

5 Easy Steps to start an AFS Chapter!

1. You need **ONE** energetic, excited, positive, warm and welcoming **volunteer** – with at least a little time to commit to starting the chapter. If you have 2 or 3, or even more volunteers, that's great!
2. **Good communication is essential.** Establish a list of potential volunteers – include past host families in the area, natural families, returnees, former volunteers, school contacts, and others who might be supportive of the mission. Communicate to this group that a Chapter is being formed, and set a date for a start up meeting. If you are part of an Area Team, include the Area Team Chair on the list for informational purposes. Use an email distribution list, posted mail invitations, and follow up with phone calls. The phone calls are critical! Establishing and maintaining a distribution list is key.
3. **Plan the start up meeting.** You may choose to include host participants that are currently being hosted in the area or sending participants who have recently returned from their AFS experience as guest speakers, however, this is not the only option. If you do not have AFS participants present, make sure that you include some element in the meeting that illustrates the value and mission of AFS and how the experience changes lives. Have fun. At this start up meeting, the group needs to discuss and decide what are the goals for this “new” chapter? What AFS programs do they wish to support? Hosting AFS participants? Recruiting participants to go abroad on an AFS program?
4. **Assign Tasks.** Let people know that you need their help to make this work. Give your group choices for how they want to be involved: liaisons, interviewers, school reps, social activities coordinator, chapter leadership positions, etc. Have some short, easy job descriptions. Get commitments from your new volunteers to do something for the group.
5. **Follow up.** Set an agenda, time and date, for your next meeting.