

RG College Organizing Guide



Resource Generation organizes young people with wealth and class privilege to become transformative leaders and work towards the equitable distribution of wealth, land, and power.

Who do we organize? Resource Generation organizes a multiracial constituency of young people (ages 18-35) with inherited, earned, or future wealth who are committed to working for a just world. The broader Resource Generation community includes people of all ages and class backgrounds who support the role that young people with wealth play in

social change. Our cross-class allies participate as board members, trainers, and key organizational partners.

Since 1998, Resource Generation (RG) has engaged over 2,500 young people with wealth across the U.S. Through community building, education and organizing, we help young people with wealth bring all they have and all they are to the social change movements and issues they care about. We organize to transform philanthropy, policy, and institutions, and leverage our collective power to make lasting structural change.

Resource Generation envisions thousands of young people with wealth across the country engaged in vital social change movements.

At RG, we love connecting with and supporting college students!

We're excited about the energy and vision that students can contribute to RG's work for social change, and we also see that many college students are hungry to learn about class privilege and to take action related to their privilege. We believe in developing leaders among the youngest members of our community because we believe that young people are the catalyst and fuel of social movements, and that we have a key role to play in organizing our communities for a more just world. We hope that RG can act as a bridge between campuses and broader social movements.

The following guide is based on the experiences of RG college organizers. It's meant for those of you who want to bring RG's work and vision to your college campus, but need help getting started. When we say "organizing", we mean the act of bringing a community of people together around shared values and visions for the purpose of making change. Organizing can be unpredictable, so this guide isn't a foolproof formula. Instead, we're offering ideas for action based on our own experiences on college campuses. It's up to you to be bold and creative in envisioning and building a campus community of young people with wealth and class privilege committed to justice and equity. We hope this resource will help you build an RG chapter on your campus!

But what is an RG chapter...?

[Resource Generation chapters](#) organize programming for people with wealth or class privilege that deepen participants' education about class privilege, wealth inequality, and ways to take action as young people with wealth. Through the discussions and programming they run, chapters recruit new people into this work. Chapters are groups of people who are committed to taking action for wealth redistribution, individually and collectively. Chapters have a relationship with the larger organization and our staff organizers, and they have volunteer organizers, or "chapter leaders", who organize ongoing programming.

A chapter is built slowly, and with mentorship from RG staff and fellows. Each chapter starts with a spark of interest from one or two people- read on to hear about how to get started!

Please reach out to RG staff Sarah Abbott, RG's National Organizer (sarah@resourcegeneration.org), if you are interested in starting a chapter.

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1. How to Get Started

It can be intimidating to imagine creating something from scratch on your campus. Hopefully these suggested starting points to organizing an RG Chapter at your school can make you feel confident about the process. There is no right or wrong path through these steps — consult RG staff for guidance, and do what feels right within the context of your campus.

Connect with Resource Generation.

If you haven't already, spend some time getting to know RG! Browse the [website](#). [Sign up for more information](#) about the organization, and you'll be connected with an RG member in your area who can share their story and give you insight into RG's work. The best way to learn about Resource Generation and its amazing members is to attend [Making Money Make Change](#), RG's annual conference in November. Importantly: Before you start a chapter, it is key that you reach out to RG staff for support and guidance. Our organizers are ready and waiting to talk to you- it's our job! This guide is designed to help you, but ultimately talking to a real person who can answer your questions and guide you in your process is the number-one most-important thing! At RG we believe that no one should take on an organizing project alone.

Educate yourself.

No one's ever an expert on this stuff, but it's important to go into your work with a basic understanding of class inequality, identity, and privilege. A great first place to start is by reading [Classified: How to Stop Hiding Your Privilege and Use It for Social Change](#), a book by Karen Pittelman and RG. (You can download a free copy [here](#)). [Class Action](#) and [United for a Fair Economy](#) also have tons of useful information. (See the "Resources" section below for more ideas).

Self-education is important, and: we don't want you to fall into the trap of feeling like you have to educate yourself *forever* before you can take action or find buddies to join you in your learning process. Unlearning privilege is a lifelong process! We recommend that you read [Classified](#) (which is very user-friendly, full of activities and comics), connect with RG's staff, and then start moving forward. A lot of your learning will come through the group discussions that you'll organize.

Partner with existing resources on your campus.

You definitely want to be thoughtful and intentional when organizing class privileged students on your campus. It's crucial to get a sense of which relevant resources already exist, and to reach out to the important people in those spaces. For example, maybe there's an administrator on your campus whose focus is on enhancing socioeconomic diversity and support for first-generation students. Maybe there's a student group that supports low-income folks on campus. Or perhaps your student government offers a weekly dialogue group on topics relating to class and identity. Take the time to connect with those resources, and figure out where your RG work would fit in.

Reach out to young people with wealth.

The hardest part of organizing young people with wealth on your campus is finding them. They're everywhere, but they can be pretty invisible. Don't be afraid to start small, connecting with one or two folks who are interested in the work you are doing. Great first steps:

Gradually, through one-on-one outreach to specific communities and individuals as well as word of mouth, you can build up a sizable network of students. Don't forget that "90% of organizing is follow-up" — it's important to stay in touch with people who express interest in what you do. Definitely keep track of people you meet along the way! Google Docs or Spreadsheets can help you make lists of who you've talked to about your work, as can adding people to a relevant email listserve.

Bring an RG workshop to your campus.

This is a fantastic first step to getting the word out about class privilege on your campus. Resource Generation has volunteer facilitators who can lead workshops and conversations about class identity at your school. Connect with Sarah Abbott (sarah@resourcegeneration.org), and she can help you make this happen.

As you begin to provide spaces for people with privilege to connect about class identities and commitments to social justice movements, you're building an RG College Chapter! You rock. Note that there's no appropriate timeline — the process of starting an RG chapter could take a month, or a year, or two! Don't feel discouraged if it's taking awhile to get going, but don't be afraid to take risks and get started.

2. Ideas for Programming

Once you've found one (or ten or twenty) allies, and you've figured out what class-resources already exist at your school, and where you fit into that landscape, it's time to start bringing your community together! There are lots of different ways to design programming that will strengthen your community of students with wealth, while also building cross-class conversations and alliances. You'll never know how many people will show up at your first event, or what the reception will be, so at a certain point, you've just got to be bold and brave and make it happen. As long as you've been intentional and thoughtful along the way, you're good to go.

First Steps

- **Start a Praxis Group.** RG encourages regional chapters to organize Praxis Groups, informal confidential spaces for people with wealth to discuss their identities and goals for supporting movements for social justice. Praxis Groups are fantastic because people often feel most comfortable talking about feelings, ideas, and concepts for the first time when they're among a small group of peers. For more on how to organize an RG Praxis Group, contact Sarah Abbott (sarah@resourcegeneration.org). RG has a guide for organizing a praxis group, including agendas for many different discussion topics.
- **Invite someone to lead a class-related workshop.** Resource Generation, [United for a Fair Economy](#), and [Class Action](#) all offer great facilitators.

- Workshop examples: ***Class: The Other Taboo*** – helps participants gain an understanding of what class privilege is, how we play it out, and what we can do about it. ***Living at the Intersection of Racism and Class Privilege*** – for young people of color with wealth who want to dive into understanding their identities, and how they can work for racial justice as people with class privilege
- ***Write a blog post, Op-Ed, or newspaper article.*** This could be about your class identity (see [these two](#) posts as an example), about your motivation for doing the work (see [this post](#) by Mike Gast of RG), or about the status of class conversations on your campus (see this [op-ed](#)). This can be done alone or with a group. It's a great way to find supporters across campus, and get a conversation about class privilege started.
- ***Host an open house or town hall.*** Large, open conversations about class and/or class privilege are a great way to seek allies in your work, and connect with other students who want to chat about class.
- ***Organize regular discussions about relevant topics.*** Perhaps you could meet once a month to talk about income inequality in the U.S., need-blind admission policies, or other class-related topics.
- ***Form a study group or book club about class identity.*** Pick a book, or an article, read it, and discuss it with others.

Next Steps

- ***Provide thoughtful cross-class programming.*** Create spaces for students from various class backgrounds to engage with one another. Don't organize an event like this alone — reach out to students or organizations that work with low-income and/or middle-class students.
- ***Do something artsy.*** An open mic, an art exhibit, a play... The possibilities are endless.
- ***Engage in direct action or advocacy.*** Bring RG's Valuing Labor for All campaign to your campus, or fight to enhance your university's resources for low-income students.
- ***Host a teach-in, or teach a student-run course about class privilege/identity.*** Share what you've learned about class in the U.S. with your fellow students.
- ***Invite a professor or outside speaker to give a lecture on class, classism, inequality, or some relevant topic.*** Sometimes, people are more inclined to talk about uncomfortable topics like class when it's in an academic setting.

3. Advice for Organizers

Below is some advice based on the experiences of RG organizers. You'll never be able to do *all* of these things- so don't take this as a list of mandates. And remember, connecting with RG staff is the best way to

get support on achieving the following things!

- **Don't be afraid to be bold and creative**, and to take risks as you create spaces for people to engage with issues of class identity. And, **don't forget to seek feedback and input** from constituents other stakeholders on campus, like relevant administrators, student group leaders, et cetera. This helps you establish accountability, and ensure that your work is impactful. You can seek feedback through one-on-one conversations or Google Forms and other surveys. Throw out ideas for programming, and see how others respond. Ask how your work would impact those stakeholders, or how you can work with them to meet their needs.
- **Reach out for guidance and support** before and throughout this process. Administrators, alumni, RG staff — they're all there to help you out, sharing best practices and offering feedback. You should feel empowered to organize students in a way that feels meaningful.
- **Spend a lot of time getting to know who on campus is already talking about class**, so that you don't conflict with or duplicate existing efforts. Connect with those organizations, students, or staff if it seems like your respective programs and ideas could support each other.
- **Seek out trainings and national retreats run by Resource Generation**. This guide is only the tip of the iceberg in terms of your own learning and leadership around organizing people with class privilege! Going to RG's national convenings and trainings is where you will really connect to a national community of people with wealth working in myriad ways to bring their full selves and resources to social change movements, deepen your personal work, and learn how to do this organizing well. Our two annual retreats are:
 - [Making Money Make Change](#)
 - [Transforming Family Philanthropy](#)
- **Localize your efforts**. Do what works in your school's context, which can entail fitting into existing structures (i.e. longstanding dialogues, events, etc.).
- **Get messy!** Organizing, especially campus organizing, is not perfect. It will be messy, confusing, and frustrating at times. Don't be discouraged — as long as you're being thoughtful, careful, and open to new ideas, you are doing good work! And, always reach out to peers and RG staff for help and support!
- **Be open to politics and perspectives on wealth that are different from your own**. You will undoubtedly encounter other students with class privilege who have very different ideas about what that means. Try and create space for as many students as possible by being patient and open-minded. Remember that everyone — even you! — is in a constant process of evolving their own political beliefs. Eventually, you might even be able to move them to a place that is more aligned with your perspective on things.
- **Remember that young people with wealth/class privilege come in all shapes and sizes**. We all have conceptions about who "wealthy people" are. A common misconception is that all people with wealth are white- but as our members of color know,

there are many people of color with wealth! RG even has a staff organizer for people of color with wealth, Yahya Alazrak. They can be reached at yahya@resourcegeneration.org, and would love to connect with you if you are a person of color, or with any people of color with wealth on your campus. Sarah Abbott (sarah@resourcegeneration.org) is a good resource for white people who want to talk about organizing people of color with wealth. You may also run into people who are from different social groups, who aren't campus activists, or who are totally new to any discussions about privilege or oppression. Our job as organizers is to bring new people in and to move them in the same direction we're headed, and not just to organize people who are already on board! Be open and accepting of many different experiences and politics, and be clear about your own goals and vision for where you're trying to move people.

- **Reach out to other social justice movements on campus.** Connect with other progressive activist organizations to build solidarity and include more people in your work. Invite them to co-sponsor events, to spread the word about your programming to their members.
- **Don't be discouraged if you get a small turnout** at your first event — or your second, your third, or fourth.... It's always quality over quantity. And every movement starts small.
- **Practice embracing skepticism and criticism.** This is natural — you're doing social justice work, which always involves plenty of pushback, and you're doing work around privilege! This is something that many people haven't heard about before or don't trust right off the bat. The trick (that takes years to develop!) is to both trust your own gut and goodness, and also be open to feedback and helpful criticism. It's super important to remember to love yourself and to know that there is a cross-class community of people who are cheering RG on and really believe that young people with wealth are needed! Reach out to RG staff and fellows to help you think through challenging pushback you're receiving, and how to deal with criticism, and to talk about your OWN questions and concerns!
- **Focus on the sustainability of your work.** Sometimes, when we're excited about what we're doing, we can forget to think long-term. Work on ensuring that the new resources you put in place will exist after you graduate. Make sure to connect with younger students, and mentor them. Carefully document your work so that others can see exactly what you did, and learn from the mistakes you made! Create a foundation that others can build on, so your brilliant work won't disappear after you've moved on from college.
- **Connect with other RG campus organizers.** You can share ideas, goals, and challenges. To join the network of RG's campus organizers, join the RG College Students listserve (rgcollege@resourcegeneration.org). Email Adam Roberts (adam@resourcegeneration.org) to be added to the Google Group.
- **Make space for students who aren't quite RG constituents,** but are attracted to your work. You'll probably encounter students who may not have access to wealth, or

significant class privilege, but still are drawn to your programming. For example, middle-class students, or working-class students who are seeking lucrative careers. Reach out to them for a one-on-one conversation, to find out what they're looking for. Connect them with relevant resources (RG staff can help you identify these). Also, organizing cross-class events can create opportunities for students from all class backgrounds to engage with these issues. Class is fluid and complicated, so be open to different stories and experiences!

- **Do your homework before creating cross-class spaces.** Self-education is so *crucial* before attempting to do cross-class organizing- which is why we recommend starting with a praxis group, and by reading on your own. Talk to RG staff who have experience with this work. Connect with students leading low-income/working-class organizations, and attend their events (as long as they are open to people of all class backgrounds).
- **Remember that race and class intersect, and work on making that intersection visible in your work.** Race and class are inextricably linked to each other: The history of wealth accumulation in this country is a history of racism and the appropriation of resources by white people from people of color. We encourage you to bring education about this into the programming you're doing, through discussion prompts, workshops, and study groups. Again, reach out to RG staff and fellows for help with this! Here are some resources to help you on your way:
 - Racial Justice Guidelines for RG Chapters
 - Praxis Guide (contains curriculum about race/class intersection)

4. Resources

For a complete list of RG's resources, please see the **Resources** section of the website. Here are some that are particularly relevant to campus organizing:

- *Classified: How to Stop Hiding Your Privilege and Use It for Social Change* by Karen Pittelman & Resource Generation (including The Magic X-Ray Declassifier and Class Privilege Side Effects)
- Working Definitions of Class from ClassMatters.org
- "The State of Communities of Color in the U.S. Economy," a 2012 report by the Center for American Progress.
- *The Color of Wealth: The Story Behind the U.S. Racial Wealth Divide* by Meizhu Lui, Barbara Robles, Betsy Leondar-Wright
- "Wealth Inequality in America" — YouTube video
- Class Action resources
- Class Privilege Resources from Stanford University's RG Chapter
- The RG staff members are always a resource, eager to support you in your work. Contact Sarah Abbott, RG's National Organizer (sarah@resourcegeneration.org)

This guide is a work in progress!
*Please reach out to Holly Fetter (holly@resourcegeneration.org)
with any suggestions, questions, or ideas.*

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generation**

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WEALTH TO LEVERAGE RESOURCES AND
PRIVILEGE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

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