DxE SF Bay Area
Chapter Member Handbook

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Who We Are

Direct Action Everywhere (DxE) is a global network of activists working to achieve revolutionary social and political change for animals in one generation. The SF Bay Area chapter is DxE's first chapter. We remain the largest chapter and the central hub of the DxE network.

History and Accomplishments

DxE was founded in 2013 by a small group of activists frustrated with the current state of the animal rights movement. The movement was heavily focused on consumer choices and small welfare reforms. It seemed like the days of nonviolent direct action and bold demands - at least in the USA - were over. DxE's founders studied social science and the history of successful social movements to learn how activists had made revolutionary change in the past. They applied these lessons to the fight for animal rights and launched Direct Action Everywhere.

Since 2013, DxE has

- Mobilized thousands of activists in dozens of countries to take nonviolent direct action for animals
- Rescued hundreds of animals from farms, slaughterhouses, fur farms, and labs
- Passed groundbreaking legislation, including a statewide ban on the sale of fur and resolutions in support of animal rescue and divesting from animal agriculture
- Successfully introduced a factory farm and slaughterhouse moratorium bill in California
- Opened the first community center for animal rights in North America (the Berkeley Animal Rights Center)

- Received positive press coverage in leading publications including The New York Times and The Washington Post
- Founded the Animal Liberation Conference, the largest grassroots animal rights conference in the world
- Been consistently called the "greatest threat" to animal agriculture by industry publications

Mission and Values

DxE has changed significantly over the years and we have chapters in disparate parts of the world working on a number of different campaigns at any given time. What unites us is our mission and our five core values.

Anyone who believes in DxE's mission and upholds our values and our code of conduct can call themselves DxE.

Mission

We will achieve revolutionary social and political change for animals in one generation.
We reject the speciesism that enables the mass torture and killing of nonhuman animals and the blatant disregard for their home - our planet - as well as the unjust and oppressive institutions and ideologies that harm all animals including humans. Using our roadmap as a guide, we will work to enshrine an Animal Bill of Rights.

> **The Roadmap**: The roadmap is a key document in DxE's grand strategy. Though we do diverge from it at times and update it as we receive new information, it acts as our North Star and ensures we remain on track and optimistic about changing the world for animals.

Values

We are fiercely nonviolent.
We directly challenge systems of oppression with the power of nonviolence.
We have empathy for the individuals caught up in violent systems, seeking to bring them to the side of justice.

We accept suffering without retaliation for the sake of the cause. Even when tested, we respond nonviolently with our actions and words.

We build purposeful communities.
We foster inclusive communities that empower, support, and build up fellow activists. It is everyone's responsibility to create a welcoming environment and treat each person in our communities with respect.
We don't gossip and we assume good faith. We hold each other accountable and help each other grow by calling each other in, not out, only resorting to public statements about individuals when necessary for community safety and transparency.
Our community is the foundation on which the movement will grow.
We encourage ordinary people to become the best activists they can be through training, mentorship, support, and opportunity.

We do our homework.
We draw on the best available evidence, from academia and beyond, to inform our activism.
We seek diverse perspectives and also look outside the animal rights movement for lessons and inspiration.
We measure and react. We're willing to innovate, experiment, take calculated risks, and fail; and we're eager to adapt and shift course based on outcomes.

We lead by serving.
We create power for the movement by empowering the people around us. Our leadership team is first in line when a sacrifice is necessary. Ultimately, we are all serving animals and the movement.

We aim to do exceptional work for the animals.
Our actions reflect the seriousness and urgency of our cause. Animal rights is a social justice movement, not a hobby.
We set clear goals and metrics and develop plans to achieve them. We are dependable, hold each other accountable, and get things done on time and to the best of our ability.
We seek feedback, commit to continuous learning, and respond to criticism with humility and grace. We believe in the duty to disagree, but we maintain compassion even when we disagree. We are radically candid.

What We Do and Why

Theory of Change

We believe that we will achieve revolutionary social and political change for animals in one generation by building a mass movement of ordinary people willing to take sustained nonviolent direct action. This is our "theory of change" (how we expect change to happen).

The details of our theory of change, strategies and tactics, along with the evidence from social movements to back them up, are detailed in our standardized chapter member and organizer trainings. If you haven't attended those trainings yet or want a refresher, you can find them here.

- Chapter Member Workshop
- Organizer Trainings
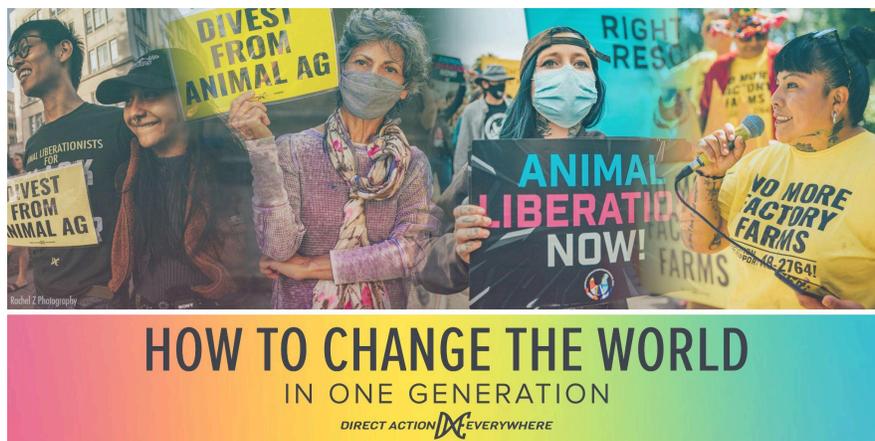
The information in these trainings is likely the most critical information you need as an activist and member of DxE. To avoid repetition and save space we have not rewritten all the content in this handbook. As you read above, one of our core values is "We do our homework" and we strive to embody this by constantly reading and engaging with social movement news and literature.

Chapter Activities

Given that sustained nonviolent direct action, community building, and leadership development are critical components of our theory of change, our chapter is extremely active with events and opportunities to get involved. You can find most of them at dxe.io/events. Here are some of the activities we do on a regular basis:

- We organize protests, disruptions and marches, typically with one larger "day of action" per month.
- We volunteer at animal sanctuaries, provide aid to injured pigeons in the city, and aim to directly help other animals in need.
- We do farm investigations and rescues, though these are typically kept to a very small group of people until they are fully wrapped up and ready to be released to the public and the press. Attending an open rescue training or participating in our Frontline Surveillance program (investigating from public property) are great ways to get involved in this work.
- We attend city council or state legislature meetings to support or oppose various pieces of legislation and meet with legislators to introduce bills and ordinances of our own.
- Chapter meetings to discuss official chapter business and campaign progress take place the first Tuesday of every month at 5:30pm.
- We host weekly Meetups every Saturday morning at 11:00am where the community gathers to hang out, share food, and listen to presentations and updates about the chapter and network.
- Small groups of activists, called Circles, meet regularly to support each other and work on various special interest projects. Some Circles ("geocircles") are organized based on geography, while others are based on interests or identities.
- We host other types of community and outreach events regularly, like movie nights or tabling on college campuses.
- We run regular trainings on everything from public speaking to video editing so people can develop their skills and leadership potential.
- We host the Animal Liberation Conference (ALC) where 1,000+ activists from around the world gather for a week in Berkeley. In 2022, the conference turned into a series of mini-convergences around our animal rescue trials.

- A few times a year, we host larger actions that involve civil disobedience or daylight rescues, typically in coordination with the ALC or smaller conferences.

The majority of our community events and meetings take place at the Berkeley Animal Rights Center West (ARC West) located at 2414 6th St. During the weekdays, the center is open for chapter members to work from 9 to 5 pm, except for Fridays which are only open from 10:30-5 pm every other week.

Because DxE is about building a movement and is not wedded to a specific tactic or campaign, we are constantly changing and trying to improve and innovate. Our protests might look different six months from now and we might add or remove various tactics from our repertoire. We will not win if we keep doing the same things over and over again. Our mission, values, and overarching strategy may not change, but everything else probably will (and should)!

How We Operate

General Structure

DxE is both a platform and a network, which means that while anyone who takes action in alignment with our mission and values can call themselves part of DxE, we do coordinate with many of the other chapters around the world. You can see all the DxE chapters [here](#).

DxE Global, the unincorporated association that manages the DxE network, has a set of bylaws as does the DxE SF Bay Area chapter (also an incorporated association). The chapter bylaws can be viewed [here](#). These bylaws govern how decisions are made and how our chapter is structured.

There are two 501c3 non-profits associated with DxE that raise funds to support various efforts in the DxE network: Friends of DxE and Direct Action Everywhere. And yes, it can get very confusing that there is both a non-profit and a network named Direct Action Everywhere!

The SF Bay Area chapter makes funding requests to these non-profits as do the other chapters in the network. The day-to-day financial decisions of the chapter are made by the lead organizer.

We operate on a fraction of the budget of many other animal rights organizations. However, our work does cost money and we have a working group that leads our fundraising efforts. Chapter members are encouraged to contribute, though there is no cost or membership fee associated with being involved in DxE.

Ladder of Engagement

Our chapter has a ladder of engagement. Each level on the ladder comes with increasing involvement, responsibilities, and benefits. It is important that we have activists on all rungs of the ladder of engagement! There are some people who have the ability and desire to be very involved and others who do not, and that is fine. We strive to value everyone's contributions. You can see detailed information on the ladder of engagement [here](#) and it is summarized below.

The three levels of engagement in the DxE SF Bay Area chapter are:

- Supporter: Supporters attend events organized by the chapter.
- Chapter Member: Chapter members are committed to being part of a community for change.
- Organizer: Organizers take ownership over achieving the chapter's objectives.

Supporters

You can become a supporter by signing up to our mailing list and attending any of our events. As a supporter you receive information on upcoming events and actions and are expected to uphold our code of conduct and values.

Chapter Members

You can become a chapter member by applying at dxe.io/apply, attending the introductory chapter member workshop (held monthly), watching a video and passing a quiz on consent, and attending direct action events. As a chapter member, you have voting rights (once certain other requirements are met), have access to various exclusive communication channels and events, and are added to a small community group ("geocircle") with other chapter members in your neighborhood/area. Chapter members are expected to uphold our code of conduct and values, understand DxE's mission, values, and theory of change, and take action consistently.

Organizers

You can become an organizer by joining a working group or hosting a circle, completing the organizer trainings, and going through the onboarding process led by the Development Working Group. All organizers are also chapter members. As an organizer, you get all the benefits of being a chapter member, plus earlier access to voting, the opportunity to have a coach, access to exclusive communication channels and events, and an organizer t-shirt. Organizers are expected to be chapter members in good standing, be ambassadors for DxE's mission, values and theory of change, and consistently attend working group meetings or host a circle.

MPI

Taking direct action consistently is an important aspect of being a chapter member or organizer. This is because our theory of change is based on building a mass movement of people who engage in sustained nonviolent direct action. Thus, remaining a chapter member or organizer, as well as gaining voting rights, is tied to the MPI (the Movement Power Index). Everyone who has taken action in a certain month is considered to be on the Movement Power Index for that specific month.

Circles

Geocircles

Geocircles (geographic circles) are subgroupings of chapter members who live in the same neighborhood or area. Some geocircles span just a few miles, such as in Berkeley where many chapter members live, while others encompass an entire county. Geocircles were created to help our chapter continue to grow and scale-up (i.e. grow exponentially). As our chapter was growing, it became harder for people, especially new people, to build connections and friendships in the chapter. And we know that close relationships are one of the strongest predictors for participating in sustained nonviolent direct action. Research tells us that in order to maintain a cohesive community with a shared identity in a group larger than 150, we need to subdivide into smaller groups and create additional structure. Check out this blog post about the research and theory behind geocircles.

Each geocircle has a host, who helps to facilitate and support the group. While there are no formal requirements for geocircles to meet on a regular basis, and members can participate in their geocircle as much or as little as they want, the vision is that they will naturally organize and participate in events together.

When you become a chapter member, you'll be added to a geocircle. As your circle grows larger, it will split, and more people will have the opportunity to be a host.

Other Circles

In addition to geocircles, which all chapter members are in, there are interest- and identity-based circles that are open to whomever. You can also be in multiple of these types of circles. Most of these circles meet on a regular basis (once every week or two).

Examples of these types of circles include the Animals in the Arts, Better Science Campaign, and the Social Movement Book Club.

Leadership

Elected Leadership

The DxE SF Bay Area leadership team is elected by the chapter every two years. The most recent elections were held in February 2024. In order to run for a position, you must be an organizer for at least 6 months. The chapter elects one lead organizer, four additional core members, and a secretary (who ensures we follow and make decisions according to our bylaws). You can read more about the election process in the bylaws. Currently, the DxE SF Bay Area core also serves as the Global Steering Committee, which guides DxE Global. The current core team is:

- Almira Tanner (Lead Organizer)
- Zoe Rosenberg
- Kitty Jones
- Cassie King
- Susana Soto

The current secretary is Alexander Taylor.

Core meetings are held every Monday at 10:00am, typically at the Berkeley Animal Rights Center West. Transparency is important in our chapter. With the exception of the last 30-45 minutes which are reserved for confidential matters, core meetings (and almost all other meetings) are open to visitors. If you would like to sit in on a meeting, please email sfbay@dxe.io in advance.

In addition to managing the day-to-day operations and decision-making of the chapter, the core team ensures the chapter is moving forward on our annual strategic plan, which

is voted on and approved by the chapter. You can see our annual strategic plan here, written in the "OKR" (Objectives and Key Results) format. The chapter works together to accomplish these objectives and we check in on our progress at the monthly chapter meeting. The core team has decided to create a specific "Campaigns" team and meeting to ensure we are regularly strategizing and executing on our key campaign(s). Additionally, various aspects of campaigns or other DxE work are owned by different working groups in the chapter.

Fellows and Stakeholders
As the complexity and volume of DxE's work has grown, we have seen the need for full-time activists and more regular coordination between teams. Each year, a number of activists receive a fellowship grant based on their past work from the Friends of DxE non-profit. This allows most of these activists to not have to work a regular day job and instead focus their full efforts on activism.

In order to ensure smooth coordination between teams, there is a subsection of organizers ("Stakeholders") who meet and communicate on a daily basis. Stakeholders lead one or more of the key teams or projects in the chapter. Due to the volume of work, many fellows are stakeholders and vice-versa, though the groups are not interchangeable.

Decision Making

The chapter votes on the strategic plan on a yearly basis and also makes decisions at monthly chapter meetings.

Chapter meetings operate by Robert's Rules (a set of procedures used by many organizations to manage meetings and make decisions). Chapter meetings are currently held on Zoom on the first Tuesday of every month from 5:30pm-7:30pm. Sometimes we end the meeting a bit early. At chapter meetings, everyone is welcome to give input on discussion items, though priority is given to chapter members. Agendas are circulated to all chapter members at least one week in advance. Voting is reserved for organizers and chapter members who meet the following criteria:

- Organizers must be active organizers and on the Movement Power Index for 2 of the last 3 full months or 8 out of the last 12 full months
- Chapter members must be active chapter members for at least the past 6 months, on the Movement Power Index for 8 out of the last 12 full months, and sign the voting waiver

Voting occurs electronically. If you are eligible to vote, you will receive a link in your email that you can click when it's time to vote.

If you would like to add anything to an upcoming chapter meeting agenda, or would like to discuss recalling a decision or an elected member, please email the chapter secretary Alexander Taylor at ataylor@directactioneverywhere.com.

Working Groups

As mentioned above, there are working groups that organize various aspects of the chapter. Each one has a "point person" who ultimately coordinates the group. The current working groups are:

- Social Media Working Group led by Zoe Rosenberg
- Tech Working Group led by Alexander Taylor
- Creative Working Group led by Paul Darwin Picklesimer
- Legal Working Group led by Josie Moberg
- Animal Care Working Group led by Carla Cabral
- Community Working Group led by Kitty Jones
- Development Working Group led by Antonelle Racelis
- Protest Working Group led by Paul Darwin Picklesimer
- UC Berkeley Working Group led by Zoe Rosenberg
- International Coordination led by Michelle del Cueto
- Fundraising Working Group led by Almira Tanner
- A/V Working Group led by Lewis Bernier

While not formally working groups, our Press Lead and Communications Lead is Cassie King. Almira Tanner leads the Campaigns team.

The chapter also collaborates with Compassionate Bay, a 501c4 organization, that works on introducing and passing animal-friendly legislation.

There are other working groups that form around specific needs for a limited period of time, You can see the full details of each committee and working group at dxe.io/workinggroups.

We aim to empower everyone to take initiative and work on projects that they are excited about. You do not need to be in a working group to start a project, though having a team can be helpful. If you have an idea, reach out to any relevant working groups to see if they can support you in making it happen! You may also consider forming a new working group if there is a need for one in the chapter. To do so, you can follow the process listed in the bylaws.

You may also reach out to a working group point person or core about financial support for a project. Decisions are made based on whether the request is in line with our budget, strategic plan, mission, and values. All requests should be made *before* a project or action takes place. Additionally, if you are in a working group or working on a DxE project, any incurred expenses are eligible for reimbursement, but please check in with your working group point person beforehand. You can submit expense reports at dxe.io/expense.

Communication and Tech Tools

Communication

The chapter uses various communication methods, primarily Signal and email.

We have an "alerts-only" Signal thread for sending important messages, usually once every day or two. "Organizing" (e.g. a thread for people taking a role at a protest) and chatting happens mostly on Signal. We also have a list of open signal chats for DxE chapter members that are identity and/or interest based.

There are mailing lists specifically for chapter members and for organizers, as well as for everyone in the entire world who has signed up to receive news about DxE (30,000+ people). If you are in a working group, you will also have a mailing list for that team.

We have a Facebook group for chapter members as well as a Facebook group for all organizers in DxE. Facebook is not used very often.

Everyone is expected to uphold DxE's values and code of conduct when using these platforms. Social media and online communication can often lead to conflict as people cannot see facial expressions, hear tone, or experience how their communication is impacting others. For this reason, we strongly recommend any disagreements be taken offline immediately and discussed in person or via phone/video chat.

Tech Tools

Most of our non-confidential work is organized in Google Drive. Most teams also use Asana to keep track of action items and manage projects. If you are in a working group, you should have access to your team's Google Drive folder and Asana list. If you need

help learning how to use Google Drive or Asana, reach out to the point person of your team.

We use a custom-built activist database (ADB) to track attendance, chapter membership, working group membership, and more. If you are part of a working group or volunteer to take attendance at an event, you will be given access and shown how to use the ADB.

You may have also noticed that we have a shortlink generator and really love creating shortlinks for everything under the sun. Looking for something? Search dxe.io/whateveritis and you'll likely find it. If you need to create a shortlink for any of your DxE work, talk to your working group point person (or email sfbay@dxe.io if you are not in a working group).

Code of Conduct

In addition to our values, DxE has a code of conduct that everyone in our community is expected to uphold at all times. If you witness someone violating our code of conduct, please report the incident(s) using this Report Intake Form.

The chapter also has a relationship policy which you can see here. The purpose of this policy is to prevent sexual harassment and to ensure that romantic relationships do not negatively interfere with chapter operations or the health of the community.

How to Get Involved

The best way to get involved is to come to any of our events. Whether it's a protest, Meetup, or sanctuary workday, we'd love for you to join us. You do not need to be a chapter member to attend any of our events.

If you want to

- Get on the mailing list, go to dxe.io/signup
- Become a chapter member, go to dxe.io/apply
- Join or start a circle, email development@dxe.io
- Join a working group, email development@dxe.io
- Get a coach, email development@dxe.io
- Donate, go to dxe.io/donate

Key Resources

Events Calendar

Chapter Member Application

Resource Library

Organizer Trainings

Mental Health Resources

Bylaws

If you have any questions about getting involved in the chapter or about anything else in this handbook, please email development@directactioneverywhere.com.

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Glossary of Terms

ARC: Abbreviation for the Berkeley Animal Rights Center (we don't use BARC)
CM: Abbreviation for chapter member(s)
Chaps: Shorthand for chapter members
Gem: A term we made up that means an even higher caliber press hit than an MCE. Anything that is a gem is also an MCE. Gems are press hits that we share via DxE's social media and mailing list that have a measurable impact like donations, tons of article shares, notable people tweeting them, or other journalists reaching out after reading them. A few examples of gems are the WIRED feature article on DxE's use of VR, the "Stealing Lauri" New York Times article from a journalist who accompanied DxE activists on a Smithfield investigation, and the Intercept article covering DxE's findings at the Foster Farms slaughterhouse in Livingston and the subsequent blockade during ALC.
LO: Abbreviation for lead organizer
MCE: Abbreviation for Major Communications Event, a term we made up that means a positive and substantive press hit or social media post that meets these criteria. We mostly only track press MCEs now and not social media ones.

OKR: Objective and key results

PM: Abbreviation for private message

Point Person: Someone who leads a working group or unofficial team (example: Kitty is the point person of the community working group)

PP: Abbreviation for point person

Stakeholders: Individuals who own or co-own a critical function of DxE Global and/or the SF Bay Area chapter, such as a chapter-level objective or key result or a working group that they lead.

Stakes: Shorthand for stakeholders

WG: Abbreviation for working group