**Tips for Local Area Coordinators**

Local area coordinators will recruit students and others from their region for Get on the Bus. As an LAC, you will be responsible for organizing transportation and collecting any transportation fees. Depending on your location and the number of people you expect to recruit, you may decide to hire a bus or van, carpool, or take public transportation.

Here are some tips to guide you:
1. E-mail us at gotbvolunteer@amnesty133.org. Our outreach coordinator has a list of Northeast Amnesty groups that you can contact.
2. Determine your region and number of people you expect to be able to recruit. This can be estimated based on conversations with Amnesty group leaders, as well as our estimates from previous years.
3. Decide on the mode of transportation. If you want to rent a car or van, you will need a driver over 25-years-old in most states.
4. Talk to various bus companies or to your school to discuss transportation options. For more tips, see the Getting to NYC link.
5. Establish a per-person fee based on the number of people expected and total transportation cost. For some regions, such as Maine, the price will be higher than years past as it will be largely determined by distance. For others closer to NYC, it may be cheaper. Be careful to collect enough to cover your costs. You can grant participants a refund after the event if you've collected more than you need.
6. Encourage others to fundraise to pay for transportation. See fundraising ideas below.
7. You can write a special initiatives grant which can cover transportation costs. If you are interested in this, contact gotb@amnesty133.org immediately.
8. Set a registration deadline based on when you need to confirm with the bus or rental-car company. If you are hiring a vehicle, we suggest setting a deadline of at least three weeks before the event.
9. Post information on our website. We will have a webpage for our local area coordinators where you can post your contact information, price, deadline, and pick-up location. If you'd like people to register using a webpage similar to ours, we can work with you to do that. This will produce a database for you to keep track of the registration information of your attendees. You'll need to establish a PayPal account if you don't already have one.
10. Make sure that the folks on your bus have also registered online by visiting [www.gotb.org](http://www.gotb.org/).
11. Get permission from parents and school. For more information regarding safety
see the Safety page under the Event Information menu.

**Getting Permission from School**

* It will not be possible or necessary for every school (for instance, you don't need school permission if you are on April vacation), but some may be able to get this as an official, excused field trip.
* Present much of the information on the website regarding [safety and security](http://www.amnesty133.org/ai/gotb/safety.html) ‹the more organized and professional the presentation (especially by students) the better!
* Make the educational connection by:
	+ emphasizing that GOTB is a practical application of American citizenship.
	+ making connections to social studies curricula.
	+ showing how these issues are the results of studied American and world histories, world and national politics.
	+ having students write up reports about the issues being protested ‹ the more academic, the better.

**Fundraising Ideas & Tips**

Your group may want to consider fundraising to help pay for the cost of transportation and/or registration for GOTB.

1. There are lots of great fundraising tips at the Amnesty USA web site <http://www.amnestyusa.org/activist_toolkit/runyourgroup/fundraisingevent.html>

**Here are some of Amnesty's ideas For fundraising events:**

* + If you are **selling merchandise** - make sure selling items is allowed where you set up. Some venues allow distribution of literature but not sales. Sometimes groups can avoid this difficulty by requesting donations and giving away products to donors who contribute a certain amount.
	+ **Raffles.** Raffles are a fun and simple way to earn money. Ask local businesses to donate prizes and sell tickets for a certain period of time. Some of the businesses that donated might also be willing to sell tickets. Incorporate the raffle into the group’s work by having the drawing during a meeting or special event. Be sure to check local and state regulations regarding raffles before you start.
	+ **“- A-Thons”.** Write-a-thons, dance-a-thons, skate-a-thons, etc. take a little extra organizing but can be extremely profitable. Try to collect pledges in advance. You can ask for a block pledge ($10 for the event) or agree to have a certain number of letters, dance a certain number of hours, etc. and ask for payment up-front. Include a speaker or show a human rights-related movie during a write-a-thon. Set up a “thermometer” poster that is updated frequently to indicate how close the group is to reaching its goals.
	+ **Literature Readers.** Invite noted authors or human rights activists to read from their work, or get group members to read parts of essays, short stories, novels, poems, or testimonies of victims of human rights violations. Set up an “Amnesty Café” to sell coffee and baked goods during the readings. A good time for this type of event would be during Banned Books Week in September.
	+ **Benefit Meals.** These can range in scope and price. A more elaborate benefit meal might be an international dinner, focusing on a single prisoner of conscience and featuring food, music, and speakers from his or her country. A more simple variation of this theme would be to hold a pancake breakfast or spaghetti dinner followed by a movie or speaker.
	+ **Concerts.** Concerts can be fun, but need to be planned carefully because they can easily lose money. There are many ways to hold events with music, and the music you use can vary widely. Check to verify the musical tastes of your target audience before you arrange the music. Make the location fun. Consider holding the concert outdoors in a park during the summer or at popular venue, such as a bookstore, bar, or restaurant.
	+ **Performances.** Consider putting on performances either using group members or members of a local drama club or theatre as performers. Charge admission for the show and then sell refreshments and AI merchandise. Also, be sure to have a table with information on AI and your group at the show.
1. If you need to raise money for a substantially sized group, you may write for a special initiatives fund (SIF) grant from Amnesty (up to $4000). If this interests you, email gotb@amnesty133.org for more information.