

10 steps toward starting a chapter

Step 1: Create a website and social media presence announcing the formation of a chapter, with an interest form for prospective board members. Use social media to educate your networks on current issues and agitate toward action.

Step 2: Find date and location for statewide assembly. Have the location be somewhere centrally located geographically. Try to have it in an area with lots of Puerto Ricans, but also that everyone from around the state can get to easily. The chapters are statewide, even if there are concentrations of Boricuas in certain cities.

Step 3: Hold in person forums around your state or area to both introduce the Agenda and also hear what local issues folks care about. Find 1-3 possible contacts in each area who can help mobilize folks to the national assembly.

Step 4: Meet with Boricua Elected officials or community leaders 1 on 1 to invite them to be a part of the process as speakers or other ceremonial roles.

Step 5: Meet with non-profit and community groups to request they send their best and brightest Boricuas to the assembly.

Step 6: Hold a public open to everyone assembly and elect an executive committee and regional representatives. Both are very important. We used counties but not every state makes sense for that. Feel free to designate areas like “North, south and central Florida” or “West, central and eastern PA”. The important part is that every inch of your state has someone who can take the lead on receiving potential volunteers.

Step 7: Appoint committee chairs and start having consistent meeting schedules. The board sets the tone for the rest of the organization. Committees are where the bulk of the work gets done and requires someone who can properly facilitate meetings. Committees should have at least 2 board members, but can and should add non board members to help do the work and ensure lots of voices are at the table for decisions.

Step 8: Committees present action plans and get buy in for programming from the full board. Committees can request additional resources to help accomplish board approved events or initiatives. Once the full board has approved a course of action, committees are empowered to implement and move forward.

Step 9: Hold a statewide Rally/Action/Conference to coalesce supporters who have seen your work around concrete policy demands. Use this event to properly announce the concrete goals of the group and ask for more volunteer and financial support.

Step 10: Pass laws, and create structures to empower our people toward justice for Puerto Rico.