



# **CSSDP CHAPTER MANUAL**

**September 2015**

**[www.cssdp.org](http://www.cssdp.org)**

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## ABOUT CSSDP

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### **Our mission:**

Canadian Students for Sensible Drug Policy (CSSDP) is a grassroots network comprised of students who are concerned about the negative impacts which our country's drug policies have on individuals and communities. CSSDP considers problematic drug use in society to be primarily a health issue rather than a criminal justice issue, and advocates for appropriate responses to reduce and prevent harm from drug use. CSSDP provides education and resources to empower chapters formed by students and youth in their work on substance use issues facing their peer groups and communities. CSSDP mobilizes members to participate in the political process at all levels, pushing for sensible policies in order to achieve a safer and more just future, while combating counterproductive drug policies, particularly those that directly harm young people.

**Want to know more? For regular updates, check us out online!**

[cssdp.org](http://cssdp.org)

[facebook.com/CSSDP](https://facebook.com/CSSDP)

[twitter.com/cssdp](https://twitter.com/cssdp)

[cdndrugpolicy.tumblr.com](http://cdndrugpolicy.tumblr.com)

### **Why Start a CSSDP Chapter?**

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CSSDP's chapters form the backbone of our organization, and their dedicated work is a huge part of what makes the youth movement against unjust drug policy in Canada possible. They are the footsoldiers in the war *against* the war on drugs. By starting a chapter, you will be creating a hub of activity, education, and action on your campus where other people who are passionate about ending the harms caused by the war on drugs can connect with like-minded people, and where those who are unfamiliar with the cause can learn about its importance. Critical thinking is contagious, and the importance of having a public presence that helps people question how our society views drugs can't be underestimated!

Starting a CSSDP chapter is also a great way of getting new or enhancing your previous experience in community organizing, outreach, event planning, and politics at all levels. Adding to your activist resume is not only something that can further your personal goals-- these skills are something you can pass on to other aspiring drug policy warriors, and help keep our movement growing!

# Getting Started

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**REGISTERING AS AN OFFICIAL STUDENT CLUB.** If your chapter is based on a university or college campus, you will want to consider registering as an official club. Although experiences vary from school to school, some of the perks of being an official student club could include receiving funding from your student union, access to free room bookings and equipment, outreach opportunities for your chapter, free photocopying, help spreading the word about your events, and more. Although processes for registering as an official club will be different from school to school, here are some general tips to get you started.

## **Find out what your school's official regulations are for registering a club.**

There should be forms and information on the school or student union webpage, or you can visit your school's student union office to talk to someone in person. Usually the process involves:

- **Getting a set amount of signatures**, to show that there is an interest on campus for your club. This can be as simple as asking ten friends, classmates, roommates, or people in your dorm to sign your registration sheet. If you have a chance to set up a table, get signatures from people who stop by the table. Or, stand in a busy part of campus and invite people to chat about CSSDP and ask for their signatures. This is also a great way to spread the word about CSSDP and your chapter. For more outreach tips, see the **Outreach 101** and **Tabling Tips** sections.
- **Assigning executives.** Your school will likely require that your club have at least one executive; someone to act as a contact person for your club. Some schools will require more official executives, such as a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary and a Treasurer. This can sometimes be challenging, especially when you're starting out as a new chapter, not knowing too much about your membership, and with people not being sure about how much time they can commit to the chapter. If you can gather enough interested people to serve as executives, that would be ideal, but if not, just listing enough registered students in order to become an official club will work until you're able to figure out who can commit the time to be an executive. If you're lucky and have a large group of committed students, you might think about creating other leadership positions, such as an event planner, a graphic designer, a membership coordinator, a media director, a researcher, or an outreach coordinator. The structure of your chapter should be determined by your chapter and its members. Do what works for you.
- **Submitting a constitution and a budget.** Schools will usually require that student clubs submit a constitution which describes the goals, structure, bylaws, voting process, and purpose of your club. If your school has funding available for clubs and you are applying for money, you will probably have to submit a budget as well, to

show how you plan to spend the money you receive, as well as any fundraising efforts your chapter plans to make.

- **Charging a membership fee.** Some schools will require that student clubs charge their members a nominal fee, to ensure that the clubs have some form of income outside of the school's funding. Usually \$5 or \$10 is a reasonable fee to charge. If you're not required to by your school, you might consider charging a membership fee anyway, with the fees going towards your chapter – for an upcoming event, food for your next movie night, or some nice colour-printed posters to hang up on campus. Make sure to keep track of membership fees on a ledger, especially if membership fees are required by your school.
- **Attending administrative meetings.** As an official student club, you may be required to attend one or several club meetings on campus, where club representatives can learn more about student club rules, applications for student club funding, processes for booking student venues, and information about upcoming outreach opportunities for your club, as well as safety and security information in case you hold a campus event. Make sure you are aware of any mandatory meetings and that someone from your chapter is able to attend. In some schools, failure to attend even one meeting could mean an automatic decrease in your funding, or in some cases, revoking of your student club status (and the perks that go along with it).

Now that you're officially registered as a student club, make the most of it! Make sure you know what the perks and responsibilities of being a student club are, and use them to your full advantage.

Requirements vary between schools, so we're always interested to hear about the different processes. We'll be happy to support you throughout!

# Outreach 101

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**BUILDING MEMBERSHIP AND DRAWING ATTENTION.** You've decided to start a CSSDP chapter and you've registered as an official club on campus... what next? Any good social movement needs people to power it. Now that you're established as a club on campus, it's time to let people know about the great things CSSDP envisions for the world, and get them interested in helping you accomplish those great things. Here are some ways you can attract new members.

- **Club Fairs.** Your school probably has a club fair during the beginning of each semester – a chance for campus clubs to let students know about their presence on campus. If you're not sure, contact your school or your student union, or check their website. Also check with your school or student union about any rules they might have for things like selling food, playing music, or whether or not you have to be a registered student club to reserve a table.

Club fairs are a great opportunity to recruit new members and to get a feel for what issues are most important on your campus and in your community. If you get a table, some key things you'll need include an email sign-up sheet, pamphlets, and info on your upcoming event.

For more tips on effective tabling, see the **Tabling Tips** section.

- **Creating a presence on campus.** Make sure everyone on campus knows about your chapter, it's events and the work it's doing! Consider contributing to your school newspaper, or manually passing out pamphlets or quarter-page leaflets in the halls, in your classes, in the library, the cafeteria, the bathrooms, and everywhere else you go. Don't forget to encourage your friends and fellow chapter members to do the same!

Create a poster with some interesting facts about the drug war and post it around your campus, or post a different drug war fact every week or two to keep people interested. Talk about your chapter, CSSDP and issues related to drug policy with your classmates, professors and others! Keep in touch with other student clubs, especially those with similar interests and goals to yours (social justice, human rights, environmentalism, cultural groups, etc), and discuss their clubs and issues with your members and to collaborate for cross-membership promotion. Get involved in lots of events on campus to make your chapter known! The possibilities for expanding your presence on campus are endless - it's up to you to take advantage of as many of them as you can!

- **Email and Social Media.** When you register a chapter with CSSDP, we'll make you an official cssdp.org email that you can access easily through gmail. Make sure it is listed on all your pamphlets and posters so that interested students can get in touch with you easily. It's up to you to make sure someone is checking and responding to emails

regularly! Start a Facebook group and even a Twitter account for your chapter to post information about upcoming events, current news, drug war facts and research, and basic stuff about your chapter and how to get involved. Don't forget to share your chapter's social media accounts with CSSDP so we can list them on the website and help promote your events and ideas!

- **Creating a community presence.** Although your chapter may be based on campus, your campus is part of a larger community who could be interested in your chapter's events and could be a potential source of support and allies. Make sure your community knows your chapter is there: contribute to local blogs, write letters to the editor, post leaflets and promote events in community centers, libraries, coffee shops, and other places in and around campus. Although community members might not be interested in attending student club meetings, they might be interested in attending (or even speaking at) special events, helping to promote or donate to your chapter, arranging meetings with local politicians, or supporting your chapter in other ways.

**CONSIDER JOINING A PIRG!** Find out if there is a Public Interest Research Group (PIRG) at your school or in your city. If there is, you might want to consider applying to be a PIRG working group (along with, or instead of, registering as an official student club). PIRGs are groups of like-minded people and organizations (much like CSSDP) working on a whole variety of social justice issues. Becoming a PIRG working group opens a whole network of support - another method to promote your chapter and it's events, as well as potential access to funding - and maybe even free photocopying!

**SHARING YOUR EXPERIENCES.** Starting a CSSDP chapter is a different experience for everyone. Some experiences will be more challenging than others, and every chapter will face it's own road bumps in becoming an active and influential student club. If you run into any complications, have questions or need advice, be sure to [contact](#) a CSSDP staff member! Also, if you have any tips for strategies that definitely do (or definitely do NOT) work, we'd love to hear them, so we can include them in our next chapter manual, for the chapter leaders of the future!

# Tabling Tips

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## 1. Goals of Tabling

- Recruitment: We are the foot soldiers in the war *against* the 'War on Drugs,' and only a large army will stomp out harmful drug policies once and for all. CSSDP email lists encourage solidarity.
- Increase Visibility: We strive to spread the word about CSSDP to all campuses, communities, and beyond! Tabling is successful when it encourages dialogue amongst students and an exchange of ideas.
- Promotion of CSSDP campaigns and upcoming events
  - i. Chapter meetings, events and actions on a local level
  - ii. National projects, annual conference and international events
- Achievement of long-term goals: the more people are aware of CSSDP, the more momentum is gained!

## 2. Tabling Toolkit

- 1 large table: usually available from the student association in charge of clubs and societies
- CSSDP banner
  - i. Large and colourful so it grabs people's attention
  - ii. Helpful to include: CSSDP logo, website ([www.cssdp.org](http://www.cssdp.org)), chapter name (e.g. Carleton University), official chapter email, a slogan ('Just Say Know' or 'Schools not Prisons' etc.)
- CSSDP pamphlets, handouts, printouts of CSSDP statements, or interesting articles: all are available on [www.cssdp.org/resources](http://www.cssdp.org/resources)
- Email list: to continue expanding the CSSDP community, on a local and national level. National email sign-ups contribute to national actions, creating stronger connections to CSSDP's work.
- Information on current campaigns, upcoming events, and meetings: a concrete date, time, and place for an event are proof that CSSDP is progressive and moving forward!
- Gimmicks! Little CSSDP reminders: stickers, buttons, leaflets, booklets-- free stuff!
- Fun & Games: music (live or stereo!) a drug fact spinning wheel, mystery needle draw, prizes, quizzes, baked goods, candy, etc.

## 3. When and Where to Table

- When:
  - i. Expo days! Most universities schedule a Clubs & Societies day in the University Centre at the beginning of the fall and winter semester, when all clubs and societies have a chance to share with curious passers by

- what they're all about! This is a great opportunity to try something new to draw attention to CSSDP and recruit enthusiastic members.
  - ii. Any other time of the year, especially when you have an upcoming event, or an issue that you're trying to raise awareness about.
- o Where
  - i. High-traffic areas such as the University Centre on campus where hundreds of students pass by everyday
  - ii. At festivals or events around the city that can be linked to CSSDP (Global Marijuana March, 4/20, International AIDS Day, etc) or youth (music festivals, local fairs, International Youth Day etc).

#### 4. Table Talking

- o Be approachable! Enthusiasm is important, and it's a great way to get other people interested in CSSDP! When you first joined CSSDP, what drew your interest? How can you share with others what it is you are most passionate about?
- o Know the basics: what are CSSDP's goals? What kind of work do we do? Where does our funding come from? How is CSSDP structured? How does the organization make decisions?
- o Try your best: There's always going to be a question you don't know the answer to. Remember, you don't have to be an expert. We're all learning as we go along. Let them know you are a volunteer, and that you'd be happy to help them find the answer they are looking for. Check out the **Tough Questions** section to learn some strategies for dealing with common, but challenging questions. You can also tell them to contact CSSDP staff, through the website or directly with any questions they'd like answered further.
- o Be assertive: Sometimes you'll get asked a really ignorant question, or a question that is meant to corner you and prove that the person who asked it knows better than you. Don't get scared; remember that CSSDP is an organization aimed to improve the lives of human beings! If you feel uncomfortable or don't wish to answer, encourage them to attend the next CSSDP meeting so they can see what we're all about, and they might become more open-minded/learn something new and interesting.
- o Break stereotypes: One reason a lot of people don't care about drug policy issues is because drug users are marginalized and stereotyped in our society. It is important to combat these stereotypes by talking openly and honestly about issues and always inviting new perspectives. Remember that there is no set description of a drug user. Drug users vary in age, sex, ability, race, background, class, etc.
- o Be careful with the word 'drug': Remember that nicotine, alcohol, caffeine, prescription and over-the-counter medications are drugs too!

## **5. Key Points to emphasize/come back to in your discussion**

- CSSDP neither condemns nor condones drug use
- If someone chooses to use drugs, we are there to provide the information and support to minimize the risks
- The reality is: some young people use drugs, no matter how much we tell them not to. They deserve and need education, support and empowerment. They don't need to be criminalized and marginalized.
- Drug use is a complex issue, and requires a complex solution. Criminalization and imprisoning is not a complex solution.
- Legalizing does not mean a free for all. It means regulation.
- Legalizing creates barriers between drugs and young people.
- We need to regain control of the drug market from organized crime!

# Tough Questions

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Whether you're staffing a table, engaging community members for an upcoming event, or promoting your chapter's activities on social media, it's important to be prepared to give accurate information to people who have questions. Drugs are a topic that's often misunderstood in our society, and knowing how to respond to some of the tougher questions people may ask is important.

## The Basics

- **'What is CSSDP?'**  
CSSDP is a grassroots network of youth, students, professionals, and individuals, who are concerned about the negative impact our drug policies have on individuals and communities.
- **'What do Chapters across Canada do?'**  
Chapters focus on raising awareness about issues important to their community, and gaining support to resolve those issues. Chapters hold regular meetings, community forums, fundraisers for themselves or local service providers, awareness events (movie nights, guest lecturers, etc), and support national projects such as
- **'How do I get involved?'**  
Sign up for the chapter email list: A great way to receive updates about upcoming events and meetings, current campaigns, and great articles about drug policy!  
Sign up for the national email list: To gain connections across the country!  
Come out to the next meeting! (Mention free food)
- **'How is CSSDP funded?'**  
CSSDP's national office is funded by private donors and organizational grants in Canada and the United States. Chapters are autonomous, fundraise for themselves, and are able to ask the national office for funds. Student clubs can also apply for funding through their school.
- **'What is a sensible drug policy?'**
  - One that is evidence-based!
  - One that doesn't criminalize people for substance use (\* note there is a difference between substance use and substance abuse → substance misuse causes harm to the drug user. Harm reduction aims to reduce substance abuse.)
  - One that doesn't introduce young people to the criminal justice system for drug use (evidence shows the earlier youth are introduced to the criminal justice system the more likely they are to experience conflict with the law in the future).

-Sensible policy balances funding. Non-sensible policy allocates  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the funding to enforcement → money down the drain! This leaves prevention, treatment, and harm-reduction with little or no funding at all.

## Harm Reduction Related

- **'Do you support harm reduction?'**

A big resounding YES!

- **'What is harm reduction?'**

-Harm reduction is a general term used to address services, policies, and philosophies that seek to reduce the amount of harm done by drug use to the individual and society.

-Harm reduction acknowledges that, like it or not, problematic drug use occurs, and shouldn't be ignored.

-General harm reduction concepts: seat belts in case of car accidents, bicycle helmets in case of bicycle accidents, warning signs at shallow diving areas, distribution of condoms to promote safe sex, eating before consuming alcohol so that you don't drink on an empty stomach, alternating alcoholic beverages with water to avoid dehydration, etc.

-Harm reduction concepts associated with drug use: clean needle distribution to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS, safer crack/meth use kits, supervised injection/consumption sites, drug maintenance therapy, and more!

- **'Harm reduction promotes drug use!'**

If someone says this to you, you must refute by saying 'No it doesn't!'

-It acknowledges a reality and seeks to reduce the harm to the individual and society. You can't beat your addiction if you're dead. Harm reduction saves lives.

- **'What about young people?'**

There shouldn't be age restrictions to learning valuable harm reduction information. Educating young people about harm reduction can only benefit them, by providing them with useful tools to apply to their own lives and help their friends. Harm reduction does not promote drug use. It is every young person's decision whether or not they use, and CSSDP aims to make sure that a youthful indiscretion does not become a death sentence.

## Marijuana Related

- **'You want to legalize pot?'**

YES!

**Criminalization** of marijuana use only criminalizes people, and it's time for it to stop. **Decriminalization** typically means to change the punishment for drug use from jail time to paying a fine. **Legalization** however typically means to take

control and regulate production, distribution, and consumption. This is the only way to get rid of the black market and remove it from the hands of organized crime.

- **‘Legalizing pot will increase youth pot use.’**  
Wrong! Legalizing marijuana will create barriers between young people and consuming marijuana, like with alcohol.
- **‘There are still ways for young people to get alcohol and tobacco.’**  
Youth routinely report that marijuana, ecstasy and other illegal drugs are easier to obtain regularly than alcohol or tobacco. Legalization creates barriers to prevent youth access to these substances. All models have their flaws, but legalization and regulation offer far more control than criminalization does today.
- **‘Nobody I know gets busted for pot.’**  
That doesn’t mean it doesn’t happen! It’s just not talked about. Thousands of people still get arrested for marijuana offences in Canada. They are introduced into the criminal justice system. They may go to court and receive a discharge, but that is a day or two they have to take off work or miss school, and who wants to tell their boss or their teachers that they have to miss work/class for a pot possession charge?

Tough reality: Marijuana laws are unfortunately enforced unevenly and irresponsibly across Canada. The government keeps moving forward (or backwards you could say) with ‘tough on crime’ bills that aim to further criminalize the recreational and medical marijuana user. Also, our courts are clogged with small marijuana consumption, distribution and production charges.

What to do: We need to create a uniform policy on marijuana that does not criminalize responsible producers, distributors, and consumers. Legalizing marijuana would significantly remove these clogs in court and allow our justice system to address and resolve real crimes.

## **Drug Related**

- **‘You Want to Legalize ALL Drugs?’**  
That is not our main goal. Our goal is to end the criminalization of drugs and drug users.
  - ‘Legalize’ can mean a lot of different scenarios. It does *not* mean a free for all. Under the current regime of prohibition, we have chaos, rather than control. Tough-on-crime approaches to drugs don’t actually result in a reduction of crime or an increase in social harmony.
  - Legalizing and *regulating* drugs could mean giving them a medical status, providing them in a supervised environment or providing them for controlled sale.

- Each substance would have its own set of marketing rules, safety provisions, and regulatory oversight.
- Our public health model would focus on education, harm reduction, prevention, and only where needed, enforcement.
- **‘But organized crime won’t disappear if we legalize.’**  
No, it won’t. But it *will* have lost its most lucrative source of revenue. Organized crime will be forced into other areas, where the police will be better able to target the key players in the criminal arena, and not the mules, low-level dealers, or members of the general public who use drugs.
- **‘What about crack cocaine/heroin/meth?’**
  - Legalizing these drugs (the ones most people assume are the most dangerous, disregarding the effects that nicotine addiction has on their wallets, or the effects of alcohol/caffeine when consumed regularly etc.) would not make them more available. -- Legalizing these drugs would make them *less* available.
  - Criminalizing these illicit drugs is a waste of money. Money that could be better used to invest in public health and education strategies.
  - Legalizing does not mean that these drugs will be sold in every corner store. There are a whole range of regulation models that can be tailored to each drug according to different needs in different communities. A good resource for different models of post-prohibition regulations is Transform Drug Policy Foundation’s *After the War on Drugs: Blueprints for Regulation* available [here](#).

## Drug Policy Related

- **‘What are alternatives to prohibition?’**  
There are many alternative policy models that address drugs in our society. The goal is to implement a public health based approach, something many communities in Canada are already trying to do.
  - A good place to start: increase funding to prevention, treatment, and harm reduction.
  - Next: responsibly remove the criminalization of drugs and drug users.
  - Outcome: replacing harmful drug policies with ones that work for our communities, not against them.
- **CSSDP’s Annual National Conference**  
Every year CSSDP holds a drug policy conference to explore policy alternatives and harm reduction solutions on a national level. The conference is held in a different city every year, and brings together CSSDP members, students, sponsors and other drug policy organizations.
  - Check out our website for information on this year’s conference.
  - A main event at each conference is the student poster presentations. It’s a great

way to get involved, and students will get financial support from their school to go to the conference. If you want to attend and need additional financial support, there's an opportunity to get sponsored with CSSDP too.

- We rely on donations and support from individuals and organizations alike.

Learn how to donate and keep CSSDP running. Encourage everyone to attend!

- **The Vienna Declaration**

The [Vienna Declaration](#) is a document that calls for a full review of current drug policies and the implementation of a science-based public health approach to currently illegal drugs with the goal of reducing individual and community harm.

The Vienna Declaration advocates:

- evidence-based approaches that respect, protect and fulfill human rights to reduce harms deriving from current policies

- redirecting financial resources towards implementing and evaluating evidence-based prevention, regulatory, treatment and harm reduction interventions

- Decriminalizing drug users, scaling up evidence-based drug dependence treatment options and abolishing ineffective compulsory drug treatment centres that violate the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

- **Bill C-10, Mandatory Minimums and Tough on Crime**

“The Safe Streets and Communities Act” or Bill C-10 passed in 2010. The bill implemented several amendments to the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act imposing mandatory minimum sentences for drug-related criminal offences.

- According to the Act people who produce, sell, or use illicit substances – from recreational use of cannabis, to those with serious and potentially life-threatening narcotic addictions are met with the same response: incarceration.

- In 2008, the crime rate was the lowest it has been in the last 25 years. drug offences are down 6% since 2008, and youth offence rates have remained relatively stable since 1991 despite the fact that fewer youths are being incarcerated under the new Youth Criminal Justice Act.

- The Act overly incarcerates marginalized groups, such as people who suffer from addictions, mental illness, and racial discrimination. These social-structural elements influence the rates of offending and correlate with who will or will not be incarcerated. The key to addressing crime rates lies in effectively remedying the structural inequalities.

- **Election Issues**

Better drug policy is always an election issue, especially with the omnibus crime bill that further criminalizes youth and marginalized youth. There are certain efforts to be particularly aware and active on:

- Medical and recreational cannabis use: our current laws limit medical patients from quality, accessible and affordable medicine, incarcerate already struggling groups and overload the criminal justice system unnecessarily.
- Supervised Injection Sites: the Conservative government is opposed to the Vancouver Insite clinic operation, and when it came to power, it dropped harm reduction from the national anti-drug strategy. The Supreme Court of Canada ruled that not allowing a SIS clinic to operate would be a violation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and ordered the federal minister of health to grant Insite an immediate exemption from drug laws.
- Safety, harm reduction and healthcare first: By focusing on concrete evidence, we can change destructive drug policies like Bill C-10's mandatory minimums and Bill C-2, which limits how existing Supervised Injection Sites operate. Help educate others, and get out and vote this election!

## Making Connections on Campus

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Drug policy is an incredibly diverse topic, and there are a number of ways drug policy intersects with student life:

- Recreational drug policies are unevenly enforced on campus, overly punishing certain students
- Members of school sports team are found using performance enhancing drugs
- Alcohol, and its role on campus and in student union and university events
- Health officials refuse to provide information to students on harm reduction practices
- University 'off campus conduct codes' end up punishing students twice for minor drug offences

It's important to keep the doors open for your chapter and be ready to tackle any issues that come up on your campus!

A great connection to make is with your school's health and safety wings. These are the parts of the university that are shaping the campuses policies and practices. Get to know the key people and find out what their opinions are on how drugs should be addressed on campus and in society. From there you will likely find common ground on ways the chapter can push certain issues forward that those working for the school may not be able to.

Your student union is also an important place to make connections. Find out what kinds of support your chapter will receive as a result of being an official club. Also find out what type of activities and events the student union holds throughout the year, and see if there's a way to involve the CSSDP chapter. For example, many hold 'anti-discrimination' weeks. See if your chapter can host an event on the different forms of discrimination drug user's face.

Connect with other student groups on campus and see if they are interesting in working together. Highlight the human rights abuses of the drug war, the environmental effects of prohibition, cultural elements of the global war on drug users with groups working on similar issues.

Also check with different departments on campus to find professors who are looking to support your work. They can be great help navigating funding sources and promoting your work. Get each chapter member to look into their own department to find out which professors are interested in what. The secretaries should be more than happy to help you, they will also be able to help you send mass call outs to everyone in that department.

## Making Connections off Campus

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CSSDP is about creating change on campus and throughout your community. A great way to expand your chapter's efforts is to make connections with local organizations related to your chapter's interests. A good starting point is local youth and health organizations. Off campus there are a variety of groups you can contact. There may be local AIDS organizations that do (or want to do) harm reduction work in the community. There may be local justice, prisoner's rights, legal reform, or related groups, that hadn't really thought about drug policy until CSSDP came to town. There will be municipal health organizations that offer a variety of services that would be great to contact to get a sense of the needs of the community. Once your chapter knows what things it wants to focus on, take a look around in the community and see what existing organizations are working on.

Many local organizations working in your community will be very excited to work with CSSDP so that they can increase the involvement of youth in their efforts. Your CSSDP chapter will be looked at to provide the voice of youth who are looking to create more sensible policies and practices in your area. Be confident in approaching organizations for partnerships! Some ways to build new partnerships include:

- Holding a fundraiser for local harm reduction service providers
- Inviting a speaker from a local organization to speak at your event
- Contacting a local organization about an event or action idea your chapter has to get their thoughts on it
- Co-hosting an event or action
- Working on a research project on a local topic
- Co-ordinating statements on local topics, or lobbying local politicians

Working with local organizations is also a great way to fulfill co-op, placement, or other course requirements. Many organizations will already have programs for students to get course credits for their time working with the organization. It's a great way for you to connect your CSSDP chapter activities with getting diverse experience and completing your program!

### **Connecting with the local business community**

The local business community could be very important to your chapter's ability to put on successful events in your area. There's lots of different ways local businesses can support, such as:

- Allowing you to put up posters in their storefront
- Donating money to your cause or event
- Donating raffle items, or other physical items to support your action or event
- Donating food for an event
- Convincing their employees to volunteer for CSSDP at a certain event
- Donating space for an event to be held

It's important to be flexible, and acknowledge what type of situation the business is in. Most small, independently run stores cannot offer money donations, but could offer items or

significant discounts. Most large chain stores have their own donation policies, some are up to individual stores and others are handled centrally. A quick phone call to the store manager will let you know where to begin the first steps to asking for support.

Remember, the business needs to get something out of the arrangement too, otherwise they won't consider it. Some businesses will simply be down for the cause, but others will want to explicitly hear the promotion opportunities available. When you're asking for support, make sure they know the exposure amongst the local youth and students.

When you're asking, make sure to write a professional letter. Make sure to have the person's name you're addressing it to. They may not respond right away, so make sure to follow up with the contact. And if you get a donation, make sure to write a thank you, and let them know how the event went (including how many people now know how awesome that business is because they support CSSDP!) You want to build a good relationship with these businesses so that the chapter can rely on their support when it's needed.

The sky is the limit on the type of businesses you approach. It depends on the type of event you're holding as well. Some obvious examples are local cannabis culture shops, radical bookstores, and other 'radical' businesses. But don't stop there! Some examples:

- Local coffee shops are great places to put up posters. They also will likely have gift baskets they regularly donate to local groups for fundraisers.
- Grocery stores are a great place to ask for discounts or donated food for an event.
- Restaurant gift certificates are always a great raffle prize
- Art store gift certificates are great as well for artsy events
- Pubs or bars may be willing to donate space or make arrangements for free to hold a fundraising event

## **Building Cultural Resistance**

There is a strong link between music, musicians, and social justice movements, even the drug policy movement. Countless artists have written and performed about the war on drugs, marijuana prohibition, and mind altered experiences.

We thought we'd throw out some ideas to help your chapter positively build on this link between the arts community and drug policy reform. You probably have plenty of ideas of your own, so make sure to tell us what you think works (and doesn't).

- **Ask your friends!** The quickest way to make a great CSSDP party better is with live music. Get a group of local artists to play at a fundraiser at a park or house. Etc.
- **Table at shows!** If you know a band that's playing at a local bar or coffee place, ask if they will let you include some of our pamphlets at their table. Or even see if you can get a whole table! It's a great way to do outreach, and you may even get to see your favourite band for free.
- **Make friends with your favourite artists!** You see them at the spot before or after the show, you know who they are, what they look like, but you just need that icebreaker. Why not tell them you're with the coolest national youth group around, and that you'd love for them to get involved? They may not want to have a big discussion after their show, but they'll give you their

contact info and you can work out how they can best get involved later. And they'll remember you as the one who introduced them to CSSDP.

- **Lots of ways for artists to get involved!** There are lots of ways for artists to contribute to CSSDP in simple ways. Something simple like a picture for our website of them wearing a CSSDP pin, or with a CSSDP sticker on their instrument, or face. Perhaps they want to rock out against the drug war? Or donate some copies of their album for us to use in our fundraising.

The local arts scene is also a great way to get the word in the community. Theatre groups, spoken word crews, and other artists have been big parts of creating cultural resistance. Talk to folks in your community about how to come together and keep the drug policy movement fun as well as successful!

## At The End of School Year

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School is out for the summer, but that doesn't mean that your chapter needs to become less active! Summer can be a great time to amp up your chapter's activism and raise CSSDP's profile in the community.

Now is the time for all the movement building you've been doing to come in handy! Use your email listserve, Facebook group, and other social media accounts, to stay in touch with chapter members and keep everyone updated on relevant drug policy issues as they arise. Setting up an event or multiple events over the summer is a fantastic way of keeping people hyped up about the cause and about participating in the chapter. Stay up to date on what's going on in your area and make sure CSSDP is represented at relevant conferences, rallies, panels, and other events.

The global day of action for the [Support. Don't Punish.](#) campaign takes place every year on June 26th, and is a great way to mobilize your community around drug policy issues. Their website has a wealth of resources on how to set up an event and become part of the global movement!

The [International Remembrance Day](#) for drug users takes place every year on July 21st. This is also a great opportunity to raise awareness, mobilize, and draw attention to the human cost of the war on drugs.