

Willamette Action Collective Structure and Bylaws



Developed over a series of meetings throughout the initial first year of WAC organizing.
This document includes associated community agreements and definition of terms.

2020–2021

Structure

Coordinating Body

- Made up of 1 representative from each local collective & the bottom-liner from each collective-wide campaign
- 1 Accountant
- 1 Motivator
- 1 Analysis Bottom-liner
- 1 representative from the Mediation Circle
- 1 Scribe

Collective Coordinating can create campaigns, projects, & actions.

Coordinating body meets once a week. Any member can attend these meetings. All collective members are encouraged to attend at least one Coordinating meeting per month.

Local Branches

- 1 Local Community Assessor
- 1 Local Environmental Assessor
- 2 Onboarding Facilitators
- 1 Motivator
- 1 Analysis Bottom-liner
- 1 Mediator

Local branches can create their own campaigns, projects, & actions.

Local branches meet up once a month or more frequently to go over community needs, environmental concerns, local projects, onboarding, or whatever housekeeping. As few as one person can start a campaign, project, or action, but the local group must agree to consider it a WAC project. Local representatives communicate all campaigns, et cetera to the Coordinating Body.

Campaign Groups (Tributaries)

- 1 Motivator
- 1 Accountant
- 1 Project Bottom-liner

Campaigns can be made up of any number of people across various local collective bodies.

Working Groups (Tributaries)

- 1 Motivator
- 1 Accountant
- 1 Project Bottom-liner

Working groups can be made of any number of people focused across the collective. These are topic-based groups that exist across time.

Working groups and campaigns can exist within the larger Collective Body or as local circles.

Mediation Body

- 3 Mediators

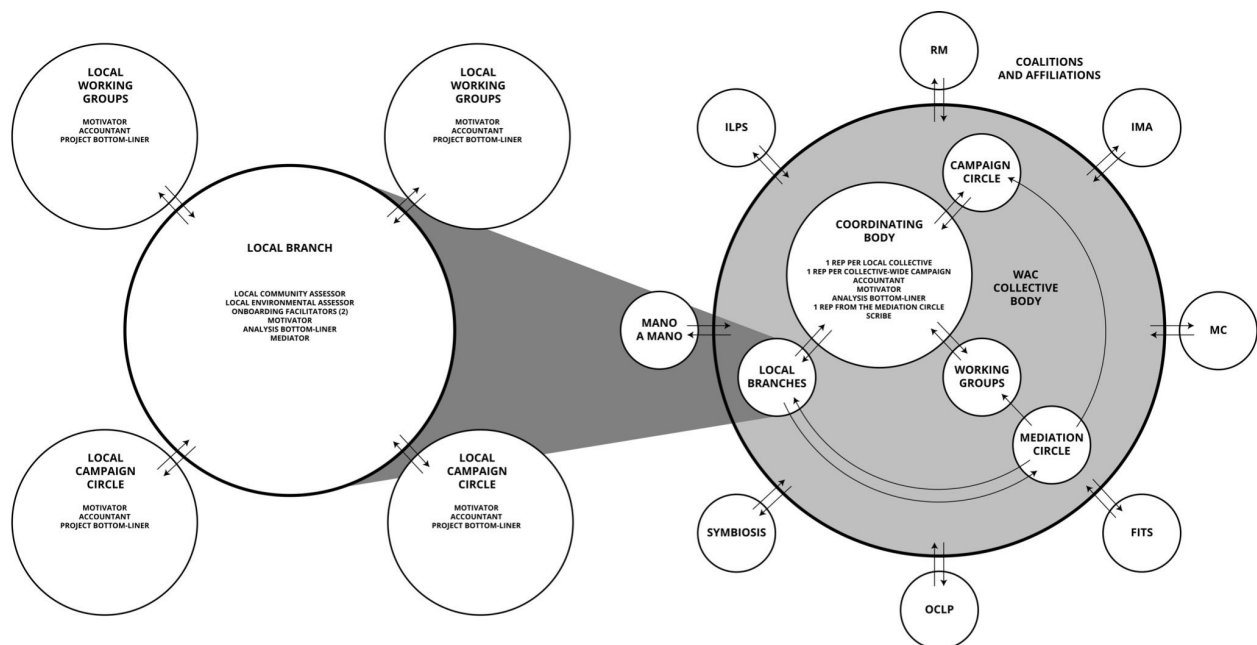
The Mediation Circle should be made up of capable members of WAC who are voted into their position by the General Assembly. This circle can be tasked with auditing the effectiveness and group dynamics of the various Working Groups, Campaign Groups, Local Branches, & Coordinating Body. Mediators will also be available to help field internal conflict within WAC. In the case of conflict, any Mediation Body member who is not a neutral party should recuse themselves from participation in the resolution process.

Definitions

- Accountant
 - Keeps track of finances, creates budgets, holds people accountable for their expenditures.
- Motivator
 - The motivator is accountable to encourage others to participate in working groups, campaigns, local branches, and actions. The motivator raises the energy of the group and finds ways to involve other members in WAC activities. The motivator creates a list of all tasks consented to during any meetings, this list is used to keep track of next steps & maintain accountability.

- *Analysis Bottom-liner*
 - *Ensures the WAC analysis is always being upheld based on our mission statement and core tenets.*
- *Project Bottom-liner*
 - *Ensures any WAC campaign gets done, is the person ultimately responsible for following through on the campaign and representing the project in the Coordinating Body as well as managing the associated Signal chat.*
- *Local Community Assessor*
 - *Responsible for assessing the needs of the local community, especially with a focus on the most exploited, oppressed, ignored populations, & reporting back to the local body at every meeting.*
- *Local Environmental Assessor*
 - *Responsible for assessing threats to the local environment & reporting back to the local body at every meeting.*
- *Onboarding Facilitators*
 - *Responsible for fielding onboarding emails, conducting interviews, calling contacts, & communicating to the local or Coordinating Body before bringing a new member to a meeting.*
- *Mediators*
 - *Responsible for mediating conflict within the group and with outside organizations (with consent). Mediators ideally deal with conflict outside their direct spheres of influence to maintain neutrality (Eg a mediator from the PDX circle would be best for facilitating conflict within the Eugene circle). If a mediator cannot maintain neutrality they will recuse themselves from the process. Local branches each elect one mediator to be part of the larger mediation body.*
- *Scribe*
 - *Acts as general secretary and lore master for all WAC internal organizing. This includes organizing the crypt drive, digital library, and Google Drive as well as ensuring that important dates are added regularly to the calendar. This also includes updating a spreadsheet of WAC supplies and doing an ongoing supplies audit. The scribe functions as the bottom-liner for all internal WAC secretarial duties and internal organizing including managing the WAC email address and website (every WAC member can access & use the group email address). The scribe drafts each weekly meeting agenda & posts it in the general WAC chat by every Monday morning for all collective members to edit.*
- *Meeting Facilitator*

- The facilitator runs the meetings and organizes the flow of information between members at each meeting. The facilitator is responsible for ensuring that meetings finish within a reasonable timescale, reflects information and discussion back to meeting members in regular intervals. Meeting facilitator may rotate with each meeting. This is not an elected role but is done by volunteer & consent at each meeting.
- Meeting Note-taker
 - This position may rotate with each meeting and is not an elected position. Note-taker is responsible for taking thorough notes at a given meeting and saving them on the WAC drive for future reference.
- Coalition Representatives
 - Meets with other coalitions or affiliated organizations regularly and reports back to the Coordinating Body monthly and at local branch meetings.



Bylaws

On decision-making:

- Consent-based decision-making is the expectation that WAC decisions are made through a process of consent. All decisions made in WAC meetings are foundational to how we are able to operate as an organization. Decisions consented to in a meeting that individual members are unable to attend still represent the consent of the group and are expected to be adhered to. The group can also consent to use a different process to make decisions as needs arise. This can mean choosing to use signal chat, defer to another meeting or some other means.
- Consent means the absence of objections.
- On Consent based decision-making:
<https://patterns.sociocracy30.org/consent-decision-making.html>
- Agreements regarding consent from sociocracy: In the absence of objections to an agreement, I intend to follow through on the agreement to the best of my ability. I agree to share objections as I become aware of them.

On the nomination of WAC members into the Coordinating Body:

- Nominations for coordinating body positions will be made at least two weeks prior to the quarterly general assembly. Elections will take place at the general assembly.
- Individuals can re-run for the same elected position; positions do not have to change each quarter.

On Assemblies

- WAC members will all meet quarterly in a general assembly to discuss the quarter, elect officials, etc.

On autonomy:

- The goal of WAC structure is to provide the most autonomy for decision-making at the local level. This means that working groups, campaigns, and local branches have the support and ability to operate independently within an interdependent organization.

Onboarding and off boarding:

- Onboarding
 - Potential WAC members will answer our onboarding questions either in writing or verbally with an Onboarding Facilitator from their city. The on-boarder then reports these answers to the local branch or collective body for approval. This is followed up with an informal phone call to assess the potential new members needs, concerns, capacity, and interests. The final step in onboarding is sitting through one weekly Coordinating Body meeting,

at the conclusion of said meeting, that member can ask questions of the Coordinating Body. At that point an onboarded candidate can start to join meetings. Ideally onboarding happens within local branches, but if needs arise, the Collective Body can approve an onboarding process.

- Offboarding
 - We recognize that WAC members will sometimes need to leave the organization. If WAC members decide to leave the collective, they can either let people know at a Coordinating Body meeting or contact their local Onboarder. If the reason for leaving involves WAC dynamics or politics, we ask that offboarding members offer feedback so that the group can work to improve moving forward. For confidentiality purposes, the offboarding individual will be removed from all Signal chats and no longer have access to WAC drives and social media accounts.

Expulsion

- FORMALIZE GROUNDS FOR EXPULSION—Mediation Circle will work on this.

On Accountability

- Accountabilibuddies
 - Rotate every quarter with GA. Each WAC member has an accountabilibuddy whose role is to ensure that they keep their buddy informed of any missed meetings, group tasks, decisions that need their opinion, or any other missed occurrences. Accountabilibuddies report back to their buddy within a week of any missed occurrences.

Community Agreements

In order to affirm a general culture of communication and support for the worth and dignity of all members the Willamette Action Collective has created a series of community agreements.

- Communication
 - WAC values direct and honest communication between members that reflects compassionate and empathetic understanding as well as accountability. The goal is for a culture of direct and honest feedback and a willingness to take feedback from others when necessary.
 - WAC is opposed to struggle sessions, call-outs, and other toxic communication strategies and patterns endemic in the left and left-wing spaces that replicate a punitive model. By struggle sessions we refer to the process by which an individual is publically shamed or humiliated for

differing political views, past behavior, or previous missteps. We are opposed to the ritual processes of group 'criticism and self-criticism' in which members discuss their failings with each other in a ritualized manner that functions to 'build discipline' or 'group cohesion.'

- While we understand that directly calling out abusive behavior can be essential, especially for folks without other options, we agree to an internal culture of conflict resolution and mediation. This reflects our commitment to direct and honest communication and a strategy of mediation.
- Capacity
 - WAC meets all members at their capacity, rather than demanding specific levels of involvement (outside specified meeting attendance guidelines above). Be honest with yourself and others about your capacity, and communicate changes in your ability to perform your roles with your fellow members.
 - Taking breaks is important—no internalized capitalism in WAC. Your worth to WAC is not based off your productivity.
- Fulfillment of roles/tasks
 - If a member in an agreed upon role is unable to fulfill their role for a meeting or project, they are responsible for communicating that to the group and finding another member willing to take over the task.
 - Follow-through on tasks as agreed upon by campaigns, local branches, & the collective body.
- Attendance and taking a leave of absence
 - In the event somebody goes inactive for over a month without communicating that they will be stepping back or becoming inactive, they will be removed from chats until they re-activated by reaching out to their local branch.
- Hierarchy
 - WAC's structure is intended to keep our organization non-hierarchical, & there should be no attempts to restructure WAC to include hierarchy within membership. This is not to ignore specialization or expertise. We choose to affirm the ability and expertise of individuals with specific skill sets or life experiences that would give them strategic insight into needs, projects and skills required by WAC organizing. Non-hierarchical structures do not mean that we don't defer to members with more knowledge, skills or experiences in specific areas.
- WAC will never endorse a candidate for an elected official within a capitalist government; WAC will never endorse a piece of legislation within a capitalist government
- WAC members agree to follow mission statement and tenets

Viable Systems Model

This organizing strategy includes six systems. These systems are described in how they correlate with WAC organizing so far below:

1. System One: **Activity!**

- a. This is what WAC is doing in the wider world. Mutual Aid, COVID-19 response, and Fire Relief would fit under system one. The WAC food drives are system one. Most of our on the ground activity fits within the first system of a viable organization. When this system is functioning - mutual aid is occurring - it can operate autonomously and continuously.
- b. This system is made up only of the direct activity: getting supplies, driving supplies, and giving out supplies.
- c. System One is Direct Action.

2. System Two: **Coordination**

- a. This is the horizontal integration of all system-one activities. For us in WAC this coordination is the logistical elements of mutual aid and other political work. Coordination in system two is the network between each different activity (system one).
- b. This system is WAC coordination of mutual aid activity. Coordinating drives and connecting resources.
- c. Coordination occurs through our group chat and meetings.

3. System Three: **Coherence**

- a. System Three is the process where we look at all the WAC activities and figure out how they are integrated into the big picture. This system is the group determining how many activities we should be doing and where supplies need to be coming from.
- b. Coherence is the integration of information from all our activities in system one and brings them in line with our values, mission, and other activities. This is the WAC mission statement and points of unity.
- c. Coherence usually occurs in general meetings and occasionally in the group chat.

4. System Four(*): **Auditing**

- a. This is a continuation of the integration and coherence of all our mutual aid activities and political activities. Auditing occurs as a process of checks and analysis to get information of how our activities are working.
- b. This process of auditing occurs infrequently and should only happen when system-one activities request an audit.

- c. WAC has yet to effectively audit our activities because we haven't needed to do an audit. This system is essential to ensure coherence.
5. System Five: **Strategy**
- a. This system looks to both the situation at hand and plans for the future. WAC strategic planning occurs during our weekly general meetings. This system takes information from coherence and auditing to determine capacity and tactical outlook for the organization.
 - b. When we decide what campaigns to focus on and how those campaigns fit with our wider goals we are developing the system of strategy.
6. System Six: **Ethos**
- a. This is the major decision-making system for the organization. Ethos is primarily our discussions of what and why WAC exists and how membership organizations occur.
 - b. When WAC discusses the new member onboarding process we are using system 6. When WAC developed the mission statement and discussed the kinds of actions and strategies to use as a group, this is all system 6.
 - c. This system should occur within a general meeting with the entire membership involved.

Systems thinking utilizes integrated feedback loops throughout the organization to improve communication, democracy, and viability of the system.