerts:  
[www.AmericansForSafeAccess.org/EmailLists](http://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](http://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 Hunter at ASA.  
([Hunter@AmericansForSafeAccess.org](mailto:Hunter@AmericansForSafeAccess.org))

## Working with ASA

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:

**[AmericansForSafeAccess.org/article.php?list=type&type=165](http://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://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](https://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](https://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](mailto:action@AmericansforSafeAccess.org)**.

## **BUILDING YOUR ASA CHAPTER**

### **I. 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 con-

trolled substances.

### **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.

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.

## **II. 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](mailto: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,

## **Chapter Structure**

### **III. CHAPTER REQUIREMENTS**

o 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](mailto:action@safeaccessnow.org).

- Chapter Steering 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 Steering Committee (CSC)**

The CSC 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 CSC 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 Steering Committee with no single leader and make all decisions by consensus. If there is no single leader, one of the Steering 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 Steering Committee can simply be the entire chapter.

Why is a CSC 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 run-



ning 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 CSC. 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 steering committee.

### **Consensus-Based / No leader**

Some of our best ASA chapters organize their CSC with no single leader and make all decisions by consensus. We highly recommend you implement this structure. One of the Steering 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 CSC should track chapter membership with a monthly sign-up sheet for all meeting attendees.

## **IV. ELECTIONS**

Within a year of a chapter's launch, the CSC 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

CSC seats, or for the members of the Steering Committee if following the No Leader Consensus model.

## **V. CHAPTER DECISION-MAKING**

### **A. Consensus**

Both the CSC 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 CSC to make decisions, there must be a quorum present. A quorum is defined as a majority. That means that if your CSC 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 CSC. Please note that the two thirds vote must include all members of the SCS. This means that a five person CSC would need at least four people to vote to expel a chapter member.

When removing someone from the chapter, the CSC should be clear with the individual as to what standards of behavior were violated. The CSC 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](mailto: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.

## **VI. 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 likeminded 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 ASA so we can publicize your meeting on our email lists. You can't do too much outreach.

### **Use Roving Facilitators**

There are several ways to share leadership

#### **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.

### Successful Meeting Tip #2

Before the meeting post the following meeting ground rules where people can see them:

1. Do not interrupt
2. Raise your hand to speak
3. Assume best intentions
4. Do not repeat others
5. Be respectful when disagreeing

within a group, but one effective method is using roving facilitators. At each meeting, two people should volunteer or be chosen to facilitate the next meeting (It's often fun working with others as facilitators, and in case one person cannot make it to the following meeting, the other will be there to facilitate). These people will be responsible for:

- Helping to promote the meeting.
- Creating an agenda for the meeting.
- Moderating the meeting to ensure it runs smoothly.

The facilitators should rotate in order to give several people the chance to be involved. Encourage new activists to co-facilitate with someone who's been involved for a long time. Challenge facilitators to come up with creative activities or presentations for the meetings. Have fun with this!

### Setting Meeting Rules

At the beginning of each ASA meeting, the facilitators should set ground rules for the

### Successful Meeting Tip #3

During the meeting sit in a circle and begin by stating why you wanted to start an ASA group, and what the ASA campaign is currently working on. Then go in a circle and ask each person to say why they are interested, and what they think they'd like to do. Try to make everyone feel like they are being listened to and that their ideas are being considered.

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.

### Successful Meeting Tip #4

**REMEMBER:** The #1 reason people do not return to meetings is because they run on too long. The #2 reason people do not return to meetings is because of lack of action items coming from meetings.

### 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 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

### Successful Meeting Tip #5

If people are interested in going out afterwards be sure to encourage that. An organization that socializes together will be that much more committed when people feel stressed by deadlines.

- 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:

### Successful Meeting Tip #6

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

**MEDIA:** Do you need a press release? Do you need media talking points for participants?

**OUTREACH:** Contacting other likeminded 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 #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; 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 cam-

paigns 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.

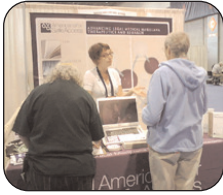
Make it fun! While our work is serious and at times heart-breaking, outreach and recruitment is a way for you to meet new people, see new parts of your community, and spend time together. This section offers a few ideas for outreach and recruitment...

### 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 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

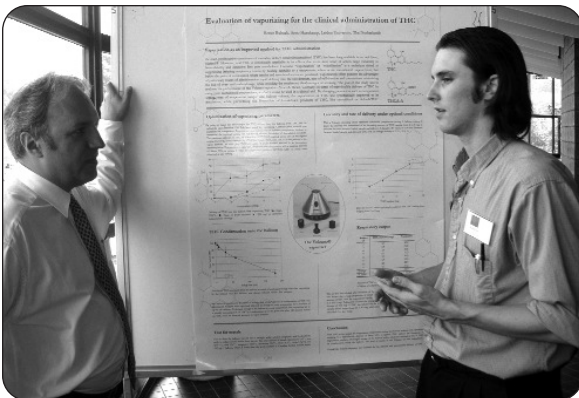
**1. Facebook** — Facebook is a great social networking tool that allows community members to connect with each other and share information.

**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.

**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 ability to "broadcast" 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



## 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.

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/guidelinst.html](http://www.ivu.org/vuna/guide/guidelinst.html) and from Steve Ongerth, East Bay IWWW 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.

# Volunteer Development

Chapter members and volunteers are the lifeblood 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 is needed. 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.