



BE4ALL Local Area Committee Guide

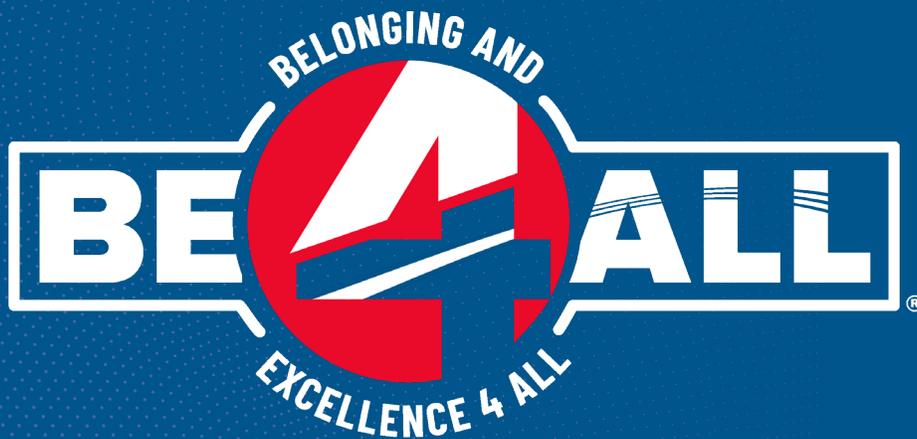


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Introduction

Belonging and Excellence for All (BE4ALL), a joint effort by SMART, SMACNA and the ITI, aims to create an environment of welcoming and belonging for all members of SMART and SMACNA, including those from marginalized or underrepresented groups. By doing so and by striving for high-value performance standards, BE4ALL aims to create a thriving unionized sheet metal industry that values each member.

Fostering a culture of belonging strengthens our memberships, benefits our communities and makes the unionized sheet metal industry more resilient and competitive. This approach ensures that we represent the communities where we operate and the people that we serve. Our goal is to recruit, welcome and retain the most competent and skilled workforce available, while valuing differences in age, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, national origin, language, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation and other unique characteristics.

We need a culture that enables our union to attract and retain the best, most skilled workers – and in doing so, affirms the dignity and worth of every human being who walks through our doors. We need to reinforce solidarity so that each one of us has the other's back. We need an industry that embodies professionalism – not only in our technical skills, but in the work environment we create: free from harassment, discrimination, bullying and hazing. We need an industry where we all can do the best possible work efficiently and effectively. SMART and SMACNA both believe BE4ALL is the vehicle for how we make this happen.

In alignment with our mission, we are providing this guide and toolkit, which are intended to assist local unions and contractors by providing ideas and strategies on how to form and sustain BE4ALL committees in your local areas.

For assistance, contact Louise Medina, SMART Director of Special Projects, at (630) 536-6547 or be4all@smart-union.org, or Caroline McGraw, SMACNA Labor Relations Project Manager, at (703) 803-2984 or cmcgraw@smacna.org.

Why form a local BE4ALL Committee?

These workplace conditions negatively impact members' financial, emotional and mental health, as well as their ability to learn and perform to their highest levels of potential on the jobsite and in our training centers.

Over time, however, craft unions have recognized these debilitating issues and have begun making concerted efforts to improve member representation by implementing recruitment and retention practices, initiating leadership and mentorship programs, prioritizing supportive work environments, and strengthening partnerships with civic and community organizations. [This ongoing transformation in the unionized construction industry should not be ignored by our local unions.](#)

Forming local BE4ALL committees is crucial for creating a local union culture that not only attracts and retains the best, most skilled workers, but also affirms the dignity and worth of every member.

Studies have shown that for generations, the culture of the unionized construction industry reflected traditional gender roles and racial segregation. Women and minorities were not only underrepresented but faced hostile work environments where they were treated as outsiders, sometimes experiencing bias practices that excluded many from promotion and work opportunities.

Additionally, hostile work environments in the construction industry helped perpetuate bullying and hazing of our apprentices, as well as the marginalization of organized members. This further damaged our industry by leading to a lack of mentorship and leadership training.

Workforce demands have opened an unprecedented opportunity to grow and strengthen our union. However, the ongoing projections of labor shortages in the construction industry, paired with competition from other trade unions recruiting from the same shrinking pool of viable candidates interested in construction careers, should be alarming to all SMART local union leadership and SMACNA contractors.

Transforming the culture of the sheet metal industry is essential if we want to retain the younger generation of workers, who are increasingly unwilling to tolerate harsh treatment and disrespect. If we fail to evolve and address these expectations, we risk losing out on a new generation of skilled workers who are critical for the future of our trade.

How to get Started

The BE4ALL initiative is gaining momentum, as evidenced by the strong showing of support at recent SMART and SMACNA conventions, as well as by the significant number of individuals who have participated in our Bias and Belonging training. Many local unions are now starting or considering their own BE4ALL efforts in coordination with their SMACNA chapter and JATC.

A key to the initiative's success has been the commitment of SMACNA, SMART and ITI leadership, prompting national policy adjustments that are inclusive of the broad membership and benefit the entire sheet metal industry. For example, the national BE4ALL committee worked to revise the United States Department of Labor (DOL) National Guidelines of Apprenticeship Standards. These revisions aim to streamline the entry process for veterans, underrepresented groups and workers with previous experience.

Committee involvement from SMART, SMACNA and the local JATC is crucial for transforming the industry locally, and we encourage you to stay engaged with your local SMACNA chapter and JATC, urging them to appoint staff to the local BE4ALL committee effort.

Initiatives that local committees can work on together include delivering BE4ALL Toolbox Talks, Bias and Belonging training, harassment prevention, leadership training and mentorship programs. These can be delivered to shops, jobsites, JATC classrooms and union halls.

Messaging is important. Since the inception of the BE4ALL initiative, there have been many questions — and perhaps some misconceptions about its purpose, leaving many members wondering: “What’s in it for me?”

This is a fair question. Given the undeniable fact that our industry is predominantly male and white, many people incorrectly assume that the sole purpose of the BE4ALL initiative is to recruit women and minorities. This has left some members feeling disconnected or disenfranchised by this effort. It’s important to note that while the BE4ALL initiative is inclusive of strategies to recruit, support and retain underrepresented groups in our union, BE4ALL is by no means exclusive to these objectives.

As a respected and influential leader within your area, we strongly encourage you to start by visiting our resource page, located at www.be-forall.org/about-be4all. Using inclusive terms and language will help you communicate the overwhelmingly positive attributes of the BE4ALL initiative to members who may object to the idea of forming a local BE4ALL committee.

Additionally, we hope that this guide will help you communicate creative ideas regarding the proposed formation of your local BE4ALL committee that resonate beyond the concept of just recruiting women and minorities. Please refer to the suggested committee structure page in this guide, which we believe captures the spirit and vision of how the work

of local labor-management BE4ALL committees can be sustained and thrive.

We believe the suggested structure, or one of a similar variation, will help you answer when some members ask, “What’s in it for me?” The equitable and broad structure we aim to create should inspire many of your members to support the BE4ALL effort, as it will help them better see themselves as active participants or allies in the initiative.

Setting up a new **BE4ALL** Committee involves:

Discussing the idea within your own sphere of influence first. It's important that you have firm commitments of support from other leaders within the union hall, SMACNA chapter and JATC, where you believe mutual respect and support exist.

Speaking with your SMACNA chapter's board about forming the joint BE4ALL committee.

Securing a recommendation from your local union executive board.

Strategically preparing your local union leaders, elected or otherwise, to speak in favor of forming a local BE4ALL committee when it is brought before the members. It may even be advantageous to implement this strategy during the executive board meeting mentioned above.

Committee structure

The key to creating a successful BE4ALL committee is a structure that will resonate with those working in your local. The majority of the BE4ALL committee members should feel connected to the overarching goals: building solidarity, mutual support and collective growth.

Many local unions and chapters have already established committees, groups or clubs that serve specific (and sometimes similar) purposes; examples include women's committees or retiree clubs.

However, some members of these committees will tell you that participation can be fragile at times, which can impede progress and impact. This happens for several reasons:

- A low number of members identify with or have a passion for the mission of the committee.
- The committee is too dependent on local leadership for action.
- Insufficient or non-existent funding prohibits participation.
- Low morale among participants derived from the

bullet points above

To strengthen participation and the success of a BE4ALL committee, it is essential to address underlying issues that lead to disengagement.

Broadening the Committee's Mission: While it's natural that not all members will identify with a committee's specific mission, ensuring that the BE4ALL committee's goals reflect values that everyone can relate to — such as respect, dignity and opportunity for all — can bridge that gap. By focusing on issues that impact the entire union and highlighting universal benefits, the BE4ALL committee can engage a wider audience.

Members who are passionate and personally invested are more likely to engage proactively, rather than simply participate due to external pressures or perceived political benefits. Success is more likely when existing and future members see themselves reflected in the committee's mission and values.

The structure of a BE4ALL committee should focus on long-term sustainability, inclusivity and the empowerment of its members. A strategy to achieve this involves appointing a member of each committee or club that currently exists in your local as board members of the (executive) BE4ALL committee. A standard agenda item of the BE4ALL committee should be receiving reports from the (now) subcommittees with their goals, accomplishments and/or requests for the support of the full BE4ALL committee.

Empowering Committee Independence: A key challenge arises when committees are too reliant on chapter or union leadership to take initiative. To prevent this dependency, the committee should be empowered to operate more autonomously: setting its own agenda, driving its own actions and actively involving members in decision-making. Local leadership should be supportive but not the only source of action, ensuring committee members feel a sense of [DS13.1] ownership over the process.

Securing Adequate Funding: Insufficient funding is often a barrier to committee participation and success. Securing financial resources for the BE4ALL committee should be a priority. Allocating a dedicated budget for meetings, events, outreach and educational initiatives allows the committee to act consistently and attract more involvement. Local unions should explore reallocation of resources to make participation accessible to all members.

Here are a few ideas to introduce adequate financial resources to help implement committee objectives:

- Dedicate your 50/50 raffle proceeds to the BE4ALL budget.
- Explore labor/management funding options.
- Consider allocating a penny or more to the exclu-

sive funding of BE4ALL and its subcommittees during your next wage allocation meeting.

- Keep an accurate record of equitably distributed funds for subcommittee use and give autonomy to subcommittee members to budget and vote on their own expenditures.
- Allow subcommittees to release funds collected during fundraising events to your local union financial secretary-treasurer to deposit into the general fund.
 - This will possibly require membership approval of a new line-item budget to facilitate accurate bookkeeping of proceeds.

Boosting Morale and Participation: Low morale is often the byproduct of unclear goals, lack of engagement or resource limitations. Boosting morale requires recognizing the contributions of committee members and fostering a sense of community. Encouraging feedback from all members and acting on their suggestions builds trust and a feeling of belonging, which can ignite enthusiasm and participation.

Rotating Leadership and Roles: Rotating leadership within the committee can prevent burnout and keep [DS14.1] ideas fresh. Members from different subcommittees should have the opportunity to lead initiatives, ensuring broad perspectives are represented across the local union.

Establishing Clear, Measurable Goals: To maintain momentum and accountability, the committee should set clear, measurable goals that align with the values of those within the local sheet metal community [LP15.1].

Providing Education and Training: By offering leadership development training and mentorship opportunities, committee members are empowered with valuable tools to take initiative with confidence. Member engagement is closely connected to meaningful opportunities for progress. This is an area where the benefits of having members of the JATC on the committee make themselves clear.

By addressing the challenges of participation and engagement, your local BE4ALL committee can serve as a catalyst for positive change and a stronger, more unified community within the sheet metal industry.

How to ensure your committee effects change

Consider opportunities to introduce meaningful systems of support that increase members' opportunities to participate in after-work meetings.

Identify and inform your members about community resources and ensure they have access to these resources.

Raise awareness of and push to address issues that are important in your community.

Sponsor or encourage soft skills training for members, such as public speaking, bias and belonging, or mentorship programs.

Set up mentoring programs for new members through subcommittees.

Encourage more members to participate in union activities.

Actively encourage and support leadership development training.

Work with leadership and the local JATC to ensure all committee members have access to at least some form of anti-harassment training.

Connect with community groups and local government entities. Advocate for things like community benefit agreements. Bring a trade union and working-class perspective to issues like the importance of earning family-supporting wages. Educate your local community about the importance of what our union fights for.

Advance union solidarity at all levels.

How to make your committee work

You can start small: A good committee does not necessarily need lots of members, but rather members who are committed to the idea and eager to participate. You might consider appointing two members from other committees (like your local women's committees, SMART Army, etc.) if not many exist in your local (yet).

Set up subcommittees to perform the work of the committee: training and education, social media engagement, fundraising, recruitment and outreach to community organizations are only some examples.

Educate committee members about the supportive policies and programs within your local union that affect members. Advocate for revisions or improvements that help increase subcommittee engagement.

Once the committee is up and running, work to have elected union leaders and SMACNA chapter leaders meet with the committee, ensuring cooperation between the work of the committee, other programs of the local union, and the chapter.

How to hold effective meetings

Every committee meeting should include something useful and educational for members — an interactive training, a report back from all the subcommittees, review of BE4ALL Learning Journey webinars, BE4ALL Toolbox Talk discussions, a guest speaker, a review of SMOHIT resources and so on. Below are steps that can be used to ensure meetings are effective:

1. Have a purpose.

Be aware that some members see the committee's work as about "getting things done," while others may see it as an opportunity to gain support for their subcommittee's issues. Both approaches are valid and represent perspectives that should be ac-

commodated at the meeting.

2. Plan ahead.

Nobody likes to meet for the sake of meeting. Distribute an agenda in advance so people can prepare. For some committees[LP17.1], alternating between in-person and online meetings, or holding meetings by conference call, has been effective

3. Get the word out.

Use your local union newsletter, chapter mailing, website and/or social media to invite members to join one of the subcommittees of the BE4ALL committee. Make it clear that this is a new and

interesting opportunity and that member participation is needed.

4. Emphasize participation.

Remember that BE4ALL's work is collaborative and that attendees are there because they want to contribute. Distribute tasks equitably among participants to further expand opportunities for all members to engage.

SUBCOMMITTEE AGENDA

TOPIC IDEAS

All Subcommittees

- Bias and Belonging Training
- Sexual Harassment Training
- Leadership Training
- BE4ALL Toolbox Talks
- BE4ALL Learning Journey Webinars
- Fundraising
- Guest Speakers

Veterans Subcommittee

- Mental Health Support and Resources
- Researching Veteran Benefits (Housing, Education, etc.,)
- Recruitment, Retention and Mentoring of New Veterans in the Trade

SMART Army

- Recruitment and Mentoring of Volunteers for Community Service Projects
- Conduct Union-Building & Political Activities

Women's Subcommittee

- Recruitment, Retention and Mentoring of Women in the Trade

RISE Subcommittee

- Recruitment, Retention and Mentoring of Minorities in the Trade

Stewards Committee

- Collective Bargaining Agreements & SMART Constitution Trainings and Discussions
- Rapid Response Protocol Training

Resources

Both SMART and SMACNA understand that each local union and SMACNA chapter is unique, with different customs and procedures across many regions. You may feel that the advice contained in this guide regarding the structure and work of forming a BE4ALL committee in your area may not work as suggested; that is why this information is presented as a guide and not as an instruction manual. There is no mandated structure, so those looking to start a BE4ALL committee are encouraged to be creative if resources or support hinder the desired vision of your committee.

The SMART Special Projects Department and the SMACNA Labor Relations Department are also here to assist your local leadership team(s) with viable resources, including in-person or video consultations to help flesh out ideas as you consider this journey.

When you form your local BE4ALL committee, please contact Louise Medina, SMART Director of Special Projects, at (630) 536-6547 or be4all@smart-union.org, or Caroline McGraw, SMACNA Labor Relations Project Manager, at (703) 803-2984 or cmcgraw@smacna.org. Both departments would like to acknowledge the formation of your committee with locally branded BE4ALL swag that can be used for door prizes, giveaways, raffles or recognition awards at meetings, picnics, etc.

Here are some links to additional online resources that you may find useful in sustaining your committee:

Appendix

Member Expectations Template

As we embark on our journey to foster a more welcoming culture within our organizations, it is essential to establish clear expectations for each member of the local BE4ALL committee. These expectations are designed to guide our actions, ensure collaboration and contribute to the success of your committee's mission. Please find below a template for setting these expectations:

Commitment to Inclusivity: Respect individual differences, perspectives and experiences.

Active Participation: Attend scheduled committee meetings regularly and actively participate.

Confidentiality: Respect the confidentiality of sensitive information discussed during committee meetings.

Respectful Communication: Communicate with fellow committee members in a respectful and professional manner.

Accountability: Be accountable for the outcomes of projects and initiatives within the committee's scope.

Collaboration: Work with other committee members, departments and stakeholders to achieve common goals.

Continuous Learning: Stay informed about current tools, best practices and research related to inclusion, belonging and excellence for all.

Advocacy and Representation: Advocate for policies, programs and initiatives that promote belonging and excellence for all.

Feedback and Improvement: Provide constructive feedback to enhance the effectiveness of committee activities.

Support and Empathy: Provide support and empathy to fellow committee members, recognizing the importance of well-being and mental health.

Writing Vision, Mission and Values Statements (Template)

Vision Statement:

Template: “Fostering a workplace where every individual is embraced, empowered and inspired, promoting a culture of unity, mutual respect and shared success.”

equal access to opportunities. Through collaborative efforts, educational initiatives and ongoing dialogue, we strive to empower every member of our organization to contribute to a culture of mutual respect, understanding and continuous improvement — by valuing the unique perspectives and talents of everyone.”

Mission Statement:

Template: “To cultivate an inclusive and equitable work environment, our mission is to actively promote a sense of belonging and excellence for all. We strive to create a culture where each member is valued, supported and provided with opportunities for personal and professional growth. Through collaborative initiatives, education and advocacy, we aim to eliminate barriers, celebrate individual strengths and foster an environment where everyone can thrive.”

Values Statement:

Template: “The Belonging and Excellence for All Committee is a dedicated group of members committed to championing inclusivity and equitable opportunities within our organization. Our purpose is to create a workplace where every member feels a deep sense of belonging and can achieve excellence. We focus on implementing inclusive practices, fostering unity and advocating for policies that support

Bylaws Template

[Committee Name] Bylaws

Article I: Name

The name of this committee shall be the Belonging and Excellence for All Committee of [SMART Local Union # / SMACNA Chapter].

Article II: Mission and Purpose

The mission of the committee is to cultivate an inclusive work environment, fostering a culture of belonging and excellence for all. The purpose is to actively promote a workplace where every member feels valued, supported and provided with opportunity for personal and professional growth.

Article III: Membership

Composition: The committee shall consist of [number] members, representing various demographics and levels within the organization.

Membership Criteria: Membership is open to (1) chair members of local union subcommittees, and (2) staff of both the local SMACNA chapter and JATC. Co-chairs of subcommittees can serve as alternates in absences. Members should demonstrate a commitment to inclusivity, respect and collaboration.

Term of Service: Members shall serve a term of [length], with the option for reappointment.

Meetings: The committee shall hold regular meetings, at least [frequency], to discuss ongoing initiatives and plan future activities.

Article IV: Leadership

Chairperson: The committee shall have a Chairperson elected by its members, responsible for leading meetings, coordinating initiatives and serving as the primary liaison with the organization.

Vice Chairperson: A Vice Chairperson may be elected to assist the Chairperson and assume their duties in their absence. The Vice Chairperson serves as Committee Recording Secretary.

Article V: Decision-Making

Decisions shall be made by a [majority/supermajority] vote of the committee members present at a meeting.

Article VI: Committees and Subcommittees

The committee may establish subcommittees to focus on specific initiatives or projects. Each subcommittee shall have a designated chair that reports its progress during regular BE4ALL committee meetings.

Article VII: Amendments

These bylaws may be amended by a [majority/supermajority] vote of the committee members present at a meeting, provided notice of the proposed amendments has been given at least [length] days prior to the meeting.

Article VIII: Dissolution

In the event of dissolution, any remaining funds or assets shall be distributed in accordance with [local union policies or applicable laws].

Article IX: Adoption

These bylaws shall be adopted by a [majority/supermajority] vote of the committee members present at a meeting.

Article X: Effective Date

These bylaws shall take effect on [date].

[Name], [Title], Belonging and Excellence for All Committee Chairperson

Meeting Minutes Template

SMART Local [#] / SMACNA [Chapter Name] BE4ALL Committee Meeting

[LOCATION]

[DATE]

INTRODUCTION

A meeting of the [ENTITY] was held on [Date], at [PLACE] located at [ADDRESS].

GENERAL FUNCTIONS

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at [TIME] by [OFFICIAL].

Attendance: In attendance was [X].

Approval of Minutes: After review, a motion was made and seconded by [NAME] to approve the minutes of their [DATE] meeting. The motion carried.

FINANCIAL REPORT

If there is one, the Financial Secretary-Treasurer produces a quarterly report here.

CHAIR/CO-CHAIR REPORT

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

OLD BUSINESS

Items of discussion that have been brought up before but are unfinished.

NEW BUSINESS

Items of discussion that are new and can be introduced by members.

NEXT MEETING

[DATE][TIME][LOCATION]

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at [time and date].

Minutes written and submitted by [NAME][SIGNATURE][DATE].

