CDSA Manual for Members, Working Groups, and Committees

Chicago Democratic Socialists of America
July 2020
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Contents

Introduction

This manual is intended to give you some guidance and useful tools for organizing with and within the Chicago Chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America. The manual is divided into three parts: first, a summary of the chapter structure that should give you some idea of how the Chapter works, how decisions are made, how leadership is determined and who can help you with what. Second, a guideline and summary for the types of activities the Chapter engages in, and how working groups, committees and individual members can interact with the Chapter's structure to make sure that our political work is accountable to the membership, well-resourced and positioned to succeed, and inclusive. Third is guidance on our best practices for record-keeping, security, transparency and accountability measures for sub-bodies within CDSA. This section includes some sample forms and criteria to help guide you in your organizing work and make sure you can develop your organizing plans to meet the Chapter's criteria and objectives.

Quick Tips for Getting Involved in Chicago DSA

- Get on the Chapter's Slack! Download the Slack app and email communications@chicagodsa.org
- Look for an event or meeting that interests you! Check out the events tab on ChicagoDSA.org
- Attend a New Member Orientation or one of the informal coffee hours! These happen monthly on the last Wednesday of the month. Keep an eye on the calendar for these!
- Sign up for the Rose Buddy program for new members to get paired with a CDSA mentor: http://bit.ly/getrosebuddy
- Attend a Socialist Night School, engage in socialist political debates through a Red Square Series debate event, or read Midwest Socialist. Check out the calendar or contact the Political Education Coordinator, politicaleducation@chicagodsa.org
- Join one of our chapter's current organizing and political campaigns, currently DefundCPD, Lift the Ban (on rent control), and DemocratizeComEd. Visit our website to find an upcoming campaign event, or contact our campaigns coordinator at campaigns@chicagodsa.org
- Be sure to read the weekly digest, This Week in Chicago DSA, that comes to your email inbox from the Communications Committee. Not getting it? Email: communications@chicagodsa.org
- Observe an Executive Committee Meeting or attend a General Chapter Meeting! Executive Committees are held on the second Saturday of the month--check the Chapter calendar for dates.
- Black, Indigenous, and Socialists of Color: We welcome you to join the Afro-Socialist and Socialist of Color Caucus (AfroSOC)! Check out the #afro-soc channel on the chapter slack
- Want to propose an event, campaign or other project? Contact the Co-Chairs or Secretary for guidance, co-chair-1@chicagodsa.org, co-chair-2@chicagodsa.org, secretary@chicagodsa.org
- Learn about the Chapter and read our Constitution and Bylaws

Part I: Chicago DSA Chapter Leadership and Personnel

The Chicago chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America ("CDSA") is organized and incorporated as an Illinois not for profit, 501(c)(4). This tax designation limits the type of political activities we can engage in to educational and political advocacy activities, and limits how much direct election work we can engage in on a partisan basis. Violating the law and regulations regarding our 501(c)(4) status can have severe repercussions for CDSA, so if you ever have any questions about whether some activity is permissible--for example, if it involves candidates for office--be sure to ask someone in elected chapter leadership.

Membership and General Meetings

CDSA is organized as a membership-run democratic organization. This means that members of CDSA are the ultimate political decision-makers for the Chapter. The membership elects officers, adopts policies, rules and its bylaws, and otherwise governs itself. The membership can also decide to delegate certain decisions or keep certain decisions for itself.

To be a member, someone must be current (paid up) in national DSA membership dues, and live within the geographic boundaries of CDSA as defined by the national DSA. Dues are paid to national DSA, a portion of which comes back to our chapter. The current jurisdiction for the chapter is here. All members have the right to participate in CDSA activities, run for office, and vote, with some minor limitations. The membership meets at least four times a year: three times in General Meetings, and once in an Annual Convention. At a General Meeting, the membership reviews and votes to approve or overturn decisions of the Executive Committee (more on them in a minute), adopt new policies, and engage in political education. At the Annual Convention, new officers are elected. Generally speaking, the membership "does business" at one of these four meetings. The General Meetings (and Convention) are the "highest body" of the Chapter. These meetings are decision-making, and so are run according to Robert's Rules of Order, which makes sure that there basic procedural guidelines all members can use. All other bodies within CDSA are subject to review, approval, and discipline of the membership meeting in a General Meeting or Convention.

Chapter Bylaws

In June of 2018, the membership adopted new bylaws, which can be found here. Bylaws are rules adopted by an organization to govern its overall and day-to-day operation. Generally speaking, an organization has to operate within the rules in its bylaws; any action taken outside of the rules set by the

bylaws are considered void. So for example, our current bylaws require that 10% of membership be present at a General Meeting for any vote to be taken. This is called a "quorum." If fewer than 10% are present, any vote taken could be considered void, meaning of no effect.

Because the membership is the highest body of authority, they can always amend or change the bylaws--but there are special rules for this, which are in the bylaws themselves. This is to make sure there is stability, and to protect the membership from sudden changes.

The bylaws also create a number of bodies, like branches and committees, and elected positions, and define what their authorities and responsibilities are.

The Branches

The Bylaws provide for territorial branches, defined by zip codes, and non-territorial branches, which can be created based around significant organizing communities or institutions: for example CDSA has a "Labor Branch." Currently, there are four territorial branches: West Cook, North Side Red Line, North Side Blue Line, and South Side. The responsibilities of the branches are defined by Article VII, Section 5 of the Bylaws: "Branches are responsible for promoting and implementing CDSA policies and programs, conducting their internal affairs in a democratic manner, abiding by the processes and policies of CDSA and promoting diversity of participation and leadership that reflects Chicago's working class. Branches shall hold regular meetings and encourage democratic participation in the operations of the Chapter."
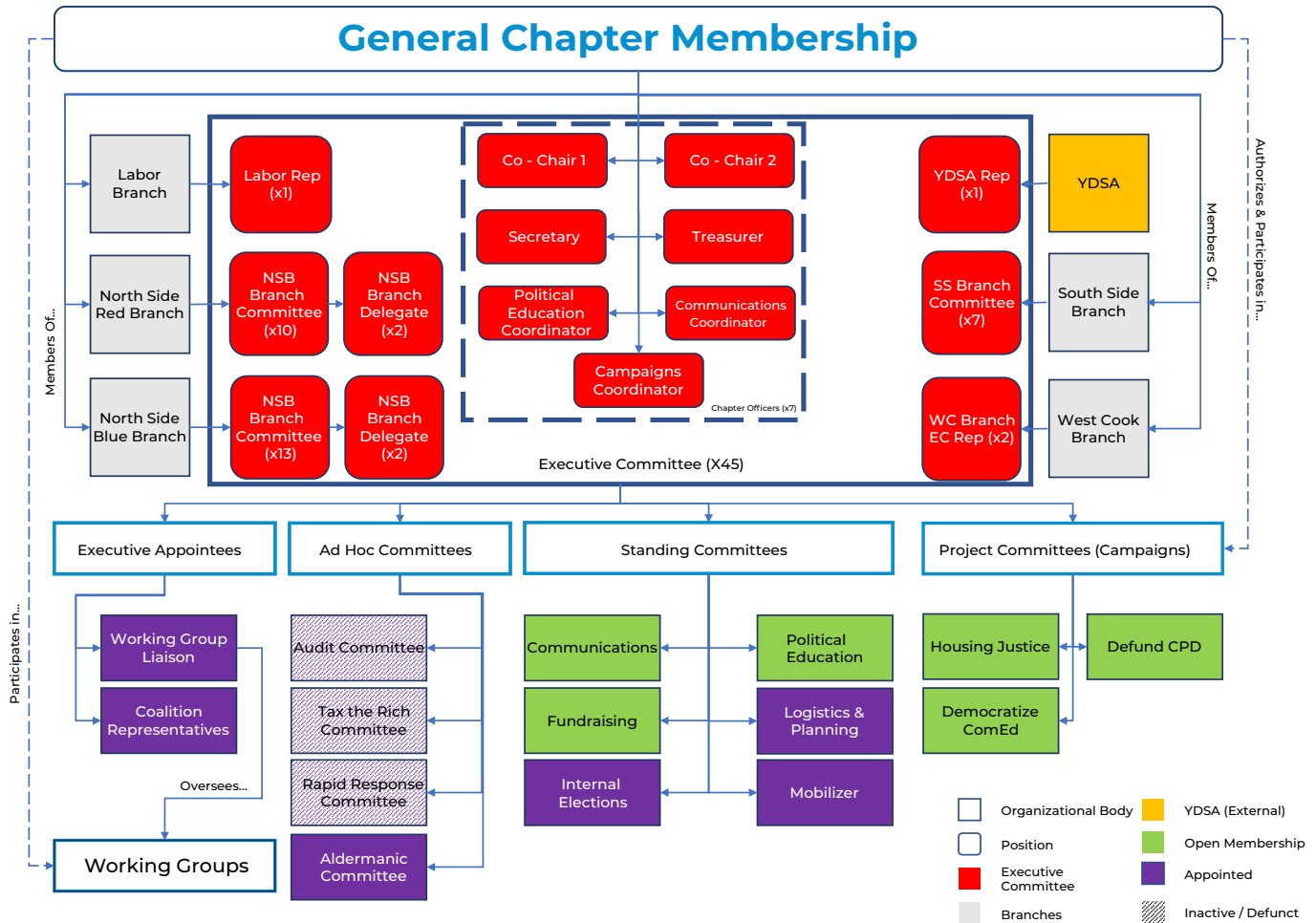
For branches defined by territory, members in that branch elect steering committees, which organize branch meetings and serve as delegates to the Executive Committee. For "non-territorial branches," one delegate may be elected by the members of that branch to serve as a delegate to the Executive Committee. See Article VII, Section 4.

The Executive Committee

Along with the membership acting through a Meeting, the Executive Committee ("EC") is the highest administrative and policy-making body of the Chapter. The EC is composed of seven officers — *two Co-Chairs, a Secretary, a Treasurer, a Communications Coordinator, a Campaigns Coordinator, and a Political Education Coordinator* — and delegates from the branches. Territorial branches are given a number of delegates based on their size; non-territorial branches may send one delegate elected by the branch membership. The chapter officers are elected to one-year terms by the full membership voting in secret-ballot elections, typically at the Annual Convention.

The EC is a very large committee representative of the full membership. It is responsible for organizing General Meetings, but just as importantly, is responsible for day-to-day operation of the chapter and making sure the Chapter's campaigns and priorities are being carried out in a reasonable and

effective way. The chapter's seven officers are elected by the entire membership and are along with the EC the political leadership of the chapter. They along with the EC are also responsible for making sure the Chapter is complying with any relevant laws, regulations and national DSA policies.

General Chapter Membership

Members Of...

Authorizes & Participates In...

Members Of...

Labor Branch	Labor Rep (x1)
North Side Red Branch	NSB Branch Committee (x10) — NSB Branch Delegate (x2)
North Side Blue Branch	NSB Branch Committee (x13) — NSB Branch Delegate (x2)

Chapter Officers (x7)
- Co - Chair 1
- Co - Chair 2
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Political Education Coordinator
- Communications Coordinator
- Campaigns Coordinator

YDSA Rep (x1)	YDSA
SS Branch Committee (x7)	South Side Branch
WC Branch EC Rep (x2)	West Cook Branch

Executive Committee (X45)

Participates in...

Executive Appointees
- Working Group Liaison
- Coalition Representatives

Oversees...

Working Groups

Ad Hoc Committees
- Audit Committee
- Tax the Rich Committee
- Rapid Response Committee
- Aldermanic Committee

Standing Committees
- Communications
- Fundraising
- Internal Elections
- Political Education
- Logistics & Planning
- Mobilizer

Project Committees (Campaigns)
- Housing Justice
- Democratize ComEd
- Defund CPD

Legend:
- Organizational Body
- Position
- Executive Committee
- Branches
- YDSA (External)
- Open Membership
- Appointed
- Inactive / Defunct

Current Officers of CDSA and their Roles

Current Co-Chairs:
Robin Peterson, she/her

Melinda Bunnage, she/her
> See Article V, Sec. 2. The Co-Chairs, at least one of whom must not be cis-male identifying, serve one-year terms and are the official spokespeople for the Chapter, responsible for administering the Executive Committee, and the presiding officers for all EC meetings and General Meetings/Conventions. co-chair-1@chicagodsa.org; co-chair-2@chicagodsa.org. One-year terms

Current Secretary:
Will Bloom, he/him
> See Article V, Sec. 3. The Secretary is the chief administrative officer of the chapter, is responsible for recording minutes and supervising minutes, agendas, reports, and membership lists. The secretary also plays a role in supervising internal elections. Contact the Secretary for questions about membership, meetings, etc.
>
> secretary@chicagodsa.org. One-year terms.

Current Treasurer:
Matthew Cason, he/him
> See Article V, Sec. 4. The treasurer is the chief financial officer of the chapter, and is responsible for managing the chapter's funds, ensuring compliance with tax
>
> rules, and facilitating fundraising. treasurer@chicagodsa.org. One year terms.

Current Pol Ed Coordinator
Sveta Stoytcheva, she/her
> Article V, Sec. 5. The Political Education Coordinator is responsible for political education and research functions of the chapter. This includes forums, study groups, and the development and curating of materials that may be useful in developing the institutional knowledge of the chapter. Materials used in your committee to train or educate members or the public should be shared with the
>
> Pol Ed Coordinator. politicaleducation@chicagodsa.org. One year terms.

Current Communications Coordinator:
Sarah Hurd, she/her
> Article V, Sec. 6. The Communications Coordinator is responsible for coordinating the internal and external communications functions of the chapter, including use of digital and social media tools, the publication of the Midwest Socialist magazine, and the chapter calendar. communications@chicagodsa.org. One year terms.

Current Campaigns Coordinator:
Sarah Richmond, she/her
> `Article V, Sec. 7. The Campaigns Coordinator is responsible coordinating the activity of the Projects Committees and supporting and assisting campaigns of the chapter. campaigns@chicagodsa.org. One year terms.

Other than the Membership, the EC has the sole authority to approve a project, campaign, or event, that requires use of chapter resources (membership lists, the chapter general fund, social media, the goodwill/name of the organization) and publicize it to the membership or to the public. The EC may choose to delegate that authority, so long as the membership or bylaws permit. This is important to understand for your work, and so it is important to understand why.

Because the EC is directly elected and directly accountable to the Membership, it has the most direct responsibility for interpreting and implementing the Membership's democratic decisions. Any work which reaches the public or which bears CDSA's name needs to fit with the chapter's goals, policies, priorities and values. Because the membership cannot be called upon to vote every time something comes up, the EC has the authority to act in between meetings. Without this, any group of members could engage in work in the chapter's name, including with other organizations, or communicate with the public, on behalf of the organization, without any accountability to the membership as a whole.

The EC not only makes policy decisions, but it has the responsibility to implement decisions – as such it has to make sure that a campaign or project actually happens. This means the EC has to make decisions about the capacity of the organization to actually undertake a particular campaign or project.

Example considerations could be *are there enough volunteers? Is there enough money? Are there scheduling or other logistical conflicts? Will participation in one campaign harm the organization's other commitments? Does the particular project fit in with the organization's socialist principles? etc.*

Let's look at how this is done!

Standing Committees, Project Committees, and Ad-Hoc Committees

CDSA is a volunteer organization with a small budget and no paid staff. All of our work, and therefore our political power, comes from the volunteer work done by members. This covers everything from keeping the organization's books in order, to drafting emails, keeping lists up to date, booking space, to canvassing, marching and organizing. Approving a campaign or endorsing an initiative means little if the organization does not smartly use its resources and plugs people into important work efficiently. If we endorse a campaign with an organizational partner but don't show up or fail our duties, we damage a potentially important relationship; if members are excited about a campaign but find it constantly under-promoted or understaffed, they may become disengaged. CDSA cannot do everything at once: and the EC is responsible for making sure priorities are prioritized and match our ability to act.

Generally speaking, if a project, campaign, or event requires use of

chapter resources, focus of the organization, and represents a significant interaction with the public or other organizations, that work requires a line of accountability and transparency to the membership. To avoid bureaucratic hurdles, the EC will either assign the work to a standing committee, or create a Project Committee or Ad-Hoc Committee for purposes of organizing and implementing that effort. For smaller scale efforts, the work may be done by the working group or other sub-group of the organization.

The Bylaws create several standing committees, which can be found in Article VIII. These are committees which must exist, and include the Communications Committee, the Political Education and Policy Committee, a Fundraising Committee and others. These Committees are responsible for implementing the political vision of the membership, and are accountable to the Executive Committee and through them the membership.

There are also "ad hoc committees," basically subcommittees, which the EC can create for the purposes of organizing or implementing a specific, short-term, effort. These ad hoc committees must be limited in size and time of existence, and are intended to take on specific projects for short periods-- for example, planning a major event like the annual Debs Parsons fundraising dinner. Ad Hoc Committees can also be used to help organize short-duration campaigns.

Working Groups

Working groups are defined by Article VIII, Section 4 of the bylaws: "Working groups may be self-organized and certified by the Executive Committee, or established at the initiation of [the] Executive Committee." Working groups are groups of members, focused on a specific issue, issue area, or other common interests. Working groups must be run democratically, keep records, and hold themselves open to all members.
Because of their size and lack of formal connection to the membership structure, working groups may be limited in terms of their ability to execute larger-scale efforts. So when a campaign requires chapter resources, extensive contact with members, the public or other organizations, or in general an increase in the level or priority, those efforts should be brought to the membership, or the EC, to be elevated to a chapter project.
In Part II, we will discuss in more detail when a campaign, project or effort requires approval by the EC or membership, the best ways to plan a project and how it can be presented to the EC and/or membership, and the best structure to implement it.

Project Committees ("Campaigns")

The EC or the membership can also choose to create a Project Committee. A Project Committee is intended to take on larger-scale, chapter-wide and public facing campaigns of greater intensity and requiring more serious commitment and coordination. The Project Committee is intended to

implement campaigns that represent a priority for the Chapter. When a working group, the membership in a meeting, or individual members brings a proposed campaign or initiative to the EC or the membership, a Project Committee can be created to implement it. The proposal should meet the following campaigns criteria we've put together here - in sum, it should be comprehensive, and include details as to why the campaign is important, specific benchmarks for success and progress, and details as to who will help organize and coordinate the campaign, the resources it will require, and a plan for implementation. Project Committees should generally only be created for large-scale initiatives that will become a top priority for members.

The Executive Committee and the Membership has adopted "Campaigns Criteria" to consider when creating a chapter campaign or otherwise pursuing a campaign of the chapter. These criteria were adopted to help the membership have a productive political debate about whether to create a campaign and make it a priority.

There are many issues, events or projects that members may support; but of course the chapter cannot pursue everything and anything, and not all projects or campaigns may fit within the strategic vision of the Chapter. Here are some of the elements of the Campaigns Criteria:

Campaigns Goals and Criteria

GOAL 1: The campaign should build working class power
- The campaign should move the working class to action
- The campaign should grow DSA's relationship to the working class in Chicago
- The campaign should challenge capitalist power structures in Chicago

GOAL 2: The campaign should develop DSA as an organization
- The campaign should bring new people into DSA, developing new socialists across the city
- The campaign should equip members with the skills and knowledge to effectively organize
- The campaign should introduce and develop DSA as a key political force among the larger scene of Chicago progressive organizations

GOAL 3: The campaign should create opportunities for political education
- The campaign should move our membership left

GOAL 4: The campaign should have winnable objectives
- It should articulate incremental goals that will engage members and build power along the way

Part II: Chapter Activities, Endorsements, Approvals and Planning

So you, your committee, or your working group wants to take on a project, plan an event or series of events, hold a fundraiser, or organize some other activity. What is the very first thing you should do?

Well, first, you should ensure that your working group members or other members buy into the idea and are ready and willing to put in the work to get it done. This means discussing the plan, working out the details, and taking a vote--all of this requires record keeping, which we will discuss in Part III--to make sure that the plan is thoughtful and ready for execution.

What then? It can seem complicated or convoluted to determine what exactly needs to be approved by the EC or the membership, what resources may be necessary, and what support the EC or its officers should be supplying.

Types of projects

What type of projects require approval of the membership or the EC? When should campaigns be elevated to the chapter level? What type of structure should you request to make sure your project is effective?

In general, to ensure accountability, transparency, and to protect the chapter and membership, any project in which CDSA's name is used with the public needs to be endorsed by the Executive Committee or the membership in a meeting. A proposal brought to the EC or the membership needs varying levels of specificity depending on the nature and intensity of the project. Projects which members or a working group wish to be promoted to the membership also should be endorsed or reviewed by the EC, in order to ensure there are no conflicts and that there are sufficient chapter resources to promote and accomplish the project's purposes, and that the project is in line with the organization's political program and vision.

Consider the following questions:
1. Who do you want to help staff the project, and who do you want to show up to it?
2. Will the project be geared towards the public--will there be a lot of contact with non-members whether through canvassing, media, tabling, or otherwise?
3. Will there be just one event, or several?
4. Do you want or need to partner up with outside organizations? Could that create a potential conflict, or an opportunity?
5. Will you need to use the membership list? Will you need to regularly communicate with the whole chapter, or through the chapter's media channels (i.e., emails, Facebook, Twitter, etc.)?
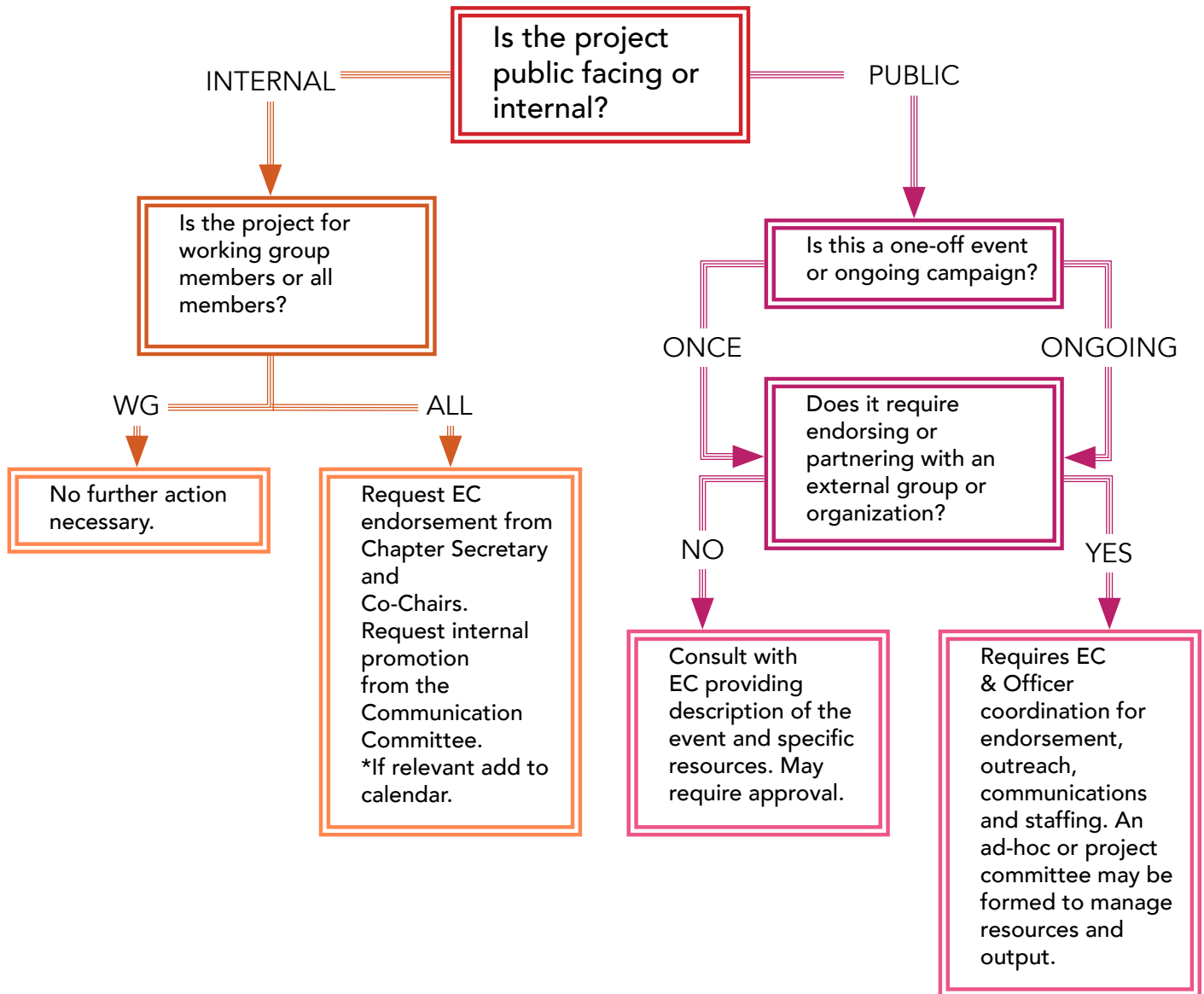
6. Will you need to manage data--for example, track your contacts from door knocking, or monitor results from social media promotion etc.?
7. Will you need to spend money beyond what you can reasonably fundraise as a group and wish to request some from the chapter?

The general practice is this: If this project requires extensive contact with the public over multiple events, should include as many members as possible as volunteers, or requires use of the chapter's membership lists and media channels, it should receive an endorsement from the EC/membership, and likely should be elevated to an ad hoc committee or project committee.
If it is a mostly-internally facing single event (with incidental contact with the public) and will not require more than a single communication with the full membership, it may not require an endorsement, although a good practice would be to communicate with the Communications, Political Education and Campaigns Coordinators, and with the Secretary, to avoid any scheduling conflicts and to get any material support necessary. Also to avoid scheduling conflicts please check the chapter calendar for other events.
In Part IV, we will provide some checklists and forms that should make this process much easier.

Project and Campaigns Flow Chart

Is the project public facing or internal?

INTERNAL

PUBLIC

Is the project for working group members or all members?

Is this a one-off event or ongoing campaign?

WG

ALL

ONCE

ONGOING

No further action necessary.

Request EC endorsement from Chapter Secretary and Co-Chairs. Request internal promotion from the Communication Committee. *If relevant add to calendar.

Does it require endorsing or partnering with an external group or organization?

NO

YES

Consult with EC providing description of the event and specific resources. May require approval.

Requires EC & Officer coordination for endorsement, outreach, communications and staffing. An ad-hoc or project committee may be formed to manage resources and output.

Part III: Best Practices for Working Groups, Projects, Committees and Campaigns

It is easy to join CDSA: just sign up online and pay the dues. But we don't just want members who join and aren't heard from again. We always want to be creating engaged socialist organizers. This requires getting to know each other, learning each others' interests and skills, and developing one another as socialists and organizers. This can't happen unless the chapter knows when members are getting engaged, and the type of work that keeps people engaged and helps them feel supported and heard.

Also because it is so easy to join, the Chapter potentially faces risks if there are no institutional records of who is attending meetings and how decisions are being made. This is a security issue as well as an accountability issue--the membership should know if any sub-grouping of the organization is operating in a non-democratic, hostile or otherwise uncomradely way, or in a way that is not in line with the membership's political vision.

For these reasons, it is critical that we keep (simple) records: who is attending meetings, what are the agendas and minutes of those meetings, and what are the matters voted on and what were the results of those votes.

Announce Your Meetings

Events, groups, and projects of the chapter are open to all members of CDSA. All meetings of working groups and committees should be planned well in advance, and a notice sent to the Communications Committee, via an online form--to be found here, so that participation is always open. The time, place, and duration of the meeting should be clear. If you are having trouble finding a place for your meeting, at a minimum announce the time and duration. Someone from the EC will be willing to help you find a location--contact the Co-Chairs and the Secretary. Do not assume the CDSA office or the CDSA teleconferencing account will be available. (You can request the Chapter's Zoom here for approved activities).

When you submit your meeting to the Communications Committee, try to include details of the event's agenda--and if it is ready, the agenda itself.

If there is a meeting, or you are planning some other event for members--you must notify the membership. CDSA has no private clubs; anything organized under CDSA's name must give all members the opportunity to attend and participate in the meeting or event, with only minor and specific exceptions. So before scheduling something, always check the chapter's calendar.

Agendas and Minutes

You should prepare an agenda--a short description of what is to be discussed, and for how long--for each meeting, and try to post it with your meeting announcement. The agenda does not need to be super detailed, but it should be written and distributed before the meeting, so people can prioritize attending if important matters are to be discussed. Generally speaking, something not appearing on the agenda can be discussed (it is a good idea to include a "new matters" or "new business" section with some time for discussion) but you should avoid voting on anything that wasn't announced well ahead of time. In general people should have more than a few days to look over, read, and ask questions about a proposal they are going to be asked to debate and vote on.

Minutes are simple records of what was discussed, and the tallies of any votes (or motions to delay a vote or cancel a vote). You can include a record of important points made and by whom, but you do not need to take detailed notes, unless you want them for later reference.

Below are examples of agendas and minutes; they can be very simple. As you see below, minutes can just be based on the agenda. Keep copies of agendas and minutes somewhere secure--the Secretary maintains a file folder on a shared drive in which agendas and minutes should be uploaded at least once a month. It is critical that the organization has records it can refer as to when decisions were made and whether they were made democratically.

Sample Agenda

Anti-Racism Working Group Meeting
June 30, 2020 7:00 PM

Introductions (5 minutes)

Old Business (30 minutes)
Report back from Project X (10 minutes)
Report back from Project Y (5 minutes)
Discussion on projects X and Y (15 minutes)

New Business (45 minutes)
Proposal to Create Project Z (link to project proposal) (30 minutes)
Open floor for discussion (15 minutes)
Scheduling next meeting

Adjourn

Sample Minutes

Anti-Racism Working Group Meeting
June 30, 2020 7:00 PM

Introductions (5 minutes)
In attendance: Ilene S, Michael A, etc etc

Old Business (30 minutes)
Report back from Project X (10 minutes)
Ilene gave report back. No questions.
Report back from Project Y (5 minutes)
Michael gave report back.
Ninos asked what turnout was like. Michael report 30 members turned out.

Discussion on projects X and Y (15 minutes)
Members discussed whether to renew projects or to fold them into one another.
Shami suggested and moved that projects be consolidated, and that project leaders bring a proposal next month to do so. Edgar seconded. Susan spoke against.
Motion voted on and passed, 12 in favor 8 opposed.

New Business (45 minutes)
Proposal to Recommend Project Z to Executive Committee (link to project proposal) (30 minutes)
Maria gave a presentation on Project Z, and moved it be adopted. Lucy seconded.
Alan spoke in favor.
Hector spoke in favor.
Nineveh spoke against.
Julie moved to close debate and go to vote, passed.
Motion passed, 16 in favor and 4 opposed. Proposal will be sent to Executive Committee.

Open floor for discussion (15 minutes)
No new matters.

Scheduling next meeting
Next meeting scheduled for July 30, 7PM

Adjourn

Sign-In Forms

Making sure people sign in is crucial. The chapter needs to know how member engagement is working, who is coming (and coming back--or not) and who is participating in making decisions. Without that, the organization is losing invaluable knowledge about how to improve our engagement process and operations. Sign-ins should be done on-line. Please email the Secretary (secretary@chicagodsa.org) to ask for a form to use. We can provide a simple on-line form for your working group that you can use for every meeting-- because the entries are time-stamped, you don't need to create a new sign-in sheet for each meeting. A sample form can be found here. You and the Secretary will have access to the sign-in records. If you cannot get an on-line form up and running for a particular meeting, take sign-ins manually and enter them yourself, later.

Democratic Rules of Order

All groups in CDSA are required to be run democratically and with regular elections. These don't need to be particularly complicated; working groups don't need bylaws, for example. A simple mission statement and set of rules with some basic rules of order are fine. They should include a basic mission statement, preferred dates and times of meetings, create a few positions for a small steering committee with defined (or rotating) duties, set a date (or range of dates) for elections, and that should be sufficient.

We encourage all groups to use procedural rules for debates and votes if the working group meeting is of sufficient size. There is no point using something like Robert's Rules of Order for a meeting of a dozen or fewer people. However, a simplified version, like Rusty's Rules of Order, which you can find here, can be very useful. We encourage this because it gives some predictability to how debates go, but also because they provide good practice for members, since Robert's Rules are used for EC meetings and General Meetings.

Progressive stack, where a designated person "keeps stack" (takes the name of the person who wants to speak, after that person raises their hand) and gives priority to persons who have not yet spoken or are traditionally excluded from formal structures, is also advisable in larger-sized meetings--say for example, a dozen or more.

Chicago DSA has also incorporated the rules of Feminist Process for group discussion into our bylaws. You can find them listed here, and as Addendum I to the Chapter Bylaws. We strongly urge these be used, and a shorthand of them read out at the beginning of each working group meeting and including them on agendas, space permitting.. Make this a habit and when time allows, explain why we have adopted these rules. Feminist process is a key element of CDSA's work, not only because they help to ensure full participation for all members, but because the principles of feminist process develop our skills as organizers: listening actively, encouraging participation of our comrades, and self-reflection.

Because it is an important point, we want to reiterate it: the guidelines of Feminist Process for discussion are not just about manners, they are a substantive part of CDSA's work, and an essential part of the political education of ourselves and our members.

The Rules for Feminist Process are not rules of etiquette--we assume all comrades in leadership will be polite. The Rules for Feminist Process are substantive because they require us all to develop our skills of active listening, encouraging participation from one another, encouraging self-reflection and critical thinking, recognizing the social conditions we live in, and encouraging habits of comradliness--learning how to apologize and accept apologies freely, so that whatever our disputes, we can dust each other off and get ready to work together again. We emphasize the Rules of Feminist Process for all Chicago DSA meetings because we want to make more and better socialists--the experience in CDSA so far is that these guidelines have improved the operation of our meetings and developed the skills of our members.