

16th Steering Committee Plan of Work

Term: December 2023 through December 2024

Due: 1/30/24

Adopted: 1/30/24

Introduction

The 16th Steering Committee of Metro DC DSA was first elected in December of 2023 and will serve until the next Steering Committee elections in December 2024. The Plan of Work is a mechanism to balance both individual members' responsibility for getting work done and the status of the Steering Committee as a collective body with shared responsibilities. Steering Committee portfolios are similar to a governmental cabinet system, where certain members are given the charge to take on and carry out work, as described in section 7.8 of the Bylaws:

“A portfolio is a division of responsibility that may be assigned to one or more members of the Steering Committee but is accountable to the policies and decisions of the committee as a whole... Portfolios may include oversight, administration, or control over existing chapter functions, as well as responsibility for establishing or promoting new initiatives as part of the Steering Committee's plan of work.”

Through the portfolios below, the Steering Committee has identified bodies of work that are high priorities for this year's Steering Committee, from the basic administrative operations that are necessary for the chapter to function, to advancements to help make chapter work and organizing run more smoothly and effectively.

“Taking into consideration its responsibilities, portfolios, approved resolutions, and priority campaigns passed at the local convention, the Steering Committee shall draft a plan of work that will help guide its activities for its term. A plan of work established by each Steering Committee must be approved and appear on an online portal available to all members within a month of the new Steering Committee taking office.”

Over the next term, the 16th Steering Committee is dedicated to strengthening our internal operations like Finance and Member Mobilization, while also advancing our external facing work like Communications, Campaigns Council, and Political Education.

Portfolios

The below details assigned areas of responsibility for members of the Steering Committee.

These assignments are in no way meant to relieve the Steering Committee as a whole of ultimate responsibility and authority over these areas of work as a deliberative body, but instead to delegate focus for effective and efficient management of these items. The text

under each header is meant to sketch out general work and responsibilities contained within each assignment, but is not exhaustive or final and will continue to be iterated on throughout this Committee's term.

Communications (Aparna R/Michael M/Carl R)

Over the course of the next year, we will collaborate closely with the Communications Department, representing earned media, publications, social media, website, and more to continue developing long-term communications systems while providing short-term comms support in terms of press relations and social media drafting and posting.

We plan to work with the earned media team to develop a press list. We'll continue fine-tuning guidelines and expectations for social media posts and will develop decision-making guidance for social media volunteers to proactively determine the best communications response (across all our channels) for various situations. We'll also work with campaigns to increase modes of communication with the social media department to make sure our comms are not just promoting events, but also documenting them. This year we aspire to:

- Refine our earned media strategy (radio, tv, local newspapers/sites) - clean up our inventory of contacts, develop additional relationships and work with working groups to identify upcoming opportunities through the year to pitch journalists
- Create decision-making protocols for communications tactics (Twitter thread, op-ed, LTE, etc) to deploy during important chapter moments
- Continue to work with the Comms Department and working group, section, and branch leaders to ensure that the chapter's voice and messaging can be consistent, reliable, and accountable.
- Work to develop press and media and social media trainings by end of year for Campaigns Council members
- Recruit and mobilize volunteers (specifically additional press liaisons, graphic designers, comms department stewards).

Campaigns Council & Working Group Coordination (Gary Z/Claire M)

Prior iterations of the Campaigns Council have been productive and well appreciated across the working groups. The Council acts as a vital source of engagement and support for working groups and chapter leaders. This year, the plan is to evolve beyond meetings and general report-backs into more direct coordination and support. At the first meeting of the Campaigns Council, there was a collective desire and resolve across the WGs to achieve this — a real desire to break down the typical silos and breach the contours of work to unify objectives and learn from each other's tactics.

The big plot: create common real (in terms of shared workspaces, forms and propaganda) as well as a social infrastructure that unites and binds the working groups together. There is a lot of startup work in getting this kicked off, but if fruited and harvested this will make jumping the

Campaigns Council less daunting and opaque in the future, and also ensure the Campaigns Council remains something that working groups and chapters actively want to participate in. To this end, there are four larger operations to be carried out this year:

1. Build and maintain the Campaigns Terminal. This online sheet will be used to identify and coordinate action, provide updates and notices for WGs, and also keep a running list of active campaigns/plots being orchestrated by associated working groups. If realized, this will act as a point of clarity for the working groups and also become an asset to auxiliary formations in their support of chapter activities (Steering Committee, publications, Administrative Committee, etc).
2. Intentionally engage chapter-wide support structures in the Campaigns Council. In focus, the aim is to better engage vital support structures of the chapter — the Mobilization Department and publications cooperative in particular — into the work and life of the Campaigns Council. These structures act as vital connective tissue that binds together members and formations within the chapter. The objective is also to assist the Political Education working group in better integrating into the work of chapter functions. PoliEd should be seen as a channel/function available to the priority campaigns and active working groups to carry out their work or base build to a wider audience. A secondary ambition here is to make members of supporting structures of the chapter feel more comfortable stepping into the Campaigns Council in the future.
3. Develop a Campaigns Council Publication, to be published bi-monthly as a record of work being engaged across the chapter. This is an ambitious project, but the objective in this pursuit is to go beyond simple note-taking as a means of eloquating ongoing work in the chapter. An intentional focus on developing a narrative around the chapter's work will become a vital resource for members of the campaigns council, chapter-wide support formations, and members in understanding what Metro DC DSA is doing (and where support and engagement is needed).
4. Integrating skill building and strategic discussion into Campaigns Council meetings to improve working group steward, and by extension campaign, capacity. The Campaigns Council is a valuable space for chapter leaders with unique organizing experiences to problem solve and learn from one another. Topics for facilitated discussions could include: determining a strategic campaign demand or target, building a ladder of engagement, using the chapter's administrative functions, recruiting for DSA through your campaign, identifying and building new leaders, designing a campaign structure, operating within coalitions, building relationships with unions and their members, coordinating with national DSA committees, building rapid response mechanisms, and many more!

As decided at the first meeting of the 2024 Council, the Council will meet formally every other month. On off months, we are planning to schedule social events to build rapport and engagement across chapter leadership.

Political Engagement Committee (Bakari W/Aparna R/Hayden D)

1. Support electoral and legislative campaigns

- a. Collect volunteer information
 - b. Identify and support field leaders
 - c. host fundraisers, organize rallies, develop communications, and take on other activities (similar to previous cycles) in support of our endorsed candidates
 - d. Examples of these potential legislative campaigns are passing the Environmental Justice Amendment Act and Green New Deal for Social Housing bills in DC, while also organizing against expanded unconstitutional powers for MPD officers; in Maryland, fighting for rent stabilization laws in Prince George's County, Rockville, and Gaithersburg, and banning consent searches in Montgomery County; and, in Virginia, repealing right to work and opposing Governor Youngkin's anti-trans and anti-abortion agenda.
2. Establish Endorsement schedule/process
- a. Timeline
 - i. 2024 General
 - ii. 2025 Primary
 - iii. Make further timeline suggestions ahead of time for future PECs
 - b. Questionnaire [changes](#) from working groups
 - c. Editing the endorsement handbook and [website](#)
 - d. Identifying races of interest, contacting candidates, building relationships with candidates of interest
 - e. Publicizing endorsement timeline/questionnaire
 - f. Walk candidates of interest through the questionnaire, follow up with them, answer questions, give feedback
3. GR-4 goals
- a. Identify cadre candidates to run
 - b. Train chapter members to staff electoral offices
 - c. Identify districts, races, and candidates of interest
 - d. A chapter town hall with electeds
 - e. 2 electoral accountability discussions
 - f. SIO meetings with involvement of working groups
4. Electoral priority campaign resolution (when relevant)
5. Other relevant GRs, BAs, and process changes
- a. Ballot initiative endorsement process BA
 - i. Ballot initiative questionnaire
 - b. Towards a working group structure

Finance (Tim S/Gary Z)

This portfolio's main responsibility is sharing information about budget with working groups, steering, et al., putting together reports, ensuring that our finances are within legal compliance, and executing reimbursements.

These responsibilities are not by any means overwhelming, but the work is tedious. Ensuring that they are done, and documented, promptly, correctly, and efficiently is important. Our focus

will be on making sure that these core functions happen, and that they are made somewhat more efficient during this term.

The main area in which efficiency can be improved is to automate and streamline our report-writing process, to make it easier for people other than the Treasurer to contribute to the process. This will make it easier to delegate tasks and distribute responsibilities, but it also makes our leadership pipeline less brittle, since it reduces the learning curve of getting into the job while also giving more people more relevant experience. Reports could be improved by clarifying our financial position and communicating budget levels to subgroups between GBM's (where we currently report on budget levels by line item). We will work to improve core functions along these lines this year. Ideally, we would also collaborate with training comrades to do a training on budget and finance: both basic reimbursement and information sharing the process of requesting money, winning priority campaign votes and complying with bylaws. These objectives are secondary to carrying out more immediate fundraising in the context of National DSA's ongoing budget crunch.

In addition to this, we will continue to encourage increased dues (especially monthly and solidarity dues), both by generally pushing them in finance-related communications and by working with others on and off steering to do at least one chapter-level solidarity dues drive by this Spring, using a mix of chapter lists and the nationally-provided solidarity dues hotlist. Over the summer we will work with working groups to create materials pitching the importance of both direct giving to the chapter and monthly/solidarity dues (since the latter contribute to dues share, while annual dues to not), and then use those materials for a fundraising campaign next Fall and Winter, on top of ongoing solidarity dues efforts.

National Coordination and Regional Organizing (Claire M/Imara C)

National Coordination and Regional Organizing acts as a liaison between the Metro DC chapter and DSA National leadership and committees. We also coordinate with nearby DSA chapters, particularly in Maryland and Virginia, to promote regional collaboration. This year, members of this portfolio will seek to grow our chapter membership's knowledge about and engagement with the national organization and regional opportunities for collaboration. To do this, members of this portfolio will:

- Attend regular regional and national calls in order to communicate the priorities of the national organization to the Steering Committee and the General Body
- Assist chapter campaigns, working groups, and committees to connect with their national counterparts and plug into relevant resources (training, grants, etc.)
 - ex: Labor Working Group and the National Labor Commission, We Power DC and the Green New Deal Campaign Commission, the local and national Political Education Committees, the local and national Abolition Working Groups, local YDSA chapters with the YDSA National Coordinating Committee, etc.
- Foster collaboration between Metro DC chapter members in leadership positions within national committees and working groups

- Open up space for discussion about the national organization in chapter spaces, including Slack and General Body Meetings
- Communicate regularly with national DSA staff, namely Metro DC's field organizer
- Engage with and where feasible support other nearby DSA chapters, with particular focus on connecting Metro DC branches with statewide organizing and strategic planning

Political Education and Training (Imara C/Hayden D)

This year Political Education will continue its long-standing role in developing and deploying opportunities for chapter membership to learn and deepen their connections with the chapter.

Across 2024 Political Education will focus on the following goals:

- Continue educating members on subjects and debate around socialist ideas.
- Continue to build bonds and culture within the chapter through interaction and discourse.
- Support priority campaigns and Working Groups with relevant educational programming
- Formalization of political education spaces as an "on-ramp" into the chapter and more broadly socialist organizing.
- Recommit to documenting and highlighting opportunities for Political Ed via the chapter's communications platforms.

Following last year's successful launch of the Training Department, we plan to focus on formalizing the body through the first transition of stewards while also standardizing our offering of training for 2024. Across 2024 the Training Department will focus on the following goals:

- Community cohort model conducted via trainings and development for fall and spring community cohorts
- Conduct a summer organizer skills training
- Conduct a summer organizer training for chapter members in branches
- Intermittent trainings throughout the year led by department members and stewards

Operations (Michael M/Tim S/Hayden D)

The Administrative Committee (AdCom) is a chapter entity sanctioned by the Steering Committee to oversee and accomplish the general administrative functions of the chapter, among other duties as outlined in the bylaws. It is the apparatus that houses all of the chapter's administrative duties to provide our various Working Groups, Priority Campaigns, Branches, and Sections with access to pooled resources and assistance in a structured and timely capacity. AdCom is organized into departments: Communications, Operations, TechOps, Security and Member Engagement. Within those departments are committees or teams — for example, Events (within Operations) and Social Media (within Communications). Both Departments and Committees are led by stewards, and the chapter Secretary chairs AdCom with assistance from the AdCom Steward, who helps lead bi-weekly AdCom meetings and RedDesk support.

AdCom has formally existed since late 2020 and has evolved along with the chapter. Departments and the teams within them have been developed depending on the organizing

circumstances and internal demand for administrative assistance in that area. We'll work to maintain its current functions that help run the chapter and work to establish new processes. We'll also work to support the Adcom Steward and the rest of the Department Stewards so every function from website maintenance to spoke texting is adequately resourced and staffed. We will create more proactive processes and decision-making frameworks for functions that have been generally ad hoc. Additionally, we'll ensure Adcom increases its capacity and more aggressively mobilizes members who indicate in the member survey that their skills align with those needed in Adcom (anyone w/ technical skills, project management, design, comms, etc.). And finally, to ensure that Adcom is effectively supporting our external organizing, we will proactively work with WG leaders to ensure that all of their administrative needs are met to the best of our ability.

- Reinvigorate Operations Dept – get more people, ideally all of whom can cut lists for opavote, spoke, and emails, and set up action network emails and data pulls, and at least some of whom can run spoke. Recruit and train 3-5.
- Expand geocoding, using a mix of the stuff Tim has written and stuff Brian is currently working on. This will help with social stuff and SIO/campaign related stuff, cuz we can do micro targeted asks.
- Continue to improve Events: need to add 2-3 more people (partially to get Tim off of events), and fix 2fa to be less aggressive to have fewer people locked out, improve processes on zoom to avoid needing an ops person to start webinars. Think we've already fixed the issue with zoom meeting rooms getting double booked, but need to keep an eye on that. Need to do some communication with WG's around how to submit these well, cuz a lot of frustration on both sides of this comes from people doing forms wrong.
- Continue to mobilize new members to the Communications Dept — at least 1-2 more people to help with social media — and help train/develop a new Comms Steward.
- Regularly promote and contribute to the chapter Wiki our TechOps Dept is developing to archive institutional knowledge, chapter structures, best practices for RedDesk and other tech platforms, etc.
- Work with our Security Dept Steward to develop and implement refined security protocols and mobilize 1-2 more members to help with vetting.
- Work with Member Engagement Dept Steward to ensure they are adequately staffed and supported in developing an efficient workflow for mobilization, recruitment, retention, and training.
- Mobilize dedicated tech team to help Hayden D with hybrid meeting set up, operation and transportation.
- Integrate our internal work with our external campaigns: right now, there are two major differences in how members approach chapter organizing: folks who help build up our internal structures and administrative functions, and folks who lead our external campaigns. Having these areas of work so distinctly separated has contributed to increased burnout on the internal side and a lack of proper training and exposure to chapter tech tools on the external side. This creates a siloing effect where members leading campaigns heavily rely on AdCom to put their events together, boost on social

media, provide tech assistance, etc., while AdCom volunteers feel disconnected from the work they're actually contributing to. Making an effort to coordinate with working group and section leaders to provide training on crucial administrative and tech functions, while also facilitating more collaboration between AdCom and campaign leaders is imperative if we want to alleviate burnout and build a stronger administrative structure. As Parquet Courts said "Swapping parts and roles is not acting, but rather emancipation from expectation."

Member Engagement (Emily N/Eduarda S)

As national and local elections draw attention to the socialist movement, we are committed to prioritizing member recruitment, mobilization, and retention throughout our term. With the reintegration of the Member Engagement formation into Adcom, we will collaborate with existing leaders in this crucial work to support priorities and enhance our strategy for expanding socialist organizing in our region.

Our portfolio will focus on two main areas: recruitment and mobilization/member development.

This term, we aim to develop a chapter-wide member engagement strategy with a multi-pronged approach: strengthening outreach and recruitment efforts, organizing consistent, low-pressure social events, deepening engagement with external campaigns, working groups, and sections, and establishing clearer pathways for engagement and leadership development.

To recruit new members and foster new engagement spaces, we will strategically engage with the broader DMV community and provide opportunities for new and prospective members to connect with cadre organizers. We will enhance outreach efforts by compiling and updating a list of events for tabling, facilitating membership recruitment, and encouraging involvement from various formations to engage with community members interested in learning more about DSA and our chapter's organizing efforts. Additionally, we will assemble a team of volunteers to organize low-pressure social events such as happy hours, picnics, and potlucks, creating more community spaces for recruiting new members and fostering relationships across different segments of our chapter.

We will also prioritize collaboration with the various formations within our chapter, both internally and externally facing, to develop pathways for new members and levels of engagement. This will involve closer coordination between our Member Engagement Department and campaigns, working groups, and sections. We are committed to working in partnership with the MED, Campaigns Council, and Training Department to design a "Ladders of Engagement" training for working group stewards that meets their needs and priorities while aligning with our chapter-wide member engagement strategy.

Security and Safety (Carl R/Bakari W)

The security and safety portfolio intends to hold trainings with former marshals from the chapter's walking tours and protest actions to prepare for the 2024 election. Organizing will

focus on getting chapter members ready to protect themselves and the chapter during protests similar to those seen in 2020. Portfolio holders will liaise with the Gaza Protest/Direct Action Subcommittee and the National Red Rabbits, reporting our security procedures and the results of our actions to those bodies, reporting back to the chapter about developments, and connecting the chapter with security resources from National.

We will also develop and standardize the requirements for vetting in the chapter, looking to historical experience, in order to improve and better protect sensitive membership data, the chapter as a whole from infiltration, and to lay the groundwork for security during a possible second Trump administration openly hostile to our political goals and rights.

If necessary, the security portfolio will advise the entire Steering Committee of credible threats to the safety and security of the chapter, and will provide recommendations for action.