

MVA Membership & Dues Policy

Approved by delegates at June 2025 Annual General Meeting

Metro Vancouver Alliance is a grassroots coalition of **community, faith, labour, and nonprofit** organizations. Our vision is a world where communities of all kinds come together united by common goals. We build institutions of the future - organizations developing leaders with the power to act across civil society in response to the issues of today and tomorrow.

Purpose

MVA allows civil society organizations to enact democracy by participating in the governance and strategic direction of the Alliance as well as its public action. This policy describes the benefits and commitments of membership in MVA. The purpose of this membership is to create clear expectations for member organizations and non-member organizations wishing to establish a formal relationship with the Alliance.

The MVA membership policy is guided by these principles:

- Ownership by the members and accountability to a membership base
- Sustainability
- Everyone pays their fair share
- Inclusiveness, diversity, and equitable participation
- Clear expectations balanced with a willingness to negotiate to make things work

What does it mean to become a member of MVA?

Any organization that meets the following requirements is considered a member of MVA

1. A formal commitment by a deciding body of the organization
2. A “fair share” financial commitment to sustain the work of MVA
3. A commitment of leadership
 - a. The minimal is leader (s) that can represent their organization as a delegates and provide direction to the Alliance
 - b. The formation of an internal organizing team (Core Team) of leaders that can engage their organization’s membership in both internal and Alliance organizing efforts

Membership Dues

Stages of membership

1. Exploratory - during a period that can last up to a year, an organization can make a smaller dues contribution while they decide if membership in MVA is a good fit for them. The minimum contribution for an exploratory membership is \$500/year
2. Development - during this period a member organization has committed to be a part of MVA and is in the process of increasing its contribution to a full dues amount, forming a Core Team, and developing the engagement of its leaders in MVA
3. Full Member - the organization negotiates a “fair share” annual dues contribution. The guidelines for dues calculations for each sector are:
 - a. Faith communities: 1-2% of their regular offerings/pledges/dues from their members
 - b. Non-profit organizations: 1-2% of a negotiated portion of their operating budget
 - c. Unions: may vary based on union structure, usual baseline is \$3-5 per member per year up to a cap of \$25,000
 - d. Educational institution: discussed with the board on a case-by-case basis

Principles for negotiations

Organizations can negotiate with the board a lesser or alternative contribution. Negotiations will be based on the above principles and recognition that it costs approximately \$5,200/member per year to sustain the work of the Alliance. To ensure sustainability and diversified revenue, dues contributions will be capped at \$25,000. Donations in excess of maximum dues can be made towards the Equity Fund (see below), which can be drawn from to enable organizations with limited budgets to join as Sponsored Members (see below).

Other ways to participate

MVA welcomes formal or informal relationships with individuals and organizations that do not meet the criteria for organizational membership. Here are some examples of alternative ways to get involved.

Friends of MVA (Member)

Individuals may become a member of MVA by joining Friends of MVA. The expected dues per person is \$50-\$200 per year. These individual dues then become Friends of MVA's dues to MVA. The Friends of MVA elect a delegate to represent the organization to the MVA Annual General Meeting. The Friends as a whole has one organizational vote at the Delegates Assembly equivalent to other member organizations.

Sponsored Members (Member)

MVA's Equity Fund offers an option for individuals and member organizations to make financial contributions towards the sponsorship of organizations that would otherwise face financial barriers to become members. Organizations wishing to apply for sponsorship must write a letter to the MVA Board of Directors that includes a description of their membership, their reasons for wishing to join MVA, their proposed "fair share" financial contribution, and non-financial contributions they are able to make (e.g. event venues, staff/volunteer time, other in-kind gifts). Sponsored Members agree to the standard commitment of leadership to MVA and are considered full organizational members.

Partners (Non-Member)

Organizations with a special interest in developing the capacity of the Alliance may become official partners by making significant financial contributions. Partner organizations can include: regional/provincial bodies wishing to encourage local chapters to join membership (e.g. a regional diocese or provincial union); private foundations or other philanthropic groups; a research partner, etc. Partners may participate in the organizing work of the alliance but do not have a voting right in the Delegates' Assembly. To ensure that our decision-making process is member-driven, the Organizer will work to ensure research-action teams and the Strategy Team are predominantly led by representatives of member organizations.

MVA does not partner with government agencies and does not accept government money.

Allies (Non-Member)

Allies are organizations or individuals that have developed a formal relationship with MVA related to a specific community or issue. Allied organizations often do not have a membership structure that allows them to fully participate in the organizing cycle. Rather, they can partner on campaigns and participate through financial support, in-kind contributions, networking referrals, expertise and guidance, etc. Allies do not have a voting right in the Delegates' Assembly and Annual General Meeting but may be invited to fully participate on MVA's research-action teams at the discretion of the Organizer. To ensure that our decision-making process is member-driven, the Organizer will work to ensure research-action teams and the Strategy Team are predominantly led by representatives of member organizations.

Allies should be aware that MVA does not provide endorsements of community campaigns and we do not promote events that our membership is not directly involved in or has not voted to support.

Guests (Non-Member)

Organizations or individuals who are interested in becoming members of MVA are welcome to visit MVA's leadership teams. Generally, visitors are expected to decide if they want to move to becoming a member within 3 months of beginning to visit.

Benefits of Membership

1. **Action** for the common good of Metro Vancouver and British Columbia.
2. **Participation** of your organization in campaigns for the common good through leadership roles on issues teams and public actions.
3. **Decisions**, a seat at the table deciding what and how MVA takes action. This includes participation in MVA's leadership as well as voting rights at the Delegates Assemblies (the democratic decision-making body of the Alliance).
4. **Recognition** of your organization's leadership role by civil society.
5. **Permanent**, long-term framework for relationship building: beyond short term and transactional relationships.
6. **New allies**, building relational trust with peers, identifying common mutual areas to learn and collaborate together, deepening solidarity across civil society sectors.
7. **Leadership development** by learning in action, building new skills to serve your organization and lead in public life.
8. **Foundations Training**, access to the introductory community organizing course at no cost for members, staff and stakeholders of member organizations. These skills include relationship building, listening to a community, identifying and developing leaders, mobilizing people for action, etc.
9. **Regional/National Training**, access to the advanced training in community organizing through our affiliates in Canada and the United States. These 5/10-day trainings are master classes in understanding power, leadership, relationships, organization, interests and action.
10. **Tailored organizing workshops** for your organization across a range of topics including membership & leadership development, organizing around change, raising money, relational meetings, listening, discernment, research & action and evaluation. A portion of MVA's organizer's time is set aside to work individually with member institutions to apply organizing skills to support their missions.
11. **Young leaders**, engagement opportunities for emerging and young leaders that nurtures their commitment to civil society organizations.
12. **Power** to shift policy on the agenda for the common good agenda set by the Alliance, specifically affordable housing, climate.