



## MEMBERS' AGREEMENT

The members of the Southern Maine Workers' Center believe that workers and working-class people must organize together to ensure our human rights, such as the Human Right to Health Care, and the right to Work with Dignity. The human rights principles, which we have adopted from the Vermont Workers' Center – equity, accountability, transparency, universality, and participation – help us prioritize and evaluate all of our work. These principles are our core values.

Our members work in different industries, live in different places, and come from different communities, cultures, and backgrounds. We bring our own stories, histories and perspectives to the organization. Our strength lies in our solidarity with each other, our shared values of the human rights principles, and our commitment to building power from the grassroots. Together we are powerful enough to transform our workplaces and our communities.

### Southern Maine Workers' Center Commitment to Members:

- ❖ The Workers' Center strives to uphold the Human Rights Principles in the way we organize and operate.
- ❖ We strive to make decisions together when possible and be transparent about the work that we do. We are accountable to our membership through board elections and through member and committee meetings.
- ❖ We strive to support members to develop their own leadership, and we build skills in order to strengthen our individual and collective power.

### Member Responsibilities:

- ❖ Members are required to attend at least one event a quarter and one joint committee event a year.
- ❖ Members are required to attend a membership orientation or have a one-on-one orientation within the first 6 months after they join the Workers' Center.
- ❖ Members are required to pay dues according to an equitable income-based sliding scale. (See page 5).
- ❖ Members must elect board members who help steer the organization's direction. Elections happen in accordance with our bylaws.
- ❖ Members must agree to the established grievance process to help resolve conflicts or other perceived breaches of the membership agreements (see page 4).



## Our Member Agreements:

- ❖ **We agree to the five Human Rights Principles.**

### **E.A.T.U.P.**

**Equity:** Everyone puts in what they can and gets the care they need. Every person is entitled to the same ability to enjoy human rights.

**Accountability:** Mechanisms must exist to enable enforcement of human rights. It is not enough merely to recognize human rights. There must be means of holding the government and other power holders accountable for failing to meet human rights standards.

**Transparency:** Government and other power holders must be open with regard to information and decision-making processes. People must be able to know how public institutions needed to protect human rights are managed and run.

**Universality:** Human rights must be given to everyone, without exception. It is by virtue of being human, alone, that every person is entitled to human rights.

**Participation:** Government and other power holders must engage people and support their participation in decisions about how their human rights are ensured.

- ❖ **We agree to support the right of workers to organize and form unions in their workplaces.**
- ❖ **We agree to lead collectively.** The leadership of each individual is valued and important. We will work to make decisions collectively (when possible). We will learn new skills together, and take on new commitments together.
- ❖ **We agree to be in solidarity with each other.** We believe that racism, classism, sexism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination only serve to strengthen the systems that keep us from realizing our human rights.
- ❖ **We will not sexually harass each other.** Sexual harassment is a form of discrimination. Because sexual harassment undermines feelings of safety and respect, it compromises people's ability to participate fully in the organization.
- ❖ **We agree to treat each other with dignity and respect.** We will help each other resolve conflicts in ways that help us learn together as an organization. We agree to the Community Agreements as a shared understanding of respectful behavior (see page 3).

## Community Agreements:

- ❖ **One Person At A Time.** Speaking one person at a time allows for deeper listening and ensures we all feel heard.
- ❖ **Be Fully Present & Listen.** To the best of our ability, commit attention to the subject at hand and those in the room who are also dedicating their time to our collective work.
- ❖ **Build Up, Don't Break Down.** We acknowledge effort and offer constructive feedback and helpful solutions, rather than unfocused or harsh criticism.
- ❖ **We Invest In Each Other's Growth.** We believe in choosing solidarity in challenging situations, because all of us are learning all the time, and we need our community's support to help us grow.
- ❖ **Assume Good Intentions.** We strive to begin with the shared belief that we are all here with common purpose and vision, though we approach our work with varied understandings and language. We act in solidarity and hold space for clarification and healing.
- ❖ **Move Up/Move Up.** Folks who speak a lot and folks who are less likely to share their thoughts will equally challenge themselves to engage in ways that allow for everyone's full participation.
- ❖ **Give Breathing Space.** Not everyone processes information and forms ideas at the same speed. We strive to allow for some silence or pause between speakers so that everyone can participate at their own pace.
- ❖ **Speak Loudly and Clearly:** Communicate from a place of power and so everyone can hear you and respond.
- ❖ **We Bring Our Whole Selves.** All of us are multifaceted and experience the world through multiple lenses: such as gender identity, racial identity, abilities, age, class positioning, etc. We believe our community is richer when we bring the fullness of our identities and experiences to the work.
- ❖ **Oppressions Exist.** Systems of racism, classism and discrimination based on economic status, ageism, heteronormativity, homophobia, sexism, transphobia, ableism, xenophobia, and religious discrimination impact all of our lives in varied ways. Unlearning these systems and ending their harmful effects on our communities is an ongoing process. Trust everyone's expression of their own experience.
- ❖ **Deal With Issues As They Arise.** Avoiding difficult conversations impedes our work. Compassionate and direct communication around misunderstanding and conflict allows us to work together from a place of unity. We strive to handle conflicts in the moment, confront each other with care and seek support when needed.
- ❖ **Speak With Honesty, Listen With Humility.** If we are genuine in our speaking and intentional about listening to one another, we can reach across difference and forge a new way ahead.
- ❖ **Encourage Creativity.** We will not solve problems with the same limited perspectives that created them. Creativity is a natural, renewable human resource that is necessary for collective liberation, and we can wield it in every aspect of our work.



## Membership Conflict Resolution and Grievance Policy:

The Southern Maine Workers' Center is committed to collective leadership and mutual respect. The purpose of this conflict resolution and grievance procedure is to help resolve internal conflicts in ways that promote the participation of members, uphold our human rights principles, and reflect the just world we are working to build. This policy should be used by members to bring up serious grievances with the organization or conflicts between members, staff, or board members.



### Introduction:

We see conflict as a normal part of working together in an organization. Conflict can come up because of misunderstandings, miscommunications, or different ideas about how to do work together. Conflicts can also highlight social dynamics such as cultural differences, racism, sexism, ageism, ableism, and other intersecting systems of privilege and oppression. Having a set of member agreements about how we treat each other and a procedure like this one helps us notice and resolve conflicts early on and in a timely way. When conflicts go unaddressed they tend to get more complicated and more damaging. When we address issues right away, we can resolve them in a way that allows all parties to continue to participate in the organization and for the organization to learn lessons that makes it, and us, stronger.

This policy is based on the following values: **transparency, consistency, mutual respect, wellbeing of individuals and organizational community.**

### Process:

- ❖ **Step One:** If you are having conflict with someone, review our agreements. Our community and membership agreements provide a helpful reference for our commitment to each other. These agreements can be useful in holding ourselves and each other accountable.
- ❖ **Step Two:** Try to address the issue directly yourself, first, when possible. Some minor conflicts can be resolved by direct communication--before they turn into bigger issues. One-on-one conversations, in which both parties are fully present and listen, can build each other up rather than break each other down. Assuming good intentions can sometimes help resolve interpersonal conflict. If you do not feel comfortable speaking to the person directly you may go directly to step three.
- ❖ **Step Three:** If the matter has not been resolved, bring the issue to a member of the Membership Committee (MC) and ask for a supported conversation with the person with whom you are in conflict. The MC must act upon a formal request for a supported conversation within 5 days. The MC will schedule a meeting between the directly involved parties and will facilitate a conversation. During this conversation, there should be time for each person to talk, consider at all sides, make amends or name agreements, and decide on next steps.
- ❖ **Step Four:** If the conflict has not been resolved, the Membership Committee brings the matter to the Board to discuss resolution. The Board can resolve the issue or decide to enlist the help of a third party to mediate. No agreements about governance of the organization can be made during a third party mediation without subsequent approval by the Board.

## Membership Dues:

The Southern Maine Workers' Center is a membership-based organization. We rely on members and membership dues to build an organization that can effectively fight for human rights. Membership dues contribute to the success of our work by covering a portion of our operating costs. These dues ensure that we can remain independent and accountable to our members.



The dues structure is set on a progressive, income-based scale. Members are asked to pay the amount that corresponds with their income bracket, the minimum being \$5 a year. Members will not be asked for proof of income. Dues can be paid annually or monthly. Members who fail to pay their dues are no longer 'members in good standing.'

Yearly Income	Dues
\$0 - \$10000	\$5/year
\$10,000 - \$15,000	\$1/month or \$12/year
\$15,000 - \$20,000	\$2/month or \$24/year
\$20,000 - \$25,000	\$2.50/month or \$30/year
\$25,000 - \$30,000	\$3/month or \$36/year
\$30,000 - \$50,000	\$5/month or \$60/year
\$50,000 - \$90,000	\$10/month or \$120/year
\$90,000+	\$20/month or \$240/year

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**I have read and agree to all member policies:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Committee(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_ City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_