



GUIDELINES FOR LOCAL CHAPTERS

HIGH ROAD FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

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I. The Mission of High Road for Human Rights

High Road for Human Rights organizes and empowers concerned people to bring about specific, crucial changes in US human rights policy through education and grassroots advocacy. High Roads' strategy is designed to supplement the work of other human rights organizations. It does this by growing a grassroots network of members and local community chapters throughout the United States, and by organizing, mobilizing, and supporting people to (1) elevate understanding about human rights threats, abuses, and solutions, and (2) speak with a powerful, unified voice and act effectively to bring about specific changes in government policies and practices impacting the human rights of people throughout the world.

II. Local Chapters

1. The Role of Local Chapters in High Road

High Road for Human Rights seeks to establish chapters in every state by the end of 2010. After 2010, High Road will seek to establish chapters in every congressional district. Local chapters are crucial to the success of the innovative and powerful grassroots strategies of High Road for Human Rights.

The following are some of the guidelines that will structure the operations of High Roads' chapters. These policies are likely to change over time. We welcome any suggestions about changes to these policies, which can be addressed to the staff at our national headquarters.

2. Chapter Organization

Chapters should include a core group of Chapter leaders that at a minimum comprises a Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Coordinator, and either a Grassroots Action Director or several Committee Chairs. The position descriptions are as follows:

- a. The **Chair** and **Vice-Chair** are responsible for organizing meetings; developing chapter goals; setting deadlines for those goals and ensuring they are accomplished; communicating with the Chapter Coordinator; and making sure that the chapter is meeting national goals. High Road hopes to hire paid local Chapter Directors in some of our cities that have established large memberships.

- b. The **Treasurer** is responsible for setting fundraising goals; encouraging and obtaining donations from new members; coordinating volunteers who have agreed to fundraise to hold events and make calls; coordinating fundraising at events (both High Road and non-High Road events); tracking donations; and forwarding monthly donation reports and donations to the Chapter Coordinator, as well as filling out necessary **Expense Reports** (blank Expense Reports can be found in the “Master Copy” section of the Chapter Handbook). Specific timelines for submitting donations and reports can be found under *Section IV- 1. Fundraising*.
- c. The **Membership Coordinator** should set goals for chapter membership and fulfill them by encouraging members to commit to bringing a certain number of new people to chapter meetings and events; collaborating in campaigns with other organizations that share High Roads’ goals; identifying potential individuals, audiences and groups that would be interested in joining High Road; contacting those organizations and inviting them to join the chapter and participate in events; coordinating volunteers to call interested people in their area and asking them to join; and tracking membership numbers and reporting those numbers to High Road.
- d. The **Grassroots Action Director / Committee Chairs** shall mobilize members of High Road and others to utilize the grassroots strategies of High Road, with respect to High Road focus issues and identified solutions.

3. Chapter Meetings

Chapter meetings should be held on a regular basis to set goals, get updates on campaigns, recruit new members, and educate the Chapter on High Roads’ issues. Meetings can be used to achieve campaign goals (e.g., writing letters to the editor), decide and coordinate new goals (e.g., organizing people to meet with an editorial board or table at an upcoming event), and educate both chapter members and the public (e.g., screening High Roads’ multimedia presentations, screening related films, or training people to engage in High Roads’ other grassroots strategies.). The Chapter Chair, Co-Chair, Membership Coordinator, and Grassroots Action Director / Committee Chairs, should work together to ensure that all of High Roads’ grassroots strategies—from writing op-eds to organizing demonstrations—are being utilized. They should also coordinate to ensure volunteers are fulfilling their commitments to accomplish defined actions or goals. Once chapter goals have been set, Chapter leadership should encourage every volunteer who signed up for certain actions to follow through. Chapters should also look for opportunities to get involved in local concerns relating to High Road’s focus issues (e.g. local instances of, and responses to, human trafficking).

III. Chapter Goals / Volunteer Goals

1. One Voice, One Mission

Chapter leaders and other members shall endeavor to speak with “one voice” on all High Road issues and proposed solutions. Our strength lies largely in the fact that chapters across the country are coordinated in advocating for the same specific solutions to human rights challenges. If chapters convey consistent messages, High Road for Human Rights is more likely to achieve reforms in US human rights policies and practices. Input from Chapter leaders and membership, communicated to the national office, is crucial for the organization’s success. We invite suggestions regarding High Road for Human Rights’ action plans and proposed solutions, which can be made to the Chapter Coordinator or Executive Director.

Local chapters shall be unified in focusing on the same issues and the same concrete solutions, utilizing similar grassroots strategies. The staff at national headquarters will inform chapter leaders about current areas of focus and current goals within those focus areas, but also encourage input and suggestions about the focus areas and proposed solutions from local chapters and individual members. This will require ongoing communication with the Chapter Coordinator in order to coordinate local efforts with national High Road education and advocacy campaigns.

High Road has set up a Google Group that will include the Chapter Coordinator and the Chapter Chairs. This group will allow frequent and easy communication between Chapter Chairs and the Chapter Coordinator, and will provide a network between Chapter Chairs of different chapters to brainstorm and share ideas, collaborations, and plan concurrent events. Additionally, each Chapter will have its own Google Group (set up by the Chapter Coordinator), and will be responsible for inviting its chapter members to join, participate, and stay updated and involved in the Google Group.

2. Grassroots Actions

Chapter leadership shall make certain that High Road’s grassroots action strategies are utilized to increase understanding about identified issues and proposed solutions. The national office will periodically choose one or more of High Roads’ issues to focus on and will, by consulting with local chapters, provide goals for specific actions in those areas.

Local chapters will identify members in their communities who are willing and able to engage in one or more of the High Road grassroots strategies, including, but not limited to, the following:

- a. Meet with editorial boards of local television stations, radio stations, and newspapers.

- b. Present about High Road or about High Road’s identified issues and proposed solutions to local church, school, and civic groups.
- c. Write letters to, and meet with, congressional representatives.
- d. Create publicity by placing ads for High Road or current projects on television, radio, newspapers, and the internet.
- e. Grow local membership base.
- f. Present multimedia productions provided by High Road’s national headquarters.
- g. Organize campaigns to submit and publish letters to the editor and op-ed pieces in local newspapers and magazines.
- h. Attend and participate in meetings at which government officials, including elected representatives, are present.
- i. Organize screening of films that address High Road’s identified issues.
- j. Organize demonstrations or rallies that will help get out the message concerning High Road’s identified issues and proposed solutions.
- k. Participate on radio and television talk shows.
- l. Present at seminars, high school and college classes, and teach-ins.
- m. Organize, or participate in panel discussions following plays, concerts, festivals, and rallies.
- n. Solely within the purview of High Road for Human Rights Advocacy Project, support candidates who pledge to work effectively to prevent and stop human rights abuses.
- o. Help focus political campaigns on human rights and climate change matters.
- p. Sponsor candidate forums during political campaigns, in which High Road’s identified issues will be discussed.
- q. Develop websites, blogs, and personal networking accounts to maximize education, advocacy, and grassroots organization through the Internet.

2. Local Chapter Communication with National Headquarters

High Road for Human Rights is committed to assess and track its progress as thoroughly and completely as possible, to ensure it is operating as effectively and efficiently as possible to prevent and ameliorate major human rights abuses, and to provide for accountability to members, donors, and stakeholders. We request that Chapter chairs report to the national headquarters of High Road about local chapter activities on at least a monthly basis and provide documentation about such efforts , including photographs, copies of articles and letters, and any other evidence of activities furthering the goals and strategies of High Road for Human Rights. If chapters organize or participate in events or activities, a ***Proof of Performance Report*** (blank Proof of Performance Report can be found in ‘Master Copy’ section of the Chapter Handbook), should be filled out and sent to the national office, indicating the nature of the event, how many people participated, and what, if any,

future actions will result from the event. All reports will go on the chapter portions of the High Road website and will be included as proof of performance to track High Road's success and to secure additional funding.

The National Headquarters staff will be available and accessible for communication with all chapters. The National Office has archives (available upon request) that include but are not limited to:

- *Research on Human Rights issues (and other related topics)
- *Records of past fundraisers and events
- *Collaborations / contacts with other non-profits

Don't hesitate to call or email and ask questions! The aim of the National Headquarters is to provide support, direction, encouragement and the necessary resources to accomplish High Roads' goals. If, as a chapter member, you feel that there is a vital communication channel or aspect being neglected, please bring it to the attention of the staff at the National Headquarters so it can be fixed immediately. The more feedback we receive pertaining to what you need, the more efficiently we can meet your requests and together develop an effective and nurturing system.

IV. Acquisition / Distribution of Funds

1. Fundraising

Local chapters are expected to assist in the fundraising efforts of High Road for Human Rights. Fundraising is crucial to the sustainability of the organization. This can be done by encouraging all new members to donate online at the High Road website, organizing fundraising events, mobilizing local members to solicit contributions door-to-door, arranging house parties, and coordinating phone fundraising trees. The Treasurer of the local chapter should account for all donations and provide the National Headquarters with the donations and a donation report on a bi-monthly basis or, if hosting an event, directly following the event. All monies or other contributions (i.e. gifts in kind) submitted to either of the High Road organizations shall be promptly forwarded to national headquarters to be tracked, deposited and correctly distributed between the National Headquarters and the local chapter. (Donation forms can be requested through the national office and are available online.)

The treasurer should send the Chapter Coordinator a monthly report, which includes all Expense Reports and donations received (an example monthly report can be found at the end of this section of the Chapter Handbook). Many donations will be received online and the national headquarters will have already recorded them. Therefore, such donations need not be included in the reports from local chapters.

2. Requesting Funds

If funds are required for local events, chapter leaders should make a written request to the national headquarters, through the Chapter Coordinator. The Executive Director will determine the national office's response to such requests, taking into account the organization's financial situation.

Chapter leaders should obtain advance written authorization from the Executive Director prior to undertaking any financial commitments on the part of High Road for Human Rights.

3. Education Project vs. Advocacy Project

Scrupulous attention should be paid to what can be done under the name of High Road for Human Rights Education Project, a 501(c)(3) organization, and High Road for Human Rights Advocacy Project, a 501(c)(4) organization. Under the Education Project, a chapter can do anything to raise awareness and bring about change short of advocating for specific legislation or participating in political campaigns. The Advocacy Project is the umbrella for all activities that lobby for specific legislative reforms. 501(c)(3) donations are tax-deductible; 501(c)(4) donations are not.