



Code of Conduct

Adopted September 13, 2023

Article 1 - Purpose

DC for Democracy (DC4D) is committed to creating a welcoming, respectful, and inclusive environment for all participants in all aspects of our advocacy efforts. We value and respect the diversity of perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences that our Members, participants, external organizations, and stakeholders bring to our work.

This Code of Conduct sets forth standards to guide DC4D Members and Officers (as [defined in our bylaws](#)) as well as other participants in our organizing and our spaces on how to ensure our actions are respectful of one another and reflect positively on the reputation of the organization.

The process of reporting violations of this Code ensures that Members are held accountable without fear of retribution and there is a consistent, formal process for reporting infractions. Ultimately, DC4D strives to ensure that the process of enforcing the Code will be fair and consistent, and will be applied equally to all Members.

When determining the appropriate consequence for a substantiated violation of the Code, the group involved in determining an appropriate response expands from the Ombudsperson, to the Steering Committee, to relevant working group, and ultimately a full Member vote before expulsion. All consequences are administered in accordance with DC4D's bylaws or other governing documents.

Article 2 - Guidance for Officer and Member Engagement with External Entities

Section 1. Be respectful and professional in all interactions with external organizations and stakeholders when acting on behalf of DC4D, including in-person meetings, phone calls, emails, and social media interactions.

Section 2. Avoid engaging in any behavior that could be perceived as hostile, confrontational, or aggressive, including the use of inflammatory language or personal attacks.

Section 3. Avoid making any false or misleading statements about DC4D or its activities, and do not engage in any behavior on behalf of DC4D that could be perceived as deceptive, misleading, or manipulative.

Section 4. Seek to build positive relationships with external organizations and stakeholders by being responsive to their needs and concerns, and by demonstrating a willingness to collaborate and mediate mutually agreeable solutions.

Section 5. Avoid conflicts of interest by disclosing any personal or financial relationships with external organizations, stakeholders, or individuals, and by refraining from using your position as an Officer or Member of DC4D to advance their personal interests or agendas, or that of their family Members, friends, and associates.

Section 6. Respect the confidentiality of any sensitive or confidential information shared by external organizations and stakeholders, and do not disclose this information without proper authorization by the DC4D Steering Committee.

Section 7. Be mindful of the impact of your words and actions on the reputation and credibility of DC4D, and strive to uphold the highest standards of integrity and professionalism in all interactions with external organizations and stakeholders.

Article 3 - Guidance for Participants at Meetings and Events

Section 1. Avoid using offensive or derogatory language, gestures, or images. Do not harass, intimidate, or discriminate against anyone based on their identity, appearance, or beliefs.

Section 2. Be constructive and collaborative. Share your ideas and feedback in a positive and respectful manner. Listen to and learn from others. Support and encourage each other. Do not disrupt, dominate, or derail the event or the activities.

Section 3. All Members and Officers must follow the instructions and guidelines of the event organizers and facilitators. Engagement in unethical or harmful behavior may result in consequences in accordance with Article 6 of the Code.

Section 4. In accordance with Article 6 of the Code, the violator's attendance or participation in future meetings and events may be prohibited.

Section 5. If a community event is executed in a manner that does not align with this Code, or DC4D's statement of values, bylaws, or other governing principles, the organization's Steering Committee will consider not participating in that event in the future.

Article 4 - Guidance for Social Media and Digital Spaces

Section 1. DC4Ds social media platforms and forums are a place for our Members, friends, and allies to organize and share information about issues related to our mission of progressive change.

Section 2. This Code shall apply to social media groups and accounts in DC4D's name, and will be enforced by the group moderators, who may include Members of the DC4D Steering Committee or their designees. Moderators may delete posts or comments that violate these principles.

Section 3. Participants who repeatedly violate these principles or otherwise exhibit a pattern of bad behavior may be ejected and banned from this forum.

Section 4. Group discussion should be related to DC4D's mission, our Members, progressive politics, or DC-area politics generally. Off-topic posts reduce the forum's relevance and usefulness.

Section 5. Open discussion requires mutual trust and understanding. Say what you mean, be open about your intentions, and always be honest.

Section 6. Excessive posting by a single person or group of people, or on a single topic, makes it hard for others to be heard.

Section 7. Constructive criticism is welcome, but personal attacks, name-calling, insults, obscene language, libel, threats, vendettas, impugnement of character, or malicious gossip against another Member of DC4D or this group is unacceptable.

Section 8. Disagreement over specific policies, candidates, or public figures is generally acceptable, but, posts and comments that conflict with DC4D's progressive mission and values are prohibited.

Article 5 - Reporting Violations

Section 1. Any complaint of potential violations of this Code of Conduct should be sent to DC4D's Ombudsperson at ombudsman.dc4d@gmail.com. If for any reason the Ombudsperson is not available or is somehow implicated in the complaint, a complaint may also be sent to the DC4D Chair at dc4d.chair@gmail.com, or any other Member of the Steering Committee. See the full list of Steering Committee Members at <https://www.dcfordemocracy.org/leadership>.

Section 2. Once a complaint is received, the Ombudsperson has fifteen (15) business days to review the report and make a recommendation regarding the appropriate consequence. The Ombudsperson may designate an appointee to issue this recommendation in their stead if they are unable or unwilling to do so. The Ombudsperson may also consult with the Steering Committee and any additional individuals involved in the complaint when considering recommended consequences.

Section 3. Once the Ombudsperson has evaluated the complaint, they will issue a report to the Steering Committee with a recommended consequence within one (1) business day.

Section 4. The Steering Committee will either accept or reject the Ombudsperson's recommendation for action. The Steering Committee will have thirty (30) days from the date when the Ombudsperson's report is received to either accept or reject the suggested consequence. If a Steering Committee Member is the subject of the complaint, they are barred from voting on this decision.

Section 6. If the recommended consequence is accepted, the Ombudsperson or their designee will have five (5) business days to communicate that consequence to the offending member as well as the complainant.

Article 6 - Potential Consequences of Violations of the Code of Conduct

Section 1. Verbal Warning: The Ombudsperson will speak with the offending Member directly. This can be an opportunity to explain why the Member or Officer's behavior was inappropriate, as well as gain understanding of the root causes of the disagreement. Documentation of the verbal warning will be submitted to the Steering Committee.

Section 2. Written Warning: If the behavior continues after a verbal warning or is more severe, the Ombudsperson may choose to issue a written warning to the offending Member or Officer, which includes a detailed description of the violation, the effect of the violation, expected behavior moving forward, and the consequences for future violations. This written warning may be delivered via email. Documentation of the written warning will be submitted to the Steering Committee.

Section 3. Suspension: If a Member continues to violate the Code after being issued a written warning, the DC4D Steering Committee may consider suspension. This would prohibit the Member or Officer from participating in DC4D meetings or business as well as attending DC4D events for the defined length of suspension. If an Officer is the individual in question for this potential action, they are barred from voting on this decision. The Steering Committee may set terms for the offending Member or Officer's return to organizational business.

Section 4. Removal of Officers: As defined in [DC4D's bylaws, Article 14](#): Any Officer or appointed Steering Committee member may be recalled by a vote of two-thirds of those members present and voting at a general membership meeting, provided notice of such recall action shall have been given in writing to all members at least twenty-one days before the meeting at which such recall action is to be proposed.

Section 5. Expulsion from the Organization: In extreme cases, DC4D Members may choose to expel an offending Member from the organization. This action permanently prohibits an individual from attending the organization's meetings or events in the future. This shall only be possible by a vote of two-thirds of Members present and voting at a general membership meeting, provided notice of such expulsion action shall have been given in writing to all Members at least fourteen days before the meeting at which such expulsion is to be proposed.

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