

## Who are we?

It is easier to explain who we are not. We are not a government program, nor a business, nor a church, charity, or political party. We are people working within our communities to organize for a better future.

Community Direct Action is when members of a community come together and use their collective power to directly reach certain goals.

Mutual aid, Decentralization, Democracy, and teaching people a new way to organize are some of the reasons why we are here!

In this booklet you will learn:

- How to organize a group using the spokes-council method
- Three basic forms of voting
- How to organize a meeting
- The essentials for building a strong team

## Contact Us

Email: [officialre.education@gmail.com](mailto:officialre.education@gmail.com)

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**Community Direct Action**  
Organizing for A Better Future

# Teams and Spokes-councils

## How to democratically organize a community



## COMMUNITY DIRECT ACTION

Organizing for A Better Future

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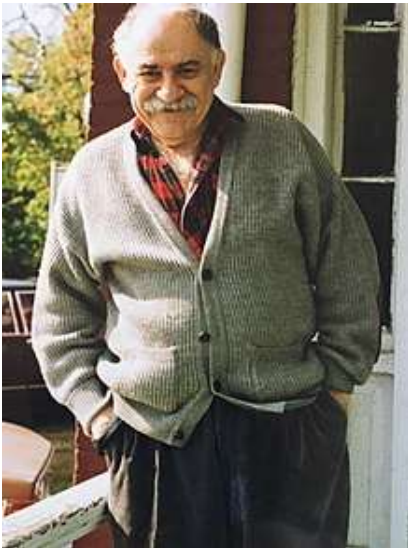
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**“If we do not do the impossible, we shall be faced with the unthinkable.”**  
— Murray Bookchin, *The Ecology of Freedom*

# Within the spokes-Council meeting

Spokes Council meetings can be held on scheduled dates or organized spontaneously when necessary. The goal isn't to bog people down with hundreds of meetings each month, but to make things work seamlessly, so the optimal use of spokes Council meetings is only when they are absolutely necessary. All meetings must be well documented, with comprehensive meeting notes taken every time, that can be archived and relayed back to each team.

The outline of a possible agenda for each meeting could start off with:

- 1) Call to order
- 2) Review prior meeting minutes
- 3) Treasurer's report
- 4) Volunteers report
- 5) Unfinished business
- 6) New business
- 7) Volunteers open dialogue
- 8) Adjournment

If a spoke is appointed with the ability to make Democratic decisions on behalf of their team, they will also follow by the three forms of democracy laid out on page 3.

# Within a team

**Each team should be given free range and autonomy to organize themselves how they feel is the most efficient.**

Parameters to consider when creating an efficient team will include

- 1) Outlining clear and precise expectations
- 2) Establishing goals and desired results.
- 3) Clearly determining roles and responsibilities
- 4) Dividing work equitably
- 5) Maintain communication

Nominating or electing a team lead or leads to organize and direct the operations can be done through the democratic processes outlined on page 3.

Note: Team leads are nominated or elected to serve the purpose of organizing the team, and is accountable to said team. This position is not like a boss but more of an organizer. Team leads can be recalled and or changed at any time if the team democratically chooses to.

When voting on subjects, each team can follow the three forms of democracy outlined on page 3 as a guide.

Each team will be responsible for organizing their own schedules, coordinating with the other teams, keeping up to date with the community, and organizing routine meetings.

Team meetings can also follow the same agenda outlined on page 5, and should also keep detailed minutes from every meeting.

# Spokes-council

## What is a spokes-council?

A spokes council is essentially an organized council of individuals of whom each represent a different team.

In a community fridge you might have a Culinary team, a donation pickup team, social media team, cleaning team, etc.

## How does it work?

Each team would elect, nominate or randomly select one member from their team to be the representative or "spoke" in the spokes Council.

Each spoke will attend a spokes-council meeting to coordinate with each other on important issues. This will allow smaller group meetings to occur, and relieve the stress of having large in person meetings.

## Requesting a spokes council meeting

Any member of the community can request a spokes council meeting. The request should be sent through a formal letter or email to the community directly with the tagline "spokes council meeting request" in the title. Requests should be limited to one request per person per topic, (as not to spam the email) And must clearly outline the reason for calling said meeting. Once the request is received, it will be brought up in the next scheduled spokes council meeting to be voted on by all of the volunteers and community members.

Spokes Council meetings can also include representatives from local orgs, as well as community members interested in taking part. All spokes Council meetings can be fully transparent and open to the public.

## What is the job of a spoke?

The "spoke" does not have to be the leader of the group, and holds no Democratic authority to make decisions on behalf of the group, unless otherwise granted. The job of the spoke is to go to the spokes Council meeting, bring up concerns or points of note and to take back the information to their respective teams so they can ratify what was proposed.

The spoke can also be given the ability to make decisions on behalf of each team if the team agrees to this. If the spoke makes a decision on behalf of the team that the team does not approve of, the spoke can be removed from the representative position.

If a spoke is appointed with the ability to make democratic decisions on behalf of their team, they should follow by the three forms of democracy laid out on page 3.

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*"Few men are wise enough to rule themselves, even fewer are wise enough to rule others"*

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## Note: Most votes should be cast as blind votes

A blind vote is any method of voting in which nobody can see how you are voting and, therefore, cannot be influenced by it.

This is not necessary in every case, but should be considered important to maintain a fair democratic process.

# Three basic forms of democracy

## This is not an exhaustive list, but will get you started!

• Direct democracy • Rank choice voting • Sortition

Direct democracy:

One person, one vote. In smaller teams, direct democracy is King. It's easy for everyone to talk to each other and organize. This is the simplest form of democracy, and usually the most effective.

Rank choice voting:

Ranking your choices 1st 2nd 3rd. This can be used to choose between several different options, and you will still wind up with a result you approve of. For instance, if you are voting on scheduled cleaning shifts and the day you really want to work is Friday, but you could also make time on Saturday, then you would rank Friday as your first choice and Saturday as your second choice. If Friday was unavailable, then you would still be able to work on a day that would fit your schedule.

Sortition:

Sortition is the selection of Representatives as a random sample from a larger pool of candidates. Essentially, it's drawing straws. you get a group of qualified individuals who are interested in willing to do the job, and one of them is selected at random.

