



# **Chapter Startup Kit**

## **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 conferences, the press, and museum, library and public exhibits and other literary and educational means. We do this in order to stimulate 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 energetic 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 time and life 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.

Please 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 you and 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).
- Participate in inter-Chapter meetings (Chapter Assembly, All Chapter meetings)
- Exhibits and Information Booths (at malls, conventions, conferences, 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 type page for space information
- Participate in March Storm - political action
- Educational videos from your Chapter meetings
- Interaction with other NSS Chapters about their activities and outreach

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 your and our existence, purpose and goals, is the path to eventual success. Publicity gives you and us this level of visibility.

—Larry Ahearn, VP Chapters

—David Stuart, Chair of the Chapters Committee

## CONTACT INFORMATION

### **NSS Vice President for Chapters**

Larry Ahearn

773-373-0349

[LDAhearn@aol.com](mailto:LDAhearn@aol.com)

### New Chapter Coordinator

Perri Doutre

[perri\\_doutre@comcast.net](mailto:perri_doutre@comcast.net)

### **Chapters Support liaison at NSS HQ**

National Space Society

Attn: Jennifer Muntz

National Space Society

PO Box 236002

Cocoa, FL 32923-6002

(321) 452-2448

[nsshq@nss.org](mailto:nsshq@nss.org)

### **Chapters Committee Chair**

David Stuart

206-241-6165

[david.stuart@nss.org](mailto:david.stuart@nss.org)

### **Chapters Internet Coordinator**

Ronnie Lajoie

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### **Chapters Assembly Chair**

**Prathmesh Barapatre**

[prathmesh.barapatre@outlook.com](mailto:prathmesh.barapatre@outlook.com)

### **Chapters Assembly Executive Secretary**

Perri Doutre

[perri\\_doutre@comcast.net](mailto:perri_doutre@comcast.net)

### **NSS Chapter Resources**

[<https://sacramento15society.nss.org/nss-chapter-resources/>]

All other Chapter Organizers can be found at: [http://chapters.nss.org/a/lists/ChapList\\_Coordinators.shtml](http://chapters.nss.org/a/lists/ChapList_Coordinators.shtml)

Chapter Coordinators provide assistance to NSS chapters in their Section. These are defined on the NSS website in the Chapters section. An interactive map is located at: [http://chapters.nss.org/a/lists/Chapter\\_Regions\\_US.shtml](http://chapters.nss.org/a/lists/Chapter_Regions_US.shtml)

Note: The similarly sounding Regional Directors are members of the NSS Board of Directors that represent NSS regions (slightly different from chapter sections). Regional Directors have no direct responsibilities for NSS 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 local or topical groups 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 [chapters@nss.org](mailto:chapters@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 email us at [chapters@nss.org](mailto:chapters@nss.org)
- 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 (this part of the rules may be waived if you have a good reason). Example: "NSS Peoria" or North Madison Chapter of NSS".
- Decide on a democratic set of bylaws - basic sample bylaws are below.
- Fill out a chapter application form as found in this 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, must 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 by email (New Chapter in subject line).
  - [chapters@nss.org](mailto:chapters@nss.org)

When a valid chapter application is approved, you will receive the following responses from the NSS 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.

- And, 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). <https://www.irs.gov/990n>

### **National Space Society Chapter Rules**

All NSS Chapters must follow the written, published Chapter rules on the NSS website. These can be viewed at. <https://nss.org/corporate/> in the 'Corporate Document' subsection.



## 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 may become the 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, by phone or multiple emails 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; act 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 bills 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, electronically 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, electronically 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:** [chapters@nss.org](mailto:chapters@nss.org)

NOTE: Upon approval of your chapter application, the following information you provide will be published in the NSS Chapter list in both Ad Astra, and in the Chapter List on the NSS website.

Name of Chapter Contact:	
Address:	
City & State:	Zip:
Contact Phone:	
Email:	

OPTIONAL ALTERNATE CHAPTER CONTACT to be listed on the <b>website</b> :	
Name:	
Contact 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