



# NOW 101

Since its founding in 1966, NOW has been dedicated to **taking action** to achieve women's full participation in society. Until women and girls are free from rigid gender roles and all forms of discrimination and exploitation, NOW will have their back!

NOW's strength comes from its membership. The organization's grassroots structure was designed to promote democratic participation and bottom-up governance. NOW is a dynamic political organization, both externally and internally. Here are its key parts:

## More than 500,000 members and contributing supporters

These supporters are the heart, soul and muscle behind NOW, and they give the organization its clout in government, media and the public eye.

Some are "at-large" members, meaning they are not affiliated with a local chapter. All members pay dues to help fund NOW, and they may also take action online, sign paper petitions, attend national events or make additional contributions.

Some members belong to chapters and may choose to get involved more directly.

## Hundreds of chapters and campus groups

Chapters hold meetings, elect their own leadership, organize actions, talk to the local media, coordinate with progressive allies and are involved in their communities in numerous ways.

Each chapter elects delegates who travel to the annual conference to help set national policy.

Chapters are required to follow NOW's national bylaws and the policies that are passed at the national conferences. Otherwise, they are fairly autonomous, setting their own agendas and objectives.

## State Organizations

Each state has its own NOW entity that focuses on state-level issues. State conferences are held to elect state officers and at-large delegates to the national conference.

States are run by a council made up of state officers and chapter representatives and have the authority to convene chapters.

Most state and local chapters do not have actual offices, and their elected leaders are strictly volunteers. In a few large cities and states, officers are paid and an actual office may exist.

## Regions and the National NOW Board

NOW is divided into nine geographical regions, which hold regional conferences every two years. At these conferences, the regions each elect a designated number of members to sit on the National NOW Board. The number of seats is based on the number of members in the region.

The National Board, along with the national officers, meets at least three times a year to manage the affairs and control the funds and property of the organization, and to pass agenda-related policy.

## National NOW Conference

Held every June or July, the National Conference is the "supreme governing body of NOW," as specified by the national bylaws. Decisions made at these conferences are binding to all members and sub-units of NOW.

Chapter and at-large delegates vote on a wide range of proposals (called resolutions) that address both external issues, such as legislative attacks on reproductive rights, and internal issues, such as membership recruitment practices. Every four years, conference delegates elect the national NOW officers.

## National Officers

The national officers serve for terms of four years at the NOW Action Center in Washington, D.C., where they manage a small paid staff. They speak on behalf of the organization, make policy decisions between board meetings and supervise the communications, membership, fundraising and field programs. The president is the CEO of NOW.



# More Pieces of the NOW Puzzle...

## NOW, Inc.

NOW, Inc., is the national membership organization dedicated to grassroots organizing and political action on behalf of women's rights. When you become a NOW member, this is the entity you are joining. Because one of NOW, Inc.'s main activities is encouraging its members to lobby their representatives in Congress, contributions to this entity are not tax-deductible.

## NOW Foundation

The NOW Foundation is the education and legal arm of NOW. The Foundation is known for its work on women's health, including the Love Your Body campaign, and for taking anti-abortion terrorists to court. It also works on family law, global issues, media policy and much more. NOW and the NOW Foundation have the same national priorities and leadership, and share some staff and office space in D.C., but are separate entities. Donations to the NOW Foundation *are* tax-deductible.

## NOW/PAC

The NOW Political Action Committee is an electoral politics arm of NOW that endorses and supports feminist candidates for federal office (U.S. House and Senate). Like the Foundation, NOW/PAC shares priorities, leadership, staff and office space with NOW. Per Federal Election Commission rules, only NOW members may contribute to NOW/PAC.

## NOW Equality PAC

NOW Equality PAC (NEP) is a separate entity that supports state ballot measures and feminist candidates for state and local office across the country, such as governor, state legislature or city council. This PAC's work is crucial to advancing women's rights on the state level and filling the political pipeline with feminist supporters. Anyone, including non-members, may contribute to NEP. Individual NOW chapters may also form their own PACs to support local candidates.

## NOW's Priority Issues

Over the years, delegates at national conferences have voted to make these issues top priorities:

- > Advancing reproductive freedom
- > Promoting diversity & ending racism
- > Stopping violence against women
  - > Winning lesbian rights
- > Achieving constitutional equality
  - > Ensuring economic justice

## More Issues

- |                             |                              |                             |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| > Affirmative action        | > Fighting the radical right | > Media justice             |
| > Custody/family law        | > Global feminism            | > Mothers/caregivers rights |
| > Disability rights         | > Health & body image        | > Peace                     |
| > Education Equity/Title IX | > Immigrant women's rights   | > Women in the military     |

## NOW

## Works on:

## What words come to YOUR mind when you think of NOW?

advocacy feminist **action** leaders uncompromising  
 trust trailblazers **equality** courageous opportunity pushing the envelope  
 powerful principled bold rebels forward-thinking **members**  
 assertive feisty respect change determined multi-issue  
 results nonpartisan motivated dedicated freedom advancement fierce  
 groundbreaking visionary empowerment questioning authority strong loud  
 fearless future **grassroots** passionate justice history-making  
 independent intrepid committed