HOW TO

ORGANIZE YOUR COMMUNITY AROUND A COMMON CAUSE
OVERVIEW

1) Evaluate your cause
2) Find your audience
3) Create a presence in your community
4) Establish connections
5) Organize a community meeting
6) Hold a community meeting
7) Take action

OBJECTIVE

Oregon Student Voice believes that student-led groups are a vital force for change and growth in communities. Beginning to recognize issues that are affecting your community can be challenging. In many cases, you may find it difficult to determine how to address community needs.

However, as students, there are many opportunities to cultivate change and it all starts by organizing in your community. After creating a student-led group, use this guide to help facilitate and organize change efforts.
1. **EVALUATE YOUR CAUSE**

First, consider these questions: What change needs to happen in the community? How will this change benefit the community? Make sure the cause is specific and clear. If it becomes difficult to explain the cause in five words or less, it is not concise enough for people to feel confident that they know what they are supporting.

2. **FIND YOUR AUDIENCE**

Work with your core group to figure out who will care about this cause. One way to determine your audience is to use polls (such as on social media) and ask individuals if they would be supportive. Answer these questions to determine who will care about your cause: Who is impacted by our cause? Who will be happy to see change?

3. **CREATE A PRESENCE IN YOUR COMMUNITY**

To recruit support, advertise your cause to a defined audience. Be intentional in what you say so that others understand your perspective. One strategy for advertising is posters at populated centers. Other strategies are creating a social media campaign, designing stickers, hosting an event, and reaching out to the media.
**ESTABLISH CONNECTIONS**

To expand your impact, it is important to have multiple groups supporting your cause. Be sure to build partnerships with organizations who have similar values. Additionally, having connections with other groups working on your cause will strengthen all of your voices.

**ORGANIZE A COMMUNITY MEETING**

Create either a physical or virtual meeting place for people to gather and discuss your cause. This could be a classroom during lunch or after school, or a digital platform like Zoom or Google Hangouts. Sometimes digital platforms cannot completely replicate the community of a physical meeting, but they are a useful alternative for individuals unable to attend in-person meetings.
HOLD A COMMUNITY MEETING

When running a meeting prepare an agenda beforehand. Write out what you plan on covering during the meeting, from introductions to hearing opinions, and the amount of time each item will take. If you plan to give opening remarks, be sure to write an outline beforehand and make it no longer than 2-minutes. An agenda keeps meetings on task.

TAKE ACTION

Keep the values and passion for your cause present throughout your work and take action to advance your cause. Taking action can include conducting research, meeting with decision makers, or hosting events to raise awareness. Continuously update your community and keep them engaged so that they remain committed to your cause.
There are many opportunities to create change and it all starts small. By fostering change in one community, it can inspire change in neighboring communities. It only takes one person with a vision to instigate change. Oregon Student Voice encourages students to lead and inspire.

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