ESTABLISHING A NEW STUDENT ORGANIZATION

Due to the restrictive nature of most Catholic universities, many reproductive rights groups are not allowed to become "official" student organizations. If this is the case, you can continue pushing back, organizing, and growing your community of supporters.



Student organizations for reproductive rights often exist on the periphery due to administrative exclusion. Whether you're running an established organization or just getting started, this toolkit provides the foundations you need to make change on campus.

Before creating a new organization, confirm that one does not already exist. Unofficial groups are often listed on social media, and you can search for common names, including "[Insert mascot] for Choice," "condom fairies," "emergency contraception delivery," "[School] for Reproductive Justice," or "[School] Generation Action." If you are unsure if your campus has a student organization, reach out to CFC — we might know.

If your campus doesn't yet have a reproductive justice group, you can make it happen!

ORGANIZATION FORMATION

Start by talking with your community. Conduct asset mapping to identify existing resources and allies, host listening sessions, and connect with those on campus to understand the student body's needs and wants. Draw connections between your community's desires and the resources available, including those from CFC.

To gather ideas about what other student groups are focusing on, connect with CFC.

Consider the following possible engagement areas:

- Combatting anti-abortion fake clinics or "crisis pregnancy centers"
- Contraception access and/or distribution
- Becoming abortion support advocates or abortion doulas for peers
- Abortion access and school health center referrals processes/provision
- Countering anti-abortion groups and misinformation on campus
- Supporting pregnant and parenting students

LEADERSHIP TEAM RECRUITMENT AND FORMATION

Once you have a sense of your new group's goals, you may want to establish a leadership team. At this stage, networking becomes crucial. Consider connecting with other social justice organizations on campus to hear about points of correlation, potential leaders, and collaboration opportunities. Tap into your social networks and ask peers on campus who share similar ideals if they would be interested in taking on a leadership role and supporting your organization's work.

You and your fellow organizers will also need to consider which leadership structure makes the most sense for your organization and aligns with your values. A traditional executive board or leadership team usually consists of a president, vice president, treasurer, secretary, and social media positions. These roles can be flexible to your organization's needs and will likely change over time. As an alternative, non-hierarchical leadership models center consensus-building and collective decision-making. This type of leadership structure is highly effective and fosters shared ownership.

CREATE A GUIDING DOCUMENT

Collaborate with your new team! Start by creating a guiding document. If you want to try to become an affiliated student organization, it is a good idea to check the requirements for creating organizational charters before you begin this step. Some schools have specific requirements for the structure and content of these.

The name of group

The group's mission and general goals

Communication channels that you will maintain

Shared commitments and roles

Digital security community agreements



Many student groups choose to use their mascot, moniker, or another phrase that represents their campus. Note that many institutions have strict rules about the use of these phrases and may not allow "unofficial" groups to use them. Sometimes students can get around this by omitting letters or using other symbols, such as an asterisk, in their place.

SET COMMUNICATION NORMS

You should also create a more informal line of communication outside of email, such as a group chat in a secure app like Signal. This will make members more likely to see notifications and interact more quickly!

Whatever communication app you use, set up admin approval for new members. Be aware of who is in each of your communication channels.

MEMBER RECRUITMENT

Once you have an established guiding document and ideas for events and activities, start building your base and recruiting members. You will want folks who learn about your group to be able to connect with you and get involved.

- **Build communication infrastructure.** Set up your organizational email address, group chats, website, and social media pages to attract new members.
- **Create a recruitment form.** This form will collect new members' contact information so that you can alert them of updates and events, which is essential for base-building. Be sure to include links to join any relevant communication channels and social media pages. You can also make the form into a scannable QR code.
- **Vet new members.** This can involve asking for a reference, requiring a link to a social media profile, or including questions about why someone is interested in joining.
- **Table around campus.** Invite community members into a conversation with candy or giveaways like stickers, buttons, or pens. Reproductive justice can be a tense topic. For additional resources on talking guides for outreach events, read CFC's tips here.

COMMUNICATION

Once you've gained contacts, be sure to engage with them frequently, especially when you have upcoming events!

If you are interested in joining our virtual community of students and young adults faithfully organizing for reproductive freedom, email activists@catholicsforchoice.org.