



National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws

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Checklist for forming a State or Regional NORML Chapter

THE PRIME DIRECTIVE: If your motivation in starting a NORML Chapter involves profit – as a collective or a clinic in a medical marijuana state, or as a method of self-promotion in any state – then a NORML Chapter is probably not what you are looking for. NORML Activists are motivated to end the injustice of marijuana prohibition and are mostly volunteer citizen activists. Call me if you have questions.

1. Decide **that you want to “go public”** and really do want to form and lead a NORML Chapter. Imagine wearing a badge that says "NORML - Marijuana Smoker" everywhere you go. If that thought gives you pause, maybe this isn't for you. We are the marijuana smoker's lobby and part of our message is that smoking marijuana is nothing to be ashamed of. You will be Googled, your advocacy will be known to potential employers and friends and family. But if you, like me, cannot be silent in the face of injustice and do not fear standing up for your rights, then let's form a NORML Chapter. **Download and read the instructions** (<http://stash.norml.org/chapters/Instructions.pdf>) on becoming a Chapter (http://www.norml.org/index.cfm?Group_ID=3434)
2. **Find four other people** who can answer "yes" to #1 above. This will be your board. If you can get more than four, fantastic. The five of you join NORML (<http://secure.norml.org/join>).
3. **Draw up résumés for yourself and your board.** We are looking for your experience in employment, education, and volunteering that prepares you and your board for politics, public speaking, fundraising, event planning, advocacy, and just regular work that demonstrates your responsibility and reliability. Don't worry if you've never done anything like this before; we can teach you the advocacy – we're looking for dedication and intelligence.
4. **Download and fill out the chapter application** (<http://stash.norml.org/chapters/Application.pdf>) for affiliation of your group with NORML.
5. **Get a copy of the paperwork** from your Secretary of State's office to form a non-profit corporation. Fill out that paperwork **but do not submit it to Secretary of State's office until after we have approved your affiliation.**
6. **Create your proposed chapter's bylaws;** you may download and use a template to prepare your customized bylaws (<http://stash.norml.org/chapters/Bylaws.pdf>).
7. **Submit your Application, Bylaws, résumés, and a copy of your non-profit paperwork to:**
NORML Chapter Application
1600 K St. NW #501
Washington, DC 20006
8. **Once we have received your application we will contact you by phone or email to arrange an interview with you and your board.** We use Skype to conduct conference call interviews of our prospective chapter leaders, because you become “NORML” in the eyes of your community, and we want to look good! If you have Skype with video capability, that is optimal, but we can arrange a



traditional telephone conference call as well. A functional NORML Chapter is like a body which needs all its parts working well to thrive. We are looking for NORML Chapter Leaders who:

- a. Can be put in front of a camera and microphone and proudly represent responsible adult cannabis consumers in the mainstream media (FACE & VOICE);
 - b. Have a basic understanding of the history and issues relating to marijuana law reform in your state and the nation (BRAIN);
 - c. Understands the fundamentals of the American political process (STOMACH... more true than you realize...);
 - d. Exhibit the leadership qualities necessary to attract committed volunteers (HEART);
 - e. Demonstrate the business acumen to run a non-profit organization, including fundraising (HANDS);
 - f. Have the time and energy to dedicate to the cause (LEGS).
9. **If we approve your interview, you will be a *provisional chapter for sixty days*** and you may begin your operations as a NORML Chapter, which can include building websites, holding meetings, and recruiting members. During this sixty day period your chapter affiliation may be revoked immediately for cause or failure to complete your application as a non-profit organization with your Secretary of State.
10. Send in your state's application to your Secretary of State to form your non-profit organization in your chapter's name. Your organization does not have to be a federal 501c3 or 501c4; your state's version of non-profit status is fine. (You may want the federal status for tax-deduction purposes, but it is more paperwork and accounting.)
11. **Fax in a copy of the receipt** you receive from your Secretary of State when they approve your application. The Fax number is 503-257-2567. When we receive this confirmation, your chapter will no longer be provisional and you will receive your official Certificate of Affiliation with NORML and your NORML Chapter Handbook, your chapter will be added to the NORML Chapter Directory (<http://norml.org/chapters>), your email will be added to our Affiliates email list, and you will receive an order form for chapter fundraising materials.
12. **Start reforming marijuana laws!** How you do that is up to you. There are many suggestions in the NORML Chapter Handbook. Everyone who joins your chapter is joining *your* organization, so their dues go to *your* organization, not ours. All we require from you is to use the NORML name wisely, fill out an End-of-Year report, and hold at least one fundraiser per year where 50% of your proceeds are sent back to us at National NORML.