

## STARTING AN ACLU STUDENT CLUB CHEAT SHEET

**1 – TALK TO YOUR SCHOOL:** Go on your school’s website and check to see what forms you will need to fill out before starting your club. Typically, your school’s leadership, Associated Student Body leadership, or Student Bar Association contact can point you in the right direction if you are confused. For high school clubs, you will likely need to find a club advisor – a staff member who is willing to support your club and allow you to hold meetings in their classroom.

**2 – CONTACT THE ACLU:** Let the ACLU of Washington know that you want to start a club. As you move forward with establishing a club, it is vital for you to keep in contact with the ACLU; and as the club gets going, communicate regularly with ACLU staff on upcoming event ideas. We can answer any questions that you have about starting a club, provide resources, and share materials, swag, and sometimes snacks for your events.

**3 – BECOME AN ACLU E-ACTIVIST:** You can also keep up with the ACLU’s work by joining our [Email Activist Network](#) to receive updates and action alerts on key civil liberties issues.

**4 – ESTABLISH CORE LEADERSHIP:** When establishing a club, it is important to determine leadership positions and decision-making processes. Refer to our Student Club Guide for more information on leadership roles.

**5 – THINK AND TALK:** Start thinking about current issues that interest you and your peers, and take a look on our website in order to research them! The ACLU works on many issues, and you can focus on ones that are most relevant to students at your school.

**6 – GET A STUDENT CLUB STARTER KIT!** Fill out the Student Club Leader Information so that we can contact you, answer any questions, and help you get started. We will send you a student club starter kit including know your rights materials, a Student Club Guide, and a free t-shirt!

## STARTING AN ACLU STUDENT CLUB FAQ

*Are you interested in creating an ACLU student club? You have come to the right place! To start off, here are a few common questions about clubs:*

**WHAT IS AN ACLU STUDENT CLUB?** An ACLU student club provides an opportunity for students to come together to discuss and take action on current civil liberties issues, including ones that affect your school. The club is part of the ACLU (short for American Civil Liberties Union), which is a national organization with members and affiliates in every state. The ACLU is devoted to defending the Bill of Rights for all people in America. You can build community and strength by talking and working with other students, hearing each other's stories, and learning your rights as a student in Washington state.

**WHAT DO STUDENT CLUBS DO?** Student clubs support the ACLU-WA's work by reaching peers and sharing know your rights information, hosting forums, coordinating educational events, and representing the ACLU-WA within your school or university.

Student clubs have organized events on a wide range of topics, including gender equality, racial justice, rights with law enforcement, censorship, technology and privacy rights, as well as drug policy reform. A few examples of educational events that other student clubs have hosted are:

- Screen short videos, followed by discussions with ACLU speakers;
- Host a Membership Drive (it's just \$5 for students to join);
- Invite an ACLU speaker to discuss hot topics, such as drug policy reform, criminal justice issues, technology & privacy, government surveillance, and civil rights in schools.

**HOW DO I GET STARTED?** Follow the pathway! These easy steps will help you create an ACLU Student Club at your school.

### Pathway to Creating a Student Club

- 1) **Talk to your school:** Go on your school's website and check to see what forms you will need to fill out before starting your club. Typically, your school's leadership, Associated Student Body leadership, or Student Bar Association contact can point you in the right direction if you are confused. For high school clubs, you will likely also need to find a club advisor – a staff member who is willing to support your club and allow you to hold meetings in their classroom.
- 2) **Contact ACLU:** Let the ACLU of Washington know that you want to start a club. As you move forward with establishing a club, it is vital for you to keep in contact with the ACLU; and as the club gets going, communicate regularly with ACLU staff on upcoming event ideas. We can answer any questions that you have about starting a club, provide resources, and share materials, swag, and sometimes snacks for your events.

# ACLU Washington

- 3) **Become an ACLU E-Activist:** You can also keep up with the ACLU's work by joining our [Email Activist Network](#) to receive updates and action alerts on key civil liberties issues.
- 4) **Establish Core Leadership:** When establishing a club, it is important to determine leadership positions and decision-making processes. Refer to our Student Club Guide for more information on leadership roles.
- 5) **Think and talk:** Start thinking about current issues that interest you and your peers and take a look on our website in order to research them! The ACLU works on many issues, and you can focus on ones that are most relevant to students at your school.
- 6) **Get a Student Club Starter Kit!** Fill out the Student Club Leader Information so that we can contact you, answer any questions, and help you get started. We will send you a student club starter kit including know your rights materials, a Student Club Guide, and a free t-shirt!

## ACLU OF WASHINGTON STUDENT CLUB GUIDE

Thank you for your interest in starting an American Civil Liberties Union Student Club. These guidelines will help you stay organized, give you strong structure, and hopefully help your club grow!

### TERMS AND LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

A typical student club, Associated Student Body chapter, or Student Bar Association chapter will have the following leadership roles: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and sometimes Historian. We have provided a sample list of those roles and job descriptions for each position. It is not required for every club to have this exact format, so plan your roles based on what is best for your club and school. Some common leadership roles can include:

- President – make sure the club is running smoothly, runs meetings, plans events, and keeps in contact with ACLU.
- Vice President – helps the president with tasks and can fill in for them if they are absent. They will also take meeting/event attendance.
- Treasurer – works on gathering and keeping track of materials like food, snacks, and supplies needed for meetings and events. The ACLU can help support and bring resources to your student club, just ask us!
- Secretary – fills in if President and VP are absent. They take meeting minutes, event reports, make announcements, and ensure PR is going smoothly.
- Historian – takes pictures of events, helps the secretary, and most importantly promotes the club and its events.

At the minimum, we do recommend two people (such as president and vice president, or copresidents) to run the club, and a few other reliable members to assist when needed.

It is also important to establish term length for all of the leadership positions. Typically, elections are held annually at the end of the school year. Though you can pick something different if it makes more sense at your school or university. Try to make sure that new leaders are in place whenever leaders graduate, so that the club can continue.

### EXPECTATIONS OF LEADERSHIP

Student club leadership is expected to uphold their positions, enforce guidelines, and run their chapter smoothly. They must come up with a method for decision making such as majority vote or consensus-based decision making. Again, choose a method that is best for your school and chapter, but be consistent.

## EXPECTATIONS OF CLUB MEMBERS

Club members are expected to follow the guidelines put in place by leadership, assist in event planning and outreach, promote the ACLU, and educate their peers on their civil liberties. They are also expected to respect and appreciate everyone's differences in and out of the club setting.

## MEETINGS AND ATTENDANCE

Meetings should be held on a regular basis at a time and place set by the officers and the staff advisor. Notice of meeting should be provided to club members in a timely matter. How regularly the ACLU club meets is up to leadership members. While we recognize students have many other commitments, we encourage attendance to every meeting possible.

## DO'S & DON'TS

DO	DON'T
Organize around Constitutional Rights!	Do not organize club activities on issues that aren't part of ACLU's mission.
Your student club should support and take action on initiatives or campaigns that ACLU has taken a position on.	The ACLU is a non-partisan organization which means it does not support political parties or endorse candidates for elected offices.  Therefore, the ACLU requires clubs to avoid any activity that could be considered partisan.
Focus on civil liberties, activism, and events!	Do not focus on fundraising (for charities or other school-wide groups).
The ACLU defends individual freedoms such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Freedom of Speech &amp; Assembly</li> <li>• Separation of Religion &amp; Government</li> <li>• Freedom from Suspicion-less Searches &amp; Seizures</li> <li>• The Right to Due Process from Government</li> <li>• Fairness in the Criminal Justice System</li> <li>• Equal Rights under the Law for All People</li> <li>• Privacy - Freedom from Unnecessary Government Intrusion</li> </ul>	Keep in mind the ACLU does not work on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foreign Policy</li> <li>• War &amp; Peace</li> <li>• Trade Policy</li> <li>• Environmental Protection</li> <li>• Taxation, Government Budgets &amp; Funding</li> </ul> Therefore, your club shouldn't either.
If an individual asks for legal advice, refer them to the legal intake and referral line available on the back of our Know Your Rights with the Police wallet cards and on the ACLU of Washington website ( <a href="http://aclu-wa.org/help">aclu-wa.org/help</a> )	Do not offer your personal legal advice if someone asks for your help.

## CLUB ACTIVITY IDEAS

Below is a list of possible events your club could host or attend, many of which other clubs around Washington have done in the past:

- Screen short videos, followed by discussions with ACLU speakers
- Host a Membership Drive (it's just \$5 for students to join)
- Invite an ACLU speaker to discuss hot topics, such as drug policy reform, criminal legal system, technology & privacy, government surveillance, and civil rights in schools
- Have conversations about current issues and research what young people could do – each club member could pick a different topic (or group up in pairs, etc.)
- Plan a rally for any current issue\*
- Host a movie screening from the suggested films list (with pizza/drinks/snacks/etc.)
- Plan to attend a school board meeting that is considering a civil liberties issue
- [Start a Banned Book Club](#) and read all the [books that are being banned](#) across the nations and discuss them at a club meeting
- Plan a poster campaign around the schools (create posters with information that might be useful – something like, “hey, did you know...)
- Plan a field trip to an [ACLU-WA or community event](#). Give us a heads up if you come to any of our events and we'll be sure to give you a student rate (if it's not a free event) and say hi!

*\*Before you plan your rally, check in with ACLU to make sure the issue is relevant and nonpartisan. Also, inform your school to see if any permits or licensing are necessary.*