

Bylaws of the Greater Grand Rapids MI Local Chapter
of the Democratic Socialists of America
Adopted December 8, 2017, approved by NPC April 2, 2018
Updated June 2018

ARTICLE I. Name.

The name of the Local Chapter shall be the Greater Grand Rapids MI Local Chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America (GRDSA). DSA is a not-for-profit corporation.

ARTICLE II. Purpose.

The Greater Grand Rapids MI Local Chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America seeks to facilitate the transition to a truly democratic and socialist society, one in which the means/resources of production are democratically and socially controlled.

DSA rejects an economic order based solely on private profit, alienated labor, gross inequalities of wealth and power, discrimination based on race, gender or sexual orientation, and brutality and violence in defense of the status quo.

We are explicitly anti-racist, and we resist white supremacy in all its forms both here in Grand Rapids MI and elsewhere. We support equality and social, economic, and health justice for all people, including people of color, LGBTQ+ people, and those with disabilities.

DSA envisions a humane social order based on popular control of resources, production, and economic planning, equitable distribution, gender and racial equality, and non-oppressive relationships.

Our conception of socialism is a profoundly democratic one. It is rooted in the belief that human beings should be free to develop to their fullest potential, that public policies should be determined not by wealth but by popular participation, and that individual liberties should be carefully safeguarded. It is committed to a freedom of speech that does not recoil from dissent, to a freedom to organize independent trade unions, women's groups, political parties, and other formations — recognizing these as essential bulwarks against the dangers of an intrusive state. It is committed to a freedom of religion that acknowledges the rights of those for whom spiritual concerns are central.

We are socialists because we are developing a concrete strategy for achieving that vision. In the present, we are building a visible socialist presence within the broad democratic Left. In the long run, we hope to build a majority movement capable of making democratic socialism a reality in the United States. Our strategy acknowledges the class structure of the U.S. society. This class structure means that there is a basic conflict of interest between those sectors with enormous economic power and the vast majority of the population.

ARTICLE III. Membership.

Section 1. Membership.

Members of the Greater Grand Rapids MI Local Chapter of the DSA will be those individuals whose dues to national DSA are paid in full, and who reside and/or work in the vicinity of Grand Rapids. Individuals may not be members of the Local Chapter without being members of national DSA. It will be the responsibility of members to approve policies and guidelines for the operation of the Local Chapter, to elect delegates to the national convention, to vote on matters related to national policy, and to make recommendations on issues and other matters to the National Political Committee of DSA.

Section 2. Removal of Members.

If a member in good standing is found to be in substantial disagreement with the principles or policies of national DSA, or if they are found to be consistently engaging in undemocratic, disruptive behavior, or if they are found to be under the discipline of any democratic centralist organization, the Local Chapter may vote to expel them from the Local Chapter of DSA. In order for such a finding to be made, another DSA member must formally present written charges against the member in question to the Local Chapter Steering Committee, which shall set the date of a Local Chapter meeting for deliberations on the charges. The member in question must receive a copy of the written charges and notice of the meeting a minimum of two weeks before that meeting takes place. Expulsion of a member requires a two-thirds vote of the Local Chapter meeting. An expelled member in good standing may appeal to the National Political Committee of DSA.

Section 3. Voluntary Donations.

As mandated by the national constitution and bylaws, the Local Chapter may establish a Local Chapter pledge system of voluntary donations for its members. The payment of a Local Chapter donation will not be a requirement for voting or for holding Local Chapter office. At every General Meeting, Greater Grand Rapids MI DSA will invite members to commit to making an annual or monthly voluntary pledge.

Section 4. Privacy concerns.

Care will be taken to protect the privacy of each member's contact information.

ARTICLE IV. Local Chapter Meetings.

Section 1. General Meeting.

The Local Chapter will hold a minimum of one (1) General Meeting annually for purposes of electing officers. All members of the Local Chapter will be sent notice of and an agenda for the General Meeting. Notice shall be sent by electronic means, but individuals who have not provided an email address must request a paper copy in writing to receive correspondence by mail. The General Meeting will elect Local Chapter officers and may adopt an annual budget. In general, it is the highest legislative body of the Local Chapter. The General Meeting may coincide with a Regular Meeting.

Section 2. Regular Meetings.

The Local Chapter will hold Regular Meetings at least four times annually, the time and place of which shall be set in a schedule published and distributed by the Local Chapter Steering Committee via email. Individuals who have not provided an email address must request a paper copy in writing to receive correspondence by mail. The Regular Meetings will set Local Chapter policy and work priorities, and they will include political education sessions.

The Local Chapter Steering Committee will set the agenda for Regular Meetings. Effectively, the Regular Meeting is the operating legislative body of the Local Chapter.

Section 3. Emergency Meetings.

The Local Chapter Steering Committee may call an Emergency Meeting of the Local Chapter on five days' notice when an urgent and important matter requires deliberation.

Section 4. Quorum.

A quorum of 10 percent of the members (but not fewer than six persons) is required for General, Regular, or Emergency Meetings to transact business.

ARTICLE V. Local Chapter Officers: Powers and Duties.

Section 1. Officers and Terms.

The officers of the Local Chapter will be Secretary, Treasurer, and Spokesperson. The term of office will be one year, and shall run from February to January or until their successors are elected.

Section 2. Vacancies.

In the event of a vacancy in any Local Chapter office (Secretary, Treasurer, Spokesperson), the Local Chapter Steering Committee will appoint an interim replacement. A vote will be held at the next Local Chapter Meeting to confirm the interim replacement. If the interim replacement receives greater than 50% of the vote, they are confirmed. If the interim replacement receives

50% or fewer of the vote, they are not confirmed, and candidates for the vacant position will be gathered, and a vote will be held at the next Local Chapter Meeting. The interim replacement will hold this position until the next General Election.

Section 3. Secretary

The Secretary shall be custodian of all Greater Grand Rapids DSA records. The Secretary shall ensure that the minutes are kept of the meetings of the Steering Committee and of the general membership and shall ensure that the minutes are distributed in a timely manner.

The Secretary shall see that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of these Bylaws or as required by law. The Secretary shall provide reports as needed to the National Office or National Political Committee of DSA concerning the records and activities of Greater Grand Rapids DSA.

The Secretary shall keep a register of the address, phone number and e-mail address of each member of the Steering Committee, which shall be furnished to the Secretary by each Steering Committee member. The Secretary shall, in general, perform the duties incident to the office of Secretary and such other duties as are from time to time assigned by the Steering Committee.

Section 4. Treasurer.

The Treasurer shall, as directed by the Steering Committee, have care and custody of the general funds, securities, properties, and assets of Greater Grand Rapids DSA.

The Treasurer shall ensure that the funds and securities shall be deposited in the bank(s), trust companies or depositories designated by the Steering Committee. At the direction of the Steering Committee, the Treasurer will ensure disbursement and disposal of the same, taking proper voucher for such disbursements.

The Treasurer will ensure that accurate books of account are kept in accordance with commonly accepted accounting principles, recording therein the amount of all monies, funds, securities, properties and assets in the Treasurer's custody, wherever located, and showing the amount of disbursement made and the disposition of properties. The Treasurer shall exhibit said books and records when required by the Steering Committee, Members, or government agency of appropriate regulator jurisdiction pursuant to law.

The Treasurer shall also be responsible for the collection of any local dues or pledges.

If requested or required by the Membership or Steering Committee, the Treasurer shall prepare and present a yearly financial report

The Treasurer shall sign or countersign all certificates, contracts, or other instruments of Greater Grand Rapids DSA with the approval of the Steering Committee except where otherwise designated in these bylaws.

The Treasurer shall provide reports as needed to the National Office or National Political Committee of DSA concerning the financial status of Greater Grand Rapids DSA, and ensure the completion of all appropriate reporting to local, state, or federal agencies.

Section 5. Spokesperson.

The Spokesperson is responsible for maintaining the presentation of Greater Grand Rapids DSA's platform calls on behalf of the chapter, and in so doing represents GR DSA's platform. In this capacity, communicates the platform of GR DSA, rather than personal views.

The Spokesperson is also responsible for ensuring that at each event hosted by GR DSA, there is a DSA member prepared to make contact with the media, and represent the platform of GR DSA.

ARTICLE VI. Steering Committee.

Section 1. The Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee shall be elected by the Membership to execute the decisions of Membership and administrative duties required for the operation of Greater Grand Rapids DSA. The Steering Committee shall ensure that Greater Grand Rapids DSA meets all requirements of the National DSA specified in the DSA Constitution and Bylaws and shall ensure communication between Greater Grand Rapids DSA and the national organization. The Steering Committee will further act to facilitate education, growth, and development of a skillset in socialist community organizing for its members.

The Steering Committee shall include officers (as referenced in Article V) and At-Large Members elected by the Membership. The Membership will determine the number of At-Large Members to be elected. One or more of the Steering Committee must have differing life experiences pertaining to race, LGBTQ+ identity, gender spectrum, and/or level of ability.

Branches of Greater Grand Rapids DSA, if any, will supervise the election or appointment of a delegate who will be a full member of the Steering Committee with all the rights and duties of any Officer or At-Large Member..

The Steering Committee will ensure all administrative duties necessary for the day-to-day functioning of the organization are assigned and carried out.

Each Officer and At-Large Member of the Steering Committee will serve a term of one year, or until a successor is elected. Elections shall be held in December and the beginning and ending of terms will correspond with the fiscal year. Additional At-Large members may be added to the Steering Committee at any time if so voted by the chapter in accordance with Section 3.

The Steering Committee shall meet at least four times a year, and meetings of the Steering Committee will be announced to and open to the attendance of all members in good standing

Section 2. At-Large Members.

The Steering Committee will include At-Large Members who will serve the executive and administrative duties of the Steering Committee without the specific duties of Officers. At-Large Members may chair and serve on any committee, and shall perform such duties incident to the operation of Greater Grand Rapids DSA as required by Membership or the Steering Committee.

Section 3. Quorum.

A quorum of for conducting business of the Steering Committee shall consist of a simple majority of its members.

Section 4. Joining the Steering Committee outside the normal election period (i.e. General Meeting).

In accordance with utilizing the Steering Committee as an opportunity for members to gain specific organizing experience and skills, any member can join the Steering Committee as an At-Large member at any time with the consent of the Chapter.

Any interested member who wishes to join the Steering Committee outside of the normal general election period must notify the Steering Committee. The Chapter meeting following this notification will then begin with a vote to elect the interested member to the Steering Committee, done by a simple majority vote from the membership of the Chapter. This vote will be done by secret ballot, unless there is a passed motion to vote by acclamation.

Any Steering Committee member elected outside the normal election period will have their tenure end at the next normal election period. They are permitted to seek re-election during the normal election period.

Section 5. Removal of Steering Committee Members.

Any Officer, At-Large Member, or Delegate of the Steering Committee may be removed from the Steering Committee by a two-thirds vote of the membership with or without cause. Any Officer or member of the Steering Committee may resign in writing at any time.

If the Chapter membership wishes to remove any Officer, At-Large Member, or Delegate of the Steering Committee from Chapter membership, refer to the protocol outlined in Article III, Section 2.

Section 6. Meetings of the Steering Committee.

The meetings of the Steering Committee will be held at the call of one of any Steering Committee member. Meeting frequency may be determined by a prior Steering Committee Meeting or by consultation with any three members of the Steering Committee. All members of the Steering Committee must be given seven days oral, written, or electronic notice of regular Steering Committee Meetings; a 24-hour notice may be given under special emergency circumstances. These Meetings are always open to Chapter membership.

Section 7. Additional Duties.

The Local Chapter Steering Committee may assign additional temporary duties to any interested member of the Local Chapter, so long as such assignments do not conflict with the designation of responsibilities outlined in these Bylaws. These temporary duties do not endow the assigned member with any powers outlined in Articles V or VI.

ARTICLE VII. Branches.

A branch is a subgroup of the Local Chapter consisting of at least five members in good standing with national DSA. Branches may be defined by geography or language. Each branch will have one chair, as voted on by members of the branch. Branch chairs will hold membership on the Local Chapter Steering Committee. Members may chair more than one branch, though they will not receive any additional Steering Committee voting power.

Young Democratic Socialists of America (YDSA) chapters within the geographic area defined by a DSA Local Chapter may affiliate as a branch of that Local Chapter, in which case the YDS chapter may send a representative to the Local Chapter Steering Committee.

All branches require a vote of at least 2/3rds of the people in attendance at a Local Chapter Meeting to be officially recognized as part of the GRDSA.

ARTICLE VIII. Committees.

Section 1. Duration.

The Local Chapter will have Ad Hoc Committees or Working Groups, which will exist for a limited and explicit duration. Ad Hoc Committees may be established by a vote of members in good standing at a Regular Meeting of the Local Chapter.

Section 2. Duties.

Chairs of Ad Hoc Committees will keep the Steering Committee and the Regular Meetings of the Local Chapter informed on the activities of the committee.

ARTICLE IX. Delegates to National, Regional, and State Bodies.

Section 1. Convention.

Local Chapter delegates and alternates to the National Convention will be elected by members in good standing of the Local Chapter of DSA. Elections for the National Convention delegation shall be held on the schedule announced by the national organization.

ARTICLE X. Prohibited Activity

The Greater Grand Rapids MI Local Chapter shall not engage in activity prohibited by the IRS guidelines established for 501(c)(4) organizations or similar rules established by the state of Michigan. Nor shall the Local Chapter engage in any activity prohibited by resolutions adopted by DSA's National Convention or DSA's National Political Committee.

ARTICLE XI. Elections, Nominations and Recalls.

Section 1. Nominations Committee.

A three (3) person Nominations Committee shall be established at least one month prior to every normal election by vote of a Regular Meeting. It shall solicit and receive nominations for the positions to be elected.

Section 2. Nominations Process.

Nominations for Local Chapter officers and delegates to the National Convention shall be opened 10 days before and closed at the election meeting. The call for nominations shall be announced to all members in good standing of DSA as soon as nominations are open.

Section 3. Uncontested Positions.

If a position is uncontested, the nominee may be declared elected by acclamation.

Section 4. Temporary Leadership After Local Chapter Status

After the Local Chapter is approved by the National Political Committee, the Organizing Committee will operate as a temporary Steering Committee, up until the first General Election. The General Election is to be held at least by February 1st, although the Organizing Committee

may call for an early election with a quorum of 50% of Organizing Committee members. An early election will follow the process outlined in Article XI. Elected Officers will assume their positions immediately after being elected.

If the Local Chapter is not approved by February 1st, elections will be held at the first meeting after being recognized, which will be a General Meeting.

Section 5. At-Large Members elected to the Steering Committee outside of the normal election period.

At-Large Members elected to the Steering Committee outside of the normal election period (i.e. General Meeting) will not require the processes outlined in Article XI, but may be elected via the processes outlined in Article VI, Section 4.

ARTICLE XII. Amendments.

Proposed amendments to these Bylaws must be made by written resolution, endorsed by five members of the Local Chapter of DSA, and submitted to the Steering Committee a month in advance of a General or Regular Meeting. The Steering Committee is required to provide the Local Chapter membership with two weeks' written or electronic notice of the proposed amendments. The amendment must be approved by a majority vote of two consecutive (Regular or General) Local Chapter meetings.

ARTICLE XIII. Rules of the Local Chapter.

Section 1. Rules.

The Rules contained in *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, shall govern this Local Chapter in cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these Bylaws. Consensus decision-making is desirable where feasible, but meetings must submit to *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* upon the request of a member.

Section 2. Action Out of Order.

Any action taken by an officer or member of the Local Chapter in contravention of these Bylaws is null and void.

ARTICLE XV. Distribution of Assets.

Upon dissolution of the organization, any residual assets shall become property of the national organization of Democratic Socialists of America.