



Bylaws of the Lawrence (Kansas) Local of the Democratic Socialists of America

ARTICLE I. Name

The name of the Local shall be Lawrence (Kansas) Democratic Socialists of America.

ARTICLE II. Mission

Our mission is to educate and organize all people, and to play a helpful and principled role in the movement for social justice. Within and throughout this struggle, we will articulate and defend the idea that true human liberation is impossible under capitalism. We seek social change which extends democracy into all aspects of life—social, political and economic. This is the struggle for democratic socialism. Our vision of socialism is profoundly inclusive and based on the notion that all people deserve basic human rights and freedoms.

We understand our organization will be made up of people with different viewpoints, mindsets, and priorities. We will encourage these differences, and recognize that what unites us is our firm belief that the disparities and injustices in our society can be confronted through the rejection of a capitalist system.

We are students, workers, long-time residents, and recent arrivals organizing in our universities, workplaces, high schools, unions, and neighborhoods to fight for the immediate needs of workers, students, and Lawrence residents while building our capacity to fight for more radical and structural changes. Though our focus will be on promoting a socialist alternative here in Lawrence, we are prepared to coordinate efforts and work towards building a better world with our fellow locals and the DSA National. We recognize that our mission statement and priorities may change based on social and political realities, and we will ensure that members have the ability to do so as needed.

ARTICLE III. Membership

Section 1. Membership in Good Standing

Membership is open to all individuals who work or reside in the Lawrence area who believe in the mission of the organization. Local members may vote to approve policies for the local, vote on any matters that require input from the full membership, serve on Committees or Working groups, and vote on all matters concerning those subgroups. Members of the Steering Committee must be dues-paying members of DSA National, as must any delegate to the National Convention. All members are strongly encouraged to become members of DSA National.

All people wishing to be members will provide a name and contact information to a member of the Steering Committee, indicate that they agree with the mission of the organization, and

attend a General Meeting or send a statement of interest to a member of the Steering Committee.

Members will be in good standing by doing the following:

- Attending four (4) General Meetings in a six-month period from the date of their first General Meeting or receipt of their statement of interest (hereby known as their Join Date).
- or
- Participating in four (4) Committee, Reading Group, and/or Working Group meetings in a six-month period.
- or
- Going to any combination of any type of meeting (General, Reading Group, and Committee/Working Group) at least four (4) times in a six-month period.
- or
- Going to fewer than four (4) meetings in a six-month period and contacting the steering committee about any problems with scheduling, etc.
- and
- Agreeing to serve in the Mediation Pool (see Article IX, section IV) at least once every six months.

Members will maintain good standing by meeting the above requirements over each subsequent six-month period. Members are encouraged to contact the Steering Committee with any questions or concerns about maintaining good standing.

Members who will be outside of Lawrence for an extended period (i.e. students home for summer) are not to have their absences during that time held against their good standing so long as they inform the Secretary of the Local of their absence at any time—in advance or otherwise.

Membership records will be maintained by the Secretary of the Local but will be accessible to all members of the Steering Committee. Any updates or discrepancies should be directed to the Secretary of the Local or to members of the Steering Committee.

Section 2. Removal of Members

If a member is found to be in violation of our conduct policy and their actions have been reviewed under the guidelines of Article XI, they can be removed from the chapter.

Section 3. Dues and Funds

Local dues will be collected on a six-month basis, based on an individual's Join Date. Local dues will be \$20.00 per six-month period. Dues payment will not impact a member's good standing. The Treasurer will manage dues collection.

Dues and other funds, such as from fundraising drives, will be deposited into the Local's bank account. The Local's funds will be allocated as needed according to the following preferences in descending order:

1. General Meeting space rental costs
2. Materials (printing costs, etc.)
3. Merchandise for fundraising purposes
4. Solidarity Funds (donations to outside groups e.g. strike-funding)
5. Emergency member support fund

The emergency member support fund will be maintained in order to help members in good standing of the Local. Members in good standing can submit a request to the Steering Committee for a withdrawal from this fund. The Steering Committee will meet and determine whether and how much to give to the applicant. The cap on funds withdrawn for this purpose will be no more than \$50 per applicant per six-month period.

Section 4. Concurrent Membership in Other Socialist Groups

The Local will not preclude its members from joining or participating in other socialist groups or caucuses.

ARTICLE IV. Local Meetings

Section 1. General Meetings

The Local will hold General Meetings once per month. The time and place will be set in a schedule published and distributed by the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will set the agenda for General Meetings. Members wishing to add an item to the agenda for an upcoming meeting may contact a member of the Steering Committee to do so.

Upcoming meetings will be announced via email to the member list and via social media platforms; additionally, an updated schedule of all meetings will be publicly available on the Local's website.

Section 2. Emergency Meetings

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

Section 3. Accessibility

All meetings must be held in an accessible location as defined by ADA regulations. Locations may be changed on a case-to-case basis to accommodate members' needs and desires.

Meeting locations should be easily accessible by public transportation. This goes beyond physical accessibility; meetings are to be welcoming, open, and safe spaces.

Section 4. Committee, Reading, and Working Group Meetings

Reading Group will be held monthly with a regular and predictable schedule, preferably at a set location. Committee and Working Group meetings should be held at a frequency befitting their areas of focus and efforts should be made to allow all members to be present.

At all Local Subgroup meetings, a member should be appointed to take roll and communicate the results to the Secretary for the sake of maintaining currency in membership rolls.

ARTICLE V. Steering Committee

Section 1. Composition of the Steering Committee

The Steering Committee will be composed of the two (2) Co-Chairs, one of whom must be a self-identified female or non-binary individual; the Secretary; the Treasurer; and the Community Outreach Chair. Members of the Steering Committee shall be elected according to the election procedures outlined in Article VIII.

Section 2. Duties of the Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is, broadly, tasked with setting the goals and intentions for the group at large. Specifically, the Steering Committee will set the times and dates of General Meetings, the agenda for said meetings, and will be responsible for the stewardship of said meetings. The Steering Committee will serve as the de-facto representatives of the Local to DSA National or to other organizations, unless otherwise specified.

All members of the Steering Committee will have access to the Local's email, digital file storage, social media accounts, and website administration.

All members of the Steering Committee must be available to address grievances in the manner described in Article IX.

Section 3. Duties of the Individual Members

Two Co-Chairs: The responsibilities of the Co-Chairs will be to lead meetings, act as head representatives for the chapter, be responsible for setting agendas for meeting, and keep in contact with every committee chair with individual endeavors.

At least one (1) Co-Chair must be a person of color and/or a self identified woman or non-binary person.

Secretary: The responsibilities of the Secretary will be to manage the agenda, keep minutes at meetings, keep track of members and their status, manage the email list, send out email updates of what people missed at the most recent meeting, use social media, and reply to messages (see Article VII, sections 1-3).

Treasurer: The responsibilities of the of the Treasurer will be to manage dues and set up and manage a bank account using the DSA National's non-profit tax ID.

Community Outreach Chair: The responsibilities of the Community Outreach Chair will be to reach out to local groups including, but not limited to unions and social activist organizations. They will also organize general chapter tabling and canvassing actions.

ARTICLE VI. Local Subgroups

Section 1. Formation and Structure of Local Subgroups

The Local is comprised of multiple forms of subsidiary groups, referred to collectively in this document as Local Subgroups in addition to the Steering Committee: Resource Committees, issue-based Committees, campaign-based Working Groups, and identity-based Caucuses.

Committees, Working Groups, and Caucuses are formed on the initiative of members in good standing and participation in Local Subgroups will be on a volunteer, ad hoc basis. Each Local Subgroup will have a Point Person who will set meeting times, places, and agendas, will take roll and submit it to the Secretary of the Local, and will report back to the Local at General Meetings. Point Persons can delegate these duties.

Committees and Working Groups are the main political organizations of the Local; their research and actions will inform the Local's political stances.

Members can participate in multiple Committees, Working Groups, and Caucuses.

Section 2. Resource Committees

Resource Committees are persistent committees with a scope that covers the goings-on of the entire Local. They exist to act as resources for members of the Local to address concerns and to serve the needs of members of the Local. There are currently four (4) Resource Committees: the POC Committee, the Gender Equity Committee, the LGBTQIA+ Committee, and the Labor Committee. The chairs of each Resource Committee are elected positions.

Elected chairs of Resources Committees must self-identify as members of those communities. Labor Committee Chair nominees must identify as a worker. Gender Equity Committee Chair nominees must identify as a woman or non-binary person. LGBTQIA+ Committee Chair

nominees must identify as a member of that community. POC Committee Chair nominees must be people of color. Any future committees focusing on specific communities must also be chaired by members of those communities.

If the chair of a Resource Committee is vacant, members interested in filling that role will inform the Steering Committee, who will initiate a special election (Article VIII, section 5).

New Resource Committees can be formed should the need arise. The process to do so is the same as the procedure to amend bylaws (Article XI, section 2) with additional language in the Platform thereof regarding why a new Resource Committee is needed.

Section 3. Committees

Committees are formed over particular issues that members identify as requiring special, focused attention or investigation. Committees require a defined goal, time-frame, and Point Person written in the form of a Platform. In order for a Committee to be officially formed, its Platform must be presented at a General Meeting and ratified by a majority vote of those in attendance. Ratification votes are valid if quorum is met at the General Meeting; provisional ratification (when quorum is not met) does not prevent Committees from starting their work, however provisional Committees will not have access to Local funds or resources until ratified.

Section 4. Working Groups

Working Groups are formed to initiate campaigns or actions that can call upon all members of the Local for participation. Working Groups require a stated goal with a defined strategy, purpose, end-point, and Point Person in the form of a Platform. In order for a Working Groups to be officially formed, its Platform must be presented at a General Meeting and ratified by a majority vote of those in attendance. Ratification votes are valid if quorum is met at the General Meeting; provisional ratification (when quorum is not met) does not prevent Working Groups from starting their work, however provisional Working Groups will not have access to Local funds or resources until ratified.

Section 5. Caucuses

Caucuses are established to organize independently around shared interests and identities. Their activities can be far more varied than Committees and Working Groups, and may take on a number of different projects or functions in relation to Local, committee, and working group goals, including but not limited to promoting certain policies or actions, planning independent events, and challenging existing Local policies.

Caucuses are not eligible to receive Local resources, including funding or ongoing access to posting on Local public-facing communications channels. They also cannot propose a

Local-wide endorsement as a group, and would instead need to partner with a Committee or Working Group (Article VI, sections 3 and 4).

Section 6. Reading Group

Reading Group is a persistent Working Group that meets monthly to read socialist literature for the benefit of the continuing self-education of the members. Reading Group meetings must be open to the public and in accessible spaces (see Article IV, section 3). The texts for Reading Group will be announced a month in advance, and disseminated to the membership via email, social media channels, and on the website.

Any member in good standing can suggest a text for Reading Group at Reading Group meetings or by contacting the Steering Committee or the Reading Group Point Person. The Point Person for Reading Group however is ultimately responsible for selecting texts.

ARTICLE VII. Meeting Procedure

Section 1. Introductions and Roll

Any General or Local Subgroup Meeting should begin by an appointed member (the Secretary in the case of General Meetings and other meetings where they are present) leading the assembled members in introductions, with the dual purpose of taking roll. The Secretary should maintain a spreadsheet or equivalent organizational tool which records total attendance to each meeting, as well as which members attended.

A separate spreadsheet will be kept containing all members of the chapter. This spreadsheet will include, for each member, a name, date of joining, most recent date and amount of dues payment, and whether or not the member is in good standing. This spreadsheet need not include information unnecessary for identifying a member (i.e. surname, email address, home address, etc.) if a member is uncomfortable providing such details.

Section 2. Agenda

Prior to a General Meeting, the Co-Chairs are responsible for creating and ordering an agenda that includes all topics collected from the members of the Local by the members of the Steering Committee. During the meeting, it is the responsibility of the Secretary to preserve a pace in the meeting that ensures that all agenda items will receive adequate time for consideration and discussion. Additional time should be allowed for any topic requiring a vote.

The first item on any agenda should be Introductions. The second should be Committee Updates, where any members of committees present are to be given time to inform the Local on the committee's actions since the last meeting, as relevant.

Members in good standing can add item(s) to the agenda by contacting a member of the Steering Committee.

Section 3. Minutes

It is the responsibility of the Secretary (or, in their absence, another appointed member of the Steering Committee) to take minutes of any General Meeting. After the meeting's conclusion, an email recounting the meeting's events, including topics, relevant dates, and results of any votes during the meeting will be sent to all members within a reasonable amount of time—ideally within 48 hours.

Section 4. Quorum

A General Meeting quorum is met when the number of attendees is at least 75% of the mean attendance of the past three (3) General Meetings. All proposals, Platforms, votes, and other procedures undertaken at General Meetings that require quorum are binding; if quorum is not met, the results are provisional. Provisional proposals, Platforms, votes, and other procedures shall be re-raised at subsequent General Meetings for ratification, confirmation, and/or approval in order to utilize Local resources and funds.

ARTICLE VIII. Elections of Local Officials

Section 1. Elected Positions

These are the elected positions of the Local:

- Steering Committee (see Article V)
 - Two (2) Co-chairs
 - Treasurer
 - Secretary
 - Community Outreach Committee Chair
- Resource Committee positions
 - POC Committee Chair
 - Gender Equity Committee Chair
 - LGBTQIA+ Committee Chair
 - Labor Committee Chair

The five (5) Steering Committee positions must be filled. The Resource Committee Chair positions may remain empty if there are no candidates during the Local's normal elections. Interested members in good standing can nominate themselves for the Resource Committee Chair positions at any point however as part of a special election (see Section 5 below).

Term lengths for elected Local officials last one (1) year, from November General Meeting to November General Meeting.

Elected Local officials can resign from their position at any time for any reason. They will be considered members in good standing with all attendant regulations and procedures governing that condition (see Article III, section 1).

Section 2. Elections

Elections results for the Local will be confirmed at the November General Meeting. Nominations for positions will be accepted from September 1 and finalized at the October General Meeting. The Secretary will announce an open call for nominations on September 1 via email, social media channels, and on the website. Candidates must self-nominate either in person at the October General Meeting or by email in the open nominations window.

Candidates must submit a 50-200 word statement of intent. The Secretary will send an email to all members containing all nominees' statements of intent within a week after the October General Meeting; candidate information will also be posted on the website.

Elections will take place online the week prior to the November General Meeting. The online ballot will include each of the candidates' names for each position and will require the email address of each voter to prevent voter fraud. Elections will close one (1) hour before the start time of the November General Meeting.

Election results will be presented at the November General Meeting in a format that does not reveal any identifying information of any voters.

Newly elected Local officials will be confirmed at the November General Meeting and will assume their roles and responsibilities after the close of that meeting.

Section 3. Transition

Outgoing Local officials should meet with the newly elected officials within the week after the November General Meeting to transfer control of all resources relevant to the performance of their positions. These include passwords, bank account information, and access to any documents relevant to the running of the chapter.

The newly elected officials will change the passwords for Local accounts (email, social media, website, and so on) as soon as they gain control of those accounts from any outgoing officials. In the event that all incumbents are confirmed in their positions, passwords should nonetheless be changed in this time frame.

Section 4. Recalling Elected Officials

Any member in good standing can initiate a recall of any Local elected official at a General Meeting where quorum is met. This can be done spontaneously without any forewarning of the Steering Committee.

Recall procedure:

1. A member in good standing proposes a motion to recall.
2. Those in attendance at the General Meeting conduct a yea/nay vote by secret written ballot. The motion to recall passes if simple majority is reached.
3. The member initiating the recall vote can take up to five (5) minutes laying out their case for recall.
4. The elected official being recalled, or someone they have chosen to speak on their behalf, can take up to five (5) minutes to present their case to remain in the position.
5. A second yea/nay vote by secret written ballot is held and the recall passes if two-thirds majority is reached.
6. The recalled official is immediately relieved of their duties but remains a member of the Local.

Section 5. Filling Vacant Offices

Special elections can be called to fill vacant offices in the case of resignations, recalls, or a previously unfilled positions (like those not of the Steering Committee).

Procedures for special elections will follow those of the general elections for the Local (Article VIII, section 2). Pursuant to the general election procedures, candidates must self-nominate at a General Meeting or by email before a General Meeting. Special elections will be conducted online and the results will be confirmed at the following General Meeting.

ARTICLE IX. Conduct, Grievances, and Mediation

Section 1. Conduct Policy

All members will be expected to act in solidarity and in good faith towards other members of this organization. All Socialist beliefs should be met with respect, regardless of their specificities. All identities (including using preferred pronouns, names, and/or other preferred forms of address) of members should also be respected in all Lawrence DSA affiliated events and online Lawrence DSA related activities.

Section 2. Submitting Grievances

Aggrieved members are able to voice grievances to the members of the Steering Committee. If these parties want anonymity, a mechanism will be provided by the Local to enable anonymous submission of grievances.

Section 3. Responding to Grievances

When a grievance is received by the Steering Committee, it should be considered by all members, who will deliberate on whether or not the grievance is within the jurisdiction of the Local. Grievances which fall within the jurisdiction of the Local are those which occur at meetings (General or otherwise) or occur in spaces (physical or online) or during events affiliated with the Local.

Should the Steering Committee decide that a grievance does not fall within the Local's jurisdiction, steps should nonetheless be taken to support and help the situation of the aggrieved in any way that is reasonably possible.

In the event that the Steering Committee finds that a grievance falls within the Local's jurisdiction, the aggrieved should be contacted and asked if they would like resolution through decision of the Steering Committee or Mediation Panel. Any resolution involving disciplinary action must come through a Mediation Panel.

Section 4. Mediation Pool and Mediation Panel Selection

At each General Meeting and as part of the minutes email sent out after each General Meeting, members will be asked to volunteer themselves for the Mediation Pool for the period lasting from that General Meeting until the next.

During that time, should the Steering Committee identify a grievance that falls within the Local's jurisdiction and whose aggrieved party desires a Mediation Panel, the Steering Committee will randomly select three members from the Mediation Pool who will act as a Mediation Panel. Should the Steering Committee be concerned about any conflict of interests in any of the selected Mediators, a new member should be chosen in that Mediator's place. All Mediators should be contacted and told the general topic of the grievance (i.e. bullying, sexual harassment, etc.) At this point any Mediator uncomfortable with the topic of the grievance should be allowed to recuse themselves without explanation, and another member will be chosen from the Mediation Pool in their place.

Section 5. Mediation through the Mediation Panel

After a Mediation Panel is selected and confirmed, the Panel should at all involved individuals' convenience meet with the aggrieved and the accused (first separately, then together, if appropriate) to ascertain the details of the situation and then to discuss future action with all parties. The aim of the Mediation Panel in these proceedings should be reconciliation in line with our beliefs in equality and the failures of strict punishment. Disciplinary action is an option, but should not be treated as the default outcome.

After the Mediation Meeting, the Mediation Panel will meet with the Steering Committee to discuss the Mediation Meeting and the Mediation Panel's recommendations going forward, be that disciplinary action or organizationally-backed reconciliation. The final action taken by the chapter on the grievance is determined by the Steering Committee, taking the Mediation Panel's suggestions under advisement.

Section 6. Disciplinary Procedures

The most extreme form of disciplinary procedure undertaken at the Local level will be removing an individual from the Local's membership and alerting DSA National of the circumstances surrounding the individual's dismissal.

Other disciplinary measures include requesting a disciplined member to abstain from attending the Local's meetings (General, Committee, Working Group, etc.), actions, or activities for a period of time, up to and including indefinitely, determined by the Steering Committee and the Mediation Panel.

The physical, mental, and emotional well-being of the Local's members is the guiding principle in dealing with grievances, mediation, and disciplinary procedures.

ARTICLE X. Endorsements

The Local reserves the right to endorse candidates for city, county, state, and federal positions in elections in which Local members are able to vote. The Local espouses a hard-to-endorse policy where the default position is that the Local will not endorse candidates.

Members in good standing can propose a candidate for endorsement by the Local that self-identifies as a socialist.

1. Contact the Steering Committee to add an item to the agenda of a General Meeting.
2. Present the case as to why the Local should endorse this candidate.
3. The Secretary will initiate a yea/nay vote by secret ballot.
4. If the yea votes receive at least a two-thirds majority, then the Local will contact the candidate with its intent to endorse. This vote is only official if quorum is met (see Article VII, section 4).

ARTICLE XI. Bylaws Amendments

Section 1. Bylaws as a Living Document

The bylaws of the Local should reflect the material and social realities of the Lawrence, Kansas area and adapt to the changing needs of the Local in response to those realities. As the Local does not exist in a vacuum, neither should the Local's bylaws.

Section 2. Amending Bylaws

Any member in good standing can form a Bylaws Amendment Committee (BAC). Pursuant to the Committee regulations in the bylaws (see Article VI, section 2), the proposed Committee's Platform will contain a goal, time-frame, and Point Person. This Platform will also contain a reasoned argument identifying the specific bylaw(s) under consideration.

After the BAC and its Platform are ratified in a General Meeting, the BAC will, in their specified time-frame, write the proposed text for the to-be-amended bylaw(s). The BAC will present their proposed text to the Steering Committee so it can be sent out to all members via email and on the website.

At the next General Meeting, the BAC will read their proposed text aloud. The Secretary will then call for a yea/nay vote by secret ballot and the proposal will succeed with a two-thirds majority vote. If quorum is met, the text of the bylaw(s) under consideration by the BAC will be immediately amended. The Secretary will include the new text of the amended bylaw(s) in the minutes of the General Meeting.

Section 3. Regular Upkeep

After each general Local election, the new Steering Committee will review the bylaws for any possible changes.