

FOR METRO DC DSA MEMBERS ONLY

Process for Metro DC DSA Program

The original resolution can be found here: [📄 Unified for a Chapter Program](#)

The next steps are as follows:

1. At the October GBM the Program Commission will present a draft of their work so far. Members will discuss and suggest edits to it, as well as propose any substantial changes through amendments.
2. The Program Commission will hold two additional feedback sessions before the end of November.
3. Amendments that pass and edits will be integrated by the Convention resolution deadline (TBD).
4. Final program will be presented at Convention and voted on then.

The Program Commission also welcomes members to attend our meetings, Wednesdays at 8:30pm. They can also engage with us in the Slack channel [#programdevelopmentcommission](#).

DRAFT OF 2026-2028 METRO DC DSA PROGRAM

NOT FOR EXTERNAL USE

Metro DC DSA and our Chapter Program

This program establishes a direction for the collective actions of the Metro DC Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) chapter and develops chapter goals for 2026 through 2027.

This Chapter Program contains initiatives detailing several goals for the next two years, including points of unity that span chapter organizing efforts and campaigns. It also contains organizing objectives that can be launched in the span of two years necessary for the creation of a strong socialist base in the DC Metro area. These include multiple potential electoral and legislative opportunities and an assessment of opportunities to win. In addition, this program will lay out our plans to organize with workers directly, in their workplaces and in their unions, as well as assist unions with expiring contracts for potential intervention. Finally this program also organizes new targets for non-legislative initiatives, such as Internationalism, Abolition, Housing Justice, Green New Deal, and Migrant Justice.

From one of the first Democratic Socialists of America chapters in the country in 1982 to the revitalization of 2016, the Metro DC DSA has stood by both progressive and socialist campaigns and causes in the DMV as one of the largest organizations of the socialist left. From Frank Smith and Hilda Mason to the present Janeese Lewis George, Gabriel Acevero, and Vaughn Stewart, the Metro DC DSA is ready to take on the next challenges and issues of the socialist and labor movements.

[Metro DC DSA and our Chapter Program](#)

[Our Analysis and the Path Forward](#)

[We are Organizing the Working Class](#)

[We are Organizing a Mass Movement](#)

[We are Organizing for Power.](#)

[We are Organizing to Win.](#)

[Chapter Outreach](#)

[Regional Work](#)

[District of Columbia](#)

[Maryland](#)

[Virginia](#)

[Working Groups and Campaigns](#)

[Abolition](#)

[Bodily Autonomy](#)

[Electoral](#)

[Green New Deal](#)

[Internationalism](#)

[Labor](#)

[Medicare for All](#)

[Migrant Justice](#)

[Tenant Organizing](#)

[Glossary of Terms](#)

Our Analysis and the Path Forward

We are Organizing the Working Class.

Our society and history is defined by the struggle — sometimes open, sometimes unseen — between two classes: the many of us who work for wages and the few who profit from our work. We outnumber the capitalist class, but they currently hold political, cultural, and social power. No political problem can truly be understood without understanding the conflicting and competing interests between these two groups of people.

The central problem we must overcome to win a democratic society where everyone can live in dignity and safety is the *lack of working class organization*. Decades of neoliberalism, austerity, and the splintering of collective society have decimated the former institutions of the working class: political parties, labor unions, social clubs, and more. Workers are atomized and disconnected from one another. Many workers do not even recognize ourselves as workers but as temporarily embarrassed entrepreneurs. Our first task is to build *class alignment*, building the consciousness and organization of the working class as political subjects. Workers and our communities must understand ourselves as the protagonists of political action, as the people who already make society run and who can rebuild it for the freedom of all.

We will achieve this by organizing to defeat the ruling class and bring the working class into power around a program that provides political and economic freedom to the many, not the few. This program will improve the lives of workers and their families and empower them to exercise the political power they so often lack.

To do that, the working masses must be politically united against the owning classes. Our goal is to build this unity across race, gender, ethnicity, and all other divides. We will collectively fight the distinct struggles faced by parts of the working class while unifying to defeat the exploitation faced by all.

We consider the entire international working class to be the subject of history, and the movement of the working class we build must be a global one, guided by the interests of the working class as a whole across political boundaries instead of the narrow interests of the local, regional, or national working class.

We are Organizing a Mass Movement.

The working class needs a vehicle to organize itself and achieve political power. Labor unions bring workers into this struggle in their workplace. Tenant unions bring tenants into this struggle in their homes. But without a unifying political organization, we risk our movement fracturing into single-issue struggles. All our struggles are connected, and the whole working class needs to fight

together through one democratic organization. That vehicle must be open to all workers, democratic as both a means and an end, and organized around strategically achieving a set of shared demands.

The only actor that can change society for the liberation of all is the unified working class, where each segment stands in solidarity together when any of us are under attack, and where we realize that only by overcoming our unique oppressions can we overcome our oppression as a whole. A united and well-organized working class is the only force capable of challenging the owning class, directly defeating rising fascism, and ending climate change. The problems in society today, and throughout history, are far larger than any one individual can hope to solve. As democratic socialists, we do not believe real change comes through the atomized actions of individuals or by simply putting the right people in positions of power. Society is changed by large groups of people working together for a particular goal. The work of bringing large groups of people into action together is called organizing. This is our primary tool. We need to organize masses of people around shared demands that put the many who must work to survive into open conflict with the few who live off our labor. On a national level, we must organize the working class in the millions, and on a local level, in the hundreds of thousands.

Our goal is the realization of true democracy, in both the political and economic spheres, where working people make the decisions that structure society. We define democracy as a process and set of institutions that rest on a foundation of individual and collective rights and liberties. To have true democracy, these rights and liberties must apply to all members of society, regardless of class, race, gender, orientation, or national origin. Because the owning class profits from the labor of workers and amasses great power, this requires the redistribution of wealth and power at the democratic disposal of working people. This is the only way to create a society where no one goes hungry for lack of money or dies for lack of healthcare and everyone is entitled to housing and education.

Our strategic goal as socialists is to combine struggles together from the local to the state, to the national and, finally, to the international levels. At each step, we reveal that the same class forces raising the rents in our buildings are the same ones passing legislation in our District to pause elimination of the tipped sub-minimum wage, fighting at the national level to cut our Medicaid, and across the world fight violently against any workers that dare to fight back against their conditions. There are no local struggles, only different fronts in the same class war. We aim to establish DSA as that vehicle, and MDC DSA as that vehicle within our region. We invite all workers to join us.

We are Organizing for Power.

Power is exercised through organized people and resources acting together. Organized as a class, working people's power makes society run. We, the working class, are the ones who build houses, grow food, run trains and buses, and teach one another's children. As tenants, we pay our landlords the money to keep owning and mismanaging our apartments. We even hold power over the climate crisis: many working people have no option but to work for polluting companies that poison us, yet generate electricity and resources for thousands and profits for a select few.

Our power comes from harnessing our energy and capacity to achieve our goals. To overcome the exploitation of the ruling class, the working class must unite and organize. They need us more than we need them. We have the power to stop working when bosses treat us poorly. We have the power to stop paying our rent when landlords keep us in poor conditions while trying to gouge us even more. We have the power to resist when ICE comes to take one of us. We have the power to vote and elect workers who will change the laws in our favor and to unseat those who fail to do so. And we will wield this power to empower other workers. The final victory of the working class will only be possible when we are strong and independent enough to claim and wield it.

We are Organizing to Win.

We cannot achieve the change we need by losing. Moral victories will not sustain us or grow our movement. Workers demand material changes in their lives that will prove that future victories are possible. Not every undertaking of ours must win, but we should be able to win and learn from our every undertaking. Whether through forming new labor unions and winning strikes, electing our candidates to office, or pressuring legislatures to respect the rights of marginalized communities like our trans or immigrant members, we are always better off winning than we are losing and we should always strive to maximize our chance of success. Winning raises the horizon for the workers' movement, makes life materially better for working people, and builds our organization.

We define winning as achieving tangible goals that increase class alignment and organization and shift power from the owning class to the working class. This includes organizing a labor or tenant union or winning a labor or rent strike. It also includes winning reforms, not as ends in themselves, but to shift power from owners to workers and open space for workers to organize as workers. Many of the demands we articulate in this program are these kinds of reforms, changes to the law that help workers and bring us closer to democratic socialism by increasing class alignment and organization. At the same time, where there are obstacles to a victory, we have a duty to loudly name those obstacles so the working class knows what it is up against and so we can strengthen ourselves for a serious fight.

Our demands are interlocking. We will organize tenants, workers, and other disenfranchised laboring people who place demands on the state. We will organize in the electoral sphere to win those demands with the votes of tenants and workers, and those wins will allow us to organize more tenants and workers and place further demands upon the capitalist state. Our chapter can, over time, win a left government at the local level and use this government to dramatically expand the level of organized tenants and workers and bring them further into conflict with the capitalist class.

Additionally, we prioritize all struggles for liberation globally and consider how we may best advance these struggles from our position at the heart of the largest imperial power structure. We do not elevate or save ourselves or our community at the expense of others. Socialism can only be achieved when the entire international working class is free.

Regional Work

District of Columbia

Home Rule and Statehood

The District of Columbia is one of the oldest polities in the United States and has gone through three distinct phases of governance.

DC was formally organized in 1801. The various towns and counties within the District were then consolidated into a single Washington city in 1871. Our present governance is based on the 1973 DC Home Rule Act, which established the District Council. Washingtonians have made various attempts to ascend to statehood. The most recent effort was a 2021 bill passed by the US House of Representatives but killed in the Senate. Statehood for DC has been historically denied by racist legislators in the US government due to the District's large Black population.

While a step forward in self-governance, Home Rule has significant drawbacks that have become more apparent under the Trump regime. Though the District Council and Mayor may pass legislation and a budget, Congress has ultimate review and final say over both. All judges within the district are appointed by the President. The District, while being more populous than Wyoming and Vermont, has no voting representation in Congress.

Washingtonians have voted for statehood multiple times. It is the will of the population to be treated like any other state in this country. Metro DC DSA has, since the establishment of our chapter, been forthrightly pro-statehood and will continue to work with the people of the District to achieve proper self governance.

Paradoxically, DC residents have more ability to participate in elections than many residents outside of DC. Since 2020, DC residents have been allowed to vote while incarcerated, and DC also allows noncitizen voting in local elections. Though it is unclear whether Maryland allows people currently incarcerated for a felony to vote, felons who are not incarcerated do have this right.

Landscape

Known for decades as Chocolate City because of its majority Black population, today the District has one of the highest state proportions of Black residents in the country. Additionally, the District and surrounding metro area have become a landing point for refugees and foreign-born populations, often pushed here by conflicts supported or started by the United States. Central American, Ethiopian, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Korean communities make up substantial populations within and around DC.

Since 2000, there has been a substantial increase in the white population, coinciding with a housing market that has become one of the most expensive in the country. Real-estate developers and their political allies have pursued highly educated, high-income workers at the expense of long-term Black residents. As a result, many Black families with roots in DC proper have been priced out into nearby counties, most notably Prince George's County in Maryland. Since the 1970s, the District has had one of the strongest tenant protections on the books in the country. But the capitalist class has made determined attempts to shift more power to landlords and developers, most recently with the gutting of the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act in the 2025 RENTAL Act.

Economically, DC has one of the highest populations of college graduates in the country, who often work in government at the federal and local levels, in non-profits, and in education and healthcare. There is also a substantial base of service industry workers from food to retail to tourism. This base has likely expanded, as the Trump administration's assault on the federal workforce has devastated the aforementioned government and nonprofit sectors. Previously led by tech billionaire Elon Musk, the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) cuts have elevated DC's unemployment rate to 6%, the highest in the country.

Goals for 2026–27

- We will expand membership by bringing in more native Washingtonians as members
- We will fight to defend what rights we have as tenants in DC, such as opposing the RENTAL Act's provisions and proactively expanding protections like Tenant Opportunity to Purchase and rent control
- We will work with unions and labor community groups to defend against wage theft
- We will mobilize with the migrant communities and organizations to defend our neighbors against harassment and detainment

Maryland

Montgomery County

The Montgomery County Branch has had many initiatives since its founding in 2017 including working groups for budget and tax equity working group, electoral politics, rent stabilization, Palestinian solidarity, and abolition and community safety. From 2023–25, the branch has focused on the following work:

Rent stabilization has been a core focus of the Montgomery County Branch, which has led to many successes and relief for hundreds of thousands of tenants. One victory of the branch includes limiting rent increases to 6% percent or less annually. The branch fights for two goals: full funding and enforcement for rent stabilization in the county budget as well as fighting for rent stabilization in the City of Rockville. Rockville has a unique circumstance because it is out of the scope of the county's regulation as a self-incorporated city. As a response, the branch has continued to canvas Rockville and has attended many hearings to fight for rent stabilization in Rockville.

Palestinian solidarity has been a critical issue to the Montgomery County Branch of Metro DC DSA for the past two years and facing the future. The branch has consistently met with state legislators regarding Delegate Gabe Acevero's ceasefire resolution in 2024 and also engaged in lobby meetings with Delegate Jhanelle Wilkins and David Moon, where branch members made a strong advocacy for peace and justice in Palestine. While mobilizing for the ceasefire resolution in 2024, the branch worked on the Uncommitted Maryland campaign by organizing in support of a show of no-confidence in the Democratic Party's presumptive nominee for the 2024 Democratic Presidential Primary in support for peace and justice in Palestine. Across the state campaign, 135 volunteers knocked on doors of over 26,000 voters and had over 4,000 conversations which led to 66,168 total votes, 9.75% of the vote across the state for the Uncommitted vote. Following the Uncommitted campaign, Palestine solidarity campaigns have focused on divestment by Maryland state and county expenditures, as well as local businesses that have relationships with the Israeli apartheid state. These include a public pressure campaign against Maryland Israel Development Center, which receives funding from the Montgomery County annual budget expenditures, as well as the state budget. The Palestine Solidarity Working Group also intends to organize with the Break the Bonds campaign to divest the Maryland State Retirement System for state employees from Israeli Bonds.

Community safety has been a key principle for the Montgomery County Branch, including organizing with the Silver Spring Justice Coalition and Decriminalize Montgomery Coalition, which supports the ban on consent searches, the Freedom to Leave Act. The branch's Abolition Working Group has been less active since 2024, but the branch's work in abolition and community safety has evolved since the second Trump Administration to focus on ICE Watch, rapid response, and supporting the Montgomery County Immigrant Rights Coalition with Know Your Rights community canvassing and fundraising to support community members with loved ones who have been detained by ICE.

The membership of the Montgomery County Branch has historically been concentrated in the "downcounty" geographic areas of the county, such as Silver Spring, Takoma Park, Wheaton, and Bethesda. For more geographic diversity, the branch has been basebuilding in the Upcounty regions in the Northwest of the county. DSA members who live in Upcounty (Germantown, Gaithersburg, Montgomery Village, Olney, Damascus, etc.) gather regularly to discuss Upcounty-centered issues and organize. Recently, the canvassed renters in the Gateway Apartments Community in Gaithersburg have worked to establish a tenants organization.

Goals for 2026–27

- Growth: Continue to grow our membership and prioritize recruitment through the Street Team, adding 100–150 members each year
- Member engagement: Grow our list of members who have attended at least 2 events in a year through a practice of regular 1–1s, outreach, socials, and tailored engagement
- Leadership development: Through training and 1–1s, increase the number of leaders involved in our steering committee, working groups, competitive steering elections, and other branch activities

- Tenant organizing: Continue to organize renters into tenant associations throughout the county, and establish MoCo DSA as a leading partner in a county-wide tenant union
- Electoral: Elect socialists to the Montgomery County Council to shift the balance of power on the county council to a progressive governing majority in 2026 and 2030
- Palestine solidarity: End county and state funding for the Maryland Israel Development Center
- Upcounty: Establish a tenants organization in the Gateway Apartment Community in Gaithersburg and expand the Upcounty meeting group
- With all of these goals, we have a focus on Rockville, Gaithersburg, Upcounty geographic areas and having our membership and leadership be more geographically, racially, and ethnically representative of the county as a whole

Prince George's County

The 1970s witnessed an exodus of Black middle-class families from Washington DC into Prince George's County (PGC), then dominated by a white political establishment. In the decades since, the county has seen gradual demographic shift followed by a shift in political and economic leadership to Black leaders. Today, the county is demographically 59% Non-Hispanic Black and 21% Hispanic.

The county has consistently voted Democratic in every federal and local election in the past half century, but with the exception of a growing progressive block on Prince George's County Council much of the county's representation falls along the centrist democratic spectrum. In 2025, PGC DSA had its first electoral victory when their endorsed candidate Shayla Adams-Stafford was elected to represent district 5 on the Prince George's County Council. In fall 2025, PGC DSA has canvassed and supported former branch chair Frankie Santos Fritz in his successful campaign for Greenbelt City Council.

In the early 2000s and leading up to the Great Recession, the county lost a significant amount of household wealth, thanks in large part to racialized sub-prime lending. Significant gaps in well-being, wealth and standard of living exist between densely populated inner ring suburbs and more sparsely populated, often more affluent communities outside the Beltway. With 986,000 residents in 2023, the county has the lowest income and home values out of all the counties adjacent to DC.

Employment is concentrated in federal government agencies (e.g., Department of Agriculture, NASA, Census Bureau), military installations (Andrews Air Force Base), educational institutions (University of Maryland-College Park and Bowie State University), healthcare, and other public sector employers. In 2025, many federal employees in the county have faced employment upheaval due to the DOGE cuts and federal shutdown. Real-estate development is the most economically and politically powerful sector of capital in the county, and will play a significant role in the county's future. Six Flags America, one of the county's largest employers and sources of revenue, announced it would close at the end of the 2025 season, and the county learned it will lose the Washington Commanders stadium within the next few years. These changes represent significant economic losses for the county and will call for new revenue and income generators to fill these gaps.

In the early 2020s, the County Council began courting developers who want to establish a data center at the old Landover Mall site. An online petition drew mass attention to the issue in summer 2025, and county residents turned out *en masse* to voice concerns about the environmental impacts of the data center and questioned its economic value to the county. Prince George's County DSA looks forward to establishing relationships with decision-makers and county residents to build coalitions that advocate for sustainable development that truly enhance the county, not line the pockets of the ruling class.

Policing and policing abuses, particularly by the Prince George's County Police Department, have generated controversy but limited reforms over the years. High profile police violence cases have included the assault on Demonte Ward Blake in 2019 and the murder of William Green in 2020, both instances involving the county police. In 2025, the Prince George's Branch established an Abolition Working Group to support abolitionist initiatives and thought in the county. The county council recently passed CR-111-2025, which will establish a task force to study the conditions at the Prince George's County detention facility in Upper Marlboro. PGDSA's Abolition Working Group hopes to build relationships with like-minded organizations in the county, including but not limited to Life after Release and PG Changemakers, to support legislation and initiatives that might evolve from this task force.

Prince George's County has a vibrant immigrant community; approximately 15% of residents are foreign-born. Immigrant enclaves along Route 1 and elsewhere in the county have been targeted by ICE during both Trump administrations. In March 2025, Beltsville resident Kilmar Abrego Garcia was detained in Beltsville on what ICE later called an "administrative error." At the time of writing, Mr. Abrego Garcia is back in the US but facing a subsequent unjust deportation to Liberia, a country where he has no official ties. PGC DSA has established a relationship with the newly-formed Prince George's County Immigrant Rights Coalition, which runs monthly Know Your Rights canvasses in immigrant neighborhoods and supports care campaigns for immigrant families impacted by ICE. PGC DSA looks forward to further connecting with value-aligned organizations in the county that share our goal of making the county a safe and welcoming place for all immigrants, regardless of status.

Goals for 2026–27

- Growth: Increase General Body Meeting attendance to an average of 20 attendees per meeting. Increase PGC DSA presence and membership in the southern part of Prince George's County through outreach events and organizing partnerships. Co-host at least two events with partner organizations to support our community and increase PGC DSA visibility
- Street Team: Establish a PGC DSA street team that tables in events throughout the county
- Abolition: Establish the Abolition Working Group as a reliable partner in abolition work in Prince George's County

- Leadership Development: Through training and 1–1s, increase the number of leaders involved in our steering committee, competitive steering elections, working groups, and other branch activities

Virginia

The Northern Virginia (NoVA) Branch of Metro DC DSA covers the City of Alexandria, Arlington County, Fairfax County, the City of Fairfax, the City of Falls Church, Prince William County, Loudoun County, Fauquier County, the City of Manassas, the City of Manassas Park, and all municipalities located therein. The branch has had many initiatives since its founding in 2017, including local working groups for electoral campaigns, mutual aid, abolition, migrant justice, tenant organizing, labor, medicare for all, and Palestinian solidarity.

Landscape

Northern Virginia is a hugely vital area not just to the larger Virginia economy but to the federal government as well. Millions in the region work for the federal government, contractors, and all the services those come with. Northern Virginia also headquarters some of the world’s largest corporations who deal directly with the government. Amazon, Boeing, Lockheed Martin, and Deloitte all have a major presence and drive the region both economically and politically. In the past ten years, the tech sector has exploded, and Northern Virginia has become a huge hub for workers and the massive data centers that the modern internet is built on.

Northern Virginia is also an increasingly deeper Democratic stronghold within the state, with GOP opposition being rump or moderated to some extent. It is in that context that we must deal with state-level controls of many operations. Virginia is a Dillon Rule state, meaning the central government in Richmond is highly restrictive of what local cities and counties may pass. With Northern Virginia, this means objectives like minimum wage, paid sick leave, hours and scheduling reform, etc, are largely nonstarters. Additionally, Virginia is the birthplace of open shop or “right to work” laws, which were designed to break interracial unions and to this day remain an obstacle to sustained union presence.

Northern Virginia is also one of the most diverse areas of the state. Immigrant populations from El Salvador, Vietnam, Korea, India, and elsewhere have long called the region home and have only increased in recent years. Although the federal government and higher paying jobs loom large, millions of workers toil in a variety of sectors.

From 2023–25, the chapter has focused on the following work in Northern Virginia:

- Tenant Organizing: The chapter’s Stomp Out Slumlords organizes buildings in Arlington to help tenants fight back against exploitative slumlords in Virginia. Virginia’s tenant protections make this fight particularly challenging

- Trans Rights and Bodily Autonomy: We helped pass Trans Sanctuary Resolutions through the Alexandria City Council and Arlington County Board in 2024 and 2025. These are the first and second trans-sanctuary localities in the state of Virginia
- Abolition and Migrant Justice: In local coalitions with abolitionist and migrant rights groups, we have pushed to divert local resources from the carceral state into taking care of local needs. Working with these coalitions, we have successfully pushed Arlington to end voluntary collaboration with ICE and hope to achieve the same in other areas in our region
- Medicare 4 All: Our Medicare 4 All working group helped pass a Medicare 4 All resolution through Alexandria's City council and are currently working to pass a similar one in Arlington
- Electoral: We hope to run local candidates throughout NoVA to realize the potential to build our base in the suburbs through a powerful election and all the associated organizing that entails
- Labor Organizing: We have been supporting local workers, primarily by showing up to solidarity actions like strikes. Our solidarity includes Starbucks workers, teachers, and county government employees
- Mutual Aid: We have been investigating ways to organize sustainable, long-term mutual aid programs in Northern Virginia that draw attention to the contradictions of capitalism. To this end, we host monthly food distributions and are looking into set up a timebank for people to share their practical skills

Chapter Outreach

Our outreach groups — Communications, Membership Engagement, NoVA Mutual Aid, Publications, and Street Team — serve as a bridge between DMV residents and MDC DSA chapter members. They spread the word about DSA's work and create spaces for collective and individual analysis and debate. Each group operates internally and externally, so individual working groups and campaigns can spread their message and promote their actions outside of the chapter.

Communications

MDC DSA's Communications Department keeps the chapter's image current by sharing updates and engagement opportunities through social media. The department shares posts on over five social media platforms to reach the largest audience possible throughout the region. Through a central account, the Communications Department is a cohesive hub for chapter news that shares events, updates, and more directly from the Steering Committee, working groups, and other trusted local organizations. The Communications Department also connects directly with our followers through direct messages on all platforms to answer questions, comments, or concerns.

Member Engagement Department

The MDC DSA Member Engagement Department (MED) recruits new members, plugs them into the larger work of the chapter, and develops them into leaders. MED connects with new members through phone and text banking, the Chat with a Comrade program, New Member Orientations, and New Member Cohorts. Externally, MED plans social events such as happy hour, walking clubs, singalongs, and more via its Community Builders group. As a whole, MED ensures that prospective members and members alike have a strong connection to the chapter and its larger work.

NoVA Mutual Aid

The Northern Virginia Mutual Aid Working Group holds recurring, sustainable, monthly aid distributions of food, hygiene kits, clothing, and literature. By working to meet the material needs of community members, NoVA Mutual Aid ensures that people have what they need to move beyond survival. Internally, NoVA Mutual Aid is creating a space where the work of MDC DSA is known; externally, NoVA Mutual Aid is building a consistent third space where residents can socialize and feel safe.

Publications

The Publications Working Group, also known as the Publications Cooperative, is one of the longest standing groups within MDC DSA. As a collective, Publications provides updates on chapter work through the Weekly Update, a weekly newsletter; the *Washington Socialist*, a quarterly publication;

the Dispatch, a video channel that includes interviews and chapter-wide news updates. Internally, Publications disseminates chapter information and actions across the different formations and campaigns; externally, Publications tells a vibrant story about how MDC DSA is fighting for a better world for all while providing a corrective perspective to the narrative of corporate media.

Street Team

The Street Team works to build the socialist movement throughout the DMV by tabling at events from farmers markets and working group fundraisers to rallies and art festivals. Members listen to community members about their material needs and priorities, engage in dialogue on how socialism can address these issues, and distribute mutual aid and information on how they can organize. Internally, the Street Team maintains a line of communication within the chapter to sustain a stocked inventory of chapter and working group literature and materials; externally, the Street Team speaks to DMV residents in their work to create a political climate that is open and ready for socialist policies. Working Groups and Campaigns

Abolition

Building on our migrant justice campaigns under the first Trump administration and coalescing during the uprisings in 2020, the Abolition Working Group is split into three distinct regions: DC and Montgomery County, Northern Virginia, and Prince George's County. Across all regions, our work is informed by being in community with those directly affected by the carceral system, imagining a world without police, building strong coalitions of support across racial and class lines, developing the means for holistic safety, and using mutual aid to create the systems we want to see. We can't have a just society that includes carceral systems: they're antithetical to that goal. The police do more than just protect the capitalist social order — they produce it. Carceral systems are places of violence, both individually and institutionally. By redistributing violence, they allow the rest of society to appear "safe." For our society to be safe in actuality, we need to abolish these systems in their entirety.

Attacks on federal funding and employment are already affecting our municipal budgets: public services are on the chopping block, rental assistance has been slashed, and thousands of people in our area are losing Medicaid coverage. What's more, while workers like county employees and public school teachers are fighting to not only ratify but fully fund the contracts they've bargained for, state and local law enforcement continue to receive blank checks. Police budgets are holding strong across the DMV, if not increasing. Divesting from — or eliminating — these would allow for those resources to be invested in other areas such as housing, transit, healthcare, education, and more. Reducing their power also gives organizers more room to act without the threat of state violence: when there are no cops responding to pickets, no sheriffs available to evict our neighbors, no threats of violence from cop unions against candidates, we have more room to create the peaceful and collaborative world that we all deserve.

Through the Abolition Working Group, this chapter has fought against harmful policies such as Secure DC and the Section 7 loophole in Arlington's trust policy. Collaboration with the Bodily Autonomy working group has been instrumental in securing the trans sanctuary resolution in Arlington and strengthening coalition work across Northern Virginia. Internal coordination for rapid response has plugged members into ongoing efforts to document and de-escalate as ICE and other federal agents kidnap and harass immigrants, Black youth, and unhoused neighbors in DC.

Across the DMV, our work has faced significant obstacles. State repression is a given when fighting to defund the very same apparatus, but recent years have seen more direct threats such as the repression of Palestinian solidarity student encampments, "emergency" youth curfews, and the escalation of DC's federal occupation. Entrenched narratives about crime, the increasing criminalization and surveillance of Black and brown communities, threats to Home Rule, budget crises, and more have become pervasive in our community.

Despite blockers, we have continued our work. Most recently, we have focused on:

- Providing mutual aid through backpack and coat distributions, brake light clinics, jail support, and prison letter writing programs

- Attending ANC and other community meetings to listen to our neighbors and advocate for community-focused policies
- Giving testimony at legislation and budget meetings, particularly on policing
- Fundraising for liberatory funds, such as Free Them All/La Colectiva Liberation Fund
- Building relationships with people affected by imprisonment and immigration detention
- Building community defense through rapid response and court watching

Goals

With the current administration and the takeover of DC, our immediate goals are to end the escalation of federal forces in DC, disrupt the accelerated deportation pipeline, and end the collaboration between ICE and municipal law enforcement. Beyond those priorities, our goals for the next couple of years are to:

- Divert funding away from the MPD through advocacy and community support
- Restore and increase funding to public services and healthcare
- Shut down immigration detention centers in VA such as Farmville and Caroline while preventing the development of any future detention centers in both VA and MD
- Fight the expansion of pretrial detention in DC

Although we're working for a police-free society, our measures of success along the way include:

- Budgets that reflect the things our communities need instead of policing
- Public figures speaking out against the cops
- Policy changes such as Arlington trust policy removing Section 7
- Regional reductions in arrests, incarcerations, and deportations
- Holistic assessments of and reductions in interpersonal violence

Bodily Autonomy

Bodily autonomy connects reproductive justice to transgender and queer liberation. The Bodily Autonomy Working Group (BAWG) advances policies protecting the accessibility of reproductive and transgender healthcare as well as the rights of queer people, promoting mutual aid, and creating strong community partnerships.

Although we have made strides forward, the fight for true bodily autonomy has not been won and MDC DSA continues to be on the frontlines. BAWG works to protect our rights from fascist legislators aiming to restrict bodily autonomy rights and from organizations using the courts to attack reproductive justice and transgender healthcare. This work has been reflected in our regional success: in 2020, DC passed a reproductive justice sanctuary law; in 2024, Maryland put reproductive justice into their state constitution and is currently working to extend sanctuary protections for transgender people in the next legislative cycle. This will be continued in NoVA, where BAWG is working to pass reproductive justice and marriage equality amendments in 2026.

In addition to our legislative work, we are building capacity for distribution of mutual aid, which includes emergency contraception, pregnancy tests, and condoms in our reproductive and sexual health kits. These will eventually expand to include the O-Pill, an over-the-counter, progestin-only birth control pill. And in a nod to growing need and intersectional issues, BAWG is also working with the DC government to distribute Narcan to our communities. In the next two years, our goal is to have a tested and efficient system of recording and distributing our mutual aid.

Despite continued legislative and judicial attacks on bodily autonomy, BAWG remains a strong presence in the DMV. Some of our work recently has included:

- Packing and distributing reproductive and sexual health care kits in collaboration with MDC DSA's Street Team and community partners
- Getting Arlington declared as a sanctuary city
- Raising money for a mutual aid fund
- Coordinating trans healthcare transfers from Children's National Hospital
- Tracking and responding to legislation in the DMV and Congress that targets reproductive healthcare (such as the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion and Abortion Insurance Full Disclosure Act of 2025)
- Hosting educational and social events throughout the DMV
- Supporting partners, students, and teachers in NoVA to protect transgender student facilities access under Title IX
- Campaigning against Medicaid restrictions for gender affirming care

Specifically within MDC DSA, BAWG has collaborated with multiple working groups and community organizations, including:

- Street Team: Tabling at community events, distributing mutual aid to the community

- Internationalism: Hosting Pack, Party, Palestine to raise money for both the DC Abortion Fund and the Middle East Children's Alliance while packing reproductive and sexual health care kits
- Emergency Contraception for DC: Coordinating and distributing reproductive and sexual healthcare kits throughout DC
- NoVA Branch: Coordinating on maintaining Title IX protections in schools, working to add marriage equality and reproductive rights into the state constitution
- LGBTQ Budget Coalition: Fighting for trans/queer funding in DC

As socialists and feminists, these battles over healthcare and the right to determine what's best for our own bodies are the key to our freedom. The attacks on healthcare — from pushing millions out of care to executive orders banning gender affirming care for youth — are the battles that BAWG takes on daily.

Goals

- Expanding our reproductive and sexual health care kits to include Narcan and O-Pill
- Work with NoVA LGBTQIA+ groups to protect school facilities for trans students
- Establish Fairfax County, Prince William County, and Loudoun County as sanctuary cities
- Expand policy and outreach work to include early childcare and other reproductive issues beyond abortion
- Establish a birth certificate law in MD to allow for a third gender marker
- Fight for further healthcare protections for transgender people

Electoral

Electoral engagement has two distinct stages: running for election and governing once in office. This section shall describe our strategy and goals for each of these stages, including likely opportunities for the expansion of our electoral bench and policy goals to enact in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia.

Elections offer a number of unique opportunities to build DSA into a fighting socialist party-like organization. This does not mean that we aim to form a separate ballot line in the near future, but rather that we in DSA, as a democratic, working-class membership organization, aim to build a clear platform, select our own candidates, and run our own campaigns. Elections are the primary avenue by which most Americans understand and engage in politics. They offer a high-profile platform from which we can articulate and educate the public about our politics, the ability to mobilize a mass of people around a specific goal and absorb them into our organization, and the chance to tangibly affect the terrain of struggle through transformative legislative efforts and agitation if we win.

To achieve that level of identification and support in the capital region, MDC DSA must engage in electoral campaigns alongside its work in other areas such as labor and tenant organizing, bodily autonomy, public power, and internationalism. Our electoral campaigns can also further these issues in themselves, both by highlighting them on the campaign trail, mobilizing workers into our non-electoral work, and by taking concrete actions to execute those policies once in office.

To run campaigns like this, we must endorse candidates who are willing to publicly identify with the organization, consciously use their campaign and time in office to build it, and clearly understand their role within our broader political project.

Our electoral strategy can be divided into two parts: “class-struggle campaigns” and “cadre candidates.” A class-struggle campaign is an election that cleanly divides all of labor and progressive forces against all of capital. Such a candidate may not necessarily be a true DSA candidate who is accountable to the organization. But these campaigns comprise a struggle that has our class in motion against the forces of capital and reveal a direct conflict between classes in the electoral arena. This was the case with Bernie Sanders’ presidential campaigns, which popularized the reality of class struggle among millions. The goal of a class-struggle campaign is to politicize workers along class lines and to cohere a left-labor coalition against the capitalist elite of the Democratic Party. One of our goals as an organization is to further cleave politics in the DMV between the left-labor and status quo coalitions, which builds class alignment among the workers of the region.

Most of the candidates we seek to run will be what we call “cadre candidates,” organizers who came up through DSA and served as active chapter members, preferably in one or more leadership roles. MDC DSA aims to increase the number of cadre candidates we endorse: member-leaders who are accountable to our organizational democracy. Over time, our goal is to exclusively run cadre candidates, democratically selected to run by our members and running on our chapter’s program,

with a mandate to represent the chapter and bring workers into struggle and membership of the organization. The goal here is working-class political independence, with MDC DSA as the organizational vehicle for the workers' movement in the region.

On the Ballot Line

Metro DC DSA currently operates on a strategy of running candidates in Democratic primaries or nonpartisan elections, while expecting that these candidates will publicly identify as democratic socialists, use their campaigns to help further organize the working class in their district, and build DSA's independent political power.

Democratic primaries take place mostly within the realm of the state: where primary elections are run and voters register, rather than within the party itself as an independent organization. The Democratic Party does not have a membership, a program, real mechanisms for internal democracy, or strong formal party organizations. In this sense, the party is essentially impossible to "take over" at either the local or national levels, but this structure also creates opportunities because the party has little direct control over who participates in and wins its nominating contests.

The Democratic Party exists primarily as a cartel-party. Rather than a formal structure, the party is a constellation of consulting firms and nongovernmental organizations that answer to the owning class. The institutions of the party exercise soft power over voters as well as more coercive and direct power over candidates and other political actors who must rely on them.

The nature of US elections essentially foreclose a major third party. Socialists, however, have had success engaging with the Democratic ballot line since the Sanders campaign. This made it clear that the best path was to struggle against the capitalist Democratic Party establishment by building our own independent organization, entirely separate from Democratic Party institutions, and using Democratic primaries to cleave the capitalist elite of the Democratic Party from its working-class base by laying bare the divergent class interests and structural barriers the party's capitalist establishment will use to obstruct real change.

The local exception to this is the two DC Council at-large seats reserved for non-Democrats, which could feasibly be challenged independently or on a hypothetical third-party ballot line (e.g. the Working Families Party). These contests are potential opportunities to further build an independent working-class political identity and build the chapter as a political force.

Socialists In Office

We believe elected offices are primarily useful for passing legislation that can improve people's lives. Through these legislative fights, we seek to materially shift the terrain of struggle to be more advantageous for working class power. This allows us to mobilize a large group of people to press those demands, who then can be moved into DSA long-term, rather than purely as a means for agitation. We do not seek to speak truth to power. We hope to wield power.

To win our goals and demands, we must wield our elected power deliberately. We should engage along lines that are maximally advantageous to us, cohering a broad coalition around our demands and working to shift the terrain of struggle in our favor. Passing trans sanctuary laws in Virginia municipalities enabled us to mobilize a large group of people to meaningfully strengthen civil liberties protections. Fighting against a bad 2025 budget in DC brought us together with unions and community advocacy groups. These are examples of our strategy. Our fights should build the left-labor coalition and bring the working class and owning class into direct conflict. DSA should position itself as a leader and central coordinator in these coalitions to further align and cohere the working class around our political program and demands.

The goal of legislation or reform is not merely to improve the living standards of workers, though that must be part of all of our efforts. In the long run, this strengthens our ability to demand more and larger reforms and pave the way for the revolutionary transformation of society from one in which owners make decisions and workers beg for scraps to one in which the working class rules.

Finally, this all must be done with an understanding of accountability to DSA. We hope to have more consistent coordination between our elected members and the chapter. Though our accountability mechanisms are not fully developed, we make clear to candidates that as a chapter we may censure, unendorse, or escalate to organizational expulsion if need be. Accountability begins in the endorsement process, with the candidates being clear that they are part of DSA and are advancing our goals as part of their platform and campaign.

Ballot Measure Campaigns

Ballot measure campaigns, such as the previous chapter campaigns for Initiative 82 to abolish the tipped minimum wage in DC and Question 1 to enshrine reproductive freedom in the Maryland State Constitution, present unique opportunities for the chapter to intervene. Ballot measures enable single-issue messaging that can be focused with laser precision. Campaign finance and compliance is generally much less regulated, and many of the contradictions inherent to candidate campaigns do not apply, such as how loyal a candidate is or what to do if they take a bad vote. On the other hand, ballot measures can be easily undermined by a hostile legislature, as we saw with the DC Council's decision to pause and then revoke the implementation of I82 in 2025. While Metro DC DSA should seek out opportunities to participate in ballot measure campaigns, they should not be a sole mechanism for achieving political change.

Goals

Metro DC DSA will engage in elections with the goal(s) of:

- Winning seats and building a local political bloc that can govern at the local level,
- Building class alignment and working class political identity,
- Seeking to expand our electoral work in the next two years, and
- Dividing the working class base of the Democratic Party from its capitalist wing

Since 2016, MDC DSA and the left have built a highly engaged working-class base. This base represents the beginning of a mass party and the class alignment we need. With this base, we can win elections in many areas and exercise power to push for legislative reform. We have organized people and organized money in jurisdictions with public finance matching programs that allow large numbers of working-class small donors to fully finance competitive campaigns. This base is the democratic socialist constituency of our moment: young, working class, diverse, concentrated in dense areas, and renters with precarious economic conditions. Building this ideologically democratic socialist working-class base has been the product of many years of organizing and has powered wins for our candidates in DC, Maryland, and Virginia.

Our immediate task is to consolidate and win in places where the democratic socialist base is the largest constituency. Our next task is to expand further by mobilizing and politicizing swathes of workers we have yet to reach: first, working-class non-voters in general, whom candidates like Zohran Mamdani have proven can be brought into the electorate in massive numbers with a sharp, democratic socialist message and good organizing. Second, historically marginalized communities, in particular, working class Black voters. Third, our electoral work needs to mobilize diaspora communities who form the backbone of the working class in our region, through multilingual and multicultural organizing.

We aim to win a left-labor majority on the DC Council, and a left-labor mayor, by 2030, and a DSA majority Council and Mayor by 2034. We will use this majority to redistribute wealth and power to the working class and organize an unstoppable force for political freedom for DC through statehood and a constitutional convention. We aim to win a majority and Executives in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties in the same time frame. We also aim to build blocs in the Maryland and Virginia legislatures and use these blocs to agitate for socialism and win reforms for the working class. We aim to have representation at the federal level from Maryland and Virginia, with our representatives fighting for DC Statehood and acting as tribunes for the working class in the federal government. These are ambitious goals, but we have confidence we will achieve them.

Green New Deal

As the largest socialist organization operating in the DMV, Metro DC DSA is determined to play a critical role in combating climate change. In many ways, DC is better positioned to address climate change. With an extensive public transportation network, recently passed climate policies, and a relatively motivated population, the city's handling of climate change has been better than many comparable metropolitan areas. Our leadership will ensure DC's response not only addresses climate change but does so in a way that positions labor unions and the working class as beneficiaries and architects of the process. To expand and synthesize the chapter's existing eco-socialist organizing, we created the Green New Deal (GND) Working Group in the Fall of 2024. It acts as a central organizing body for our chapter's three Green New Deal campaigns (listed below), as well as serving as a site of cross-pollination and incubation for potential future campaigns:

1. We Power DC: A priority campaign organizing to municipalize DC's electricity utility.
2. Social Housing: A campaign to build a Social Housing Department in DC.
3. Transit: A campaign organizing to pass a Land Value Tax on the land near transit stations, to help fund WMATA, reduce the burden of cost on residents, and improve transit sustainability.

Working independently, each of the GND subworking groups has achieved significant success. Focused on educating the local population, building coalition and public support, and developing allies on the DC council to push for legislation, We Power DC, Social Housing, and Transit have consistently punched above their weight. We have led the drafting and coalition building for both the Green New Deal for Housing Bill and the Cumulative Impacts Analysis Amendment Act and recently completed a massive white paper detailing Pepco's plutocratic management of DC's energy utility and our path toward municipalization.

Now, working in concert with each other, the GND Working Group has provided its subworking groups with a platform to host joint events, coordinate actions, and support each other's campaigns. This coordination will provide an opportunity to combine efforts, increase public awareness of the individual campaigns, and amplify pressure on the DC Council.

To reach our long-term goals, the GND Working Group has several legislative and organizational challenges:

- Home Rule: A central threat to the GND Working Group's success. Without Home Rule, we have no hope of passing the legislation necessary to enact our political objectives. The Trump Administration's overt assault on DC independence has made this a more pressing issue than ever. The mayor and other institutional council members have made it clear that they will use the threat of Home Rule ending to target any progressive legislation passed by the DC Council.
- Trump Administration: It is likely that if the DC Council passes any GND legislation, it will be vetoed by the Trump Administration and its allies.

- Public Awareness and Outreach: Lack of community buy-in, particularly from Wards 7 and 8, is a critical issue for the GND Working Group. Wards 7 and 8 are the wards that, in theory, would most benefit from GND policies. Yet, systemic disenfranchisement and a lack of DSA member density in the area have prevented this from becoming a reality.
- Lack of Programming for MD and VA: Despite MD and VA facing similar issues to DC, the high concentration of DC members in our chapter and the need for locally oriented campaigns have prevented the expansion of the GND programming to the rest of the DMV.
- Capacity: Campaign leadership tends to do the majority of the work, which has led to burnout in the past.

Goals

To overcome these obstacles and fulfill our objectives, the GND Working Group has established a number of short- and long-term goals. First, we will identify a champion on the DC Council to put forward and advocate for our legislation. While Janeese Lewis George has already thrown her support behind the Green New Deal for Social Housing and other GND legislation, municipalization has only tepid support on the DC Council. To overcome this, we will focus our legislative efforts on interim policies that will erode Pepco's strength and build alliances with council members. Fighting for a long-overdue feasibility study and collaborating on "Make Polluters Pay" legislation are both options that address this issue while building future public support.

While we build allies within the DC Council, the GND Working Group will expand public and organizational support for our campaigns. Wheatpasting, canvassing, and tabling efforts have already proven to be practical tools for public outreach. With recent increases in GND Working Group membership, they should be even more effective. Collaborations with other climate and community organizations should be expanded as well. In particular, we need to increase inroads with organized labor. The Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU), Washington Teachers Union (WTU), and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) will be crucial allies in the success of our legislation. Support from the IBEW, in particular, has played an essential role in the success or failure of municipalization campaigns nationwide.

Finally, the GND Working Group will work to expand our reach into MD and VA. While primarily focused on DC, recent activism around data center construction in MD and VA has provided us with a unique opportunity to tie the interests of DC residents to those of MD and VA. To best address this opportunity, the GND Working Group should reach out and offer assistance to VA and MD DSA branches and chapters. The local formations will have the best insight into the context they are facing and can best lead the organizing.

Internationalism

MDC DSA's Internationalism Working Group aims to build solidarity with global movements for a more just world. We are committed to opposing militarism and global capitalism from the capital of the US empire. Through direct action, political education, and coalition building, we seek to put global solidarity at the center of our socialist practice and advance anti-imperialism in the DMV region. Our position at the heart of western empire makes clear that the struggle against capitalism to build socialism is inextricable from the struggle against empire. Socialism must by necessity be a global project, not merely a national one.

Our Work

With the ongoing genocide by the Israeli apartheid state, several campaigns for Palestine have been a priority for our Internationalism Work Group's efforts in the DMV. We are organizing locally to canvas our neighbors and local businesses alongside the Apartheid Free DC Campaign (with DC for Palestine), which builds our base and tangibly advocates for the boycott of Israeli products. We want deeper ties with labor via the "Labor for an Arms Embargo" campaign, knowing the role organized labor plays in applying pressure. In Virginia, we are part of a campaign to have the Virginia Retirement System divest the pensions of Virginia's public sector employees from harmful investments. We are also organizing to apply pressure on Chevron to stop supporting Israel's energy infrastructure as a part of the "Stop Fueling Genocide" campaign: we have applied pressure and spoken about their role in front of Chevron's Legislative Affairs office in Washington DC. Moving forward, we seek to eliminate as many ties in our community to the Israeli apartheid state as possible, with the ultimate goal of contributing to the end of the genocide in Gaza and the occupation of Palestine.

While Palestinian liberation is our current priority, we also have ongoing work on solidarity with Cuba and the Philippines and aim to build more ties with organizations doing anti-imperialist work. Our Cuba solidarity work endeavors to build a base of popular support and work alongside the Cuban embassy to educate on Cuba's history and current plight under blockade. In Philippines solidarity, our chapter is a member of the International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines (ICHRP) coalition. We have held numerous political education events about the situation and US-backed state repression in the Philippines. We seek to build connections with and learn from the broader movement for socialism in the imperial periphery and strengthen connections between the domestic and international working class.

Our Internationalism Working Group seeks to build DSA's credibility as a truly anti-imperialist organization, especially with diaspora-led communities. We know and wish to articulate clearly that the ruling class in the US can't maintain its power without imperialist endeavors. Everything is connected, so if we can weaken the ruling class, we can win more of everything. As the Trump administration expands its imperialist aims, we will expand our responses to the aggressions of the United States. Through intentional relationship-building and political education, we can bring lessons from many working-class struggles abroad to our own organizing.

Goals

We will build a more developed capacity for campaigning and mobilizing by building up member's skills, confidence, and readiness to lead (action support, turnout, internal organizing, etc). We are developing discipline in organizing contingents and turning our membership out to many mass meetings about the Boycott, Divestment & Sanctions (BDS) campaign and Palestine solidarity in DC. Through our consistent and reliable partnership, we will deepen our coalition partnerships. We will foster a reputation for reliability and effectiveness and be more deeply embedded in regional BDS efforts. We will continue to build out our rapid response abilities as we grow a network of people to get out to allied events, as well as organizing our own.

In all of this, we are continually helping to develop activists into organizers, supporters into activists and DSA members. This work not only raises the consciousness, but also inspires people to commit to the work. Through this, we gain the ability to change narratives and influence conversations around internationalism. We hope to encourage the masses to mobilize around the struggles of anti-imperialism and to communicate and educate about these struggles to the people. Through lobbying and pressure campaigns, we can influence national politicians and corporations. We also hope to raise political consciousness about anti-imperialism within our own members and particularly within other working groups and campaigns.

Some of the specific policies we are working on include:

- Establishing an Arms Embargo on Israel
- Dismantling the Virginia Israel Advisory Board and Maryland Israel Development Center
- Divesting the Virginia Retirement System from companies that support the genocide
- Divesting Chevron from Israel
- Passing the federal Philippines Human Rights Act
- Helping to end the blockade on Cuba

Labor

Metro DC DSA is rare among DSA chapters for the geography we cover. DC, a federal district with declining autonomy over its laws; Maryland, in recent decades a progressive state in some respects; and Virginia, a bastion for much of the anti-union movement. Additionally, millions of federal and quasi-federal workers live and work in our region. This means our labor organizing program has to be at once expansive in scope but realistic in what power we can build.

MDC DSA has, since 2016, focused on two major sectors: public employees and food service. We have also engaged with workers in non-profits, construction, logistics, hospitality, retail, and transportation. Our work has spanned mobilizing in solidarity to pickets and strikes, conducting workplace canvasses and organizing trainings, and direct worker organizing.

In recent years, the chapter has also been more deeply coordinated with the Emergency Workplace Organizing Committee. The relationship has been especially strong in 2025, as our Labor Working Group's organizing department helped establish a local EWOC earlier this year and we continue to supply it with trained volunteers. These close relationships ensure that any organizing that takes off or requires immediate community assistance are communicated to the chapter's Labor Working Group in a timely way.

While the working class in DC may retain greater privileges than our neighboring Virginia, the political conditions we face are fundamentally of a capitalist character, with a council bought and paid for by the ruling class. In 2022, we fought hard to pass Initiative 82, a bill intended to gradually eliminate the tipped subminimum wage. Although I-82 passed with overwhelming support, the Restaurant Association of Metropolitan Washington and their insiders in the DC Council and Mayor Bowser spent years launching myriad attacks upon this established law, while whining in the press about how paying workers adequately would drive them out of business. Eventually, the Council succumbed to the pressure, with an amendment introduced earlier this year that effectively killed the resolution.

The experiences of I-82 parallel, in smaller form, the Trump Administration's broader assault on the foundations of labor law, especially targeting the federal workforce. While the administration paralyzed the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), a Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals found in favor of a lawsuit brought by SpaceX and Trader Joe's that argued the NLRB is itself unconstitutional. These actions have emboldened employers to engage in more extreme and blatant illegal unionbusting activity.

Goals

Our goal is to build DSA into the political home for socialist trade unionists. To meet the moment, we need to build and strengthen a core of active socialists in the labor movement.

Current Organizing

- Public sector
 - Federal Workers: Supporting federal workers in the Federal Unionist Network and federal unions in their fight to preserve federal worker rights and a strong civil society
 - WMATA: Supporting the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 689 in the fight for a fully funded transit system, against privatization, and transit access
- Sectoral food service
 - Restaurant Workers: Working with UNITE HERE Local 25 on their campaign to organize high end restaurants, particularly the STARR Group
 - Starbucks: Supporting the Starbucks Workers Union in the region through solidarity actions
- Other sectors
 - Healthcare: Fighting against hospital closures
 - Hotels: Supporting UNITE HERE Local 25 organizing at various chains, and in their coordinated bargaining efforts at Marriott
 - Retail: Supporting organizing at independent bookstores throughout DC

Potential Organizing and Upcoming Bargaining Fights

- Amazon, Amazon Web Services: the internet flows through Northern Virginia data centers, and we were a coalition partner in the fight against HQ2. We see opportunity in talking to these workers who are at a “digital chokepoint”
- Grocery: The multi-state Giant and Safeway contracts expire in Oct 2027. Last time, both groups of workers nearly struck. This is a key fight to watch, given the price gouging by grocery companies
- May Day 2028: DSA has supported the call by United Auto Workers president Shawn Fain to coordinate contracts to initiate a general strike. Our members in industries large and small and our continued visible and material solidarity to unions we see as key in building confidence and willingness to make May Day 2028 in the Metro DC area a reality

Legislation

- Maryland Public Sector: Supporting workers at the University of Maryland to attain the right to bargain and the larger campaign to win the right to strike for public sector workers in the state
- Virginia Union Rights: Fight to end Virginia’s Open Shop status, which has advanced in strides in the past ten years. We believe there is opportunity when the expected shift towards Democratic control in 2026 to do this, even without the support of the governor. Additionally, we aim to expand public-sector collective bargaining rights that were partially opened in 2020. We aim for full recognition of these rights, rather than the compromise law that was opt-in

Internal Union Organizing

- The DSA National Labor Commission has developed standards for democratic unions:
 - The right of members to vote on all collective bargaining agreements
 - All members to receive a copy of the CBA; prior to any contract vote, a complete copy (not just “highlights”) of proposed changes to the CBA will be available to all members, with time to review
 - Bargaining committees to include rank and file members
 - Direct election of officers at all levels — local and national
 - Officer salaries should be set close to that of the people they represent
 - Meetings, CBAs, constitutions, etc, to be translated (or conducted) into the languages spoken by 5% of members
- We will continue to support our members and any union members who wish to better their unions. We offer trainings and support in this endeavor regionally

Trainings and Education

- Inside Organizing Schools: Developing rank-and-file union leadership and organizing skills for fighting, democratic unions
- Know Your Rights trainings: Educating workers at large about their rights on the job and how to use legal and non-legal means of ensuring they are respected
- Bilingual or Spanish trainings: Broadening our multilingual work
- Outreach brigades: Engaging in Know Your Rights canvasses, sectoral specific meetings, and public education events like walking tours

Medicare for All

The US healthcare system is inherently inequitable, inadequate, and does not meet the needs of Americans despite comprising one-fifth of the US economy. We believe that decoupling the healthcare system from the capitalist for-profit economic model and treating healthcare as a human right would be a revolutionary advance in alleviating these inequities, improving health outcomes, and reducing the overall costs of healthcare. Our long-term goal: federal passage of national, improved Medicare For All would be a giant step toward decoupling capitalism and healthcare, but much work will still need to be done to address racial, economic, and regional disparities in healthcare outcomes. The struggle for universal healthcare locally has been based around education and building support at the local and state level for expanded public healthcare and calls for a Medicare for All type system.

Goals

Immediate Work

- Supporting healthcare mutual aid for the uninsured and underinsured
- Providing popular education on universal healthcare

Building Medicare for All Locally

- Advocating for Medicare for All support resolutions in local Virginia governments
- Supporting Medicare and Medicaid expansion efforts at the state level
- Working towards state-level implementation of universal healthcare
- Getting local federal electeds on board with national Medicare for All legislation

Migrant Justice

Originally housed under the Abolition Working Group, the continued and escalated attacks on DC's immigrant community led to a resurgence of this work as its own independent campaign. Organized in coalition with DC migrant justice organizers, the Migrant Justice Working Group works alongside frontline communities to resist the escalation of federal forces in DC and protect our most vulnerable neighbors. We will:

- Ensure that the anti-ICE collaboration law is enforced by the District government
- Provide mutual aid to support families impacted by deportations
- Provide community defense and cop watching
- Work in coalitions on campaigns targeting deportation profiteers like Avelo Airlines
- Organize against deportation decision-makers in the federal, state, and local governments of our region

Tenant Organizing

Tenant organizing in the DMV has long been a cornerstone of mass movement building. Agitation by DC tenants in the 1970s led to some of the strongest renter rights and eviction protection laws in the country, including the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA) in DC. 40% of residents in the metro area are renters, and close to 59% of households in DC are renter-occupied.

Goals

Given that the chapter covers a large number of jurisdictions that have vastly different ratios of owner-renter and varying levels of renter protections, our approach will need to be flexible. That being said, targeting specific goals can have knock-on effects for neighboring jurisdictions, so wins anywhere can mean better chances to win everywhere. Our areas of focus for the next two years:

Defend and Expand Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA).

TOPA is a one-of-a-kind law that goes beyond giving DC tenants the right of first refusal to provide time and resources for tenants to self-purchase and convert multifamily properties to limited-equity cooperatives that are self-managed. In recent years, this right has been used most frequently by tenants to negotiate concessions from potential buyers of the property. In 2018, the law was amended to strip TOPA rights from those who live in single-family homes. In September 2025, the DC Council voted to exempt an untold number of tenants living in properties with 4 or fewer units. Between the Budget Support Act of 2023, and the recently passed RENTAL Act, TOPA has been further eroded. Restoration of TOPA and repeal of the RENTAL Act should serve as the baseline of a socialist strategy over the next two years.

Jurisdictions in Maryland have a variety of laws similar to TOPA, but they do not meet the same standard and are not attached to as many resources. Expanding TOPA to these regions — full TOPA — could serve as an important cohering mechanism for strategy in the years to come.

Support Creation of a Region-Wide Tenants Union.

- Focus first on a DC tenant union given density of membership, high percentage of renters as compared to homeowners, and strength of tenant organizing laws
- Expand into MD given similar strength of tenant organizing laws and number of SIOs
- Explore opportunities in NoVa, targeting large buildings and buildings owned by companies that own properties in DC and MD for cross-border pressure

Other Goals

- Introduce Social Housing legislation in as many jurisdictions as possible, and pass and launch pilot programs with support of the Social Housing section in Green New Deal
- Defend rent stabilization in MoCo
- Defend and expand rent control in DC

- Introduce rent control legislation at state level in VA and remove state preemption of rent control
- Introduce and pass commercial rent control in DC and MD

Glossary of Terms

- Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC): Bodies of local government in DC created through the Home Rule Act
- Apartheid Free DC: Campaign by DC for Palestine to end support for Israel's genocide by cutting ties with any companies involved
- Arlington Trust Policy's Section 7: A section in Arlington's trust policy which allowed for Arlington police to notify ICE of the immigration status of anyone they arrested
- Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS): A Palestinian-led movement promoting boycotts, divestments, and economic sanctions against Israel
- Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA): Contracts negotiated between labor unions and employers
- Consent Search Ban: A law or policy that prohibits police from searching a person or their property based solely on their consent
- Cumulative Impacts Analysis Amendment Act: A DC bill that would require new projects to analyze their cumulative impact on pollution and other environmental stressors
- Emergency Workplace Organizing Committee (EWOC): A volunteer-run network who organize for better workplaces and unions
- Freedom to Leave Act: A Montgomery County bill that would restrict police consent searches during traffic stops
- Green New Deal for Housing Bill: A bill that would increase funding to modernize and decarbonize the US's public housing stock
- Home Rule: Law passed in 1972 that allows for DC to elect its own mayor, members of the DC council, and commissioners of ANCs; stipulates that Congress must review all DC bills before becoming law
- Initiative 82 (I-82): a DC voter-approved measure to gradually eliminate minimum wage for tipped employees
- International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines (ICHRP): a global network of organizations committed to campaigning for just and lasting peace in the Philippines
- Make Polluters Pay: Legislation that would hold major fossil fuel polluters financially responsible for climate change costs
- Maryland Israel Development Center: A nonprofit organization that promotes trade and investment between Maryland and Israel
- Medicare for All: A movement to establish a single-payer national health insurance in the US
- Mutual Aid: A system where people in a community work to support each other
- Pretrial Detention: The process of holding a person in custody after they have been arrested but before their trial has begun
- RENTAL Act: A DC housing bill that shortens eviction timelines, exempts new buildings from TOPA protections, and more
- Rent Control: Limits on how much landlords can charge for rent or how much they can increase the rent each year
- Rent Stabilization: Limits how much landlords can increase the rent on a property

- Sanctuary City: A city that limits or denies its cooperation with the national government in order to protect immigrant residents
- Secure DC: A DC bill that would establish drug free zones, allow police to use neck restraints, increase sentencing for different crimes, and more
- Stop Fueling Genocide: A DSA campaign targeting Chevron for its support of Israel's genocide
- Social Housing: Affordable housing provided to families and individuals
- Stomp Out Slumlords (SOS): A DSA working group that fights evictions and supports tenant organizing throughout DC
- Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA): A DC law that gives tenants the right to purchase their multi-family building
- Virginia Israel Advisory Board: An advisory board that promotes trade and investment between Virginia and Israel
- Virginia Retirement System: An independent state agency that administers pension plans, retirement savings plans, and other benefits to public employees in Virginia