

PFML Coalition FAQs

Who can join the coalition?

Any organization can join the coalition, so long as they support the coalition's mission of advancing a comprehensive Paid Family & Medical Leave policy, currently in the form of (insert bill number) at the Minnesota state legislature.

How is the coalition structured?

The coalition is co-chaired by the Children's Defense Fund – Minnesota, ISAIAH, and Minnesota AFL-CIO. The coalition is structured with a Steering Committee, which acts as the governing body of the coalition, and three working groups.

The Steering Committee and each working group are convened by members of the Leadership Team, who are responsible for coordinating regularly to ensure communication, coordination, and collaboration throughout the coalition. Additionally, there is the Coalition Organizer (who is also part of the Leadership team) who is responsible for regular coalition updates to the full coalition, managing the coalition list, and keeping the coalition members up to date on opportunities to engage in the work of the coalition.

Who is on the Leadership Team?

The Leadership Team is made up of the Coalition Organizer (Haylee Hilton, hhilton@mnaflcio.org), the convener of the Steering Committee (Melissa Hysing, mhysing@mnaflcio.org), and the conveners of each of the working groups.

What are the working groups and how can my organization participate in them?

Any coalition member can participate in any of the working groups. To get involved in any of the working groups, please contact the respective conveners:

- **Lobby/Policy:** Lars Negstad, lnegstad@isaiahmn.org
Responsible for policy development and legislative advocacy
- **Field/Comms:** Vivian Ihekoronye, vihekoronye@isaiahmn.org
Responsible for developing messaging, communications and organizing strategies
- **Strategic Partnerships:** Deb Fitzpatrick, dfitzpatrikck@childrensdefense.org
Responsible for outreach regarding the bill language to ensure it is inclusive for all Minnesotans, especially those from communities historically disenfranchised and/or underinvested in our State

Each workgroup is empowered to make decisions under their purview, outside of what constitutes major coalition decisions. Major coalition decisions are made at the Steering Committee level, but in a scenario in which consensus cannot be reached, then the issue at hand would be raised to the coalition co-chairs.

How does my organization join the Steering Committee?

The steering committee is a set, but by no means closed group of coalition members. As of Dec.

8, 2022, any new organization that wishes to join the Steering Committee must be approved by the committee. Steering Committee organizations have dedicated resources and/or staff time to the coalition and sit on at least one other working group in addition to the steering committee. Any coalition members that are interested in joining can reach out to Melissa Hysing (mhysing@mnaflcio.org).

What are major decisions?

The following are defined as major coalition decisions:

- Major policy changes
- Approval of coalition-branded tactics
- Approval of campaign plan
- Instances in which there is not consensus in a workgroup and a workgroup member wants to refer the decision to the Steering Committee for resolution. For example, anyone on the Lobby/Policy group has the power to identify a policy change as major and kick it up to the Steering Committee.
- Any other decision a member of the Steering Committee wants to flag as major

How does consensus decisionmaking work?

Once a major decision has been identified, the Leadership Team coordinates on a timely basis as needed to schedule a Steering Committee meeting and communicate out by text message the time, place, and agenda of the meeting.

Any member of the Steering Committee may propose a course of action at a meeting. Consensus will be presumed if there is some level of agreement and no objections.

Alternatively, upon request of any Steering Committee member, the “Fist to Five” method will be used to make decisions. In that case, every member will be asked to raise their hand indicating their level of agreement. If everyone is a 3, 4, or 5, there is consensus. If there are any 1, 2, or fists, those members will be invited to explain their objection(s), after which there will be open discussion followed by another Fist to Five. If consensus remains blocked, the member(s) blocking consensus will be asked to offer a compromise proposal. If no compromise is offered, the original proposal prevails. If a compromise is offered, there will be a Fist to Five on the compromise. If the compromise is blocked, members will vote between the original proposal and the compromise proposal(s). The proposal that receives a majority is approved.

In order to block consensus, organizational representatives must be in alignment with one another. For example, if multiple people from one organization are present at a meeting and one wishes to block consensus, they must have the support of the other representatives of that organization to do so. Each organization is responsible for managing their own internal alignment around participation in coalition decisionmaking.

Major coalition decisions are made at the steering committee level, but in a scenario in which consensus cannot be reached, then the issue at hand would be raised to the coalition co-chairs.

In a situation where the cochairs can't reach consensus, they will bring that back to the Steering Committee, and at that point each Steering Committee organization would advocate as they see fit as an organization, and no one would be empowered to speak for the coalition.

Once a major decision has been made through our above model, if a Steering Committee organization can not abide by that decision, they must make that clear to the coalition, remove themselves from strategic conversations, and both that organization and the coalition will make it clear in conversations with electeds and leadership that the organization is speaking for themselves outside of the coalition, and the coalition is moving forward without the support of that steering committee organization.