

**FIVE STEP GUIDE TO  
STARTING A LAST  
PLASTIC STRAW  
CAMPAIGN**



**change X**

# WELCOME

**“Welcome to the ChangeX Last Plastic Straw guide!  
We’re so happy you’re thinking about helping to  
address the issue of plastic waste in your community.  
Plastic straws are often the tipping point for changing  
people’s attitude and behavior towards plastic so let’s  
start one straw at a time. I’m here to help so don’t  
hesitate to get in touch!”**

Jackie Nunez

- Founder, The Last Plastic Straw



## Introduction to the Idea

### What is it?

The Last Plastic Straw movement seeks to activate citizens through grassroots campaigning to encourage individuals to push for change in restaurant protocol and practices in their local communities. By becoming aware of the issue yourself and mobilizing a movement within your community to limit-- and ultimately eliminate-- the use of plastic straws, you can bring about wider behavior change and reduce the amount of single-use plastic damaging our planet.

The movement started in the U.S. and teams of community organizers are now mobilizing around the world to take simple, practical and effective action toward eliminating plastic straws.

### Is it working?

Over 1,800 restaurants, organizations, institutions, and schools worldwide have stopped using plastic straws or have implemented a “serve straws only upon request” policy as part of the Last Plastic Straw movement. Businesses report a 60-90% reduction in plastic straw use and waste, resulting in significant financial savings.

### Why is it important?

Plastic straws are of no real value or significance to most people. At the same time, they are a huge contributor to the plastic pollution problem in our oceans, waterways and beaches.

Most people are overwhelmed by plastic pollution. If you have travelled in the last 10 years, particularly near waterways, you know the amount of plastic in our environment is huge and growing. There is virtually nowhere on earth that is not touched by humankind’s “footprint” of plastic, and in particular single-use plastic. The earth cannot digest this foreign material created by people. If plastic continues to be produced at the rate in which it is currently produced, there will be more plastic than fish in the ocean by volume by the year 2050.

# STARTING A LAST PLASTIC STRAW CAMPAIGN

## EVERYTHING YOU NEED

### TIME



A few hours a week (approx. 4) will be enough to get this going in your community.

### PEOPLE



You'll need a team of 3-5 people to help you.

### FUNDING



You can apply for funding of \$500 to help with the license to STRAWS the documentary, to print materials, fliers or to buy some alternative straws to test out to help you build the case for plastic alternatives.

#### Who typically starts a Last Plastic Straw Campaign?

Someone who:

- Is looking for a simple and practical way to address plastic pollution.
- Wants to engage the local community around the issue.

#### 5 Step Summary

- 1 Complete the 30 Day Challenge
- 2 Make a personal commitment
- 3 Arrange a community viewing of the film 'STRAWS'
- 4 Map out local businesses & ask them to take the pledge
- 5 Track your progress & next steps

#### Support and Additional Resources

Visit [www.thelastplasticstraw.org](http://www.thelastplasticstraw.org) | Email: [jackie@plasticpollutioncoalition.org](mailto:jackie@plasticpollutioncoalition.org)  
Support from ChangeX: Email: [info@changex.org](mailto:info@changex.org)

# STEP 1: COMPLETE YOUR 30 DAY CHALLENGE



The 30 Day Challenge has been designed to get your project off to the strongest possible start by building momentum in the first month. Once you have completed your challenge your first funding payment will be unlocked.

- Learn more about the idea you're starting**  
This '5 Step Guide' includes all you need to know about the specifics of starting your project.
- Schedule a Call**  
Pick a time that works for you to talk to a ChangeX team member about what's involved in your chosen project as well as to ensure that you understand the Guidelines & rules associated with the Challenge.
- Find 5 interested people**  
You already have your own project page on [changex.org](https://changex.org). Use the site to share the project with others in your school to get get started together.
- Set up a casual kick-off meeting**  
Host a meeting with your team at your school, at a community center or in a coffee shop and come up with an action plan. You can use your page on [changex.org](https://changex.org) to set up an event and invite people.
- Share a team photo and your plan of action**  
Upload a team photo taken at your first team meeting to [changex.org](https://changex.org). In addition, provide us with a narrative on what you will spend the funding on, what your next steps as a group will be, and how you hope the project will ultimately benefit your school community.

## STEP 2: MAKE A PERSONAL COMMITMENT

The first step is to decide that **you've had your Last Plastic Straw**. Make a personal commitment to say "no" to plastic straws. Whenever ordering a drink, politely request "no straw, please." Once you've taken the plunge, begin to encourage your family and friends to do the same.

It can be helpful to explain to the server in a bar or restaurant why you don't want a plastic straw. Most people just don't give it any thought. By politely explaining that you don't need a straw and you'd rather not use one to avoid unnecessary waste, you may even trigger a mind shift in the person serving you.

If you really like using a straw, then try carrying your own paper, glass, bamboo, or stainless steel straw instead of using a plastic straw.

Here's a handy guide for when you're out and about in bars and restaurants:

**SCOPE IT - TAKE A LOOK AROUND...**Are there plastic straws in glasses at tables? Do all or most drinks have plastic straws in them?

**SAY IT - ORDER YOUR DRINKS WITH NO STRAW...** Explain politely why you don't want or need a straw.

**SUPPORT IT - GIVE EM' SOME LOVE!**

Give your server positive affirmation for honoring and fulfilling your request of serving you a drink without a straw!

**SHARE IT - SOCIAL MEDIA POST**

Give the bar or restaurant a positive review on social media. Share by posting a photo to Instagram with hashtags: #NoPlasticStraws, #PlasticPollutes & any specific hashtags to your or other groups working to rid plastic pollution.



## STEP 2: ARRANGE A COMMUNITY VIEWING OF STRAWS, THE DOCUMENTARY

STRAWS is a 30 minute award-winning documentary that leaves you with a clear understanding of the problems caused by plastic pollution. Importantly, the film also clearly articulates how each of us can be part of the solution.

Watching this together as a group (either the small team you've gathered to work on this idea with you, or a wider community group) will ensure that everyone has a good understanding of the problem and feels motivated and ready to take action! It might be fun to watch it together and then have a small panel discussion afterward around the extent of the problem in your community and the steps you can take together to make change.

In order to screen STRAWS (or any film) to the public, a public performance license is required. The good people at STRAWS are willing to offer a 20% discount to any ChangeX communities interested in hosting a screening. Once you complete your 30 Day Challenge and you unlock your seed-funding, you should have all the funding you need to cover this license cost as well as the expenses of bringing a small group together in your community.

Otherwise, admission and a donation ask at the screening can also be a simple way to cover the costs. You can email [strawsfilm\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:strawsfilm(at)gmail.com) for a link to download STRAWS promotional and screening toolkit items or you can find more information at [www.strawsfilm.com](http://www.strawsfilm.com).



# STEP 4: MAP OUT LOCAL BUSINESSES AND ASK THEM TO TAKE THE PLEDGE

Over 1,800 restaurants have already joined the movement globally and those that implement a “straws only upon request” policy report a 60-90% reduction in plastic straw use and waste.

With your team, identify how many bars and restaurants in your town / city / area you’d like to speak to. It’s okay to start with a small number and slowly build from there.

You can use this framework when identifying which bars and restaurants you need to talk to. Some won’t serve straws at all, some will have already implemented a “straws only upon request” policy. Start by making a list of places that give out straws without request. Shifting their behavior will have the biggest impact. Their first step will be to shift to only giving out straws upon request and the next step is to begin phasing out plastic straws completely.

When you’ve completed your research and mapping, you’ll have a list that falls into 3 categories:

1. Giving plastic straws without request
2. Giving plastic straws only upon request
3. Not using plastic straws

**Category 1** needs urgent action!

**Category 2** may require action

**Category 3** should be recognized and celebrated!

When talking to businesses, give them a little bit of background on the issue and why it’s causing so much damage to our beaches and waterways. They may find the issue of single-use plastic overwhelming. By emphasizing how big an impact they can have just by taking this one small step to move to serving straws only upon request, you can make them feel excited and empowered to change things.

Remember when talking to restaurants that this is a very positive thing for them to do. Their customers will love them more for it, it will save them money and it saves a lot of waste. It really is a win win!

## RESOURCES



You can find business cards, table tents and a pledge form to provide to the businesses you speak to in the resources section of your project page on ChangeX.



As the owner or manager of \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of Business), I am officially participating in the The Last Plastic Straw movement as part of an effort to bring my community pollution-free and help plastic pollution at the source.

As a plastic straw free business, we will feature you on our list of participating businesses on **The Last Plastic Straw Website**, listing your business to a global movement, share on social media, and promoting you as green business leader in your community!

As a participating business I now too (please check all that apply):

First we serve "Straws Available Upon Request?" and only provide straws upon customer's request.

Discontinue the use and purchase of plastic straws. Offer a fully compostable (paper?) or reusable option to plastic straws, OR get rid of straws completely.

\*Note: "Bio-Plast Biased & Compostable Plastic" are not compostable. No plastic requires a commercial high-heat composting facility, and will not break down in a landfill. Check with your local Waste Management agency.

Sign: \_\_\_\_\_

(Signature)  
Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Business Website: \_\_\_\_\_

## STEP 5: TRACK YOUR PROGRESS & NEXT STEPS

Remember the list of local businesses you had at Step 3?

The goal is to move as many of these businesses as possible into category 3. Think about the best way to keep track of which businesses are at which stage.

Once you have a couple of positive examples and stories, many more will jump on the bandwagon. Don't forget to give these businesses a shout out through social media channels so that they begin to share this positive message with both their customers and with other businesses.

At this stage, you may be ready to expand the geographical scope of your work by talking to more bars and restaurants in your town or city. If you've covered all the businesses in your area, you may be ready to move onto the next stage of making your community plastic-free.

If so, congratulations and check out [ChangeX.org](http://ChangeX.org) and [plasticpollutioncoalition.org](http://plasticpollutioncoalition.org) for more inspiration and actionable ideas to reduce plastic pollution in your community.



Read Abigail's story of starting a Last Plastic Straw campaign in Ely, Minnesota on our blog - <https://www.changex.org/blog/changing-minds-on-plastic-use-in-ely-minnesota/>

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