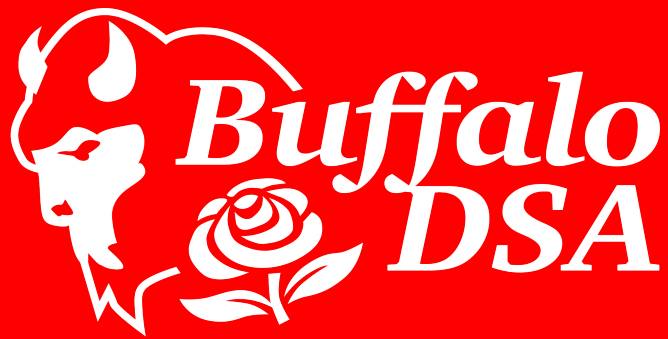




HANDBOOK

2026-2027

What is DSA?

Welcome to DSA! We are so glad you joined.

Democratic Socialists of America is the largest socialist org. In the history of the United States, and is a proud, member-driven mass organization. We believe that working people should run both the economy & civil society, and we show our commitment to this principle by being an organization of, by, and for the working class. We want a democracy that creates space for us all to flourish, not just survive. One that provides basic material necessities to all with the input of all. We want to collectively own the key economic drivers that dominate our lives, such as energy production and transportation. We want the multiracial working class united in solidarity instead of divided by fear. We want to win “radical” reforms like single-payer Medicare for All, an end to militarized policing and ICE terrorism, pursue an eco-socialist future through robust green energy programs, organize unions for every worker, and more in order to transition to a freer, more just world. We want a democracy powered by everyday people.



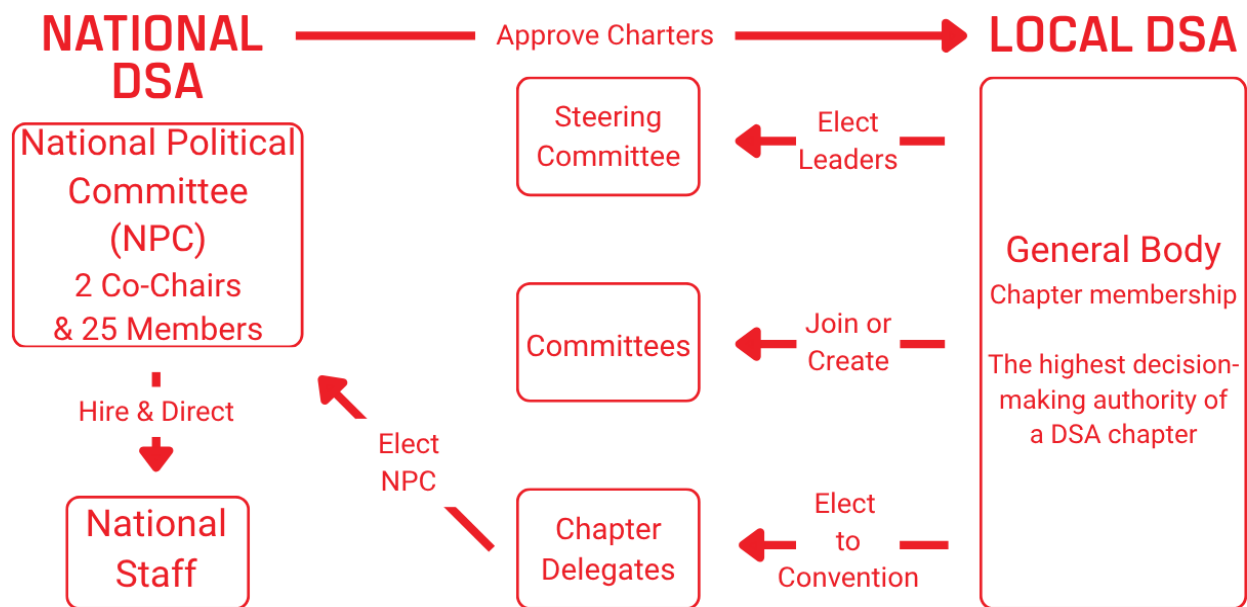
The capitalist class tells us we are powerless, but TOGETHER we can take back control!

Founded in 1982, Democratic Socialists of America (DSA)—and its two predecessor organizations, the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (DSOC) and the New American Movement (NAM)—had their origins in the early 1970s, at the beginning of a long-term rightward shift of U.S. and global politics. In the last decade, DSA has seen a huge boost in membership. Major victories for DSA include sending Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Rashida Tlaib to Congress in 2018 and Zohran Mamdani’s 2025 win in the NYC mayoral race.

The Buffalo chapter of DSA began in 2018 and grew exponentially along with the national organization as a result of the growing popularity of democratic socialism during the Bernie 2016 campaign. Recent waves have been driven by successes such as Adam Bojak’s Democrat primary win in the race for the 149th state assembly district.



DSA's Structure, National & Local



Our Local Chapter

Priority Campaigns

Our chapter selects priority campaigns to organize around as entry points for the greater community to see and understand who we are and what we fight for. **No savior is coming to help us, so we must organize each other – in the workplace, as tenants, at the ballot box, and beyond!**

Here are some of our 2026-2027 priorities:

Buffalo Tenant Union: Like bad bosses, bad landlords prey on isolated tenants ignorant to their rights. Just like workers, tenants have power in numbers too! Our Infrastructure Committee is hard at work organizing what can become a first-of-its-kind tenant union in the city of Buffalo among renters from the BMHA. **Through tireless work and the collective strength of many, renters can take back power and protect themselves from bad landlords.**

Good Cause Eviction: Buffalo is currently New York's largest city that has not opted into Good Cause Eviction, a state law that holds bad landlords in check and protects tenants from predatory rent hikes, evictions without reason, and more. Our Infrastructure Committee has joined a slew of coalitions in organizing around the Buffalo Common Council adopting Good Cause. **Good Cause Eviction is a step toward fuller housing justice, and we need it in Buffalo now!**



New York Health Act: Healthcare is a right, not a privilege tied to private insurers or employers who use your literal health as a bargaining chip for their greed. Right now, the New York Health Act – free, single-payer healthcare in New York – could pass in the NYS Assembly and State Senate, but our representatives in Albany won't bring it to a vote. **We strategize and agitate against local power sources, be they insurance-backed politicians or greedy chambers of commerce like the Buffalo-Niagara Partnership, who hold up single-payer care from passage in New York.**

Electoral Organizing: We need more socialists in office! Adam Bojak is a longtime chapter member and open democratic socialist who won the democratic primary for NYS state assembly back in June. Adam is running to represent the 149th assembly district which covers the west side of Buffalo and Hamburg. If he wins this November, our chapter will work with him to pass legislation in Albany and build our statewide coalition/movement. **Bojak for Assembly is just the beginning!**

Workplace Organizing: In Buffalo DSA we believe in Organizing the Unorganized! Through the framework of DSA & UE's national Emergency Workplace Organizing Committee (EWOC) we help guide workers through the unionization process, from initial organizing conversations, to affiliating with an international union & bargaining a contract. **Organizing a union and a democratic workplace is not easy in the United States, and we want to set our comrades up with the best chance for success.**

Coalition Campaigns: Our chapter democratically decides when to enter into coalition with other organizations to achieve a common goal, electing a coalition representative in the process. Current campaigns include:

Break the Bonds NYS: New York State is currently one of the largest investors in Israel Bonds, which are unrestricted loans that the Israeli treasury uses to fund their war crimes and genocide in Gaza. As a coalition of DSA and JVP chapters, we demand that Comptroller Tom DiNapoli stops his use of public retiree dollars—primarily, the New York Common Retirement Fund—for Israel Bonds. Taxpayers, retirees, and union members shouldn't have their money spent on genocide. Learn more at jewishvoiceforpeace.org/resource/btb-nys/

Evict ICE 250: ICE currently runs their entire New York operation (excluding NYC) from the 7th floor of 250 Delaware Ave. Their lease expires 03/31/27 and Evict ICE 250 is a pressure campaign comprised of almost 50 sponsors and partner orgs committed to making sure it isn't extended. **Learn more at evictice250delaware.com**



Committees

Most chapter work is done through committees. Committees are ratified at **General Body Meetings (GBMs)** and regularly meet to discuss campaign work and strategize. Committees report back to membership at a GBM, and any committee's major work or partnerships are subject to General Body approval. If you don't find your home in any of our current committees, **any member can present a resolution to charter a new committee!** (More on resolutions in a later section)



General Body Meetings and Local Convention

General Body Meetings happen each month. These are opportunities to hear updates from committees on their work and debate items that are brought to the general body for a vote. This includes endorsing new organizing campaigns, undertaking a certain political action, or allocating a large portion of our dues to a project. **Participation and discussion at General Body Meetings makes Buffalo DSA stronger and reflective of what YOU want us to prioritize as an organization.**

Each year during the month of May, the chapter holds a larger GBM known as Local Convention, where we elect leadership, ratify our standing committees, and set our chapter's political platform for the year to come.

How We Run Meetings

To ensure meetings are run democratically and remain comradely, we use a standard of rules called Robert's Rules of Order. These rules can be tricky to understand, and you aren't expected to know them by heart! We sometimes offer Robert's Rules trainings, so look out for those in the future.

To:	You say:	Interrupt Speaker	Second Needed	Debatable	Amendable	Vote Needed
Adjourn	"I move that we adjourn"	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Recess	"I move that we recess until..."	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Complain about noise, room temp., etc.	"Point of privilege"	Yes	No	No	No	Chair Decides
Suspend further consideration of something	"I move that we table it"	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
End debate	"I move the previous question"	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Postpone consideration of something	"I move we postpone this matter until..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend a motion	"I move that this motion be amended by..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Introduce business (a primary motion)	"I move that..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

The above listed motions and points are listed in established order of precedence. When any one of them is pending, you may not introduce another that is listed below, but you may introduce another that is listed above it.



Resolutions, Bylaws Changes, and Committee Charters

Every chapter member has a right to bring forth (1) resolutions for the entire chapter to follow as priorities/agreed upon rules, (2) bylaws changes, which are foundational changes to the chapter's written processes or structures, and (3) new working groups or committees, which plan and develop campaigns or chapterwide efforts. Our Google Drive gives members access to templates for each of these types of actions, but anyone on chapter leadership is happy to help you develop one if you need further support.

(Resolution Title, e.g. "Resolution to Encourage Monthly Dues")

Author(s):

Chapter Co-Sponsors: **(requires 5 chapter members in-good-standing signed-on)**

Rationale:

(the "whereas" statement begins the rationale for a resolution, essentially the "why" this resolution is being proposed)

Whereas (...)

Whereas (...)

Be it Resolved:

(This section details the concrete actions Buffalo DSA is to take, such as "Resolved: Buffalo DSA will co-sponsor the x-campaign in June" and can have multiple 'resolves' for detail. Essentially this is the "What is to be Done" section that we vote on)

Resolved: (...)

Buffalo DSA Bylaws - Resolution Requirements Section:

Article IV, Section 2.

Resolutions operate as written main motions per Robert's Rules of Order that may be brought to a General Body Meeting for deliberation, amendment, and approval by the general membership. A resolution consists of a rationale section describing the nature of the motion followed by a resolved section that details the concrete actions to be voted upon. To bring a resolution forward to a General Body Meeting a resolution requires five co-sponsors of chapter members in good standing, and must be submitted to the Steering Committee no later than two weeks in advance of a General Body Meeting. The Steering Committee and resolution author(s) are responsible for communicating the proposed resolution to chapter membership at least 2 weeks in advance of a General Body Meeting. Any amendments to the resolution may be made via writing and sent to membership no later than 1 week ahead of a General Body Meeting. A resolution requires a simple majority vote among general membership via electronic ballot for approval – unless the resolution goes against a previous order of business, in which case a



How We Communicate

Signal Messenger (end-to-end encrypted messaging platform)

- Members are added to the General Chat and Announcements, but you can be in as many chats as you'd like.

Google Group

- buffalodsa@googlegroups.com is our primary email list for chapter membership discussions/announcements.

Solidarity Tech / Action Network

- Platforms used to schedule and RSVP for events - visit events.buffalodsa.org for the full calendar.

Resources

- You can see all chapter resources for members in the Buffalo DSA Google Drive.
- Sign-up for our newsletter at our website as well as explore our Bylaws, Committees, and other resources.

What we believe in & what it means to be a Socialist

"The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.

Proletarians of All Countries, Unite!" - Karl Marx, The Communist Manifesto

Class exploitation existed long before capitalism. It manifested as feudalism, slavery, and conquest – subjugating and torturing the masses for the acquisition of power, wealth, and status. Now, capitalism has shapeshifted to survive in modern contexts, via exploitative wages (or, in many places, unpaid prison labor or child labor), mass privatization of public goods and services, near-unlimited warmongering, and more. Under Capitalism, greed, cruelty, and extraction are rewarded and reinforced systemically - **The rich only care to get richer, and leave the working masses to rot.**

Socialism seeks to remedy these immense gaps at every level of civic and economic life. Through collective ownership of the means of production and the universal provision of essential goods and services, it seeks to reverse the course of Capitalism and the generations of greed, racism, sexism/transphobia, and more that capitalism has produced. Through identifying the material conditions of working people ("What do we need to not just survive, but thrive?"), and the raising of class consciousness ("How do I inspire others to learn about our shared oppressors/bosses/enemies?"). Socialists seek to wrestle power from a powerful ruling class, and redistribute political and economic power – at work and at home – to the masses.

Political growth is a slow journey. The working class politically develops not just through reading theory, but most importantly by action (praxis). The best way to develop as a socialist is by helping to build a better world for our comrades/neighbors. **Join a committee and help build the socialist future!**



Chapter Leadership

2026-2027 Elected Steering Committee

Co-Chairs: Maxwell B., Taylor F. – The Co-chairs act as public-facing representatives of the chapter, facilitate our meetings, and ensure chapter leadership has the support they need to thrive.

Secretary: Dan R. – The Chapter Secretary takes minutes at our General Body and Steering meetings, or any larger, general special sessions we may have. The Chapter Secretary is a co-chair of the Communications Committee.

Treasurer: Steven J. – The Treasurer ensures our finances are on the up-and-up. They are available for consultation on committee budgets, and give regular reports on our budget, dues share, etc. The Treasurer is a co-chair of the Finance Committee.

Membership Coordinator: Philip K. – The Membership Coordinator oversees membership growth and retention. They are responsible for maintaining our member lists and recruiting efforts. The Membership Coordinator is a co-chair of the Membership Committee.

At-Large Members: Alok P., Darren H., Jack G., Lukas F., Reese M. – At-Large Members represent your voice on Steering, and assist with any additional tasks delegated to them, including (but not limited to) the newsletter, email correspondence when the Secretary or Chairs cannot, answering DMs, and more.

Branches are official divisions within Buffalo DSA that receive representation on Steering after being chartered. These may take the form of the YDSA chapter on a college campus, or maybe a geographical branch organized around the specific needs of comrades in that area. If you're interested in organizing a branch, talk to a member of Steering!

Grievance Policy

We pride ourselves on fostering healthy debate to make the organization stronger, as well as all being comrades and friends. However, any behavior that leaves the political realm and becomes personal, harassing, or harmful in nature can be referred confidentially to our Grievance Officers and adjudicated via the grievance policy. Our grievance policy offers guidelines in which violations of our community standards can be handled in a manner that benefits all parties—and, foremost, damaged member(s). Grievance Officers are elected and do not hold Steering Committee positions to maintain neutrality. Email: grievance@buffalodsa.org

Current Grievance Officers: Dave S.

