



**Canadian Students for
Sensible Drug Policy**
Chapter Startup Manual



**A Grassroots Approach to
Harm Reduction and Drug Policy Reform**

What you need to know to start making campus connections & mobilizing action



@CSSDP

*Prepared for and with contributions from our chapters nationwide, July 2018

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At the end of the school year

Who are Canadian Students for Sensible Drug Policy?

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.



Our Mission

We believe that the criminalization of drug users circumvents public health, feeds stigma, and undermines the rights of those who use drugs/those who love them. Our mission is to advocate for evidence-based approaches to drug policy and drug education that prioritize public health and human rights. We seek to implement peer-to-peer education strategies in harm reduction, policy issues, legal and social concerns around drug use as it affects us.

Canadian Students for Sensible Drug Policy has long endorsed social services such as safe injection sites, drug testing services all promote public health in Canada. We are also part of a larger network of Student Groups advocating for drug policy reform across the world. (You can read more about our international policy work under the Global Affairs section!)

Getting Started

In order to get your club officially recognized on campus, generally you will need to acquire and develop a number of things. A few of those generally being:

1. A list of student names and numbers to show there is interest.
(Finding faculty who support the mandate of CSSDP are an asset as well!)
2. Structure from those students being: likely a *Club President (aka Chapter Leader)* potentially also a *vice president, treasurer, secretary*, as well as *bylaws* and a *constitution*. (Definitions of these roles and sample policies are all available in the chapter resources section coming up below!)
3. It often helps to have a *letter of intent* to send your Club Coordinator, the head of the student association, or whoever you feel appropriate. You may also request a *letter of endorsement* from the board or chapter liaison.

Chapter Resources

We have a number of resources available on our website to help make things easier for our chapters. From policy and letter templates to event guides and tabling supplies that you can print online- find it all at

cssdp.org/chapter-resources

Chapter Manual

CSSDP 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. If you decide to start a chapter or already run one, this manual will give you some basic guidelines on running an active Canadian Students for Sensible Drug Policy chapter.

CSSDP Pamphlet

This pamphlet gives some background information on CSSDP and what we stand for. Print it out to hand out during tabling sessions!

Sample Constitution

Edit this sample constitution according to the guidelines of your university!

Chapter Sign Up Sheet

Print this chapter sign-up sheet to collect names and contact information of members.

Chapter Grants

Outreach 101

You've decided to start a CSSDP chapter and 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 accomplish those great things.

Here are some ways you can attract members:

Building Membership and Drawing Attention

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 signup 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, its events and the work it's doing! Consider contributing to your school newspaper, or manually passing out pamphlets or trifold 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!

Postering

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 crossmembership 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 likeminded 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

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!

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), 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

- Email list: to continue expanding the CSSDP community, on a local and national level.

National email signups contribute to national actions, creating stronger connections to CSSDP's work.

