

Trouble **NATION**
GUIDE

TO STARTING AND GROWING A GRASSROOTS GROUP



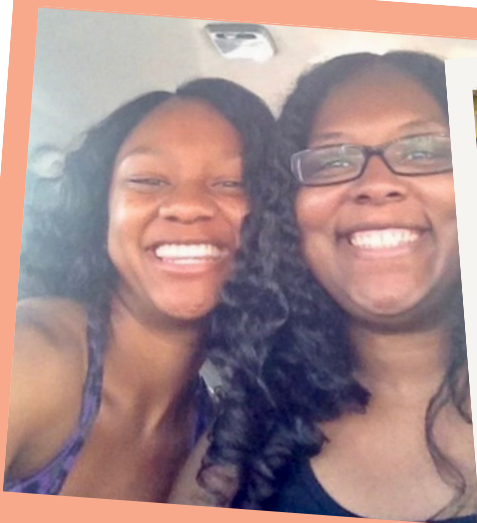
WELCOME TO *Trouble* NATION

BECAUSE PROTECTING DEMOCRACY IS MORE FUN WITH FRIENDS!

Want to bring the joy of Red Wine & Blue to your community? Maybe you've been trying to figure out how to do more to fight extremism, or you're looking to be part of a like-minded community of troublemakers.

Whether you already have an advocacy group that you want to grow or you're thinking about starting a new group in your area, you're going to want to be part of TroubleNation!

Red Wine & Blue is launching TroubleNation to harness and grow the power and reach of women organizing locally.



BRINGING TROUBLEMAKERS TOGETHER

TroubleNation will help you find other members in your community who share your frustration with the rise of extremism in their communities. Yes — they do exist! Even if you feel alone where you live, we guarantee you are not! You can be the one to bring all the Troublemakers in your community together. And guess what — it will be fun!

Say what?!? Can it really be fun?? Absolutely! It's fun to DO something to help create meaningful, lasting change.

Read on to learn how.



WHAT DO WE OFFER WITH

Trouble NATION

THE TOOLS YOU NEED

Organizing on a local level can be very rewarding. We've created the TroubleNation program to give you the tools and support to not only get started but also to help you as you grow. Here are some of the highlights:

DEDICATED GROUP LANDING PAGE

- Your group will have its own landing page on the TroubleNation platform where you'll be able to create events and petitions, communicate with your members, and generate sign up and advocacy links to share on social media – all in one spot!

NEW MEMBER RECRUITMENT

- Our website features a clickable map where our national audience can search the RWB network by city/state or zip code. Tap into 500,000+ like-minded women looking to connect with others near them!

EXCLUSIVE, TURNKEY CONTENT

- TroubleNation groups will have access to Red Wine & Blue content ready for your group to use, including sample meeting agendas, how-to guides, shareable social media content, and RWB's programming including Freedom to Parent 21st Century Kids, Banned Bookmobile, Troublemaker Trainings, SWEEP Salons, Easy A microblog, and more.
- Leaders will receive exclusive invitations to special events and bespoke trainings, including "Green Room" meet-and-greet opportunities with special guests.

SPECIALIZED LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY TRAINING

- Ongoing training sessions will help strengthen your leadership team and arm your group with the advocacy tools and strategies it needs to be most effective.
- Regular leadership summits and a dedicated leader communication channel will help you share best practices and learn from other groups and leaders.
- Leaders will receive exclusive invitations to special events and bespoke trainings, including "Green Room" meet-and-greet opportunities with special guests.



WHO SHOULD JOIN

Trouble **NATION**

Regular Women (competent and fabulous, but perhaps without any previous political exposure or interest) from all over the country have formed grassroots action groups in their community to impact the political landscape where they live.

There is no right or wrong way to start a group, and as the number of members increases, the dynamics and reach of your group will likely evolve.

Still, we find that three characteristics define successful groups:

SOCIAL

Women want to make connections and build relationships with other women in their community. We want a place to laugh, complain freely about politics, drink wine (or your favorite beverage of choice), and share our lives. Members don't necessarily identify as "activists" and may not want to attend formally structured meetings. They want to become informed, share their experiences in a social setting, and feel supported.

The roots of a lasting relationship are mindfulness, deep listening and loving speech, and a strong community to support you.

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SAFE:

Women want to engage and learn in a judgment-free setting where there are no stupid questions, and no one feels intimidated. Whether you've been active all of your life, never even thought about politics before, or are realizing that you don't agree with the political beliefs of some family and friends, you can join the party and start a group in your area without submitting any bona fides. This party is "come as you are" so we can all help change the future.

ACTION-ORIENTED:

Women want to DO something to create change. Engagement should be more than just informational; it should provide a way of taking action. There's no one right way to engage, but making a difference is the point.



HOW TO:

START A GROUP

We strongly encourage you to start by establishing the focus and purpose of your group. Do you have a specific issue you are concentrating on or are you working to change your community as a whole? In addition to local issues, would you like to also take action on the state and national levels?

Now start thinking about a name for your group. We recommend thinking of a fun name that isn't too partisan (this will broaden your appeal). Check out some names groups have come up with — Illinois Dames for Democracy and Medina Mavens are just two good examples.

FYI

While we are thrilled to have you as part of TroubleNation, **for legal reasons we can't permit other groups to use the name Red Wine & Blue or TroubleNation.** But we know your creative juices are flowing and you will find the perfect name for your community and concerns.

Once you've figured all that out, it's time to join TroubleNation! Click [here](#) to create your group's landing page. We'll ask you to tell us a little about yourself and your group, and then you can submit your group for approval by our admin team.



*Red
Wine & Blue*

WHAT IS THE CRITERIA TO JOIN?

We welcome any group whose mission aligns with that of Red Wine & Blue.

RWB MISSION STATEMENT:

Red Wine & Blue is an empowered community of women working together to defeat extremism, one suburb at a time. We give women the confidence they need to influence the people they know, organize their communities, and get stuff done while having fun along the way.

We expect most groups who join will be independent groups whose primary purpose is to **connect women in their communities to address local issues**. Some may be incorporated as 501(c)3 (educational/charitable) or 501(c)4 (social welfare/issue advocacy) organizations.

Because TroubleNation is a 501(c)4 program, we cannot accept independent groups whose primary purpose is to directly contribute to candidates. We also can't accept incorporated groups that are political organizations under section 527 of the Internal Revenue Code and/or are directly affiliated with a political party or a PAC.



HOW DO I FIND OTHERS?

Now it's time to grow your membership.

This is the exciting part!

Start by thinking of people you know — your friends, your Facebook contacts, people you know from school or the gym.

Who can you think of who shares your concerns and might want to do more? Consider posting about your group or an issue on social media, and reach out to those who “like” or comment on your posts.

Invite all who engage to join your group and be sure to encourage others to invite their friends — this is how you grow. TroubleNation has an easy invitation link you can share with others.

Helping you get the word out to people in your community is something with which RWB can absolutely assist you. As noted above, we have more than 500,000 members nationwide. Chances are very good we have members in your local community, and we can help connect you with them! For example, we can send emails on your group's behalf to the RWB network in your area. We can also profile your group in your state's RWB or SWEEP Facebook group.

Start building your own list of members and their contact info. Don't be afraid to ask members when they join to send you their email addresses and cell numbers.

**PRO
TIP**

Consider creating a dedicated email address for your group — this will help keep you organized and save you from having to broadly share your personal email address.



TIME TO GET THE PARTY STARTED

So you have started the group and people
are joining - CONGRATULATIONS!

It's time to plan your first meeting! The TroubleNation platform has tools to help you easily set up your event and invite others. Challenge everyone you invite to bring a friend (or 10 — the more, the merrier!).

You're planning your first meeting, but think of it more like a party. This first event will set the tone for how your group rolls. Hold it (and all future meetings) in someone's home or at a fun venue like a wine bar to keep the vibe chill. It's way more social than a charmless library community meeting room with the dreaded whiteboard. Yechhh. We're talking wine (or whatever), food, and comfortable seating. It's a social gathering, a place to form new friendships, commiserate, and share your feelings about what's happening locally and across the country.

Above all, you want your group to bond — you've found your people! Allow time for people to introduce themselves and to share their personal stories (why are they making time to come out on a weekday evening with (mostly) people they don't know?).

In addition to the social and bonding time, show you also mean business — incorporate a brief educational component and have an easy, localized call to action. It can be as simple as calling elected officials, attending a school board meeting, or completing a training. You know us women, we get it done.

If you'd like even more ideas for planning your event, [check out this presentation](#).

**PRO
TIP**

Before people go home, share the date and time of your next meeting. Consider setting the schedule for the first six months.

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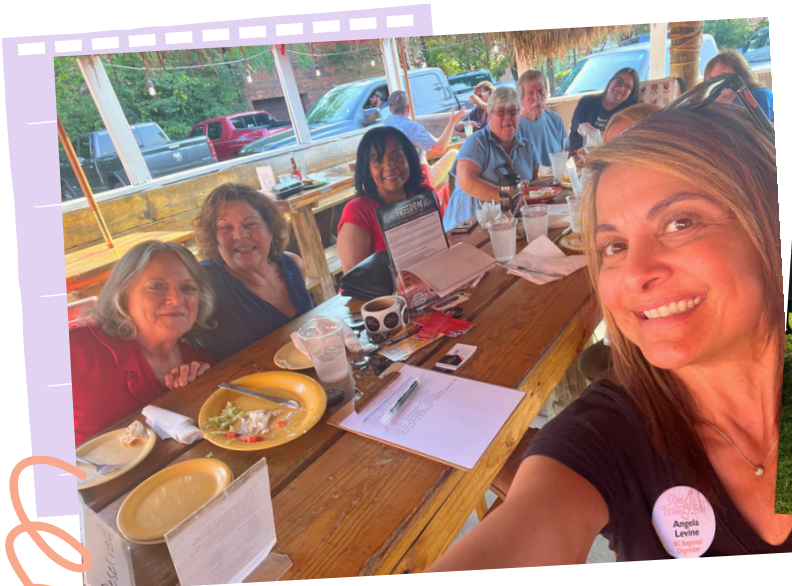
KEEP YOUR MOMENTUM GOING –

YOU'RE IN IT FOR THE LONG TERM!

You've set up your group, you have members, and you've had your first meeting. You're off to a great start! Now you have to keep your membership engaged so your group stays active for the long run. Here are some best practices we've learned:

1. DON'T LOSE MOMENTUM

To keep your membership engaged, holding regular gatherings that include time for socializing, learning, and taking action is the best practice. Schedule your next meeting to take place four to six weeks after your first meeting. At the first meeting, share the schedule for the next six months. Use RWB's online events as ways to stay engaged and connect in between your planned events and activities...you can all attend a SWEEP Salon or Troublemaker Training together and then brainstorm ideas or have a group chat during the event to share reactions and ideas.



KEEP YOUR MOMENTUM GOING —

2. SHARE LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITY

We get it, leading a group can feel like a lot. And we all know that life happens — you have a huge work deadline, you're sending a kid to college, whatever it is — and the group can't be your top priority at the moment.

This is why we recommend quickly identifying two to four highly-engaged members who would like to become more involved and can become part of your group's leadership team.

Everyone has strengths and talents — you will likely find these new leaders can help in areas where you may need help. For example, you may be an amazing communicator and motivator, but spreadsheets are not your jam. Find someone who lives for data!

When assembled thoughtfully, these leadership teams are the secret sauce that drive local groups to thrive. Whether you call them your Jedi Sisters or the Board of Goddesses (yes, both real names), this is your ride-or-die crew. The women you trust to get it all done. We truly are all in this together.

Of course, you will want to stay in close contact with this new leadership squad — your soon-to-be besties.

Find what works for your team — it can be as simple as a text group.

TroubleNation can also help — we've created a dedicated Slack channel that will connect you with TroubleNation group leaders from across the country, so you can all learn what's working — and what's not — from each other!

We cannot raise our voices unless we can breathe, and each of us sometimes runs out of breath... We are in this together. We will hold the note until you're ready to sing.

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KEEP YOUR MOMENTUM GOING –

3. ALWAYS PROVIDE FRESH CONTENT.

Consider what your group wants to accomplish and be sure to give your members something new to learn at each meeting. Red Wine & Blue can absolutely help you with this — we’ve created a LOT of content over the past few years, and we are excited to share it with your group.

TroubleNation has a pretty awesome (if we do say so ourselves) Resources page for groups that can be found at the top right of the TroubleNation landing page. We designed this page to serve as a library of the best content we’ve created over the past few years. We have organizing and training resources for groups as well as links for education on the issues most important to your members. [Check it out here](#) — we think you’ll find it useful.

Find what works for your team — it can be as simple as a text group. TroubleNation can also help — we’ve created a dedicated Slack channel that will connect you with TroubleNation group leaders from across the country, so you can all learn what’s working — and what’s not — from each other!

4. IDENTIFY CONCRETE WAYS YOUR GROUP CAN COLLECTIVELY TAKE ACTION

Your members will be more engaged when they feel they are doing something to move the needle. At every meeting (and maybe as “homework” in-between), give your members something tangible to do.

5. PERSONAL INTERACTION WITH MEMBERS

Foster an environment in which members are comfortable sharing their “whys.” Reach out to members between meetings and find out what’s driving them and encourage them to come back.



KEEP YOUR MOMENTUM GOING –

Your group should be a safe space
where people don't feel judged.

The tent to protect and save democracy should be large and one that welcomes people new to politics or longtime activists, lifelong Democrats or Republicans who feel deserted by their party...you get the idea.

PRO TIP

As mentioned above, it's important to build a contact list of your members.

While you are able to communicate with your members through your landing page on TroubleNation, privacy considerations prevent RWB from sharing your members' email addresses with you.

But you are absolutely welcome to ask your members to voluntarily provide their contact information to you separately.



HOW TO STRUCTURE MEETINGS

That's really up to you and your crew. Planning ahead is important. Meetings can be held at the same time and place each month or alternate between daytime and evening times to accommodate the needs of more members.

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Here are some best practices of successful meetings:

- Always include social time (tend to the sisterhood!) and time for sharing of personal stories
 - Take pictures or videos and share in your group!
- Educational component
 - Speakers from allied groups
 - Briefings on issues from group members who have done their research
 - Election or legislative updates
 - News stories of interest
- Community service component
- Accessible calls to action
- Reports on previous actions taken by the group



HOW TO STRUCTURE MEETINGS

Consider a newsletter. Not everyone will be able to make a meeting, so keep all members in the loop by sending a fun newsletter via email and/or posting updates to social media pages for the group.

Offer some virtual events. Even though most people are no longer following COVID distancing guidelines, sometimes it's hard for people to get out of their homes. Consider peppering your meeting schedule with some virtual meetings. You might find some who don't come to your in-person events will participate in virtual meetings.

HERE ARE SOME WAYS TO MAKE VIRTUAL MEETINGS FUN:

- Virtual Happy Hours are a thing. They're a fun way to relax and get to know each other. Give everyone a chance to introduce themselves and tell why they joined the group.
- Host a Zoom book club, a trivia night, or play another online game.
- Host a watch party for a TV event, movie, debate, or speech where members can post and share their thoughts.



TIPS AND TRICKS FOR MANAGING A FACEBOOK GROUP

Even though TroubleNation is separate from Facebook, many groups find it helpful to also maintain a Facebook page. If you do this, we encourage you to share the link to your Facebook page in the welcome message of your landing page on TroubleNation.

You may choose to use one platform more than the other, but we encourage you to keep your content fresh on both. Some of your members may exclusively visit only one site (lots of people have ditched Facebook in the past few years!), so make sure both sites include accurate and up-to-date info.

Red Wine & Blue has a number of Facebook pages, and we've compiled a lot of best practices over the years. Read on for our best tips and tricks.

KEEP IT AN ENGAGING PLACE

- By having admins posting and participating in comments. Welcome new members and be sure to encourage others to invite their friends. And check the vibe in your group — keep it positive and forward thinking. We know the news can be doom and gloom — so be sure to post positive actions people can take, celebrate small victories and share success stories.

WHO WILL BE ADMITTED AS MEMBERS OF YOUR GROUP?

- Is it open to anyone or are you keeping it local? Is it only for people who identify with a political party or philosophy or is it inclusive of all who want to do the work? Define those parameters from the start and stick to them; it will save you headaches in the long run. Just like you tell your kids — follow the rules ... and we will not have a problem.
- Without a doubt, establish posting rules for your Facebook group before you create it, and think about how you prefer to moderate the group before it gets rolling (read: takes on a life of its own). You know exactly what we're talking about, yes? Determine member rules up front to rein in the usual suspects: the chronic complainer, the fight picker, the tangent taker, the over-sharer, and the monopolizer (who replies to every single post or comment, whether it's 2:00 in the afternoon or 2:00 in the morning). Obviously, everyone's input is valued and respected, but a group without parameters can get unwieldy.



TIPS AND TRICKS FOR MANAGING A FACEBOOK GROUP

We also suggest multiple administrators so the group doesn't go unattended if you need to be offline for more than a few days. Your co-administrators should almost certainly be your group's leadership team – ladies you trust to take care of the group as you would and should lighten your load as the primary administrator – not add to it.

You also may want to consider requiring admin approval before a member's post goes live to ensure things stay on track. If you don't have the bandwidth for that level of monitoring, simply highlighting content guidelines on your site that keep your group's purpose clear and the vibe friendly and respectful will likely be enough to keep your members from going rogue. Join [RWB's private Facebook group SWEEP](#) and check out our guidelines for ideas on rules of engagement.

Some groups remain strictly online and rarely hold meetings or social events, and exist mostly as online support communities that sometimes put out Calls to Action for their members to engage in if they wish. This is ideal for people who like to stay in their pajamas and surf social media while drinking their favorite beverage quietly from their couch. But the snacks aren't as good, and most Facebook groups eventually transition to real life and begin holding some type of gathering to form friendships and take action together, because women get stuff done!

Frustrated that group members don't always respond to your amazing and insightful posts? While Facebook can be a fabulous place to build a community -- it also limits your ability to reach your members. Facebook's algorithm determines what your members see in their feeds. So that amazing event you planned and posted -- might never get seen by a majority of your members.

So how do you help make sure people see your stuff? We can't stress this enough -- make posts personal! Just throwing up a link to an article or sharing a graphic for an event will get you ZERO engagement. Share your personal stories, thoughts and concerns in your posts. Want to really up engagement? Use a photo of you, other willing group members, or your cute kids and pets in posts -- those are winners every time! And the more people who like/comment -- the more Facebook will show others the post. So don't be shy about asking people to go and love on something you posted.

TIPS AND TRICKS FOR MANAGING A FACEBOOK GROUP

But the most important way of getting around the Facebook algorithm is finding ways to contact your members IRL -- email and phone numbers are game changers. You can reach your people without the blessing of Mark Zuckerberg. It is all about the data!

One cool tool at your disposal is membership questions. Those boring old things? Yes -- they can actually be super helpful. We all know that to join groups we often have to agree to the group rules -- don't be afraid to ask people for their email or contact information there. Say what? Yep -- this practice can bring huge rewards.

By asking for contact information when they join your group, you start to build that list. Not everyone will do it -- but you will be surprised how many are willing. Here is an example of a membership question that can be used:

Facebook doesn't show you all the cool stuff happening in the group -- enter your email address to get alerts about events and action opportunities.

Yep it's that simple! Create that spreadsheet, record those emails and voila -- you have the beginnings of a database for your new friends. And Facebook no longer controls everything!



SURVEYS

You can use surveys to help determine the interest and desires of your group, including meeting structure, frequency, issue priorities and the like. You can also leverage surveys to calculate the really important things, like do we need appetizers or is this a straight to dessert crowd? (We have a sneaking suspicion that these questions will generate a high rate of response!)

Surveys can also be helpful to find out what motivated people to join and why they stay, how they found the group, their preferred activities and what they envision for the future of the group.

If you do a survey, determine carefully what data you want and understand that properly crafted questions with intentional wording are important to the success of any survey.



PARTNERING WITH OTHER GROUPS

- Some groups intentionally partner with other like-minded grassroots groups or issue organizations.
- These partnerships can involve sharing each other's events with members, having a partner group speak at one of your meetings and sharing best ideas/strategies.
- Some people like to form regional leadership groups.
- These bring together leaders of all the local grassroots groups to make connections and coordinate efforts.



FIRED UP... **READY TO GO!**

Starting a group should not feel like being assigned a lab partner in 8th grade science class. The suburban women who have connected via these groups are finding meaningful and genuine kinship with like-minded women in their city or town that they likely would never have met otherwise.

CAN WE COUNT YOU AMONG OUR NUMBERS?

No matter what type of group you form or what type of activism you decide to engage in, there is a responsive and rockin' sisterhood waiting to support you! Red Wine & Blue is helping women-led grassroots groups across the country become powerful and inspiring.

WE CONNECT WOMEN TOGETHER

Generate fun and informative content, and help you grow as influencers in your communities. The programs we run supplement and support your group's actions and help rally your troops — even if their comfort zone is their couch.



RED WINE & BLUE

WANTS TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Keep updated on all things Red Wine & Blue by signing up for our newsletter.

JOIN ONE OF OUR VIRTUAL OR IN-PERSON EVENTS!

- Become a member of our national Facebook group at [SWEEP by Red Wine & Blue](#) to meet many cool new friends!
- Love podcasts? We got you! Listen to [The Suburban Women Problem](#) and [The Cost of Extremism](#) to hear from Troublemakers from across the county!

FOLLOW US ON YOUR FAVORITE SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM:

- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [Threads](#)
- [IG](#)
- [TikTok](#)

If you have questions, reach out to the TroubleNation team:
TroubleNation@redwine.blue

