



## **350 Massachusetts for a Better Future Charter**

### **I. Who We Are**

350<sup>1</sup> Massachusetts for a Better Future (350 Mass) is a network of local, power-building nodes who work together around coordinated grassroots campaigns to achieve climate victories at the state, national, and international levels. 350 Mass is member-led and member-driven and sees a grassroots climate movement as critical for achieving climate justice and maintaining a liveable world. 350 Mass draws its inspiration from 350.org and receives coordination, skill-building, communication, financial, fundraising and operational support by the staff and board of Better Future Project (BFP).

350 Mass campaigns are bold in direct action, consistent in principled political advocacy, and attempt to build broad and diverse alliances to achieve their objectives. 350 Mass campaigns are distinguished by direct action, political advocacy, and diverse alliances.

We strive to become a network that fully embraces climate justice, recognizing that this must imply that climate related costs and benefits are distributed fairly, with attention to historical legacy and ability to pay. We recognize that the climate movement is an integral part of broad movements for social justice, and should not stand apart from them.

### **II. What We Do**

350 Massachusetts for a Better Future is a member-led network of climate activists organized in a growing number of nodes across the state of Massachusetts. We believe that a people-powered movement is critical for our success, and everything we do is focused on building a larger, stronger, more people-powered movement that empowers grassroots leaders to exercise leadership in the face of the climate crisis.

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<sup>1</sup> The “350” in our name comes from 350 parts per million, the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere considered safe by Dr. James Hansen, formerly of NASA, and other climate scientists: <http://350.org/about/science/>

Together we coordinate climate action campaigns at the statewide level. We build local and regional power by holding regular meetings, by organizing events and actions, and by advocating for solutions to the climate crisis at the local, regional, and state level. We share knowledge about climate change and build local and regional resilience by coordinating across the state and beyond. We organize resistance against any new investments in fossil fuel infrastructure.

In all of this work, we recognize that the climate movement is larger than any one organization, and that one goal of our work is to bring about greater unity of action within an expanding movement.

All 350 Mass nodes and campaigns are fully committed to and bound by the values of transparency, democracy, accountability, and inclusivity.

350 Mass is “member-led”, meaning that as members we have agency over the selection of campaign priorities, strategies, and tactics, and the structure of our work.

Our network of activists is supported and advised by the dedicated staff of Better Future Project, a 501(c)3 tax-exempt nonprofit based in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

### **III. General Principles**

All decisions to be made by 350 Mass members and by BFP staff and board shall be made using open, democratic, and inclusive processes, even if not so stated explicitly in any particular part of this charter. In general, all groups within 350 Mass will strive to reach consensus on decisions, but in the event consensus cannot be reached, decisions will be made by majority vote.

All actions carried out by 350 Mass members and by BFP staff and board (in their capacity as such) shall be done in accordance with local, state and federal laws and regulations, including but not limited to those governing 501(c)3 organizations and Massachusetts nonprofit corporations. Neither BFP nor 350 Mass will curtail or restrict the individual actions of members to personally engage in civil disobedience or political activities, but rather will make sure that organizational resources are not deployed in such efforts. Any provisions in this charter that turn out to be in conflict with such laws are considered invalidated upon determination that they are in conflict and would have to be re-written to ensure ongoing compliance. Any such rewriting would follow the “amending the charter” process specified in section IX in this document.

### **IV. How We Organize Our Work**

350 Mass is organized in semi-autonomous nodes across the state coordinated by the Statewide Steering Team (SST). Members from all nodes participate in our statewide campaigns.

## **Nodes**

A node is the basic unit of organization in 350 Mass. Nodes are geographically based and are open to anyone who wants to join and agrees to work in a manner consistent with our organizational principles and norms.

### **Requirements of Node Status**

To constitute an official node 10 people in a geographically contiguous area must be signed up as active members of 350 Mass, be committed to prioritizing the selected campaign goals of 350 Mass, democratically select representation to the Statewide Steering Team (SST), and host meetings at least once per month in their community/region. For a list of current nodes, please see appendix.

To remain active, a node must:

1. maintain a functional level of membership
2. hold regular node meetings
3. participate constructively and congruently with the network's campaigns and actions
4. ensure node representatives regularly attend SST meetings
5. be conducted in accordance with the principles and spirit of this charter

If a node does not maintain these requirements the SST may inactivate the node so that the network can move forward, while the SST works with the node leaders to reconstitute the node if possible.

### **Node Coordinators**

Every node shall democratically select at least one and preferably more coordinators. Node coordinators are charged with ensuring the smooth operations of the node. Each node decides via a democratic process how and when to select its coordinators. Coordinators should be announced to the SST. Each node also decides how to handle selection and rotation of its coordinators to help grow new leaders and share the burden of the work.

### **Node Representation on the Statewide Steering Team (SST)**

Each node must have one and can at its discretion have two representatives to the Statewide Steering Team (SST). Each node has autonomy to determine how it selects its representatives. If the SST becomes unwieldy, the number of representatives shall be reevaluated, and may be changed by the SST as it deems appropriate. It is recommended that representatives make at least a one-year commitment to participate on the SST. Nodes can choose a new, replacement representative whenever they wish. Nodes can also select alternates to sit in for regular representatives when they are

unavailable. Any change in node representation to the SST must be communicated to SST in writing by a node coordinator.

### **Home Node**

A 350 Mass member may attend meetings of any node s/he chooses. Regardless of how many node meetings a node member participates in, for any voting purposes, s/he may only be counted as participating in one node, known as the Home Node.

### **Node Decision Making**

Nodes define their own decision-making processes, provided that the decision making is based on democratic principles and is true to the values of 350 Mass, as stated in section III.

### **Node Autonomy and Coordination**

Nodes are encouraged to autonomously advance the goals and strategies of the statewide network. However, to ensure overall network effectiveness, nodes should coordinate their actions through the Statewide Steering Team (SST) and/or campaign teams (as appropriate). If node leaders are unclear on whether or not their actions are congruent with the network, they should check in with the SST. Nodes may decide to support local initiatives when those initiatives are consistent with the mission and values of 350 Mass and not in conflict with priority campaign time or major resource constraints.

### **Membership in 350 Mass**

350 Mass draws its power from the individuals who engage with and advance its priorities. 350 Mass Members are individuals who agree to take action on climate change by participating in 350 Mass activities, campaigns, node meetings and/or planning thereof.

Node members may participate in all node-level decision making, including:

1. node-level elections for representation in the SST
2. the campaign selection process
3. node level decisions around local actions, events, etc.

### **Affiliates**

In addition to member nodes, 350 Mass also has affiliates that have limited rights and responsibilities, which are spelled out in the appendix. Any community-based group that agrees with one or more statewide campaign goals of 350 Mass and wants to be more plugged in to the efforts of 350 Mass to accomplish these goals can join as an affiliate of 350 Mass.

**See Appendix for details.**

## **Statewide Steering Team (SST)**

The Statewide Steering Team (SST) serves as the governing body of 350 Mass. It makes decisions about the structure of 350 Mass, guides the campaign selection and evaluation processes, and looks after the overall health and well-being of 350 Mass.

## **Composition of SST**

The Statewide Steering Team (SST) is currently composed of one or two elected representatives from every node. BFP staff working with 350 Mass and 350 Mass campaign coordinators (defined below) serve as nonvoting members on the SST.

## **Decision-making, Coordination and Structure**

In general, SST will strive to reach consensus on decisions, but in the event consensus cannot be reached, decisions will be made by majority vote.

The SST elects from its volunteer membership at least one SST Coordinator who will officiate as facilitator of SST meetings and the development of its agenda. SST Coordinator election takes place in January. In the event of a tie, the SST coordinator, or the longest-serving such coordinator if there is more than one, may vote to break the tie. This is the only situation in which the coordinator has a vote on the SST.

SST may at its discretion create structures to organize its work, e.g. by forming an Executive Committee, or other work committees. The Structure and membership of such committees shall be established by the SST.

## **Quorum**

A quorum of voting members of SST must be present, including via phone, to conduct business. A quorum is defined as more than half of the voting members of the SST.

## **Eligibility to Vote on the SST**

Voting representatives to SST must be present (in person or on the phone) to cast a vote. No proxies will be considered.

## **Convening SST Meetings**

Regular SST meetings (typically conference calls) can be convened by any member of the SST, but are normally convened by the SST Coordinator at least once a month. A tentative agenda with relevant documents for the meeting is sent to all SST members at least two days prior to the meeting.

## **Quarterly In-Person Meetings**

Once a quarter members of the SST and other leaders of 350 Mass meet in person to review the progress of the campaigns and determine the campaigns; strategies for the next three months, which node leaders will then go back and work to implement. At this meetings, the SST may also take up any important business it needs to discuss.

### **Proposals to the SST**

Any member of the network and or BFP staff may make a proposal of substance to the SST, provided that it is submitted in writing at least one week in advance and accompanied by a rationale for any proposed actions or changes.

### **Norms**

The SST, the nodes, and campaign teams can establish norms of behavior that they expect members to adhere to. Such norms should be formally established and known to all. Current SST norms are listed in the appendix.

### **Campaigns and Campaign Selection**

The bulk of the work in 350 Mass is done through the statewide campaigns. Campaigns can be initiated by 350 Mass members. Campaigns can also be coordinated with other organizations when deemed appropriate/relevant.

Our campaigns strive to do most of the work in and through the nodes, with a goal to grow our active membership and supporters to help grow the climate movement.

### **Participation in Statewide Campaigns**

Each node should aspire to have one or more node member(s) working on each Statewide Campaign. There is no limit on how many members of a node can participate in a particular Statewide Campaign.

### **Selection and Evaluation of Statewide Campaigns**

The Statewide Steering Team (SST) shall lay out a public, transparent process for the democratic and deliberative selection of Statewide Campaigns at least once every two years.

*All campaign proposals* will be distributed to all nodes and voted on by all active node members across the state.

### **Campaign Evaluation**

The Statewide Steering Team (SST) will evaluate campaign proposals according to the agreed-upon campaign selection process. Based on review of written campaign plans and explicit input from nodes reflecting deliberation and voting at node meetings, the SST will determine whether a campaign will be designated as an approved 350 Mass

statewide campaign. The SST will subsequently review campaign plans for each previously-approved 350 Mass state-wide campaign no less frequently than once per year. Based on review, the SST may determine that a Statewide Campaign should end and may call for a new campaign selection process.

### **Campaign Coordinators**

Campaigns may, if they wish, elect a statewide campaign coordinator. Campaign coordinators coordinate the campaign team, which includes representatives from at least one half of the nodes. Campaign coordinators help schedule and facilitate campaign team meetings, set agendas, share information and best practices across the state, and implement decisions made by the campaign teams. Campaigns may be supported by a BFP staff person, who may also help to coordinate campaign teams and/or serve as the campaign coordinator. Campaign coordinators are encouraged but not required to attend SST meetings as non-voting participants.

### **Campaign Decision Making**

Statewide campaign teams should be made up of representatives from at least one half of the nodes and ideally at least one member of the staff, as capacity permits. Campaign teams are responsible for setting strategy, determining tactics, and making decisions for their respective campaigns.

Decisions made by campaign teams must be consistent with the initial campaign plans approved by the SST, or submit major changes to the SST for additional approval. Each campaign team can determine its own decision-making processes, as long as those processes are consistent with democratic principles and with the values of 350 Mass, as laid out in this document. Although coalition partners and members of other groups are welcome to offer input and ideas, they should not be counted in any final consensus check or vote. Similarly, although staff should help coordinate and advise statewide campaign teams, they should not be counted in any final consensus check or vote. In keeping with the grassroots nature of 350 Mass, statewide campaign teams should strive to empower nodes; ideally, statewide teams will set the overall direction of campaigns, with decisions about individual tactics, actions and events left up to nodes as much as possible.

Node members, node Campaign Team Coordinators (including Statewide Campaign Coordinators), node Coordinators, and Statewide Steering Team representatives will fulfill their roles on a best effort basis. If the SST determines via SST decision-making rules that a Statewide Campaign Coordinator or Statewide Steering Team representative is not fulfilling his/her role, the SST may select a replacement. If a node determines, via node decision-making rules, that a node Coordinator or Node Campaign

Team Coordinator is not fulfilling his/her role, the node may select a replacement. A Node Coordinator should consult with the related Statewide Campaign Coordinator before replacing a Node Campaign Team Coordinator and notify the Statewide Campaign Coordinator in writing in the event of such a replacement.

## **V. Communications**

350 Mass has its own Facebook and Twitter accounts and its own subdomain on the Better Future Project website (350mass.betterfutureproject.org). 350MA.org and 350Mass.org redirect to 350mass.betterfutureproject.org. Better Future Project staff help manage the website, social media accounts, and other communications for 350 Mass, with input from nodes, campaign teams, and members. The SST reviews 350 Mass communications regularly and provides feedback. Any major changes to communications platforms, systems, or processes related to 350 Mass must be approved by the SST. All online and offline communications associated with 350 Mass should faithfully reflect the 350 Mass / BFP relationship (for instance, both the 350 Mass logo and the BFP logo should be featured prominently on the 350 Mass website).

All 350 Mass contacts should be entered into the central database, which is managed on a day-to-day basis by BFP staff. Nodes will have access to the portion of the database relevant to their area and will be able to use it to track contacts and coordinate outreach. BFP staff in charge of the database will submit a plan for managing and sharing data to the SST on an annual basis. The SST will provide feedback, and BFP staff will take SST feedback into consideration and refine the plan as needed. BFP staff will also work with node coordinators to make sure that node members are only receiving the emails that they want, and to make sure that the quantity of emails is not overwhelming or counter-productive.

With the approval of the SST, BFP may sell 350 Mass contact information to a sister 501c4 organization. Otherwise, BFP may not sell, in whole or in part, any or all 350 Mass contact information.

## **VI. The Relationship of 350 Mass to Better Future Project (BFP)**

350 Mass is a member-led network of grassroots leaders supported by the staff and board of Better Future Project. All relevant campaign and structural decisions related to 350 Mass are made by the grassroots leadership of 350 Mass. 350 Mass receives coordination, skill-building, communication, financial, fundraising, and operational support by the staff and board of Better Future Project (BFP).

Better Future Project is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that works to build the climate justice movement in Massachusetts and beyond. BFP connects concerned citizens to one another, provides opportunities for leadership development and skill-

building, and supports strategic campaigns. Ultimately, BFP seeks to foster powerful grassroots networks that can mobilize communities, hold decision-makers accountable, and achieve a rapid and responsible transition beyond fossil fuels.

BFP is governed by a board of directors who have fiduciary responsibility for the organization, meaning they manage the finances and legal obligations of BFP. The board hires an Executive Director (ED) who is authorized to hire and manage staff and to spend the funds raised for the organization in order to accomplish its purpose.

All paid BFP staff, including those dedicated to 350 Mass work ultimately report to the Executive Director of BFP and are legally responsible to the ED for their actions. However, staff who work on 350 Mass are also accountable to the 350 Mass SST, which will have regular opportunities to provide feedback on all BFP staff they engage with, including the BFP Executive Director, to their supervisors. 350 Mass through the SST and node and campaign leaders are empowered to make decisions on the best course of action. However, any major decisions that could impact BFP's legal status should be discussed with the BFP ED.

### **Financial Relationship**

350 Mass is a grassroots, member-led, member-driven, grassroots network that is part of Better Future Project, and the financial relationship described below reflects this interconnectedness. All funds raised in the name of 350 Mass shall be earmarked exclusively for 350 Mass purposes (including the salaries of BFP staff who work on 350 Mass). The BFP board and the staff take exclusive responsibility for major donor fundraising and foundations, and these funds are used to pay for staff salaries, including staff wholly or partially dedicated to 350 Mass, and other expenses related to 350 Mass (including the program's proportional share of BFP overhead).

On an annual basis, in advance of the start of a new fiscal year, BFP will share with the 350 Mass SST a proposed budget for 350 Mass that will project revenue and expenses, including budget lines for campaign events and node reimbursement (which endeavors to cover the routine expenses of node meetings and local events). The SST will have the opportunity to provide input on the budget before the BFP Executive Director and Board approve the budget for the year. BFP will provide regular financial updates to the SST and/or on an as-requested basis. (The specific terms and processes for reimbursement of volunteers are contained in a separate volunteer reimbursement policy, which will be reviewed annually by BFP's Director of Operations and the SST.)

It is the role of the BFP board and through them, the staff to ensure that all 350 Mass funds are spent in compliance with all applicable state, and federal laws, including but

not limited to those around lobbying and political activities. Nodes may only maintain separate bank accounts if they agree to have those bank accounts undergo a financial audit as part of the annual auditing process. If a node incurs regular expenses (e.g. to pay for meeting space), node leadership should arrange reimbursement with BFP administrative staff.

### **Staffing Relationship**

Better Future Project (BFP) provides staff support to 350 Mass. This includes staff to support campaigns, legislative efforts, communications and outreach, training, organizing support, as well as fundraising and the overall operations and growth of the network.

Toward the end of each calendar year, BFP shall submit a proposed staffing support plan to the 350 Mass Statewide Steering Team (SST) to get feedback on the nature and scope of the support that BFP hopes to provide in the following calendar year. Staff will take SST feedback into consideration and refine the plan as needed. Staff that work directly with volunteers will undergo annual performance evaluations led by their supervisors that will include opportunities for input and evaluation by the 350 Mass members they work most closely with. BFP staff shall communicate to the SST when it has plans to hire for a role that directly supports 350 Mass. BFP staff and SST shall agree on a representative from 350 Mass to serve on the hiring committee. 350 Mass SST shall also be consulted about potential staff transfers and/or promotions that will directly impact 350 Mass prior to any decisions being made.

### **350 Mass Statewide Steering Team and the Better Future Project Board**

The 350 Mass SST elects two representatives to serve in an ex-officio non-voting capacity on the BFP board for renewable two-year terms. Candidates should be active members of 350 Mass (for at least one year) before being elected. They will attend all board meetings, receiving notice of meetings at the same time as other board members but shall not have the same fiduciary and other obligations (including serving on working committees) as full voting board members. Participation of SST representatives to the board in executive sessions will be up to the discretion of the BFP board.

If the BFP board is interested in recruiting a 350 Mass member as a voting board member, the board shall consult with the 350 Mass SST before voting to bring them onto the board.

### **External Representation of 350 Mass by the Better Future Project Staff**

BFP support staff who work exclusively on 350 Massachusetts shall be identified primarily as 350 Mass staff who are employed by Better Future Project. Relevant

support staff (including those who are not exclusively attached to 350 Mass) may be attached to certain committees or teams (such as the SST or the Campaign Team) as non-voting members. Support staff may play a coordinating role, and can participate in strategic discussions.

BFP support staff may represent 350 Mass with coalition partners, decision-makers, and/or other external parties, but they are not permitted to make decisions on behalf of 350 Mass or commit 350 Mass to any actions. They serve as a conduit of information between 350 Mass and external parties. All relevant decisions are made by the SST or campaign teams, respectively, or a node if the issue is geographically constrained to the area of the node. When engaging in long-standing coalitions, 350 Mass should always have a volunteer representative in addition to any BFP staff representing 350 Mass.

Both 350 Mass members and staff must notify the relevant campaign team/SST prior to attending any future key new external meetings with partners, decision-makers, and media. BFP staff should also ensure that the 350 Mass brand is highlighted for events that 350 Mass is engaging in (that highlight may be in addition to or exclusive of BFP branding depending on the appropriate context).

## **VII. Conflict Resolution**

To resolve significant conflicts related to our work, the 350 Mass SST can create an ad-hoc committee made up of 350 Mass members, BFP staff, and BFP board (chosen by each respective group) that reports non-binding recommendations to the SST for adoption to resolve the conflict.

## **VIII. Amendments to and Ratification of this Charter**

This charter will be ratified upon approval by both the 350 Mass Statewide Steering Team (SST) and the Better Future Project (BFP) board. SST approval requires three-fourths of members in attendance at the meeting where it is voted on. BFP Board approval is in accordance with BFP bylaws for decisions. The SST may also decide to seek approval from the entire 350 Mass membership.

We anticipate that the 350 Mass Charter may evolve over time, as circumstances change. Individual amendments to the charter that directly affect the nodes, staff, board, or campaigns shall first be communicated to relevant actors before any formal proposals are made. If amendments are proposed, their approval follows the same process as charter ratification. If it is determined that major revisions are needed, BFP and SST will constitute an implementation team to revisit the Charter and propose revisions.

## **APPENDIX**

### **A. List of Current Nodes**

Berkshires,  
Boston  
Cambridge  
Cape Cod  
Greater Franklin  
Holliston  
Lowell  
Metrowest  
Mystic Valley  
Newton  
North Shore  
South Coast  
South Shore  
Waltham  
Watertown  
Winchester

### **B. Norms**

General:

- Assume good will
- “Queen Elizabeth” norm (when you have to disagree, express it as if you were addressing the Queen--with great courtesy and care)
- Respect others--golden rule
- Respect the space

More meeting-related:

- Step-up Step Back.
- Recapitulate what other person just said. Summarize.
- Bike rack. Stay on point
- Repeat our names.
- Stick to the agenda.
- Signal when context is required.
- Ghost chair

### **C. Affiliates**

### **D. History of the Document**

The first iteration of this charter (previously referred to as 350MA Bylaws) was originally based on recommendations from the 350 Massachusetts (350 MA) Structure Committee, and other interested people in 2012: Adam Greenberg, Adi Nochur, Bil Lewis, David O'Sullivan, Farhad Ebrahimi, Jack Spence, Jerry Koch-Gonzalez, Joan

Black, Joshua Jackson, Marc Breslow, Rachel Plattus, and Vanessa Rule. They reflect adoption of the structure discussed at the December 4, 2012 general meeting, as shown in a diagram drawn by Vanessa Rule for the December 18, 2012 general meeting.

This charter was amended on October 9, 2013 based on input from the voting members of the Statewide Steering Team, plus Craig Altemose, Turner Bledsoe, Sophie Robinson, Grace Ross, and the Structure Working Group at People's Action Assembly of June 30, 2013. The amended charter was approved by the voting members of the Statewide Steering Committee.

The version of the Charter in this document represents recommendations made in November 2014 by the Implementation Team (consisting of 350 Mass Statewide Steering Team members Turner Bledsoe, Darcy DuMont, Errica Saunders, Susan Theberge, and Sabine von Mering, along with BFP staff Craig Altemose and Marla Marcum and BFP Board members Margaret Bullitt-Jonas and Bonnie Cockman) to the Statewide Steering Team, as well as new recommendations by the newly constituted Implementation Team (consisting of 350 Mass Statewide Steering Team members Turner Bledsoe, Emily Neumann, and Sabine von Mering, as well as Boston node member David Klaffer, and BFP staff Craig Altemose and Emily Kirkland and BFP Board members Juliet Schor and Quinton Zondervan) presented to the Statewide Steering team on August 1, 2015.

Updated to align with common practice: December 13 2017