



DELAWARE DSA MEMBER HANDBOOK

WORKING TOWARDS A BETTER FUTURE FOR ALL

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WHO ARE WE?

Delaware DSA is a local chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America, the largest socialist organization in the United States with over 92,000 members and chapters in all 50 states. We believe that working people should run both the economy and society democratically to meet human needs, not to make profits for a few. The Delaware Democratic Socialists of America became an official chapter in 2021. We represent all three counties in Delaware; Kent, New Castle and Sussex.

WHAT DO WE BELIEVE IN?

The Delaware Democratic Socialists of America (DE DSA) is committed to creating a society built on compassion and equity rather than greed and oppression. We are socialists because we believe in a just world based on popular control of resources and production, equitable distribution, and a dignified life for every person. We are democratic because we know that this transformation cannot be won from the top down, by a small group of elites who claim to have all the answers, or even by well-meaning politicians. This transformation can only come from the bottom up, when millions of working-class people stand together.

WHAT DO WE DO?

We are a political and activist organization, not a party; through campus and community-based chapters, DSA members use a variety of tactics, from legislation to direct action, to build a progressive movement with a member-funded, member-run, democratic organization that fights for reforms that empower working people in the state and beyond.

WHAT IS DE DSA

THE DELAWARE CHAPTER OF THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS OF AMERICA

HOW CAN I JOIN?

Step 1 - Reach out to us! We can answer any questions you may have and even attend one of our community events.

Step 2 - When you are ready, Join DSA as dues-paying member and then Delaware residents can fill out our chapter Membership Form!

Step 3 - We will get you integrated into our Slack where you can find upcoming events, participate in conversations, and organize towards a better future!

WHAT'S NEXT?

Join Chapter Meetings, Social Gatherings, and Events

Our chapters has a monthly General Member Meeting to discuss, debate, and vote on agenda items. We also host 'Socialist Socials' where we meet informally for enrichment and to connect with our fellow comrades.

Join a Working Group or Committee

This is how most work is organized to cover the spectrum of issues and ideas. You can find a list here and even propose your own if its not currently existing!

Volunteer for actions or with a Campaign

Volunteering, whether one off or as part of a larger initiative, to put our ideas into action and make socialist ideals a reality.

WHAT IS DE DSA

HOW CAN I JOIN AND WHAT'S NEXT?

HOW IS DE DSA LOCAL CHAPTER ORGANIZED?

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP - Every single dues paying member makes up DE DSA's membership. As a democratic organization, the vote of the general membership is the highest authority. Most votes are held at monthly meeting and annual conventions. Members have access to all chapter resources.

WORKING GROUPS - Members who join to work on a short-term project, often in response to current events, local issues, and the needs of the chapter as whole..

COMMITTEES - Working groups that are formally recognized by the chapter to work more permanently. Committees will have more formalized goals and report to the Steering Committee.

STEERING COMMITTEE - Elected annually by General Membership vote, our SC is made up of members who oversee day-to-day operations of the chapter. The SC comprises two Chapter Co-Chairs, a Northern and a Southern Chair, and Secretaries of Political Affairs, Communications, and Treasury.

HARASSMENT & GRIEVANCE OFFICERS - Our HGOs are help ensure that our chapter is meeting national guidelines that guarantee that all members can organize without fear of abuse, harm, or retaliation. HGOs independently and impartially investigate, process, and present complaints and allegations to the Steering Committee for their review and decision.

HOW IS DSA STRUCTURED

HOW DO WE ORGANIZE A SOCIALIST ORGANISATION

HOW DOES OUR NATIONAL DSA ORGANISATION REPRESENT A COUNTRY OF LOCAL CHAPTERS?

NATIONAL CONVENTION - Every two years, local chapters elect delegates to send to a national convention. Our delegates meet, debate, and vote on proposals and resolutions. Additionally, they elect a 16-person body known as the National Political Council to act as national leadership for two years.

NATIONAL STAFF - DSA also boasts a small and dedicated staff, but to stay true to our democratic principles, the staff do not make any political or strategic decisions on behalf of the organization. Rather, they work at the direction of the NPC to help build and execute campaigns and carry out the will of the membership.

COMMITTEES & WORKING GROUPS - Like our local DSA chapter, National DSA also has working groups and committees. Made up of interested members from around the country, they help coordinate work between chapters at the national level..

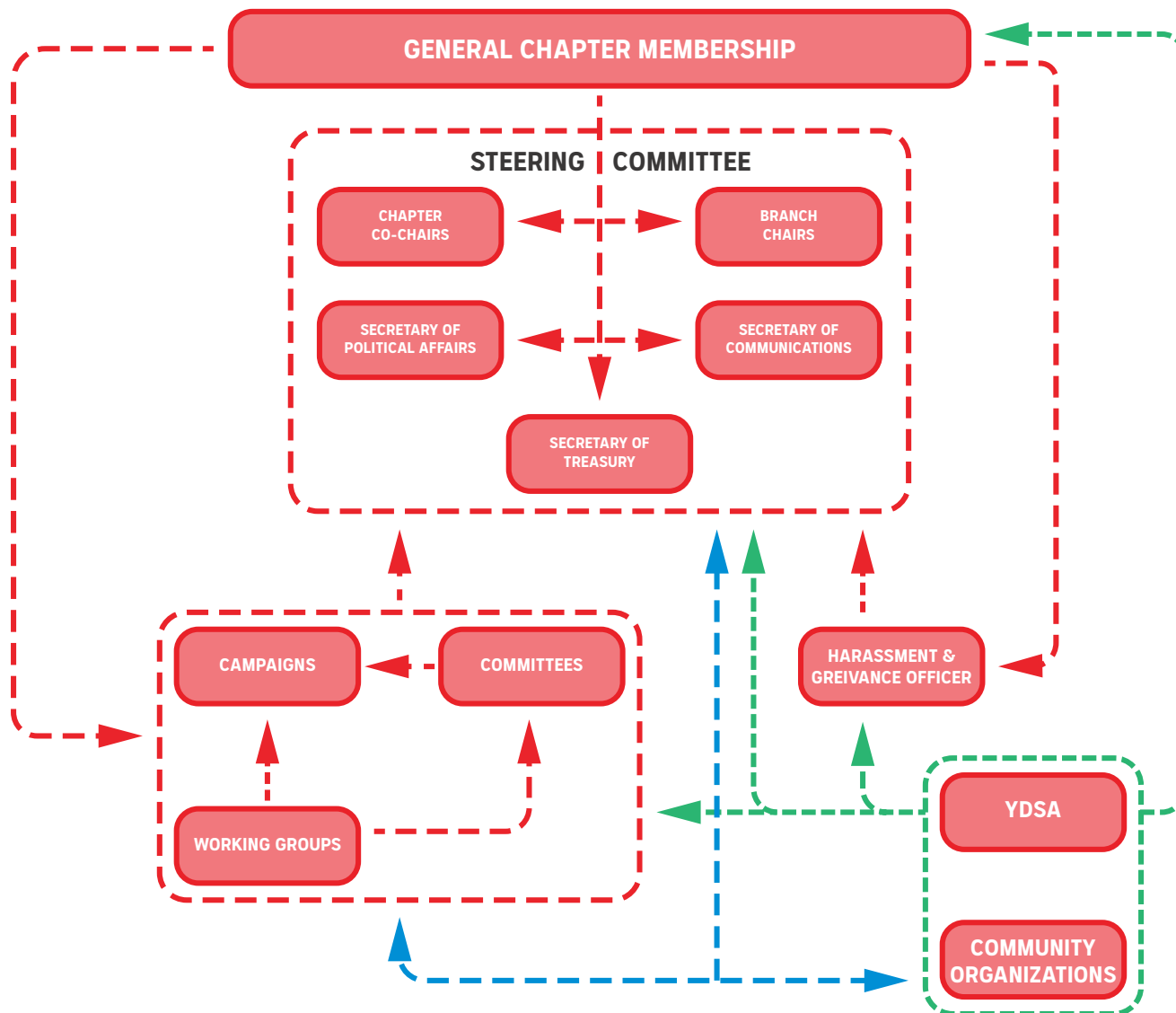
CAUCUSES - Caucuses are independent formations of members within the Local and National organisation. They're a big part of internal democracy. If you want to do more work on a particular front, if you want to gather with people who are interested in the same issues or shared experiences, or if you want to push the leadership to consider alternatives to the current path, a caucus may be what you're looking for.

HOW IS DSA STRUCTURED A NATIONAL ORGANISATION MADE OF LOCAL CHAPTERS

HOW DO MEMBERS AND THEIR WORK MOVE THROUGH THE LOCAL CHAPTER?

HOW IS DSA STRUCTURED

FLOW CHART OF DE DSA CHAPTER ORGANISATION



ORGANIZING MEMBERS

--- DSA MEMBERS

--- INDEPENDENT

--- COALITION

ELECTED OFFICERS OF DEDSA

CHAPTER CO-CHAIRS

Chief executive officers of the Local Chapter. They will preside over Local Chapter and Steering Committee meetings. The Co-Chairs will be the official public spokes-persons for the Local Chapter and will also be responsible for coordinating the day-to-day operations and political work of the Local Chapter's Branches and Committees.

BRANCH CO-CHAIRS

Officers for the Northern (New Castle Co.) and Southern (Kent Co., Sussex Co.) territories of Delaware to provide representation of branch members in the chapter as a whole. They will oversee and coordinate branches members' and territory specific work with the chapter as whole.

SECRETARY OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS

Senior advisor to the Steering Committee for the execution of the political, legal, public policy, and electoral strategy development and implementation between the chapter conventions.

SECRETARY OF COMMUNICATIONS

Responsible for the member newsletter, website, and social media communications though each of these functions may be substantially delegated to or shared with designated committees.

SECRETARY OF TREASURY

Reports to the Steering Committee on the financial status of the organization at each Steering Committee meeting. The Secretary shall collaborate with members of the Steering Committee in preparing annual budgets for the Chapter. The Secretary will maintain transparent and open financial reports available to the entire membership upon request by an officer of the Steering Committee.

WHO IS DEDSA LEADERSHIP

DELAWARE DSA STEERING COMMITTEE ROLES

DELAWARE DSA PLATFORM

ABOLITION OF THE CARCERAL STATE

GREEN NEW DEAL

HOUSING FOR ALL

HEALTH JUSTICE

DELAWARE DSA 2024 PRIORITIES

ABOLISHING THE CARCERAL STATE

ADMINISTERING AND ORGANIZING MUTUAL AID

CONDUCTING AND FACILITATING POLITICAL EDUCATION

SUPPORTING ORGANIZED LABOR AND LABOR MOVEMENTS

PROMOTING EDUCATION, WITH A FOCUS ON EQUITABLE FUNDING

ENGAGING IN ANTI-IMPERIAL WORK, WITH A FOCUS ON PALESTINE

ENACTING ALL GREEN NEW DEAL LEGISLATION FOR DELAWARE INITIATIVES

SUPPORTING TENANT ORGANIZING AND PRO-TENANT LEGISLATION, CANDIDATES

WHAT IS DE DSA WORKING ON

CHAPTER PLATFORM AND
PRIORITIES

CURRENT LIST 2024

WORKING GROUPS

LEGISLATION AND BILL TRACKING - This group follows legislation and bills proposed locally and state wide. Firstly, to understand the stated effects and discuss the potential impacts of the proposed legislation. Secondly, to inform the chapter and formulate our position. Lastly, to help prioritize chapter efforts in supporting or opposing the proposals.

BOOK CLUB - As an extension of the Education Committee, this group; selects, reads, and facilitates a book club to grow comradery as well as deepen our understanding of Socialism and the many facets of our lives that intersect with our principles.

HOUSING JUSTICE - This group is responsible for working and coordinating with local and state organisations that work towards expanding Tenants' unions, Tenant's Bill of Rights, Ending houselessness, and making housing a right not a privilege.

PALESTINE SOLIDARITY - This group is responsible for working and coordinating with local and state organisations that work to pressure elected officials to work towards a permanent cease-fire, ending US aid to Israel, supporting BDS efforts, and advocating for Palestinian human rights including but not limited to; a One State solution, a Right to Return, and Reparations to Palestinians.

COMMITTEES

COMMUNICATIONS - Responsible for crafting and distributing the chapter's messaging. Accumulates news and information to then create and distributes news, statements, event information, and media to the chapter and the public at large.

EDUCATION - Researches, crafts, and facilitates programs in order to develop the chapter's knowledge of Democratic Socialism and the many issues that are tangential to our work. Public events and programs will also be prioritized in order to foster healthy and informed discourse in Delaware around all things Socialist.

RED RABBITS - Coordinates DSA resources and facilitates trainings for the Red Rabbits Marshal Team. The Red Rabbits Marshal Team is a safety and security team dedicated to making Leftist street actions and events safer and accessible for participants and organizers.

ENVIRONMENTAL - Organizes and advocates for environmental justice at the local, state, and federal levels. Directly works towards the implementation of a Green New Deal in Delaware and across the nation through legislation and community actions.

JUSTICE - Organizes and coordinates with local and state organisations on the issues of Carceral Reform, Abolishing Bail, Defunding the Police, and Decriminalization.

WHAT IS DE DSA WORKING ON

CURRENT WORKING GROUPS, COMMITTEES & CAMPAIGNS

WHERE IS EVERYTHING
KEEP UP WITH COMRADES
AND KEEP THE GOOD
FIGHT GOING

CHAPTER WEBSITE - <https://www.dedsa.org/>

CHAPTER PLATFORM - <https://www.dedsa.org/about/>

CHAPTER BYLAWS - [Bylaws as Last Amended 05/02/2024](#)

CHAPTER EMAILS - info@dedsa.org & delaware.socialists@gmail.com

HARASSMENT GRIEVANCE OFFICER EMAIL - delaware.socialists.hgos@gmail.com

DE DSA SOCIAL MEDIA - Twitter: [@DelawareDSA](#) Instagram: [delawaredsa](#)

DE DSA FACEBOOK - [Delaware Democratic Socialists of America](#)

DE DSA SLACK - All Members in Good Standing are provided access once they are dues-paying.

MEMBERS GOOGLE CALENDAR - <https://calendar.google.com/calendar>

SUGGESTED READINGS - [Readings to reflect on what it means to be a Socialist](#)

THE DELAWARE ROSE GARDEN NEWSLETTER - <https://www.dedsa.org/delaware-rose-garden/>

DSA FAQ's - <https://www.dsausa.org/resources/faq/>

DSA RESOURCES & TOOLS - <https://www.dsausa.org/resources/>

DSA HARASSMENT & GRIEVANCE POLICY - <https://www.dsausa.org/resources/harassment-and-grievance/>

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

DEFINITIONS OF WORDS YOU WILL HEAR IN OUR DISCOURSE

BY LAWS - The body of rules that DSA operates under.

MEANS OF PRODUCTION - The physical facilities and resources used to create and transport goods and services. This is how we produce food, clothes, homes, medicine, refined ore, everything—if you can think of it, it was made by the means of production. Who owns the means of production, and how they use them, characterizes economic systems.

CLASS - The social position one occupies in relation to labor and the means of production. A class is made up of people who share common economic interests, are conscious of those interests, and engage in collective action that advances those interests. Note that wealth does not determine your class but is a feature of class.

THE STATE - A political entity with sovereignty over the use of force in a given geographic area. The state uses this sovereign power to enforce the current economic and political relations and mediate problems among members of the ruling class (if this last part doesn't make sense, think about the federal government drafting laws that are done on behalf of businesses, not your average working citizen).

CAPITALISM - An economic and political system in which a country's trade and industry are controlled and privatized by the capitalist class for profit, rather than by the state. The profit-motive, or search for ever more profits, lends itself to an upward trend in economic growth and the expansion of markets into new areas—both geographically and in aspects of our lives. There are only two (legal) classes in this economic mode—the Bourgeoisie and the Proletariat, although slavery has existed in it (and, in prisons and illicit cases, it still does).

BOURGEOISE - The ruling class of capitalism. Also known as the capitalist class, this class privatizes property, such as the means of production, and through this exploits the proletariat in order to create profits. They control what gets produced, how much of it is produced, when it is produced, and how it gets distributed. The bourgeoisie is the small business owner that owns the coffee shop on your block and they're also big business owners, like Musk, Bezos, and Gates. Businesses exploit workers by not paying them the full wealth of their labor via depressed wages, denying benefits, and wage theft. Landlords are also members of the bourgeoisie, earning their profits by renting living spaces to the proletariat.

PROLETARIAT - The exploited class of capitalism, aka the working class. The proletariat, by and large, makes the majority of its living through selling its labor to the bourgeoisie for wages. As the working class, we do not control the means of production, however we work them and create wealth through their use—workers make the world run. The proletariat makes up the vast majority of the world's population, so it's highly likely that, if you're reading this, you are part of the proletariat (and no, owning a few stocks does not make you a member of the bourgeoisie). The proletariat, because of their exploited status and general exclusion from the means of production, are in an antagonistic relationship with the bourgeoisie, with this antagonism is often referred to as “class struggle” or “class warfare.”

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

DEFINITIONS OF WORDS YOU WILL HEAR IN OUR DISCOURSE

IMPERIALISM - Capitalism's profit motive typically leads to expansion of markets into new areas, literal and figurative, in order to make even more profits. Imperialism is a policy or ideology of extending influence over other people and countries to further political and economic access and enhance power and control. This is achieved through employing hard power, especially military force, but also soft power, as corporations often weaponize capital in other countries in order to control their economies. While related to the concepts of colonialism and empire, imperialism is a distinct concept that can apply to other forms of expansion and many forms of government. Imperialist powers get away with this by hiding this super exploitation from those of us back home, keeping progressive labor laws in place domestically while getting filthy rich off super exploitation abroad, and when the propaganda back home, like in the USA, tells everyone that we "intervene" in order to "bring democracy to countries run by dictators."

LIBERALISM - Liberalism is a very broad political philosophy that arose in the 1600s and 1700s in response to the shortcomings of feudalism, becoming the dominant ideology in the 1800s and 1900s. As it predominantly arose through the emergence of the bourgeoisie as an economic force in feudal Europe, much of the philosophy was developed by bourgeois intellectuals and those connected to them as an ideology meant to legitimize the establishment of what would become capitalism. Liberalism often espouses the necessity of political and civil liberties, freedom of property, and republicanism as a means of determining and maintaining the legitimacy of the institutions that uphold it, such as the state.

SOCIALISM - Socialism is an umbrella term for an economic mode characterized by democratic control over the means of production. In short, it is an end to the exploitation of labor. Socialists, unlike Liberals, believe that true liberation can only be achieved through this paradigm shift in economic relationships. The proletariat, the exploited class, are the only class that can bring about this change, because we are the only class who has an interest in this—the bourgeoisie are fundamentally opposed to this, since classes would no longer exist.

DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM - Democratic Socialism seeks democratization of production as an end goal like every other socialist tendency. However, its proposed means of achieving this are through popular demand and an electoral effort with the power of labor behind it. Regardless of your tendency, bringing about socialism requires large-scale and organized, direct action, mutual aid, and solidarity, and completely freeing the means of production from the private hands of the bourgeoisie

ORGANIZING - Organizing, in the case of socialism, is the act of bringing together a wide array and large number of people to work for a common political goal. It places the decision making power of a movement in the hands of the ordinary people in it. Democratic decision making builds agency and trust amongst members. It also forces people into contact with one another, allowing them to see their experiences reflected in the stories of their peers. This leads to a shared sense of identity and purpose--in a word, solidarity, which ultimately empowers ordinary people to take risks they would never consider taking on their own

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

DEFINITIONS OF WORDS

YOU WILL HEAR IN OUR DISCOURSE

ADVOCACY - A model of political change that relies on a small group of paid professionals (lawyers, pollsters, nonprofit staff) to “advocate” on behalf of oppressed or downtrodden peoples. These “advocates” work behind the scenes with elites to convince the elites to make small, incremental reforms. This model of change is often described as “realistic,” because it does not meaningfully challenge elite power, nor the idea that elites should hold power over ordinary people, and therefore does not upset elites and provoke (as much) resistance from them. Advocacy practitioners see politics as a game of making the system of exploitation more humane and bearable, but never as a struggle to end the system altogether.

MOBILIZING - A model of change that attempts to bring a large number of people into the fight for justice, mobilizing still relies on a core group of activists to guide and steer the work, and often only turns out the same small group of committed, self-identified activists - and thus ultimately still relies on the good will of elites. Often organizations, staffed by a small number of paid professionals, build up a big email list of people who they know care about an issue- say, climate change or gun control - and when, for example, a particularly bad bill comes through congress, they send a mass message asking people to make calls to their legislators or show up at protests.

DIRECT ACTION - Direct action is the act of a group of people using their own power to directly demand legal or economic changes and create the pressure necessary to achieve these demands. This is different from appealing to authorities, like politicians or bosses, to change things on behalf of those making demands. Direct action isn't politely asking for things to get better; it's a demand with political force behind it. The Montgomery Bus Boycott, BLM protests, NoDAPL sit-in protests, and labor strikes are examples of direct action.

SOLIDARITY - Solidarity is people with common social and economic interests providing support for each other either during 1) times when one group is fighting against its own oppression or 2) when both are fighting against a shared oppression. Solidarity is necessary for any movement aiming for social and economic changes, because this power in numbers and shared resources provides the means for these groups to be successful in their struggle. You're there for them when they need you, and in turn, they're there for you when you need them. This includes, but is not limited to, direct action and mutual aid. Examples: the Rainbow Coalition, general strikes, boycotts.

COMRADE / COMRADELY - A comrade is someone you have solidarity with and organize with. If you're a member of DSA, then you're our comrade. If you're a member of an organization we work alongside, you're probably our comrade, too. Being comradely means recognizing that we all have skin in the game and are here to win together, not fall apart through infighting. Don't be a jerk to people you organize with if you want this to actually work! We have to work together in solidarity, locally, nationally, and internationally, without throwing fellow revolutionaries under the bus over personal disagreements. Being a comrade also means recognizing that necessary--even extremely difficult - conflict is bound to occur in our organizations, but that we can constructively overcome these situations for the sake of all our comrades and make our organizations truly fight for all workers.