



HURON

COUNTY

DEMOCRATIC PARTY



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Precinct Chairs' Responsibilities

- Elected by precinct voters
- Represents the Democrats in the precinct
- Communication link between the citizens of the precinct and the Democratic Party, elected officials, and candidates
 - Open to all residents with priority to those of Democratic affiliation and/or leaning
- Role is to encourage community involvement and political involvement
- Provide information and opportunity for participation in the political process
- Develop a relationship of trust and empowerment
- Communicate via personal contact, USPS mail, phone calls, texts



Central Committee Person's Handbook

Ohio Democratic Party



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Introduction

A central committee person is an elected representative of the Democratic Party at the most local level. As an elected official, the committee person represents the Democrats in the precinct and serves as a communication link between the Democratic Party, elected officials, candidates, and the citizens of the precinct.

The role of the central committee person is to encourage community involvement and political involvement at a grassroots level by providing information and by providing an opportunity for participation in the political process. This handbook is designed to help guide central committee persons through this process

In regard to County Parties with members and/or Officers who are not Precinct Committee persons: The Officers will have duties defined by the local by-laws. Other at-large members can fill in at vacant precincts (or wards), help other committee members who need or ask for assistance, or have other duties assigned by the Chair. All members of the local county party should work to contribute to victory.

You and Your Constituents

As a Central Committee Member, you are the first line of contact with residents of your precinct. A precinct is a small electoral district in your municipality. In common terms, your precinct is your immediate neighborhood. Your goal is to communicate with your neighbors about issues of concern in the community, about values of The Democratic Party, and about knowledge of Democratic Candidates and Party-Endorsed Ballot Issues. The line of communication is meant to be open to all residents with the priority to those of Democratic affiliation and/or leaning. Furthermore, the ideal Central Committee Member communicates with his/her neighbors several times throughout the year, working to develop a relationship of trust and empowerment.

The County Party

The County Democratic Party should play a key role in assisting committee persons in the development of their precinct's political organization. Each County Party should hold regular meetings so precinct persons can collaborate on organizing for electing candidates, organizing fundraisers, etc. Formal training sessions should be held periodically by the County Party and the Ohio Democratic Party to train new members or when implementing new plans or strategies and to keep the members "focused" on the goals of the party.

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The county party should provide central committee members with lists of voters, elected officials, candidates, and committee members, maps, a calendar of events, voter registration and absentee request forms, and other important documents that would be helpful to precinct committee persons.

Central committee members are also expected to help with fundraising efforts by donating directly to the party and/or helping raise money from other individuals by selling tickets to fundraising events or by soliciting donations. Funds solicited through such avenues are necessary to the operation of the ODP and to pay for things like the headquarters, office supplies, literature, mailing costs, and also to support candidates.

Central Committee members should participate on one or more subcommittees so that all of the internal County needs are met. These subcommittees vary county by county, but usually include concentrations on fundraising, coordinated campaign efforts, community outreach, training, headquarters operations, field, and/or candidate recruitment.

All information that you receive from the National, State, and County Democratic Parties is private and confidential. Not only do we want to be coordinated and on message at all levels of the party, but we want the manner in which these organizing efforts are successful to remain secure. This especially includes any access to fundraising information, the ODP's databases, and/or committee meeting correspondence. Discussions with the media, with few exceptions, should be left to the County Party leadership and candidates. If, for some reason, you are approached by the media please speak with the County Party Chair for recommendations and talking points.

Your work will support all levels of Democratic candidates. Your dedication not only offers your neighbors information on candidates and issues, but also tells them that the County Party is not just there for them on Election Day, but during the entire year. If this mentality persists, it will be easier for the candidates and their specific campaigns to reach voters on a more personal level and ultimately the residents are more likely to cast their vote for a Democrat.

Supporting Candidates

The Central Committee person serves as the candidate's link to the voters in the precinct and should help with:

- Canvassing
- The Volunteer Leader Program
- Phone Banking
- New Media Chatter
- Letters to the Editor
- Hosting a House Party

Canvassing

The most effective way that you can communicate with voters is by canvassing door-to-door. According to a study done at Yale University it only takes 14 knocks on a door to gain one additional vote for a candidate while it takes 460 phone calls or 389 pieces of mail! Between now and Election Day a central committee person needs to:

Identify Your Voters—Start going door-to-door in your precinct to spread our Democratic message and identify issues that are important to voters. Record what issues each voter cares about and who is a Democratic supporter, who is undecided, and who is voting Republican using the 1-5 rating system:

- 1= Strong Democrat
- 2= Lean Democrat
- 3= Undecided
- 4= Lean Republican
- 5= Strong Republican

Persuade Your Undecideds—Once you have determined which voters haven't made up their minds about whom to support (the 3s), you will go back to them with information about where all of our candidates stand on the issues that matter to them—from our Presidential nominee down to local races.

Reconfirm Supporters—A lot can happen in the last few weeks of an election. In October, go back to all of the Democrats and Independents you have persuaded to make sure they still plan to support our candidates. We will encourage all our supporters to cast their vote early, by mail or in person, to make sure that we get their votes in the bank before Election Day.

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Turn Out Our Voters—The candidate with the most supporters doesn't win elections—the candidate with the most supporters *who vote* wins elections. You will need to visit all Democrat and Independent supporters once the weekend before the election and once on Election Day itself to remind them to vote if they haven't already voted early.

At each step of this process the party will provide you with all the materials that you need to be successful in canvassing your neighborhoods. We will provide the following items:

- Lists of voters to contact in your precinct. If you have Internet access we can provide you with access to your precinct on VoteBuilder so you can print your own lists and enter your own data.
- Scripts so that everyone is using the same message
- Literature from each candidate's campaign as it becomes available. The Democratic National Committee (DNC) is also developing a system where you can print your own local literature using templates.
- Trainings so that everyone feels comfortable doing the work.
- Visibility materials like yard signs, bumper stickers, buttons, and other materials as they become available from each campaign.

Volunteer Leader Program

In election years, the ODP works with county Democratic parties to make our voter contact operation as strong as possible. Volunteer Leaders are the folks who are willing to help central committee members with the door-to-door voter contact activity. Central committee members should reach out to their social networks to recruit their friends, family, neighbors, and co-workers to join the Democratic Party as a Volunteer Leaders.

Phone Banking

Making phone calls is also a helpful way to identify, to persuade, and to turnout the voters in your precinct. Using the phone can be helpful if your precinct is mostly rural or if there is a fence around a voter's house, or if there's a large dog in the yard. Lists and Scripts will also be provided for this activity.

New Media Chatter

These days, successful campaigns must use a variety of mediums to reach voters. Reverberating our message on TV, on the web, on the phones, and at the doors ensures the repeated contacts necessary for our message to get through the clutter of campaign season. Be sure to ask your friends, family, and neighbors to help in this stream of contact. For example, send out an email to your network asking the following:

Will you join us in the fight against the GOP attacks by spreading the message on Facebook, Twitter, and other new media platforms? Here are some ways you can help us:

- Write letters to the editor
- Call elected officials
- Be part of the crowd at press conferences
- Share posts on Facebook
- Forward emails to your contact lists
- Receive text message alerts from ODP (Text OH to 51555)
- Be a Twitter e-activist

Letters to the Editor

Letters to the Editor are an easy way to get our Democratic message out to the public. They can be written to promote the party, our elected officials, our candidates on the ballot, or to point out the flaws in the opposing party's candidates, elected officials, and/or policies. It is important to keep letters to the editor brief and to the point. Stick to the issues and talk about why our party or our candidate is better than the Republican Party or their candidates.

Hosting a House Party

Hosting a House Party is a good way for a central committee person to recruit Volunteer Leaders and other volunteers who want to be active in the campaign season. The Ohio Democratic Party will sponsor many statewide house party days, which will include conference calls featuring special guests.

VoteBuilder

The ODP, in conjunction with the DNC, has provided every county party with web information about Ohio's voters and about their voting histories. This information is also available at the Board of Elections, but ODP's use of VoteBuilder allows us to manage our data over time so we can have the best information available about our communities and about voters. The database is available to elected officials, central committee members, candidates, and their campaign staff and access to the information is given by the county parties. In cases where a candidate's district covers several counties, access is granted by the ODP. Training is available from regional staff (in an election year) and from the ODP Data and Targeting Department. All of our canvassing, phone banking, mailing lists, and scripts will come from this database.

Registering People to Vote and Voting Absentee

Every central committee person in the county should feel welcome to register voters. While an organized voter registration effort does not have to be going on in your area, the opportunity to register to vote is a service the committee person should attempt to make available to all new residents of the community, to persons reaching 18 years of age, and any other interested and eligible residents.

The qualifications for registering to vote in Ohio are as follows:

- You must be a citizen of the United States
- You must be at least 18 years of age on or before the date of the next General Election.
Seventeen year olds can register and vote in a primary if they are going to be 18 on or before the General Election.
- You must be a resident of the State of Ohio for at least 30 days prior to voting.
- You must reside at the address at which you seek to register.

Voter registration ends 30 days before Election Day, so make sure all registration forms are turned in to the Board of Elections by then, or the voters will not be able to vote in the upcoming election.

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It would be a good idea to personally deliver a voter registration form to anyone who moves into your precinct and to offer to help them register to vote, to change their address, or to request an absentee ballot. You should also provide voter information sheets that include the name of the precinct where they live, the data of the election (candidates and issues upon which they'll be voting), and the location of their polling place. If there are rental apartments or senior living facilities in your precinct you should talk to management about gaining access to the building to register voters or assist with absentee ballot requests. You may have to do this activity in a non-partisan way.

The State of Ohio now has "no excuse" absentee voting or early voting, which means that any registered voter can request an absentee ballot without providing a reason for their absence on Election Day or may vote early in person. Voters can fill out a request form to vote by mail (ballots will be sent to their home address) or they can vote early in person at the Board of Elections starting 25 days before a Presidential primary, 35 days before a General Election, or as soon as the ballots are available. Requests for absentee ballots can be made at any time by filling out the proper form and by turning it in to the Board of Elections. Ballots will not be mailed until around 30 days before Election Day.

Conclusion

Thank you for your participation in the Democratic Party. Your grassroots party building efforts are crucial to win at all levels of elections, from the federal level to the statewide and local races. Your efforts are not only necessary, but they are appreciated. Central Committee members do not always receive the accolades they deserve, so the staff at the Ohio Democratic Party would like to express its full recognition all of the hard work committee members have done and will continue to do to build a strong Democratic Party, to strengthen our supporters in every community, and to secure victories for our candidates across the great state of Ohio.

Appendices

Canvassing Door to Door

Sample Door-to-Door Script

Hi, my name is _____ and I am the precinct committee person (or Volunteer Leader) here in the neighborhood for the Democratic Party. I wanted to introduce myself and ask you a few questions. I realize that the election seems a long way out, but I want to find out what issues matter most to people in our neighborhood.

Do you plan to vote for the Democratic or Republican Presidential candidate in November?

1= Strong Democrat

4= Lean Republican

2= Lean Democrat

5= Strong Republican

3= Undecided

Thank you for your time. I will make sure to stay in touch with you.

Sample Walk List

Odd · Electric Dr
4276728

29603 Electric Dr
Bay Village, OH 44140

Sex: F Age: 53
Party: R

D C M V O R F Gen Pres 1 2 3 4 5
I N H S P Issue ID HQEJAITLCTEGCO

Email:
4622105

29603 Electric Dr
Bay Village, OH 44140

Sex: U Age: 22
Party:

D C M V O R F Gen Pres 1 2 3 4 5
I N H S P Issue ID HQEJAITLCTEGCO

Email:
4635086

29603 Electric Dr
Bay Village, OH 44140

Sex: M Age: 53
Party: R

D C M V O R F Gen Pres 1 2 3 4 5
I N H S P Issue ID HQEJAITLCTEGCO

Email:
3764608

29617 Electric Dr
Bay Village, OH 44140

Sex: F Age: 37
Party:

D C M V O R F Gen Pres 1 2 3 4 5
I N H S P Issue ID HQEJAITLCTEGCO

Email:
4409051

29617 Electric Dr
Bay Village, OH 44140

Sex: M Age: 75
Party: D

D C M V O R F Gen Pres 1 2 3 4 5
I N H S P Issue ID HQEJAITLCTEGCO

Email:
4409064

29617 Electric Dr
Bay Village, OH 44140

Sex: F Age: 69
Party: D

D C M V O R F Gen Pres 1 2 3 4 5
I N H S P Issue ID HQEJAITLCTEGCO

Email:

Door-to-Door Tips

- Your safety should always come first. Go door-to-door with a buddy and a cell phone, whenever possible. Avoid canvassing after dark and avoid entering strangers' homes. If a house makes you uncomfortable at all, skip it and move on to the next one.
- Don't get into arguments with voters – it doesn't help our cause. There will always be voters who will not support our candidates; when you meet one, simply thank them for their time and move on.
- Never leave literature in mailboxes or mail slots. According to federal law, only the US Postal Service can leave items in mailboxes.
- Be prepared for any kind of weather, whether that means mittens, an umbrella, or sunscreen.
- Pencils are more reliable than pens, especially in the cold and damp.

Canvass Checklist

Map

Script

List

Pencils

Literature

Voter Registration Forms

Absentee Ballot Application

Cell Phone

How to Host a House Party

Brainstorming Your Social Networks

Brainstorm a list of people you know in your community who you think share your values. It doesn't matter if they are registered Democrats or not – if there are Independents, third party members, or even reformed Republicans who want to join our campaign, we're glad to have them. Be creative when building your list and think big. Talk to an ODP staffer for help brainstorming types of people to invite. Most folks find they know a lot more people than they think they do! When you're brainstorming your list, you should consider:

- Family members
- Friends
- Coworkers
- People from your place of worship
- Classmates
- Neighbors
- Members of Clubs or Groups (i.e. book clubs, fraternal organizations, PTAs, etc.)

If you are hosting an event, you should also consider inviting registered Democrats from your immediate neighborhood to attend as well. ODP staff can help you create a list—remember in one-year election cycles there will be regional staff nearby to help as well.

Inviting Your Guests

Mail every attendee a paper invitation – feel free to use the attached example as a guide. Sending an actual invitation in the mail is the best way to get a crowd. Ask people to RSVP and be sure to call or email anyone you haven't heard from about a week after you send the invitation. Finally, call every guest who's RSVP'd the day before your event to confirm their attendance and answer any last minute questions. The increase in turnout that a reminder call can provide is unbelievable! Don't be dismayed if not everyone you invite shows up – if you invite 50 people, you will usually get 10-15 people who show up. The simple fact that you invite people, even if they can't attend, is important; a personal note from a friend or a person in their community is a communication that will stick with folks.

Hosting the Event

The agenda for these events is very straightforward and is intended to be easy for the hosts to keep the conversation moving. Talk to your ODP staff contact about any changes or suggestions you have to improve the agenda for your specific event. Here is a sample agenda:

12:30-12:45

Guests arrive, introduce themselves to each other, and sign in. Save the sign-in sheet and make sure that the data is entered into the VoteBuilder system, either by you or your ODP staffer.

12:45-1:00

The host gathers everyone into one room and starts the agenda. The host should begin by sharing their story by taking few minutes to introduce themselves and to describe why he/she is an active Democrat. Try to focus on your personal history and your values and how they connect with the Democratic Party, not just a list of issues. For example, while saying something along the lines of "I'm a Democrat because I believe that everyone deserves health care" is good, saying "When I was growing up, my mother would have to decide every week whether she needed food or her medicine more that week. When President Bush vetoed health care for kids, it reminded me of why I'm a Democrat -- the Democratic Party fights for health care access for every family" is better. When you have shared your story, ask all of the attendees to share theirs. It's a good idea to prepare the first person you are going to ask ahead of time, to make sure they have a few minutes to think about what they would like to say.

1:00-1:30

On Statewide Days of Action we will have a conference call connecting all of the events in occurring in Ohio and they will feature special guests to thank folks for attending campaign events and to talk about the particular agenda item(s) at hand. Participants will get an update of the Democratic Party's progress and will learn about our strategy to win in 2013. If your house party is not on a Statewide Day of Action, skip this step.

1:30-1:45

At this point, you will take charge of the agenda and talk about how you're going to make the ODP's statewide strategy work in your neighborhood. During on-year elections, regional ODP staff can help you fill in details about how to make this program work in your community. Otherwise, be sure to go over this with your ODP staff contact or county party contact for specific details. Some key things to remember:

- Our Strategy depends on direct voter contact. TV ads, direct mail, and robotic phone calls are mostly ignored and the only way to cut through the noise is to have neighbors talking to neighbors
- We will be as focused on issues as possible – the more we know about what issues matter to each individual, the more successful we will be
- Ask everyone in the room to commit to getting involved. The best thing they can do is sign-up to be a Volunteer Leader of their own precinct. If they don't want to be a Volunteer Leader, ask them to join your team as you go through the process.

1:45-2:00

If you have people ready to go out canvassing, pass out the walk sheets and scripts. If you are going to be doing a phonebank at your house, distribute your call lists and scripts. Practice role playing the script a few times – it might feel silly, but it helps new volunteers get into the swing of things. Make sure everyone knows how to fill in his/her call sheets. If you are going to be writing letters to the editor, pass out sample letters/message sheets and a list of names and addresses.

Hosting a fundraising house party for a candidate will be slightly different as the agenda will focus on getting to know the candidate and raising money. You should talk with the candidate to work out these details.

Getting the Information into the System

The most important part of your event might be what happens after the guests all leave: entering all the information that you gather into the system. If you have Internet access and are computer savvy, ask your ODP staffer to provide you with access to VoteBuilder. If not, deliver or mail the information to your ODP staffer so they can enter it. The information that needs to be entered is:

- Event sign-in sheet
- New Volunteer Leaders recruited
- Completed walk Lists / call sheets / names and addresses from letters to the editor

Host Checklist

Building Your Crowd

- ✓ Determine location
- ✓ Brainstorm your social network invitation list
- ✓ Get a list of local Democrats from your ODP staffer
- ✓ Send all of your guests an invitation and send your ODP staffer a copy of your invitation
- ✓ Track RSVPs as they arrive
- ✓ One week after the invitation is mailed, call everyone who hasn't responded

Before the Event

- ✓ Review the agenda with ODP staffer, practice telling your story and explaining the local strategy
- ✓ Make sure you receive enough walk/call lists for everyone who will be attending
- ✓ Review door-to-door/phonebanking techniques and familiarize yourself with the script
- ✓ The day before the event, call everyone who has RSVP'd "Yes" to confirm their attendance

During the Event

- ✓ Make sure everyone who attends signs in

After the Event

- ✓ Send your sign-in sheet and all the completed walk/call/letters to the editor lists to your ODP staffer

Sample House Party Invitation

Dear Friends –

Last November, I joined hundreds of activists, volunteers, staff, and candidates from across the state celebrate the victories of Senator Sherrod Brown, of President Barack Obama, and of Democratic candidates up and down the ticket. We had worked tirelessly for months to talk to our family, friends, and neighbors about the importance of voting and about the importance of supporting Democratic candidates. This work clearly paid off and while the victories were sweet, there is still a lot of work left to be done. After sweeping GOP victories across the state in 2010, the Republicans in the state legislature have continued to attack Ohio's women and Ohio's working and middle class families. I refuse to sit idly by while this happens and I am prepared to continue to work to ensure that we keep winning on local and statewide races in the coming campaign cycle to keep this great state moving forward. To kick off the 2013 campaign cycle, I will be hosting a house party on February 16th to talk about the issues facing our neighborhood and our state and to tell folks how to get involved with the Ohio Democratic Party. I hope to see you on Saturday, February 16th at 1:30. Please RSVP if you think you can make it!

Thanks and talk soon,
John

Please join us for an
Election Year Neighborhood Kickoff

Saturday February 16th
1:30 pm – 3:00 pm

The home of John Smith
340 East Fulton Street
Columbus, OH 43215

Please RSVP at calling (614) 221-6563
or by emailing leader@ohiodems.org