How to Start a
Choose Civility
Chapter or Affiliate

Choose Civility
YOUR CITY, YOUR STATE
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INTRODUCTION TO CHOOSE CIVILITY

Welcome!

We are excited that you want to join Choose Civility.

Choose Civility began in Howard County, Maryland when Dr. P.M. Forni, author of Choosing Civility: the 25 Rules of Considerate Conduct, appeared as the keynote speaker at Howard County Library System’s (HCLS) Professional Development Day in 2006. The themes of his presentation resonated so greatly that HCLS staff members met with community leaders to envision a community-wide initiative – an initiative that has since gained international attention and grown to include more than 100 local Alliance Partners and Advocates as well as Chapters and Affiliates around the country.

Our goal is to bring this grassroots initiative to communities across the United States...and maybe even further. Civility is a core value of a well-functioning community and one of its defining components, underscoring its general health and wellness. Our quality of life depends in great part on how community members treat each other.

Choose Civility Chapters and Affiliates further the initiative’s mission and growth. Together, we can make this a national movement!

Ready to get started?
To assist you in starting your own Chapter or Affiliate, we recommend the steps outlined on the following pages.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the difference between a Chapter and an Affiliate?
- Chapters are external, community-wide initiatives.
- Affiliates are internal, organizational initiatives.
- See pages 8 and 9 for more details.

Why Become a Choose Civility Chapter or Affiliate?
Joining Choose Civility as a Chapter / Affiliate establishes your organization as a community leader and gives you:
- National recognition as part of this nonpartisan, unbiased initiative
- Affiliation with a national network
- Access to a communications network of representatives from other Chapters and Affiliates
- Access to expertise and an established structure
- Access to a toolkit, including logo and style guide

Does the national Choose Civility initiative dictate how our Chapter or Affiliate operates?
While we provide our experiences as a guide, you are free to operate your Chapter / Affiliate in the manner that works best for your community or organization.
We do have two requests:
- Choose Civility is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License. We request attribution to Howard County's Choose Civility initiative on your web site.
- We ask Chapters / Affiliates to personalize the logo with their location while adhering to the style guide (including the color palette).

What are the benefits to using the Choose Civility logo?
Similar to established national brands (e.g., Target, Starbucks, McDonalds, United Way), use of a consistent logo expands awareness, strengthens credibility of individual Chapters / Affiliates, and advances the goal of creating a national movement.

Is there a fee to participate?
While there is no fee, we request attribution to the Howard County (MD) Choose Civility initiative on your web site.

How do we become a Chapter or Affiliate?
See Getting Started on page 5.
CHOOSE CIVILITY STRUCTURE

Choose Civility
Howard County, MD

Howard County
Library System

Board of Advisors

Choose Civility

Chapters
Affiliates

Committees
Alliance Partners
Advocates
Sponsors
GETTING STARTED

1. Contact Howard County Library System (HCLS), lead organization for Choose Civility. Library staff will assist you with starting a new Chapter or Affiliate. Call 410.313.7786 or email info@choosecivility.org.
   • Visit ChooseCivility.org > Become Involved > Join or Start a Local Chapter or Affiliate.

2. For potential Chapters:
   • Assess the interest in your area. Determine which organizations might be interested in participating. Do you have existing partners that may be interested? Discuss the idea with community leaders and stakeholders (e.g., public library system, school system, colleges, Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Clubs).
   • Determine the lead organization best suited to provide direction for the initiative. The lead organization also will provide in-kind support for projects, events, communications management, and fundraising.
     • Because libraries' customer base encompasses the entire community (regardless of age, background, or means), HCLS recommends that public libraries take the lead. However, any organization willing to take the lead may fill this role.
   • Organize a steering committee with an initial target of 6 to 10 members. Strong, active leadership is essential to the development and success of a Chapter. Criteria to consider when building a steering committee:
     • Passion for the mission
     • Connections and willingness to connect with personal and/or business contacts
     • Representation from a variety of organizations within the community (e.g., government, education, nonprofit, business, faith-based)

3. For potential Affiliates:
   • Assess the interest in your organization. Is your leadership invested? Do you have a core group of colleagues interested?
   • Determine who in your organization will take the lead (i.e., providing direction, recruiting colleagues, convening meetings, following up).
   • Organize a steering committee comprised of people with passion for the mission, willingness to assist, and representation from various departments.

4. Once you have a committed core of people / organizations, plan your first meeting. We recommend your agenda include:
• Define purpose of meeting
• Outline goals
  o Identify outcomes and objectives
• Create vision and mission statements
• Identify opportunities
• Identify additional potential partners
• Discuss potential activities
• Establish regular meeting schedule

5. Determine and define committees and their responsibilities. Suggested committees: marketing, events, curriculum.

6. Establish a web and social media presence (e.g., web site, web page on the lead organization's web site, Facebook page).

7. Register your new Chapter / Affiliate with Howard County Library System (MD), which serves as the national lead organization for Choose Civility.
   • Complete the Chapter / Affiliate form provided by Howard County Library System (MD), including the link to your website, web page, and/or Facebook page.
   • Commit to a minimum three-year (renewable) term to operate Chapter / Affiliate.
   • Agree to use the Choose Civility logos, personalized with your location, and in accordance with the Choose Civility Style Guide.
   • As Choose Civility is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License, give attribution to Howard County's Choose Civility initiative somewhere on your web site.

8. Once your Chapter / Affiliate is registered, you will receive:
   • Authorization to use the name, logo, etc. within your community
   • Access to a toolkit with sample forms, letters, art files, etc.
   • Access to a communications network with other Chapters / Affiliates

HCLS then will include a link to your Chapter / Affiliate on ChooseCivility.org and issue a press release.
VISION, MISSION, AND PRINCIPLES

Sample Vision Statement
[Your Community] chooses to be a model of civility.

Sample Mission Statements
We choose respect, consideration, empathy, and inclusion as our fundamental values, advancing the community's quality of life.

or

Valuing diversity, we choose respect, compassion, empathy, and inclusiveness as essential to our quality of life.

Principles of Civility
While the Choose Civility initiative was inspired by Dr. Forni's 25 Rules of Considerate Conduct, Howard County (MD) chose to promote 15 of his rules as guiding principles:

Pay attention
Listen
Speak kindly
Assume the best
Respect others' opinions
Respect other people's time and space
Be inclusive
Acknowledge others
Accept and give praise
Apologize earnestly
Assert yourself
Take responsibility
Accept and give constructive criticism
Refrain from idle complaints
Be a considerate guest

You may choose these and/or other related principles for your Chapter / Affiliate.
CHOOSE CIVILITY AFFILIATES

Affiliates are internal, organizational initiatives.

- Led by a self-directed organization such as a library, school, government department/agency, nonprofit or other entity outside of Howard County that wishes to integrate in full or in part the Choose Civility initiative into its own programming/curriculum and operation.
- May model structure and activities based on Howard County (MD) Choose Civility.
- No fee required.

Criteria:
1. Develop an active and self-sustaining civility initiative within Affiliate’s entity, area of influence, or organizational reach.
2. Based on the Howard County Choose Civility model and strategic plan, promote civility through outreach programs, events, and communications plan.
   a. Create or adapt programs, activities and/or events that reach Affiliate’s base and constituents.
   b. Promote Choose Civility within organization.
   c. Create web page within Affiliate’s organization’s website or Facebook page to promote Affiliate’s programs, activities, and/or events.
3. Commit to a minimum two-year (renewable) term.
4. Provide appropriate independent budget, including in-kind support, to operate Affiliate’s activities. May also raise funds through sponsorships, grants, and/or donations.
5. Brand the Affiliate using the Choose Civility logo, personalized with your location, and in accordance with the color palette and style guide.
6. Provide attribution to the Howard County (MD) Choose Civility initiative on your website or Facebook page.

Benefits:
1. Recognition and prestige as a leader in bringing Choose Civility to Affiliate’s organization.
2. Guidance, templates and materials to develop Affiliate’s Choose Civility activities.
3. Use of the Choose Civility logo and other design elements and artwork.
4. Communication network with other Choose Civility Chapters and Affiliates.
5. Advance access to all new materials and tools developed by the Howard County Choose Civility initiative.
6. Recognition as Affiliate on Howard County Choose Civility website (with link to Affiliate’s website or Facebook page).
**CHOOSE CIVILITY CHAPTERS**

Chapters are external, community-wide initiatives.

- Led by a self-governing entity such as a county, city/town, university/college, school or library system outside of Howard County that:
  - wishes to establish and operate its own community-wide civility initiative, and
  - has its own governance, brand and identity, budget, and independence of direction.
- A stand-alone entity inspired and guided by the Howard County (MD) Choose Civility initiative, but empowered to create and direct its own initiative (i.e., structure, activities).
- No fee required.

**Criteria:**

1. Develop an active and self-sustaining civility initiative within Chapter’s entity, area of influence, and organizational reach.
2. Recruit partners to strengthen initiative and expand its reach.
3. Create, adapt, or modify a strategic plan to promote civility through partnerships, events, and communications plan.
   a. Create or adapt programs, activities, and/or events of civility that reach Chapter’s base and constituents.
   b. Promote Choose Civility within Chapter’s organization, area of influence, and organizational reach.
   c. Create a Choose Civility website, page within Chapter’s lead organization’s primary website, and/or Facebook page.
4. Commit to a minimum three-year (renewable) term.
5. Provide appropriate independent budget, including in-kind support, to operate Chapter’s civility initiative. May also raise funds through sponsorships, grants, and/or donations.
6. Brand the Chapter using the Choose Civility logo, personalized with your location, and in accordance with the color palette and style guide.
7. Provide attribution to the Howard County (MD) Choose Civility initiative on your website or Facebook page.

**Benefits:**

1. Recognition and prestige as a leader in bringing Choose Civility to Chapter’s community.
2. Guidance, templates and materials to develop Chapter’s Choose Civility initiative.
3. Use of the Choose Civility logo and other design elements.
4. Communication network with other Choose Civility Chapters and Affiliates.
5. Advance access to all new materials and tools developed by the Howard County Choose Civility initiative.
6. Recognition on Howard County Choose Civility website (with link to Chapter’s website) and Facebook page.
CHAPTER STRUCTURE

Since effective leadership is critical to the initiative's success, one organization must take the lead and provide direction. Other organizations and individuals can join and support your Chapter in a number of ways.

While the following structure works for Howard County (MD), your Chapter may wish to use a variation or different arrangement:

• Board of Advisors – Fifteen to 20 individuals representing diverse segments of the community who guide the strategic, visionary, and goal-oriented aspects of the initiative

• Committees – Individuals who guide, develop, and support the various aspects of the initiative. Membership may be open to anyone in the community

• Alliance Partners - Businesses, organizations, and government agencies that guide and promote the initiative, while incorporating Choose Civility into the culture and programs of their own organizations (see p. 10)

• Advocates - Individuals or organizations who wish to be involved and embrace the goodwill and principles of Choose Civility (see p. 11)

• Sponsors – Media, businesses, organizations, and individuals that provide financial and/or in-kind support of value
ALLIANCE PARTNERS

Chapters may wish to engage other organizations as Alliance Partners to extend the initiative's reach to build awareness, involvement, and commitment.

Alliance Partners may include organizations, businesses, government departments/agencies, faith-based institutions, or education institutions that are active partners of your Chapter.

Sample Criteria:
1. Serve as an active advocate of civility and the initiative.
2. Promote Choose Civility within organization to employees, members, and stakeholders and through distribution channels to constituents, customers, vendors, and suppliers.
3. Display the Choose Civility logo and website link on organization’s website and in appropriate marketing materials.
4. Incorporate Choose Civility into organization's marketing efforts (internally and externally).
5. Two or more of the following:
   a. Participate in marketing, events, or workplace committee.
   b. Participate in and promote Choose Civility events and programs.
   c. Sponsor (cash or in-kind) events/programs.
6. Offer suggestions on new events, components, tools, and ideas for extending Choose Civility throughout the county.
7. Serve a one-year renewable term.

Sample Benefits:
1. Recognition and prestige as a community leader and frontline collaborator.
2. Recognition on Choose Civility website (with link to organization’s website), in promotional materials and at Choose Civility events.
3. Use of the Choose Civility logo and other design elements and artwork.
4. Display of Choose Civility identification and promotional materials within organization and its activities.
5. Advance invitation to Choose Civility events and activities.
6. Advance access to all materials and tools for distribution to organization’s base.
7. Press release to local media announcing organization’s participation.
8. Consideration for selection to serve on the Choose Civility Board of Advisors.
ADVOCATES

Chapters may wish to include individuals or organizations, that want to be involved and embrace the goodwill and principles of Choose Civility, as Advocates.

Sample Criteria:
1. Strive to model the Principles of Civility and promote Choose Civility.
2. Participate in Choose Civility activities and events.

Sample Benefits:
1. Community pride in demonstrating the Principles of Civility and positively influencing the quality of life.
2. Recognition on Choose Civility website and in other appropriate venues.
3. Invitation to all Choose Civility events and activities.
Choose Civility is a community-wide initiative led by Howard County Library System.