

# Working Class Unity Membership Handbook

WCU's Motto  
"We aren't like the other NGOs"

## Introduction

Our work is centered on building working class movements rooted in shared experiences. That's where we have the power to improve our lives now and ultimately dismantle capitalism, the state, and all forms of oppression.

Our world is convulsed by an incredibly complex set of interlocking crises both new and old; war, rising nationalism, nativism and white supremacy, economic instability, exploitation

[[WHAT IS THE ORG GONNA BE LIKE]]

This Handbook along with the Working Class Unity (henceforth WCU) [bylaws](#) should provide you with all the resources you need to understand WCU's goals, organizational structure, culture, and policies.

That being said, this Handbook is a living document, and as such may be amended by the Membership Committee with approval from the General Meeting. This is because everything we do is determined by our Members. Which

means you can suggest amendments to be voted on during a General Meeting.

The working class and the Owing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among the working people of the World while the few, who make up the Owing class, have more than they could ever use let alone need. Struggle between these two classes must continue until the Workers of the World organize as a class, take possession of the means of production, abolish the wage system, and live in harmony with the earth. It is the mission of the Working class to do away with Capitalism. To do this we must be organized, not only for everyday struggle with capitalists, but also to carry on production when Capitalism has been overthrown. By organizing in this manner we create the conditions necessary for a more just society.

Working Class Unity We are a membership-based ??? organization fighting for the human right to housing for all. We demand truly affordable and safe housing. Our mission is to strengthen tenants' power through education, advocacy, and direct action. Housing is a human right!

[[[SOMETHING ABOUT WHAT KIND OF ORG WCU IS]]]

[[["We're not just fighting – we're fighting with every fiber of our being. We're fighting for your right to be the author of your own life story. We're fighting to snatch back control from the clutches of those who would use your hard-earned money

without your consent. We're fighting to empower you in your homes, in your workplaces, and in every facet of your existence.

This is about more than just politics; this is about a burning desire to birth a true democracy, one that reflects the voices of the many, not the few. Our mission is to rally the working masses, to ignite a fire of revolutionary class struggle that will forge a society where socialism and democracy go hand in hand.

Working Class Unity isn't a political party; we're a relentless, member-driven force dedicated to openly championing socialism within the heart of San Joaquin County. We understand that many of you yearn to shape a better world, but the journey can seem daunting when you're standing alone, powerless, against a sea of corrupt politicians and corporate giants who hoard all the power. We need more than just brilliant ideas; we need the unshakable strength to make those ideas a reality, to rise up against those who seek to suppress us. And that strength can only be found in the unity of the working class.

We're on a mission to recruit, educate, and bolster activists who will stand shoulder to shoulder in the battle for working class supremacy. We're here to build bridges between labor and tenant unions and the vibrant tapestry of social movements. Yes, it's going to be a long and arduous road, but we believe, with every fiber of our beings, that when workers stand together, we can fashion a movement that heralds socialism and crafts a brighter, more equitable world.

They want to render us destitute, to strip away our right to the homes we've built, to deny us the sustenance of the very land we've nurtured. But we won't let them. For our families, for the dreams of our children, regardless of your race, your creed, your birthplace – don't stand idly by and let them pillage the country each of you has played a part in constructing.

We have the power to organize collectively, to amass a roaring throng of members. We don't have to rely solely on politicians, pleading for their attention in the hope they'll choose us over their deep-pocketed donors. We can stand as one, a force so potent that it shakes the very foundations of injustice, and together, we will write a new chapter in the history of justice and equality."

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"At [Organization Name], we are not just an organization; we are a movement fueled by unwavering emotion and an unrelenting desire for change. Our mission is to empower individuals to seize control of their own destinies, to become the authors of their own narratives, and to reclaim their hard-earned resources from those who would exploit them without consent. We stand united in our pursuit of a true democracy, one that amplifies the voices of the many over the interests of the few.

[Organization Name] is not merely another entity; we are a dynamic, member-driven force committed to openly advocating for socialism within our community of [Community Name]. We recognize that many yearn to shape a brighter future but often feel powerless when faced with the entrenched forces of corruption in politics and big corporations that hoard power. We understand that ideas alone are not enough; we need the collective strength to transform those

ideas into reality, to challenge those who seek to silence us. This strength lies in the unity of the working class.

Our core mission is to recruit, educate, and support activists who will join the battle for working class empowerment. We endeavor to build bridges between labor and tenant unions, fostering solidarity with a diverse array of social movements. While the journey ahead may be arduous, we believe, with unshakable conviction, that when workers stand together, we can create a movement that champions socialism and paves the way for a more equitable world.

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“They get out-of-control salaries,” he said. “They get pensions they don’t even need. They get top-rate health care. They work whatever schedule they want. The majority of our members do not get a pension nowadays. It’s crazy. We get substandard health care. We don’t get to work remotely.”

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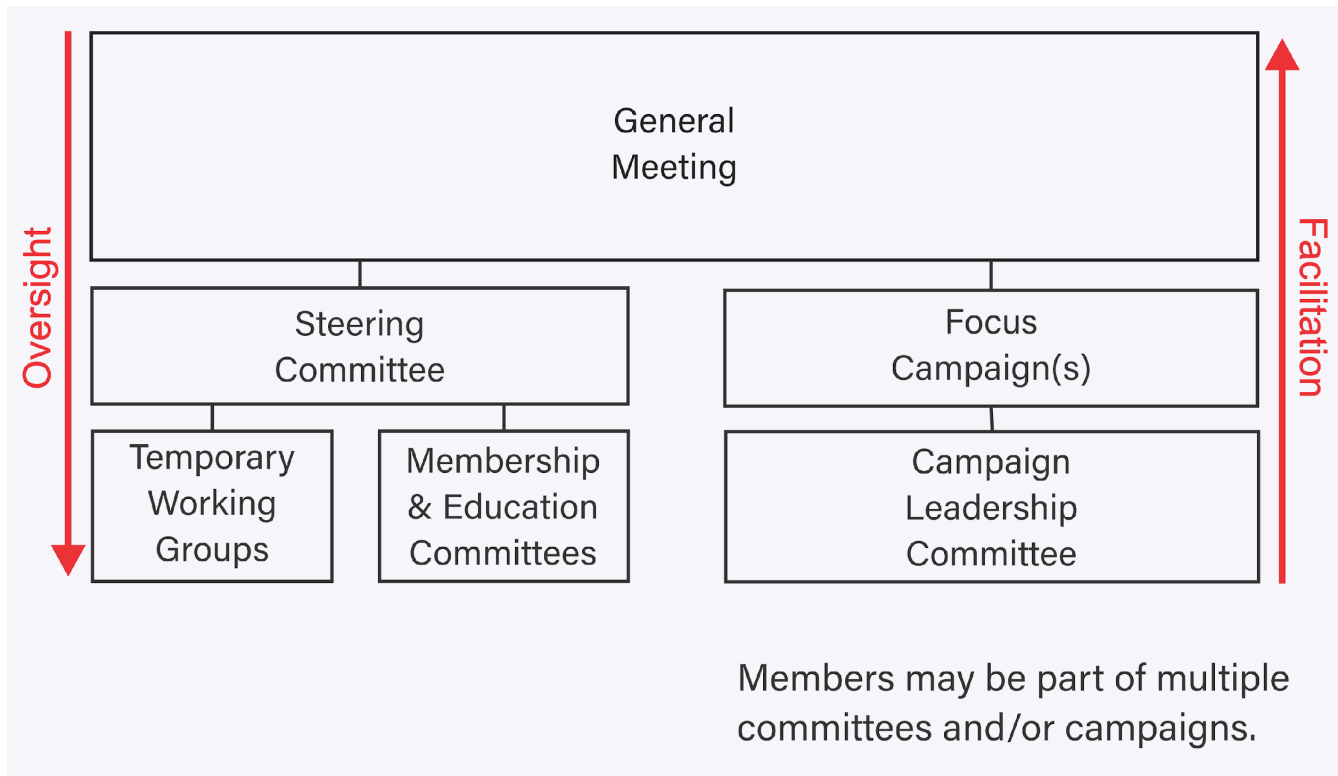
## **Points to Unity/Guiding Stars**

1. Anti-Capitalism
2. Mutual Aid?
3. Building Working Class Power
4. Self-Management
5. Solidarity w/ whom?
6. Liberation of all People

7. Accountability

8. The Ends do not Justify the Mean

## Organizational Structure



**Members:** Members must recognize that all people should have an equal voice in determining our common future. Members organize for self-determination by having decision-making power come from the bottom up. Members of WCU will be those who in free and mutual association have attended a meeting and paid at least 1 month's dues. Membership will not be barred on the basis of background or identity. Censure & expulsion should be based on a failure to attend at least 1 meeting per calendar year, past or current violations of our Code of Conduct, or concerns for the safety of our membership.

**Focus Campaigns:** are the primary goals and commitments of WCU. Campaigns are proposed and voted upon at the General Meeting. WCU may only have 2 Campaigns running concurrently. Campaigns are renewed or finished every 6 months. Upon approval of a new campaign, nominations for Campaign Leadership will open. Campaigns will operate without formal leadership for their first month. Campaign Leadership shall consist of at least one member but may be expanded by the Membership during the campaign formation process.

**The Steering Committee** executes the decisions of the Membership, and is responsible for the administrative duties required for the operation of WCU. The Steering Committee is made up of 4 elected positions: Campaign Coordinator, Membership Coordinator, Secretary, & Treasurer.

**The Education Committee** is responsible for WCU's political education and outreach.

**The Membership Committee** is responsible for recruitment of and outreach to non-Members, and creating training and leadership development of the Membership, as well as ensuring Members are in good standing.

**Temporary Working Groups** may be authorized by the Membership at a General Meeting. Such groups should not necessitate a significant, ongoing commitment of resources from the membership.

Members may join any committee or group by joining a meeting of that body, with the exceptions of the Steering

Committee and Campaign Leadership Committees which are elected by the Membership at a General Meeting.

Detailed descriptions of all our structures are outlined in our bylaws [\[LINK TO BYLAWS\]](#)

## **General Meeting**

[[[HOW TO RUN A MEETING]]]

WCU General Meetings take place on the 1st Thursday of every month.

General Meetings are where we discuss important details of events, committees, and make decisions for the whole organization. The General Meeting oversees and has the final say on all WCU activities. Decisions require a 51% Majority for most issues or 2/3<sup>rd</sup>s Majority Vote when deciding upon Focus Campaigns and amendments to WCU bylaws. This margin ensures buy-in from political minorities within the chapter.

Once a bylaw change has been announced, any member may submit amendments to that proposal. Amendments must be announced to the Membership two weeks before the vote to adopt the proposal.

Any Member in good standing can make a motion during a General Meeting. The General Body can then discuss and vote on the motions in accordance with Robert's Rules. For example you might suggest that a General Meeting be rescheduled, or propose a new Focus Campaign. It's a good idea to inform the General Body if you plan to propose a major motion so that the Membership can make an informed decision. [\[LINK TO FORUM OR SLACK OR WHATEVER\]](#)



The General Meeting should serve as an entry-point for new members or curious non-members who want to learn about what is going on in WCU – the work we are doing to advance our socialist project. Discussions at general meetings should be made accessible by providing as much background information and explanation of terms as possible.

The meetings should also be as physically accessible as possible. This can include holding in-person meetings in accessible buildings, utilizing a PA system at meetings so that members can be clearly heard when they speak, being as “parent friendly” as possible, or holding hybrid in-person/virtual meetings so that members who may not be able to attend in-person can still participate.

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General Meetings often have the following components and generally are one (1) hour in length and scheduled after 5pm:

- Pre-meeting new member socials

- Initial remarks explaining Robert’s Rules and Who We Are/What We Believe

- Event Announcements

- Reports from campaigns, committees, working groups, etc.

- Political education

- Discussions and voting:

  - Elections for leadership positions

  - Approval of campaigns/working groups

  - Motions from members

  - Any other business needing to be discussed

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## **Education**

Political Education is essential to the functioning and mission of WCU. Socialist Political Education comes in 2 forms

generally called “Theory” and “Practice” the intersection of which is often referred to as “Praxis”.

Theory generally comes in the form of books, and debate, though in our technological era you are sure to find plenty of videos on the subject online.

Practice on the other hand is the education you get through active participation with organizations like WCU!

Our political education comes from the work done within the Education Committee. This committee is responsible for maintaining our book club series, educational presentations at our General Meetings, and other education work within the chapter. Education work does not require a member to have any specific backgrounds or experiences. For our education to be meaningful it should engage members of all backgrounds and draw on their experiences, perspectives, and ideas.

## **Culture of Democracy**

Most of us don't get to experience democracy in our daily lives. Learning to put democracy into practice can be exciting and empowering, but it can also be tedious, confusing, and stressful.

Democracy does not mean voting for Leadership or sitting back and hoping the Steering Committee does your will. We want you to participate, ask questions, critique our assumptions [LINK TO HOW TO CRITICIZE AND HANDLE CRITICISM].

We want to build all of our capacities for judging arguments, creating new campaigns, and being leaders and organizers. We want to welcome opposition in practice and not just in theory. Engaging in frank and earnest debate on how to accomplish our collective goals. This might be a lengthy and intense process, but we must remember that we are all comrades and that we must foster respect for each other! One of the ways we show that respect is by taking each other seriously, not by pretending to agree simply to avoid conflict. We believe conflict is a normal part of building a mass movement that is democratic *in practice*. Avoiding conflict ultimately means suppressing the voices of our membership, and we have also found through hard experience that, in most cases, there is no way to avoid conflict. Conflict should be both comradely and democratic. While it can be stressful, if we continue to approach it with good faith and practice we will build a healthier organization. Ultimately what we want is for power in the chapter to be visible, and therefore believe in setting measurable and quantifiable goals and holding ourselves to them. We want to ask ourselves what specifically a tactic is meant to achieve, and if we fail to reach this goal, ask ourselves why this happened in a spirit of frankness.

## **Growing as a Member**

This section outlines the Membership Pipeline. The goal is to show Members the path to taking on a larger role in WCU. While far from the only way in which a member can become more involved, we believe that this is the easiest way for

someone new to this work to build skills. We have included a shorter summary of the pipeline in this Handbook – the full version can be found [here](#).

[WE NEED TO COMPLETE OUR MEMBERSHIP PIPELINE OUTLINE, LINK IT HERE AND ABBREVIATE IT]

## **Focus Campaigns**

WCU has upto 2 concurrent Focus Campaigns running at any given time. These are the Campaigns that we will be spending the majority of our time and energy on as an organization.

### **Focus Campaign Creation**

[TO BE DETERMINED]

### **FOCUS CAMPAIGN CRITERIA**

[TO BE DETERMINED]

### **Guiding Questions:**

- What is the timeline for the campaign?
- How will this build power for oppressed groups in the San Joaquin County area? How does this campaign exhibit solidarity with oppressed peoples in our area?
- What will this campaign need materially?
- How does this campaign build Working Class Unity's power (eg: how does this engage and develop Working Class Unity members)?

- What is the engagement strategy? Is it a broad enough campaign to engage a variety of members with different interests and talents?
- How does the campaign engage with or overlap with existing campaigns?
- Does the campaign have clear measurable goals? What are those goals and how will they be measured?
- If the campaign is public facing, what is the media strategy?
- Based on our current capacity, do we have the capacity to do this campaign?

## **CAMPAIGN LEADERSHIP**

Campaign leadership will be elected by a simple majority of Members in good standing attending the General Meeting one month after the approval of the Campaign. This leadership will be responsible for overseeing the ongoing operations of the campaign.

## **Forum**

What is this? Why is this?? Who am I???

place for org communication

- public & members only space

# Security Culture

How to be safe

## Side Quests

WCU bylaws outline the specifics of how we should be organized. Outside of the committees (steering, education, membership, and focus campaigns) and an established campaign, how else can members get together to meet? The bylaws outline “non-campaign activities” to address this.

Critical to our campaign-based structure is the question of non-campaign activities. WCU members can start and participate in activities in the chapter outside of campaigns, but subject to some limitations. The limitations are meant to assure that our chapter is concentrating its energies and resources on intentional priorities so that we can make effective change in our community.

The Bylaws state that non-campaign activities “may be single events such as demonstrations or ongoing work that will not require a significant ongoing commitment of resources by membership.” Resources can be interpreted as funding as well as member capacity. Based on this guidance, it is WCU Cleveland membership’s responsibility to judge what non-campaign activities should be undertaken by the chapter. Any member can propose a new non-campaign activity at a General Meeting. The important point is that new projects and actions are undertaken intentionally by the General Body, as opposed to being approved within campaign meetings, issue

committees, or working groups (with the partial exemption of Membership and Education work).

There are also the “three essential chapter functions” of administration, outreach, and education, which are all technically non-campaign activities, carried out by our Steering, Membership, and Education Committees. These Committees should still seek general membership buy-in for their work, but are permanent bodies that exist outside (but in large part in service of) the Priority Campaign.

Single events can be organized by members at any time and don’t need whole chapter approval unless they want to be represented as a WCU event to outside groups. The bylaws state regarding these single events, “Any member can propose, advocate for, or initiate a non-campaign activity that meets the [non-campaign activity] criteria at any time.” For example, members have set up a queer liberation theology discussion, book discussion, solidarity meal creation, and solidary fund proposal discussion all without needing to ask for full chapter permission. Any member can ask a Steering member to put an event on the WCUcalendar.

## **How to edit the Membership Handbook**

This Membership Handbook should be regularly amended with improvements suggested by the Members of the entire organization. The process should be clear, concise, and democratic, while still ensuring that the General Meeting has the final say over the contents of this Handbook.

1. Oversight of the Membership Handbook is the responsibility of the Membership Committee.
2. Members should submit amendments to the Membership Committee at the General Meeting or by emailing [\[Membership@WorkingClassUnity.com\]](mailto:Membership@WorkingClassUnity.com)
3. The Membership Committee will consider the amendments at its next meeting.
4. If approved, the Membership Coordinator will make the amendment OR the Member who submitted the amendment will be granted access to make the amendment themselves.

## APPENDIX

<https://www.dsacleveland.org/cleveland-dsa-membership-handbook>

### **Membership**

#### **Summary**

Members of Cooperation Tulsa will be those who in free and mutual association have joined and been recognized as members. Membership will not be barred on the basis of background or identity. Expulsion and exclusion should be based on a lack of commitment to our shared platform, past or current violations of our Code of Conduct, or concerns for the safety of our membership.



Cooperation Tulsa uses the concept of concentric circles. These concentric circles are divided into three levels of membership, each nested within the last. These circles do not represent any form of authority or control over another and are understood as levels of theoretical commitment and/or involvement within the organization. There can be no limit to the number of people which can be present in each circle. Anyone who agrees to the Points of Unity of Cooperation Tulsa can become a part of the **Green Circle**, but entry must be approved by all individuals part of the circle structure. Individuals a part of the Green Circle are not yet considered part of Cooperation Tulsa's membership and are not counted for quorum during Council Meetings, but are still allowed to attend. After a period of 3 months, individuals in the Green Circle are able to join the **Yellow Circle**. Individuals a part of the Yellow Circle are considered part of Cooperation Tulsa's membership and are counted for quorum/voting during Council Meetings. Individuals a part of the Yellow Circle must be paired with a red or yellow member for mentorship with a member of the Yellow or Red circle for further political development and understanding of organizational tasks for the first month in the Yellow Circle. Individuals who have the capacity to focus on long-term goals and can spend at least a few hours on administrative tasks can join the **Red Circle**.

## **Descriptions & Expectations**

### **Green Circle**

- Not yet considered part of Cooperation Tulsa's membership.
- Must make a verbal agreement to points of unity.
- No commitments, expected to learn and volunteer.
- Not counted for quorum during Member Meetings, but are still allowed to attend (non-voting).
- Not expected to be politically developed and are encouraged to attend the Redbud Federation Popular Education Program.
- Entry approved by consensus of all circles.

### **Yellow Circle**

- 3 months in the green circle or shows high levels of commitment and participation in the organization.
- Considered part of Cooperation Tulsa's membership.
- Must be paired with a red or long-standing yellow member for mentorship to further theoretical development and understanding organizational tasks for the first month in the Yellow Circle.
- In rotation for inreach/outreach tasks.
- Access to organizational info.
- Counted for quorum/voting during Council Meetings.
- Is encouraged to participate in the Advanced Reading Group.
- Not expected to the same level of time commitment as red, but must maintain monthly participation.
- Entry approved by consensus of red and yellow circles.

### **Red Circle**

- 6 months in the yellow circle or shows high levels of commitment and participation in organizational tasks.
- Commitment to internal work.
- On rota for administrative and organizational tasks.
- Access to sensitive organizational info.
- Expected to be present for all general council meetings.

- Entry approved by consensus of the yellow and red circle.

These roles are not static. Individuals may move back to the Yellow Circle or even the Green Circle from the Red, for instance, if an individual's availability changes or they wish to focus their energies elsewhere. In the green circle, individuals are not prohibited from discussing or giving their input on strategy or helping out with administrative work, rather it is not *expected* of them. Each circle sets how much an individual would like to commit and self-manage, while also earning trust over time via their commitments.

## **Points of Unity**

The following principles are the points of unity which individuals must agree to in order to be admitted as a member of Cooperation Tulsa. These Points of Unity represent the principles of the organization, which shape the actions and direction of the organization's decisions.

### **1. Direct Democracy**

Members must recognize that all people should have an equal voice in determining our common future. Members organize for self-determination by having decision-making power come from the bottom up.

### **2. Anti-Hierarchy**

Members must recognize that all hierarchical power structures should be abolished, such as: racism, sexism, transphobia, homophobia, ageism, ableism, religious discrimination, the state, capitalism, and all other forms of hierarchical domination. Members oppose all systems of domination, fight against all forms of oppression, and lift up the voices of the marginalized.

### **3. Anti-Capitalism**

Economic democracy is essential for the preservation of our ecosystems and the self-determination of our communities. Members must share an intolerance for the capitalist economic model and seek its abolition. Members must seek to abolish the profit system and place economic decision-making in the hands of communities and workers through communal, cooperative economics and an ethic of mutual aid.

### **4. Social Ecology**

The fate of humanity is intertwined with all other life on Earth. We braid together the holistic and reconstructive threads of indigenous knowledge and ecological science. Capitalism is killing life on our planet, and we are fighting to sustain life by reharmonizing human societies with the rest of the natural world.

### **5. Dual Power Prefiguration**

Members seek to transform the current oppressive society through the creation of horizontal alternatives. Members must share a commitment to help prefigure the creation of horizontal power structures controlled by the community which countervail and eventually abolish the

current social structure, creating a new form of social organization based on solidarity, autonomy, and mutual aid.

## **6. Intersectional Unity**

Members must recognize the unique forms of oppression that can be found at the intersections of gender, ethnicity, race, nationality, sexuality, class orientation, disabilities, and other aspects of identity. Under no circumstances should members tolerate or enable discrimination, bigotry, or the reduction of forms of oppression. Members must strive for the liberation of all who face the many intersecting forms of oppression and must work towards unifying the struggle for the freedom of all.

## **7. Decolonization**

This land was stolen and enclosed, and Cooperation Tulsa's aim must be to return it to the commons, beyond private property. Members of Cooperation Tulsa must center and empower the voices of the indigenous and dispossessed. Tribal autonomy must be protected and expanded.

## **8. Accountability**

Members must be committed to respond to violence, harm, and abuse in a way that does not rely on the state, does not perpetuate oppressive norms, and actively cultivates healing, accountability, resilience and safety for all involved. Members share a commitment to personal and organizational accountability, and will be held responsible for any actions considered harmful to other members or neighbors.