

Bylaws of the Miami-Dade County Local Chapter
of the Democratic Socialists of America
[Last Revised March 30, 2021]

ARTICLE I. Name

The name of the Local Chapter shall be the Miami-Dade County Local Chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA). DSA is a not-for-profit corporation. The Local Chapter shall also be known as the “Miami DSA”.

ARTICLE II. Purpose

The Miami-Dade County Local Chapter of the DSA seeks to facilitate the transition to a truly democratic and socialist society, one in which the means and resources of production are democratically and socially controlled.

DSA rejects the capitalist economic order based on private profit, alienated labor, gross inequalities of wealth and power, discrimination based on identity, ecological destruction, and brutality and violence in defense of the status quo.

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

Our conception of socialism is a profoundly democratic one. It is rooted in the belief that human beings should be free to develop to their fullest potential, that public policies should be determined not by wealth but by popular participation, and that individual and collective liberties should be carefully safeguarded. It is committed to a freedom of speech that does not recoil from dissent, to a freedom to organize independent unions, groups, parties, and other formations -- recognizing these as essential bulwarks against the dangers of an intrusive state.

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

ARTICLE III. Membership

Section 1. Membership

Members of the Miami DSA will be those individuals whose dues to national DSA are paid in full, who reside, work, or spend significant time in Miami-Dade County. It will be the responsibility of members to approve policies and guidelines for the operation of the Local Chapter, to elect delegates to the national convention, to vote on matters related to national policy, and to make recommendations on issues and other matters to the National Political Committee of DSA.

Section 2. Removal of Members

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

Section 3. Voluntary Donations

The Local Chapter may establish a pledge system of voluntary donations for its members.

Section 4. Disclosure

Any member must disclose their employment or political affiliation with law enforcement or any organization that seeks to directly uphold or defend the carceral state. The local membership should be informed if any person currently employed as a law enforcement officer is in attendance at any meeting of the local membership, committees, working groups, Executive Board, or any other officially recognized group within the local.

ARTICLE IV. Local Chapter Meetings

Section 1. General Meeting

The Local Chapter will hold a minimum of one General Meeting annually, and all members of the Local Chapter will receive, by either electronic means, postal mailing or telephone call, three weeks' notice and an agenda of the General Meeting. The General Meeting will elect Local Chapter officers and may adopt an annual budget. In general, it is the highest legislative body of the Local Chapter.

Section 2. Regular Meetings

The Local Chapter will hold Regular Meetings at least four times annually, the time and place of which shall be set in a schedule published and distributed by the Local Chapter Coordinating Committee. The Regular Meetings will set Local Chapter policy and work priorities, and will include political education sessions.

The Local Chapter Coordinating Committee will set the agenda for Regular Meetings. In general, the Regular Meeting is the operating legislative body of the Local Chapter.

Section 3. Emergency Meetings

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

Section 4. Quorum

A quorum of 15 percent of the members (but not fewer than six persons) is required for General, Regular, or Emergency Meetings to transact business.

Section 5. Accessibility and Proxy

Meetings will be held in accessible locations whenever possible. Meetings will be live-streamed whenever feasible. Participation via video or teleconference shall be facilitated for members requesting an accommodation. In addition, members may designate another member to act as their proxy vote and/or speaker, as an accommodation, by filing a request with a member of the Coordinating Committee. Accommodations will be made upon request for any person with children that expresses interest in attending a meeting. The Coordinating Committee will make it known to the local membership which member is the point person for accommodations, but any Committee member contacted is responsible for making sure the member's requests are heard and responded to.

Section 6. Endorsement Threshold

The threshold for endorsements of any kind (ex. candidates, campaigns, initiatives) shall be 60% of the voting members at a local meeting.

ARTICLE V. Local Chapter Officers: Powers and Duties

Section 1. Officers, Terms, and Eligibility

The Officers of the Local Chapter shall be: the Internal Coordinator, the External Coordinator, the Communications Coordinator, and the Treasurer. The term of office shall run from four

weeks after the General Meeting at which the officers are elected until one month after the next General Meeting at which officers are elected. The term of office shall be no more than one year.

Officers shall not be eligible for more than two terms within three consecutive years. After a lapse of one year following a second term within the three year limitation, eligibility is reestablished.

Members in good standing of the Local will be eligible for Coordinating Committee, except:

1. A candidate running for public office, or
2. An elected official holding public office

Members of the Coordinating Committee who begin a campaign or are elected or appointed to an elected public office during their term must notify the other Coordinating Committee members of this change in status and resign their position. The vacancy will be filled through the procedure in Article V, Section 3.

Section 2. Diversity

The Local Chapter does not plan on establishing strict numeric standards which the leadership demographics have to meet, as we do not intend to force people to take organizational duties they cannot meet. However, as socialists, we want the Coordinating Committee to reflect the people they are organizing, which includes people of different races, ethnicities, genders, sexualities, religious beliefs, nationalities, etc, so that we work towards building a better world for everyone.

Section 3. Vacancies

In the event of a vacancy of any Local Chapter office, the Coordinating Committee will appoint a replacement for a remainder of the term. The appointed replacement should be confirmed by a majority vote of the membership at the next Monthly Member Meeting. If the appointed replacement does not receive a majority vote of the membership, the Coordinating Committee must appoint another person and repeat the confirmation process.

Section 4. Internal Coordinator

The Internal Coordinator is responsible for implementing programs to connect with the members of the Local as a whole and encourage their engagement in the Local's projects. They will be responsible for maintaining an up to date membership list of the local chapter including tracking membership status. The Internal Coordinator shall solicit regular updates from working groups, caucuses, branches, and committees. The Internal Coordinator shall oversee outreach strategies to increase membership and address diversity underrepresentation within the Local Chapter. They will create and administer an onboarding process for new members and establish a plan to recruit and retain members.

Section 5. External Coordinator

The External Coordinator will maintain effective communication with the national and regional DSA and ensure that information communicated from national and regional bodies is disseminated to the membership in a timely manner. The External Coordinator will coordinate and communicate regularly with other DSA locals to facilitate planning and participating in regional and statewide events as appropriate. They will coordinate with and build alliances with other socialist groups in Miami. They will develop and administer a petition process for members to propose new campaigns and will oversee external campaigns.

Section 6. Duties shared by Internal and External Coordinators

The Internal and External Coordinators will create agendas for, schedule, and facilitate the Monthly Member and Coordinating meetings or will appoint a substitute to carry out those tasks. The Internal and External Coordinators will also be the official public spokespeople for the Local Chapter.

Section 7. Communications Coordinator

The Communications Coordinator will be responsible for answering all correspondence and queries of the Local Chapter. The Communications Coordinator is responsible for recording and communicating the business of the Local Chapter to members. The Communications Coordinator shall send calls for Monthly Member Meetings, Coordinating Committee Meetings, General Meetings, and any other meetings, calls, or discussions open to membership. The Communications Coordinator shall ensure the calls for voting are publicized to the membership. The Communications Coordinator shall ensure an agenda is created and minutes are taken at Monthly Member Meetings, Coordinating Committee Meetings, and General Meetings and communicate those minutes to the membership. The Communications Coordinator is also responsible for coordinating the external communications infrastructure of the Local Chapter. This would include facilitating the creation and maintenance of external and internal communications standards and strategies. The Communications Coordinator shall transfer official records in good condition to their successor. Official records shall include meeting minutes and member lists. The Communications Coordinator will report to Monthly Member Meetings on the business of the Coordinating Committee Meetings, at which time a copy of the meeting minutes will be available for inspection.

Section 8. Treasurer

The Treasurer will be responsible for the funds and financial records of the Local Chapter. All funds collected by the Local Chapter will be turned over to the Treasurer, who shall deposit them in a bank account under the name of the Local Chapter. The Treasurer will be responsible for ensuring that membership dues are paid up-to-date. The Treasurer will prepare the annual

Local Chapter budget, and deliver the Local Chapter financial report to the General Meeting of the Local Chapter, as well as periodic progress reports as requested by the Coordinating Committee of the Local Chapter.

Section 9. Additional Duties

All local officers may delegate their duties to any other local officer or member, but shall remain responsible to see that their duties are carried out, so long as such assignments do not conflict with the designation of responsibilities outlined in these Bylaws. In the event of a vacancy in any office, the Coordinating Committee may assign the duties of that office to another officer or member of the Local, notwithstanding the designation of responsibilities outlined in this Article, until the vacancy is filled as provided in Section 3 of this Article.

ARTICLE VI. Coordinating Committee

Section 1. Composition

The Local Chapter shall have a Coordinating Committee composed of four officers.

Section 2. Diversity

No later than the end of the first week of nominations the Coordinating/Nominations Committee shall develop a list of currently active members who are non-male and/or non-white identified who have demonstrated formal or informal leadership. Members of the Coordinating/Nominations Committee shall contact those individuals specifically encouraging them to run for positions on the Coordinating Committee. When nominations are opened, the Coordinating/Nominations Committee shall invite all members to suggest the names of non-male/non-white identified members to be contacted by the Coordinating Committee as well.

Section 3. Duties

a. The Coordinating Committee administers the affairs of the Local Chapter and oversees the implementation of the decisions of the General and Regular Meetings; it may also propose policy to the General and Regular Meetings. It shall have the power to receive reports of any Committee, Working Group, Caucus, or Branch, and advise thereon, to call Emergency Meetings of the Local Chapter, and to act on any matter that requires immediate and urgent action. The Coordinating Committee is the regular executive body of the Local Chapter, and thus subordinate to its Legislative bodies, the General and Regular Meetings.

b. The Coordinating Committee will be responsible for establishing program activities for the Local Chapter, for proposing guidelines and policies that will subsequently be voted on by full members of DSA, and for acting on the organization's behalf between Local Chapter meetings.

Section 4. Meetings

The meetings of the Coordinating Committee will be held at the call of the Internal and External Coordinators at such intervals as may be determined by a prior Coordinating Committee Meeting or by consultation with any two members of the Coordinating Committee. All members of the Coordinating Committee must (ordinarily) be given four days oral or written notice of regular Coordinating Committee Meetings; a 24-hour notice may be given under special circumstances.

Section 5. Quorum

A quorum of at least half the members of the Coordinating Committee is required for the transaction of Coordinating Committee business.

Section 6. Accountability

In the first meeting of the Coordinating Committee after their election, the Coordinating Committee shall set collective expectations that outline the commitments, duties, and responsibilities of individual Coordinating Committee members. Not meeting responsibilities shall include, but is not necessarily limited to, not carrying out work in a timely manner, failing to engage in regular Coordinating Committee discussion, and routinely failing to attend meetings. The Coordinating Committee shall present the expectations to the general membership for discussion, amendments, and a vote of approval at the first Regular Meeting after their election. Coordinating Committee members shall not have unexcused absences from two or more consecutive Regular Meetings, unexcused absences from three or more Coordinating Committee meetings, or otherwise not meet collective expectations set by the Coordinating Committee or the outlined duties of the elected office. Remote participation in Coordinating Committee meetings shall not count as absences. An excused absence shall be defined as any absence where the Committee member notifies the Coordinating Committee with 24 hours of notice, barring an emergency.

Section 7. Disclosure and Recusal of Political Staffers

Members who are staff, paid or unpaid, holding a leadership role of any kind for a campaign for public office or paid staff of an elected official holding public office (political staffers) must disclose that they are a political staffer to the membership when running for a Coordinating Committee position. Members of the Coordinating Committee who become political staffers must disclose this to the membership. Members of the Coordinating Committee who are political staffers are required to recuse themselves from any Coordinating Committee decisions related to their campaign or the office holder they are staff for.

ARTICLE VII. Branches, Caucuses, and Working Groups

Section 1. Definition

A branch, caucus, or working group is a subgroup of the Local Chapter consisting of at least five full members in good standing with national DSA. Generally, Branches may be defined by geography, Caucuses may be defined by constituency (e.g., People of Color, Women, Queer, Religious), and Working Groups may be defined by area of political work (e.g., communications, peace action, environmental movement). Branches, Caucuses, and Working Groups may democratically determine their own internal structure but are required to identify an individual who will be a point of contact to the Membership Coordinator and Local Chapter membership.

Section 2. Responsibilities

Any branch, caucus, or working group wishing to form must receive approval from the Coordinating Committee via the submission of a written proposal outlining the scope and purpose of the work that they will undertake. All subgroups are required to be accountable to the general membership by presenting a report of their recent activities and progress at each regular meeting of the Local Chapter and are expected to make recommendations to the general membership and the Coordinating Committee on issues pertaining to the nature of their work. Failure of a branch, caucus or working group to adhere to the above guidelines will be grounds for it to be dissolved by a two-thirds vote of full members at a quorum of a Regular Meeting.

Section 3. Working Group Leadership

Working Groups shall nominate two points-of-contact: a Visionary Leader and an Administrative Leader. Visionary Leaders will serve as the spokesperson for all Working Group business. Visionary Leaders will be responsible for drafting and maintaining a "Vision Document," laying out the long-term strategies and goals of their Working Group. Administrative Leaders will serve as the point-of-contact for new members and the Coordinating Committee. Administrative Leaders will provide the Membership Coordinator with bimonthly updates of Working Group business, as well as provide the Communications Coordinator with information about upcoming events as needed.

Working Group Leaders can be confirmed at a monthly meeting by a majority vote at quorum and be removed by a vote of no-confidence with a 60% margin at quorum.

ARTICLE VIII. Committees

Section 1. Duration

The Local Chapter will have Ad Hoc Committees, which will exist for a limited and explicit duration. Ad Hoc Committees may be established by a vote of full members at a Regular Meeting of the Local Chapter. A majority vote of a quorum of the membership is required to establish an Ad Hoc Committee.

Section 2. Duties

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

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

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

ARTICLE X. Prohibited Activity

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

ARTICLE XI. Nominations, Elections, and Recalls

Section 1. Nominations Committee

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

When nominating candidates, the Local Chapter should be representative of not only its membership but also the community. The Local Chapter should strongly emphasize nominating candidates who identify as being part of one or more oppressed or underrepresented groups such as: women, people of color, LGBTQ, among others.

Section 2. Nominations Process

Nominations for Local Chapter officers and delegates to the National Convention shall be opened 10 days before and closed at the General Meeting. The call for nominations shall be announced to members of DSA in good standing in advance of the General Meeting.

Section 3. Uncontested Positions

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

Section 4. Elections Process

When single-seat officer elections take place for officers or for any other elected position, the process used will be ranked choice voting; that is, if there are more than two candidates running for a given position, members shall rank their order of preference for the candidates rather than just giving their most favored option.

In multi-seat elections (such as the nomination of convention delegates), each member in good standing will receive an allotted number of equal votes total to the number of seats (such as five votes for five convention delegates). Members must cast all of their allotted votes, but may cast no more than one per candidate. The winners will be those with the highest vote totals proportional to the number of seats available.

Section 5. Recalls

Officers, delegates, and executive committee members may be removed from their positions at any time by a two-thirds vote of a quorum of the membership, after at least one week's notice to all members that such a vote will take place.

ARTICLE XII. Amendments

Proposed amendments to these Bylaws must be made by written resolution, endorsed by five members of the Local Chapter, and submitted to the Local Chapter Coordinating Committee a month in advance of a General or Regular Meeting. The Coordinating Committee is required to provide the Local Chapter membership with two weeks' written notice of the proposed amendments.

The Coordinating Committee may make any of the following non-substantive changes in the Bylaws by majority vote at a Coordinating Committee meeting:

- Capitalization or punctuation.
- Typographical, spelling, or grammatical errors
- Lettering and numbering of a rule or the subparts of a rule, according to style conventions in current policy
- Cross-references to rules or sections that are cited incorrectly because of subsequent repeal, amendment, or reorganization of the sections cited.

ARTICLE XIII. Rules of the Local Chapter

Section 1. Rules

The Rules contained in Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, 11th Edition shall govern this Local Chapter in cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these Bylaws. Consensus decision-making is desirable where feasible, but meetings must submit to Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, 11th Edition upon the request of a member.

Section 2. Action Out of Order

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

ARTICLE XIV. Young Democratic Socialists of America

Young Democratic Socialists of America (YDSA) chapters on college campuses in Miami-Dade County will establish their own organizational structure in accordance with the Constitution of the YDSA.

ARTICLE XV. Local Funds

Section 1. Expenditures

All funds will be expended in accordance with the annual budget as amended by local meetings. Expenditure of funds for items not included in the budget or spending over line items in the budget must be approved in advance by the Coordinating Committee or local meeting in accordance with the general policy of the Local.

Section 2. Bank Accounts

All funds collected by the Local will be turned over to the Treasurer, who shall deposit them in a bank account under the name of the Local. All checks drawn on the account(s) of the Local must be signed by either the Internal or External Coordinator or the Treasurer.

Section 3. Delegation of Responsibility for Funds

The Coordinating Committee may from time to time delegate responsibility for the funds of a project to the subgroup in charge of the project.

ARTICLE XVI. Grievances

Section 1. Harassment Policy

Miami Democratic Socialists of America is committed to creating a space that is welcoming and inclusive to members of all genders, races, and classes. The following policy provides guidelines to ensure that everyone is able to organize without fear of harassment, abuse, or harm. The Local Chapter shall adhere to the DSA Harassment Policy and report their activities to relevant national DSA bodies in a timely and appropriate manner. While this policy was modeled after and borrows from federal and state civil rights law, we acknowledge the inadequacies of the U.S. legal system and are not bound to address harassment and abuse through the DSA Harassment Policy alone. With that, it is the duty of the local chapter leadership and the Harassment Grievance Officers (HGOs) to foster an actively safe and welcoming culture in the Local Chapter by providing educational programs and harassment intervention trainings to preempt these issues. Leadership and HGOs will also seek out and try to provide training to membership in restorative justice models in order to build organizational capacity to utilize alternatives to punishment.

Section 2. Appointment and Duties of Grievance Officers

The Coordinating Committee shall appoint at least two members of the Local Chapter to serve as HGOs, no more than one of whom shall be male-identified. The HGOs are not considered part of the Coordinating Committee but will serve out a term concurrent with the Coordinating Committee that appoints them. HGOs can be removed by a two-thirds vote of a quorum of full members at a Regular or General meeting of the Local Chapter.