Madison Area Democratic Socialists of America

About the 2024 Madison Area DSA Chapter Convention

RSVP for Convention by Friday, March 15

Submit campaign proposals, officer nominations and working group materials

Not a DSA Member in good standing? Renew or join

How to confirm your current membership status

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What is Convention?

Every year Madison Area DSA has a chapter convention where all members in good standing are invited to attend in order to make decisions about important chapter business. Our convention is the highest legislative body in the chapter. MADSA Convention will enable our chapter to focus our work in an impactful and politically relevant direction through democratic and member-driven brainstorming and collective decision making.

WHEN:
Saturday, March 23rd 10am-5pm. Doors open at 9:30am!

WHERE:

Madison Area Democratic Socialists of America

Goodman Center Ironworks Building, Grace Room
149 Waubesa St., Madison WI 53703

WHO:
All DSA members. Guests are welcome but will not participate in debating and voting.

COVID Protocols:
Masks are required.

What do I have to do for Convention?

Members

Members in good standing are invited to submit proposals for chapter campaigns and to run for chapter elections.

Working Group Co-Chairs

Working group co-chairs are responsible for submitting annual reports and proposed charters for their group's renewal. Working group co-chairs will also be expected to present their reports and charters at the March 23rd meeting for discussion and debate. We are requiring all working group charters to have at least 5 co-sponsoring members in good standing signed on.

Upcoming important dates

~~**Strategic Campaigns Training** | Sunday Feb 18, 10-11:30am | Zoom~~
~~Bring your campaign ideas to this training, where we'll dive deep into what makes a successful strategic campaign.~~

~~**Executive Committee Q&A** | Monday Feb 19, 7-8pm | Zoom | Passcode 371739~~
~~Anyone considering a role on the Executive Committee is encouraged to attend~~

~~**DSA Leadership Intensive** | Sat and Sun March 2-3, 12-5pm | RSVP~~
~~This two-day training, led by DSA's national Growth and Development Committee (GDC), is meant for chapter leaders (or prospective chapter leaders) of all experience levels to come together, learn from one another, and return to organizing with a greater understanding of what it takes to build DSA into a mass organization of working people across diverse backgrounds.~~

~~We will cover everything from how to cohere your chapter around shared projects to the basic, day-to-day work of chapter officers.~~

~~**Executive Committee Q&A** | Monday March 4, 7-8pm | Zoom | Passcode 371739~~
~~Anyone considering a role on the Executive Committee is encouraged to attend.~~

March General Membership Meeting | Tuesday March 12 7-8:00pm | Social Justice Center & Zoom
The official Convention Agenda will be presented and discussed, along with other important convention updates.

Convention RSVP Form, Campaign proposals, Working Group submissions and officer nominations DUE | Friday March 15 @ Midnight

Convention Compendium Available | March 16th
A convention guide including campaign proposals, working group submission and officer statements will be shared with all members.

2024 MADSA Convention | Saturday March 23 10am-5pm | Goodman Center Ironworks, Grace Room

What documents do I need to read before Convention?

The following will be available for you to view here **after Saturday, March 16th:**

- Executive Committee candidate statements
- Submitted campaign proposals
- Working group reports & charters

Submitting a chapter campaign proposal

This year, we will be soliciting campaign proposals from chapter members and voting to pursue **one campaign** together as a chapter.

All members interested in submitting a campaign proposal are strongly encouraged to attend the **Strategic Campaigns Training** on Sunday Feb 18 10-11:30am via Zoom.

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Why campaigns?
We have limited capacity, both as individuals and as an organization. Through one collective campaign, we can focus our people power to make real change in our community. By choosing just one campaign, we are acknowledging that MADSA cannot realistically address every political issue that arises. There will always be things we choose to dedicate our capacity to, and by definition, there will always be things we do not dedicate our capacity to. The tradeoff of focus is inherent to what a priority is, it's not negotiable.

Through campaign proposal discussions at Convention, we bring these political questions into the open, and require ourselves to negotiate the tradeoffs, and consider our strategy together, creating a healthy internal culture.

What is a campaign?
A political campaign is an organized effort to achieve specific political goals or changes.

DSA Campaigns do the following:

Win material change: People are suffering under capitalism right now. Delivering changes that affect people's daily, material lives inspires hope that things can get better and can motivate people to join with us in our fight.

Directly confronting capitalist class: Our campaigns are chances to introduce socialism to everyone, far beyond our normal DSA reach. Campaigns can serve as political education vehicles that help heighten class conflict and show the power of collective, not individual, action.

Shift Power: Not just winning a campaign demand or election, but through winning it, shifting power (even slightly) towards the working class and away from those who currently have it - even if we don't see the shift right away.

Breaking down a campaign
Campaigns have a clear **demand, target, goals, base, timeline and escalating tactics**. Members submitting campaign proposals should fill out the 2024 Madison Strategic Campaigns Proposal Worksheet, which walks you through the elements of a campaign.

2024 Madison Strategic Campaigns Proposal Worksheet

Example campaigns:
- Pushing a BDS resolution in the City Council
- Municipalize the power grid
- Opposing demolition of public housing

Examples that are NOT campaigns:

- Developing and executing Know Your Rights trainings
    - This is not a campaign because it has no target or demand
- Support striking workers
    - This is not a campaign because it has no clear demand or target in and of itself
- Build a tenants union
    - This is not a campaign because it has no clear demand or target in and of itself

A MADSA campaign, specifically, involves a democratic, flexible, and collaborative approach to our goal setting and strategizing.

How campaigns are implemented:

- Membership identifies strategies best suited for the collective campaign and allocates resources
- Campaign leadership is democratically elected. Campaign leadership coordinates campaign work and moves it forward
- Chapter meetings prioritize campaign updates and decision-making
- Membership may create work groups to help with various aspects of running a campaign, like Communications, Organizing, Political Education
- Existing Working Groups fold agreed upon strategy into their work when opportunities arise (by devoting some number of meetings throughout the year to a priority or priorities, by doing study groups around specific issues, etc.)
- Exec takes direction from membership when making decisions about allocating resources (committees, meetings, funds) toward items designated for campaigns

How to submit a campaign proposal

Any member in good standing may submit a campaign proposal. All campaign proposals must have no less than 5 chapter members signed on as co-sponsors. This is to help ensure campaign proposals come forward with a good level of buy-in and commitment, and to encourage campaign development to move outside of Working Group silos and build ties across chapter formations.

Submitting Working Group reports and charters

Working Group reports provide the chapter a summary of what each Working Group has done in the past year. If a Working Group wants to recharter, or a group of 5 members in good standing want to form a new Working Group, they must submit a charter. Current charters can be found on our website. **All working group charters are required to have at least 5 co-sponsoring members in good standing signed on (including co-chairs).**

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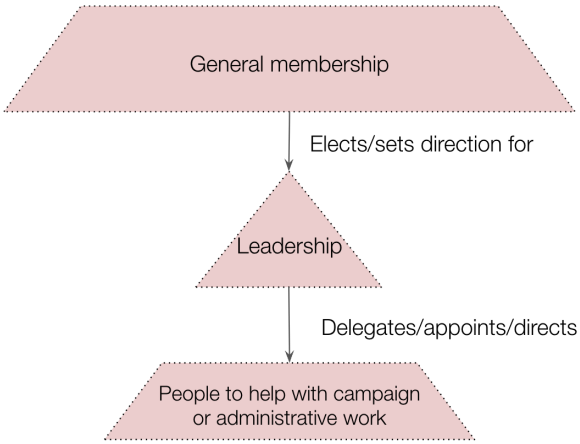
Membership at Convention may decide whether or not to recharter a Working Group based on: if they have achieved their past goals, if they've made judicious use of their budget, if they are contributing to the growth or capacity of the chapter, etc.

Elections

To nominate yourself or others for the following positions, fill out the corresponding forms here.

Nominations for Executive Committee

The Madison Area Democratic Socialists of America (MADSA) Executive Committee is the chapter leadership responsible for the day-to-day operations of the chapter and for making decisions between membership meetings.
The Executive Committee also plays a role in shaping the form and content of membership meetings, maintaining democratic accountability within the organization, and leading the chapter politically in statements and proposed activities.



All Executive Committee members are expected to attend twice-monthly Exec meetings and should be regularly present at membership meetings. Co-chair responsibilities take roughly 3-5 hours of work a week, while other positions take roughly 2-3. You can read about each of these positions and their responsibilities in our bylaws.

The follow positions are open for election:

Co-chairs (2)	Give shape and support to the work of the chapter
Administrator	Coordinate meetings, maintain chapter records, coordinate chapter elections
Treasurer	Monitor income and expenses, pay invoices, maintain contracts, file taxes
Membership	Orient new members to the chapter, maintain chapter member lists,

Coordinator	serve on the Membership Committee
Communications Coordinator	Assist with internal and external communication
At-large	Provide important support as needed to Exec and the chapter

Members interested in running for a position on the Executive Committee are encouraged to contact our current officers on Slack to talk more about their positions: Adithya P and Joel W (Co-Chairs), Bonnie W (Administrator), Phil P (Membership Coordinator), Will P (Treasurer), and Henry B (At-large). Members can also email dsamadison@gmail.com with questions. Members are also invited to sit in on upcoming committee meetings to see what the work is like:

Executive Committee Q&A | Monday Feb. 19, 7-8pm | Zoom | Passcode 371739
Executive Committee Q&A | Monday Mar. 4, 7-8pm | Zoom | Passcode 371739

Nominations for Community Accountability Committee

The Community Accountability Committee (CAC, aka Harassment and Grievance Officers or HGOs) helps with community accountability, interpersonal oppression, harm, harassment, grievances, and related topics. Our bylaws specify our chapter must elect four CAC members with one year term limits. National DSA requires each chapter to have HGOs and provides resources and trainings to HGOs.

Members interested in serving on the Community Accountability Committee are encouraged to contact our current committee on Slack to talk more about their positions: Ally B, Dan F. Submit nominations here.

How will decisions be made?

Voting

During the 2023 MADSA Convention, we will be using the following voting methods to fit with our in-person meeting:

- We will discuss then vote on working group charters in person at the Goodman Community Center.

- We will vote on Exec and CAC positions using OpaVote, sent to all members via email on March 24th
- We will discuss and then vote for a single campaign in person at the Goodman Community Center

Making amendments

Working Group reports/charters and campaign proposals will be posted to the #general Slack channel 7 days prior to Convention. Members can propose amendments to proposals before Convention meetings on the #general Slack channel (contact dsamadison@gmail.com if you have trouble accessing Slack). Proposers can decide whether to accept amendments; once they accept a proposed amendment, the Convention Planning Committee will update the original proposal with **red, bolded** language to denote additions, and will denote cuts with ~~red, strikethrough~~ font. All amendments must be final by noon on Friday, March 22 for the March 23rd meeting. Members will not be able to propose amendments on the floor, unless the meeting chair and proposer(s) in question agree that an amendment is friendly.

Other Questions?

Please reach out to a member of our Convention Planning Committee (Bonnie W, Adithya P, David O, Lindberg C, Emerson M, Omar M)