



DEMOCRATIC PARTY

PRECINCT CHAIR GUIDE

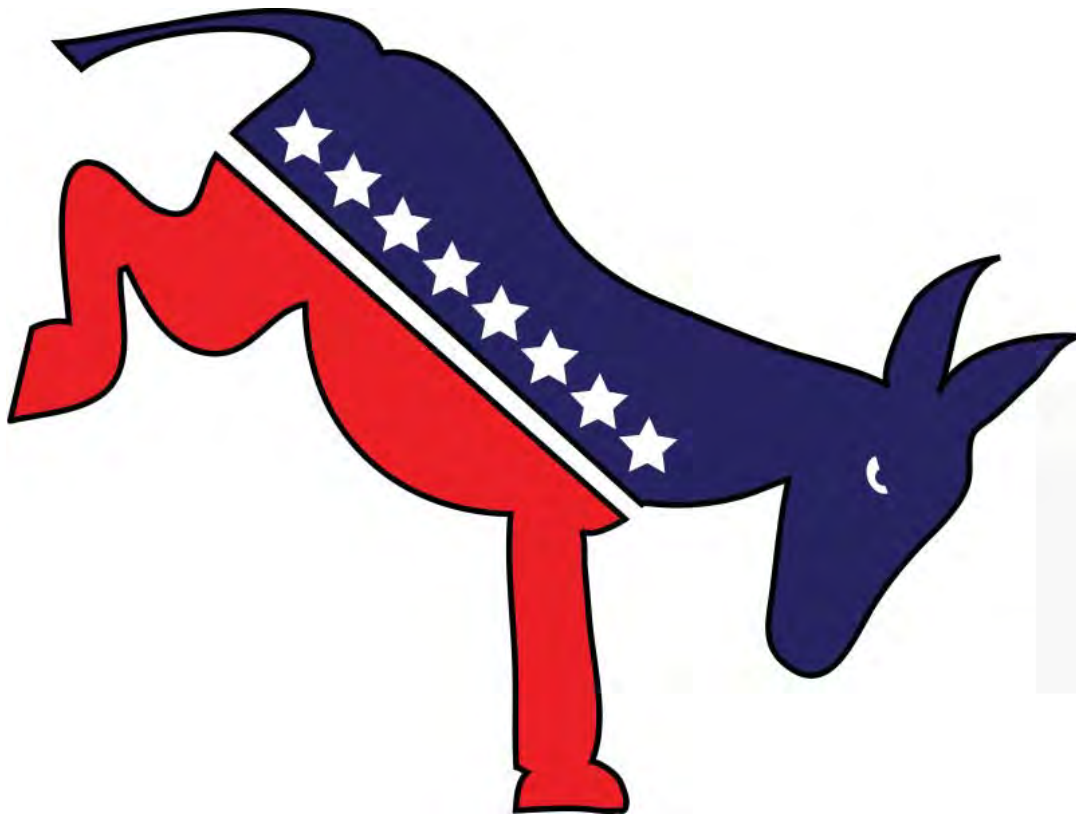


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Thank you for looking at becoming a precinct chair. Welcome!

What is a Precinct Chair?

A Precinct Chair is the neighborhood organizer for the Democratic Party. A Precinct Chair is an elected official with special duties. It's an important job, but it's also a lot of fun!

You get to meet and help people in your neighborhood vote. You get to meet and help candidates get elected. You get invited to important meetings.

What Does a Precinct Chair Do?

As a Precinct Chair, you organize your precinct, help with elections, attend conventions, and make decisions for your county Party. You'll be a member of the County Executive Committee (CEC).

Why is a Precinct Chair important?

Elections are truly won or lost in precincts. Precinct chairs are crucial to ensuring strong Democratic support for Democratic candidates and issues. Precinct chairs are the face of the Democratic Party at the local level.

Some Important Things to Know

A precinct is a voting district. It's the smallest official political subdivision.

A Precinct Chair is an elected official with special duties. Both parties have precinct chairs. Precinct chairs are elected during the Primary Elections, which are held in March of even-numbered years. The term for a precinct chair is two years.

If there isn't a chair in a precinct, the vacancy can be filled. Vacancies are filled by appointment of the county chair with a confirmation by the County Executive Committee (CEC).

How Do I Become a Precinct Chair?

This may sound complicated, but it's easy. Basically, you get elected in your precinct or appointed by the County Executive Committee (CEC).

1. Election for two-year term. This may seem difficult, but it is actually a simple process. Candidates for Precinct Chair run for office in the Primary Election each even-numbered year. A one-page notarized application must be submitted to the County Chair (or CEC secretary) within the filing period, usually September to December. Individuals may also apply as write-in candidates (§171.0231). If only one candidate applied to be on the ballot, there will be no election and that person will be declared elected to the office (§171.0221). If there is more than one candidate, the winner is determined by majority vote of those voting in their Democratic Primary.

2. Filling a vacancy. This is a common way Democrats become Precinct Chairs. Any eligible person may fill a Precinct Chair vacancy at any time. Appointment is by majority vote of the County Executive Committee (CEC) present at a properly called meeting with a quorum, unless otherwise stipulated by the Election Code (§171.024-5).

Qualifications to be a Precinct Chair:

- Be a resident of the precinct (§171.023)
- Be a qualified voter in the Precinct Chair's (your) County (§161.005)
- Not be a county, state, or federal public officeholder or candidate for such office
- In a general election year, be affiliated with the Democratic Party through voting in the Democratic primary election or runoff or by oath of affiliation (§162.001 – 162.012)

What if I Need to Resign?

Sometimes circumstances in life are such that a Precinct Chair may need to resign. If that happens, the Precinct Chair immediately provides a letter of resignation to the County Chair or CEC so the Party can fill the vacant seat.

What if a Precinct Chair Fails to Perform Duties?

If a Precinct Chair fails to perform his or her duties for an extended period of time or misses three consecutive county executive committee meetings, an Acting Precinct Chair may be appointed.

What's the County Executive Committee?

As Precinct Chair, you also sit on the County Executive Committee (CEC). Each county's Democratic Party is governed by a CEC. The CEC is made up of the County Chair and each Precinct Chair in each voting precinct in the county.

CEC Regulations

The CEC is governed by the Texas Democratic Party (TDP) Rules and statute. Local Party CECs may adopt local rules as long as local rules don't conflict with the Election Code or TDP Rules. The CEC is required by Texas Democratic Party Rules to meet at least four times each year. Many counties meet monthly.

You're the representative of your precinct, so it's important for you to make every effort to attend each meeting. You are a voting member of the CEC. Your presence counts towards a quorum enabling official business to be conducted. If you are not able to attend, have your Precinct Captain or someone there who will collect handouts and take notes for you. However, that person may not vote as your proxy (§171.026).

FYI: All Democratic meetings are open to the public with a few exceptions. Also, CEC voting by secret ballot is not permitted.

What else does a Precinct Chair do?

Get Out The Vote (GOTV)! Your job as a Precinct Chair is to get out the Democratic vote in your precinct. There are five ways to do this:

1. Get to know people in your precinct and help them get involved.
2. Identify voters
3. Register voters
4. Let voters know about Democratic events, candidates, and elections
5. Get voters to the polls

1. Get to know people in your precinct and help them get involved.

Your main job as a Precinct Chair is to get the voters in your precinct to vote for Democrats in elections. Relationships are really important. Start small getting to know the Democrats in your precinct. Invite them to Democratic events so they can meet other Democrats. You want them involved in any part of working your precinct that's possible.

It's almost always easier to do work when friends work together. It's also easier when volunteers are doing what they are most interested in doing. Volunteers usually start with bite-size projects, and then make a larger commitment as they learn more about Party activities.

So don't forget to ask your Democrats to help! Most people will help with something small. Get them involved, and then the most committed will keep asking for more things to help with.

2. Identify Voters. The first step is to get a list of the Democratic voters in your precinct. You can get lists of voters from your local elections office. As a Precinct Chair you can access the Voter Activation Network (VAN) (see "Resources") for voter lists.

Call and visit the Democratic voters in your precinct. These Democrats are golden because they are already committed Democrats. Let them know you are their Democratic Precinct Chair – give them your Precinct Chair business card and tell them about local Democratic events and activities.

Then, branch out. Get to know other folks in your precinct. One idea is to welcome new neighbors and let them know you are their Democratic

Precinct Chair. This starts conversations which can determine their political leanings. You'll find out who your consistent Democratic voters are so you can count on their support. You'll also learn who is a "swing voter" (a voter who doesn't vote consistently along party lines) or who does not usually vote. You might persuade them to vote Democrat. Also note the Republicans, so that you can make relationships and have conversations which might switch their views, or so that you can leave them alone when it comes to Democratic Party politics.

Identifying voters and recording this information is called canvassing.

3. Register Voters. Always be ready to register a Democrat to vote by becoming a volunteer Deputy Voter Registrar (VDR). VDRs take a short training course that is free and offered by the Elections Office. It usually takes about an hour. You take the oath administered by the county Voter Registrar. Then, you can help people register to vote, change their address if they've moved, re-register if they've fulfilled their obligations after having a felony charge, or need a replacement card. Most Precinct Chairs are VDRs.

4. Let voters know about Democratic events, candidates, and elections. You're the political leader in your precinct. Keep in touch with your Democrats and let them know of Democratic events, issues, upcoming elections, and ways they can be active with the local party, club, or campaigns. Be a distribution hub for campaign yard signs, Democratic literature, stickers, pins, t-shirts – any materials, apparel, and signs that promote local, statewide, and national candidates and issues. This can be as simple as having a few extra signs on your porch for pickup. Plant a precinct chair sign in your yard to help folks identify you and also to show your pride.

You'll also want to have a stock of Voter Registration forms and Applications for Ballot by Mail.

5. Get voters to the polls. Getting voters to the polls is our #1 priority. As the election date approaches and you've identified your voters, registered

them to vote, and kept them politically informed, you'll contact them again. Remind your Democrats about voting dates, times, and locations by calling them on the phone, sending them personal text messages, sending them personal messages through social media, and blockwalking (quick, short visits to voters at their homes). Encourage every voter to vote early. 😊 Ask every voter to tell you their voting plan.

Voters who are disabled or otherwise can't physically get to the polls, can vote by mail. Offer to help them vote early by mail. Let your Democrats know that there are rides to polls available. Volunteers usually are delighted to drive voters to the polls.

The Precinct Chair job isn't done until each voter lets you know they have actually voted. 😊

FYI: It's helpful for Precinct Chairs to also be Notary Publics. There are many times when this service is invaluable. For example, when a Democrat wants to be a Precinct Chair, the application must be notarized.

All Politics is Local. Local Elections Matter.

There are two main elections: Primary and General. The Primary Election is an election by the political parties to nominate their candidate to move onto the General Election ballot. No one is "elected" in a Primary election*; candidates are "nominated." The Primary Election is usually thought of as the spring election. A General Election is an election in which candidates are elected to offices. Candidates from different parties square off in the General Election. The General Election is usually thought of as the November election. (*Precinct Chairs are elected in a Primary election.)

Precinct Chairs may be election workers. This is a great way to learn the process and ensure ballot integrity for our Party. Precinct Chairs may choose not to be election workers and focus on getting voters to the polls.

Primary Election: Campaigning. Neither the Election Code nor the TDP Rules prohibit a Precinct Chair from endorsing or getting involved in contested primary races or nonpartisan local elections. Campaign involvement may include supporting a candidate with donations, hosting fundraisers, blockwalking, making phone calls, sending text messages, or handing out campaign material.

Check your County Executive Committee Bylaws (if available) about involvement in contested primary races. Warning! Use discernment. Publicly taking sides in a contested primary race may lead to damaged relationships.

Primary Election: Working at the Polls. In Primary Elections, County Chairs (with approval of the County Executive Committee) appoint Election Judges for each precinct in the county, and the Election Judges appoint clerks to assist them.

General Election: Campaigning. Precinct Chairs help Democratic candidates in every way possible. Create excitement for candidates and elections by hosting events, organizing volunteers, blockwalking, making phone calls, sending text messages, passing out campaign materials for a candidate, or placing signs in the community and at polling locations. You are important because you know your precinct better than anyone.

General Election: Working at the Polls.

Presiding Judges and Alternate Judges

This is not super easy to understand, but it's the way Texas election code works. The commissioners court must apportion the number of judges for countywide polling places in direct proportion to the percentage of election precincts located in each county commissioners precinct won by each part in the last gubernatorial election (Section 32.002). Contact your election office for additional clarification.

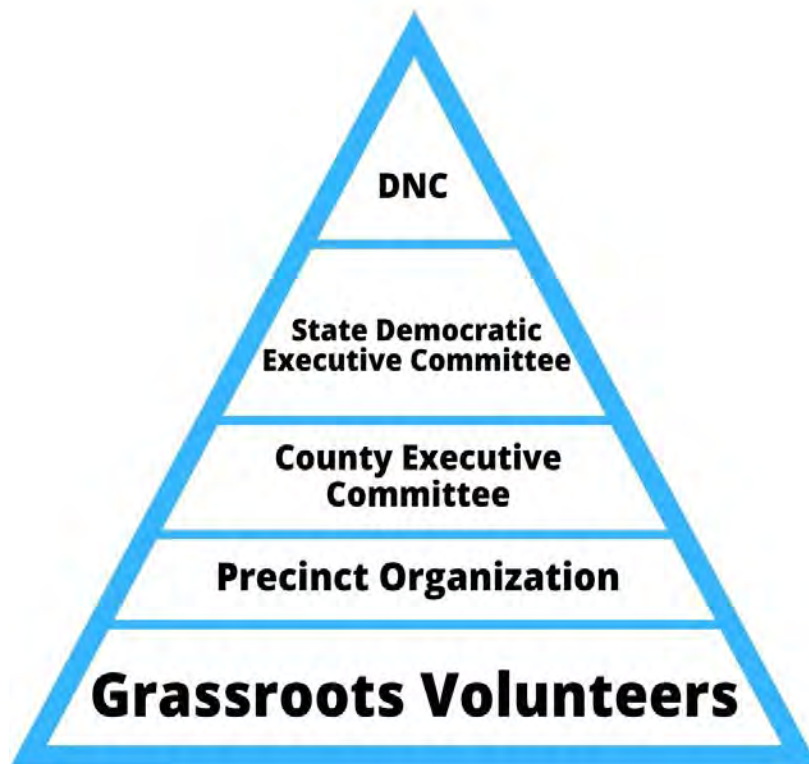
Precinct Chairs may serve and should encourage other Democrats to serve as election judges. The job of the judge is important. Judges ensure a fair and accessible election. Judges pick their clerks.

The list of names for Election Judges must be submitted by the County Chair to the Commissioner's Court the summer preceding the general election; remind your County Chair to submit your name!

Democratic Party Structure

It's important to understand where the precinct fits in the Democratic Party at the county, state, and national levels, as well as to understand the convention process, the Texas election cycle, and to know what documents govern the Party.

The structure of the Democratic Party is below. There is no Democratic Party without the local grassroots volunteers.



National Party Organization:

Democratic National Committee (DNC)

The Democratic National Committee (DNC) governs the Democratic Party. Officers are elected by the DNC. The DNC is composed of the chairs and vice-chairs of each state Democratic Party Committee and over 200 members elected by Democrats in all states and the territories. Texas Democrats elect their DNC committee members at the state conventions.

State Party Organization:

State Democratic Executive Committee (SDEC)

The State Democratic Executive Committee (SDEC) is composed of the State Chair, Vice-Chair, two committee people who identify as different genders from each of the 31 state senatorial districts (SDs) and special groups. Delegates elect this committee at the Democratic State Convention held in June of even-numbered years. All convention delegates elect the State Chair and a State Vice-Chair. Each SD elects two committee people to represent their district, which is then ratified by the convention. Officers are either elected or appointed. SDEC members help organize and oversee Party activities in their SDs. You are encouraged to attend these meetings.

County Party Organization:

County Executive Committee (CEC)

The County Chair and Precinct Chairs are elected by popular vote at the Primary Election held in March of each even-numbered year. Together, they comprise the County Executive Committee. Democratic primary election voters in the county vote on the County Chair. Voters residing in each of the county's voting precincts elect their respective Precinct Chairs. The County Executive Committee shall elect a Secretary. Officers are either elected or appointed, according to CEC bylaws.

FYI: "Shall" means must.

Precinct Organization:

Precinct Chair and Volunteers

The only elected official in the precinct is the Precinct Chair. The Precinct Chair connects with volunteers and organizes them in the way most fitting to the precinct. The precinct is the smallest unit of our Party; however, it is the most essential unit. It is here, at the grassroots level, that voters are identified and turned out on Election Day.

Clubs and Other Organizations

Democratic Clubs and other organizations work in cooperation with the formal Party organization to bring specific groups of citizens into the Democratic Party. They often serve as a bridge that transitions volunteers into leadership positions with County Executive Committees or with campaigns. They complement and add to the strength of the Party organization.

Documents Governing Our Party

Texas Election Code

The Texas Election Code is the set of laws passed by the Texas State Legislature governing Texas elections, voting systems, candidates, and political parties. When you see the "Section" sign (§), it is referring to the Texas Election Code. Find the Texas Statutes as well as the Texas Constitution here: <https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/?link=EL>

Texas Democratic Party Rules

Per the Texas Election Code, the Texas Democratic Party (TDP) has adopted rules to govern the conduct of precinct, county/senatorial district, and state meetings and conventions. These rules continue in effect unless changed at a state convention. Therefore, the rules in effect at any given time will be dated as of June of the last state convention year. It is important to note that the TDP Rules do not, and cannot, conflict with the Texas Election Code. TDP Rules may be accessed online at <https://txdem.co/Party-Rules>. All Precinct Chairs should have a copy of the TDP Rules.

Texas Democratic Party Platform

The Texas Democratic Party has a statement of basic beliefs that outline our political philosophy. This platform is adopted at each Democratic State Convention. The platform in effect at any given time will be dated as of June of the last state convention year. Additionally, the State Democratic Executive Committee often passes resolutions that speak to current issues. The current TDP Platform may be accessed at <https://www.texasdemocrats.org/our-party/texas-democratic-party-platform/>.

Texas Election Cycle

Year 1 (odd-numbered year)

- January: Presidential Inauguration
- January—May: Legislative Session
- November—December: Candidate Filing for Primary Election
- September—December: Precinct Chair Filing for Primary Election

Year 2 (even-numbered year)

- March: Primary Election, Precinct & SD/County Conventions
- June: State Convention
- November: General Election (Gubernatorial)

Year 3 (odd-numbered year)

- January: Gubernatorial Inauguration
- January—May: Legislative Session
- November—December: Candidate Filing for Primary Election
- September—December: Precinct Chair Filing for Primary Election

Year 4 (even-numbered year)

- March: Primary Election, Precinct & SD/County Conventions
- June: State Convention
- July: National Convention
- November: General Election (Presidential)

Democratic Conventions

Participants in Party conventions set rules, elect leaders and delegates, write resolutions, and much more. There are different kinds of Democratic conventions. Precinct chairs are expected and encouraged to take an active role in conventions.

County Conventions

County Conventions are held the third Saturday after the Primary Election. Precinct Chairs are encouraged to participate in their County Convention and to volunteer to serve on one of the temporary convention committees. Pre-register for your county convention! The time and place for the County Conventions are set by the County Executive Committee (CEC) and to be posted on the TDP website calendar and local Party websites where available by January 15th of the voting year.

Rather than holding separate precinct conventions, Democrats caucus (hold meetings) with their precincts during the county convention to elect their delegates to the state convention. The ratio is 1 delegate for each 300 votes in the county for the Party's candidate for Governor in the last General Election. Each county shall elect at least two delegates. In presidential years, delegates are elected proportionately to the number of supporters for a presidential candidate or uncommitted status.

The Precinct Chair is responsible for all the documentation before the call to order and election of the Precinct Convention officers. When the precincts are grouped for the convention, the Precinct Chair of the largest precinct by population has this responsibility. Those duties are described in the TDP Rules.

The purpose of the county convention is to elect delegates and alternates to the state convention and propose resolutions for the state convention to consider. A county convention is held when the county is completely within one senatorial district. The County Chair is the chair of the County Convention unless the County Chair is absent or declines the position. In that situation, the delegates would elect from among themselves a chair by

majority vote. The County Convention Chair will submit delegates to the State Convention and all resolutions to the State Chair.

State Convention

As a grassroots leader, a Precinct Chair should try to get elected as a delegate to the State Convention at their County Convention. If you are interested in serving on a temporary convention committee, contact your State Democratic Executive Committee (SDEC) member.

The Democratic State Convention is held in June of even-numbered years, following a Primary Election. The date and place for the state convention is selected by the State Democratic Executive Committee (SDEC) three years in advance. The State Convention is composed of delegates, members of the Democratic National Committee (DNC), SDEC, County Chairs, and former State Chairs. Major decisions having to do with the Democratic leadership and running of the Party are made just before and during the Convention. There are special committees and your involvement is encouraged.

The purpose of the state convention is to formally choose the State Democratic Executive Committee, elect a State Chair and Vice-Chair, adopt the Texas Democratic Party Rules, adopt the State Party platform, and officially certify the Party's candidates to be listed on the general election ballot. In presidential election years, the state convention also elects two people of different genders to serve on the Democratic National Committee, elects delegates and alternates to the national convention, and elects representatives to the Electoral College.

The Democratic State Convention bustles with excitement! It is an opportunity to see and hear from Democratic leaders around the state and country and from all walks of life. As a delegate, it is an opportunity to shape democracy.

National Convention

The Democratic National Convention is held in presidential election years. The specific date, time and location are set by the Democratic National

Committee. The purpose of the Democratic National Convention is to nominate candidates for President and Vice President of the United States, adopt the National Party platform, and unify the Party. Pledged delegates from all fifty U.S. states and from American dependencies and territories, and superdelegates (unpledged delegates representing the Democratic establishment) are voting participants. It's possible for a Precinct Chair who has become a delegate to the state convention to become a delegate to the national convention.

How to Organize Your Precinct

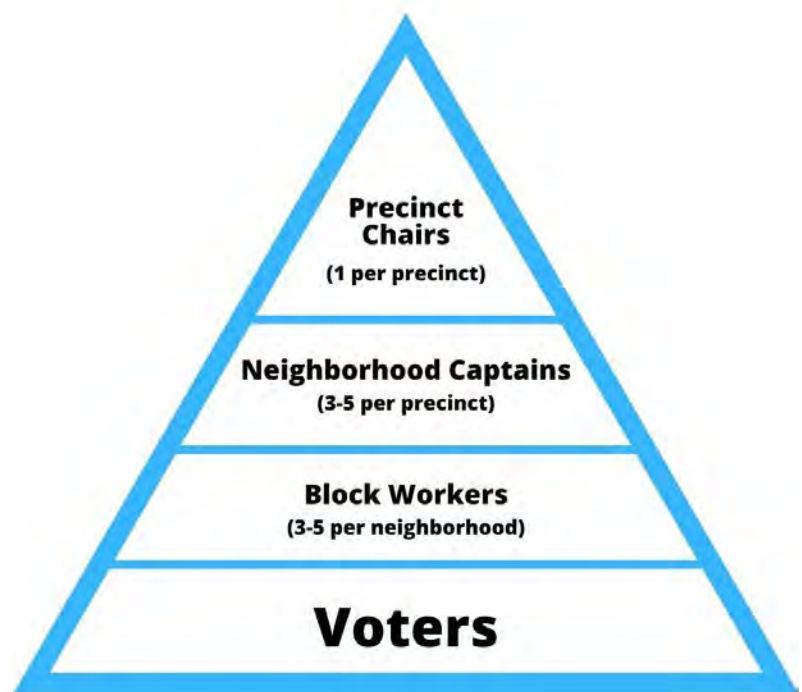
Many elections have been won or lost by just one vote per precinct. That is how important your work is as Precinct Chair!

Fact: Most elections are won with effective local (precinct) work. In order for your work to be most effective, you must have a strong precinct team to reach all your voters. You will benefit from having several volunteers or Captains to help you. The goals of your Captains are the same as yours: identifying voters, registering voters, informing voters, and getting Democrats to the polls. Your Captains learn a lot from talking to voters. This information is reported to the Precinct Chair, so you can maintain data for your precinct. Don't be info stingy; share what you and your Captains learn with your team and other Precinct Chairs. Also, visiting neighboring CEC and Democratic Club meetings is a great way to network.

Eat the elephant one bite at a time.

At some point, you may feel overwhelmed. If you make it a habit to do one action each day, no matter how small, you'll know you've done your part!

Here is a **Precinct Organization Chart**. This works for many precincts, but you know your precinct best. Make adjustments according to your precinct's geography, needs, and the availability/needs of volunteers. Some volunteers will love blockwalking or calling voters; others won't. That's okay. Everyone can do something.



Precinct Chair

You are the central manager and the main go-to person for your precinct.

Precinct Captains (3–5 per Precinct)

Break your precinct down into major subdivisions, neighborhoods, or areas. Choose your most capable volunteers to serve as Captains who will manage each of these divisions. Captains report directly to the Precinct Chair.

Block Workers (3–5 per subdivision or neighborhood)

Break your subdivisions and neighborhoods down into blocks. Assign (or have your Captains assign) Block Workers to one or a few blocks each. Block Workers report directly to their Captain.

Voters

Voters are the target of each member of the precinct organization. Reach out to voters and get to know them. Make sure they are currently registered to vote. Let them know about events, candidates, and issues; make sure they have a plan to vote; get them to the polls! Encourage them to volunteer.

Recruiting Volunteers

Politics begins at the kitchen table where most of us spend a lot of time. Begin talking to your family, friends, and close neighbors. Then, talk to people in your church, community, clubs, and gym. Talk to retirees and students. Some high school and college Government/Political Science teachers allow nonpartisan guest speakers. Use social media to let people know that they can volunteer to work with you. There are a lot of people who want to be involved, but they don't know how to get started or they are waiting for the Party to ask them.

"No one asked me to"

One out of four people say they don't volunteer because no one asked them to; so let's ask!

Stanford Center on Longevity

That's your job; to ask them to help, to make them feel welcome and important, encourage them, and to teach them how to do their job. Communicate regularly with your volunteers.

As Precinct Chair, keep track of who you can count on to show up for events and blockwalks, who likes making phone calls, distributing yard signs, or contributing money.

Volunteer Confirmation Calls

Before each volunteer shift or event, call your volunteers who RSVP'd and confirm their attendance. Confirmation calls are important because they will remind volunteers that they signed up for an event, the volunteers are verbally committing to attend (which makes them much more likely to show up), and it's a chance to update them on any recent changes about the event and ask them to bring essential items.

3 tips for confirming your volunteers:

1. Be enthusiastic! Volunteers – especially first time volunteers – may be nervous about voter contact work. Be friendly and reiterate the importance of this work.
2. Make a hard ask. Use clear language that implies they definitely are coming instead of giving them an opportunity to either show up or

back out last minute.

Examples of a hard ask:

- a. "Please bring a pen and a highlighter when you come."
 - b. "I will see you at [time, date, location]!"
 - c. If they say they cannot attend this event after all: "That's okay. We have shifts every Tuesday at 5:30pm and every Saturday at 9:30am! Which one would you like to reschedule for?"
3. Say the date, time, and location at least twice – once at the beginning of the call and once at the end. Remind them of anything they need to bring (laptop and charger, phone charger, pen, etc.)

Here is a sample volunteer confirmation call:

Hello! This is _____ with our local Democratic Party. Is this _____? I'm calling to remind you of some important details about the _____ today. We will be meeting at [location and time] and we want to get started right on time, so please make sure to arrive about 15 minutes early. Don't forget to bring _____!

If attending: Great, see you at [location and time]!

If they will not be attending: That's okay! We have an upcoming shift on _____ at _____ and another shift on _____ at _____. Which one would you like to reschedule for?

Thanks!

Canvassing Voters

Canvassing is the process of identifying voters and recording that information. Each time you meet someone in your area, take notes about their political affiliation and interests. You can also organize blockwalks, phone banks, or texting initiatives in your precinct to gather this information. Use the Voter Activation Network (VAN) to record the information into the database or use a canvass sheet to keep temporary notes until you can enter the information into the VAN.

All the information you have canvassed is incredibly valuable to Democratic candidates and campaigns in your county and in the state.

Here is a sample canvassing script. It can be used any time precinct workers are out meeting people:

"Hello, my name is _____. We're taking a survey in our neighborhood/area. May I ask you a question or two? Do you plan to vote for (Democratic Candidate) for Governor?

- If the person answers "no", thank them politely and leave.
- If the answer is "yes", ask if they are registered to vote. If not, give them a voter registration card.
- If you are a volunteer Deputy Voter Registrar (VDR), collect the voter registration card before you leave. **DO NOT MENTION REGISTRATION** to a person who is not interested in supporting Democratic candidates.
- Complete the information for your canvass.
- When finished, thank them and go to the next residence. Don't take more than 5 minutes at any residence.
- Keep going back until you have canvassed every family in your area.

Sample Canvass Sheet (may be customized for your needs)

Date canvass completed: _____ Precinct _____
 Area covered in precinct: _____ (subdivision or neighborhood)
 Volunteer's Name: _____
 Captain's name: _____
 Address: _____
 Phone: _____ Email: _____

ADDRESS	HOUSEHOLD	RESIDENT'S FIRST NAME	R	D	I	U	REG?	VOL?	YARD SIGN	BUMPER STICKER	Comments
4100 First St	Williams	Richard	x				Y				lawyer
4100 First St	Williams	Amy		x			Y	Walk	x	x	disabled; member of Mom's Demand Action
4100 First St	Williams	Denver		x			Y	Walk, Calls		x	college Dem; LGBTQ+
4102 First St	Jackson	David				x	N		x		felony conviction, off paper; completed reg card
4300 Main St	O'Brian	Cassie		x			Y	Calls	x	x	veteran; LGBTQ+

R = Republican D = Democrat I = Independent U = Undecided (or "swing")
 Reg? = Are they registered to vote? Vol? = Are they willing to volunteer?
 Yard Sign = They asked for a yard sign Bumper Sticker = They asked for a bumper sticker

Keep in touch with "undecided" voters who you might be able to persuade to vote Democrat.

Recordkeeping

Each Precinct Chair is responsible for maintaining an up-to-date permanent record of information on voters in the precinct. The best way is by using the Texas Voter Activation Network (VAN).

Voter Activation Network (VAN)

The Texas Democratic Party maintains an online voter file, the Texas Voter Activation Network (VAN), to empower campaigns and activists with the tools they need for successful Democratic campaigns and initiatives. The VAN is an online database that allows us to organize information about voters and volunteers to ensure we're targeting the right voters and turning them out to vote. While it is an excellent resource to get information about voters, it is equally important to enter the data you gather while canvassing and phone banking into the VAN to keep our database up-to-date.

Every Precinct Chair is given a VAN account. To get access to your VAN account, contact your County Chair, campaign administrator, or the Texas Democratic Party. You can find more information and resources at www.texasdemocrats.org/action/roadmap-to-van-resources/

The Texas Democratic Party offers online and in person trainings on VAN. Please visit txdem.co/training for more information.

What's great about VAN? You can easily look up people and see how often they vote. You can easily access a spreadsheet with the names, addresses, phone numbers, and voting information about every voter in your precinct!

Get-Out-The-Vote (GOTV)

GOTV efforts go on all year. It's an important community service to register voters at local celebrations and events. You and your Captains are out in the community talking to friends, family, and groups all the time about Democratic values, issues, and candidates. A GOTV "effort" can be as simple as designating a day each month that you and your Captains wear t-shirts with voting themes or manning a table outside of a Democratic-friendly business.

Encourage every Democrat to vote early.

There's always a big GOTV push right before and during the Early Voting period and especially during the last hours before and on Election Day. The three most common GOTV efforts are blockwalking, phone banking, and texting. Urgency needs to be communicated to voters during the Early Voting period and last hours before and on Election Day. During the Early Voting period, voters usually have one to two weeks to get to any of the nearby polling locations. During the last hours before and on Election Day, time and polling locations are severely limited. Be sure to include this information in relevant scripts when blockwalking, phone banking, or texting.

Blockwalking

Blockwalking is the single most effective way to boost voter turnout. Blockwalking is door-to-door outreach. Blockwalking builds relationships with voters and, ultimately, more support for your campaign.

Blockwalking takes time, but it is highly rewarding. Voters appreciate that someone from the Party cares enough to come to their homes to hear what they think. Voters appreciate the face-to-face contact and the opportunity to ask questions.

Organizing a Blockwalk

1. Train your volunteers. Bring them together as a group and define the purpose of the blockwalk, give them a script, map, and VAN links as needed. Let them know how many doors the group is expected to knock. Explain that each voter needs to verbalize their voting plan (this is a highly effective strategy for GOTV). Discuss the importance of positive, upbeat interactions with voters. **Never leave literature in mailboxes – it's illegal!** If someone isn't home, stick the literature in their door. Important: If there is a No Soliciting sign, you can knock on that voter's door. Political canvassing is not soliciting, it's government work. Stress safety. Review basic information about the Democratic Party, candidates,

and the upcoming election. Then, practice/role play the script. Have fun! Take photos and share them with the Party on social media!

2. Arrange one central location and a time for everyone to meet before and after the walk. Shifts are usually two hours. Appoint leaders (Captains or other experienced blockwalkers) to lead each group. Give each leader a packet that includes:
 - Clipboard with pen
 - List of targeted Democratic voter addresses
 - Canvass sheets to record new information about the voters
 - Literature. Ex: Democratic candidate information, information about upcoming local Democratic events, early voting and Election Day polling locations and times, mail-in voter registration forms, or other important information to leave with voters or on their door.
3. Have drivers available to take each group to their walk locations. It's fun to provide water, coffee and/or snacks after the walk.

Sample blockwalk script:

Hello, Mr./Ms. _____. My name is _____, and I am a volunteer for (candidate's name or Party). I'm out reminding voters about the upcoming election. Are you registered to vote? (If they are not registered to vote, get them registered on the spot! If they are unsure, look them up.)

Do you have a plan to vote? (Make sure they know the election dates, times, and polling locations. Make sure they have a ride to the polls.)

Show them the election information on the literature you have with you. Then hand the election literature to them with an upbeat salutation, such as "I'll see you at the polls!"

If they need a ride to the polls, note their name and phone number and communicate this to the local Party or local campaigns.

For candidate blockwalks, know why you support that candidate. Be ready to answer basic questions about the candidate and the upcoming election.

Important: Before the blockwalk, call your volunteers and confirm their attendance.

After the blockwalk

1. Debrief with your volunteers
 - a. How did it go? Try to focus on the positives but record any legitimate concerns and complaints too.
 - b. How many doors did you knock? How many vote plans and pledges did you secure? How many volunteers did you recruit?
2. Make sure blockwalkers return all of the stuff they borrowed.
3. **Reshift everyone!** Get them signed up for upcoming events before they leave for the day.
4. Call volunteers who RSVP'd for the blockwalk but did not show up and sign them up for the next blockwalk.
5. Send any sign-in sheets, canvass sheets, volunteer reports, and other collected data to the County Chair.
6. Volunteer reports should include:
 - a. Number of volunteers that showed up and walked
 - b. Total number of doors knocked, vote plans and pledges secured
 - c. Total number of volunteers recruited (if any) during the shift
 - d. Number of volunteers reshifted
 - e. Any complaints, concerns, issues, etc.

Phone Banking

An informed, cheerful volunteer talking with fellow voters over the phone is an effective way to reach many voters in a short amount of time.

Phone banking involves having a group of volunteers scheduled to arrive at a particular place to call voters using a script. The TDP uses an internet-based dialer so volunteers will need access to a computer, WiFi, and a phone. Precinct Chairs: familiarize yourself with the dialer before a phone bank! The TDP offers phone bank trainings - you can find more information

at texasdemocrats.org/dial. Have at least one experienced volunteer present to oversee the activity and be available to answer questions.

What's needed for a phone bank?

- A location with several power outlets, reliable WiFi, and plenty of parking
- A printed sign-in sheet and printed sample scripts
- Access to a computer. It's recommended that volunteers bring their own laptops, if possible.
- Phone chargers for mobile phones

Before the phone bank

1. Recruit volunteers. Make sure they understand that phone banks are usually a 3-hour commitment.
2. Print materials in advance. Put sample scripts next to the sign-in sheet for the volunteers to pick up as they sign in.
3. Make confirmation calls. See the "Recruiting Volunteers" section for more information.
4. Do introductions and run a quick training on how to use the dialer. Allow a few minutes before the shift to practice with your volunteers. Run through the script and roleplay. Help them become more comfortable with what they're supposed to say.

NOTE: You can obtain polling locations from your county chair or local elections office. Communicate with the local Party or local campaigns about possibilities for rides to the polls before offering this.

Be prepared to answer basic questions about the candidate(s) or issues you are supporting, or being a Democrat in general. If voters ask questions you cannot answer, direct them to particular campaigns or to the county Party or local elections office.

Below is a sample phone script. Customize this to the election or campaign to which you are referring, and to whether you are calling during Early Voting or during the last hours before the Election ends.

Hello, my name is _____ and I'm calling for _____?

If you reach the voter on your list: Hi _____, my name is _____ and I'm a volunteer with ABC's campaign.

If the voter's name is incorrect: I'm so sorry. We're calling a publicly available list of voters, and there are a lot of incorrect phone numbers. I'd still love to talk to you about the upcoming election.

We're calling Texas voters to talk about this year's AAA race and talk to them about ABC. ABC is running for XXX.

I'm personally supporting ABC because... (Say a couple of sentences about why you support ABC.)

Can ABC count on your support and vote in the (date) election?

After the phone bank

1. Debrief with your volunteers
 - a. What was their favorite conversation? What was the strangest one? How many voting plans were made?
2. Reshift everyone! Get them signed up for upcoming events before they leave for the day.
3. Call people who RSVP'd to the phone bank but did not show up and sign them up for the next phone bank
4. Send any sign-in sheets, volunteer reports, and other collected data to the County Chair.
5. Volunteer reports should include:
 - a. Number of volunteers that showed up and made calls
 - b. Number of volunteers reshifted
 - c. Any complaints, concerns, issues, etc.

Texting

Texting is a way to reach many Democrats quickly. Texting campaigns are powered by volunteers and specific scripts are used. Although volunteers use their own phones or computers most of the time, the texts appear to the recipient as coming from a specific number (not the volunteer's

personal number). The recipient of the text may respond STOP at any time and, by law, texts may not be sent to that number again.

Thank Your Volunteers!

Be generous in your appreciation of volunteers. Thank them individually and as groups. Thank them verbally or in writing and via social media. Invite them to watch parties and election celebrations that campaigns may be putting on, or host one yourself. We value and love our volunteers.

Voting Requirements

Keep this information in mind or on hand when encouraging voter registration.

Qualifications for voting (Texas Election Code §13.001-13.002):

- You must be a citizen of the United States.
- You must be at least 18 years of age on the day of the election.
- You must be a resident of the county.
- You must not be a convicted felon (unless the sentence is complete).
- You must not be declared mentally incapacitated by a court of law.
- You must be registered to vote.

How to Register to Vote (Texas Election Code §13.001-13.002):

- Complete a voter registration application available at any government office and mail or present it in person to your county Voter Registrar's office.
- Complete a voter registration application and give it to a Deputy Voter Registrar to deliver to your county Voter Registrar's office.
- A person may register to vote at any time, but the application must be received by the Voter Registrar at least 30 days before an election in order to vote in that election.
- A person may register to vote at 17 years and 10 months of age, but may not vote until age 18.

Note: The League of Women Voters provides nonpartisan accurate, up-to-date voter registration and election information.

How to Vote Early by Mail (Texas Election Code §84.001-84.002):

- Send a request for a mail-in ballot to your county Early Voting Clerk by mail.
- The application must be in writing and signed by the applicant. It must have the name of the applicant, the address at which the applicant is registered to vote, the address to which the ballot is to be mailed, for which election the application is being made, and the reason for needing to vote by mail (out of town during entire voting period, over age 65, disabled, or sick). Using an official form is not required.
- Upon approval, a ballot will be mailed to you with instructions on how to mail the completed ballot back.

Precinct Chair Necessary Documents

Keep these items at hand through the year:

Texas Democratic Party (TDP) Rules

Precinct Chairs need to know the rules that govern the Texas Democratic Party.

Democratic Party Platform

All good Democrats should know what they believe. The TDP platform link: <https://www.texasdemocrats.org/our-party/party-resources/>

Republican Party Platform

All good Democrats know what they don't believe. The Texas Republican Party platform can be found at www.texasgop.org

Voter Registration Cards and Change of Address Cards

Always be ready to register a Democrat to vote by becoming a volunteer Deputy Voter Registrar (VDR). VDRs take a simple oath from the county Voter Registrar and are then allowed to accept a completed voter

registration application card from a new voter and take it to the Voter Registrar.

Previous General Election Results by Precinct

This can be found on the Secretary of State's website at www.sos.state.tx.us/elections (search "Election Results") or through your local elections office. By keeping track of this data over several election cycles, it can be determined if the precinct is improving for Democrats, declining in strength, or staying the same.

Include these items during the election season:

Canvassing Sheets

Use these to keep notes when you meet new people or walk your neighborhood.

Sample Ballot

Have at hand the races on your ballot. Many people will ask you about candidates and their offices.

Election Dates/Times and Polling Locations list

Voters frequently do not know when and where they can go vote (and it is common for locations to change). Contact your County Chair or local elections office for this list.

Candidate contact list

List each candidate's name and the contact information for their campaign office. People need to know how to find information about candidates and how to donate and volunteer.

Applications for Ballot by Mail

Voting by mail is a good option for many Democrats. To be eligible to vote early by mail in Texas, you must:

- be 65 years or older;
- be sick or disabled;
- be out of the county on election day and during the period for early voting by personal appearance; or

- be confined in jail, but otherwise eligible.

By providing these people with a mail-in application, you will gain a vote that likely would not otherwise be cast. You can get the applications from your local elections office or the Secretary of State website.

Remind voters who are voting by mail to be careful to get the application mailed before the deadline. Also remind them to be careful when filling out their ballot. Some voters forget to sign their ballot envelope. Signatures must match between the endorsement on a ballot envelope and the one on the voter's application.

Resources

Don't wait for the state or county Party to come to you. Contact the Texas Democratic Party, the SDEC, or your County Party with any questions, concerns, or needs.

County Party Staff and Officers

Your County Chair, along with the county headquarters staff, should be your main point of contact and should be the best resource to answer questions about local issues. Your CEC officers are good resources for specific needs, such as obtaining copies of minutes or applications for precinct chair (Secretary), questions about funds (Treasurer), or legal questions (General Counsel).

Your County Elections Office

Your local county elections office can provide you with maps of your precinct and the most recent list of registered voters for your county.

Texas Democratic Party Staff

If you have questions regarding statewide issues, TDP staff is available at 512-478-9800 or you can email them at yellowdog@txdemocrats.org. The TDP can help you hold Campaign, Grassroots/Activist, Communications and VAN trainings in your area.

www.TexasDemocrats.org

The TDP website hosts a wealth of information on Party news and activities, as well as contact information for elected officials and Party leadership. Other resources include TDP Rules, TDP Platform, training resources, and voting resources. Visiting and directing others to our website is a great way to stay informed.

VAN

The Texas Democratic Party maintains an online voter file, the Texas Voter Activation Network (VAN), to empower campaigns and activists with tools they need for successful Democratic campaigns and initiatives. The VAN is an online database that allows us to organize information about voters and volunteers to ensure we're targeting the right voters and turning them out to vote. Every Precinct Chair has access to the VAN. To get your VAN account login, contact your County Chair, campaign administrator, or the Texas Democratic Party. You can find more information and resources at www.texasdemocrats.org/action/roadmap-to-van-resources/

State Democratic Executive Committee (SDEC)

Each state senate district is represented by two people of different genders who oversee the Party organization in that area. They are volunteers who can assist your county Party in many ways with personal, hands-on attention. There are special groups who are represented on the SDEC too. Their contact information is available at <https://www.texasdemocrats.org/our-party/leaders/executive-committee/>

Secretary of State (SOS)

The office of the SOS has many responsibilities. For our purposes, the SOS website is a valuable resource. Every Texas Precinct Chair is listed on the SOS site. Other Election Officials and Officeholders are listed too: <https://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/voter/current.shtml> . Other election information can be found on the SOS site, including voter information and voter registration applications.

More About Your County Executive Committee (CEC)

The Election Code establishes County Executive Committees to run local political parties. The County Executive Committee (CEC) consists of the County Chair and the Precinct Chairs. The CEC may add additional officers (ie. Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer). The Election Code allows only County Chairs and Precinct Chairs to vote on election code business. Officers may or may not be Precinct Chairs.

Each county is different and has its own unique geography, population, culture, and needs. However, successful CECs are careful to follow the Election Code, TDP Rules, and Robert's Rules of Order. Some adopt and follow written bylaws to govern their organization and procedures. A committee system is an effective way to organize the county Party duties and activities. Committees that fill vacancies for Precinct Chairs, recruit and assist candidates, and provide funding for Party operations can be highly beneficial.

Responsibilities of a committee should be clearly defined (often as part of the bylaws) and accountability should be maintained. Committees do the background research and present flesh-out plans to the CEC for approval. Generally, each committee meets at least once between meetings of the CEC. The chair of each committee presents the report of the activities of his or her committee to the CEC. This system is customary and results in short and productive meetings of the CEC.

The County Executive Committee is required to meet at least quarterly. Meetings should include a report from the County Chair; reports from committee chairs; brief reports from representatives of Democratic clubs; remarks by any Democratic officials or candidates in attendance; adoption of any action or appointments as required by the bylaws; and any new business items.

Relationships are important. The CEC should incorporate social interaction that is both enjoyable and constructive. Typically, social activities precede CEC meetings. The goal is to incorporate relationship-building that allows informal discussion of business and the establishment of good working relationships among Party volunteers.

Statutory Requirements of the CEC

CEC members are to spend most of their time building relationships, promoting the Democratic Party, and working to elect Democratic candidates to office. However, the Election Code delineates specific other responsibilities.

Statutory duties of the County Executive Committee include

- collecting filing fees (Required by Texas Election Code §172.021 and 172.022)
- appointing watchers (Required by Texas Election Code §33.03)
- determining the order of names on the ballot (Required by Texas Election Code §172.082 and §172.084)
- canvassing primary results (Required by Texas Election Code §172.116)
- setting and publicizing times and places for Precinct and County and Senatorial District and State Conventions (Required by Election Code §174.022 and §174.063)

Note: Additional required responsibilities are outlined in the Texas Election Code in Chapters 171, 172, 173, and 174 as well as Sections 31.032, 32.006, 32.034, 32.093, 32.111, 34.007, 42.009, 43.003, 51.002, 51.003, 51.035, 52.002, 123.001, 123.033, 124.065, 125.031, 143.033, and 145.036.

A County Chair or Precinct Chair who has been elected by the voters or has been appointed to fill a vacancy must be posted to the website of the Secretary of State (SOS). The County Chair, CEC Secretary, or their designee shall add any Chair who is appointed and remove any Chair who resigns, dies or is removed from office during the term of their office. The list as posted on the Texas SOS website shall be the official members of the CEC for all purposes outlined under the TDP Rules and Texas statutory requirements.

Overseeing Primary Election

The CEC oversees conduct of the primary election and primary runoff election (§172.111(b)). It's appropriate to hire a Primary Elections Administrator and staff to be paid with state government funds (see Texas Administrative Rules published by Secretary of State (SOS)). The CEC is also to approve Primary Election Judges (§32.006).

Conducting Conventions

Every two years, the CEC sets the time and location for their county conventions (§174.022 & §174.063).

Filling Vacancies on the County Executive Committee

Any time there is a vacancy in the office of County Chair or Precinct Chair, it is the responsibility of the CEC to appoint someone to fill the vacancy. Appointment is by majority vote of Executive Committee members attending a properly called meeting at which a quorum is present; 25% of the membership constitutes a quorum.

The Secretary calls the meeting to fill a County Chair vacancy. The person appointed serves until the end of the executive committee's term. (§171.024 & §171.025).

When a Nominee Withdraws from the Ballot

Sometimes, after the Primary Election, a nominee of the Democratic Party withdraws from the ballot. Depending on the office and circumstances, it may be the duty of the CEC to appoint a replacement nominee. Members eligible to make the replacement nomination are determined by the type of district affected. Refer to the TDP Rules and the Texas Election Code.

When an Incumbent Leaves an Unexpired Term

Sometimes, after the Primary Election, an incumbent officeholder, whose office is not to be on the ballot that year, leaves office. Depending on the office and circumstances, it may be the duty of the CEC to appoint a Democratic nominee to run in the November General Election. Refer to the TDP Rules and the Texas Election Code.

Precinct Executive Committee For the Purpose of Filling a Commissioner or Justice or Constable Precinct Candidate Vacancy

At a meeting called by the County Chair to fill a Commissioner Precinct or Justice Precinct vacancy, the Precinct Chairs in each Commissioner precinct and each Justice precinct shall select one of their number to serve as Chair of a Precinct Executive Committee for each respective Commissioner precinct and Justice precinct. The Precinct Chairs of the election precincts within the Commissioner precinct or Justice precinct shall constitute the Precinct Executive Committee. However, if any such precinct contains fewer than three county election precincts, the CEC shall be the Precinct Executive Committee and the County Chair shall serve as Chair of the Committee. (Required by Texas Election Code §§ 171.071, 171.072, and 171.073)

FYI: Plurality is when the candidates receive less than 50% of the majority vote, yet the candidate who receives the most votes wins. Majority is when the candidate receives more than 50% of the vote.

*Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time.
We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek,
Barack Obama*



*Thank you again for being
a precinct chair.*