





STL DSA

HANDBOOK



TABLE OF CONTENTS



<i>What is Democratic Socialism?</i>	6
<i>What is DSA</i>	7
<i>National DSA Organizational Structure</i>	9
National Political Committee (NPC) and Staff	9
Diagram/Chart of Structure	11
National DSA Priorities	14
Medicare for All (M4A)	14
Green New Deal (GND)	15
National Electoral Organizing	17
Democratic Socialist Labor Commission	18
DSA Bylaws	19
<i>Chapter Structure</i>	20
STL DSA Bylaws	20

Membership	23
Committees	24
Working Groups	24
Caucuses	25
How to Create a Committee, Working Group or Caucus	26
How to Get Elected	26
How to Bring Up a Resolution	28
Robert's Rules of Order	29
“So-and-so has the floor.”	30
“I motion that we...”	30
“Second!”	31
Consideration of the Motion	31
“I put forward the motion to vote.”	33
Code of Conduct and Community	34
Community Agreements	35
Code of Conduct	40
The Grievance Process	45
How Do You DSA?	48
Join a Priority Group, Committee, or Working Group	48
Attend a Meeting or Event	49
Share DSA Content	50

Pay Dues and/or Make Other Financial Contributions	51
<i>Regular Meetings</i>	53
Monthly Meeting	53
Committee and Working Group Meetings	54
Executive Committee Meetings	55
<i>Staying in Touch</i>	56
Emails	56
Slack	56
STLDSA.ORG	57
<i>Glossary</i>	58





WHAT IS DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM?

“Democratic socialists believe that both the economy and society should be run democratically – to meet public needs, not to make profits for a few. To achieve a more just society, many structures of our government and economy must be radically transformed through greater economic and social democracy so that ordinary Americans can participate in the many decisions that affect our lives.

Democracy and socialism go hand in hand. All over the world, wherever the idea of democracy has taken root, the vision of socialism has taken root, as well – everywhere but in the United States. Because of this, many false ideas about socialism have developed in the US.”

-Democratic Socialists of America

WHAT IS DSA?

The Democratic Socialists of America is not a political party, such as the Democratic and Republican parties; but rather a political and activist organization. The largest socialist organization in the United States, DSA now has more than 85,000 members.

DSA believes that both the economy and civil society should be run democratically by working people with the goal of meeting human needs instead of generating profits for the very few. Through chapters in both local communities and campuses, DSA members are involved in a number of key areas across the country, including direct action, legislative work, and fights for reforms to benefit and empower working people. DSA believes

these tactics and many more will be required to create a free and liberated society.

DSA is completely member-funded. This allows DSA's work to be led only by its members who all share the same mission of creating a society where all people have the necessary resources to live to their fullest potential. Through this independence from establishment politicians and corporate donors, DSA avoids any outside directives or threats to funding. Instead, we build further solidarity among our member base and stay focused on realizing our vision of radical democracy.



NATIONAL DSA ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

DSA aims to operate on a power structure that is as non-hierarchical as possible. Therefore, the national DSA leadership does not set the agenda for local chapters; nor does it attempt to impose a uniform political ideology upon all of its members. Instead, local chapters are responsible for democratically deciding their own structure, bylaws, and annual goals.

NATIONAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE (NPC) AND STAFF

The National Political Committee (NPC) is DSA's national leadership structure. The NPC consists of 16 members, of which eight slots are reserved for women and five

for people of color. The NPC is responsible for implementing the broad campaigns that DSA members vote on bi-annually, which can take the form of chartering local DSA chapters, creating task forces and committees or providing the national DSA staff with guidance on the day-to-day operations of the organization. The NPC includes the two co-chairs of the Young Democratic Socialists of America (YDSA) Coordinating Committee.

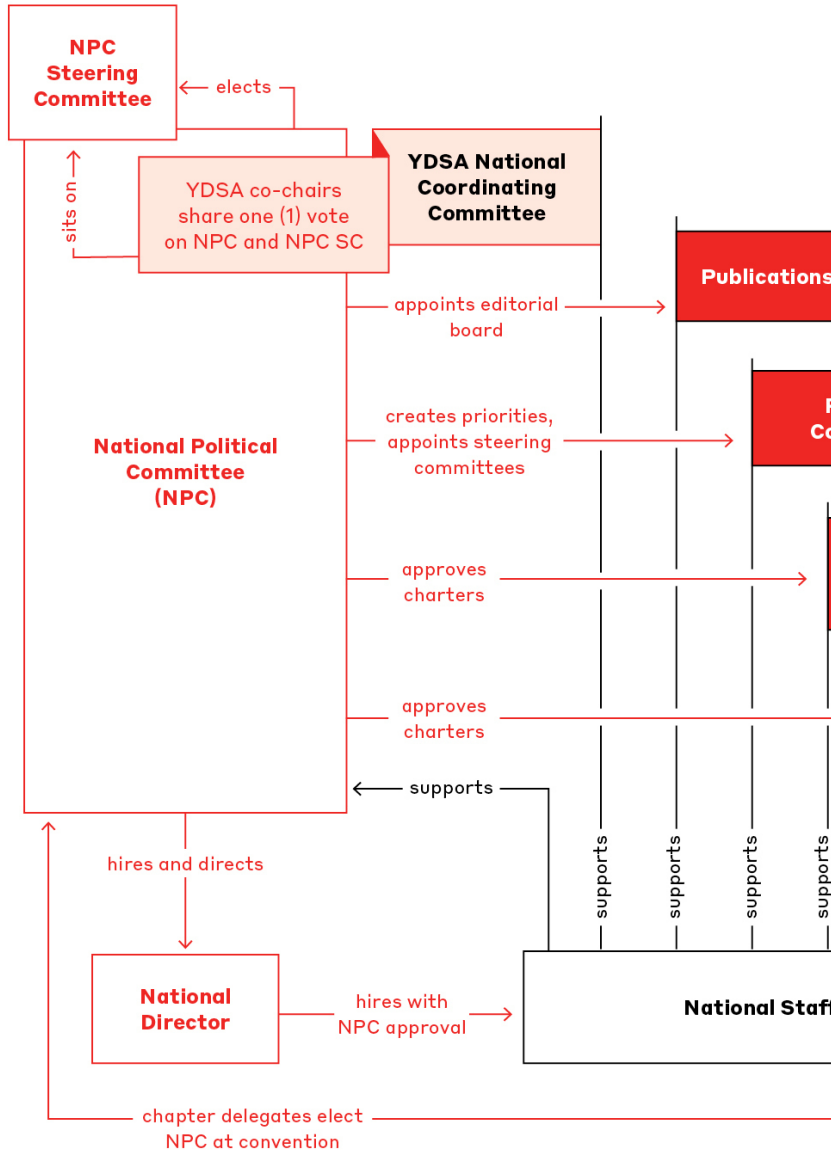
Out of the 16 members of the NPC, five are elected to serve on the Steering Committee, which spearheads specific national campaigns and projects. Currently, the goals of the Steering Committee are (1) to advocate for and develop DSA's platform around Medicare for All, (2) to expand DSA's relationship with labor groups, and (3) to develop DSA's electoral strategy. At DSA's national level, there is

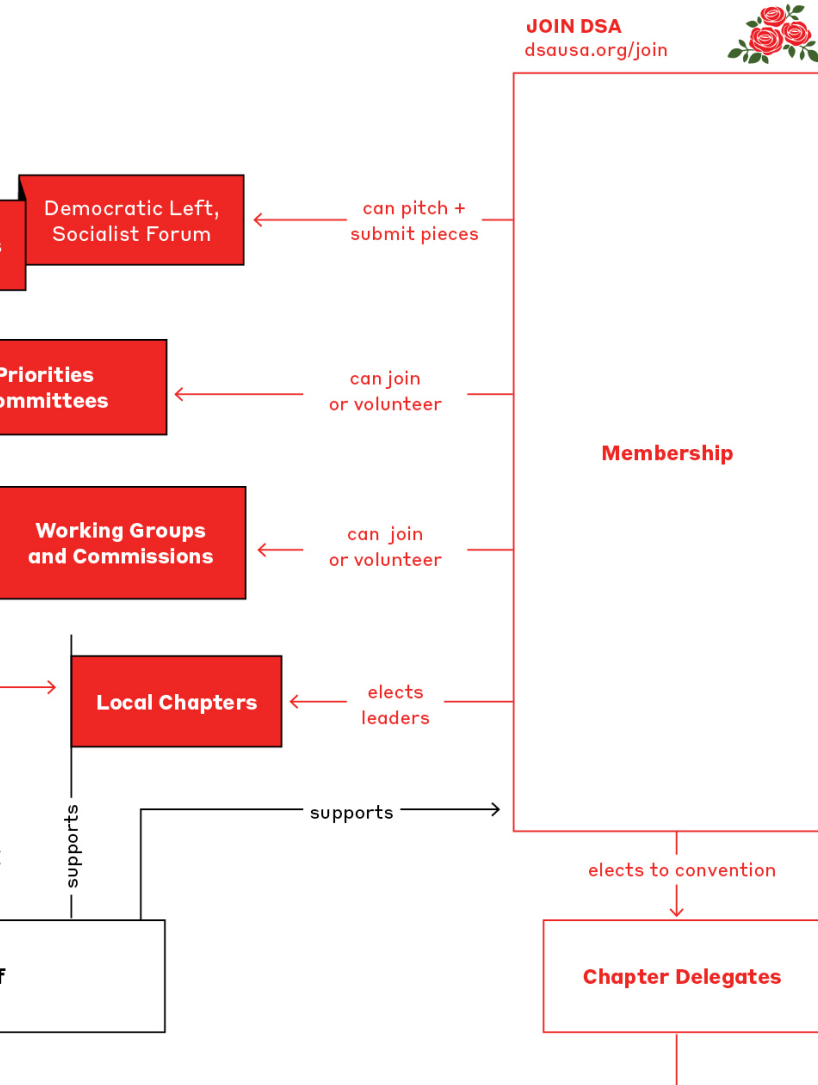


How DSA Operates

ELECTED DSA ROLES

HOW MOST PEOPLE





also national staff that carries out a variety of roles important to the smooth functioning of the organization as a whole. These roles include:

- following through on the basic day-to-day operations of the national organization
- ensuring national committee members' compliance with regulatory rules and bylaws
- supporting local DSA chapters
- coordinating national leadership trainings
- coordinating and publishing DSA's magazine, Democratic Left

Aside from providing loose guidance on the goals of the organization as a whole, the national structure serves mostly to support the activities of the 181 local chapters.

DSA members can find the contact information for all NPC members and National Staff members at the following link:

<https://www.dsausa.org/about-us/structure/##staff>

NATIONAL DSA PRIORITIES

DSA also sets national priorities for all chapters to contribute. As of the national convention of 2019, these priorities are as follows.

MEDICARE FOR ALL (M4A)

We need a healthcare system that prioritizes the health of working-class Americans over the profits of insurance companies and their billionaire executives. We need a single, universal system with comprehensive coverage that is free at the point of service.



This includes a Single Payer Health Program where:

- Everyone will be covered by one health insurance program, regardless of income.
- There's comprehensive coverage for all services requiring a medical professional, including vision and dental.
- There's free care at the point of service.
- All US residents, including non-citizens, are covered.
- A jobs initiative exists and includes severance for those affected by the transition to a government-run healthcare system.

GREEN NEW DEAL (GND)

DSA takes seriously the imminent threat of climate change, mass extinction, and loss of biodiversity happening on our planet. To combat this global catastrophe, DSA



supports and advocates for the Green New Deal. This program seeks to:

- Fully decarbonize the economy by 2030.
- Democratize control over major energy systems and resources.
- Center the working class in a just transition to this new economy.
- Decommodify survival by guaranteeing wages and basic needs.
- Reinvent our communities to serve both people and planet over profit.
- Demilitarize, decolonize, and strive for a future of international solidarity and cooperation.
- Redistribute resources from the worst polluters through progressive taxes on both the rich and corporations.

NATIONAL ELECTORAL ORGANIZING

While DSA will prioritize social movement work and public socialist education, we also recognize that who holds legislative power affects the possibilities for democratic social change. We also understand that for many people open to radical politics their first political experiences come through electoral politics. In a world of big-money politics, DSA's electoral capacity is mostly tied to the volunteer power of our chapters.

Thus, the convention commits the NPC to expand the work of the National Electoral Committee in supporting chapters' efforts to develop and run viable openly socialist candidates for office (either in Democratic primaries or as independents). The NEC will also work with other relevant national committees and working groups, the national training team and chapter mentors to share electoral "best practices" of DSA locals and ways in which electoral political activity can build DSA.

DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST LABOR COMMISSION

The Democratic Socialist Labor Commission (DSLCL) is a body of DSA'ers active in the labor movement, whether as union members and stewards, union staff, workers center activists, union officers, labor journalists, union retirees, students in labor solidarity groups, labor-oriented intellectuals, or in any other kind of role in the movement.

The DSLCL was formed in fulfillment of a priority resolution adopted at the 2017 DSA National Convention. The resolution mandates the creation of the commission in order to help foster the growth of chapter-based labor working groups. With a growing network of local labor working groups working in coordination via the DSLCL, DSA can better support a rank and file labor movement. The DSLCL can provide a central node of labor-related organizing resources, advise the NPC on matters relating to labor, build channels within

DSA for labor activist networking and discussions, develop resources to tackle the challenges faced by socialists in their workplaces, and ultimately strengthen an intersectional, worker-led struggle.”



DSA BYLAWS

All of the previous information regarding the national organization’s structure comes from its constitution and bylaws. While the main points of the bylaws were touched upon previously, we recommend that you spend a little more time reading how these bylaws were formed. You can find the national DSA bylaws and constitution at the following link:

<https://www.dsausa.org/about-us/constitution/>



CHAPTER STRUCTURE

STL DSA BYLAWS

National DSA allows and encourages all chapters to organize themselves in the way each chapter believes best. Along with this emphasis on local autonomy and prioritization of democracy, DSA requires all chapters to write a set of bylaws, which encompass both the operations and the structure of the organization. STL DSA's bylaws can be found on the website at the following link:

<https://stlds.org/bylaws/>

Members are encouraged to read through the bylaws to more thoroughly understand the chapter's structure and methods of operation.

That said, many of the authors of this handbook recognize this can be a slightly tedious task. As such, please find a summary of STL DSA's setup, below.

Our chapter is intentionally democratic, from top to bottom. Chapter structure includes an Executive Committee and two Comrades-at-Large.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee consists of five chapter officers, the Parliamentarian, and the chairs of any local branches and youth sections (YDSA). Voting chapter officers are as follows:

- Two Co-Chairs
- One Corresponding Secretary

Comrades-at-Large

Two non-voting Comrade-at-Large officers, differently gendered from one another.

Primarily responsible for facilitating mediation between chapter members when conflict arises. The two officers act as the chapter's

- One Recording Secretary
- One Treasurer

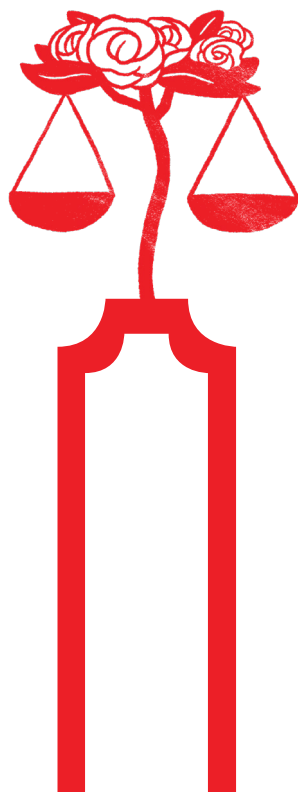
Responsible for administering the chapter's affairs and implementing decisions made at both General and Regular Meetings.

The Executive Committee has the power to receive reports of any Committee or Branch and advise on the matter at hand. It can also call Emergency Meetings for the chapter and act on any matters that demand immediate action. Elected by the chapter every September with a one-year term.

Elected by the chapter every September with a one-year term.

Harassment Grievance Officers (HGO), as outlined in the national harassment policy.

Elected by the chapter every September with a one-year term.



A large part of the STL DSA's internal democracy, committees, working groups, and caucuses are independent formations within the overall chapter structure. Any chapter member can form a committee, working group, or caucus. To define these, we turn to our bylaws.

MEMBERSHIP

The foundation of our chapter are DSA dues-paying members who live in the greater St. Louis area. All dues-paying members have full membership and voting rights within STL DSA. The membership has the ultimate decision-making power in the chapter, and all major decisions are discussed at monthly meetings and voted on in the meeting or electronically.

Article III of the STL DSA Bylaws

We organize the chapter into subgroups called formations. Most of the work of the chapter happens in formations, and there are three basic types, each described below.

Article VIII of the STL DSA Bylaws

COMMITTEES

We form committees to perform regular tasks for the chapter. Unlike working groups, committees are more permanent and focused on ongoing administrative or organizing tasks for the whole chapter. As of the publishing of this handbook, these include:



- Executive Committee
- Leadership Committee
- Communications Committee
- Political Education Committee
- Technology Committee
- Community Committee

WORKING GROUPS

We form working groups to organize action around political themes or projects that are part of the DSA National and/or St. Louis DSA's political platform. As of this writing, these include:

- Anti-Privatization
- Electoral
- Socialist Feminism

CAUCUSES

Caucuses are independent formations of members established on the basis of shared interests, identities, affinities, and/or political goals. Unlike working groups or committees, which are always open to any DSA member, caucuses have the ability to define membership beyond DSA membership.

STL DSA currently has an Afrosocialists and Socialists of Color Caucus (AfroSOC), a Religious Socialism Caucus (RSC) and a Transit Caucus.

AfroSOC's membership is restricted to people who are black, indigenous, or people of color.

RSC's membership is open to members in good standing of STL DSA who identify as a person of faith or as a religious adherent. Importantly, RSC is not for proselytization purposes, and people of all religions and faith traditions are welcome and encouraged to participate.

The Transit Caucus seeks to organize both the region and chapter membership to be commuter-friendly. In addition to larger political organizing, this caucus advocates for transit-friendly locations for chapter events and helps with commuting assistance.

HOW TO CREATE A COMMITTEE, WORKING GROUP, OR CAUCUS

To form a committee, working group, or caucus, a minimum of five dues-paying members in good standing must petition the Executive Committee to hold a vote among the larger chapter membership. Whether a committee, a working group, or a caucus, each formation must have a purpose, including a proposed name; a mission statement and objectives; a list of membership requirements; and a procedure for selecting its respective chair(s), which will be presented to the chapter membership before votes are cast.

If there's a simple majority vote in favor of the petition, the committee, working group, or caucus can form.

HOW TO GET ELECTED

All officers serve for one full year or until the next successor is elected. Officer nominations are usually fielded by the Co-Chairs, two Regular Meetings

ahead of a General Meeting, but nominations can also be sent in writing to any Executive Committee Member.

The nomination process ends four weeks prior to the General Meeting, with the Corresponding Secretary compiling and sending out the full nomination list to chapter membership at least two weeks before the General Meeting. If any nominations are still open at that time, they can be filled during the General Meeting.

During the election, five voting officers and two Comrades-at-Large are elected using a ranked-choice voting system – in other words, if there are multiple candidates running for the same position, members rank their order of preference for those candidates rather than just voting for their most-favored candidate. All votes are cast by secret ballot, with the specific type of ranked-choice voting system decided on by chapter membership via democratic



process at least three months before the election takes place.

At the General Meeting election, each nominee presents a two-minute speech and answers questions posed by members. Once all votes are cast, candidates are ranked according to the previously decided-upon ranked-choice voting method.

Any dues-paying members in good standing can vote in chapter elections.

HOW TO BRING UP A RESOLUTION

Chapter members can propose amendments to STL DSA's Bylaws. Any proposed amendment to the bylaws must be made by written resolution, with an endorsement of at least five chapter members, and submitted to the Executive Committee at least two weeks before either a General or a Regular Meeting.

At that point, the Executive Committee is then required to provide chapter membership with two weeks' written notice of the proposed amendment. At

the next General or Regular Meeting, the amendment is proposed, set in motion, and debated at the following General or Regular Meeting. All voting members then have a minimum of 48 hours to cast their ballots by electronic vote.

If a proposed bylaw amendment reaches a two-thirds majority of all ballots cast, it will pass, allowing for any respective abstentions. All other resolutions require only a simple majority vote to pass.

ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER

Robert's Rules of Order are an ancient form of governance first used by dinosaurs. Just kidding! Though they're based on old parliamentary systems, they still hold strong as the dominant way to conduct business for any organized group of people. While you might hear strange phrases best left to a court room, don't let them intimidate you. Here's a quick overview of the most common things you'll hear.

“SO-AND-SO HAS THE FLOOR.”

This means that a member not only owns the tiling or wood of the floor (kidding) but that they also hold all powers to speak in front of the group. During this time, no interruptions are allowed by members unless the floor holder asks for them or calls upon a member for comment.

If nobody has the floor, you can raise your hand and request it by saying “I request the floor to...” There’s no guarantee you’ll get it, but it’s worth a shot!

“I MOTION THAT WE...”

Much like rest of the world, work requires motion. In Robert’s Rules, we submit motions for all sorts of things. Sometimes we motion to adjourn meetings, approve notes, or bring something up for a vote. To submit a motion, you simply say “I move to...” and then say what you want. For example, if you were getting tired of a

debate on a proposal, you could say, “I motion to vote on the proposal.” Or, if you wanted to submit a proposal, you could say, “I move to add this proposal to our agenda.” Afterwards, you’ll probably hear someone say...

“SECOND!”

This means that someone agrees with your motion! Hooray! Now the real fun begins.

CONSIDERATION OF THE MOTION

Now the resident parliamentarian (usually the EC Chair running the meeting) will entertain a debate. No, this doesn’t mean they run commentary about two folks arguing it out. Instead, this is where we share our personal perspectives regarding the motion. Remember to be respectful of your comrades by actively listening, not making things personal, and raising your hand to be called upon.

Typically these considerations start with the person proposing the motion gaining the floor to introduce their resolution or proposal. In the smaller motions (like a motion to approve the previous meeting's notes), we tend to skip this part.

Next, the chair facilitates the previously mentioned debate. If things get rowdy, you might hear someone say “Rule of order,” meaning, “Hey team, we’re getting a little out of hand. Let’s remember that we’re comrades and bring it back, okay?” While the debate is supposed to strictly stay on subject, someone may submit a “point of personal privilege” meaning they want to have everyone recognize something they’re personally dealing with such as noise from the hallway or that people are using non-inclusive language. Once all this is complete, the chair will say...



“I PUT FORWARD THE MOTION TO VOTE.”

Then, it's time for a vote! Members say “Aye,” raise hands, or do whatever special action the chair requests to indicate agreement. Once votes are tallied (and it's usually pretty obvious where that tally is headed), the chair announces the results of the vote to either pass or fail the motion. Then, that vote is finished, and the meeting moves on from there.

While this is the more formal way to do business, the chair will sometimes suspend the rules in favor of getting things done. Typically, this is done for more informal activities with much lower consequences or stakes.

Lastly, there are many other rules. Outlined above are only the very basics that you'll see. If this seems like a lot, don't stress! It's a bit confusing at first and even some of our elected committee chairs get it wrong from time to time. Just remember, the group in the meeting are your comrades, so assume good faith. When one of us gets it wrong, the group will help us get it right.”

CODE OF CONDUCT AND COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS

Our goal in St. Louis DSA is to build a mass organization of working class people - by far the most diverse class across race, sexual orientation, gender, nationality, you name it - that is capable of confronting people with power in our capitalist system and building a socialist alternative. Perhaps it goes without saying, but this is incredibly difficult! In order to help us build a better organization that is constantly working to avoid recreating white supremacist and heteropatriarchal systems within itself, we have developed a Code of Conduct and Community Agreements.

These two documents work together. The Code of Conduct is the formal statement of values and behaviors not tolerated in STL DSA. The Community Agreements help us put our values into action in all the events, meetings, and work we do together. You will likely see the Community Agreements much more frequently than the Code of Conduct, since we open every STL DSA meeting

and event with the agreements. The Community Agreements are informed by our experiences within the organization, as well as by socialist feminist and anti-racist community agreements of other organizations.

COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS

1. We will use Progressive Stack.

Progressive Stack is a form of leading discussions in which a facilitator keeps a list of names of people who wish to speak. The facilitator scans the group during discussion and if someone wishes to speak, they raise their hand and catch the facilitator's eye. The facilitator nods and makes eye contact to indicate the person is now put on the list to speak, and then the person can put their hand down so it does not distract from further discussion. In a progressive stack, the facilitator may favor members of oppressed groups, such as women,

people of color, or gender non-binary individuals, and those who haven't spoken yet.

2. Why Am I Talking?

When in discussion, please ask yourself “Why Am I Talking (WAIT)?” Is what you want to say on topic? Has it already been said? Is this the best time and place for it? Are there other ways to show how you feel, such as nodding your head or showing a raised fist?

3. Step Up, Step Back.

After you make your point, let others speak. Help create a safe and inclusive space for everybody. Please recognize how often, much, and loud you're speaking and if you're dominating conversation. If the facilitator asks you to wrap up, please do so. On the other hand, if you don't often speak up, step up!

4. Really Listen (Don't Listen Just to Respond).

Genuinely pay attention to what

others say. Actively listen to others.

***5. Challenge the Behavior,
not the Person.***

Give people the benefit of the doubt, but don't be afraid to challenge others when they say something you disagree with. Assume good faith in each other. If you are challenging someone's ideas or behavior, do it respectfully, and if you are being challenged, receive it respectfully.

***6. Oops, Ouch. Take Responsibility
for Your Words and Actions.***

Remember, mistakes will be made, nobody is perfect. If you have said something that is problematic to another member or guest, please hold yourself accountable and be open to learning. And remember to speak for yourself and only for yourself; use "I" when you mean "I"!

7. Consent is Key.

Always ask for consent, no matter what! This includes

physical contact, videotaping, and photographing others.

8. Invite Others Into Creating DSA.

Building this community is hard work. We sincerely believe that DSA is strengthened by our diversity, so we seek both deeper and wider engagement with the community. To this end, we commit to invite others into taking ownership of our group and its projects. We want to avoid “gatekeeping.”

9. Invest in Authentic Relationships!

This one takes a while! We need to trust each other in order to do the sometimes scary work of replacing capitalism and building our alternative. That takes relationships. We commit to get past the surface through one-on-one conversations and using some of the techniques described above. This also means making efforts to be actively anti-racist in our community.



***10. Build in Time and
Space for Recuperation.***

Just surviving in capitalism is exhausting, let alone trying to change it. We commit to making sure we build in time and space in our organization, so it can also build us up. This is especially important for our comrades experiencing the traumas of white supremacy and/or patriarchy that white working-class, cis-gender people are not.

CODE OF CONDUCT

PREAMBLE

- 1. The St. Louis Local of the Democratic Socialists of America (STL DSA) is committed to engendering a climate of respect for the variety of experience, analysis, and opinion that exists among those already in our ranks and those whom we stand alongside in the struggle for a democratic and socialist society. As a rule, STL DSA will be as accommodating and inclusive as practicable.*
- 2. Rigorous debate is one of the hallmarks of any socialist organization. Such debate elicits the fullest political commitment and input from each member in order to develop a unified national perspective. We expect debates to be conducted with civility and respect, as comrades committed to the same struggle.*

3. *Wherever possible, personal conflicts should be resolved on an individual basis or with the help of local members' branch leadership. Given that the aim of building a socialist organization includes building a shared sense of solidarity, disciplinary infractions should be handled with the aim of changing a member's improper behavior, rather than resorting to formal disciplinary procedures.*

PURPOSE

1. *The goal of the Code of Conduct is to foster a community that has the following qualities:*
 - *Provides a safe, respectful, and welcoming environment where all are free to fully express their ideas and identities free from discrimination or harassment.*
 - *Defaults to openness and works to be objective.*

- *Presumes the value of others and cherishes everyone's ideas, skills, and contributions.*
- *Encourages participants to listen as much as they speak, ask respectful questions, and demystify subject matter.*
- *Approaches problem-solving with a "yes, and" mentality and permits the ability to stretch.*
- *Works to prioritize access for and input from those who are traditionally excluded from the political process.*
- *Ensures that relationships and conversations remain respectful, participatory, and productive.*

2. Article XII of the Bylaws provides for disciplinary procedures. The provisions of the Code of Conduct are meant to be a substantive limit on the Local's disciplinary powers, in that they provide criteria and guidelines by which the Local shall exercise those powers.

- 3. Members are expected to not only abide by rules of membership but should also abide by principles of non-discrimination and norms of comradely behavior. Members are accountable for actions that bring serious harm to other members, to allies, or to the organization. Discrimination may include, but is not limited to:***
- Restricting engagement in the organization or the community that surrounds it on the basis of the following traits: race, color, religion, sex, national origin, language of preference, age, disability, physical appearance, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, military status, source of income or workplace, or neurotypicality.***
- 4. Harassment is prohibited and includes conduct which is verbal, written, physical, or via electronic communication, that has the intent or effect, because of its severity and/or persistence, to be***

*intimidating, hostile, or offensive.
Harassment may include, but is not
limited to:*

- *Violence, or threats, calls to, or incitement thereof.*
- *Repeated unsolicited and/or unwanted advances, propositions, attention, or physical contact, sexual or otherwise.*
- *Stalking.*
- *Imagery, language, or other behavior that is intended to be disturbing or provocative without contributing to discussion.*
- *Hate speech.*
- *Intentional misgendering or use of former or rejected names.*
- *Photographing or recording video for purposes of harassment.*
- *Publication or transmission of personal, private communications.*



THE GRIEVANCE PROCESS

We strive to uphold our Community Agreements and, when we make mistakes or when there is conflict, to deal with each other directly and respectfully. However, in the unfortunate case that the conflict cannot be resolved directly or the conflict involves serious breaches of our Code of Conduct, we have a formal grievance procedure, and elected positions called the Comrades-At-Large (CALs) to help members navigate the procedure. CALs are always of two different genders, and can always be reached at cal.1.stlds@gmail.com and cal.2.stlds@gmail.com.

Members should see dsausa.org/resources/harrassment-and-grievance for a complete description of the grievance procedure. The steps are simplified here:

1. Member contacts a CAL and files a formal grievance. CALs are required to keep anything shared with the chapter's CAL email addresses confidential.
2. CAL notifies the other member(s) named in the grievance that the grievance has been filed. The member(s) named in the grievance have 3 options:
3. Admit to the grievance, in which case the members and CAL work to come to an acceptable agreement.
4. Deny the grievance, in which case the CAL is tasked with collecting information about the case and creating a confidential report that goes to the Executive Committee, which is then tasked with resolving the case as outlined in our STL DSA Bylaws.

5. If the named member(s) does not want to comply with the grievance procedure, the only other option is to leave the organization.
6. Either party in the grievance can appeal the locals decision to national under certain circumstances. See the website above for more information.
7. If you find yourself subject to harrassment or discrimination, if you need help talking through some conflict resolution, or if you have any questions about our policies, please do not hesitate to reach out to one or both of the CALs.



HOW DO YOU DSA?

STL DSA is a democratic and participatory organization – which means it thrives off membership involvement! The work we regularly engage in is both for others and for ourselves, so we can build working-class power, further democratic-socialist ideas, and fight to democratize our local community, economy and society.

As a DSA member, there are many ways to participate, depending on your unique interests, financial resources, and available time. A good starting point is to make your DSA membership official and pay your member dues – then, jump in and become active! Here are a few different ways you can get started:

JOIN A PRIORITY GROUP, COMMITTEE, OR WORKING GROUP

At any given point in time, STL DSA has a set number of chapter

priorities and groups that support those priorities, such as the Protecting Public Ownership Working Group. Additionally, there are a number of active committees and working groups within STL DSA, as well.

Currently, the chapter has specific committees for Community, Communications, Technology, and Political Education.

ATTEND A MEETING OR EVENT

Join STL DSA's meetings to find out more about chapter priorities, active campaigns, upcoming events, and forthcoming elections, or resolutions. Meetings are an ideal way to meet fellow comrades and learn more about how you want to get involved. For additional camaraderie and some more lighthearted fun, the chapter also hosts a number of different events on a regular basis, including movie nights, virtual game nights, and more.

SHARE DSA CONTENT

Every member plays a crucial role by visibly representing DSA when they talk with friends, family, neighbors, coalition partners, and others.

Whether you're sharing a flyer, blog post, DSA literature, or anything else, you may want to tell them where they can find more information about DSA.

Follow the national DSA and STL DSA key social media platforms, too, so you can help spread the word and bring attention to upcoming events or campaigns by simply liking, sharing, favoriting, commenting on, and retweeting posts.



Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/STLDSA>

Twitter

<https://twitter.com/stlouisdsa>

Website

<https://stlds.org/>



**PAY DUES AND/OR MAKE OTHER
FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS**

**DSA is 100% member-funded,
which means we're fully
accountable to our members.**

Every single dollar from members is appreciated and immediately put to use building a strong foundation for DSA. Power is organized people and organized money!

To join, follow [this link](#), and begin contributing a minimum of \$5/month or \$27/year.

Thanks to a dues-sharing program, a portion of your national dues are routed back to STL DSA to help fund our local organization.

Though membership is based on dues payments, nobody will be turned away due to lack of funds.

STL DSA offers dues sponsorship for anyone that requests it – just contact a member of the Executive Committee for details.

REGULAR MEETINGS

MONTHLY MEETING

Typically, during the last week of the month, our general membership meets to debate and discuss resolutions, vote, discuss upcoming events, and share the successes and progress of our many committees and working groups.

At these meetings, we usually host a guest or hold a special event to help grow our organization and inform members about what's going on in the St. Louis area.



Meetings occur online via Zoom or at our home base,

Trinity Church
600 N. Euclid Ave.,
St. Louis, MO 63108

on the fourth Tuesday of the month
at 7 pm, Central time.

COMMITTEE AND WORKING GROUP MEETINGS

Most committees and working groups meet on their own respective schedules and adapt as needed to ongoing projects. The best way to keep in contact is through each formation's unique mailer or Slack channel, or via the STL DSA website. A list of all STL DSA formations, as well as their upcoming events, can be found at the following link:

<https://stlds.org/formations/>

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE & LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The elected officers of the Executive Committee meet at least monthly with the chairs of Committees and Working Groups as part of STL DSA's Leadership Committee. The Leadership Committee helps enact the priorities and policies that chapter membership has voted on and can approve spending (less than \$250) to advance those goals.

These meetings are open to all members in good standing of STL DSA and currently happen via Zoom on Saturdays at 11 am. Contact a member of the EC for more details!



STAYING IN TOUCH



EMAILS

All committees and working groups keep their own email lists. Once you sign up for a committee or working group, or you attend an event, you'll be added to those respective lists. Organizers will send out emails to you and your fellow comrades to help you stay up-to-date on STL DSA activity and to alert you to any upcoming meetings or events.

SLACK

Slack is a tool for both chat and collaboration. We use it regularly to communicate within focused groups (called channels), one on one, or in group chats with specific comrades. Aside from being an ideal place to work and share files, it's also a great way to get to know each other. We

use the #random channel to get to know our fellow comrades and post silly, lighthearted articles, cartoons, videos, memes... you name it. Once you're a dues-paying member, you'll be added to these channels.

STLDSA.ORG

Our website is run by our comrades in the Tech Committee and features a list of our current priorities, links to our committees and working groups, a list of upcoming events, and blog-style posts of our weekly newsletter. If you're looking for something to do, check out a working group or committee's page, and see what upcoming meetings or events the group has scheduled.



GLOSSARY

1. Bylaw - a rule made by a company or society to control the actions of its members. STL DSA's bylaws may be found at <https://stlds.org/bylaws/>
2. Caucus - a conference of members of a legislative body who belong to a particular party or faction. A list of STL DSA's Committees may be found at <https://stlds.org/formations/>
3. Chair - the person in charge of a meeting or of an organization. Every chair of every formation can be found via clicking the desired Committee, Caucus, or Working Group at <https://stlds.org/formations/>
4. Committee - a group of people appointed for a specific function, typically consisting of members of a larger group. Differs from "Caucus" in that Caucus is based on identity, Committee is based upon function. A list of Committees may be found at <https://stlds.org/formations/>
5. Comrade at Large - facilitates mediation between members of the chapter that have conflict. Both individuals shall act as and

have the responsibilities of the chapter's Harassment Grievance Officers (HGO) as defined by national harassment policy, found at <https://www.dsausa.org/about-us/harassment-policy-resolution-33/>

6. Corresponding Secretary - answers all queries for the local chapter and maintains an up-to-date membership list, as well as communicates with national DSA, ensuring the transfer of official chapter documents to the next set of officers.
7. Democratic Socialism - belief that both the economy and society should be run democratically – to meet public needs, not to make profits for a few. For a full definition, visit <https://www.dsausa.org/about-us/what-is-democratic-socialism/>
8. Executive Committee (“EC”) - administers the affairs of the Local and oversees the implementation of the decisions of the General and Regular Meetings. For a publicly available list of STL DSA's Executive Committee, visit <https://stldsa.org/ec/>
9. National Political Committee - a sixteen-person body that functions as the board of directors of DSA and is elected every two years by the delegates to DSA's National Convention.
10. Priorities - an issue regarded or treated as more important for STL DSA. “The Work”. To view a list of current priorities, visit <https://stldsa.org/formations/>

11. Recording Secretary - takes all minutes at the General, Regular, Emergency, and Executive Committee Meetings, and has custody of the minutes, the resolutions, reports, and other official records of STL DSA.
12. Resolution - a firm decision to do or not to do something. INSERT RESOLUTION PROCESS HERE.
13. Slack - a proprietary business communication platform in which STL DSA communicates. To join, reach out to leadership.
14. Treasurer - responsible for the funds and financial records of STL DSA.
15. Working Group - a committee or group appointed to study and report on a particular question and make recommendations based on its findings. Differs from Committee in that Committees are geared internally (making STL DSA work) whereas Working Groups are geared externally (changing St. Louis' political landscape). For a list of current Working Groups, visit <https://stldsa.org/formation/>
16. Young Democratic Socialists of America - the youth and student section of the Democratic Socialists of America. For a list of recognized campus chapters, visit <https://y.dsausa.org/get-involved/chapters/>

