



How to Build a Right Care Alliance chapter

NOTE: This is a process that will take 3-4 months, and maybe more. That's okay.

Definition:

Right Care Alliance chapters are local groups who work together on both local and national campaigns. Local campaigns are for achieving change specific to their local health care system. National campaigns are developed by the Right Care Alliance Steering Committee and approved by the national RCA body.

Goal Of This Document:

To help guide the development of robust, dynamic, and active chapters of the Right Care Alliance with strong leaders committed to making real change in health care. This document is one tool to build a chapter along with the support of other RCA chapter leaders and organizing team members. Please reach out with questions to organize@rightcarealliance.org



Guiding principles for building strong chapters

Chapters should be:

- Based on authentic relationships among leadership and all other members;
- Organized around specific goals, in keeping with the Right Care Alliance's values for a health care system that is more just, affordable, effective, and accountable to all members of our communities;
- Created with a balance of specific, well-established organizing techniques and each member's own creativity for recruiting new members, creating strategy, running campaigns, and building power for change.



Step 1- Have a conversation with an Organizer

So you want to start a chapter of the Right Care Alliance. The RCA has organizers on tap to help you get started. In a conversation with an organizer, you will:

- Share why you are interested in starting a chapter;
- Learn from the organizer why they are involved with the RCA;
- Discuss with the organizer why you are involved or want to be involved;

- Talk about the steps of starting a chapter;
- Learn how Lown Institute staff and RCA Steering Committee members support chapters;
- Learn about other chapters;
- Share ideas for people you can recruit and methods of recruiting; and
- Talk about next steps.



Step 2 – Recruit People

- Put together a list of people you want to recruit for the chapter. First, think about who you might want by your side in the early days of forming the chapter. You'll need people who see the problems in health care that you see, envision a different system, and might be committed to making that happen. You can find these people by thinking about all of your friends, colleagues, family, personal contacts.
- Once you have your list, ask each of them for an in-person conversation, to get to know each other better and share your vision for the chapter. This is called a “one to one” or “one on one” conversation. (*Reach out to organize@rightcarealliance.org to learn what makes these conversations an important leadership skill and practice with others.*)
- Go into this conversation with specific ideas in mind for what you want to ask the person to do, but also stay open in your conversation to hear about their interests. Tell them what the chapter is looking for, and ask them about their interests. If somebody is a social media expert, they may want to share their skills and help guide social media for the chapter, or they might feel that they want to explore a new skill. Be sure to end with a clear

ask and next steps about whatever you decide. That next step could range from another meeting to continue this conversation, to a specific role the other person wants to take on.

- Not everybody you have on your initial list is going to want to join – don't be discouraged. To find more, ask every person you have a 1-1 conversation with for recommendations. Even if your best friend doesn't care about health care or doesn't want to join a movement, they might know other people who do.
- Other ways to find more people to join include:
 - Sending messages to email lists in your community;
 - Teaching out to community groups that may have members who share your values of right care;
 - Working with Lown Institute staff to identify other Right Care Alliance members in your neighborhood/city;
 - Talking about this wherever you go. Somebody sitting next to you on the bus, at school pick up, or wherever you go just might share your values.



General Tips for Recruiting:

- Remember, email is not the same as recruiting! Email is definitely an important tool to start spreading the word, but make sure in your emails that you ask people to meet in person.
- Phone calls are an effective way to talk to people if you can't meet in person.
- Don't do all of this recruiting by yourself! As you start talking to people, don't just ask them to take action someday; ask them to jump in right now by helping you recruit.
- Be sure to stay in touch with Right Care Alliance organizers. Check in on regular coaching calls, where you can learn how and practice doing 1-1s. We'll connect you with other chapter leaders who have done this outreach already, as well as people who are in the middle of recruiting too.

Step 3 – Host a House Party to Explore Team Building



Once you have a few people interested/committed, organize a house party! Invite these people over for food and to talk. The purpose of this meeting is to get to know each other and share stories about why you are here, and your shared values and visions for a better future. You should also talk about your vision for the chapter and what you all hope it might accomplish.

Right Care Organizers will share templates and agendas from other meetings, and put you in touch with other chapter leaders who have already organized house parties.

Just like with recruitment, you shouldn't plan this meeting by yourself! Ask the people you are working with to plan it with you. Ask them to host or find a location, organize

food and logistics, and to put together the agenda and facilitate the meeting. The more other people are invested and are doing things, the more they have a sense of ownership, responsibility and belonging everybody feels, and the less work there is for each individual.



At the house party:

- Share your stories with each other about why you care about right care. Go around in a circle, and give everybody 3-4 minutes to talk about why they are here.
- Encourage people to be as specific as possible in describing what experiences made them want to organize for right care, as opposed to listing off their resume or talking in philosophical or scientific concepts. Tell them everybody wants to hear why they care deeply enough about a better health care system to be willing to work on it.

Talk about the next steps for building a chapter together. Brainstorm how many people you will have 1-1s with between now and the next meeting. Talk about other next steps, and who will do what. Be sure to schedule your next meeting while everybody is there, and end on time.

Step 4 – Host a Team Meeting



This is the meeting where you will ask people to make formal and explicit commitments to the team. Anybody who is interested can come to the House Party, but people should only come to this team meeting if they are committed. The purpose of this meeting is to create the structure your team will need to support each other. Here are some tips about this important meeting:

- Check in with an RCA organizer to talk about how to facilitate this meeting. We'll send you agendas and templates, and can connect you to others who have run similar meetings in their communities.
- This should be about 2-4 weeks after the House Party.
 - You'll talk about the purpose of your group, as well as roles and norms for the group, and decide how you want to work together, support each other and hold each other accountable. We will send you worksheets that your group can use to have these conversations and make decisions.
 - At this meeting you'll also start talking about planning for your kickoff event. You may want to spread this conversation out over two different meetings.

Step 5 – Hold Kickoff Event



This is your first big public meeting or action when you formally launch your chapter!

Preparation:

- Get templates and agendas from an RCA organizer, who can also connect you with other people who ran awesome kickoffs.
- Plan a big social media blitz for this, to tell everyone in your community and allies across the country that this is happening!
- Be sure to do lots of focused recruitment for this. People won't show up because of one email or one tweet. Send emails, but also follow up with lots of phone calls and face-to-face meetings encouraging people to come.

At the Kickoff Event:

- You and your team introduce yourselves. A few of you should share your stories about why you care about starting this chapter, your vision and goals and shared purpose for

the group. Introduce the RCA for participants who have never heard of the network. The goal of this part of the meeting is to create a sense of solidarity.

- Make sure that part of the event is interactive! We can offer ideas, but feel free to be creative and have fun with this! For example, you can play human bingo. You can ask people to write a 3-line poem about health care and recite it to the group.
- At least half of the meeting should be dedicated to brainstorming towards a projects. Divide the participants into 2-3 small groups, according to the number of actions or events that you are working on. These can include holding listening tours or town halls, writing op-eds, how to do outreach and find more members, etc.
- Close the meeting by having everybody commit to three clear next steps and state the date of the next meeting or meetings. Those steps might be: come to the next meeting, make a presentation to co-workers, and recruit 5 people, for example.
- Be sure to celebrate at the end of the meeting—your chapter is officially launched!



YOUR CHAPTER IS STARTED!

Step 6– Build Your Core Team and Leadership Structures



By now you should have a handful of people who are active members. As more and more people are hopefully joining your group, it's time to expand leadership roles. People need specific roles and tasks to feel a responsibility to the group, and also to make sure that the new people are plugging in right away.

It might be time to rearrange some of the roles you decided on at the first Team Meeting. It will definitely mean creating leadership structures to support all of your new people. Find people to coordinate the work of each of the breakout groups from the kickoff. For example, if one of the breakout groups decided to hold a town hall, that event will need people to plan the event and coordinate the logistics. Core Team members can't and shouldn't do it all, but they can coordinate and mentor others to take the lead on specific events and actions.

If there is energy among your active membership around a new committee that didn't meet at the kickoff, make sure you have people coordinating that new group to help it find the leadership it needs to run.

Think of the leadership of the chapter as a snowflake, which has a structure of the Core Team at the center, and then other teams, or working groups, radiating outward from there.

Don't forget about your core team as you develop the working groups. Members of the core team should be the leaders of the working groups. The Core Team is also responsible for planning meetings for the full group, and supporting recruiting and outreach.



A Note on Meetings:

As your group expands into several committees and working groups, make sure that you are holding effective and fun meetings. You should aim for 4 types of meetings/gatherings:

- 1) **Mass Meetings** - These are for all members and new people to come together and share updates from the working groups.
- 2) **Working groups** - These are for the working groups to plan their next steps.
- 3) **Core Team** - Core Team needs to meet at least monthly to check in, coordinate the activities of working groups, and reconnect with each other and their commitment to the chapter.
- 4) **Social Events** - Social action is hard work, but it should also be fun! The Sierra Club discovered that their most active and effective chapters were the ones who went on hikes together. What's the version of hiking for your chapter?

Make sure you keep a roster of who attended, especially when new people come. Start every meeting with an introduction to welcome and orient people to what is happening.

And end with a debrief of what worked well and what you should do differently next time. We are always learning, and each meeting or action is an opportunity to reflect on how to keep growing.

