

*Mission and Values unanimously approved by MTPC Voting Membership on September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2008.  
By-Laws (other than Mission and Values) unanimously approved by MTPC Voting Membership on May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2009.*

# **By-Laws**

## **Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition**

### **MISSION AND VALUES**

The Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition (MTPC) is dedicated to ending discrimination on the basis of gender identity and gender expression.

We envision a world where persons of all genders are treated with respect and fully participate in all areas of society, free from fear of prohibition, harassment or violence based on their gender identity and/or expression.

To that end we educate the public, advocate with state, local, and federal government, engage in political activism, and encourage empowerment of community members through collective action.

MTPC values:

- Promoting social and economic justice & equality;
- Working against all forms of oppression;
- Building broad-based participation and community power;
- Developing leaders and building coalitions;
- Drawing strength from diverse experiences and identities;
- Learning from our history and elders;
- Growing through challenge and critique;
- Including those who cannot be fully visible;
- Being accountable to the communities for which we work.

#### ***Amendments to Mission Statement***

Changes to MTPC's mission statement require:

1. The Steering Committee must first reach consensus and fully support the proposed changes. For more information about consensus, see "Steering Committee Decision-Making."
2. At least 2 weeks before the meeting where the changes to the mission will be presented for approval, the Clerk must email MTPC's Voting Membership the following information: the proposed amendment to the mission statement; an explanation of the fact that it must be approved by the Voting Membership; the date and time of the MTPC meeting where it will be voted upon; and the requirements for being a Voting Member.
3. At least 2/3 of active Voting Members must be present for quorum. Absentee members may cast their votes by proxy and be included towards the quorum count.

4. Absentee votes will be accepted for following the General Membership Meeting. At the conclusion of that week the clerk will tally all votes. Votes received after close of voting will not be counted.
5. The amendment will be enacted if at least 2/3 of votes cast approve the new mission statement.
6. The Clerk will announce the outcome of the vote to the Voting Membership before the next General Membership meeting.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

There are two kinds of membership, General and Voting.

### **Requirements**

#### *General Membership*

Anyone who currently lives in, works in, attends school in, or is otherwise significantly connected to Massachusetts can become a General Member. General Membership is earned by any and all who participate in MTPC, through either attendance at monthly General Membership meetings or other involvement. General Members must pay annual dues of \$1-\$35 (sliding scale based on financial resources).

#### *Voting Membership*

Voting Members must fulfill the requirements of General Membership, including paying annual dues. In addition, they must either attend four out of six consecutive monthly General Membership meetings or participate in an equivalent manner (as determined by the Steering Committee).

If a Voting Member's participation lapses, the member's voting status remains for three months following the last recorded participation. After three months have passed without participation, a Voting Member's voting status is suspended. In order for Voting Membership to be restored, participation must be brought back to Voting Membership level for at least two out of three consecutive months.

MTPC's participation requirement for Voting Membership can be satisfied by activities that support MTPC outside of the general meetings for people who are 1) consistently unable to attend General Meetings but who wish to becoming Voting Members, or 2) already Voting Members but who must miss more than 2 consecutive meetings and wish to retain their voting status. Such activities are subject to approval by the Steering Committee, and may include:

- attending MTPC committee or chapter meetings,
- volunteering to do outreach at an event specifically on behalf of MTPC,
- contributing to an MTPC project such as working on a grant proposal,
- participating in an MTPC training, or
- otherwise demonstrating a significant level of commitment to and investment in the organization.

All activity intended to fulfill the participation requirement for people not able to attend General Meetings must be documented through an email or phone call to the Clerk. Reporting the activity to the Clerk is the sole responsibility of the MTPC member.

## **Responsibilities**

### *General Membership*

General Members are encouraged to give feedback on MTPC's work and decisions, to volunteer, to donate, to host house parties, and to advocate as needed. General Members will receive updates about MTPC's work through email newsletters and the MTPC website ([www.masstpc.org](http://www.masstpc.org)).

### *Voting Membership*

Voting Members are responsible for providing feedback on MTPC's work and decisions, for electing the MTPC Steering Committee, and for undertaking volunteer work in support of the organization's mission. Voting Members will receive updates about MTPC's work through email newsletters, member-specific email messages, the MTPC website ([www.masstpc.org](http://www.masstpc.org)). Voting Members must approve any changes to MTPC's mission and values, and will be notified of any changes to the By-Laws. Voting Members will also be able to vote on significant decisions facing the organization, as determined by the Steering Committee.

Decisions the Steering Committee presents to the Voting Membership that are neither amendments to the mission statement nor Steering Committee elections, recalls or replacements must meet the following requirements in order to be approved:

- At least 2/3 of active Voting Members must be present for quorum.
- Of the Voting Members who are present to vote, a simple majority (at least 50% + 1 person) must support the proposal for it to be approved.

For information about voting in Steering Committee elections, see "Steering Committee Elections."

## **Donors**

MTPC values its financial donors, but financial support alone does not satisfy the requirements for Voting Membership. All donors are considered General Members, and as such are welcome to give feedback and receive information and updates about MTPC. All donors are encouraged to become Voting Members by increasing their participation with MTPC.

## **STEERING COMMITTEE**

### *Responsibilities*

The MTPC Steering Committee is responsible for ensuring that the MTPC is upholding the organization's mission, vision, and values, and for seeking feedback from the General Membership and from the broader transgender and gender non-conforming communities of Massachusetts. The Steering Committee is also responsible for:

- establishing annual priorities (and, as necessary, longer-term strategic plans)
- hiring, firing, supervising, and supporting MTPC staff
- approving MTPC's annual budget and fundraising plan (in coordination with BAGLY, MTPC's fiscal sponsor)
- securing funds to support MTPC's budget
- establishing MTPC's policies
- ensuring the organization adheres to its by-laws, and updating the by-laws as needed
- evaluating MTPC's effectiveness
- managing MTPC's interactions with and response to media
- organizing MTPC's annual Town Hall Meeting and Community Feedback Sessions
- approving the creation or (re)activation of committees, and ensuring the health of standing committees (as needed)
- determining the size of the next year's Steering Committee, and working to recruit a diverse group to run for those positions,
- approving the creation of MTPC chapters

### *Meetings*

The Steering Committee must meet at least eight times a year, and are encouraged to meet more frequently. At least four of these meetings must be in-person meetings. Both General and Voting Members are welcome to attend Steering Committee meetings, but only Steering Committee members are able to vote on matters at Steering Committee meetings.

The Steering Committee may go into "executive session" (closing the meeting to anyone not on the Steering Committee) as needed for confidential discussions about sensitive matters.

### *Decision-Making*

There is no quorum for Steering Committee meetings, but at least 2/3 of the Steering Committee must be present for decision-making. If less than 2/3 of the committee members are present the decision must be made over the Steering Committee email listserv. The Steering Committee usually makes decisions by consensus, shaping decisions as needed to reach consensus. This means that the entire Steering Committee must approve of a decision. To reach consensus after conversation about an issue, Steering Committee members should only oppose a position/course of action if they are doing so based on principle rather than preference, and because they think the decision is wrong and will harm MTPC's ability to carry out its mission and values. When consensus is not possible (either due to absences or disagreement) but a decision is required by external circumstance, decisions must be approved by at least 2/3 of the entire Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee must approve any MTPC response to issues that may be controversial or not explicitly connected to the mission. Ultimate approval may be required from MTPC's fiscal sponsor around certain issues.

# STEERING COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

## *Positions*

Positions on the Steering Committee are:

- Chair (1)
- Vice-Chair (1)
- Treasurer (1)
- Clerk (1)
- At-Large Members (between 1 and 11)

\*There must be at least 5 and no more than 15 people serving on the Steering Committee. The number of Steering Committee members may increase as Voting Membership increases at the discretion of the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee must determine and announce the size of the next year's Steering Committee at least two months in advance of the annual Steering Committee election in June.

## *Diversity/Demographics Requirements*

The Steering Committee is responsible for supporting the leadership development of the Voting Membership, and of intentionally cultivating both General and Voting Memberships that are diverse in terms of gender identity, gender expression, race, ethnicity, age, class, ability, religion, marital status, veteran status, national origin, sexual orientation, political affiliation, and other identities. The Steering Committee is also responsible for cultivating a diverse range of candidates for Steering Committee elections so that MTPC's leadership reflects the diversity of Massachusetts' transgender and gender non-conforming communities. As such, the Steering Committee should actively recruit candidates for elections who are people of color, poor/working class people, differently-abled/people with disabilities, youth, and/or elders.

Because MTPC is committed to developing and supporting leadership skills within transgender and gender non-conforming communities, the Steering Committee should uphold the following minimum representation requirements:

- at least 1 person self-identified along the MTF/transfeminine spectrum,
- at least 1 person self-identified along the FTM/transmasculine spectrum, and
- at least 2 more people self-identified as transgender, genderqueer, intersex, or otherwise gender non-conforming.

If the Steering Committee is at the minimum size of 5 members, at least 1 should be considered open to anyone regardless of gender identity (including non-trans identified people).

## *Timeline*

Steering Committee elections will be held annually at the June General Membership meeting (held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of June). The newly elected Steering Committee will begin its term on July 1<sup>st</sup> and the serve until June 30<sup>th</sup> (following MTPC's fiscal year). Only Voting Members may run for Steering Committee. General Members with questions about their voting status should check with the Clerk prior to the June meeting.

The Chair of the Steering Committee will announce the approaching Steering Committee election, election process, and Steering Committee positions by email and at the May General Membership meeting. Candidates for the Steering Committee **must** submit a written statement of interest to the MTPC Director and Chair of the Steering Committee by the May General Membership meeting (1 month before the June election). The candidates' names and statements will be emailed to the Voting Membership at least 2 weeks before the June election. If there are an insufficient number of candidates for the available positions, the Chair will send an announcement via email 1 week before the election notifying the Voting Membership about positions which still have no candidates and encouraging more statements of interest. In the instance that there is a lack of candidates, statements of interest can be delivered orally and in person at the June General Membership/election meeting.

### *Voting Procedures*

Only Voting Members (see "Membership") may vote in Steering Committee elections. As with other decisions made by the Voting Membership, 2/3 of Voting Members must be present to hold the election. Two people not running for the Steering Committee will count ballots.

Voting Members running for the steering committee who have NOT served on the Steering Committee before may run for the following positions: Clerk, Treasurer, At-Large. Voting Members who HAVE served on the Steering Committee before the election in question may run for the following positions: Chair, Vice-Chair, Clerk, Treasurer, At-Large.

Candidates may run for only one of the four executive positions (chair, vice-chair, clerk, and treasurer), but are also allowed to run for an "At-Large" position.

In order to win an executive position, a candidate must win a simple majority (50% + 1 of votes cast) of the votes for that position. If no candidate wins a majority (or there is a tie), another ballot between the two top vote-getters will be held. In the case of a single candidate who is unable to obtain votes on more than half of the ballots (abstentions equaling or exceeding votes), that position will be declared vacant and the procedure for filling a mid-term vacancy will subsequently apply.

The vote totals for candidates running unsuccessfully for executive positions who also wish to run for "At-Large" positions shall be considered to be votes for their election to "At-Large" positions, and added to any other votes they received for At-Large position. In the event of a second ballot for any executive position, the losing candidate's votes from the first ballot only shall be counted towards At-Large election.

Voting Members will be able to vote for as many At-Large candidates as there are positions for a given election (if there are 4 At-Large seats, each Voting Member can vote for 4 At-Large candidates). If a candidate is elected to an executive position, any votes cast for them to win an At-Large position will be considered void. At-Large positions will be won in order of who receives the highest number of votes (pluralities).

Ballots should be pre-printed with positions clearly indicated, so as to allow one entry per position. Voters should be instructed to vote for each candidate only once, and that a blank in an executive position is a vote against the candidate(s). If a ballot contains the same name in more than one position, only one At-Large vote for that person will be tallied.

If only one person is running for a given position, Voting Members may 1) abstain, 2) vote in favor, or 3) vote “no confidence.” If there are two or more candidates for a position, Voting Members should either abstain or vote for one of the candidates. To vote for At-Large candidates, Voting Members need to indicate who they want to fill the available positions, supporting only as many candidates as there are positions available for a given election.

In the event of a tie among candidates for any position, a run-off election shall be held immediately between the candidates who tied. For the run-off, blank ballots may be used, on which voters write the name of a candidate.

### *Resignations and Vacancies*

If a Steering Committee member resigns (or is recalled) mid-term, the Chair will give at least 2 weeks notice (and not more than 5 weeks notice) that an election only for this vacancy will be held at the next General Membership meeting. For this election, candidates will only be asked to make an oral statement about their interest in the position and qualifications. If a Steering Committee member resigns in March, April, or May, the position will remain open until the June election.

If any positions remain empty after either the annual election or after any mid-term election due to a resignation, the Steering Committee may appoint a Voting Member to the vacant position at their discretion, and as seems necessary. The Steering Committee must reach consensus (100% approval) among all elected Steering Committee members for the appointee. The appointee will serve with the other elected Steering Committee members until June 30<sup>th</sup>.

### *Removal/Recall Procedure*

Steering Committee members may be removed from office if they act in a manner:

- that is detrimental to MTPC’s mission or reputation,
- that counteracts or undermines MTPC’s values,
- that otherwise limits the effectiveness and functionality of MTPC and of the MTPC Steering Committee.

Steering Committee members must have held their positions for at least 3 months before a recall election is held for any one Steering Committee member, unless significant harm to MTPC or one of its members is ongoing. The Steering Committee must have a simple majority (50% + 1 person) agree to let the Voting Membership participate in a recall election. The recall election must be announced in the same way as mid-term elections are announced, with at least a 2 week notice given by email before the recall election is held at a monthly General Membership meeting. For a Steering Committee member to be removed, there must be a quorum of 2/3 Voting Members present at the recall election. Of the Voting Members present, a simple majority (50% + 1 person) must vote for the person’s removal. The person up for removal AND another

Steering Committee member in support of the recall must each be allowed 5 minutes to summarize their perspectives of the behavior in question before ballots are submitted. The person up for recall, 1 person from the Steering Committee in support of the recall, and 1 person from the Voting Membership will count the ballots.

If the recall election results in the Steering Committee member remaining on the Steering Committee, there may not be a recall election for the same person for at least 3 months. There may be no more than 3 recall elections per year for the entire Steering Committee. People who have been removed from their Steering Committee positions are ineligible to run for any positions on the Steering Committee for 1 year.

## **STAFF**

### *Responsibilities*

The responsibilities of the MTPC Director are outlined in the job description, as written by the Steering Committee. The Director serves as an *ex officio* member of the Steering Committee, expected to attend meetings without voting privileges. The Director supervises paid staff, interns and volunteers. The Director makes decisions about MTPC's support of and response to non-controversial issues that are explicitly relevant to MTPC's mission, and is responsible for communicating those decisions and actions to the Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee will work with the MTPC Director and any other staff members to adjust the division of labor and responsibilities as needed.

## **COMMITTEES**

All committees must commit to carrying out the Mission and Values of MTPC and to regularly communicating with the MTPC Steering Committee. Each committee should have co-chairs who are responsible for communicating with MTPC's Steering Committee and staff about meeting times, agendas, and work plans. No more than one of the co-chairs of any committee may be a Steering Committee member. Committees must meet at least four times per year to be considered active.

## **CHAPTERS**

Regional chapters of MTPC must adopt the mission statement and values of MTPC, and must be approved by the MTPC (Boston-based) Steering Committee if they are to identify as an MTPC chapter. Each chapter must at minimum have a Chapter Coordinator whom must have contact with the MTPC Director and/or Steering Committee Chair at least every other month. The Chapter Coordinator must be selected by the chapter members on an annual basis and may also serve as Chapter Treasurer. If there is not regular contact between the chapter and MTPC Director and/or Steering Committee Chair, the MTPC Steering Committee will determine a

course of action and whether or not the chapter may continue calling itself a chapter of MTPC.

Chapters may choose their own names, in addition to identifying themselves as chapters of MTPC. Members of chapters may also become General Members or Voting Members of MTPC according to MTPC's bylaws. Chapter members must contact the Clerk to ask that their participation in chapter events and/or meetings count toward the participation requirement of their Voting Membership.

## **EXTERNAL ACCOUNTABILITY**

A public town hall meeting for the transgender community will be held once a year and will be publicized online, through fliers and using local newspapers and other media. An anonymous feedback box will be available at the annual town meeting. There will be at least 15 minutes of unstructured "open forum" at the Town Hall Meeting. The rest of the agenda will be set by the Steering Committee.

In addition, the MTPC Steering Committee will determine appropriate times and locations for community feedback sessions at least twice yearly in order to reach the broadest diversity of the transgender community possible.