

**STUDENTS
DEMAND
ACTION**

High School Organizing Toolkit

Welcome to Students Demand Action!

The following toolkit is a comprehensive guide, created by high school students, to organize a Students Demand Action group at your high school.

High school campuses are incredible places to organize, as students are learning more about the world around them and discovering new avenues to engage in the things in which they are most interested.

This toolkit will cover everything from registering your group with Students Demand Action, recruiting students to join your group, hosting your first meeting, organizing your group's leadership structure, and more.

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Steps to Starting a Students Demand Action Group

01. REGISTER YOUR STUDENTS DEMAND ACTION GROUP

Registering your group with Students Demand Action is simple and quick. Identify one student to submit a [Start a Students Demand Action Group](#) form. Completing this form lets Students Demand Action staff know that you're forming a group and allows you to gain access to materials, resources, and support that will help you and your group organize at school and succeed in the gun violence prevention movement!

02. GROUP MEMBERS AND LEADERS COMPLETE VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT FORMS

When one member of your group officially completes their [Volunteer Agreement form](#) (and parental consent form, if they are under 18 years of age), you'll get an email recognizing your group as officially registered with Students Demand Action!

While only one leader needs to complete the form to be officially onboarded as a group, **all leaders and members should submit a [Volunteer Agreement](#)** in order to gain access to all of the resources Students Demand Action has to offer.

03. REVIEW STUDENTS DEMAND ACTION AND EVERYTOWN FOR GUN SAFETY RESOURCES

Students Demand Action has a ton of materials and resources to support you on your organizing journey. These resources include but are not limited to:

- Up-to-date information on upcoming events and campaigns
- Leadership calls and training sessions
- Access to our national communications platform to connect with Student leaders from across the country
- Students Demand Action merch
- Canva templates
- An annual \$250 budget for your group
- [Groundbreaking gun violence research](#)

04. SCHEDULE A MEETING WITH YOUR REGIONAL ORGANIZER

Each region (Northeast, South, Midwest, and West) has an Everytown For Gun Safety staff member assigned specifically to support YOU! Regional organizers are experts in grassroots organizing and can help with everything from recruiting new members, planning events, engaging in legislative advocacy, and more!

In this first meeting, you'll get to know each other, learn about the support that Students Demand Action provides to groups, and ask any questions about organizing at your school that you may have. Your regional organizer will be copied on the email that you receive welcoming your group to Students Demand Action.

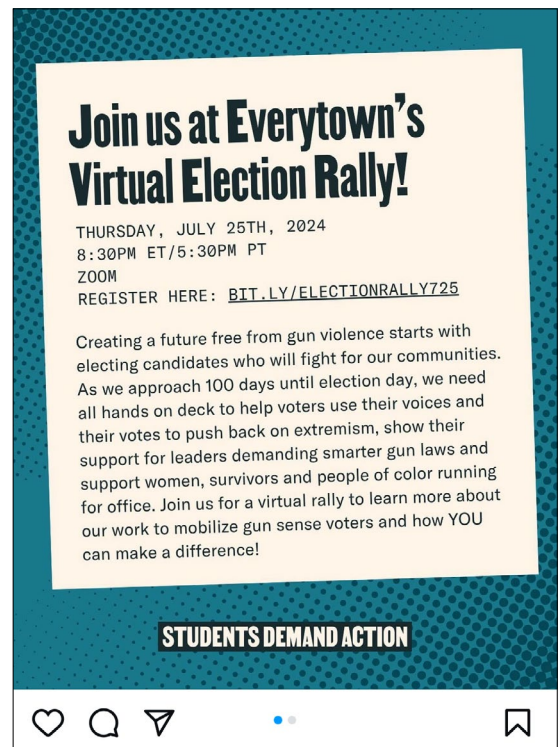
05. GET RECOGNIZED AS A GROUP BY YOUR HIGH SCHOOL

In addition to the resources that Students Demand Action offers to groups, high schools can provide meeting space, additional budget funds, recruitment assets such as tabling opportunities and access to all campus email lists, and more. Your school knows the student body and school community better than Students Demand Action does, so take advantage of all of the resources both sources have to offer.

The Student Government Association or Office of Student Life/Activities at your school should have information on their website or in their office about how to start an official club. Other students, teachers, administrators and guidance counselors at your school are also great resources when first organizing your new group. Don't hesitate to ask multiple people about the process, someone will know the answers to your questions or can direct you to someone who will!

06. START AN INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT FOR YOUR GROUP

Instagram is a great place to post updates about your group and can be a great recruitment tool for students at your school. Create an account and use the Students Demand Action Canva templates to make custom graphics.



07. ORGANIZE YOUR FIRST MEETING

Pick a time and a place and submit your event to the [Register Your Event form!](#) Make sure to pick an [accessible time and place](#), and recruit for the meeting on campus. See page 6 for ideas about how to recruit students to join your club. Your first meeting is an opportunity for you to introduce yourself as a leader and show others on campus what kind of advocacy work Students Demand Action does and why students should care about gun violence prevention.

HERE'S A SAMPLE AGENDA FOR YOUR FIRST MEETING:

1. Leadership Introductions

The leadership team should take time to introduce themselves and their roles to the group.

2. Group Introductions

Depending on the size of the group, allow everyone time to introduce themselves and share one reason why they are interested in getting involved with Students Demand Action. If the group is too large for everyone to have time to introduce themselves, break up into pairs or small groups.

3. Learning and Discussion Activity

Share [EveryStat.org](https://www.everystat.org) and [Everytown's Gun Law Rankings](https://www.everytown.org/gun-law-rankings) with meeting attendees. Allow students 15-20 minutes to browse the resources in pairs or small groups. When the time ends, ask questions to start a discussion. Here are some examples:

- What is one new thing you learned about gun violence in our state?
- What is something that shocked you about gun violence in our state?
- As the statistics appear on EveryStat, what is an issue area of gun violence that you would be interested in working on as a group (ie: firearm suicide prevention, unintentional shooting prevention, intimate partner violence prevention, etc.)?
- Were there any approaches to preventing gun violence in the gun law rankings that you hadn't heard of before?

4. Meeting Wrap-Up

Thank everyone for coming to your meeting and provide a call to action to end the meeting.



Pro Tips:

Always have your next meeting scheduled so your call to action can be “sign up for our next meeting” with specific dates and times.

Make sure to [register your meeting](#) so you have a sign-up link to share.

Encourage meeting attendees to bring a friend to the next meeting!

08. CREATE YOUR LEADERSHIP TEAM

It's possible that you had some co-leaders on board with you when you started your group, but it's probable that you need additional support, or students who attended your first meeting are interested in taking on a leadership position within the club! Read more about leadership structures on page 10.

09. PLAN AHEAD

Students Demand Action addresses gun violence in many ways, it would be impossible for one group to do it all! Talk with your group about goals for the year (or semester), campaigns you'd like to take action on, and notable dates, seasons, or months. For example: consider state legislative session dates, awareness months, events and moments specific to your school or community, and national moments, like an upcoming general election! Work with your group to strategically map out when your regular meetings will take place and what specific things you want to take action on.

This is a great time to connect with a regional organizer who can point you in the direction of state priority legislation and upcoming important tentpole moments. Stay tuned to Slack, the Demand Action App, National Leadership Calls, and the month-ahead emails for additional information and opportunities to engage in various campaigns.

10. KEEP STUDENTS DEMAND ACTION UPDATED

- Utilize Students Demand Action resources and connect with your regional organizer regularly
- [Register your meetings and events](#)
- Make sure new members and leaders complete the [Volunteer Agreement form](#)
- Post on social media and always tag @StudentsDemand!

If you have additional questions about organizing your group or want to set up a 1:1 meeting with your Students Demand Action regional organizer, don't hesitate to reach out to students@everytown.org



Recruiting New Members

One of the most important steps in getting started is recruitment. Luckily, high schools have lots of built-in tools for making recruitment more accessible.

These tips will help you reach your student body, however, every school is different and there's plenty of room to be creative with your recruitment tactics.

USE ONLINE SYSTEMS THROUGH YOUR SCHOOL

Most high schools have recruitment tools available to registered student groups. Some examples include:

- Morning/Afternoon Announcements
- Campus Calendar
- Newsletters/Blasts
- School Newspaper

CREATE AND DISTRIBUTE FLYERS

Use the Canva template to create flyers with meeting information and hang them on lockers, doors, and school bulletin boards. You can also utilize the placards you'll receive in your starter kit. Some schools have virtual bulletin boards where you can post digital flyers with the most up-to-date meeting RSVP links or campaign information and calls to action.

SPREAD THE WORD ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is a great way to remind your peers what you're up to while they're scrolling. Follow these tips to make the most of these platforms:

- **Create an Instagram account for your school's group** and share announcements, new campaigns, member profiles, and pictures from meetings and events.
- **Follow and share posts from other student organizations** at your school so that they'll do the same for your group. Many groups focus on issues that intersect with gun violence prevention and have members who will also be interested in joining Students Demand Action.
- **Reach out to your school's social media accounts** such as Instagram, Twitter, or Facebook, to see if they will post photos of your group meetings, information about joining your group, or re-post one of your group's posts on their Instagram or Facebook story.

SET UP A TABLE

Tabling is one of the most tried and true ways to recruit at high schools.

- **Set up a table outside high-traffic areas in your school** such as central meeting areas, the library, and the cafeteria. Share information about your upcoming meeting, have interested students text STUDENTS to 644-33*, and hand out the bracelets, buttons, or stickers that come in the welcome package. Make sure you have a short pitch prepared about gun violence in America and how your group is advocating for gun safety.

RECRUIT THROUGH YOUR CLASSES

Oftentimes, teachers are open to students using classes as a place for recruitment for their student group, particularly if the class is closely related to areas in which Students Demand Action works. Here are two ways to use this tactic to your advantage:

- **Ask your teacher if you can make a short pitch** for Students Demand Action to your classmates. This could be done before class, immediately afterward, or during mid-class breaks. Have flyers handy, mention upcoming events or membership meetings, and tell everyone to text STUDENTS to 644-33*.
- **Attend events or panels** about topics that cover or intersect with gun violence prevention and pass out information about your group's next event before or after the discussion.
- **Leave physical materials with teachers** to hang up in their classroom and distribute to students.

RECRUIT YOUR FRIENDS (+ YOUR FRIENDS' FRIENDS)

Leveraging interpersonal relationships is a great foundation upon which to start a group.

- After meetings, always ask members to bring a new friend to your next meeting as a way to increase participation, but be cautious not to use this as your only recruitment method, as you want to foster an open, inclusive space for everyone interested in gun violence prevention.

**By texting, you agree to receive communications to your phone number from Everytown organizations. Msg freq varies. STOP to quit. Msg & data rates may apply. everytown.org/terms*

PARTNER WITH OTHER CLUBS

Most students in high school are involved in more than one club, and oftentimes, they're interested in a range of interrelated issues. Below are some ways to tap into the population of students that is already engaged in extracurricular activities:

- **Co-host an event with another club** to get to know its members and their mission. Students who have engaged with your Students Demand Action group through another group may be more likely to attend your meetings or help with an event.
- **Form a coalition with other clubs** to find ways to collaborate and promote gun violence prevention. You can join them in promoting each other's events in a calendar or an all-group newsletter to share each other's events in one place. This is an actionable way to establish a cooperative relationship with the campus community, develop a consolidated resource for students with specific interests to find opportunities that appeal to them and increase your group's visibility.

CONNECT DIGITALLY TO STUDENTS DEMAND ACTION SUPPORTERS IN YOUR AREA

Once you fill out the [Register an Event form](#) which ensures the event is on our radar, you can request Everytown's outreach resources. These resources must be requested via the [Outreach Request Google form](#) **five days in advance** of the time you'd like to begin outreach. This is a great way to extend out to people in your community who have already signed up online to join Students Demand Action or have previously shown interest in our movement.

- **Send an email:** Draft and send an email that includes a call to action or RSVP link. Emails allow freedom for personalization, so you can be as candid as you'd like in discussing your anticipation for your event.
- **Make calls:** Your regional organizer will help create a phone banking script and organize a list of volunteers to contact. Depending on the length of the list and/or your phone banking experience, recruit other Students Demand leaders to help you phone bank.
- **Send texts:** Text banking is easier than ever via the online tool Spoke! Draft the initial text(s) to be sent, submit the information to the outreach request form, and your regional organizer will input it into Spoke.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

Every high school is different.

Different schools have different rules, cultures, and platforms. If the resources and strategies provided in this toolkit aren't useful for your specific school, reach out to other clubs and faculty to find the best recruitment methods for your own school.

Never stop networking.

Your group is never done growing, so you should never stop recruiting. Networking opportunities can happen at any moment, so always be prepared to share your message at an event, in a class, or even in line at the cafeteria. New members can be found anywhere at any time!

Keep going.

Recruitment can be hard. It can be intimidating to put yourself out there and approach people you don't know. If you don't see immediate results, don't get discouraged—your brand new group is out there somewhere and you can always reach out to be connected to a student leader at another campus near you.

Have fun.

Half the appeal of a high school group is the community it provides for students. Make sure your group comes across as a welcoming, inclusive space for students to share their voice and make an impact on their community to end gun violence. Never forget that your group can make a difference and still have fun!

Group Leadership

Starting a group from scratch may seem daunting, but it's easier if you find ways to delegate. Establishing your leadership team is a good way to get your group up and running. You may find that you want to have an executive board before you seek approval, or you might want to make leadership opportunities available at your first meeting. There's no right formula, so explore whatever is best for your campus.

Students Demand Action uses a distributed leadership model of organizing which allows for groups to have as many students as they wish to serve as Leaders in the group. We believe that increasing our numbers of Student Leaders working together on gun violence prevention directly strengthens our movement by capitalizing on each student's individual talents.

ONBOARDING NEW LEADERS

When growing your leadership team, it's important to have student leaders register as official leaders with Students Demand Action by completing the [Volunteer Agreement form](#). Once new student leaders complete the Volunteer Agreement and their parents or legal guardians complete a permission slip (if they are under 18—we will provide the permission slip upon completion of the volunteer agreement), they'll gain access to National Students Demand Action Slack, GSUo, National Leadership Calls, and more.

Having all of your group leaders plugged into these resources ensures that your group will have the most up-to-date information on campaigns and materials at all times, and allows the Students Demand Action team to get to know your group and help support your work.

While only one leader needs to complete the form to be officially onboarded as a group, **all leaders and members should submit a [Volunteer Agreement](#)** in order to gain access to all of the resources Students Demand Action has to offer.

GROUP LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

Groups can decide to organize their leaders in different ways, especially when considering that some high schools require specific leadership roles like a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, etc.

These are some suggested roles for your high school group:

- Group Leader(s)
- Recruitment Lead(s)
- Events Lead(s)
- Social Media Lead(s)
- Advocacy/Legislative Lead(s)
- Community Outreach Lead(s)

Each of these roles can have multiple co-leaders within them. Further, these aren't the only leadership roles you can create. Think about the types of meetings, events, and actions that your group wants to do, and think strategically about the type of leadership needed to make each of those things happen.

When assigning leadership roles, consider individuals' interests, skills and goals, and remember that having a leadership role in a club is an opportunity to develop as a leader and learn new skills—students don't have to be experts to advocate for gun violence prevention!

A group of diverse students, including a young man in a white shirt and a young woman in a blue shirt, are holding signs that say "STUDENTS DEMAND ACTION". The background is a dark, textured blue with a grid pattern.

Equity and Inclusion for Students Demand Action Leaders

Students Demand Action leaders are provided with resources, trainings, and everyone is expected to learn and develop the following skill set:

- Understanding how stereotypes, bias, and forms of racism in America (including structural racism, implicit bias, gender bias, religious bias, ageism, and bias based on gender identity or sexual orientation) impact our society and an ability to articulate the connection between these large societal issues and the disproportionate impact of gun violence on specific demographic groups in America.
- Understanding how dynamics of power, voice, and privilege impact one-on-one and group interactions, and a commitment to using power, voice, and privilege to make our movement more equitable.
- A commitment to share direct feedback with others and listen to and implement feedback given.
- Commitment to building diverse teams and learning management skills for equity and inclusion.
- Ability to help other people in our movement develop this same skill set and knowledge base. As with all other organizing skills the expectation is that over time leaders would also develop the ability to train other volunteers in these areas.

Students Demand Action Resources

ABOUT STUDENTS DEMAND ACTION

- Our website: StudentsDemandAction.org
- [Values statement](#)

FOLLOW US

- @StudentsDemand on [Instagram](#)
- @StudentsDemand on [Threads](#)
- @StudentsDemand on [TikTok](#)

TAKE ACTION

- [Start a Group](#)
- [Join the Text Team](#)
- [Join the Calling Team](#)
- [Find Students Demand Action events](#)

TEXT KEYWORDS

- Text **STUDENTS** to **644-33***
Join Students Demand Action
- Text **GROUP** to **644-33***
Start a Students Demand Action group
- Text **FUTURE** to **644-33***
Register to vote

RESOURCES FOR LEADERS

- [Gun Sense University Online](#)
username: your email
password: demandaction
- [New Leader Onboarding](#)
- [Join an Affinity Group](#)
- Students Demand Action's national Slack workspace

EVENT TOOLS

- [Register an Event](#)
- [How to Plan an SDA Event](#)
- [Event Host Guide](#)
- [Outreach and Recruitment Request form](#)
- [Guest Speaker Request form](#)

MEDIA + COMMUNICATIONS

- Take a media training with the Everytown Communications team. Keep an eye out for upcoming trainings!
- Email students@everytown.org or reach out to your regional organizer with press questions.

MERCH + BUDGETS

- [Order T-shirts](#)
- [Expense Requests](#)
(Merch, Printing, Food, Supplies)

PUBLIC MATERIALS FOR ALL STUDENTS

- [Black Students Organizing webpage](#)
- [Everytown Research](#)
- [EveryStat](#)
- [Gun Law Rankings](#)
- [CityGRIP](#)
- [School Safety Hub](#)
- [Elections HQ](#)

PERMISSION SLIPS/COMPLIANCE

- [Volunteer Agreement](#)
- [Code of Conduct](#)

**By texting, you agree to receive communications to your phone number from Everytown organizations. Msg freq varies. STOP to quit. Msg & data rates may apply. everytown.org/terms*

Navigating Your Resources

STUDENTS DEMAND ACTION SLACK

Slack is a communication tool with different channels that cover different topics. The Students Demand Action Slack is the primary form of communication groups use to communicate with one another and the best place to get the most up to date information and connect with other Students Demand Action volunteers from across your state or across the country. The best channels for you to join at first are your regional and state channels. All state channels are listed like so: #region-state, e.g. #midwest-colorado.

LEADERSHIP CALLS

On National Leadership Calls, Organizing Board Members share recent highlights and important news and help students connect. These calls are a great way to hear about upcoming events, collect ideas from other groups, and learn about new campaigns.

WORKSHOPS

Our Students Demand Action National Training Team leads trainings several times a month. Upcoming trainings will be posted in Slack and the month ahead email!

GUN SENSE UNIVERSITY ONLINE

GSUo is Students Demand Action's online training platform where you can find toolkits and trainings that guide you in your advocacy and leadership development. This is a great place to look for new ideas and materials to present at your meetings, or resources to plan your events and learn how to best utilize our tools.

RECRUITMENT

After your event is submitted and approved, you can request a text bank, phone bank or email to contact people in your area. These tools allow us to message people in our network to invite them to your event.

BUDGET

All groups receive an annual budget of \$250. Groups use their budget to print flyers, order a large SDA Banner, order food for their meetings, restock Students Demand Action merch, or buy materials for their events. Your budget refreshes every January.

THE MONTH AHEAD

We send out our monthly newsletter, the month ahead, at the beginning of each month, with all the information you need on upcoming Students Demand Action campaigns, calls (national leadership calls, workshops, etc.), and more. Make sure to check your inbox, you won't want to miss it!

WELCOME KIT

Once your group is approved, you'll receive a package in the mail with materials such as Students Demand Action t-shirts, placards, buttons, and stickers.

AFFINITY GROUPS

Affinity groups are a space for Students Demand Action leaders and team members who share an identity to meet, build community, brainstorm initiatives, and work together.