

Chapter Activities & Outreach Guide

Part 1: Possible Chapter Activities

Each CGS Chapter engages the public and advances our mission through advocacy, education, and media. These activities inform or influence Members of Congress, engage the general public, and use local media to raise awareness and inspire action on global issues.

Per the Chapter Affiliation Agreement, each chapter must sponsor or conduct at least one advocacy, educational, or media action per year. The ideas below offer a broad menu of possibilities to choose from – chapters are encouraged to do more where capacity allows.

When carrying out these activities, always express CGS’s point of view and identify yourself as a representative of your local chapter. For example, if you meet with a Member of Congress about climate change, introduce yourself as a CGS chapter representative and connect the conversation to a global institution, norm, or agreement that CGS supports as part of the solution.

1. Advocacy Activities

Advocacy activities focus on directly influencing elected officials and building long-term relationships with policymakers. These are some of the most impactful actions your chapter can take.

- Meet with a Member of Congress or their staff to discuss a CGS issue or approach to an international challenge. Building a constructive and friendly relationship with the local and national staff of your Senators and Representatives is the best way to influence their future voting record.
- Organize letter-writing campaigns or petition drives on current CGS priority issues.
- Attend town halls or public forums hosted by elected officials to ask questions related to CGS’s areas of focus.
- Coordinate constituent visits to Congressional offices – both local district offices and Washington, D.C.

Tip: Building Congressional Relationships

Consistent, respectful engagement – not just one-time visits – is what shifts a legislator’s position. Aim to maintain ongoing contact with your representatives’ foreign policy staff throughout the year.

2. Educational Activities

Educational activities are an excellent way for new chapters to build their presence in the community and introduce CGS's mission to broader audiences. Consider starting here if your chapter is just getting off the ground.

- Collaborate with another local organization on a project related to global interdependence, civic engagement, or world affairs. Be sure that CGS's ideas are reflected in the collaboration and that your chapter receives equal visibility.
- Speak to a group of people who are not currently CGS members about our work. Close your talk with a membership invitation and at least one concrete action they can take.
- Table at a community event — invite people to join CGS, sign a petition, write a letter, or take some other action at your table.
- Host a film screening, panel discussion, or book club on a relevant global issue.
- Partner with a local university to engage students — essay contests, guest lectures, and Model United Nations collaborations are all great entry points.
- Organize a community dialogue (in-person, hybrid, or online) on a topic connected to CGS's current campaigns.

3. Media Activities

Media outreach extends your chapter's reach beyond your immediate membership and helps shape public discourse on global issues.

- Submit a letter to the editor or op-ed on a CGS issue to your local newspaper or online outlet. CGS has a team working to distribute op-eds via the Peace Voice Syndicate — contact CGS staff if you are interested.
- Invite a community leader to co-sign a letter to the editor or op-ed about a CGS issue, whether or not it is published. The relationship-building is valuable in itself.
- Request a meeting with your local newspaper's editorial board to discuss a CGS issue, whether or not they write an editorial on it.
- Arrange for a chapter event to be covered by local media, with Citizens for Global Solutions mentioned by name in connection with the coverage.
- Seek opportunities to be interviewed by a local television or radio station on a relevant global topic.
- Use social media — including your chapter's Facebook, X (Twitter), or Instagram accounts — to amplify CGS content and share local chapter news.

** A note on attribution: Occasionally it may not be effective to identify yourself as a CGS representative. For example, editors may be less likely to print a letter if you appear to represent a special-interest group rather than a concerned reader. Use your best judgment on a case-by-case basis — but always take advantage of every opportunity to get CGS's key messages into the public discourse.*

Part 2: Suggestions for Launching Your Chapter

These are suggestions, not rigid requirements. Every community is different, and you should adapt this process to fit your local context. That said, the steps below provide a practical framework that has worked well for CGS chapters in the past.

Note: There is no single required format for early chapter meetings. Some chapters begin with an informal gathering — coffee, a meal, a casual get-together — before moving into more structured planning. What matters most is bringing the right people to the table.

Your First Meeting

The goal of your first meeting is to generate genuine interest and identify who wants to be involved. Keep it informal and conversational — this is about building relationships, not running a committee meeting.

- Find a comfortable, accessible location — a coffee shop, local restaurant, library meeting room, or a video call. The priority is that potential members feel welcome and at ease.
- Give everyone a chance to introduce themselves and share their interest in local civic action on global issues.
- Introduce what CGS is and what your chapter could accomplish. Share CGS's current priorities and ask whether there are local issues chapter members want to address.
- Ask members to learn more about the organization by following CGS on social media or visiting GlobalSolutions.org.
- Explore which members are interested in discussing these issues with elected officials or engaging civic groups, churches, universities, and other organizations in the community.
- Invite those who want to stay engaged to a follow-up meeting within a few weeks to begin organizing the chapter.
- Notify CGS after your first meeting so they can provide materials and support for your next steps.

Your Second Meeting

The second meeting is where your chapter begins to take shape. Come prepared with information from CGS and an agenda focused on structure, campaigns, and initial planning.

- Select a chapter chair or president and at least one other officer. If your group wants a more formal structure, the Sample CGS Chapter Bylaws document provides a ready-to-use template.
- Confirm your Primary Contact and Alternate Contact for CGS — these will be listed on the CGS website. Also designate at least one person to join the CGS Chapter Leaders email list; members of that list are invited to periodic

cross-chapter meetings. Any of these roles may overlap with each other or with a third person, per the Affiliation Agreement.

- Review materials from CGS about CGS's active campaigns. Discuss how these campaigns connect with your local community and how your state and national elected officials currently stand on relevant issues.
- Brainstorm local civic groups and activist organizations with which your chapter could partner on advocacy, educational, and media actions. Check their websites and local media listings for upcoming events you could engage with or co-sponsor.
- For issues where no local partner is immediately available, identify the steps needed to organize your own event: brainstorm venues, potential expert speakers, and creative ways to promote the event.
- Begin planning your digital presence and member outreach:
 - Identify a volunteer to set up chapter social media accounts. Note: per the Affiliation Agreement, all accounts using the CGS name or branding must share login credentials with CGS, which will also have team-level access (e.g., via Meta Business Suite).
 - Research how to list chapter events in local media community calendars.
- Assign someone to compile contact information for your Senators and Representatives — local office addresses and phone numbers, Washington D.C. contact details, the name of their foreign policy legislative aide, and upcoming town hall dates.
- Discuss what kinds of training or support your members might benefit from — leadership, advocacy, public speaking, media skills. Share this list with CGS staff, who can provide mentoring and guidance.
- Draft your chapter's program plan and initial activity list, and submit it to CGS. Per the Chapter Guidelines, chapters are required to submit their local program plans to CGS. You will also send an annual schedule of upcoming meetings and activities as required by the Affiliation Agreement.

Keep It Simple

You don't need to plan everything in the second meeting. The most important outcomes are: who will lead the chapter, a short list of 2–3 potential activities, and at least one upcoming action to look forward to. Build from there.

Part 3: Outreach in Your Local Community

A thriving chapter doesn't operate in isolation — it builds relationships with other organizations and weaves CGS into the fabric of its local civic ecosystem. This section provides practical guidance on finding, approaching, and maintaining partnerships with like-minded organizations in your area.

Finding Potential Partner Organizations

CGS works on a wide range of topics, from climate change and human rights to global governance and international law. It's unlikely that any single local organization will share all of your chapter's interests — and that's fine. The goal is to find organizations that share at least one area of focus and are genuinely active in the community.

The best partners are often organizations where you or a chapter member already have a connection. But you can also search for:

- [Your city] organizations + [topic area, e.g., climate, human rights, peacebuilding]
- [Your city] chapter of [relevant national organization]
- International relations or world affairs groups at local universities
- Civic groups, service organizations, and community foundations
- Cultural or ethnic organizations with a connection to international affairs
- Model United Nations groups at local high schools or universities

When reviewing search results, look for organizations with active websites, clear missions, accessible contact information, and a recent record of events and community engagement. These are the signs of a healthy, responsive organization.

Prioritize Depth Over Breadth

It's better to build a strong relationship with one focused organization than to work thinly with many. A group that puts serious effort into a single issue — even if that issue is just one part of CGS's mandate — can be a powerful ally.

Initiating Dialogue

Once you've identified a few potential partner organizations, collect their contact information and mission statements. Not every organization you approach will be ready or willing to partner with CGS, so have multiple options in mind.

Send each potential partner a personalized introductory email. Wait a few days, then follow up with a second message or a phone call if you haven't heard back. Persistence is key — organizations receive a high volume of emails, and yours may simply have been missed.

Approach every outreach interaction with a spirit of genuine partnership. Remember:

- You are not there to push CGS's agenda onto another organization. You are proposing a collaboration that benefits both groups and the community.
- Familiarize yourself with their goals, recent campaigns, and community role before making contact. Your email or call will be far more effective if it reflects that you've done your homework.
- Emphasize specific, tangible CGS issues — not abstract goals like "global democracy." Helping a potential partner see how a collaboration leads to concrete, achievable outcomes makes the case for partnership much more effectively.

What to Include in Your Introductory Email

Your email should be personal, specific, and concise. Here are the key elements to include:

- Tailor the main message to the mission of the organization you're reaching out to. If they focus on climate change, lead with CGS's climate-related work. If they focus on refugee issues, connect through human rights.
- Briefly note CGS's broader goal of educating Americans about global interdependence and working on issues that no nation can solve alone — such as effective U.S. contributions to UN peacekeeping, ratification of core human rights treaties, and sustainable climate policy — while emphasizing what your local chapter specifically hopes to accomplish in the community.
- Explain why you reached out to this particular organization and what your chapter hopes to gain from the partnership. Be honest and genuine — you don't need to overpromise.

Tip: Keep your first email short. One or two focused paragraphs, a clear ask, and a warm closing is all you need. You can share more information once they've expressed interest.

Getting a Response

Once organizations begin responding, be prepared to answer questions about CGS and your local chapter. Many groups will want to know more before committing to a joint event or collaboration.

Find out when the organization holds its regular meetings and ask to attend one. Hearing their speakers, learning about their priorities, and engaging their members in conversation is one of the best ways to lay the groundwork for a productive partnership. In turn, invite their members to a chapter meeting where you can introduce CGS's current campaigns and give them an opportunity to share their organization's work.

General Dos and Don'ts

✓ DO	✗ DON'T
Be persistent in outreach to organizations	Approach partnership primarily to recruit members
Reach out to as many organizations as possible	Dominate conversations with the group
Respect other organizations' goals	Focus mainly on CGS's more ideological aims
Host events or attend partner meetings	Ignore ideas and priorities posed by partners
Follow up on all communications	Try to cover all of CGS's issues at once
Emphasize specific, achievable issues	Present CGS's agenda as non-negotiable

Moving Forward Together

Whatever type of event you plan with a partner organization, ensure that both groups have an equal role in the planning and execution. The purpose of a partnership is to educate the broader community and encourage civic engagement — not to make CGS the dominant voice in the room.

As your chapter develops credibility on a range of issues, it will be seen as a valuable collaborator for globally-minded citizens who want to make a difference across multiple areas of concern. Chapter membership offers ongoing opportunities to do exactly that.

Building and Maintaining Relationships

After an initial engagement, follow-up is essential. Regular communication keeps the relationship alive and opens the door to future collaborations. Here are some practical ways to maintain productive partnerships:

- Forward information about upcoming chapter events to partner organizations and invite them to share it with their members. Ask them to keep you informed of their upcoming events, which your chapter may attend or contribute to.
- Invite partner organizations to other chapter functions — not just co-sponsored events — to deepen their familiarity with CGS and keep them engaged in planning.
- Connect on social media: invite partner organizations to follow your chapter's accounts, and engage with their content regularly.

Remember: a partnership doesn't require full alignment on every issue. One or two shared principles is enough to build something meaningful.

Inviting New Members at Partnership Events

Every event you co-host with a partner organization is an opportunity to introduce CGS to a new audience. Set up a table with information about Citizens for Global Solutions and make it easy for attendees to learn more, sign up, or take action on the spot.

Since you will often be working with single-issue organizations, note to their members that CGS is a multi-issue organization — our contribution to the discussion comes from our commitment to building sustainable, systemic, and institutional solutions to global challenges. This often resonates with audiences looking for more than one-off tactics.

Highlight that CGS can offer members opportunities to work on other global issues they care about, and that through the local chapter, CGS can help them build skills in lobbying, community engagement, media outreach, and leadership development — all on behalf of a nationally recognized and influential organization.