

Meeting Hand Signals

In order to ensure that members are on fair footing when participating in group discussions, use these hand signals to communicate with the facilitator(s) about requests to speak.



“I want to talk” Hand

If you have something to say, simply raise your hand to be added to the stack or speaking order. This applies to comments, questions, and motions. The facilitator(s) will determine who should speak next based on who has spoken, when hands are raised, and if any of the higher-priority hand signals (below) are used.



“Clarifying Question” C-Hand

Clarifying Questions are simple questions of fact with brief, factual answers. Clarifying questions take priority over general comments and questions. When a clarifying question is asked, the facilitator(s) will ask another participant to respond - it does not necessarily need to be answered by the previous speaker.



“Process” Triangle

A ‘Point of Process’ is made when the conversation has strayed from the original topic, an agenda item is over time, or the the group’s decision-making process and/or rules have been violated. This signal is used to point out that process has broken down and needs to be repaired. The process triangle takes precedence over all other hand signals. It essentially means, “put on the brakes,” and should not be overused.



“I agree” Twinkle Fingers

Hold both hands raised with fingers pointing up and wiggling. The Twinkle Fingers signal indicates support of or agreement with what is being said. Some co-ops use snapping or knocking as an alternative for visually-impaired members, since this hand signal does not prompt a verbal response.

Notes about accessibility: When using hand signals, it is critical that all participants understand how to participate in the meeting. For the uninitiated and unfamiliar, hand signals can easily become instruments of exclusion. This is why we’ve included so few hand signals.

We are intentionally omitting two common hand signals (“point of information” and “direct response”), as they often subvert large group discussions and lead to abuses of power. Co-ops are responsible for making sure that these signals can be used by everyone and coming up with alternatives as needed.