



Chapter Startup Kit 2014 US Chapters

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Starting A Chapter

What is the National Space Society?

Thank you for your interest in forming a chapter of the National Space Society (NSS). NSS is a non-profit, educational organization (United States IRS designation 501(c) (3)) open to citizens of all nations. Our purpose is to develop the nearly limitless resources of the solar system and permit the establishment of a space-based civilization. The Society sees this civilization as economically self-sufficient and supported by a free enterprise structure.

To this end we promote interest in space exploration, research, development and habitation through the media of conferences, the press, library and museum exhibits and other literary and educational means by stimulating the advancement and development of applications of space and related technologies; and by bringing together people from government, industry and all walks of life for the free exchange of information.

The National Space Society, which is the result of the merger of the National Space Institute and the L5 Society in 1987, was founded on the insight that free space, not the surface of a planet, offers the best location for the expansion of industrialized humanity. The Society wants to share both this insight and the prospects that it offers for a hopeful future. In short, we want “Space for everyone to live, work and play!”

The emphasis in the Society is on volunteer leadership and labor. The functions conducted by these volunteers, often done in other organizations by paid staff at great expense, give the Society an impact far beyond its limited resources. This performance, however, exacts a price of its own since volunteers, no matter how dedicated, have their limitations. Whether this is caused by limited free time, a shortage of volunteers or lack of interest in specific projects, the availability of 40 hours/week in volunteer labor is NOT equivalent to a full time staff person.

Remember this when you start organizing your group: you can only take on and perform tasks at a level consistent with the availability and interests of your chapter members.

What is a National Space Society Chapter?

The NSS exists because of the membership’s desire to see an aggressive, ambitious space program leading to space settlement.

What activities does a local chapter pursue? No two chapters are alike. They take on a personality consistent with the talents, interests and availability of local members. Another important factor is the availability of funding and local resources (does your area have a science museum, planetarium, etc?). The broad range of chapter activities includes the following:

- Sponsoring speakers and films.

- Forming a Speakers Bureau for use by local civic and school groups.
- Space Week organization.
- Yuri's Night events.
- Appearing on radio and TV shows as “local Space experts.”
- Visiting local Congressional representatives.
- Political awareness campaigns (letter writing, etc).
- Phone Tree organization.
- Exhibits and Information Booths (at malls, conventions, etc.).
- Teaching courses (continuing education, etc.).
- Co-sponsoring Explorer Posts, Young SEDS Chapters or other youth groups.
- Operating your own chapter website, hosting chats or a Facebook page for space information

Whatever your group decides to do, you need to become an expert in public relations. No matter how good your event, it is only a limited success unless you can get some widespread attention, particularly in the local media. While an activity like teaching a course can be productive in its own right, making an ever wider audience aware of our existence, purpose and goals, is the path to eventual success. Publicity gives us this level of visibility.

--Larry Ahearn, VP Chapters

CONTACT INFORMATION

NSS Vice President for Chapters

Larry Ahearn
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LDAhearn@aol.com

Chapters Support liaison at NSS HQ

National Space Society
Attn: Tenisha Fortson
1155 15th Street NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20005
202-429-1600 ext 211
nsshq@nss.org

U.S. Chapters Coordinator

Bennett Rutledge
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Chapters Committee Chair

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Chapters Internet Coordinator

Ronnie Lajoie
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Chapters Assembly Chair

Dennis Pearson
610-434-1229
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All other Chapter Regional Organizers can be found at:

http://chapters.nss.org/a/lists/ChapList_Coordinators.shtml

Chapter Regional Organizers provide assistance to NSS chapters in their Region. There are nine chapter regions, eight in the United States, and one International. An interactive map is located at: http://chapters.nss.org/a/lists/Chapter_Regions_US.shtml

The similarly sounding Regional Directors are members of the NSS Board of Directors that represent NSS regions (slightly different from chapter regions). Regional Directors have no direct responsibilities for chapters.

Checklist: Creating a New Chapter of the National Space Society

NSS chapters may serve a local area ("Peoria, IL") or have a topical focus ("lunar bases"). Chapters are the peripheral organs of the society, organizing events, communicating with the public, and inspiring new generations of space activists.

If you're interested in forming a new chapter, the basic steps are as follows:

- See the Starter Kit (this document). If you would like to have a Starter Kit sent electronically to you, send an email to Larry.Ahearn@nss.org. Include your contact information (Name, address, phone) and the area that you are interested in starting the local chapter. In the Subject line type New Chapter Startup Kit. If you have questions about starting a chapter call 202-429-1600 and leave a number where you can be reached. NSS will return your call as soon as possible.
- Find three NSS members in the area (including yourself) who are willing to help organize the chapter
- Decide on a name - see the [NSS Rules](#) (chapters section) for guidelines on naming and other issues (the rules may be waived if you have a good reason). Example: "NSS Peoria."
- Decide on a democratic set of bylaws - basic sample bylaws
- Fill out a chapter application form as found in the Starter Kit identifying your [contact information and names of chapter officers](#)
- US chapters not intending to obtain independent non-profit status and file separately with the IRS should also complete the [group exemption authorization form](#).
- It is appreciated if you can also include a list of members and a report on any events already held with your chapter application.
- Send the chapter application, [group exemption authorization form](#) (if needed) and chapter bylaws to the Vice president for chapters either by email (New Chapter in subject line) or by US mail as a paper copy.
 - Larry.Ahearn@nss.org
- Send one paper copy to the National Space Society headquarters.
 - National Space Society, Att: Chapters
1155 15th Street NW, Suite 500 Washington, DC 20005
Telephone: (202) 429-1600
Fax: (202) 530-0659

A valid chapter application will receive the following responses from NSS headquarters and chapter VP:

- A chapter code - this number is used to track rebates and member-chapter relations: your chapter will receive half the amount paid by new members joining because of your chapter.
- Listing on the chapters web site and in *Ad Astra* magazine.
- Inclusion in the chapter-leaders mailing list
- A chapter certificate. Congratulations!

If this doesn't happen when you expect it, please follow up - and remember even the national organization is largely run by volunteers!

Employer Identification Number (EIN) Process

Once you are approved as an NSS chapter, there is a followup step of filing with the IRS to obtain an Employer Identification Number (EIN). This is a brief process, but is needed in order to do annual reports and annual IRS 990 form filing.

- [Instructions for obtaining an IRS EIN \(U.S. chapters only\)](#)

THE NATIONAL SPACE SOCIETY CHAPTER RULES **(October 2005; last revised October 2008)**

Section 1. A Chapter is an incorporated or unincorporated association of persons who have joined together to further the interests and purposes of the National Space Society (NSS) and which has been issued a valid Chapter Certificate. A Chapter Certificate is a certificate issued by the Chapters Coordinator which states (1) that the organization named in the certificate is a chapter of the NSS and (2) that the certificate is valid for fifteen months from the date of its issuance unless the certificate is revoked or surrendered before fifteen months have elapsed. Issuance of a Chapter Certificate does not confer tax-exempt status on a U.S. chapter. In order to receive tax exemption, the chapter must comply with IRS regulations either by becoming a subordinate under the NSS Group Exemption or filing the appropriate documents directly with the IRS.

Section 2. Three or more members of the NSS, who are not institutional members, may submit to the Chapters Coordinator, for the purpose of organizing a chapter of the NSS, three copies of an application on forms provided by the Chapters Coordinator. The application must be accompanied by three copies of the chapter's bylaws, articles of incorporation, etc. which establish reasonably democratic procedures of governance, and purposes consistent with the purposes of the NSS.

Section 3. An existing organization may apply to become a chapter of the NSS, if it fulfills the requirements contained in these rules.

Section 4. If the Chapters Coordinator determines that the documents comply with the requirements set forth and accepts the application of a new or existing organization, the Chapters Coordinator shall stamp all three copies "Filed" and "[date]", file one copy in the Chapters File, send one copy to the principal office of the NSS, and return one copy to the chapter's organizers. The Chapters Coordinator shall issue a Chapter Certificate to the Organization.

Section 5. National Space Society chapters must use a name which includes in it the term "National Space Society" or "---, a chapter of the National Space Society". Chapters will be encouraged to adopt names in the format of: Geographical Name + Space Society + a chapter of the National Space Society. Non-US chapters would use the chapter name format, omitting or including "a chapter of the National Space Society" as they prefer. Examples of reasonable names might be "Denver Space Society, a chapter of the National Space Society", or "National Space Society, Denver Chapter". Geographic descriptions are preferred, but should not refer to an area greater than that from which members may reasonably be expected to travel for regular meetings (e.g., not Midwest Space Society, or Great Britain Space Society, or Eurasia Space Society). The existence of a chapter in an area in no way excludes the are encouraged to help form new chapters.

Section 6. A chapter may not act as a representative of the NSS in any capacity without permission of the Society. All letterheads, newsletters, telephone answering machines, statements to individuals, groups, and so forth shall clearly identify the source as a chapter, as opposed to the Society itself

Section 7. Chapters may not establish arrangements with other organizations which are aimed in a substantial sense at obtaining the benefits of NSS chapter status for the other organization rather than for the chapter. For example, the establishment of two organizations with the same Board of Directors, one a chapter of NSS and the other not, where the NSS chapter is used to exploit the NSS non-profit status, the NSS name, the NSS membership incentives, etc., while the resources thus obtained are used to a significant extent to build up the non-NSS organization, is not allowed. Chapters which are concerned that they may be in violation of this rule should consult the Chapters Coordinator, who will decide such issues on a case-by-case basis. The foregoing is not intended to prevent chapters from organizing as student body organizations.

Section 8. A chapter shall have at least three principal officers and shall not allow any person to hold a principal chapter office (for example, chapter president, secretary or treasurer) unless such person is a member of the NSS. A chapter is allowed to require any other or all of its members to become members of the NSS.

Section 9. Each chapter shall file an Annual Report with the Society within forty-five (45) days after the end of NSS' fiscal year. The report shall be made on forms provided by the Chapters Coordinator. A chapter shall also, on request of the Chapters Coordinator, provide a current copy of its membership list, with names and addresses. The Chapters Coordinator shall issue a Chapter Certificate to each chapter which files a satisfactory Annual Report.

Section 10. In order to maintain good communications within the Society, each chapter shall provide the Chapters Coordinator and the principal office of the NSS with subscriptions to the chapters' newsletter(s).

Section 11. A chapter may at any time elect to surrender its Chapter Certificate to the Chapters Coordinator, thereby ceasing to be a chapter of the NSS and relinquishing the privilege of using the NSS name and symbol.

Section 12. The Chapters Coordinator shall be in charge of all of the Society's non-legislative Spaceweek activities above the chapter level, because Spaceweek activities are, in general, chapter oriented. The Chapters Coordinator may appoint and/or remove one or more Spaceweek Coordinators and/or other volunteers to help carry out Spaceweek activities.

Section 13. There shall be a program of incentives for chapters to recruit new members of the NSS. A one-time incentive payment will be made for each new member of the NSS recruited by a chapter using membership forms that identify the recruiting chapter. The incentive payments will be paid to chapters within three months of receipt of full NSS dues payments. The initial recruitment incentive will be set at half the amount of the dues payments. The NSS Board of Directors may, by an act of the Board, adjust the level of the recruitment incentive as required to maintain the financial integrity of the Society. ("New member" is defined as any person who has never been a member of the NSS, or whose membership has lapsed for more than nine months.)

Section 14. The Chapters Coordinator may terminate the status of a group as a chapter in the NSS if he/she feels that this would be in the best interests of the Society. Such action may be appealed to the Executive Committee. A decision of the Executive Committee concerning such an action may be further appealed to the Board of Directors. Appeal includes the right to submit documents to the Committee or Board members, to review copies of all documents submitted to the Committee or Board members which relate to the decision in question, and to make a presentation to the Committee or Board if the matter is to be considered at a Committee or Board meeting held in person or via communications equipment. A majority of a quorum is sufficient to sustain the Chapters Coordinator's action at the Executive Committee level. An appeal to the Board of Directors shall require a majority vote of a quorum of the Board (or a majority vote of the Board, if by mail vote) to sustain the action of the Chapter Coordinator as upheld by the Executive Committee.

Section 15. The Chapters Coordinator may elect to suspend some or all services and privileges to a chapter which is in material or substantial noncompliance with these rules. At such time as the Chapters Coordinator determines that the chapter has remedied its noncompliance, its rights to chapter services and privileges shall be reinstated.

Section 16. The Chapters Coordinator may interpret rules 1 – 15 of this document and is empowered to grant exceptions in order to further the interests and purposes of the Society.

Section 17. Decisions rendered by action or inaction of the Chapters Coordinator may be amended by the Executive Committee.

Section 18. This document may be amended only by a majority vote of the NSS Board of Directors.

Sample Chapter Bylaws - [Chapter Name]

Note: once you have decided on your chapter's bylaws and have entered the name of your chapter below, delete the word Sample wherever it appears in this document and enter the name of your chapter. Also delete this note before sending in with your chapter application.

NAME The name of this organization shall be _____ .

PURPOSE AND GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

The purpose of the Chapter shall be the same as that of the National Space Society. No funds or assets of this Chapter may be used for any other purpose. The Chapter shall operate under the rules of the NSS Bylaws and Chapter Rules, and the Chapter Fiscal Year shall be the same as that of the NSS. Upon dissolution, all remaining chapter assets shall become property of the National Space Society.

MEMBERSHIP

The membership in the Chapter consists of those persons who have agreed to become members, three of whom must be NSS members who have paid Society dues for the current year. The Chapter may collect chapter membership dues in amounts determined from time to time by the Board of Directors of the Chapter. The Chapter members may deny or withdraw a person's membership in the chapter by a two-thirds vote of the chapter members present and voting or by proxy at a general membership meeting as long as a quorum exists.

All chapter members will be encouraged to become members of the National Space Society.

MEETINGS

There shall be at least one general membership meeting every year. All members shall receive a one week notice of the meeting in writing, in person, or by phone, of the time and place of the meeting. A general membership meeting may be called at any time by a majority of the Board of Directors, President, or a petition signed by 1/2 of the membership. Business may be transacted at any general membership meeting by a majority of those members present and voting unless otherwise specified. The first general meeting of the members will be on _____. Society members and other persons who have agreed to form the Chapter shall be informed of the time and place of this meeting.

OFFICERS

The Chapter shall have a minimum of 3 officers including President, Secretary, and Treasurer and shall not allow any person to hold a principal chapter office unless such

person is a member of the NSS. A single person may hold the offices of Secretary and Treasurer. Officers and Board members shall be elected annually at a general membership meeting, and shall serve until their successors are elected. An officer may be removed from office by a majority vote of Chapter members present and voting at a meeting or by proxy, as long as a quorum exists, for which members were given at least one month advance written notice of such proposed removal. If an office or Board position becomes vacant, the remaining Board members may select a replacement from among the regular members of the Chapter to serve the remainder of the term.

Duties of the Officers

The President shall: preside at meetings of the membership and of the Board of Directors; administer all affairs of the Chapter, in accordance with the decisions of the Board of Directors and the membership; in addition to such other members of the Chapter as are from time to time designated by the Board of Directors, act as the official representative of the Chapter; sign all agreements to which the Chapter is a party; delegate those responsibilities and powers to other members of the Chapter as may be appropriate; at as liaison between the Chapter and the Society.

The Secretary shall: maintain records of resolutions passed at all meetings of the membership and of the Board of Directors; keep the membership roll and provide a copy to any Board member or to the NSS if requested to do so; provide notice of meetings to the membership and the Board of Directors.

The Treasurer shall: receive, record, and safeguard all monies paid into the Chapter; keep full and accurate books of account for all financial transactions of the Chapter; render a financial report or open the books for inspection when called upon by the Board of Directors or the NSS; pay all duly approved bill of the Chapter.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

All powers of the Chapter, except as otherwise explicitly provided in these Bylaws, rest in the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors may delegate the power to administer the affairs of the Chapter in specified areas of activity to such members as it finds appropriate or convenient. The Board of Directors shall consist of no less than three or no more than seven members elected annually at a general membership meeting. All Officers shall be Board members. A majority of the members of the Board shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. A matter disposed of in a meeting conducted by telephone or mail will be considered acted upon when a majority of the Board has voted in the same way regarding the matter. Board meetings may be held by mail, by phone, or in person.

RATIFICATION AND AMENDMENT

These Bylaws may be ratified or amended by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting at a duly called general membership meeting.

NSS Chapter Application Form

NSS CHAPTER APPLICATION DATE	
PROPOSED CHAPTER NAME	

We, the Chapter Officers, have read the “Chapter Rules” and agree to abide by these rules and amendments duly passed on by the National Space Society Board of Directors

Print Here	Sign Here
President	
Secretary	
Treasurer	

Send a copy to:

NOTE: Upon approval of your chapter application, the following information will be published in the NSS Chapter list in Ad Astra, and will be posted in the Chapter List on the NSS web site. Please place a check mark next to the phone number you will be using.

Name of Chapter Contact:		
Address:		
City:	State:	Zip Code:
Home Phone:		Work Phone:
Email:		

OPTIONAL ALTERNATE CHAPTER CONTACT to be listed on website:		
Name:		
Home Phone:	Work Phone:	
Email:		

EMERGENCY CHAPTER CONTACT, Unlisted, different from Primary Contact above		
Name:		
Home Phone:	Work Phone:	
Email:		

GROUP EXEMPTION AUTHORIZATION LETTER

I, _____, duly authorized officer of _____ (“Chapter”), represent to the National Space Society (“NSS”) as follows:

a. Chapter is organized and shall be operated at all times exclusively as a nonprofit organization exempt from federal income taxation under Section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code (“Code”) as an organization described under Section 501(c)(3) of the Code and in full compliance with the requirements thereof;

b. Chapter is not a private foundation within the meaning of section 509(a) of the Code;

c. Chapter is and shall be: i) a “subordinate” of NSS; ii) affiliated with NSS; and iii) subject to the general supervision or control of NSS; and,

d. The fiscal year of the Chapter is the same as that of NSS which is [Jan 1 – Dec 31].

Chapter confirms that its governing instrument (e.g., charter, articles of association etc.) [a copy of which was previously submitted to NSS/or which is attached hereto] is in full force and effect. Chapter further confirms that a detailed description of its purposes and activities, including the sources of its receipts and the nature of its expenditures [a copy of which was previously submitted to NSS/or which is attached hereto] is accurate as of the date of this letter.

Chapter authorizes NSS to take all action including, but not limited to, filing all appropriate documents with the Internal Revenue Service (“IRS”), pursuant to the group exemption letter dated September 16, 1996 and issued by the IRS to NSS in accord with Rev. Proc. 80-27 (“Group Exemption Letter”), to add Chapter to the roster of subordinate organizations covered by the Group Exemption Letter. Chapter also agrees to file a statement with NSS each February confirming the information set forth herein which is necessary for Chapter to remain a subordinate organization that is covered by the Group Exemption Letter and which is subject to the supervision and control of NSS.

(Name of Chapter)

(Name of authorized officer)

Title

Date: _____

Please check one:

- Chapter's employer identification number (EIN) is _____
- Chapter has applied for an EIN but has not yet received it.
- Chapter has not yet applied for an EIN. Please inform us of the procedure to obtain an EIN.

Address of Record (for NSS HQ mailings – PO Boxes are acceptable):

Chapter address, c/o, street address/PO Box

City, State, Zip

Address (for IRS purposes – PO Boxes are not acceptable):

Chapter address, c/o, street address

City, State, Zip