

LOCAL GROUP STARTER GUIDE



**Guide for Organizing An Amnesty International
Local Group in Your Community**

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



TABLE OF CONTENTS

LOCAL GROUP STARTER GUIDE

Intro

10 Steps to Launch a Local Group

Meetings

Meeting Space
Monthly Gatherings
Contact List

Shared Leadership

Roles & Responsibilities

Connect

AI's Network of Activist Leaders
Key Resources

10 STEPS TO LAUNCH A LOCAL GROUP

1: GET REGISTERED

Sign up to start a new Local Group by using the [Local Group Registration Form](#). Once you register, you will receive more resources and information, and you'll be connected with members in your area who will support your activism for human rights.

2: COMPLETE YOUR AIUSA ORIENTATION

During the orientation, you will learn more about Amnesty International USA, how Local Groups work, and how you can get started making an impact.

3: JOIN THE AMNESTY COMMUNITY

Following the orientation, you will be connected with Amnesty's network of activist groups and members in your state, so you can join events and participate in actions led by other AI members.

4: BUILD YOUR GROUP

Use your contacts to recruit a core group of at least 3-5 people. As you continue to expand, diversify your group by reaching out to members that will strengthen the group with new perspectives, experiences and skills.

5: SCHEDULE YOUR FIRST MEETING

Set a date and time for your first group meeting. This should be in an accessible (or virtual) meeting space for all members, that you will be able to meet consistently from month to month. See, "Meeting Space" on page 4.

6: CREATE SHARED LEADERSHIP

Start delegating roles and building leadership across the group in your very first meeting, so all members take ownership of the work from the start and your group can stay strong for years to come.

7: FOCUS ON THE ISSUES

Learn more about human rights and the issues Amnesty works on and select 2-3 Amnesty issues to start working on. Focus on issues that members care most about or that your group could have a big impact on given your experience or location.

8: BUILD VISIBILITY & NETWORK

Build awareness about your new group in your community. You can use social media and local resources to connect with other human rights groups in your community. Share your group's work and look for opportunities to acknowledge and support their work as well.

9: MAKE AN ACTION PLAN

Once your group has identified your core issues, pick actions that are easily accessible to get started. There are many actions you can do with a small group that don't require a lot of materials or volunteers and Amnesty staff and member leaders can help you plan.

10: CELEBRATE SUCCESS!

Connect with AIUSA staff and member leaders for mentorship and training, and to share updates on your activities and victories. And remember to celebrate successes and acknowledge your group's impact in your meetings, on social media, and in your community too!





MEETING SPACE

When selecting a meeting space choose carefully! Think about accessibility and visibility. Identify spaces that would allow your group to meet monthly at the same time of the month. Consistency helps to build momentum and people will be able to better plan. Finding the right space is key, so test out a few places and see where “the vibe” feels right. There are many opportunities to connect your Amnesty International Local Groups to community spaces. Shared spaces like coworking spaces, libraries, bookstores, coffeeshops, faith centers and community centers often have available meeting space and a built-in community of potential new members, as well as natural foot traffic for new people to notice you!

MONTHLY GATHERINGS

We recommend Local Groups meet at least monthly and use a consistent but flexible meeting structure. You can use this [meeting agenda template](#) to plan meetings that balance time to learn with time to take actions during meetings, and plan future actions as a group. Your meetings should also be fun! It’s important to enjoy the work that you do and the time you spend together. You can start your meetings with an icebreaker, set aside downtime before or after your meeting to socialize, have refreshments, and even plan group outings!

CONTACT LIST

Make sure you capture people’s contact information and follow up with a thank you and information for when the next meeting will be!



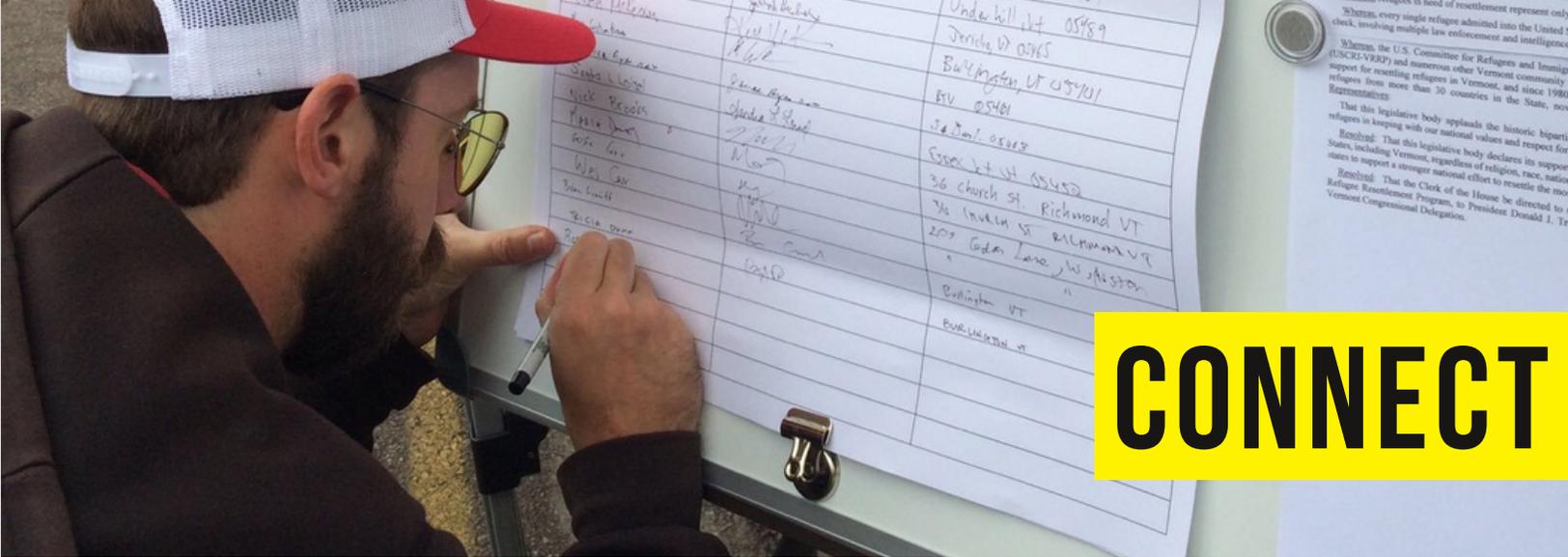
SHARED LEADERSHIP

DELEGATE ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES WITHIN THE GROUP

Don't try to do it all yourself.

Delegate roles and invite people to help out. The key to a successful group is having everyone pitch in. Whether it is volunteering to write the minutes of the meeting or offering to bring snacks to the next meeting, people want to feel like they are contributing. Below you will find a list of group roles that we usually recommend.

- **Group Coordinator:** Plans monthly agenda, solicits input, and helps to facilitate at the meetings.
- **Group Co-Coordinator:** Provides support to the Group Coordinator, often times sharing the responsibility as lead.
- **Urgent Action Coordinator:** Direct contact to receive monthly Urgent Actions. This person will draft the sample letters and share with the group at the meetings.
- **Communications Coordinator:** Takes notes at the meetings and shares these notes with everyone, including the email list of people who are interested in your group, or who may not be able to attend meetings. This to build a system for internal communications as well as external communications (social media presence, local media, etc.)
- **Case Commitment Coordinator:** If your group decides to commit to a long-term case this person will be the direct contact to receive all relative information for sharing with the group.
- **Treasurer:** Manage the group's finances, apply for funding, and spearhead fundraisers for the group.
- **Publicity & Outreach Coordinator(s):** Promote the group in the community using fliers, newspapers, social media and other outlets. They announce meetings, invite new members and advertise events and actions.
- **Campaign Coordinator(s):** Focus on an AIUSA campaign or issue, educate the group about the role and coordinate actions. This role could be ongoing or short-term.
- **Local Group Legislative Coordinator:** Support the group in connecting with Legislative Coordinators in the state, and leads local lobbying and grassroots advocacy actions.



CONNECT WITH AI'S NETWORK OF ACTIVIST LEADERS

AIUSA has a web of grassroots volunteer leaders who have been recruited and trained to support the work of other activists. These roles include:

AREA COORDINATORS (AC) are ensure that local groups have the support they need to protect human rights and take effective action.

STUDENT ACTIVISTS COORDINATORS (SAC) support new student groups in their first year, so they have the support they need to start protecting human rights and taking effective action.

LEGISLATIVE COORDINATORS (LC) keep current with AI's state and national legislative priority issues. The LC will provide education and training to AI activists throughout the state.

STATE DEATH PENALTY ABOLITION COORDINATORS (SDPAC) work with groups and other activists to abolish the death penalty in their state.

COUNTRY AND THEMATIC SPECIALISTS are volunteers with expertise in specific geographical areas of the world or thematic issues who help develop and implement human rights advocacy strategies.

To connect with AI member leaders in your state contact: communitynetworks@aiusa.org



You can find many organizing and skill-building resources on AIUSA's website. Here are a few of the most useful links to help you get started:

- **[50 Ways to Take Action](#)**: a resource with a wide range of creative ideas for organizing activism in your community.
- **[Activism Toolbox](#)**: an online repository of resources to support organizing, activism, and human rights education.
- **[Materials Request Form](#)**: order free Amnesty branded materials for your group to use at outreach and activism events.
- **[Events Calendar](#)**: post your group's events, and find virtual and local events to join, posted by other Amnesty groups.
- **[Member Email Request Form](#)**: chartered local groups can ask AIUSA to send an email to all members in their area about an activity or event.
- **[Special Initiatives Fund Grant](#)**: chartered local groups can apply for grant funding to cover the costs of their activities and events.

**“LOCAL ACTION
WITH GLOBAL
IMPACT.”**