



ANIMAL LEGAL DEFENSE FUND

STUDENT CHAPTERS

How to Start an Animal Legal Defense Fund Student Chapter

1. Put the Word Out

Talk to a variety of students: resident students, off-campus students, the student bar association, and every other person you come into contact with on campus. You will find that there *are* other students interested in helping animals. Make use of on-campus newsletters, bulletin boards, media, and events (especially the orientation/new student fair) to reach out to other students. You may also look into whether there is an existing student organization with similar goals. Making an announcement at a student environmental protection or other social justice organization meeting also helps to spread the word about the new Animal Legal Defense Fund Student Chapter.

2. Administration Requirements

- a) What applications and approvals are necessary?
- b) Does your school require faculty sponsorship?

Check with your law school administration for the requirements for new on-campus student organizations. Some schools require organizations to adopt by-laws. Even if not required, by-laws help provide a foundation to solidify your membership and carry your organization through various changes. We have [sample by-laws](#) for you to reference or adopt.

3. Organize a Meeting

When planning your first meeting, it is helpful to hold two general interest meetings at different times in order to accommodate more students. Advertise the meeting(s) through announcements or flyers. However informal the meeting may be, it is important to have an agenda. Communicate that purpose at the start of the meeting and when advertising the meeting, so people know why it is important for them to attend.

Your first meeting should help attract students and announce your plans to form an Animal Legal Defense Fund Student Chapter. To broaden your potential audience and to reduce the pressure for you to “entertain” for the entire meeting, you could plan your first gathering as a plant-based potluck, a [film screening](#), or invite a [guest speaker](#). Animal Legal Defense Fund can provide free [tabling materials](#) (brochures, newsletters, bookmarks, and pens) to hand out at your meetings.

4. Lead Your Student Chapter to Success

Once you have a student chapter established and a core membership in place, it is a good idea to discuss your plans and goals as a group. Keep in mind that goals should be reasonable and attainable given the number of members you have and your available time. Goals should be challenging so that they are rewarding to achieve, but also realistic to avoid discouragement.

When choosing your chapter officers, it is a good idea to include a 1L and 2L representative to ensure continuity of your chapter once the core group of original members graduates.

For newly formed student chapters, we suggest that their first activity be to [establish an animal law class](#) at your school, if there is not already [one](#) offered.

If you have a large, highly motivated group of students, you may want to consider projects such as producing a newsletter, building a website, or [organizing an animal law symposium](#). You could also plan events with other [student chapters](#) in your area. A smaller group might focus on writing articles for an on-campus publication, inviting speakers to discuss animal law issues, or planning monthly plant-based potlucks. Student chapters can apply for [funding](#) from Animal Legal Defense Fund to support animal law project, as well as [travel](#) to animal law conferences and events.

Animal Legal Defense Fund may occasionally call on chapters to assist with specific projects like legal research for a case, helping to pass local legislation, attending hearings or other events, or helping with a local animal cruelty prosecution.

Animal Legal Defense Fund offers numerous resources to its student chapters, including:

- [Student Chapter Program Guides](#)
- [Project Ideas](#)
- [Film Screening Suggestions](#)
- [Speaker Suggestions](#)
- [Calendar](#)
- [Tabling Materials](#)
- [Project](#) and [Travel](#) Grants
- [Career Advice for Aspiring Animal Attorneys](#)
- [Advancement of Animal Law Scholarships](#)

For further information, please contact Animal Legal Defense Fund Student Programs Attorney [Kelly Levenda](#).