

LOCAL CHAIRS' HANDBOOK



Democratic Party of Virginia
2016



Local Committee Chairs Handbook

*Paid for by the Democratic Party of Virginia
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This information is not intended as legal advice nor is it intended to be a comprehensive summary of your legal obligations. You should seek specific legal advice before acting on any matter discussed herein.

A Letter from the Chairwoman of the Democratic Party of Virginia

Dear Local Party Chair:

It gives me great pleasure to present this DPVA Local Committee Chairs Handbook. Being a Democratic Local Party Chair, especially for the first time, can be a daunting task. But you will also find that leading your Local Democratic Committee is one of the most exciting and rewarding ways to advance the Democratic cause.

Our hope is that this handbook will help you navigate all the different roles and duties of the local chair and local Democratic committee, so that you can focus on the crucial work of the local chair—creating awareness of Democratic values, raising money, recruiting volunteers and candidates, and providing support to *all* of our elected officials.

This handbook is designed to help you do your job better. It covers everything from setting up your Local Party Committee to raising money to organizing winning campaigns. It is drawn from the knowledge and experience of numerous Local Party Officers and Democratic Party of Virginia Staff and Officers, all of whom have faced the very same challenges you face when running your Local Committee.

It's important to remember that you are not alone. The Democratic Party of Virginia is a clearinghouse of information and training tools for Local Chairs and officers, which it provides at its meetings, via its secure website (<http://www.vademocrats.org>), and by email.

In addition to providing information and staff support to help with the day-to-day operations of Local Party Committees, the DPVA can put you in touch with other Local Party Committees that may be able to help you with your particular question or problem. You should always feel free to call the DPVA with any questions or concerns.

Virginia is a purple state. It is vital that we turn out our Democratic voters. Your hard work expanding the Democratic network and supporting our Democratic candidates is what turns our Commonwealth blue, so thank you for all that you do.

Sincerely,



Susan R. Swecker

Chairwoman, Democratic Party of Virginia

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Introduction



Introduction

Our local committees are the backbone of the Democratic Party of Virginia.

The purpose of the Democratic Party at the national, state, and local level is to elect Democratic candidates to public office and to expand the Democratic electorate. Our local committees are the backbone of the Democratic Party of Virginia. Democratic candidates rely on local committees for many tasks, including registering voters, contacting voters, getting out the vote and staffing the polls on Election Day. While these grassroots efforts may seem mundane, they are essential to the election of Democrats and expanding our electorate.

All city and county committees are unique. There are 95 counties and 38 cities in Virginia, totaling 133 individual localities. Each locality in Virginia has different laws, political situations, and traditions. Each committee faces different challenges, and those challenges vary from year to year, even day to day. If there is a single fact that characterizes life as part of the party leadership, it is that you never know for sure what will happen on any given day.

The programs and possibilities of committee operations are as limitless as the imaginations of individual Democrats. There is always one more worthwhile thing the committee could and should be doing. And there is also always some way you could do the things you are already doing just a little bit better.

However, all of us have limited time and resources. That means you must have clear priorities and a plan to keep the city/county committee focused on what must be done. Without such a blueprint, you can spend all your time reacting to daily crises and demands.

This handbook is intended to be not only a day-to-day guide for you as a local committee chair, but also to be a “How To” training manual for you and Party Volunteers. The **Democratic Party of Virginia (DPVA)**, in conjunction with its **Virginia Association of Democratic Chairs (VADC)**, has developed this handbook to help city and county committee leaders understand and fulfill their unique role in the political process. The handbook is designed to help you think through your situation, set priorities, and develop a plan of action for your committee. It is not designed to be read all at once, but rather to be used as a reference throughout your term. You can use the table of contents to find the relevant sections and brief description of the contents is below. In this handbook you will find sections on:

Chapter 1: Your Role—The Role of the Local Party and Local Party Chair

- Electing Democrats at every level and expanding the Democratic electorate.

Chapter 2: Party Structure and Overview – How Does the Local Party and Chair fit in?

- The roles and responsibilities of the Democratic National Committee (DNC) and the Democratic Party of Virginia (DPVA) and their key committees, officers, caucuses, and staff.

Chapter 3: Prioritizing What To Do—Fulfilling Your Committee’s Responsibilities

- What are the legal, State Party Plan, and bylaws responsibilities that must be fulfilled.

Chapter 4: Organizing Your Committee—Creating and Updating Bylaws

- Examples of effective bylaws, ideas for building a better committee, and techniques for holding effective meetings.

Chapter 5: Setting Priorities—Evaluating Your Committee and Developing a Plan

- A step-by-step approach to the planning process for the committee.

Chapter 6: The Nominating Process—Primaries, Caucuses, and Conventions

- An overview of nominating processes, national convention delegate selection, and reorganization.

Chapter 7: Preparing For Elections—Year Round Party Building Activities

- Programs that build the relationships and organization needed to win elections from candidate recruitment to outreach.

Chapter 8: Elections—Getting Out The Vote

- How to make sure we get our Democratic base to the polls and win elections.

Chapter 9: Money—Budgeting, Fundraising, and Reporting

- Everything you need to know for budgeting, fundraising and reporting

Chapter 10: Communications—Moving Your Message While Building Your Committee

- How to use both traditional media and social media to effectively communicate the party message.

As we mentioned before, this handbook does not need to be read all at once. We encourage you to quickly skim the contents so you can familiarize yourself with the resources available. We know that some of the resources in the appendices of each chapter are forms you may want to be able to edit and update, or print separately. Throughout the month of January 2016, DPVA will be reworking and updating its chairs’ resources library on the website and will have the forms in the appendices available in a editable format.

We strongly recommend reading Chapters 1-5 when you first get this handbook, especially if you are a new chair. Those chapters will provide you with a solid outline of what is encompassed by your role as chair and the resources that this handbook will provide. Your role as a local Democratic committee chair can be divided into two parts:

1. What you are *obligated* to do under state and federal law and the party plan;
2. What you *may* do to strengthen the party structure in your locality.

This handbook will describe both what you are obligated to do and what you may do. Most of your obligations as chair are covered in Chapters 3-4, 6-7, and 10. You can read those chapters right away, or reference them as they become relevant. As your committee strengthens and grows, you can use this handbook to aid you in expanding beyond what you are obligated to do, so you can focus on expanding the Democratic electorate in your city or county.

Virginia is a large and varied Commonwealth, we recognize that some things in this handbook may not be appropriate for every committee. We encourage you to pick and choose what is best for your committee as you read this handbook.

Chapter

1

Your Role

The Role of the Local Party and Local Party Chair

In light of the Commonwealth's political trends, it's clear the modern local party (city/county committees) must do much more than run conventions and help elect candidates.

Today's local party must serve as the bridge between grassroots activists and our candidates and officeholders, providing the organizational voice and support it takes to win elections. The role of the party and its leaders has evolved to include helping coordinate our candidates' campaign efforts with the Democratic Party of Virginia – not only during the traditional campaign season, but also through year-round party building and organizational activities and direct candidate services.

The role of the city/county committee includes:

- Local Organization (Precinct/Local/Legislative District Organizing)
- Candidate Recruitment (State, Legislative District, & Local ballots)
- Conventions, Caucuses and Primaries
- Fundraising
- Party building
- Outreach (to traditional Democratic-leaning populations)
- Development and maintenance of Voter I.D. files and targeting data.
- Officer and volunteer training and grassroots education.
- Public relations and external communications.
- Understanding election law, voter rights and campaign finance law that directly affect the election processes in the locality.

I. PURPOSE OF THE LOCAL PARTY AND LOCAL PARTY CHAIR

The purpose of the City/County Democratic Committees is to elect Democratic candidates to public office and to expand the Democratic electorate. Virginia has elections every year, which means our Local Committees and Chairs need to be looking ahead to the next election while getting the candidates in the current cycle elected.

A. Electing Democrats at Every Level of Public Office

At the heart of electing Democrats at every level is having candidates who are ready to run.

Candidate recruitment and development needs to be an ongoing project. The majority of legislative and statewide candidates start out as members of School Boards, City Councils, Board of Supervisors, or Constitutional Officers. We will discuss candidate recruitment in more depth in Chapter 7.

It is the responsibility of the local committee to **determine and organize, if necessary, nomination processes** for party-nominated candidates. *This is a legal requirement of local parties and the local party chair.* The most common nomination processes are primaries, caucuses, and conventions. We will discuss nomination processes more in Chapter 6.

One of the most important resources a committee can offer a campaign is **grassroots volunteers**. The volunteers who work in election after election are often local committee members, and they have the closest relationships and contacts with voters. We will discuss grassroots operations in detail in Chapter 7, but it is worth noting that they are one of the most important components of any election.

In the age of data-driven campaigns, little is more important than **capturing data on each and every voter and volunteer** your committee has contact with. The tool where local committees can track this information is the voter file or Voter Activation Network (VAN). This database can be used to reach out to voters, recruit volunteers, identify potential members, and contact potential donors. However, the VAN is only as good as the data in it. We cannot impress the importance of entering data into VAN. As many campaigns say, if it's not in VAN it never happened! We will talk more about VAN and how your committee can best make use of all it has to offer in Chapters 7 and 10.

Finally, local committees often engage in **voter protection efforts** on election day—placing volunteers inside and outside of the polls to monitor how the election is going—and sending volunteers to the canvass and provisional ballot meeting after election day. Building a voter protection program will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 9.

B. Expanding the Democratic Electorate

Developing effective **outreach programs** is one of the most challenging aspects of a local committee chair's job. People who are involved simply because they believe in the Democratic Party are already filling the committees, volunteering with campaigns, and attending events. Your job in grassroots party building is to convince others that the party is relevant to their issues and their involvement matters. Grassroots party building requires enormous amounts of time and energy; the ability to project long-term needs and identify programs to meet those needs; and the stamina to reach out to those who must be given a reason to get involved.

As part of our outreach efforts, the Democratic Party engages in significant **voter expansion** work.

Local committees frequently engage in **voter registration** drives at area events, popular locations, and high schools, as well as door to door in areas with a high concentration of transient residents. Another important component of voter expansion is outreach to individuals who might need their **voting rights restored** due to a felony conviction. Voter expansion is discussed in more detail in Chapter 9.

In addition to voter expansion efforts, local committees can improve voter turnout through **voter education efforts**—making sure voters know the requirements they have to meet in order to vote and providing them with resources to answer any questions. We will also talk more about how to engage in voter education in Chapter 9.

II. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DPVA AND THE LOCAL PARTY

While elections every year mean that you will have a lot happening in your committee all the time, the DPVA is here to help. We have staff and resources at your disposal and you should feel free to reach out to us when you have questions or need assistance. There is a list of current staff, their contact information, and the topics they can help you with in the Appendix at the end of this handbook.

As with any relationship, there will be some give and take. The DPVA will have certain expectations from local chairs, and there are certain things you should be able to expect from us. In order to ensure that we all start out on the same page, expectations are laid out below:

What Local Chairs can expect from DPVA:

- Training materials and resources to make each local committee across the Commonwealth a success
- Assistance with technological resources like social media and VAN
- Election support through a voter hotline and voter information website
- Providing your local candidates with a menu of resources as they run for office

What DPVA expects from Local Committees:

- Respond to DPVA emails—either the chair should do so or a dedicated DPVA liaison within your committee
- Send us updated lists of party officers and individuals who manage your social media
- Communicate any changes in contact people to DPVA
- Return requested forms, data, and dues on time
- Inform us about upcoming events
- Work with DPVA on candidate recruitment

The DPVA and Local Democratic Committees will work together to pursue the two main purposes of the Democratic Party: elect Democratic candidates to public office and to expand the Democratic electorate.

III. HOW TO BE AN EFFECTIVE PARTY LEADER

To elect Democrats in today's political environment, local Party Organizations should provide essential election-related services to candidates in addition to maintaining the basic party organization, developing issues platforms, and performing other more traditional party functions.

Continuity of party organization leadership for more than one election cycle is of enormous benefit. Two guidelines can help keep you on track throughout your tenure with the committee:

1. Recognize Your Obligations

There are certain things you are obligated to do to fulfill the duties of your office. Do them well and make sure someone pays attention to the little things that keep the organization running smoothly. Follow the guidelines in your committee Bylaws and DPVA *Party Plan* as well as the State Board of Elections and Federal Election Commission regulations and laws. Pay attention so that disputes over obligations don't limit your opportunities. Your obligations are covered in detail in Chapters 3, 4 and 9.

2. Turn Challenges into Opportunities

There are so many things you are expected to do, "need" to do, and can do — if the resources and commitment are present. You will want to do more than merely meet the basic requirements of your job. But you can't do everything. Faced with a host of challenges and expectations, you must set priorities and realistic goals to achieve during your leadership of the committee.

Chapter

2

PARTY STRUCTURE AND OVERVIEW

How Does the Local Party and Chair Fit In?

Every local committee is part of a much larger, nationwide structure: the Democratic Party of the United States is governed by the Democratic National Committee. Each State Democratic Party falls under the purview of the National Party. The Democratic Party of Virginia is governed by the Party Plan. In addition to local committees, the Plan provides for our Steering and Central Committees, including our state party officers, our Congressional District Committees, and other party organizations. The staff of the Democratic Party of Virginia provide support to all of these committees and organizations. The following sections provide a description of how each of these entities works.

I. THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE (DNC)

The Democratic National Committee (DNC) is the governing body of the national Democratic Party. Members of the DNC are elected by each state. Virginia Democrats elect four members, two men and two women, at the State Convention in each Presidential year who serve four-year terms. These elected DNC members are also called “National Committeemen” and “National Committeewomen.” In addition, the the DNC Chair appoints 75 members of the DNC; those living in Virginia will be counted with the DPVA.

The DNC meets twice a year and is responsible for overseeing the nomination of national candidates, issuing calls to National Conventions, establishing rules, and ensuring that each state complies with the rules.

The DNC is governed by its National Charter and Rules. The staff of the DNC provides support to the DNC itself as well as to the state party organizations. To learn more about the DNC, visit www.democrats.org

II. THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF VIRGINIA (DPVA)

The Democratic Party of Virginia is one of fifty-six state parties (including territories). Every resident of the Commonwealth of Virginia who believes in the principles of the Democratic Party of Virginia is considered a member of the Democratic Party of Virginia.

i. DPVA Party Plan

Each state party has a set of state bylaws. Here in Virginia, we call our bylaws “The Party Plan.” The Democratic Party of Virginia Party Plan is the governing document of the Democratic Party of Virginia. It contains information on the structure and role of the state party. It also contains information concerning nominating procedures for all offices and the conduct of caucuses and conventions. Finally, it contains information on various procedures such as proxy voting, binding delegates, what constitutes a quorum, notice requirements, etc. **Refer often to the Party Plan.**

ii. Central Committee

The governing body of the DPVA is the State Central Committee. The members of the Central Committee are spelled out in the Party Plan, including state officers, DNC representatives, Congressional District Representatives (20 from each of the 11 Congressional District Committees), certain Elected Officials (members of Congress; the Democratic Governor, Lieutenant Governor and Attorney General; the President Pro Tempore of the State Senate and the Speaker of the House of Delegates, provided they are Democrats; and, the chairs of the Democratic caucuses of the Senate and the House.

Within the Central Committee are different caucuses and groups, including the Virginia Young Democrats (VAYD), Virginia Democratic Women’s Caucus, Democratic Latino Organization of Virginia (DLOV). These are just a few examples – you can refer to the full list with more details later on in this section.

The Central Committee meets at least four times a year, roughly on a quarterly basis, and is responsible for overseeing the nomination of statewide candidates (including determining the method of nomination – either primary or convention), issuing calls to State Conventions, establishing rules and amending the Party Plan, and ensuring that each district and local committee complies with the rules and the Party Plan.

iii. Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is the ‘Executive Committee/Board’ of the Democratic Party of Virginia and is responsible for the operation of the state party between meetings of the Central Committee. In general, the relationship between the State Steering and Central Committees is much like the relationship between a local committee’s Executive Board and the local committee. Steering Committee handles all party matters that arise between meetings of the Central Committee.

The officers of the Central Committee are the officers of the Steering Committee. All members of the Steering Committee are members of the Central Committee and members of their respective congressional district committees. All 11 Congressional District Committee Chairs are on the Steering Committee. A list of Steering Committee Members and their contact information is in the resource section at the end of this handbook.

iv. State Party Officers

State Party Officers are officers of both the Central Committee and Steering Committee. A complete list of party officers is available at the end of this chapter, but the duties of some of those officers are described in detail below:

Chair of the Democratic Party: Also known as the Chair of the Central Committee. The Chair may appoint and dismiss any and all personnel of the staff of the Central Committee, including Sergeant-at-arms; Parliamentarian; and other deputies, assistants, committees, counsel, and staff as are needed to manage the operations for the Democratic Party of Virginia, subject to ratification by the Steering Committee. The State chair oversees the work of the vice chairs and other officers; all vice chairs may be assigned duties and projects by the State chair.

Vice-chair for Organization (First vice-chair): The vice-chair for organization is responsible for strengthening county and city Democratic committees, increasing their membership and activities, perfecting their organization, providing necessary training, and acting as a liaison to congressional district and county and city democratic committees regarding statewide coordinated campaign activities. The vice-chair for organization also presides at meetings when the State chair is absent and serves as “acting” State chair in the event of a vacancy in the position of State chair, or in an extended vacancy of the State chair, pending election by the central committee of a new State chair.

Vice-chair for Rules (Second vice-chair): The vice-chair for rules is responsible for preparing the Party Plan and other rules, and drafting amendments to the Plan, delegate selection plans and calls to convention and advising the State chair and other appropriate entities as to their implementation. The vice-chair for rules also serves as the chair of the standing committee on resolutions (or, in conjunction with the State chair, appoint such a chair for the committee).

Vice-chair for Technology and Communications: The vice-chair for technology and communications is responsible for, and assists congressional district, county and city committees with, implementation of technologies for identifying and mobilizing voters, maintaining records, and communications within party organizations and to the public.

Vice-chair for Finance: The vice-chair for finance is responsible for raising those funds necessary for meeting the annual budget needs of the Party, and, in conjunction with the treasurer, works with the finance director to implement a fundraising plan. The vice-chair for finance also works with congressional district, county and city committees to assist in their fundraising efforts.

Vice-chair for Outreach: The vice-chair for outreach serves as chair of the standing outreach committee, as provided in section 4.21 of the Party Plan, and works with the congressional district, county and city committees to develop outreach plans and strategies for their jurisdictions. The vice-chair for outreach is responsible for outreach to the various constituencies of the Democratic Party and serves as liaison with statewide organizations supportive of the Democratic Party. The vice-chair for outreach is also responsible for overseeing the Party’s voter registration activities.

Secretary of Central Committee: The secretary keeps and makes available to members the minutes of the Central Committee and Steering Committee meetings and formally certifies actions and resolutions of the Central Committee.

Treasurer of the Central Committee: The treasurer safely keeps all funds of the committee and keeps a detailed account of all contributions, other receipts and disbursements. The treasurer submits to the members of the Central Committee an oral financial report at each meeting of the Central Committee and an audited report annually. The treasurer shall work with the vice-chair for

finance to prepare the annual budget and to conduct quarterly budget reviews. The treasurer shall be the signatory on Federal Election Commission and State Board of Elections required financial reports.

v. Congressional District Committees

Each of the eleven Congressional Districts in Virginia has a Congressional District Committee. Each District Committee is composed of 20 members nominated by Congressional District Conventions and elected by the State Convention in the gubernatorial year. In addition, members of the Steering Committee and State Party Officers are considered members of their resident congressional district committee.

Once the District Committee has been formed, it elects one Democratic member of the General Assembly and three representatives (usually city and county chairs) are elected as members of the District Committee and therefore, are members of the Central Committee.

vi. City and County Committees

There are 95 counties and 38 cities in Virginia, totaling 133 individual localities. There is a local committee in each one of them – again, this is the backbone of the state party. Some chairs also serve on their Congressional District Committee as one of the 20 elected members, or as one of the 3 local committee chair members selected by the CD committee. Serving as a local chair does not mean you are automatically on the Central Committee.

According to the Party Plan, committees must reorganize by caucus or convention sometime between the 1st of the December in odd-numbered years and the 15th of the following January (The next reorganization will begin December 2017.). At that time, members of the committee are elected. If possible, each precinct should be represented by at least one full voting member of the committee who is a resident of that precinct. Officers are elected at the first meeting following reorganization. City and county committees meet on a regular basis, usually monthly. A list of Local Committee Chairs and their contact information is in the resource section at the end of this handbook.

vii. Other Party Organizations

As mentioned above under ‘Central Committee,’ there are ancillary organizations within the Democratic Party of Virginia.

Virginia Association of Democratic Chairs (VADC)

The Virginia Association of Democratic Chairs (VADC) is made up of all the city and county chairs. The VADC was set up to provide a vehicle for the exchange of information between and among chairs. The organization has formed working groups based on region and size of jurisdiction. In addition, the VADC works with DPVA staff to provide training and support to city and county chairs.

The VADC typically meets during the weekends of Central Committee meetings and reorganizes once every two years after local committee reorganization (so, the beginning of every even-numbered year).

Virginia Young Democrats

Young Democrats (VAYD or YD) clubs involve our youth in the political process. There are chapters at nearly every major college and university in the state, and at many community colleges. We also have active chapters at many of our high schools and community colleges. There are active

clubs involving young professionals. The YD clubs provide an organized way to involve young people between the ages of 13 and 35 in campaigns and in building the Democratic Party. For more information visit: <http://www.vayd.org>.

You should do everything you can to involve the YD clubs in your area in your campaigns and committee operations. You will find that they are an excellent source of volunteers with nearly boundless energy. Be careful, however, not to take advantage of them – involve them in planning and strategy meetings. Local committee chairs should view our YDs as important contributors to our electoral success now as well as the future of our party. Train them well!

Internal Party Caucuses

The DPVA recognizes the need to encourage the growth and active participation of important constituency groups in all levels of party activities. **The Democratic Party of Virginia is growing! Across the Commonwealth, Democrats are networking based on common interests and goals. As our constituency organizations and caucuses are expanding, so too are our caucuses.** Each caucus chair also serves on the Steering Committee.

- **Virginia Democratic Women's Caucus:** The purpose of this organization shall be to unite the women of Virginia in support of the women of the Democratic Party and its candidates, encourage full and equal participation of women in the Party, encourage, educate, and finance Democratic women who aspire to public office, and raise awareness of women's issues in the Commonwealth and the Virginia Democratic Party.
- **Democratic Black Caucus of Virginia:** The Democratic Black Caucus of Virginia (DBCW) is an integral part of the Democratic Party of Virginia and Democratic National Committee. Our mission is to educate members of our communities about the value of the Democratic Party and to educate the members and leadership of the Democratic Party of Virginia about the needs of our community. The DBCW consists of members from all corners of the Commonwealth and various economic strata. Our members are committed to advancing Democratic values and electing Democrats from the local grassroots level to the General Assembly, to Congress and to the White House. For more information visit: vadwc.org/.
- **The disAbility Caucus:** The DPVA disAbility Caucus aims to promote the interest of individuals with disabilities in the political process and create awareness of their needs to the community and elected officials. Activities shall include voter registration, education, employment, outreach, recruitment of members of local Democratic committees and endorsement of candidates for political office.
- **Rural Caucus:** The mission of the Rural Caucus is to nurture connections between communities of people who may, or may not yet, vote Democratic in Virginia's non-urban areas, to engage local people to determine the issues and priorities that matter to them, and to ensure sustainable rural life and progressive values throughout all of Virginia. For more information visit: <http://www.ruralvadems.org>.
- **Small Business Caucus:** The VADSBC mission and goal is to organize and document the Virginia Democratic small business base through local Democratic Party networking. Our goal is to create a Commonwealth-wide directory of Democratic friendly small businesses. For more information visit: <http://www.vadsbc.com>.

- **LGBT Democrats of Virginia:** The LGBT Democrats of Virginia present issues and act as an advocate for LGBT persons within the Democratic Party of Virginia. They help elect Democratic candidates by providing a centralized repository of expertise and a clearinghouse for all LGBT campaign activities through working with various Democratic campaigns. For more information visit: <http://lgbtvadem.org/>.
- **Democratic Asian Americans of Virginia** The purpose of this organization is to promote the interest of Asian Americans in support of the Democratic Party and encourage participation of Asian Americans at all levels of the Democratic Party. They do voter registration & education, community outreach, recruitment of members of local Democratic committees, fundraising, and endorsements. For more information visit: <https://www.facebook.com/DemocraticAsianAmericans/>.
- **Latino Democratic Caucus:** The Democratic Latino Organization of Virginia (DLOV) is a political committee that fosters participation of Latinos with the Democratic Party and supports candidates who embrace policies that benefit the Latino community in Virginia. Visita la página de Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Democratic-Latino-Organization-of-Virginia/120968031283079>.
- **Veterans and Military Family Members Caucus:** The Democratic Party of Virginia Veterans and Military Family Members Caucus makes it their mission to inform politicians in office about the needs of veterans, service members, and their families. For more information visit: <https://www.facebook.com/DPVAVMFCaucus/>.
- **Labor Caucus:** The Labor Caucus of the Democratic Party of Virginia is committed to increasing awareness of labor issues and through their actions, support and communications making a positive impact for today's working class.

viii. The State Party Staff

The staff of the DPVA are the employees of the Central Committee. The Executive Director is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the DPVA and answers directly to the State Party Chair. A complete listing of current staff, their contact info, and topics you should reach out to them with questions on is included in at the end of this chapter. The DPVA office is open Monday – Friday from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm (though as many of you know, there is usually someone available beyond 6:00 pm – especially as we approach Election Day).

ADDITIONAL CHAPTER RESOURCES

- The Party Plan
- Chart: Democratic Party Organization Structure
- Chart: Democratic Party of Virginia Organization Structure
- Chart: Democratic Party of Virginia Officer Structure

Party Plan

DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF VIRGINIA PARTY PLAN

March 7, 2015

Revised December 5, 2015

The Honorable Susan Swecker, Chairwoman

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Authorized and paid for by the Democratic Party of Virginia.

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DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF VIRGINIA PARTY PLAN

PREAMBLE

The Democratic Party of Virginia exists to facilitate and encourage the full participation of all Virginians in choosing their elected officials and controlling their political destiny. It is dedicated to the preservation of all the rights enumerated in Article One of the Constitution of Virginia. The Democratic Party of Virginia exercises full equality with Democratic parties in other states in controlling the activities and establishing the principles of the National Democratic Party.

ARTICLE 1. THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF VIRGINIA

Section 1.1 Statement of Principle

The Democratic Party of Virginia endorses the principles contained in the Charter of the Democratic Party of the United States of America, bound always by the United States Constitution and the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Section 1.2 Cooperation with Democratic National Party

The Democratic Party of Virginia pledges full cooperation with all rules and requirements promulgated in connection with any Call to the Democratic National Convention or Democratic Party Conference. This pledge is made both to the substance and to the spirit of the Call.

ARTICLE 2. MEMBERS OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Section 2.1 Membership

Every resident of the Commonwealth of Virginia who believes in the principles of the Democratic Party is hereby declared to be a member of the Democratic Party of Virginia.

Section 2.2 Participation

Every person who participates as a voter in a Democratic primary, convention or caucus must be qualified to vote in the next ensuing general election or special election. No person shall participate in a Democratic primary, convention or caucus who intends to support a candidate opposed to any Democratic nominee in that general or special election.

ARTICLE 3. FULL PARTICIPATION AND REGISTRATION

Section 3.1 Full Participation

The Democratic Party shall not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, age (if of voting age), color, creed, national origin, religion, economic status, sexual orientation, ethnic identity, or disability. Every Democratic committee shall adopt and implement an outreach program to encourage Democrats to participate in all organizations at every level and in all delegate selection processes. Particular concern should be undertaken regarding young people, women, African Americans and other ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities and other constituent groups. Every Democratic committee, as well as every member and officer thereof, shall make efforts to include young people, women, African Americans and other ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities and other constituent groups in all Democratic committees and delegations to

Democratic conventions and other party affairs. Mandatory quotas, however, shall not be imposed at any level of the delegate selection process or in any other party affairs.

Section 3.2 Registration

The Democratic Party of Virginia supports the broadest possible registration of voters without discrimination on the basis of race, sex, age (if of voting age), color, creed, national origin, religion, ethnic identity, sexual orientation, economic status, or disability.

ARTICLE 4. DEMOCRATIC STATE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Section 4.1: Membership

There shall be a Democratic State Central Committee (herein the Central Committee) composed of twenty (20) members from each congressional district. In addition, the following persons shall be voting members of the Central Committee:

- the State chair;
- the vice-chair for organization (first vice-chair);
- the vice chair for rules (second vice-chair);
- the vice-chair for technology and communications;
- the vice-chair for finance;
- the vice-chair for outreach;
- the secretary and the treasurer of the Central Committee;
- the Virginia members of the Democratic National Committee elected by the State Convention, and any other member of the National Committee elected under the national charter and rules who resides in Virginia;
- the Democratic members of the United States Congress from Virginia;
- the Democratic Governor, Lieutenant Governor and Attorney General;
- the President Pro Tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Delegates, provided they are Democrats;
- The Senate and House of Delegates Majority or Minority Leaders, provided they are Democrats;
- the chairs of the Democratic caucuses of the Senate and the House;
- the president, national committeeman and national committeewoman of the Virginia Young Democrats;
- the president and first vice-president of the Virginia Democratic Women's Caucus;
- the chair of the Association of Democratic Chairs;
- the chair of the Association of Democratic Elected Officials;
- the chair of the Virginia Young Democrats College Caucus;
- the chair of the Virginia Young Democrats Teen Caucus;
- the chair of the Virginia Young Democrats County/City Caucus; and
- Representatives from recognized caucuses identified pursuant to Section 4.19 and constituency group organizations as identified pursuant to Section 4.20.

In addition, those members of the General Assembly and those chairs of county and city committees who are elected as provided in Section 6.2 of this Plan will be voting members. All members of the Central Committee shall be members of their respective congressional district committees.

Section 4.2 Election of Central Committee

The twenty (20) members of the Central Committee from each congressional district shall be nominated in congressional district conventions and shall be elected by the State Convention in each gubernatorial election year, each member to serve a term of four (4) years.

Section 4.3 Equal Division

The members of the Central and district committees elected pursuant to Section 4.2 shall be equally divided between men and women. However, a district committee may choose to use the authority provided in Section 6.2 to insure that the equal division requirement of this Section is met.

Section 4.4 Election of State Party Officers

The State Convention held in the year of the gubernatorial election shall elect a State chair, vice-chair for organization, vice-chair for rules, vice-chair for technology and communications, vice-chair for finance, vice-chair for outreach, the secretary and the treasurer, herein the officers of the Central Committee. Each officer shall serve a term of four (4) years.

Section 4.5 Election of National Committee Members

The State Convention held in the year of a presidential election shall elect the members of the Democratic National Committee allocated to Virginia, each member to serve a term of four (4) years.

Section 4.6 Vacancies

The Central Committee shall fill any vacancy in the offices set forth in Section 4.4 and 4.5 above. The State chair, in the event of a vacancy in the position of any officer, may appoint an “acting” officer to serve until the vacancy is filled by the Central Committee or a State Convention. Should any officer be temporarily unable to fulfill his or her duties due to extended illness or absence, the State chair may appoint a “temporary acting” officer to serve until such time (not to exceed 120 days) as the officer is able to resume his or her duties. Should the position of State chair become vacant, or should the State chair have an extended absence, the first vice-chair shall serve as temporary chair pending the election of a new State chair by the Central Committee.

Section 4.7 Central Committee Meetings

The Central Committee shall meet at least four times a year. Under extraordinary circumstances (e.g. weather), meetings may be held by teleconference. However, at least three Central Committee meetings a year must be held in person and assembled Central Committee meetings must occur at least once every six months. In years of a State Convention, the State Convention shall be counted as one of the four meetings of the Central Committee. Meetings may be called as follows:

- a) By the State chair; or
- b) By written call signed by any five (5) Congressional District chairs if the signed call is filed with the secretary of the Central Committee at least fifteen (15) days before the proposed meeting date; or

- c) By written call signed by twenty percent (20%) of the membership of the Central Committee if the signed call is filed fifteen (15) days before the proposed meeting date; or
- d) By a vote of the Central Committee at a properly convened meeting of the Committee.

Section 4.8 Quorum

Thirty five percent (35%) of the membership of the Central Committee shall constitute a quorum.

Section 4.9 Duties of the Central Committee

The Central Committee shall have entire charge and full control of all party matters arising throughout the Commonwealth. All powers that inhere in the Democratic Party of Virginia or in a State Convention shall be vested in the Central Committee at such times as the State Convention is not in session. It shall be the duty of the Central Committee, as well as each officer and member thereof, to perfect the organization of the Democratic Party throughout the Commonwealth and to do all within its power to aid in the victory of the Democratic Party's nominees in all elections.

Section 4.10 Removal from Central Committee

The Central Committee shall remove from office and membership any member who shall miss three (3) consecutive meetings without cause or who shall be guilty of willful neglect of any duty imposed upon such member. Such action shall be taken only on the recommendation of the Steering Committee. Before making a recommendation of removal, the Steering Committee shall provide the member with ten (10) days written notice of the charges and with an opportunity for a hearing before the Steering Committee.

Section 4.11 Chair of the Central Committee

The Chair of the Central Committee, herein "State chair", shall be chief officer of the Central Committee. The State chair may appoint and dismiss any and all personnel of the staff of the Central Committee, including Sergeant-at-arms; Parliamentarian; and other deputies, assistants, committees, counsel, and staff as are needed to manage the operations for the Democratic Party of Virginia, subject to ratification by the Steering Committee. The State chair shall oversee the work of the vice chairs and other officers.

Section 4.12 Vice Chairs of Central Committee

The vice-chair for organization (first vice-chair) shall preside at meetings when the State chair is absent and shall serve as "acting" State chair in the event of a vacancy in the position of State chair, or in an extended vacancy of the State chair, pending election by the central committee of a new State chair. In addition, the vice-chair for organization shall be responsible for strengthening county and city democratic committees, increasing their membership and activities, perfecting their organization, providing necessary training, and acting as a liaison to congressional district and county and city democratic committees regarding statewide coordinated campaign activities.

The vice-chair for rules (second vice-chair) shall preside over meetings in the absence of the State chair and first vice-chair, shall be responsible for preparing the Party Plan and other rules, and shall be responsible for drafting amendments to the Plan, delegate selection plans and calls

to convention and advising the State chair and other appropriate entities as to their implementation. The vice-chair for rules shall also serve as the chair of the standing committee on resolutions (or, in conjunction with the State chair, appoint such a chair for the committee) as provided in Section 4.17.

The vice-chair for technology and communications shall be responsible for, and shall assist congressional district, county and city committees with, implementation of technologies for identifying and mobilizing voters, maintaining records, and communications within party organizations and to the public.

The vice-chair for finance shall be responsible for raising those funds necessary for meeting the annual budget needs of the Party, and, in conjunction with the treasurer, shall work with the finance director to implement a fundraising plan. The vice-chair for finance shall also work with congressional district, county and city committees to assist in their fundraising efforts.

The vice-chair for outreach shall serve as chair of the standing outreach committee, as provided in section 4.21, shall work with the congressional district, county and city committees to develop outreach plans and strategies for their jurisdictions, shall be responsible for outreach to the various constituencies of the Democratic Party and shall serve as liaison with statewide organizations supportive of the Democratic Party. The vice-chair for outreach shall also be responsible for overseeing the Party's voter registration activities.

All vice chairs may be assigned duties and projects by the State chair.

Regular reports of the activities of the vice chairs shall be made to the Steering and Central Committees.

Section 4.13 Secretary of Central Committee

The secretary shall keep and make available to members the minutes of the Central Committee and Steering Committee meetings and shall formally certify actions and resolutions of the Central Committee.

Section 4.14 Treasurer of the Central Committee

The treasurer shall safely keep all funds of the committee and shall keep a detailed account of all contributions, other receipts and disbursements. The treasurer shall submit to the members of the Central Committee an oral financial report at each meeting of the Central Committee and an audited report annually. The treasurer shall work with the vice- chair for finance to prepare the annual budget and to conduct quarterly budget reviews. The Democratic Party of Virginia fiscal year will run concurrent with the calendar year. The budget for the ensuing fiscal year must be approved by the Steering and Central Committees prior to the start of the fiscal year, that is, January 1. The Executive Director shall provide to the Steering Committee a proposed draft budget seven days in advance of consideration by the Steering Committee. The treasurer shall be the signatory on Federal Election Commission and State Board of Elections required financial reports.

Section 4.15 Dues

As a part of the annual budget adopted by the Central Committee, dues shall be collected from each county and city committee. Such assessment of dues shall be made by the treasurer of the Central Committee and based on a formula that uses the number of delegates apportioned to each county and city in the most recent State Democratic Convention. Should a state convention not be held in any year, then the treasurer, using the apportionment formula for the most recent such

convention, but inserting updated voting statistics, shall prepare an apportionment of delegates for each county and city. Such apportionment shall then be used to determine dues for the current calendar year. Notice of dues shall be forwarded to county and city chairs on or before December 15 of each year. The chair of each county and city shall have the responsibility of insuring that dues are paid in a timely manner between January 1 and March 15 following notice from the Central Committee treasurer. Congressional District Committee Chairs shall assist in the collection of such dues.

Section 4.16 Amendments to Party Plan

This Party Plan may be amended by an absolute majority of the Central Committee at any time or may be amended by a majority of the Central Committee members present and voting if notice is given and if the proposed amendment is mailed to the membership at least fifteen (15) days before the vote on the amendment. Proposed party plan amendments shall be clearly so designated in the mailing to the State Central Committee. For informational purposes, proposed party plan amendments shall at the same time be mailed to the chairs of the Democratic county and city committees.

Section 4.17 Standing Committee on Resolutions

The Central Committee shall have a standing committee on resolutions which shall be appointed every four years following the election by the state convention of new Central Committee officers and members. The State chair shall designate the resolutions committee members who shall be elected as outlined herein.

The committee's membership shall be fifteen (15), including its chair who shall be the vice-chair for rules (or the designee of the State chair and the vice-chair for rules) of the Central Committee as a part of the duties set forth in Section 4.12; eleven (11) members with one (1) elected by each congressional district committee; three (3) at-large members nominated by the Central Committee chair, and elected by the Committee, one of whom shall be a county or city chair, and one (1) of whom shall be a Steering Committee member. At-large members shall serve one-year terms.

The resolutions committee shall establish rules and procedures that clearly define its operations, including the regular conduct of any needed meetings or hearings to receive information on any subject or resolution. The committee's chair shall plan and coordinate its work. Any member of the Central Committee may offer a resolution. All resolutions, except those of strictly memorial or commendatory nature, shall be presented to the committee at least thirty (30) days prior to a scheduled meeting of the Central Committee. Resolutions approved for the Central Committee shall be mailed to all its members at least ten (10) days before such scheduled meeting. The Resolutions Committee shall submit its report, including identification of all resolutions considered, for consideration by the Central Committee.

The Resolutions, Central and Steering Committees may approve resolutions by a majority of those members present and voting. Only the Steering Committee may send any resolution to the Central Committee for consideration without prior approval by the Resolutions Committee.

Section 4.18 State Central Committee Elections in the Absence of a State Convention

In gubernatorial election years in which a State Convention will not be held, the provisions of this Section shall supersede any conflicting provisions in the Party Plan pertaining to the reorganization of the Central Committee.

In a gubernatorial election year in which the Democratic Party of Virginia chooses nominees for statewide offices in a primary election, the State Central Committee may decide not to conduct a state convention. Whenever the State Central Committee decides not to conduct such a convention, the twenty (20) members of the State Central Committee representing each congressional district shall be elected in congressional district conventions.

The State Central Committee, at its first meeting in the gubernatorial year, shall adopt a method of allocation for delegates to congressional district conventions, as set forth in Section 15.2 of this Plan.

The Congressional District Committee shall issue a call to its district convention, as specified in Section 15.2 of this Plan. The notice provisions of Article 9 shall apply.

Delegates to a Congressional District Convention may be elected at caucuses held within a jurisdiction that is part of the Congressional District or immediately prior to the Congressional District Convention at the same location as the Congressional District Convention. Each caucus electing delegates to a congressional district convention shall certify the roll of delegates so elected to the Chair of the Congressional District Committee in the manner provided in Section 15.4.

The newly elected congressional district committees shall meet to elect officers and additional members (as provided in Section 6.2) prior to the first meeting of the newly elected State Central Committee.

The newly elected State Central Committee shall meet within sixty (60) days after the primary election to elect the Party officers enumerated in section 4.4 of the Plan.

Section 4.19 Central Committee Caucuses

Members of the Central Committee may form caucuses within the Central Committee. Such caucuses may provide an organizational focus for members of a constituency group who are members of the Central Committee; present issues and act as an advocate for members of the group within the Virginia Democratic Party; provide contacts to members of the public who are not yet active in party affairs; assist in the Democratic Party's commitment to outreach to members of the group and encourage them to participate in party affairs at the local, state and national levels; assist in the Democratic Party's commitment to encourage persons who are members of the group to register to vote and become informed about public issues; assist in the Democratic Party's efforts to energize and mobilize members of the group to vote for and support Democratic candidates; encourage the development of group members who may be candidates for public office; raise money to be used for outreach, party building and election activities; and provide a state contact for the Democratic National Committee and other national and state organizations.

Members of the Central Committee may organize recognized caucuses that shall: (1) be comprised of members of the Central Committee; (2) represent a minimum of three percent of the Central Committee general membership, with members from at least four Congressional Districts; (3) represent an identifiable constituency of the Democratic Party; (4) adopt bylaws that are consistent with the party plan, and that shall include (a) a statement of the purpose of the caucus, (b) membership qualifications that include an affirmative act by the Central Committee member to join the caucus, and (c) procedure for the regular election of officers; and (5) be approved by a majority present and voting at a Central Committee meeting. Notice of such vote shall be mailed to Central Committee members 10 days prior to the meeting.

Caucuses who do not have a representative on the Steering Committee pursuant to Section 5.1 shall have one representative on the Central Committee.

Section 4.20 Constituency Group Organizations

Virginia Democrats may organize constituency group organizations that may be entitled to one representative as a member of the Central Committee. To be a recognized constituency group organization, the organization shall meet the following criteria: (1) the members of the organization must be Democrats (2) the members of the organization must share an inherent and/or immutable traits, not a concern about an issue or a cause; (3) the organization must represent a significant constituency that is not represented or has been historically underrepresented on the Central Committee; (4) the organization must submit its current bylaws, membership list, and officers list to the Democratic Party of Virginia; (5) the organization must maintain an action plan for mobilizing its constituency for elections, which must include evidence of recent past activity in Democratic organizations or campaigns; (6) the organization must provide to the Democratic Party of Virginia a list of current outreach events, organizations, and events within Virginia related to its constituency; and (7) the organization's membership must include residents of at least four Congressional Districts, and at least 15 members who are also members of any local Democratic committee from across the state.

To qualify for representation on the Central Committee, each constituency group organization must be approved by a majority of the Central Committee members present and voting. Notice of such vote shall be mailed to Central Committee members 10 days prior to the meeting. Each constituency group organization must be reviewed every two years to determine if it remains a viable organization. Each constituency group organization must re-apply for recognition by January 31 of each even numbered year, and will be reviewed for approval within six months. The Outreach Committee shall review the constituency group organizations' applications, subject to final review by the Central Committee.

The Virginia Young Democrats, the Association of Democratic Chairs and the Association of Elected Democratic Officials shall submit to the Democratic Party of Virginia their current bylaws, membership list, and officers list, and an action plan by June 31 of each even numbered year.

Section 4.21 Outreach Committee

The Central Committee shall have a standing committee on outreach, which shall be appointed every four years following the election by the state convention of new Central Committee officers and members. The committee's membership shall be comprised of the following:

- Its chair who shall be the vice-chair for outreach;
- eleven members with one elected by each congressional district committee;
- five at-large members nominated by the Central Committee chair, and elected by the Central Committee, one of whom shall be a county or city chair; and
- one member designated by each officially recognized caucus and constituency group organization of the Democratic Party of Virginia.

At-large, caucus and constituency group representative members shall serve one-year terms.

The Outreach Committee's duties including the following: (1) Develop and implement an outreach plan for the Democratic Party. After each Central Committee election, the committee shall review and update the plan after consultation with candidates and local committees. (2) Receive and act on all applications by constituency groups for official recognition by the

Democratic Party, and shall present its recommendation for approval or denial to the Central Committee. (3) Perform any other outreach activities designated by the Committee. The Outreach Committee shall establish rules and procedures that clearly define its operations, including the regular conduct of any needed meetings or hearings to receive information on any subject. The committee's chair shall plan and coordinate its work and seek to insure that any Democratic Party member has opportunity to present information or comments.

ARTICLE 5. STEERING COMMITTEE

Section 5.1 Members of the Steering Committee

There shall be a Steering Committee of the Democratic State Central Committee composed of:

- The State chair;
- Vice chair for organization (first vice-chair);
- Vice chair for rules (second vice-chair);
- Vice-chair for technology and communications ;
- Vice-chair for finance;
- Vice-chair for outreach;
- Secretary;
- Treasurer;
- Immediate past chair of the State Central Committee;
- The Virginia members of the Democratic National Committee elected by the State Convention, and any other member of the National Committee or Executive Committee elected under the National Charter and rules who resides and is a registered voter in Virginia and so requests in writing to the State Party Chair;
- The Congressional District chairs;
- The President of the Virginia Young Democrats;
- The President of the Virginia Democratic Women's Caucus;
- The chair of the Association of Democratic Chairs;
- A representative of the Democratic Black Caucus;
- A representative of the Democratic Latino Organization of Virginia Caucus;
- A representative of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Caucus;
- A representative of the Veterans and Military Families Caucus;
- A representative of the Democratic Labor Caucus of the Central Committee;
- A representative of the DisAbility Caucus; and a
- A representative of the Democratic Asian Americans of Virginia Caucus.

The officers of the Central Committee shall be the officers of the Steering Committee. All members of the Steering Committee shall be members of the Central Committee and members of their respective district committees.

Section 5.2 Duties of Steering Committee

The Steering Committee shall have entire charge and full control of all party matters arising throughout the Commonwealth between meetings of the Central Committee. All powers that inhere in the Central Committee shall be vested in the Steering Committee at such times as the

Central Committee is not in session and its actions shall be final unless overruled by the Central Committee or a Democratic Convention, with the following exceptions:

1. the Steering Committee may not amend the Party Plan,
2. the Steering Committee may not change the assessments upon county or city committees,
3. the Steering Committee may not determine the method of nominating Democratic candidates for any public office, except in cases when the nominated candidate dies, withdraws, refuses candidacy or if the nomination is set aside for any reason,
4. the Steering Committee may pass resolutions by a two-thirds majority of all of its members,
5. when vacancies occur among the elected officers of the State Party, the chair may recommend and the Steering Committee may elect "Acting" officers; the Central Committee shall be convened within 120 days of the occurrence of a vacancy to elect permanent replacements unless a state convention occurs within that period, and
6. the Steering Committee may not fill vacancies to the Democratic National Committee.

Notices of Steering Committee meetings, including specific agenda, shall be mailed to all members of the State Central Committee at least ten (10) days prior to all Steering Committee meetings, except in cases of emergency when the Steering Committee has to be notified by telephone. When a meeting of the Steering Committee is not followed within eight (8) days by a meeting of the Central Committee, the minutes of Steering Committee meeting, including details of all actions taken, but not necessarily of the discussions, shall be mailed to all Central Committee members within thirty (30) days after the Steering Committee meeting.

At each State Central Committee meeting, the actions taken by the Steering Committee since the previous Central Committee meeting shall be reported, questions shall be taken about any such actions, and the chair shall ask if there are any motions to alter or overrule any action taken by the Steering Committee.

Section 5.3 Steering Committee Meetings

Meetings of the Steering Committee may be called as follows:

- a) By the State chair
- b) By any five (5) members of the Steering Committee if the signed call is filed with the secretary of the Steering Committee at least ten (10) days before the proposed meeting date; or
- c) By a vote of the Steering Committee at a properly convened meeting of the Committee.

All meetings shall be open unless the Steering Committee specifically votes otherwise.

A majority of the members of the Steering Committee shall constitute a quorum.

Section 5.4 Designation of Substitutes

If the chair of a district committee cannot attend a meeting of the Steering Committee, he or she may designate another member of the district committee to attend the meeting in his or her place. The district chair shall inform the chair of the Central Committee of the designation. Such designees shall be counted in determining a quorum and shall be a full voting member of the Steering Committee for that meeting.

Section 5.5 Appeals

The Steering Committee shall constitute an appeals committee for appeals provided in this plan from constitutional officer committees, legislative district committees, senatorial district committees and congressional district committees. The decision of the Steering Committee acting as an appeals committee shall be final unless overruled by the Central Committee or a Democratic State Convention. Appeal procedure shall be as provided in Article 11.

Section 5.6 Complaints

The Steering Committee shall receive and investigate complaints relating to alleged discrimination in party affairs on the grounds of race, sex, age, color, creed, national origin, religion, ethnic identity, sexual orientation, economic status, or disability. Any Democrat aggrieved by such alleged discrimination may file a complaint with the secretary of the Steering Committee. Upon filing of a complaint, the State chair shall appoint a subcommittee of the Steering Committee to review the complaint. If the subcommittee determines that there is a reasonable basis for the complaint, it shall immediately begin an investigation of the complaint in accordance with Article 11. The subcommittee shall complete its investigation and file a written report within thirty (30) days of the filing of the complaint. Within (30) days of receiving the subcommittee report, the Steering Committee shall act on the complaint and provide such remedies, as it deems appropriate.

Section 5.7 Executive Committee

The Central Committee or the Steering Committee may by resolution or bylaw establish an Executive Committee to be composed of the chair and such other persons as the resolution or bylaw may direct, in any event, the Executive Committee to be composed of not more than seven (7) persons, a majority of whom shall be district chairs. The Executive Committee shall exercise such powers as may be allocated to it from time to time by resolution or bylaw and may exercise all the powers of the Steering Committee between meetings of the Steering Committee with its actions to be final unless overruled by the Steering Committee or the Central Committee. The resolution or bylaw shall set forth the method of selection of members of the Executive Committee, which method shall provide for reasonable geographical balance among the members who are district chairs.

Section 5.8 Steering Committee Caucus Representation

The Central Committee may amend the Party Plan (pursuant to Section 4.16) to add a representative to the Steering Committee of a Caucus recognized under Section 4.19 that reflects inherent and/or immutable traits. In evaluating whether to provide representation to such a Caucus, the Central Committee may consider the following criteria: The caucus represents a constituency which constitutes a significant part of Virginia's population; the constituency has a proven record of supporting Democrats; the constituency is historically underrepresented in the party structure; the caucus is a longstanding group with a proven record of working hard to elect Democrats and build the Party; and the Caucus is represented on the DNC Executive Committee. If a Caucus with Steering Committee representation fails to maintain its status as a Caucus (under Section 4.19), its representative shall no longer be considered a voting member of the Steering Committee.

ARTICLE 6. DEMOCRATIC CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT COMMITTEES

Section 6.1 Membership

The members of the Democratic State Central Committee or their successors, who are residents of a congressional district, shall comprise the Democratic congressional district committee for that district.

Section 6.2 Additional Members

The district committee, upon its organization and two years thereafter, shall elect one Democratic member of the General Assembly and three county or city representatives. A “county or city representative” shall be a resident of the congressional district who is (a) a county or city committee chair or vice chair, (b) a magisterial district chair, (c) a ward chair or (d) a county or city committee member proposed by his or her county or city committee to the district committee. The additional members identified in this section shall be members of the Central Committee. Members so chosen shall be counted in determining a quorum and shall be voting members of the district committee as soon as elected by the district committee. Confirmation of the election of the General Assembly member and the county or city representatives shall be made by the Central Committee. If for any reason a Democratic member of the General Assembly or a county or city representative cannot fill these positions, they shall be filled by the district committee. If for any reason such additional members vacate the office(s) they hold which entitle them to this membership, then the seat(s) shall become vacant. In selecting these additional members, any district committee may choose to use these positions to insure that the equal division requirement of Section 4.3 is met. If such procedure is utilized, the secretary of the Central Committee shall be so advised when the district’s complete list of members is submitted. The total number of the district committee members elected pursuant to section 4.2 and this section shall be equally divided pursuant to Section 4.3.

Section 6.3 Officers

Each district committee shall organize by electing from its membership a chair, a secretary and such officers, as it deems appropriate.

Section 6.4 Congressional District Committee Meetings

District committees shall hold periodic meetings at publicized locations and times. Notice of such meetings shall be provided to all Democratic city and county committees within the Congressional District. Notice shall also be provided to the Virginia Young Democrats District Chair and the Virginia Democratic Women’s Caucus District Representative and other Democratic groups within the district. Meetings of the congressional district committee may be called as follows:

- a) By the chair; or
- b) By any five (5) members of the congressional district committee, if a signed call is filed with the secretary of the district committee at least ten (10) days before the proposed meeting date; or
- c) By a vote of the district committee as a properly convened meeting of the committee.

Section 6.5 Vacancies

Vacancies in any district committee shall be filled by the remaining members of the committee, subject to confirmation by the Central Committee at its next meeting. Members so chosen shall be voting members of the district committee as soon as elected by the district committee. The

district chair shall make reasonable efforts to notify each county and city committee chair of any existing vacancy.

Section 6.6 Duties

Each district committee shall have entire charge and full control of all matters relating to congressional nominations and elections within its district. It shall be the duty of each district committee to perfect the Democratic organization within its district, and see to the proper discharge of their duties by county and city committees or other constituent committees within the congressional district. Committee members should know and understand their responsibility under Section 10.8 and the exception stated in Section 10.9.

Section 6.7 Removal from District Committee

Each district committee may remove from office and membership on the Central Committee and the district committee any member who shall miss three (3) consecutive meetings without cause or who shall be guilty of neglect of any duty imposed upon such members.

Before making a recommendation of removal, however, the district committee shall provide the member with ten (10) days written notice of the charges and an opportunity for a hearing before the district committee. The decision of the district committee may be appealed to the Steering Committee.

Section 6.8 Nomination of Candidates for House of Representatives

It shall be the duty of each district committee to fix the time, place and method of nominating in its congressional district a Democratic candidate for the United States House of Representatives. Such nomination shall be made by primary, convention or caucus. Whenever a district committee determines that such nomination shall be by the primary method, the primary shall be held in conformity with the Party Plan of the Democratic Party and applicable Virginia election laws. Whenever such nomination is to be made by convention, the district committee shall fix the basis of representation for such convention, consistent with the requirements of Article 15, Section 15.1.

Section 6.9 Oversight Duties

By January 15 of every even numbered year, each district committee shall ascertain that all Democratic county and city committees within its jurisdiction have reorganized as required in Section 8.1. If a county or city committee has not properly reorganized, the district committee shall immediately cause an election to be held in each non-complying county or city to select a new committee and to have officers elected in the manner provided in this Plan.

Section 6.10 New County and City Committee Elections

When a county or city committee fails to carry out its duties as specified in the Party Plan, the district committee acting upon an appeal of any member of the county or city committee or of any ten (10) Democratic voters of the county or city may cause an election of a new county or city committee to be held; provided, however, no such election shall be held without an opportunity for a hearing by the Steering Committee or any appeal under Article 11 from the action of the district committee.

Section 6.11 Supervisory Authority

Whenever a district committee orders the election of a county or city committee pursuant to the provisions of the Party Plan the district committee shall be charged with the authority and responsibility for supervising such election as provided in the Party Plan.

Section 6.12 Appeals

Any member of a district committee may appeal any decision, deadlock, or the failure of the district committee to act, to the Steering Committee.

Section 6.13 District Committees and Reapportionment

Whenever redistricting occurs or on January 1 of the year following any reapportionment of the congressional districts, and until the next Democratic State Convention at which a new Central Committee is elected, all members of the Central Committee shall become members of the district committee for the congressional district in which they reside. Where, as a result of such reapportionment, a district committee contains more resident members than the specified number to which it is entitled, each such member's vote on the Central Committee shall be the fraction that is obtained by dividing the specified number by the numbers of members of the new district committee. Where, as a result of such reapportionment, fewer than the specified number of the Central Committee reside in a congressional district, the difference in number specified shall be deemed vacancies on the Central Committee and shall be filled as provided for in the Party Plan.

Section 6.14 Special Elections - House of Representatives

Whenever a special election is called to fill a vacancy in the United States House of Representatives, the members of the Central Committee residing in the congressional district as defined for purposes of that election shall be deemed the district committee for that election.

ARTICLE 7. DEMOCRATIC CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICER AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY DISTRICT NOMINATING COMMITTEES

Section 7.1 Definition of Committees

For the purpose of prescribing the method of nominating candidates, there shall be Constitutional Officer and General Assembly (House of Delegates and State Senate) District Nominating Committees (herein the nominating committee) for every such election district in the Commonwealth, provided, however, when such district lies wholly within the boundaries of one county or city, the county or city committee shall exercise all authority relating to the method of nomination.

Section 7.2 Nominating Process

Nominations shall be made by primary, convention or caucus. Whenever any nominating committee determines that such nominations shall be by primary, then such primary shall be held in conformity with this Plan and applicable Virginia election laws. Whenever such nominations are to be made by convention, the appropriate nominating committee shall fix the basis of representation for such convention. The nominating committee shall advise State headquarters in writing of the method of nomination for any office within seven (7) days of the decision.

Section 7.3 Composition of Nominating Committees

Except as provided in Section 7.1, the General Assembly District Committees shall consist of the chairs of the county or city committees in whose counties or cities the district lies. In the event any chair does not reside within the General Assembly district, such chair shall designate a member of his or her county or city committee who does reside within the district to serve on the district committee. In the event no member of such county or city committee resides within the district, the county or city chair shall designate a Democrat residing within the district to serve.

Section 7.4 Voting

The weight of each member's vote on such nominating committee from each county or city shall bear the same relation to the total vote of the nominating committee as the combined vote in such member's county or city, or part thereof, which is contained in said district for the Democratic candidate who was a candidate in all precincts of the district and who received the highest number of votes in the most recent general election bears to the total vote cast for such candidate in the entire district.

Section 7.5 Officers and Organization

Each nominating committee shall organize by the election of a chair and secretary and such other officers, as it deems necessary. The committee shall meet between January 1 and January 15 of each appropriate election year, and upon the election of a chair and secretary, shall advise the State Party headquarters by February 1 of each year of the names and addresses, and phone numbers of the committee members and officers. Any two (2) members of such district committee may call a meeting of such committee. Any member of such committee may call a meeting if there are less than three (3) members of such committee.

Section 7.6 Appeals

Any member of a nominating committee may appeal any decision, action or failure to act by the committee to the district committee in which such Constitutional Officer or General Assembly District is located. In the case of a Constitutional Officer or General Assembly District that is located in more than one congressional district, the appeal provided in this paragraph shall be made to the Steering Committee.

ARTICLE 8. DEMOCRATIC COUNTY AND CITY COMMITTEES

Section 8.1 Time of Election

A Democratic Committee shall be elected for each county and city by the Democratic voters during the period between December 1st in odd numbered years and the 15th of the following January. City and County Democratic Committees must determine the date of their reorganization meeting and communicate that information to the State Party by November 15th of each odd numbered year.

Section 8.2 Caucuses

Caucuses for the purpose of the election of such committees shall be held on Saturday or, if provided by county or city committee bylaws, on any other weekday evening. Any waiver of this requirement as to the time for elections must be granted by the State Party Chair or the Steering Committee.

Section 8.3 Committee Membership

The existing committee shall in each case determine the basis of representation of the committee; however, each precinct shall be represented by at least one full voting member of the committee who shall be at the time of his or her election a resident of that precinct.

Section 8.4 County and City Committee Elections

County and city committees shall elect their members by caucus. Any candidate for election to the county or city committee who has duly filed and who is unopposed shall be declared elected. A caucus shall be held to vote on the candidates in contested elections for the remaining positions on the county or city committee.

Section 8.5 Appeals

Any ten (10) Democratic voters of a county or city who feel that the Democratic committee for that county or city has been elected in a manner inconsistent with the Party Plan may, within fifteen (15) days after such election, appeal in writing to the chair of the congressional district committee for the district in which the county or city is situated. If the county or city is divided into two or more congressional districts, the chairs of these district committees shall meet and establish a procedure for considering such appeal. The district committees may jointly hear the appeal, establish a subcommittee composed of equal members from each committee to conduct a hearing and make recommendations to the full committees, or designate one district committee to hear the appeal. The district committee(s) may sustain the election of the county or city committee, or order a new election in which case said election shall be held under the direction of the district committees. The decision of the district committee(s) may be appealed to the Steering Committee.

Any person aggrieved by any decision, action or failure to act by a county or city committee may appeal to the district committee for the congressional district in which the county or city is situated, disposition of such appeal shall follow the procedure outlined in the previous paragraph when the county or city is divided between two or more districts. The decision of the congressional district committee(s) may be appealed to the Steering Committee.

Section 8.6 Officers

Following the election of its members as provided herein, each new county or city committee shall elect a chair, secretary, treasurer, and such other officers as it deems necessary no later than January 15th. The date, time and place of the meeting where the election of officers will occur shall be made known to committee members in advance following the notice requirements in Section 9.5. Should the meeting take place immediately following adjournment of the caucus to elect committee members, or within 7 days thereafter, notice of the meeting shall be included in the public advertisement for the caucus. All officers elected by the committee shall be residents of and registered to vote in the jurisdiction of the committee holding the election. The secretary shall submit to State Party headquarters within five (5) days of his or her election the names, addresses, emails and telephone numbers of the officers and members of the committee. The secretary shall submit a list of any changes to the committee list every 6 months thereafter until the next committee election.

Section 8.7 Bylaws

Each county or city committee shall have a set of bylaws available for its membership upon request. Such bylaws shall be submitted to State Party headquarters for review as to form and consistency with this Plan. It shall be the responsibility of the county or city committee chair to submit such bylaws to State Headquarters within ninety (90) days of his or her election as chair.

Section 8.8 Responsibilities

It shall be the duty of every county and city committee, as well as each officer and member thereof, to seek the registration of voters, to perfect the Democratic organization within the county or city, and to do all within their power to aid in the victory of the Democratic Party's nominees in all elections. Committee members should know and understand their responsibility under Section 10.8 and the exception stated in Section 10.9.

Section 8.9 Removal

A county or city committee may remove from both office and membership any person found guilty of neglect of any duty imposed upon him or her. Such action shall not be taken without at least ten (10) days written notice to the accused member and an opportunity for him or her to refute such charges in a hearing before a subcommittee of the county or city committee. The decision of the county or city committee may be appealed to the district committee.

Section 8.10 Vacancies

Each county and city committee shall fill any vacancy occurring in its membership.

Section 8.11 Meetings

All meetings of the county or city committee shall be open to the public. Such meetings may be called as follows:

- a) upon call of the chair of the committee; or
- b) by at least ten percent (10%) of the members of the county or city committee if the signed call is filed with the chair at least fifteen (15) days before the proposed meeting date; or
- c) by a vote of the county or city committee at a properly convened meeting of the committee.

Section 8.12 Nomination

Each county or city committee shall prescribe the methods to be used within such county or city to nominate candidates for county, city and local offices, and to elect members of said committee and delegates and alternates to party conventions. Such nominations and elections shall be made by primary, convention or caucus. Except, when an incumbent candidate for an office in a city or county was nominated by a primary, a primary shall be held for that office unless all incumbents of that party for that office consents to a different method. Whenever a county or city committee determines that such nominations or elections shall be by primary, the primary shall be held in conformity with this Plan and applicable Virginia election laws.

Section 8.13 Nomination Conventions

In the election of delegates and alternates to any county, city, district or state convention, it shall be the duty of the county or city committee to prescribe whether such election shall be by precinct, magisterial or equivalent district, ward, county or city caucus or convention. The county or city committees shall also determine the number of delegates and alternates to which

each precinct, magisterial or equivalent district, or ward shall be entitled pursuant to the Call to Convention and Delegate Selection Plan issued for said Convention.

Section 8.14 Dues

Every county and city committee shall be responsible for paying to the treasurer of the Central Committee in a timely manner the annual dues provided for under Section 4.15 under this Plan. Congressional District Chairs shall assist in the collection of such dues.

Section 8.15 Ex-Officio Members

Each member of the Central Committee shall, upon election, become a voting ex-officio member of the Democratic committee of the county or city in which he or she resides. Such members shall pay any required filing or membership fees unless waived by the county or city committee.

Section 8.16 Combination of County and City Committees

Any county or city committee may be joined with any contiguous county or city committee and operated jointly under the following conditions and the following procedures:

- a) Each committee to be joined must vote for the combination by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting; or
- b) The proposed combination must be ratified by a two-thirds vote in a duly announced caucus to be held in each of the counties or cities to be combined; and
- c) The county or city desiring to combine must present to the Steering Committee a petition requesting approval of the combination.

If the required two-thirds majority is obtained in each of the committees to be combined or in each of the caucuses for the counties or cities to be combined, upon approval by the State Steering Committee, the functions of such county and city committees shall be combined in one joint committee. However, the combination of committee functions shall not include the nominating process for candidates for city, county, and local offices. For such nominations, only the representatives of the counties or cities served by the office in question shall participate in setting the method of nomination or in nominating such candidates.

Upon the petition of any ten (10) Democrats from any county or city served by a combined committee, the Steering Committee, after consideration, may dissolve the combined committee and order separate reorganization of the committees.

ARTICLE 9. NOTICE REQUIREMENTS

Section 9.1 Notice Requirements

Whenever any Democratic committee shall determine that committee members, delegates and alternates to any convention, or Democratic nominees for any office, are to be selected by any method other than primary, notice of the time, place and method of selection shall be given at least seven (7) days prior to the date of such selection. Where a caucus /convention process is used and the initial notice provides information as to the time and place of the convention, a second notice is not required.

Committees shall post this notification using channels of communication typically used by the committee, and which shall provide the widest possible dissemination within its jurisdiction.

Committees are required to post this notification on either their own committee web site,

congressional district web site, or the DPVA web site and provide a press release to all relevant newspapers of general circulation.

Committees are encouraged, but not required, to use other opportunities to disseminate this information to all interested parties, as they are able, including a variety of social media, e-mail databases and distribution to relevant television and radio outlets.

Section 9.2 Declaration of Candidacy

Notice of the need to file a declaration of candidacy for selection as a committeeperson, delegate or alternate shall be given at least seven (7) days, but not more than two (2) weeks, prior to the deadline for filing such declaration. Such notice shall include the substance of the declaration and the time and place and declaration must be filed. Filing declaration of candidacy by mail or messenger shall be permitted as long as such declaration is received before the filing deadline and is signed personally by the prospective candidate. The deadline for filing declaration of candidacy shall not be set for more than ten (10) days prior to the first day of the start of any selection process for the office sought.

Section 9.3 Full Participation

Notice requirements as provided in this article shall be construed as minimum requirements to encourage full participation by all Democrats in all phases of convention, committee and nominating procedures. Comprehensive affirmative action programs such as informational fliers for general distribution, radio or television public announcements, print and electronic media news stories, press releases, newsletters, efforts to contact interested individuals and organizations, and any other means deemed appropriate to achieve full participation are strongly encouraged. The appropriate enforcement committee (i.e., credentials, steering or full committee), established by the convention calling such a meeting shall consider all affirmative action taken to encourage such participation when deliberating as to the validity of meeting notice requirements.

Section 9.4 Filing Notice

A copy of the required notice shall be mailed to the Secretary of the Central Committee on or before the day it is to be published or distributed. Such notice shall be kept on file for at least one year thereafter at State Party headquarters and shall be made available at reasonable times to any Democrat.

Section 9.5 Meetings

The time and place of all meetings of the Democratic Party of Virginia at all levels shall be publicized fully and in such manner as to assure timely notice (at least seven (7) days before said meeting date) to all interested persons. Notice may be given through paid advertisements, press releases, web site notice or other reasonable method. Such meetings shall be open to all members of the Democratic Party, shall be held in placed easily accessible to all Democrats and large enough to accommodate all interested persons. The public may attend all such meetings as observers.

Section 9.6 Special Election Waivers

The chair of any committee responsible for the nomination of a candidate in a special election may apply to the chair of the State Central Committee for a waiver of the notice requirements and declarations of candidacy set forth in Sections 9.1 and 9.2 above. The application shall be in writing and shall state the type of notice that will be given and the reasons that notice complying with the provisions of Sections 9.1 and 9.2 cannot be given. If the chair of the State Central Committee finds that compliance with Sections 9.1 and 9.2 is impractical, then the chair may issue a waiver excusing noncompliance with the notice provisions of these sections, and requiring such notices as are practical under the circumstances.

ARTICLE 10. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Section 10.1 Proxy Voting

In no committee, convention or other representative body of the party shall any person be permitted to vote by proxy.

Section 10.2 Bylaws

All Democratic committees shall adopt bylaws, rules or regulations deemed necessary for the proper operation of such committee. Such bylaws, rules or regulations when not in conflict with law or this Plan, shall be considered valid and binding. Such bylaws, rules or regulations shall be mailed to State headquarters within fourteen (14) days of approval by any Democratic committee and shall be kept on permanent file and made available for public viewing.

Section 10.3 Unit Rule

Use of the unit rule, or any rule or practice whereby all members of a Party unit or delegation may be required to cast their votes in accordance with the will of a majority of the body, is prohibited in all stages and levels of Democratic proceedings. This provision does not prohibit slates authorized elsewhere in this Plan.

Section 10.4 Binding Delegates

Except as provided in this section no caucus, convention, or party rule may bind any delegate selected by such caucus or convention to vote in a particular way on any matter or for or against any candidate. This section shall not alter the binding obligation of Democratic electors when elected to vote for the Democratic candidates for President and Vice President. In addition, this section shall not prohibit a committee, caucus or convention from requiring delegates and alternates elected to such caucuses or convention to be bound to vote for the candidate to whom they have pledged or are elected to vote for in a committee, caucus or convention.

Section 10.5 Quorum

A quorum of thirty percent (30%) of the members of any Democratic committee or convention shall be required to take any action, except to adjourn a meeting to another time or place, unless a committee votes to set a higher quorum requirement, which shall not exceed forty percent (40%).

Section 10.6 Failure to Nominate a Candidate

Whenever an authorized convention or caucus shall fail to nominate a candidate for elective office, the committee that convened the convention or called the caucus may thereafter nominate a candidate who shall be the Democratic nominee for such office.

Section 10.7 Special Election

In the event of a special election called to fill a vacancy, the Steering Committee may provide reasonable deadlines with respect to any requirement of this Party Plan and may waive those herein provided.

Section 10.8 Party Support

No Democratic committee member or officer of any Democratic committee shall publicly support, endorse, or assist any candidate opposed to a Democratic nominee. If a Democratic committee member is accused of undertaking such public activity, the appropriate Democratic committee shall vote on whether the member has undertaken such public activity. The member's removal from the committee shall be automatic if the committee finds that the member has engaged in such public activity. Such action shall not be taken without at least ten (10) days written notice to the accused member and an opportunity for him or her to refute such charges.

Section 10.9 Candidate Support

The obligations and duties imposed on any county, city or district committee or the Central Committee and their members in this Plan shall not be deemed to require support of any candidate who is publicly supporting a nominee on the ticket of any other political party in any general election where Democratic candidates for office appear on the ballot, or who publicly supports any other candidate opposed to a Democratic nominee.

Section 10.10 Public Information

The procedures governing caucuses, county or city conventions, district conventions and state conventions, shall be furnished to all members of the Central Committee and each county and city chair, and shall be furnished, or otherwise made available, to any other Democrat requesting such information. Copies of this Plan and the rules or bylaws of every county and city committee shall be furnished without charge to any Democratic requesting such documents.

Section 10.11 Party Endorsements

The Democratic Party of Virginia, and any of its components, including county and city Democratic committees, Congressional district committees, the State Central Committee, the State Steering Committee, State Party caucuses, and State Party constituency groups, may not formally endorse contested candidates for office prior to their nominations

ARTICLE 11. APPEALS

Section 11.1 Appellant Filing

The Appellant shall file with the chair of the appellant committee (Steering or congressional district committee) the following information:

- a) A statement of the decision, action or failure to act from which the appeal is taken;
- b) The points on which the appeal is based;

- c) The individual(s) for whom the appeal is taken;
- d) What provisions of the Party Plan have been violated or disregarded; and
- e) What relief, correction or other action is sought by the appellant.

Section 11.2 Notice

The chair of the appellant committee shall determine to whom notice of the appeal and copies of the petition shall be furnished by the appellant. At least ten (10) days written notice shall be given to all persons affected by such appeal.

Section 11.3 Hearings

The persons thus notified shall answer the petition within a reasonable time, to be fixed by the chair of the appellant committee. The chair of the appellant committee shall fix a time and place for a hearing within at least ten (10) days written notice on said appeal, at which time the appellant committee shall determine the validity of the appeal, either upon the petition and answer, or after the taking of evidence as in its discretion it may see fit. Appellants and other interested parties may be represented by counsel in the appellant process.

ARTICLE 12. METHODS OF NOMINATION

Section 12.1 Nominations of Statewide Candidates

Democratic party candidates for United States Senator, Governor, Lieutenant Governor and Attorney General may be nominated by primary or convention, as determined by the Central Committee.

Section 12.2 Nominations of Congressional Candidates

Democratic party candidates for the United States House of Representatives may be nominated by primary, convention or caucus in the congressional districts, as determined by each district committee.

Section 12.3 Nominations of General Assembly Candidates

Democratic party candidates for the State Senate and House of Delegates may be nominated by primary, convention or caucus. A Democratic incumbent shall have the right to designate the method of nomination for the office held by that incumbent if he or she is a candidate for the nomination. If there is no Democratic incumbent, or if the incumbent fails to designate the method of nomination, the nominating committee for the General Assembly district in which the election will occur, shall determine the method of nomination unless one or more candidates are to be elected by voters in a single county or city, in which case the appropriate county or city committee shall determine the method of nomination. In General Assembly districts that include more than one county or city, the nominating committee may, by unanimous vote, determine that caucuses need not be held in each county or city, but may be held in one or more convenient location(s).

Section 12.4 Nominations for City and County Constitutional Officers and Other Local Elected Officials

Democratic party candidates for county or city offices may be nominated by primary, convention or caucus, as determined by the county or city committee. Except, when an incumbent candidate

for an office in a city or county was nominated by a primary, a primary shall be held for that office unless all incumbents of that party for that office consent to a different method.

Section 12.5 No Democratic Nominee

Nothing in the foregoing sections shall preclude any Democratic Committee at a meeting to determine the method of nomination for any office from deciding that a Democratic Party nominee will not be selected in a particular election and that no Party nominating procedure will be scheduled, or from including a provision in the Call to Convention or Caucus that the option of selecting “No Candidate” will appear on the convention or caucus ballot.

Section 12.6 Supervisory Authority

Each Democratic party committee responsible for determining the method of nomination of a Democratic Party candidate pursuant to this article shall be responsible for directing the conduct of the convention or caucus.

Section 12.7 Vacancies

If a nominated candidate dies, withdraws, or refuses candidacy or if the nomination is set aside for any reason, or if no candidate qualifies as such for a primary, convention or caucus, then the committee having responsibility of determining method of nomination shall determine the manner by which a new candidate shall be nominated.

Section 12.8 Unopposed Nominees

If the number of persons qualifying as candidates in a primary, convention or caucus does not exceed the number of nominations to be made for a particular office, then the qualified candidate or candidates may be declared the nominees of the Democratic Party.

ARTICLE 13. DEMOCRATIC PARTY PRIMARIES

Section 13.1 Procedures for Primaries

Primaries held under this Plan shall be governed by those provisions of the state’s election laws, as detailed in the Code of Virginia, as to requirements, procedures, and notice applicable to Party primaries. The appropriate committee chair shall carry out the duties outlined in both this Plan and the law whenever a primary is selected as the method of nomination.

Each nominating committee chair shall receive the required notice of candidacy, petitions and receipts for filing fees in a timely manner, and shall insure that all Democratic candidates know where such filings shall occur. If only one candidate for a particular office shall file by the deadline, he or she shall be declared the nominee and no primary will be conducted.

Nothing herein shall be construed to diminish the Party’s control over the process of selecting candidates of the Party.

Section 13.2 Encouraging Voters

It shall be the affirmative duty of each officer and member of county or city, district and state Democratic Committees to encourage Democrats and voters who may favor Democratic nominees in general elections to participate in primary elections used to select such nominees.

ARTICLE 14. CONVENTIONS AND CAUCUSES GENERALLY

Section 14.1 Nominating Procedures

The Central Committee, district committees, nominating committees and county and city committees established pursuant to this Plan may call a convention or caucus within their respective jurisdiction for any purpose which is not inconsistent with this Plan. Any such committee calling for nominations or delegate selection by a caucus may utilize the unassembled caucus.

Section 14.2 Call to Convention

The Central Committee shall meet and issue a timely call in any year a state convention is approved by the Committee or required by this Plan.

Any committee issuing a Call to Convention or to a caucus:

- a) Shall specify the time, place, and purpose of the convention or caucus;
- b) May restrict the convention or caucus to the purpose stated in the call notice;
- c) Shall make all convention and caucus arrangements; and
- d) Shall state the conditions for cancellation of the caucus or convention, if so desired;
- e) Shall state that all conventions or caucuses shall be held in a location that is ADA accessible; and
- f) Shall ensure that the convention or caucus is held in accordance with the Plan

Section 14.3 Selection of Delegates

Delegates to any Democratic convention shall be elected at a convention or caucus called by the county or city committee. If a county or city committee decides to hold a convention for election of delegates to a state convention, then the delegates to the county or city convention shall be elected at caucuses within the county or city. In addition, the committee calling any convention may designate as ex-officio delegates Democrats holding elective office in that county or city provided such ex-officio delegates will not exceed ten percent (10%) of the total number of delegates to the convention.

Section 14.4 Fees

No fee of any kind may be charged for the right to attend and vote at a caucus. A voluntary administrative fee may be requested for participation in any convention. However, no party member shall be excluded from participation in a convention because of not paying a fee. Any Democrat who desires to participate in a convention but who chooses not to pay the requested fee shall be permitted to participate.

Section 14.5 Slates

In any convention or caucus, any individual or group of Democrats may sponsor or endorse a slate of candidates for delegates to any convention. However, no slate may receive preferential treatment or a preferential place on a delegate selection ballot, nor may any slate be publicly identified on the ballot or otherwise as the "official slate." A committee calling a convention or caucus may allow voting by slate, but participants must also be permitted to vote for individual delegate candidates. All individuals and slates must meet identical qualifying requirements for appearing on a ballot at all levels of the delegate selection process. Any committee choosing to permit slate voting shall provide in their Call to Convention or Caucus detailed information on

when to file slates, how the names are to be listed, how each slate will be designated on the ballot, and anything required to make the procedure clear to all participants.

Section 14.6 Caucus Cancellation

Caucuses in which alternates are selected as the “next-highest-vote-getters after the delegates” may only be cancelled provided the number of individuals filed by the deadline does not exceed the number of delegates to be elected. Caucuses in which delegates and alternates are to be elected on separate ballots may only be cancelled provided the number of individuals filed for delegate does not exceed the number of delegates to be elected and the number filed for alternate does not exceed the number of alternates to be elected. Should the condition(s) for cancellation occur, the chair of the nominating committee shall be responsible for deciding whether to cancel or conduct the caucus, making public notice of such decision, and advising those individuals who filed of their election.

ARTICLE 15. DELEGATE SELECTION AND DELEGATE ALLOCATION

Section 15.1 Allocation of Delegates

Delegates to any state Democratic convention may be allocated by one of the following methods:

- a) A formula giving equal weight to population and to the average of the Democratic vote in the most recent elections for Governor, United States Senator, and United States President;
- b) A formula giving equal weight to population and to the average of the Democratic vote in the most recent elections for Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Attorney General;
- c) A formula giving equal weight to the Democratic vote in the most recent elections for Governor, United States Senator and United States President;
- d) A formula giving equal weight to the Democratic vote in the most recent elections for Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Attorney General.

However, in a presidential election year a different allocation formula shall be followed if required by the National Democratic Party. Delegates to any congressional district, General Assembly district (Senate and House of Delegates) or county or city convention may be allocated by the committee issuing the Call by using the Democratic vote in the most recent election held for the offices for which the nominating process is being established.

Section 15.2 Filing of Delegates

If candidates for delegate or alternate are required to file as candidates before a convention or caucus, then the committee calling the convention or caucus shall prepare sufficient copies of a written ballot listing the names of all candidates who have filed as required. In conventions and caucuses for which filing is required, voting for delegate candidates shall be by written ballot unless the convention or caucus votes to conduct the election of delegates in a different manner. The deadline for filing as a delegate candidate shall not exceed ten (10) days prior to the convention or caucus. The Committee may establish a final deadline for filing consistent with the need to prepare ballots for such convention or caucus.

Section 15.3 Declaration of Candidate Preference

The committee calling a convention or caucus may determine whether candidates for delegate and alternate are required to make known their preference with respect to candidates for nomination by the Party. If disclosure of candidate preference is required, the delegate

candidates may alternatively declare themselves to be uncommitted. If a delegate candidate fails to indicate preference for all offices to be nominated on a filing form, the committee shall list such persons as “uncommitted” rather than declaring the filing as invalid. For state conventions, the Central Committee may determine whether delegates to a state convention will be bound to vote in accordance with their announced candidate preference on one or more ballots. Candidate preferences or uncommitted status shall be indicated for each delegate candidate on the written ballots used in the convention or caucus.

Section 15.4 Certification of Delegates

Within five (5) days of the election of delegates and alternates to a convention, the chair of the Democratic committee responsible for the election shall certify a list of the delegates and alternates to the secretary of the committee that called the convention. The list shall include names, addresses and telephone numbers, and candidate preference where applicable, of each duly elected and accredited delegate and alternate.

Section 15.5 Disclosure of Filing

Any Democrat may inspect, at reasonable times and in a reasonable manner, lists of filed candidates for delegate or alternate and lists of duly elected and accredited delegates and alternates to any convention.

Section 15.6 Delegate Selection

Unless a caucus is cancelled pursuant to Section 14.6 and except for ex-officio delegates provided under Section 14.3 of this Plan, all delegates and alternates for any convention shall be elected on the basis of the number of votes received. The committee calling a convention or caucus shall provide procedures governing the votes at any stage in the election process.

Section 15.7 Alternates

The committee calling the convention shall determine whether alternates will be elected separately from delegates or whether the alternates shall be those persons receiving the next highest number of votes after the persons elected as delegate.

Section 15.8 Succession of Delegates and Alternates

If a delegate is unable to undertake or continue in his or her duties as delegate, he or she shall select an alternate to succeed to delegate status or may designate the chair to select the alternate; failing either, the delegation may select the alternate. Whenever the number of alternates is less than the allowable number, the delegation may elect alternates to fill the vacant positions from persons within the congressional district.

Election of delegates and alternates under this section may occur after reasonable notice to the delegation if a quorum of forty percent (40%) assembles for the election. If the convention call requires announcement of candidate preference, new delegates and alternates shall have the same candidate preference as the delegate or alternate they replace.

Section 15.9 Filling Vacancies

Any vacancy occurring in the delegation after the caucus election shall be filled by the delegation. Such action may be done prior to the district or state convention at a scheduled and publicized meeting. Alternatively, it may be done by a majority of the delegation at the district or

state convention. Alternates should first be moved to the position of delegate and additional alternates elected. The newly elected alternates should be of the same gender and candidate preference as the delegates they replace.

ARTICLE 16. ROLL OF THE CONVENTION AND CHALLENGES TO CREDENTIALS

Section 16.1 Challenges to Credentials

Any participant in a Democratic caucus may challenge any delegate or alternate elected in the county or city in which he or she resides by written notification to the chair of the committee calling the caucus for election to a convention. Any such challenge must be filed within ten (10) days of the election and shall contain the information required in Section 16.3. Any challenge not timely filed and lacking such information shall not be considered by the Temporary and/or Permanent Credentials committee established for any convention.

Section 16.2 Temporary Credentials Committee

The committee calling the convention shall establish a temporary credentials committee for such convention. For state conventions, the Temporary Credentials Committee shall meet at least six (6) weeks before the convention to hear timely filed challenges, but the Call to Convention may provide for a different schedule to insure that fair consideration of all challenges may be accomplished.

Section 16.3 Content of Challenge

A challenge to a delegate or alternate must include at least the following:

- a) The names of the specific delegate(s) and alternate(s) being challenged;
- b) The precise nature of the challenge including a factual statement justifying the challenge;
- c) The provision(s) of the Party Plan, Call to Caucus or Convention, Delegate Selection Plan, or rules being relied upon as the basis for such challenge; and
- d) The specific relief requested with respect to the challenge, including the exact number of delegates or alternates to be awarded and, unless a new caucus or convention is requested, their identities.

Section 16.4 Powers of Temporary Credentials Committee

If the temporary credentials committee sustains a challenge to a delegate or alternate, the committee may take any of the following actions:

- a) Include the challenged delegate or alternate on the temporary roll;
- b) Strike the challenged delegate or alternate from the temporary roll;
- c) Recommend that the committee calling the convention order a new election with respect to the challenged delegate or alternate position;
- d) Substitute the name of another candidate in the position of delegate or alternate on the temporary roll; or
- e) Such other action not inconsistent with this Plan as the committee determines to be appropriate.

Section 16.5 New Caucuses or Conventions

Upon the recommendation of the temporary credentials committee, the Steering Committee or any other committee calling a convention may order a new convention or caucus for election of delegates or alternates to replace challenged delegates or alternates.

Section 16.6 Temporary Roll

The secretary of the committee calling a convention shall make a temporary roll of the convention including names certified to the secretary as amended by the temporary credentials committee of the convention.

Section 16.7 Report of the Temporary Credentials Committee

For state conventions the temporary credentials committee shall report to the temporary credentials committees of congressional district conventions affecting any challenges for their conventions, and to the permanent committee of the state convention. Any minority report of the committee must be supported by at least twenty-five percent (25%) of its members present.

ARTICLE 17. RULES, RESOLUTIONS, AND OTHER CONVENTION COMMITTEES

Section 17.1 Selection

The local or Congressional District committee calling a convention shall select a temporary rules committee and such other temporary committees as are determined to be appropriate.

For state conventions, a Resolutions Committee, a Rules Committee, an Arrangements Committee, and Credentials Committee shall be selected. These committees, Rules, Arrangements, Credentials and Resolutions shall be named at the 1st quarterly meeting of the year in which the Convention is to be held. Each committee, with the exception of Arrangements, shall be composed of one member from each Congressional District, with that individual named by the Congressional District chair, and two members for each committee named by the Party Chair. The Arrangements Committee, consisting of five individuals, shall have a majority from the Congressional District where the Convention shall be held, and shall be chosen by the Congressional District chair. The remaining Committee members shall be chosen from the Central Committee and shall be appointed by the Party Chair.

The chairs of the Rules Committee, the Credentials Committee, the Resolutions Committee, and the Arrangements Committee shall be appointed by the Party Chair from among the members of the Committees, and they shall serve as Chair of both the temporary Committees and the permanent Committees.

Section 17.2 Reports

For state conventions, the temporary resolutions committee shall hold hearings in various areas of the Commonwealth at least thirty (30) days prior to any convention to receive views and ideas for resolutions that might be considered by the convention. Proposed resolutions must be submitted to the committee at least twenty (20) days in advance of the convention unless the committee, by vote of sixty-seven percent (67%) of its members, agrees to receive a proposed resolution at a later time, except that all resolutions adopted by district conventions shall be considered if presented to the committee prior to its final meeting which shall be not later than

one (1) week before the State Convention. The committee shall report to the convention and no other resolutions shall be considered by the convention. No floor amendments or substitutes shall be allowed, and floor notes shall be only on the majority or minority reports of the committee. Minority reports of the committee must have the support of at twenty-five percent (25%) of its members present and voting.

The State chair may appoint a Drafting Committee composed of the Chair of the Temporary Resolutions Committee (who shall chair the Drafting Committee), a representative of each statewide campaign, two members at-large, and the State Chair (as an ex-officio member). The Drafting Committee will be responsible for preparing a draft majority report to be considered by the full Temporary Resolutions Committee at its meeting prior to the State Convention. State Party staff shall provide support to the Drafting Committee and the full Committee.

The report of the Temporary Resolutions Committee shall be distributed in advance of the State Convention to all congressional district chairs, preferably at least 48 hours prior to the Convention but not later than 24 hours prior to the Convention's convening.

The report of the committee shall be distributed to all delegates when they register for the convention and shall be presented to the convention at the time specified in the agenda by the convention rules committee which shall be no later than 2 p.m. on the second day of any convention. The rules committee shall prescribe the procedure for consideration of the report on the convention floor, including the consideration of any minority reports.

Notwithstanding any other provisions of this Plan, the temporary resolutions committee shall also serve as the permanent resolutions committee of any state convention, (regardless) of whether its members are convention delegates. Adoption of resolutions by the convention shall require a sixty percent (60%) vote of the delegates present and voting, a quorum being present.

Section 17.3 Additional Committees

If temporary committees other than the credentials, rules and resolutions committees are established, such committees shall report to any corresponding permanent committees of the convention, or to the Steering Committee for state conventions.

Section 17.4 Temporary Rules

The temporary rules committee shall meet and issue its report as soon as possible after the issuance of the Call to Convention. The temporary rules adopted pursuant to this section shall govern conduct of the convention until adoption of

permanent rules by the convention. The Rules Committee may be available to provide counsel regarding the execution of those Rules through the Convention that will govern the process of the Convention and be available to assist the Convention Chair in making rulings and determinations in the instance of any Rules questions or challenges that are raised.

Matters of a procedural nature that arise during a convention shall be governed by the most recent edition of Roberts' Rules of Order.

ARTICLE 18. COUNTY AND CITY CONVENTIONS AND CAUCUSES

Section 18.1 Caucus

The first step in selection of delegates for any convention shall be a caucus in a convenient public place accessible to the Democrats in such county or city. The date for caucuses to be held shall be established by the committee calling the convention.

Section 18.2 Notice of Caucuses

Notice of any caucus shall satisfy all notice requirements of this Plan. In addition, the notice shall clearly identify the purpose of the caucus and any convention for which the caucus directly or indirectly elects delegates.

Section 18.3 Participation in Caucuses

Each person participating in a caucus must provide written certification that he or she:

- a) Is a Democrat;
- b) Is a registered voter within the county or city for which the caucus is held;
- c) Believes in the principles of the Democratic Party; and
- d) Does not intend to support any candidate who is opposed to a Democratic nominee in the next ensuing election.

All such persons present at the caucus at the time stated in the notice are entitled to participate in the caucus if they sign the required certification. The permanent chair of the caucus shall not be elected until all persons entitled to participate have had a reasonable opportunity to complete their written certification.

Section 18.4 Temporary Rules for Caucuses

The chair of the committee calling the caucus shall prepare the temporary rules of the caucus. The temporary rules of the caucus shall be available at least one (1) week before the caucus for inspection and copying by any interested Democrat. The temporary rules shall govern the caucus until adoption of permanent rules, which shall be the first order of business following the election of the permanent chair and appointment of the permanent secretary. The foregoing applies to assembled caucuses. If a committee decides to use an unassembled caucus, it shall provide in its call to convention for establishment of permanent committees on credentials, rules, and other such committees as may be required.

ARTICLE 19. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT CONVENTIONS

Section 19.1 Generally

Before each state convention, separate district conventions may be held. The delegates to these district conventions shall be the delegates to the State Convention from that congressional district.

Section 19.2 Time of Convention

If the Central Committee does not determine the time and place for holding district conventions, each district committee shall determine a convenient and accessible time and place for the district conventions.

Section 19.3 Temporary Officers

The chair of each district committee shall choose the temporary chair and temporary secretary of the district convention.

Section 19.4 Roll of the Convention

The permanent roll of each district convention shall consist of the delegates from that congressional district on the temporary roll of the State Convention. The chair of each congressional district shall prepare the temporary rules for the convention. Other than as provided in this Article, district conventions shall be governed by the provisions of this Plan applicable to other conventions.

Section 19.5 Permanent Committees for State Convention

Each district convention preceding a state convention shall nominate three (3) members to each of the permanent committees established for the State Convention; with the exception of the resolutions committee where members selected for the temporary committee shall serve as permanent committee members.

ARTICLE 20. CONVENTIONS FOR NOMINATING A PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

Section 20.1 Priority of Calls

In cases where any procedures delineated in this Plan are inconsistent with the call to a national convention issued by the Democratic National Committee, the call of the National Committee shall prevail. All rules of the Democratic National Committee regarding candidate eligibility and all decisions, directions, or instructions of the Democratic National Committee or its officers shall be binding on the Party.

Section 20.2 District Conventions and Presidential Elections

Where the call notice directs, each district convention held before a state convention shall elect the number of delegates and alternates to a Democratic National Convention allocated by the Central Committee. Each district convention shall elect at least one (1) Democratic presidential elector. All disputes or contests regarding elections by the district convention shall be resolved by the state convention. The presidential electors shall be deemed to be nominees and candidates of the Democratic Party of Virginia. Should they be elected in the general election following, they shall cast their votes in the Electoral College for the presidential nominee of the National Democratic Party.

Section 20.3 State Convention

The State Convention may elect such national delegates and national alternates, "at-large", to a Democratic National Convention as Virginia is entitled to by decision of the Democratic National Committee, over and above those delegates and alternates allocated to the district conventions. National at-large Delegates and national at-large alternates are to be elected by the State Convention at large and shall be nominated from the floor of the convention.

The State Convention in a presidential year shall also elect the members of the Democratic National Committee, divided evenly by gender as prescribed by the national Party. Those individuals will be elected by plurality vote, unless the Convention adopts rules that provide

otherwise. Any person choosing to run for Democratic National Committee shall obtain the signatures of fifty registered voters in Virginia representing at least six Congressional Districts.

Section 20.4 Limitations

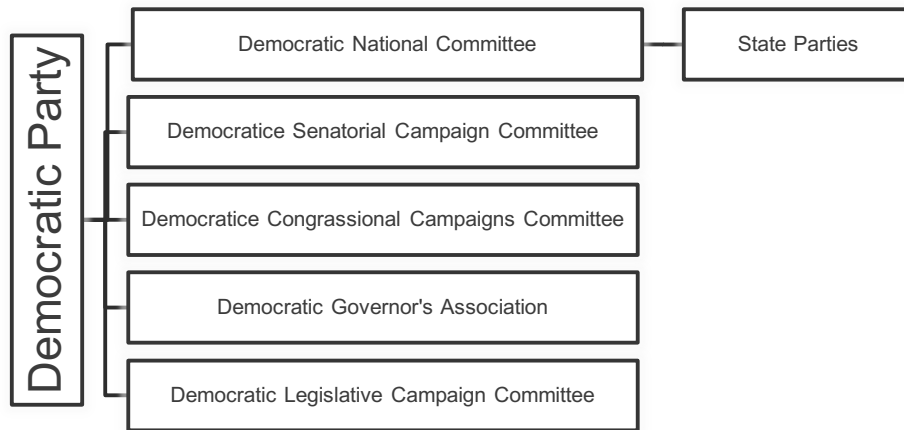
No person shall participate and/or vote in the nominating process for the Democratic presidential candidate who also participates in the nominating processes of any other party for the corresponding election year.

Section 20.5 Presidential Preference

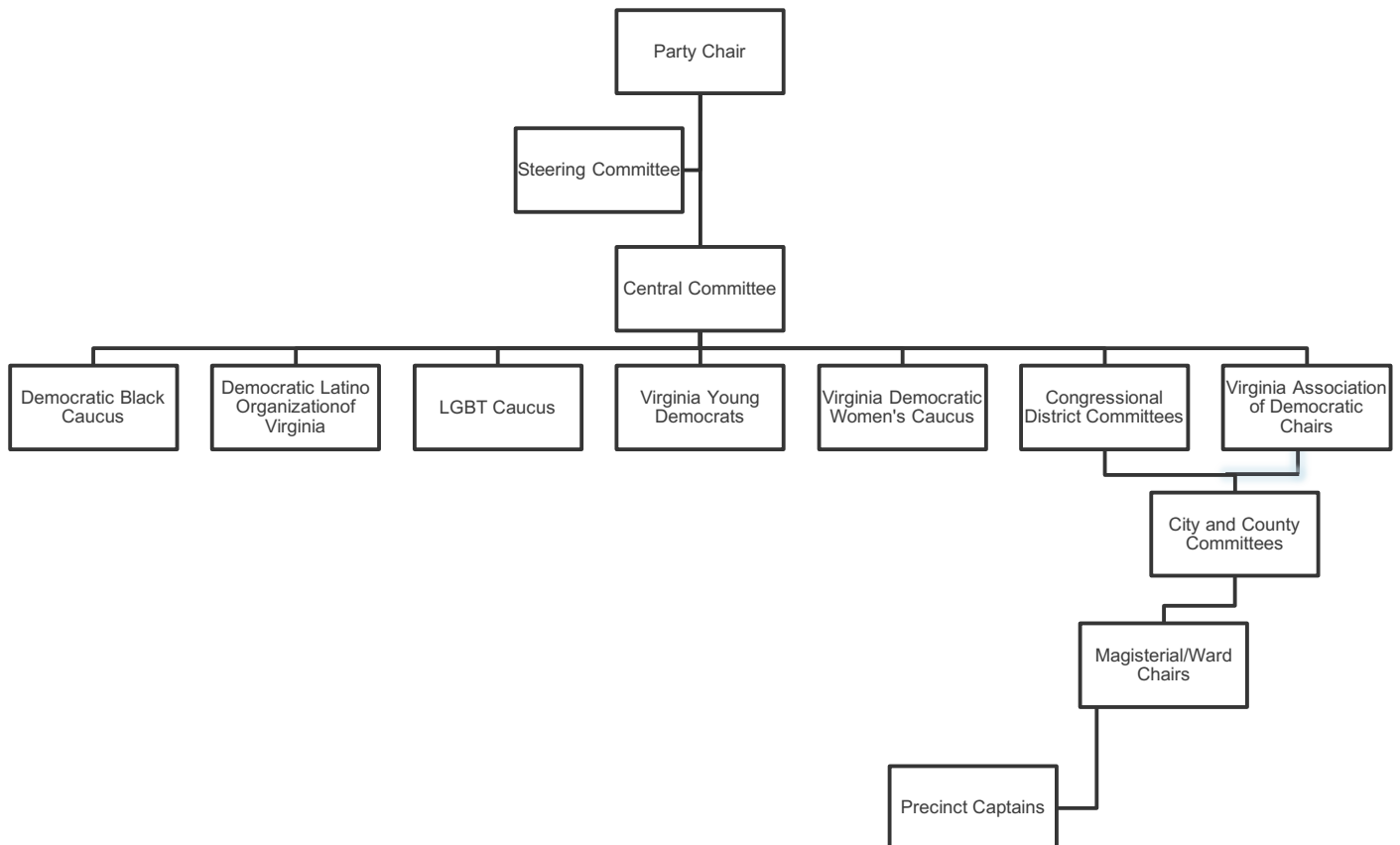
All candidates for delegate or alternate in caucuses, conventions, committees and/or primary ballots during the presidential nomination process shall be identified as to presidential preference, uncommitted or unpledged status.

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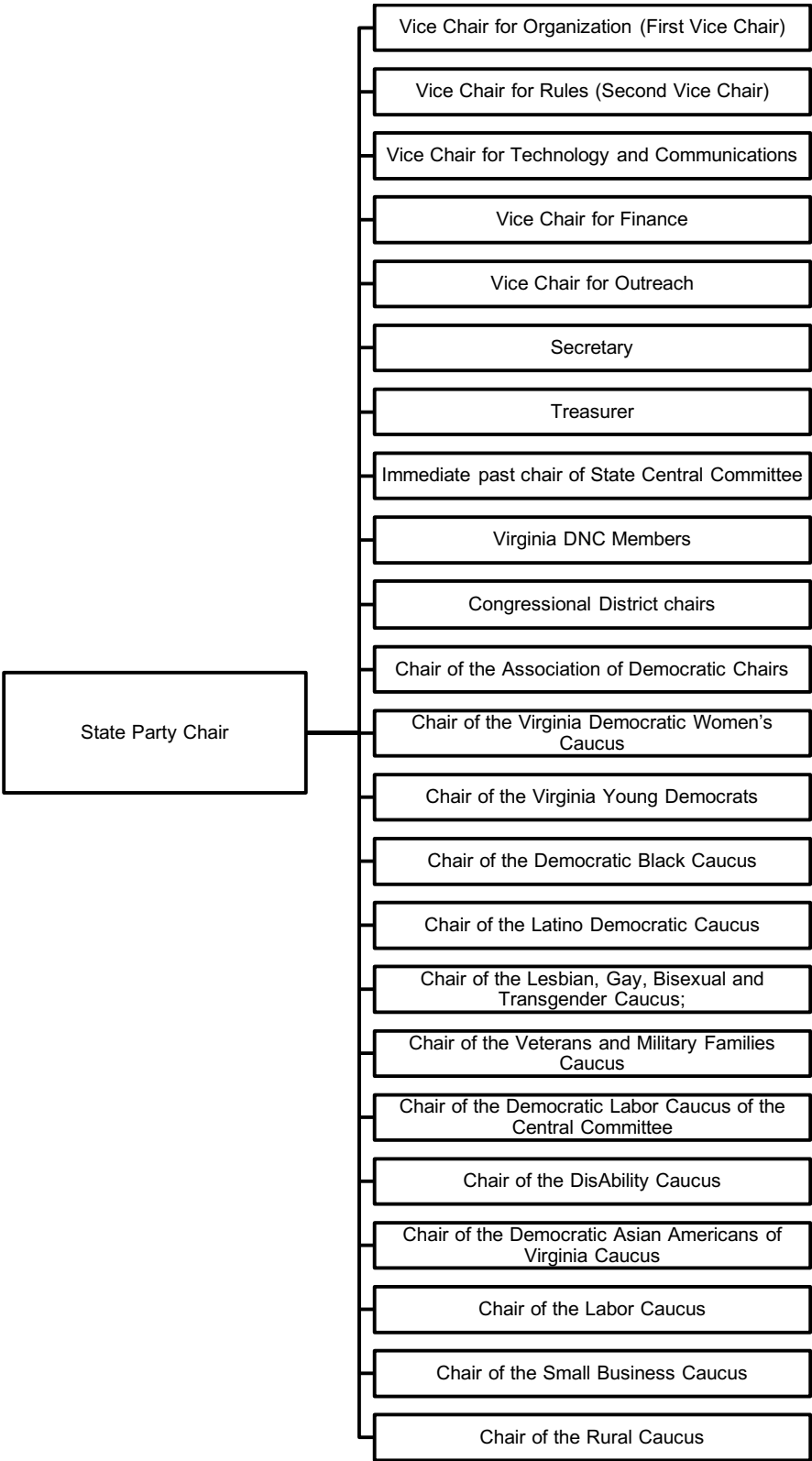
Democratic Party Organizational Structure



Democratic Party of Virginia Organizational Structure



Democratic Party Of Virginia Officer Structure



Chapter

3

Prioritizing What To Do

Focus on what MUST be done first

As a local committee chair, you have certain roles and responsibilities that you *must* fulfill. Fulfilling internal party and administrative obligations is often the last thing on the mind of a new local committee chair. Party leaders must cope with a host of seemingly “mundane” tasks: writing and adopting a Call to Caucus; conducting activities required by Virginia law related to elections; filing campaign finance reports; interpreting Bylaws; and other aspects of party administration.

Especially at first, these activities may not seem as important as the critical tasks of the Coordinated Campaign, delivering the message, party building and organizing, and fundraising. It is essential, however, that the chair takes the necessary time to fully understand basic committee obligations and Virginia and federal law and the DPVA *Party Plan* (state bylaws).

Rules and institutional obligations may not be as interesting as political activities, but a thorough knowledge of how the rules and the law work is essential if the chair is to act fairly and consistently. An unfair or inconsistent decision, a “bad call,” or a lack of attention to party obligations can damage your ability to lead the party toward your more important political goals, cause an embarrassing headline in the press, or even result in a legal fine or lawsuit.

This chapter will cover many of those obligations. However, it is not supposed to be an exhaustive list of your legal obligations, nor is anything in this handbook intended to be legal advice. If you

need legal advice, you should consult the counsel for your committee or contact the DPVA. As a local democratic committee chair, most of your obligations are governed by three primary sources:

- The ***Code of Virginia*** (state law, mainly Title 24); and
- The Democratic Party of Virginia ***Party Plan*** (internal Party document);
- Your Local Committee Bylaws (if your committee does not have bylaws, you must create them. [See Chapter 4](#)).

In addition, you will have certain legal obligations that will apply to you due to the activity you are engaging in, rather than your position as chair. The sources of these obligations include the *Code of Virginia*, relevant case law, and, potentially, federal campaign finance law. This chapter will not delve into campaign finance law. Instead, your obligations under both state and federal campaign finance laws are covered in more detail in Chapter 9.

I. CODE OF VIRGINIA

When you were elected chair of your local committee, you assumed critical legal responsibilities. State law requires that you fulfill the following duties:

Code Section	Requirement
§ 24.2-106. Appointment and terms; vacancies; chairman and secretary; certain prohibitions; training.	Local chairs are responsible for nominating representatives to the local electoral boards. Electoral Boards are made up of three members: Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary. For appointments, representation will be given to each of the two political parties having the highest and next highest number of votes in the Commonwealth for Governor at the last preceding gubernatorial election. Two electoral board members shall be of the political party that cast the highest number of votes for Governor at that election. The political party entitled to the appointment shall make and file recommendations with the judges for the appointment not later than January 15 of the year of an appointment to a full term or, in the case of an appointment to fill a vacancy, within 30 days of the date of death or notice of resignation of the member being replaced. Its recommendations shall contain the names of at least three qualified voters of the county or city for each appointment. The judges shall promptly make such appointment (i) after receipt of the political party's recommendation or (ii) after January 15 for a full term or after the 30-day period expires for a vacancy appointment, whichever of the events described in clause (i) or (ii) first occurs.
§ 24.2-115. Appointment, qualifications, and terms of officers of election.	The Chair should nominate election officers. If practicable, elections officers will be appointed from lists of nominations filed by political parties. The party must file nominations with the secretary of the electoral board at least 10 days before February 1 each year.
§ 24.2-428.2. Return of registered voter to active status and § 24.2-429. Maintenance of accurate registration records by general registrar; notice and hearing before cancellation.	The Chair should receive from the General Registrar in his or her locality a list of those individuals who will have their voter registration cancelled due to failure to take steps to returned to active status from inactive status within the requisite period of time and those who will have their registration cancelled due to being believed to be improperly registered.

§ 24.2-508. Powers of political parties in general.	Each political party has the power to (i) make its own rules and regulations, (ii) call conventions to proclaim a platform, ratify a nomination, or for any other purpose, (iii) provide for the nomination of its candidates, including the nomination of its candidates for office in case of any vacancy, (iv) provide for the nomination and election of its state, county, city, and district committees, and (v) perform all other functions inherent in political party organizations.
§ 24.2-509. Party to determine method of nominating its candidates for office; exceptions.	As chair, you have the right to determine the method by which a party nomination will be made for any offices in your locality. If the office in question overlaps multiple localities, you will work in conjunction with the other chairs of those local committees to determine the method of nomination. The method in which this determination should be made is contained in the party plan. There are certain exceptions in this section of the code that apply to incumbents.
§ 24.2-510. Deadlines for parties to nominate by methods other than primary.	This section lays out a schedule for completing a candidate nomination by means other than a primary. If you plan on nominating a candidate by means other than a primary, you can read the schedule in the <i>Code of Virginia</i> excerpts at the end of this chapter.
§ 24.2-511. Party chairman or official to certify candidates to State Board and secretary of electoral board; failure to certify.	As local committee chair you must certify the name of any candidate who has been nominated by your party by a method other than a primary for any office to be filled within your locality within five days after the last day for nominations to be made.
§ 24.2-516. Party to furnish names of chairmen and notify State Board of adoption of direct primary.	Each chairman of a local committee must file written notice with the Board, not more than 125 days and not less than 105 days before the date set for the primaries, whether or not a primary will be held for each office that is eligible for a primary. In order to satisfy this requirement, the chair must make sure the Board receives by the deadline (i) written notice from the appropriate party chairman or (ii) a copy of the written notice from an incumbent officeholder to his party chairman of the incumbent's selection, pursuant to § 24.2-509, of the primary as the method of nomination.
§ 24.2-527. Chairman or official to furnish State Board and local electoral boards with names of candidates and certify petition signature requirements met.	As chair, you are responsible for certifying the candidates for nomination for offices. If the office in question overlaps multiple localities, you will certify in conjunction with the other chairs of those local committees. You must certify the candidates for the Commonwealth at large or of a congressional district or of a General Assembly district to the State Board, and to furnish the name of any candidate for any other office to the State Board and your local electoral boards. Prior to providing the names of the candidates to the State Board and local electoral boards, you must certify that a review of the filed candidate petitions found the required minimum number of signatures of qualified voters for that office to have been met. Signature requirements are found in §24.2-521, which is in the <i>Code of Virginia</i> excerpts at the end of this chapter.
§ 24.2-536 - § 24.2-540	These sections discuss how to handle a candidate dropping out, dying, etc. prior to and after a primary. It is unlikely that you will need to use these sections, but in the event that you do it is in the <i>Code of Virginia</i> excerpts at the end of this chapter.
§ 24.2-604. Prohibited activities at polls; notice of prohibited area; electioneering; presence of representatives of parties or candidates; simulated elections; observers; news media; penalties.	Subsection C of this Code section allows the Democratic party to send authorized representatives to observe the election from inside polling location. Those representatives must be registered to vote in Virginia, have proof of that registration, and an authorized representative form signed by the local party chair, a draft of which is in the resources section of this chapter. The DPVA requests that you send a signed copy of the "Authorized Representative Form for Poll Observers" to the DPVA Voter Protection Director no later than 30 days prior to the election.
§ 24.2-633. Notice of final testing of voting system; sealing equipment.	You should receive notification of the final testing of voting or counting machines from your local electoral board and should be allowed to send a representative to observe. Any time you receive these notifications, please pass them on to the DPVA Voter Protection Director.
§ 24.2-653. Voter whose name does not appear on	Subsection B of this Code section allows the Democratic Party to send authorized representatives to observe the provisional ballot meeting. Those representatives

pollbook or who is marked as having voted; handling of provisional ballots; ballots cast after normal close of polls due to court order extending polling hours.	must be registered to vote in Virginia, have proof of that registration, and an authorized representative form signed by the local party chair, a draft of which is in the resources section of this chapter. The DPVA requests that you send a signed copy of the “Authorized Representative Form for Provisional Ballot Meeting Observers” to the DPVA Voter Protection Director no later than 30 days prior to the election.
§ 24.2-655. Representatives of political parties and candidates to be present on request.	This section allows the Democratic Party to send authorized representatives to observe the counting of the votes at each polling location and at the central absentee precinct. Those representatives must be registered to vote in Virginia, have proof of that registration, and an authorized representative form signed by the local party chair, a draft of which is in the resources section of this chapter. The DPVA requests that you send a signed copy of the “Authorized Representative Form for Poll Observers” to the DPVA Voter Protection Director no later than 30 days prior to the election.

In addition, *the chair is responsible for ensuring that all required financial reports are submitted on time and are correct when submitted.* Chapter 9 in this document provides detailed information on reporting requirements. This requirement is critical - if you have any questions about your need to report after reading this document, contact the DPVA Chief Operations Officer.

II. REQUIREMENTS OF THE *PARTY PLAN*

The *Party Plan* is the “set of bylaws” of the DPVA. Requirements and the appropriate section of the *Party Plan* are listed in the following table.

Party Plan Section	Requirement
1.2 Cooperation with DNC	Full cooperation with all rules and requirements promulgated in connection with any Call to the Democratic National Convention or Democratic Party Conference.
3.1 Full Participation	Make efforts to include young people, women, African Americans and other ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities and other constituent groups in all Democratic committees and delegations to Democratic conventions and other party affairs.
3.2 Registration	Support the broadest possible registration of voters without discrimination on the basis of race, sex, age (if of voting age), color, creed, national origin, religion, ethnic identity, sexual orientation, economic status, or disability.
4.15 and 8.14 Dues	Pay city or county committee dues in a timely manner between January 1 and March 15 following notice from the Central Committee treasurer.
7.1-7.5 Nominating Committees	Participate in, or delegate someone to participate in, the nominating committee for each district that is in whole or in part within the locality of the local chair. The nominating committee will determine the method of selecting the Democratic Nominee for Constitutional Officers and General Assembly members.
8.1-8.4 Reorganization	Local committees are required to disband and reorganize every two years in the period between December 1st in odd numbered years and the 15th of the following January. You must determine the date of your reorganization meeting and communicate that information to the State Party by November 15th of each odd numbered year.

8.6 Officers	Each local committee must elect a chair, secretary, treasurer, and such other officers as it deems necessary no later than January 15th. The secretary must submit to State Party headquarters within five (5) days of his or her election the names, addresses, emails and telephone numbers of the officers and members of the committee. The secretary must submit a list of any changes to the committee list every 6 months thereafter until the next committee election.
8.7 and 10.2 Bylaws	Ensure your committee has bylaws and that those bylaws have been submitted to the State Party within 90 days of the chair's election. After any changes to the bylaws, a new copy should be sent to the State Party within 14 days.
8.8 Responsibilities	Seek the registration of voters, to perfect the Democratic organization within the county or city, and to do all within your power to aid in the victory of the Democratic Party's nominees in all elections
8.11 and 9.5 Meetings	Call and publicize, with at least seven days notice, all meetings.
9.1 Notice Requirement	When a Democratic committee determines that committee members, delegates and alternates to any convention, or Democratic nominees for any office, are to be selected by any method other than primary, notice of the time, place and method of selection shall be given at least seven (7) days ahead of time. Committees are required to post this notification on either their own committee web site, congressional district web site, or the DPVA web site and provide a press release to all relevant newspapers.
10.8 Party Support	You, and members of your committee, may not publicly support, endorse, or assist any candidate opposed to a Democratic nominee.
10.11 Party Endorsements	Your committee, may not endorse candidates for office in contested races prior to their nomination.
13.2 Encourage Voters	Encourage Democratic voters and voters who may favor Democrats to participate in primary elections.
15.4 Certification of Delegates	Certify a list of the delegates and alternates to the secretary of the committee that called a convention within 5 days of their selection.

In addition, the *Party Plan* requires local committees to choose methods of nomination, accept pre-filings for delegates and alternates, and participate in the nominating process for State Legislative candidates. ***The local committee chair is responsible for ensuring that all of these requirements are fulfilled properly.*** The complete Party Plan is included in the resources at the end of Chapter 2.

III. LOCAL COMMITTEE BYLAWS

Every local committee should have its own bylaws. Since each committee's bylaws are different, you will need to read your bylaws to determine what your obligations are under your local committee's bylaws. If you cannot find your committee's bylaws, check with DPVA to see if we have them on file. If you still cannot find a record of your local committee bylaws, one of your first priorities as Chair will be to create and adopt bylaws. The State Party Plan requires that you submit your

committee's bylaws to the State Headquarters within ninety (90) day of your election as Chair. Chapter 4 will go over local committee by laws in more detail.

IV. SEEKING SOUND LEGAL ADVICE

Your committee should, if possible, have its own legal counsel who is familiar with federal and state election and campaign finance law. Party legal counsel should receive training information from the state counsel, and at a minimum develop a working knowledge of:

- Federal and state campaign finance laws, especially as they relate to the committee's activity.
- Virginia law concerning candidate eligibility and ballot access.
- Federal and Virginia law concerning voter eligibility and registration.
- Virginia law concerning challenged ballots and contested elections.
- Virginia law related to the conduct of elections, including voting procedures such as early voting and mail ballots.

Whether or not your committee has its own legal counsel, you should also let the DPVA know if you have any legal issues within or committee as soon as they develop. Ask DPVA's Voter Protection Director or Executive Director first; if needed they will consult DPVA's Legal Counsel.

V. CALENDAR OF IMPORTANT DATES AND DEADLINES

The DPVA has put together a calendar of important dates and deadlines for you to use from 2016-2018. It is included in the resources section at the end of this chapter. We encourage you to reference it frequently. It covers election dates, as well as state and federal reporting deadlines.

ADDITIONAL CHAPTER RESOURCES

- Extra Resources on Legal Responsibilities
- 2016 - 2018 Calendar of Important Dates and Deadlines
- Relevant sections of the *Code of Virginia*

Legal Resources

- To view the entire Virginia Code: <http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode>
- The State Board of Elections website address is: <http://elections.virginia.gov>
 - To access information regarding State of Virginia Campaign Finance guidelines, documents and other helpful information: http://www.sbe.state.va.us/Campaign_Finance/
 - To access Candidate Informational Bulletins for any office: <http://elections.virginia.gov/candidatepac-info/index.html>
 - To access Election Law and Guidance: <http://elections.virginia.gov/election-law/regulations-and-policies/index.html> (These include information on Do's and Don'ts for Poll Observers and Authorized Representatives.)
 - To access a 5-year Schedule of elections in Virginia: http://elections.virginia.gov/Files/Media/Calendar/2013_2017_Calendar.pdf
- For the Virginia General Assembly: <http://viriniageneralassembly.gov>
- For district boundaries: <http://redistricting.dls.virginia.gov/2010/DistrictMaps.aspx>
- For information on campaign contributors and contributions, the Virginia Public Access Project: <http://www.vpap.org>

2016-2018 Calendar Of Important Dates And Deadlines

2016 – 2018 Calendar			
Year	Date	Description	Category
2016	January 4th	Earliest filing date for Independents running in May.	May Elections
2016	January 4th	Earliest filing date for Independents running in November.	Nov Elections
2016	January 14th	Earliest Political Parties may nominate candidates for May elections by method other than a primary	May Elections
2016	January 15th	Deadline to complete reorganization and inform DPVA of new officers.	Reorganization
2016	January 15th	State Board of Elections (SBE) Campaign Finance Report for 10/1 to 12/31 Filing Deadline.	State Finance
2016	January 15th	Deadline to submit Electoral Board recommendations (if applicable this year).	Electoral Board
2016	January 20th	Local Committee Secretary must submit local committee membership list to the DPVA.	DPVA Bylaws
2016	January 22nd	Deadline to submit Election Officer Recommendations to the Electoral Board.	Electoral Board
2016	January 31st	Federal Election Commission (FEC) Report for 2015 Year-End is due	Federal Finance
2016	February 4th	Earliest party chairs can request primaries for November General Election	Nov Elections
2016	February 20th	FEC Report for 1/1-1/31 due (if filing monthly)	Federal Finance (Monthly)
2016	February 26th	Inform DPVA of date/location for local-level caucuses.	State Convention
2016	March 1st	Deadline for political party chairs to request a primary as the party's method of nomination for an office elected in the November General Election	Nov Elections
2016	March 1st	Presidential Primary held (consider tabling outside precincts to promote committee).	Presidential Primary
2016	March 1st	Deadline for political parties to nominate May election candidates by method other than primary	May Elections
2016	March 20th	FEC Report for 2/1-2/29 due (if filing monthly)	Federal Finance (Monthly)
2016	March or April	Endorse candidates for non-partisan municipal office (if any)	May Elections
2016	March 21st	Call to Caucus for local (city or county)-level caucuses due to be provided to DPVA/CD committee.	State Convention
2016	March 31st	5 PM Deadline for local office June primary candidates to file certificate of candidate qualification and, if applicable, statements of economic interests with his/her local general registrar and declaration, petitions and primary filing fee receipt with his/her local political party chairman	Nov Elections
2016	April 5th	5 PM Deadline for political party chairs to certify June primary candidates to ELECT and, for local offices, to local electoral board	Nov Elections
2016	April 9 or 11, 2016	Pre-filing deadline for local-level caucuses	State Convention
2016	April 15th	State Board of Elections (SBE) Filing Deadline for 1/1 to 3/31	State Finance

2016	April 15th	FEC Quarterly Report 1/1-3/31 due (if filing quarterly)	Federal Finance (Quarterly)
2016	Mid-April (4/16/16 or 4/18/16)	Local-level caucuses for CD/state convention held	State Convention
2016	April 20th	FEC Report for 3/1-3/31 due (if filing monthly)	Federal Finance (Monthly)
2016	April 28th	Earliest Political Parties may nominate candidates for November elections by method other than a primary	Nov Elections
2016	May 3rd	Municipal General Election Day	May Elections
2016	May 7, 14, or 21, 2016	CD Convention	State Convention
2016	May 20th	FEC Report for 4/1-4/30 due (if filing monthly)	Federal Finance
2016	June 14th	Primary Day for November Elections	Nov Elections
2016	June 14th	Deadline for political parties to nominate Nov election candidates by method other than primary (or Ind candidates to file)	Nov Elections
2016	June 18th	State Convention	State Convention
2016	June 19th	5 PM Deadline for political party chairs to certify non-primary nominees for November offices to ELECT and, for local offices, to ELECT and the secretary of the local electoral board	Nov Elections
2016	June 20th	FEC Report for 5/1-5/31 due (if filing monthly)	Federal Finance (Monthly)
2016	June 20th	Local Committee Secretary must submit local committee membership list to the DPVA.	DPVA Bylaws
2016	July or August	Endorse candidates for non-partisan municipal office (if any)	Nov Elections
2016	July 4th	Consider walking in local parades, either with candidates or separately as a party	Local Events
2016	July 15th	SBE Filing Deadline for 4/1 to 6/30	State Finance
2016	July 15th	FEC Quarterly Report 4/1-6/30 due (if filing quarterly)	Federal Finance (Quarterly)
2016	July 20th	FEC Report for 6/1-6/30 due (if filing monthly)	Federal Finance (Monthly)
2016	August 20th	FEC Report for 7/1-7/31 due (if filing monthly)	Federal Finance (Monthly)
2016	Late August through September	Back To School Nights occur (schedule varies by locality) – these should be flyer'd	Local Events
2016	September 20th	FEC Report for 8/1-8/31 due (if filing monthly)	Federal Finance (Monthly)
2016	October 15th	FEC Quarterly Report 7/1-9/30 due (if filing quarterly)	Federal Finance (Quarterly)
2016	October 15th	SBE Filing Deadline for 7/1 to 9/30	State Finance
2016	October 17th	Deadline to register to vote in the November general election	Nov Elections
2016	October 20th	FEC Report for 9/1-9/3 due (if filing monthly)	Federal Finance (Monthly)
2016	October 23rd	FEC Pre-Election report (10/1-10/15) due	Federal Finance
2016	October 31st	Consider participating in any local Halloween activities, either with candidates or separately as a party	Local Events
2016	November 1st	5PM Deadline for Absentee Ballot Request forms	Nov Elections

2016	November 8th	November General Election Day	Nov Elections
2016	Immediately following previous Nov Election	Determine if any special elections will be held (because a winning candidate held lower office). If so, you may need to plan a nominating or endorsement process.	Special Elections
2016	December 4th	Post-Election FEC filing (10/16-11/24) due	Federal Finance
2017	Early January	Earliest filing date for Independents running in November	Nov Elections
2017	January 15th	Deadline to appoint members to state legislative nominating committees	Legislative Nominations
2017	January 15th	SBE Filing Deadline for 10/1 to 12/31	State Finance
2017	January 15th	Deadline to submit Electoral Board recommendations (if applicable this year).	Electoral Board
2017	January 20th	Local Committee Secretary must submit local committee membership list to the DPVA.	DPVA Bylaws
2017	January 22nd	Deadline to submit Election Officer Recommendations to the Electoral Board.	Electoral Board
2017	January 31st	FEC Year-End Report due	Federal Finance
2017	February 1st	Deadline for nominating committees to meet, pick Chair, and provide contact info to SBE	Legislative Nominations
2017	Early February	Earliest party chairs can request primaries for November General Election	Nov Elections
2017	February 20th	FEC Report for 1/1-1/31 due (if filing monthly)	Federal Finance (Monthly)
2017	Late February	Deadline for political party chairs to request a primary as the party's method of nomination for an office elected in the November General Election	Local Nominations
2017	Late February	Deadline for nominating committees to request SBE run a primary for their nomination for November Election	Legislative Nominations
2017	March 20th	FEC Report for 2/1-2/28 due (if filing monthly)	Federal Finance (Monthly)
2017	Late March	5 PM Deadline for local office June primary candidates to file certificate of candidate qualification and, if applicable, statements of economic interests with his/her local general registrar and declaration, petitions and primary filing fee receipt with his/her local political party chairman	Nov Elections
2017	Late March/Early April	5 PM Deadline for political party chairs to certify June primary candidates to ELECT and, for local offices, to local electoral board	Nov Elections
2017	Early Spring	Congressional District Committee Elections/Reorganization	State Party Reorg
2017	April 15th	State Board of Elections Filing Deadline for 1/1 to 3/31	State Finance
2017	April 20th	FEC Report for 3/1-3/31 due (if filing monthly)	Federal Finance (Monthly)
2017	Late April	Earliest Political Parties may nominate candidates for November elections by method other than a primary	Nov Elections
2017	Late Spring	DPVA Reorganizational Meeting & State Party Officer elections	State Party Reorg
2017	May 20th	FEC Report for 4/1-4/30 due (if filing monthly)	Federal Finance (Monthly)
2017	June 13th	Primary Day for November Elections	Nov Elections

2017	June 13th	7 PM Deadline for political parties to nominate Nov election candidates by method other than primary (or Ind candidates to file)	Local & Legislative Nominations
2017	Mid-June (probably the 18th)	5 PM Deadline for political party chairs to certify non-primary nominees for November offices to ELECT and, for local offices, to ELECT and the secretary of the local electoral board	Local & Legislative Nominations
2017	June 20th	FEC Report for 5/1-5/31 due (if filing monthly)	Federal Finance (Monthly)
2017	July 4th	Consider walking in local parades, either with candidates or separately as a party	Local Events
2017	July 15th	State Board of Elections Filing Deadline for 4/1 to 6/30	State Finance
2017	July 20th	FEC Report for 6/1-6/30 due (if filing monthly)	Federal Finance (Monthly)
2017	July 31st	FEC Mid-Year Report for 1/1-6/30 (if filing semi-annually)	Federal Finance (Semi-Annual)
2017	August 20th	FEC Report for 7/1-7/31 due (if filing monthly)	Federal Finance (Monthly)
2017	Late August through September	Back To School Nights occur (schedule varies by locality) – these should be flyerred	Local Events
2017	September 20th	FEC Report for 8/1-8/31 due (if filing monthly)	Federal Finance (Monthly)
2017	October 15th	SBE Filing Deadline for 7/1 to 9/30	State Finance
2017	Mid-October (Probably the 16th)	Deadline to register to vote in the November general election	Nov Elections
2017	October 20th	FEC Report for 9/1-9/30 due (if filing monthly)	Federal Finance (Monthly)
2017	October 31st	5PM Deadline for Absentee Ballot Request forms	Nov Elections
2017	October 31st	Consider participating in any local Halloween activities, either with candidates or separately as a party	Local Events
2017	November 7th	November General Election Day	Nov Elections
2017	November 15th	Set date for Reorganization meeting (between 12/1-1/15) and inform DPVA.	Reorganization
2017	November 20th	FEC Report for 10/1-10/31 due (if filing monthly)	Federal Finance (Monthly)
2017	December 1st	Begin Reorganization Period	Reorganization
2017	December 20th	FEC Report for 11/1-11/30 due (if filing monthly)	Federal Finance (Monthly)
2018	January 15th	Deadline to complete reorganization.	Reorganization
2018	January 15th	SBE Filing Deadline for 10/1 to 12/31	State Finance
2018	January 15th	Deadline to submit Electoral Board recommendations (if applicable this year).	Electoral Board
2018	January 20th	Local Committee Secretary must submit local committee membership list to the DPVA.	DPVA Bylaws
2018	January 22nd	Deadline to submit Election Officer Recommendations to the Electoral Board.	Electoral Board
2018	January 31st	FEC Year-End Report due	Federal Finance

Code of Virginia (State Law)

The section of state law that relates to elections and political parties is:

Title 24.2 - ELECTIONS.

Chapter 1	General Provisions and Administration (§§ 24.2-100 thru 24.2-123)
Chapter 2	Federal, Commonwealth, and Local Officers (§§ 24.2-200 thru 24.2-238)
Chapter 3	Election Districts, Precincts, and Polling Places (§§ 24.2-300 thru 24.2-313)
Chapter 4	Voter Registration (§§ 24.2-400 thru 24.2-447)
Chapter 4.1	Uniform Military and Overseas Voter Act (§§ 24.2-451 through 24.2-470)
Chapter 5	Candidates for Office (§§ 24.2-500 thru 24.2-545)
Chapter 6	The Election (§§ 24.2-600 thru 24.2-687)
Chapter 7	Absentee Voting (§§ 24.2-700 thru 24.2-713)
Chapter 8	Recounts and Contested Elections (§§ 24.2-800 thru 24.2-814)
Chapter 9	Campaign Finance Disclosure Act [Repealed] (§§ 24.2-900 thru 24.2-930)
Chapter 9.2	Disclosure Requirements for Political Campaign Advertisements (§§ 24.2-941 thru 24.2-944)
Chapter 9.3	Campaign Finance Disclosure Act of 2006 (§§ 24.2-945 through 24.2-953.5)
Chapter 9.4	Campaign Fundraising; Legislative Sessions (§ 24.2-954)
Chapter 9.5	Political Campaign Advertisements (§§ 24.2-955 through 24.2-959.1)
Chapter 10	Election Offenses Generally; Penalties (§§ 24.2-1000 thru 24.2-1019)

Code Of Virginia Sections Applicable to Chairs and Local Committees

§ 24.2-106. Appointment and terms; vacancies; chairman and secretary; certain prohibitions; training.

There shall be in each county and city an electoral board composed of three members who shall be appointed by a majority of the circuit judges of the judicial circuit for the county or city. If a majority of the judges cannot agree, the senior judge shall make the appointment. Any vacancy occurring on a board shall be filled by the same authority for the unexpired term. In the event of the temporary absence, or disability that precludes the performance of duties, of one or more members that prevents attaining a quorum, the senior judge, for good cause, may appoint, on a meeting to meeting basis, a temporary member to the electoral board. The temporary appointee must be eligible for appointment and to the extent practicable maintain representation of political parties under § 24.2-106. The clerk of the circuit court shall send to the State Board a copy of each order making an appointment to an electoral board.

In the appointment of the electoral board, representation shall be given to each of the two political parties having the highest and next highest number of votes in the Commonwealth for Governor at the last preceding gubernatorial election. Two electoral board members shall be of the political party that cast the highest number of votes for Governor at that election. When the Governor was not elected as the candidate of a political party, representation shall be given to each of the political parties having the highest and next highest number of members of the General Assembly at the time of the appointment and two board members shall be of the political party having the highest number of members in the General Assembly. The political party entitled to the appointment shall make and file recommendations with the judges for the appointment not later than January 15 of the year of an appointment to a full term or, in the case of an appointment to fill a vacancy, within 30 days of the date of death or notice of resignation of the member being replaced. Its recommendations shall contain the names of at least three qualified voters of the county or city for each appointment. The judges shall promptly make such appointment (i) after receipt of the political party's recommendation or (ii) after January 15 for a full term or after the 30-day period expires for a vacancy appointment, whichever of the events described in clause (i) or (ii) first occurs.

The circuit judges of the judicial circuit for the county or city shall not appoint to the electoral board (i) any person who is the spouse of an electoral board member or the general registrar for the county or city, (ii) any person, or the spouse

of any person, who is the parent, grandparent, sibling, child, or grandchild of an electoral board member or the general registrar of the county or city, or (iii) any person who is ineligible to serve under the provisions of this section.

Electoral board members shall serve three-year terms and be appointed to staggered terms, one term to expire at midnight on the last day of February each year. No three-year term shall be shortened to comply with the political party representation requirements of this section.

The board shall elect one of its members as chairman and another as secretary. The chairman and the secretary shall represent different political parties, unless the representative of the second-ranked political party declines in writing to accept the unfilled office. At any time that the secretary is incapacitated in such a way that makes it impossible for the secretary to carry out the duties of the position, the board may designate one of its other members as acting secretary. Any such designation shall be made in an open meeting and recorded in the minutes of the board.

The secretary of the electoral board shall immediately notify the State Board of any change in the membership or officers of the electoral board and shall keep the Board informed of the name, residence and mailing addresses, and home and business telephone numbers of each electoral board member.

No member of an electoral board shall be eligible to offer for or hold an office to be filled in whole or in part by qualified voters of his jurisdiction. If a member resigns to offer for or hold such office, the vacancy shall be filled as provided in this section.

No member of an electoral board shall be the spouse, grandparent, parent, sibling, child, or grandchild, or the spouse of a grandparent, parent, sibling, child, or grandchild, of a candidate for or holder of an elective office filled in whole or in part by any voters within the jurisdiction of the electoral board.

No member of an electoral board shall serve as the chairman of a state, local or district level political party committee or as a paid worker in the campaign of a candidate for nomination or election to an office filled by election in whole or in part by the qualified voters of the jurisdiction of the electoral board.

At least one member of the electoral board shall attend an annual training program provided by the State Board.

§ 24.2-115. Appointment, qualifications, and terms of officers of election.

Each electoral board at its regular meeting in the first week of February of the year in which the terms of officers of election are scheduled to expire shall appoint officers of election. Their terms of office shall begin on March 1 following their appointment and continue, at the discretion of the electoral board, for a term not to exceed three years or until their successors are appointed.

Not less than three competent citizens shall be appointed for each precinct. However, a precinct having more than 4,000 registered voters shall have not less than five officers of election serving for a presidential election, and the electoral board shall appoint additional officers as needed to satisfy this requirement. Insofar as practicable, each officer shall be a qualified voter of the precinct he is appointed to serve, but in any case a qualified voter of the Commonwealth. In appointing the officers of election, representation shall be given to each of the two political parties having the highest and next highest number of votes in the Commonwealth for Governor at the last preceding gubernatorial election. The representation of the two parties shall be equal at each precinct having an even number of officers and shall vary by no more than one at each precinct having an odd number of officers. If practicable, officers shall be appointed from lists of nominations filed by the political parties entitled to appointments. The party shall file its nominations with the secretary of the electoral board at least 10 days before February 1 each year. The electoral board may appoint additional citizens who do not represent any political party to serve as officers. If practicable, no more than one-third of the total number of officers appointed for each precinct may be citizens who do not represent any political party.

Officers of election shall serve for all elections held in their respective precincts during their terms of office unless a substitute is required to be appointed pursuant to § 24.2-117 or the electoral board decides that fewer officers are needed for a particular election, in which case party representation shall be maintained as provided above. For a primary election involving only one political party, persons representing the political party holding the primary shall serve as the officers of election if possible.

The electoral board shall designate one officer as the chief officer of election and one officer as the assistant for each precinct. The officer designated as the assistant for a precinct, whenever practicable, shall not represent the same political party as the chief officer for the precinct. Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, where representatives for one or both of the two political parties having the largest number of votes for Governor in the last preceding gubernatorial election are unavailable, the electoral board may designate as the chief officer and the assistant chief officer citizens who do not represent any political party. In such case, the electoral board shall provide notice to representatives of both parties at least 10 days prior to the election that it intends to use nonaffiliated officers so that each party shall have the opportunity to provide additional nominations. The electoral board may also appoint at least one officer of election who reports to the precinct at least one hour prior to the closing of the precinct and whose primary responsibility is to assist with closing the precinct and reporting the results of the votes at the precinct.

The electoral board shall instruct each chief officer and assistant in his duties not less than three nor more than 30 days before each election. Each electoral board may instruct each officer of election in his duties at an appropriate time or times before each November general election, and shall conduct training of the officers of election consistent with the standards set by the State Board pursuant to subsection B of § 24.2-103. Each electoral board shall certify to the State Board that such training has been conducted every four years.

Notwithstanding the provisions of § 24.2-117, if an officer of election is unable to serve at any election during his term of office, the electoral board may at any time appoint a substitute who shall hold office and serve for the unexpired term.

Additional officers shall be appointed in accordance with this section at any time that the electoral board determines that they are needed or as required by law.

If practicable, substitute officers or additional officers appointed after the electoral board's regular meeting in the first week of February shall be appointed from lists of nominations filed by the political parties entitled to appointments. The electoral board shall inform the political parties of its decision to make such appointments and the party shall file its nominations with the secretary of the electoral board within five business days.

The secretary of the electoral board shall prepare a list of the officers of election that shall be available for inspection and posted in the general registrar's office prior to March 1 each year. Whenever substitute or additional officers are appointed, the secretary shall promptly add the names of the appointees to the public list. Upon request and at a reasonable charge not to exceed the actual cost incurred, the secretary shall provide a copy of the list of the officers of election, including their party designation and precinct to which they are assigned, to any requesting political party or candidate.

§ 24.2-428.2. Return of registered voter to active status.

A registered voter shall be returned to active status from inactive status if, during the period beginning on the date the voter was assigned to inactive status and ending on the day of the second general election for federal office thereafter, the voter:

1. Notifies the general registrar of a change of address within the county or city;
2. Responds to a confirmation notice with information that the voter continues to reside at the registration address;
3. Votes or attempts to vote in a primary or a special or general election and, if necessary, corrects the registration record; or
4. Transfers his registration to another county or city within the Commonwealth, pursuant to § 24.2-424 or subsection E of § 24.2-428.

If the registered voter fails to take such action on or before the day of the second general election for federal office after the voter was placed on inactive status, the general registrar shall cancel the person's voter registration.

The general registrar shall post at the courthouse or have published in a newspaper of general circulation in his county or city a list of names of persons whose registration has been cancelled pursuant to this section. He shall deliver or mail, obtaining a certificate of mailing, a certified copy of the list to the chairman of each political party in his county or city.

§ 24.2-429. Maintenance of accurate registration records by general registrar; notice and hearing before cancellation.

Whenever a registered voter is alleged to be improperly registered, except for reason of removal of residence from the precinct, either by the general registrar or by any three qualified voters of the county or city who make such an allegation

to the general registrar, the registrar shall post at the courthouse or publish in a newspaper of general circulation in his county or city the name of the registered voter on a list of persons whose registrations are to be cancelled by the general registrar. The list shall be certified by the registrar and delivered or sent by mail to the county or city chairman of each political party. If sent by mail, the general registrar shall obtain a certificate of mailing. In addition to the posted or published list, the general registrar shall send a notice by mail to the last known address of each registered voter on the list, stating the reasons provided by law for the cancellation, the facts on which the cancellation is based, and when the registrar, at his office during regular office hours, will hear testimony produced for or against the right of persons named in the notice to be retained on the registration records. The hearings shall be held not less than ten days after the mailing of the notice, and in no event shall be within sixty days of the general election in November or within thirty days of any other election in the county or city.

At the hearing, the registrar shall hear the testimony produced and shall determine if the registered voter named in the notice is qualified to vote in the county or city. If the person is no longer qualified to vote, the registrar shall cancel the voter's registration. Nothing contained in this section shall prevent the registered voter from applying to the general registrar for a transfer to his proper jurisdiction, provided the registration records are not closed as provided by law. The general registrar may continue the hearing for a period of not more than thirty days in order to complete his examination. If the registered voter so challenged fails to appear and defend his right to be registered, his registration shall be cancelled by the general registrar.

§ 24.2-508. Powers of political parties in general.

Each political party shall have the power to (i) make its own rules and regulations, (ii) call conventions to proclaim a platform, ratify a nomination, or for any other purpose, (iii) provide for the nomination of its candidates, including the nomination of its candidates for office in case of any vacancy, (iv) provide for the nomination and election of its state, county, city, and district committees, and (v) perform all other functions inherent in political party organizations.

§ 24.2-509. Party to determine method of nominating its candidates for office; exceptions.

A. The duly constituted authorities of the state political party shall have the right to determine the method by which a party nomination for a member of the United States Senate or for any statewide office shall be made. The duly constituted authorities of the political party for the district, county, city, or town in which any other office is to be filled shall have the right to determine the method by which a party nomination for that office shall be made.

B. Notwithstanding subsection A, the following provisions shall apply to the determination of the method of making party nominations. A party shall nominate its candidate for election for a General Assembly district where there is only one incumbent of that party for the district by the method designated by that incumbent, or absent any designation by him by the method of nomination determined by the party. A party shall nominate its candidates for election for a General Assembly district where there is more than one incumbent of that party for the district by a primary unless all the incumbents consent to a different method of nomination. A party, whose candidate at the immediately preceding election for a particular office other than the General Assembly (i) was nominated by a primary or filed for a primary but was not opposed and (ii) was elected at the general election, shall nominate a candidate for the next election for that office by a primary unless all incumbents of that party for that office consent to a different method.

When, under any of the foregoing provisions, no incumbents offer as candidates for reelection to the same office, the method of nomination shall be determined by the political party.

For the purposes of this subsection, any officeholder who offers for reelection to the same office shall be deemed an incumbent notwithstanding that the district which he represents differs in part from that for which he offers for election.

§ 24.2-510. Deadlines for parties to nominate by methods other than primary.

For any office, nominations by political parties by methods other than a primary shall be made and completed in the manner prescribed by law according to the following schedule:

1. For a general election in November, by 7:00 p.m. on the second Tuesday in June;
2. For a general election in May, by 7:00 p.m. on the first Tuesday in March;

3. For a special election held at the same time as a November general election, either (i) at least 81 days before the election or (ii) if the special election is held at the second November election after the vacancy occurred, by 7:00 p.m. on the second Tuesday in June before that November election;

4. For a special election held at the same time as a May general election, by 7:00 p.m. on the first Tuesday in March; or

5. For a special election held at a time other than a general election, (i) at least 60 days before the election or (ii) within five days of any writ of election or order calling a special election to be held less than 60 days after the issuance of the writ or order.

In the case of all general elections a party shall nominate its candidate for any office by a nonprimary method only within the 47 days immediately preceding the primary date established for nominating candidates for the office in question. This limitation shall have no effect, however, on nominations for special elections or pursuant to § 24.2-539.

§ 24.2-511. Party chairman or official to certify candidates to State Board and secretary of electoral board; failure to certify.

A. The state, district, or other appropriate party chairman shall certify the name of any candidate who has been nominated by his party by a method other than a primary for any office to be elected by the qualified voters of (i) the Commonwealth at large, (ii) a congressional district or a General Assembly district, or (iii) political subdivisions jointly electing a shared constitutional officer, along with the date of the nomination of the candidate, to the State Board not later than five days after the last day for nominations to be made. The State Board shall notify the secretaries of every electoral board of the names of the candidates to appear on the ballot for such offices.

B. The party chairman of the district or political subdivision in which any other office is to be filled shall certify the name of any candidate for that office who has been nominated by his party by a method other than a primary to the State Board and to the secretary or secretaries of the electoral boards of the cities and counties in which the name of the candidate will appear on the ballot not later than five days after the last day for nominations to be made. Should the party chairman fail to make such certification, the State Board shall declare that the candidate is the nominee of the particular party and direct that his name be treated as if certified by the party chairman.

C. In the case of a nomination for any office to be filled by a special election, the party chairman shall certify the name of any candidate (i) by the deadline to nominate the candidate or (ii) not later than five days after the deadline if it is a special election held at the second November election after the vacancy occurred.

D. No further notice of candidacy or petition shall be required of a candidate once the party chairman has certified his name to the State Board.

E. In no case shall the individual who is a candidate for an office be the person who certifies the name of the party candidate for that same office. In such case the party shall designate an alternate official to certify its candidate.

§ 24.2-516. Party to furnish names of chairmen and notify State Board of adoption of direct primary.

Each political party within the Commonwealth shall furnish to the State Board the names and addresses of its state, county, and city party chairmen in January of each year, and during the remainder of the year it shall notify the Board of any changes in such names and addresses.

At least 135 days prior to the regular date for a primary, the Board shall inquire of each state chairman and each county and city chairman whether a direct primary has been adopted. The Board shall advise each chairman that notification to the Board of the adoption of a direct primary is required and must be filed with the Board not more than 125 days and not less than 105 days before the date set for the primaries.

Each chairman shall file timely written notice with the Board whether or not a primary has been adopted and identify each office for which a primary has been adopted. The requirement to notify the Board of the adoption of a direct primary shall be satisfied when the Board receives by the deadline (i) written notice from the appropriate party chairman or (ii) a copy of the written notice from an incumbent officeholder to his party chairman of the incumbent's selection, pursuant to § 24.2-509, of the primary as the method of nomination.

§ 24.2-518. County and city treasurers to pay primary expenses; certain uses of machinery by party.

The treasurer of the county or city in which the elections are held shall pay the costs of primary elections.

A political party may hold an election to select the members of its party committee at the same time and in the same places as a primary election without fee or charge for making use of the electoral machinery, provided that a primary to nominate the party's candidate for an office is in fact conducted on that primary date. Such elections for party committee members may be conducted by paper ballots or by voting machines in the discretion of the local electoral board.

The proper political party committee shall pay the costs of using the election machinery at any other time for the purpose of conducting other nominating procedures adopted pursuant to the rules of that party, if such use is authorized by the officials having custody of the machinery.

§ 24.2-521. Petition required to accompany declaration; number of signatures required.

A candidate for nomination by primary for any office shall be required to file with his declaration of candidacy a petition for his name to be printed on the official primary ballot, on a form prescribed by the State Board, signed by the number of qualified voters specified below after January 1 of the year in which the election is held or before or after said date in the case of a March primary, and listing the residence address of each such voter. Each signature on the petition shall have been witnessed by a person who is himself a legal resident of the Commonwealth and who is not a minor or a felon whose voting rights have not been restored and whose affidavit to that effect appears on each page of the petition.

Each voter signing the petition may provide on the petition the last four digits of his social security number, if any; however, noncompliance with this requirement shall not be cause to invalidate the voter's signature on the petition.

The minimum number of signatures of qualified voters required for primary candidate petitions shall be as follows:

1. For a candidate for the United States Senate, Governor, Lieutenant Governor, or Attorney General, 10,000 signatures, including the signatures of at least 400 qualified voters from each congressional district in the Commonwealth;
2. For a candidate for the United States House of Representatives, 1,000 signatures;
3. For a candidate for the Senate of Virginia, 250 signatures;
4. For a candidate for the House of Delegates or for a constitutional office, 125 signatures;
5. For a candidate for membership on the governing body of any county or city, 125 signatures; or if from an election district not at large containing 1,000 or fewer registered voters, 50 signatures;
6. For a candidate for membership on the governing body of any town which has more than 1,500 registered voters, 125 signatures; or if from a ward or other district not at large, 25 signatures;
7. For membership on the governing body of any town which has 1,500 or fewer registered voters, no petition shall be required; and
8. For any other candidate, 50 signatures.

§ 24.2-527. Chairman or official to furnish State Board and local electoral boards with names of candidates and certify petition signature requirements met.

A. It shall be the duty of the chairman or chairmen of the several committees of the respective parties to furnish the name of any candidate for nomination for any office to be elected by the qualified voters of the Commonwealth at large or of a congressional district or of a General Assembly district to the State Board, and to furnish the name of any candidate for any other office to the State Board and to the electoral boards charged with the duty of preparing and printing the primary ballots. In furnishing the name of any such candidate, the chairman shall certify that a review of the filed candidate petitions found the required minimum number of signatures of qualified voters for that office to have been met. The chairman shall also certify the order and date and time of filing for purposes of printing the ballots as prescribed in § 24.2-528, provided that the State Board shall determine the order and date and time of filing for

candidates for United States Senator, Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Attorney General for such purposes. Each chairman shall comply with the provisions of this section not less than 70 days before the primary.

B. In no case shall the individual who is a candidate for an office be the person who certifies the names of candidates for a primary for that same office. In such case the party shall designate an alternate official to certify the candidates.

§ 24.2-536. Procedure when a vacancy in office occurs less than 75 days before primary date.

Whenever, by reason of the death, resignation, or removal of the incumbent, a vacancy in any office occurs less than 75 but more than 45 days before the regular date for the holding of a primary, the properly constituted party authorities may permit the filing of declarations and petitions of candidacy for nomination for that office in the primary. Notice of the vacancy and the right to file declarations and petitions of candidacy for nomination to fill it shall be advertised by the party committee or committees in at least one newspaper of general circulation within the Commonwealth if it is an office filled by election by the people at large, and in the manner prescribed by the properly constituted party authorities in the case of all other offices. No declaration and petitions of candidacy shall be filed with the committee or committees until such advertisement is made, nor within 35 days prior to the date for holding the primary. Declarations and petitions of candidacy filed pursuant to this section shall comply in every respect, except for the time of filing, with the requirements established generally for such declarations and petitions in this article.

If more than one person qualifies, the party chairman shall promptly certify their names to the State Board and the appropriate electoral boards as having qualified under the provisions of this section. The electoral boards having charge of the printing of the official ballots for the primary shall either:

1. Cause to be printed on the ballot the name of each person so certified; or
2. If the official ballots have already been printed, cause separate ballots to be printed for the office for which the persons have qualified pursuant to this section.

In the event that only one person qualifies as a candidate under the provisions of this section, the person so qualifying shall be declared the nominee of his party for that office and his name shall not be printed on the primary ballot.

In the event that no person qualifies as a candidate under the provisions of this section, or that the vacancy occurs less than 45 days before the primary, the appropriate committee of the political party shall determine the time and method of nominating its candidate for the office.

§ 24.2-537. Procedure when nominee by default dies or withdraws or nomination is set aside prior to primary.

A. If any person who would have been nominated as the candidate of a political party for any office in any general election by reason of the fact that he was the only person who filed the required declaration of and petition for candidacy dies or withdraws as the party candidate, or his nomination is set aside for any reason, 45 days or more before the day on which the primary would have been held if two or more candidates had qualified, the appropriate committee of the political party shall determine the time and method of nominating its candidate for the office.

B. If the party committee determines that the party's nominee shall be elected at the scheduled primary, any person desiring to become a candidate for nomination by the party at that primary who is otherwise qualified may file a declaration of and petition for his candidacy with the proper chairman of his party committee. No person whose nomination has been set aside for fraud knowingly participated in by the candidate, or other person who knowingly participated in such fraud, shall be deemed qualified. The declaration and petition shall comply in every respect with the requirements established generally for such declarations and petitions in this article, except that the declaration and petition shall be filed at least 35 days before the day on which the primary is to be held.

If more than one person qualifies, the party chairman shall promptly certify their names to the State Board and the appropriate electoral boards as having qualified under the provisions of this section. The electoral boards having charge of the printing of the official ballots for the primary election shall either:

1. Cause to be printed thereon the name of every person so certified; or
2. If the official ballots have already been printed, cause separate ballots to be printed for the office for which two or more persons have qualified pursuant to the provisions of this section.

In the event that only one person qualifies as a candidate in accordance with the provisions of this section, the person so qualifying shall be declared the nominee of his party for that office and his name shall not be printed on the primary ballot.

In the event that no person qualifies as a candidate pursuant to the provisions of this section, or that the death or withdrawal or setting aside of candidacy of any such party nominee should occur at a time which is less than 45 days prior to any such primary, the appropriate committee of the political party shall determine the time and method of nominating its candidate for the office.

C. No party shall nominate any person whose nomination has been set aside for fraud knowingly participated in by the candidate, or any other person who knowingly participated in such fraud.

§ 24.2-538. Procedure when opposed candidate for nomination dies prior to primary.

If any person who is a candidate for nomination by a political party at a primary election, and who, along with one or more other candidates, has qualified to have his name printed on the official ballot for the primary, dies 45 days or more before the day on which the primary is to be held, any person otherwise qualified who desires to be a candidate at that primary may file a declaration of and petition for his candidacy with the proper chairman of his party committee. The declaration and petition shall comply in every respect with the requirements established generally for such declarations and petitions by this article, except that the declaration and petition shall be filed at least 35 days before the day on which the primary is to be held.

The party chairman or chairmen shall promptly certify the names of every such person to the State Board and appropriate electoral boards as having qualified under the provisions of this section. Every electoral board having charge of the printing of official ballots for the primary election shall either:

1. Cause to be printed thereon the name of every person so certified; or
2. If the official ballots have already been printed, cause separate ballots to be printed for the office containing the names of those candidates other than the decedent who have theretofore qualified and the names of those certified to it as having qualified pursuant to the provisions of this section. The board may, in its discretion, cause to be stricken from the ballots already printed the title of the office involved and the names of all candidates for nomination for the office appearing thereon.

Whenever any additional candidate shall qualify pursuant to this section, no ballots theretofore cast by absentee vote for a candidate for such office shall be counted, but any person who has so voted shall be entitled to receive a new ballot and to vote for his choice among all the candidates for such office.

§ 24.2-539. Party may nominate when nominee dies, withdraws, or nomination is set aside; duty of party chairman.

Should the nominee of any party die, withdraw, or have his nomination set aside for any reason, the party may nominate to fill the vacancy in accordance with its own rules. A candidate who has been disqualified for failing to meet the filing requirements of Article 1 (§ 24.2-500 et seq.) of this chapter shall not be renominated. No party shall renominate any person whose nomination has been set aside for fraud knowingly participated in by the candidate. The party chairman or chairmen shall promptly certify the name of any such nominee to the appropriate electoral boards and the nominee shall promptly comply with the filing requirements of Article 1 of this chapter.

§ 24.2-540. Other parties may also nominate; independent candidates.

Any other political party may also nominate and file the required notice of a new candidate pursuant to § 24.2-539 if the candidate who died, withdrew, or had his nomination set aside was unopposed by that party. A nonparty candidate shall also be permitted to file a notice of candidacy whether or not the candidate who died, withdrew, or had his nomination set aside was opposed by a nonparty or party candidate.

Any such party or nonparty candidate shall file any statement or petition required of him by Article 1 (§ 24.2-500 et seq.) or Article 2 (§ 24.2-505 et seq.) of this chapter.

§ 24.2-604. Prohibited activities at polls; notice of prohibited area; electioneering; presence of representatives of parties or candidates; simulated elections; observers; news media; penalties.

C. The officers of election shall permit one authorized representative of each political party or independent candidate in a general or special election, or one authorized representative of each candidate in a primary election, to remain in the room in which the election is being conducted at all times. A representative may serve part of the day and be replaced by successive representatives. The officers of election shall have discretion to permit up to three authorized representatives of each political party or independent candidate in a general or special election, or up to three authorized representatives of each candidate in a primary election, to remain in the room in which the election is being conducted. The officers shall permit one such representative for each pollbook station. However, no more than one such representative for each pollbook station or three representatives of any political party or independent candidate, whichever number is larger, shall be permitted in the room at any one time. Each authorized representative shall be a qualified voter of any jurisdiction of the Commonwealth. Each representative shall present to the officers of election a written statement designating him to be a representative of the party or candidate and signed by the county or city chairman of his political party, the independent candidate, or the primary candidate, as appropriate. If the county or city chairman is unavailable to sign such a written designation, such a designation may be made by the state or district chairman of the political party. However, no written designation made by a state or district chairman shall take precedence over a written designation made by the county or city chairman. Such statement, bearing the chairman's or candidate's original signature, may be photocopied, and such photocopy shall be as valid as if the copy had been signed. No candidate whose name is printed on the ballot shall serve as a representative of a party or candidate for purposes of this section. Authorized representatives shall be allowed, whether in a regular polling place or central absentee voter precinct, to be close enough to the voter check-in table to be able to hear and see what is occurring; however, such observation shall not violate the secret vote provision of Article II, Section 3 of the Constitution of Virginia or otherwise interfere with the orderly process of the election. Any representative who complains to the chief officer of election that he is unable to hear or see the process may accept the chief officer's decision or, if dissatisfied, he may immediately appeal the decision to the local electoral board. Authorized representatives shall be allowed, whether in a regular polling place or central absentee voter precinct, to use a handheld wireless communications device, but shall not be allowed to use such a device to capture a digital image inside the polling place or central absentee voter precinct. The officers of election may prohibit the use of cellular telephones or other handheld wireless communications devices if such use will result in a violation of subsection A or D or § 24.2-607. Authorized representatives shall not be allowed in any case to provide assistance to any voter as permitted under § 24.2-649 or to wear any indication that they are authorized to assist voters either inside the polling place or within 40 feet of any entrance to the polling place.

§ 24.2-633. Notice of final testing of voting system; sealing equipment.

Before the final testing of voting or counting machines for any election, the electoral board shall mail written notice (i) to the chairman of the local committee of each political party, or (ii) in a primary election, to the chairman of the local committee of the political party holding the primary, or (iii) in a city or town council election in which no candidate is a party nominee and which is held when no other election having party nominees is being conducted, to the candidates.

The notice shall state the time and place where the machine will be tested and state that the political party or candidate receiving the notice may have one representative present while the equipment is tested.

At the time stated in the notice, the representatives, if present, shall be afforded an opportunity to see that the equipment is in proper condition for use at the election. When a machine has been so examined by the representatives, it shall be sealed with a numbered seal in their presence, or if the machine cannot be sealed with a numbered seal, it shall be locked with a key. The representatives shall certify for each machine the number registered on the protective counter and the number on the seal. When no party or candidate representative is present, the custodian shall seal the machine as prescribed in this section in the presence of a member of the electoral board or its representative.

§ 24.2-653. Voter whose name does not appear on pollbook or who is marked as having voted; handling of provisional ballots; ballots cast after normal close of polls due to court order extending polling hours.

B. The provisional votes submitted pursuant to subsection A, in their unopened envelopes, shall be sealed in a special envelope marked "Provisional Votes," inscribed with the number of envelopes contained therein, and signed by the officers of election who counted them. All provisional votes envelopes shall be delivered either (i) to the clerk of the circuit court who shall deliver all such envelopes to the secretary of the electoral board or (ii) to the general registrar in localities in which the electoral board has directed delivery of election materials to the general registrar pursuant to § 24.2-668.

The electoral board shall meet on the day following the election and determine whether each person having submitted such a provisional vote was entitled to do so as a qualified voter in the precinct in which he offered the provisional vote. If the board is unable to determine the validity of all the provisional ballots offered in the election, or has granted any voter who has offered a provisional ballot an extension as provided in subsection A, the meeting shall stand adjourned, not to exceed seven calendar days from the date of the election, until the board has determined the validity of all provisional ballots offered in the election.

One authorized representative of each political party or independent candidate in a general or special election or one authorized representative of each candidate in a primary election shall be permitted to remain in the room in which the determination is being made as an observer so long as he does not participate in the proceedings and does not impede the orderly conduct of the determination. Each authorized representative shall be a qualified voter of any jurisdiction of the Commonwealth. Each representative, who is not himself a candidate or party chairman, shall present to the electoral board a written statement designating him to be a representative of the party or candidate and signed by the county or city chairman of his political party, the independent candidate, or the primary candidate, as appropriate. If the county or city chairman is unavailable to sign such a written designation, such a designation may be made by the state or district chairman of the political party. However, no written designation made by a state or district chairman shall take precedence over a written designation made by the county or city chairman. Such statement, bearing the chairman's or candidate's original signature, may be photocopied and such photocopy shall be as valid as if the copy had been signed. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (§ 2.2-3700 et seq.), attendance at meetings of the electoral board to determine the validity of provisional ballots shall be permitted only for the authorized representatives provided for in this subsection, for the persons whose provisional votes are being considered and their representative or legal counsel, and for appropriate staff and legal counsel for the electoral board.

If the electoral board determines that such person was not entitled to vote as a qualified voter in the precinct in which he offered the provisional vote, is unable to determine his right to vote, or has not been provided one of the forms of identification specified in subsection B of § 24.2-643, the envelope containing his ballot shall not be opened and his vote shall not be counted. The provisional vote shall be counted if (a) such person is entitled to vote in the precinct pursuant to § 24.2-401 or (b) the Department of Elections or the voter presents proof that indicates the voter submitted an application for registration to the Department of Motor Vehicles or other state-designated voter registration agency prior to the close of registration pursuant to § 24.2-416 and the registrar determines that the person was qualified for registration based upon the application for registration submitted by the person pursuant to subsection A. The general registrar shall notify in writing pursuant to § 24.2-114 those persons found not properly registered or whose provisional vote was not counted.

If the electoral board determines that such person was entitled to vote, the name of the voter shall be entered in a provisional votes pollbook and marked as having voted, the envelope shall be opened, and the ballot placed in a ballot container without any inspection further than that provided for in § 24.2-646.

On completion of its determination, the electoral board shall proceed to count such ballots and certify the results of its count. Its certified results shall be added to those found pursuant to § 24.2-671. No adjustment shall be made to the statement of results for the precinct in which the person offered to vote. However, any voter who cast a provisional ballot and is determined by the electoral board to have been entitled to vote shall have his name included on the list of persons who voted that is submitted to the Department of Elections pursuant to § 24.2-406.

The certification of the results of the count together with all ballots and envelopes, whether open or unopened, and other related material shall be delivered by the electoral board to the clerk of the circuit court and retained by him as provided for in §§ 24.2-668 and 24.2-669.

§ 24.2-655. Representatives of political parties and candidates to be present on request.

Before proceeding to ascertain the vote, the officers of election shall determine whether no more than two representatives of each political party having candidates in the election and one representative of each independent candidate or primary candidate request to be present while the absentee ballots are cast, votes are counted, and returns are completed.

Each representative shall be a qualified voter of any jurisdiction in the Commonwealth and shall present to the officers of election a written statement certifying that he is an authorized representative, signed by his party chairman for the jurisdiction in which the election is held, the independent candidate, or the candidate in a primary, as appropriate. If the party chairman for the jurisdiction in which the election is held is unavailable to sign such a written designation, such a designation may be made by the state or district chairman of the political party. However, no written designation made by a state or district chairman shall take precedence over a written designation made by the party chairman for the jurisdiction in which the election is held. Such representatives shall be entitled to be present while the votes are counted and shall remain until the returns are completed.

In case such representatives, or any of them, do not request to be present, the officers shall notify the bystanders, if any, and select one or more to be present with any available representatives of the parties or candidates so that there are as many as four bystanders and representatives present.

The representatives and bystanders lawfully present shall have an unobstructed view of the officers of election and their actions while the absentee ballots are cast, votes are counted, and returns are completed. The representatives and bystanders lawfully present are prohibited from interfering with the officers of election in any way.

Organizing Your Committee

Creating and update your bylaws

With an understanding of your legal responsibilities and state party plan requirements described in the previous chapter, it is up to you as the local party chair to organize your committee to best meet these requirements while not losing sight of the fact that your committee's purpose is to elect Democrats and expand the Democratic electorate. Once understood, many of these obligations can be delegated to allow the chair and officers to put more time into other activities. In many cases, you may be able to delegate much of the basic work to committee members, or your Treasurer, but the chair is ultimately responsible for carrying out the Party's obligations. In this chapter we discuss tools and best practices that exist to help you organize your committee.

I. BYLAWS

Each city/county has bylaws or rules that set forth the party plan of organization and govern the committee's operation. As the committee's chief executive officer, the Chair must develop a working knowledge of the bylaws. If you cannot find your committee's bylaws and the State Party does not have them on file, one of your first priorities as Chair will be to create and adopt bylaws. The State Party Plan requires that you submit your committee's bylaws to the State Headquarters within ninety (90) day of your election as Chair.

Recognize that your committee's bylaws are unique. Here are some items that are likely set out in yours:

- How frequently does the full Committee meet?
- What Officer positions exist and what are their roles and responsibilities? Is there flexibility to create additional Officers?
- What Standing Committees exist, what functions do they fulfill, and what is their membership? What guidance exists regarding Ad-Hoc or Special Committees?
- What can the Executive Committee do? What can only the full Committee do?

It is important that you review your bylaws, recognizing that at times it may make sense to modify your existing bylaws. You should also check to ensure your bylaws are in compliance with the State Party Plan.

II. EXECUTIVE OR STEERING COMMITTEE

Each local committee elects Officers who comprise the committee's Executive or Steering Committee.

Article 10.2 of the State Party Plan states that:

"Following the election of its members as provided herein, each new county or city committee shall elect a chair, secretary, treasurer, and such other officers as it deems necessary no later than January 15th."

Local Party Chairs are the glue that hold the local party together. He or she is responsible for calling meetings and ensuring the overall functionality of the local party. The Chair oversees the work of the Officers, volunteers, and any staff hired by the local party. Other responsibilities include overseeing candidate nomination processes, recruiting and developing future candidates, and serving as the local party spokesperson. The Chair also serves as liaison between the state party and the local party.

The treasurer has the job of tracking the contributions to and expenditures of the local party. He or she should provide a regular report of the financial activities to the committee. They are also responsible for filing campaign finance reports as required by state and federal election law.

The secretary's primary role is keeping the minutes of the proceedings of meetings of the local party committee. He or she is also responsible for committee correspondence and serves as custodian of the books, records and papers of the organization with the exception of the documents maintained by the treasurer. The secretary should also be in the habit of communicating to the state party important events so they can be publicized on the state party's website.

The State Party Plan allows local committees the flexibility to create additional officers. Your committee bylaws may state what these positions are or you bylaws may allow the Chair the flexibility to create Officer positions.

Other common Officer positions include:

- Executive Vice Chair – assists the Chair
- Finance – oversees fundraising efforts
- Outreach – develops and implements constituent outreach programs
- Communications – maintains the website, social media, and email system

- Voter Expansion – directs voter registration drives, restoration of rights programs, and voter education

Your Executive or Steering Committee should meet periodically, and a minimum frequency may be set out in your bylaws.

III. BUILDING A BETTER COMMITTEE

There are three major components to building a strong local committee: direction, organization and communication.

Direction

One of the most important tasks for a Chair is to define the committee's goals and objectives for each year. You should work with your Executive or Steering Committee in setting these goals.

A Chair cannot do everything. Running meetings, serving as party spokesperson, making sure things happen when they should and setting overall polity for the local party are more than enough to keep a local chair busy. That is why the most productive organizations put together a strategic plan that incorporates a budget, fundraising plan, communications plan, candidate recruitment plan, and campaign plan. Responsibilities are then delegated across Officers and Committees. See Chapter 5 for more on developing a strategic plan for your local committee.

Organization

The Chair should define the roles and responsibilities of officers and committees. It is important that there is clarity about what is expected in order for officers and committees to be successful.

Take a good look at your committee openings and the demographics of your locality when searching for new members. Be aggressive and enthusiastic when asking people to volunteer.

Communication

Communication among committee members helps insure a strong and active committee. There are several ways to maintain communication with your committee members:

- Hold **regular meetings**. Meeting on a regular schedule helps your committee members plan to attend.
- Establish an **email distribution list** so the committee can communicate quickly.
- Create and maintain a committee **website** that lists the latest news, upcoming events, and has links to elected Democrats in your locality.
- Establish a presence on **social media**, such as Facebook and Twitter, and post often.

D. RUNNING AN EFFECTIVE MEETING

Meetings should have an agenda and serve a purpose. They should help you implement your strategic plan. Often, having a speaker or a standard part of the meeting devoted to issues can help draw people.

Ask any group what makes a good meeting and most people will say they want meetings to be on time, stay on agenda and be productive. They want to participate, and they want to be treated fairly.

The three essentials to running a good meeting are preparation, moving the agenda and following parliamentary procedure. Generally, if the agenda is followed and people are given a chance to participate, you can manage a meeting without using *Robert's Rules of Order*. However, if you're interested in following *Robert's Rules of Order* there is a cheat sheet for using the rules during meetings in the resources section at the end of this chapter.

Meeting Preparation:

- **Plan the meeting.** Know the purpose of the meeting. Make sure notices and agenda reflect the purpose and are timely sent. If a motion or resolution is to be presented, make sure you have someone to move and second it.
- **Plan for participation.** Prepare handouts and visual. Try to include a training component in all meetings. Save time on the agenda “for the good of the order” to allow local leaders a chance to share their activities, problems and successes. This time also gives people who have no motion or resolution a chance to speak at the end of the meeting.
- **Check out the meeting space.** People must be able to see and hear the Chair and each other. Seats should be arranged so that someone can leave the meeting without disrupting it. You might want to arrange seating in a hollow square, with name tents so everyone can see who everyone else is. All meeting locations must be ADA compliant, well lit, and have public restrooms. Test audiovisual equipment and hang the party banner. Make sure the physical set-up is compatible with the goals of the meeting.

Moving the Agenda:

- **Prepare an agenda and follow it.** Send out the agenda before the meeting. The agenda should allow for all business items that must be covered and still provide room for new items of business from the floor. Time limits on the agenda will keep the meeting moving along. The Chair should recognize only one speaker at a time.
- **No one has the floor unless recognized.** The Chair must also move on to someone else if a speaker is going on too long. If such a speaker isn't cut off, side conversations and mass distraction occur.
- **Set the tempo.** Very few people come to an Executive Committee or Committee meeting to waste time nit picking the agenda, minutes or treasurer's report. If one of these contains an item of legitimate controversy, the Chair should deal with the issue and move on. Setting the tempo lets people know their time is valuable and trivial rambling is out of place.
- **Be fair; handle disruptions effectively.** In all of the discussions about moving the agenda, don't lose sight of treating people fairly. The Democratic Party is diverse and inclusive and acknowledges that everyone has a seat at the table. When there are legitimate points of view to be heard make sure they are heard. Encourage participation by those who do not usually speak. Be consistent in treatment of all members.

General Best Practices:

- Meetings should have a single focus. Don't try to discuss everything.

- Inform participants in advance about the purpose of the meeting and all topics that will be discussed.
- Start and end meetings on time.
- Keep minutes of all committee or subcommittee meetings.
- Restate the purpose of the meeting before you begin.
- Appoint a competent, trusted parliamentarian to guide you, especially if *Roberts Rules of Order* are not your strong suit.
- Provide a written agenda. Consider presenting a timed agenda that indicates the amount time to be spent on each topic. Also consider creating a Chair's agenda for yourself that includes notes on each topic area for your personal use during the meeting.
- Keep control of the meeting and stick to the agenda. Unresolved details can be worked out later in smaller groups.
- Restate the key decisions, next steps, and assignments at the end of the meeting.
- Schedule the next meeting, if a follow-up meeting will be necessary.

Order of a Standard Agenda:

- Call the meeting to order.
- Roll call of officers and members.
- Minutes of the previous meeting.
- Reports of the officers:
 - Chair
 - Vice-Chair
 - Treasurer (financial report)
 - Secretary (correspondence)
- Standing committee reports.
- Unfinished business.
- Postponed business.
- New business.
- Speaker or Program.
- Adjournment.

Structure of Standard Minutes:

Minutes are not a verbatim report of everything said. They should reflect action taken at the meeting. The minutes should contain the following information:

- Kind of meeting, regular or special (or specify if, for example, by conference call).
- Name of the organization.
- Date and place of the meeting.
- Presence of officers and members.
- Approval of previous minutes.
- All reports and action taken.
- All main motions carried or lost and the name of the maker of the motion (omit those withdrawn).
- All other motions carried which contain information needed at a future meeting.

- All points of order and appeals, whether sustained or not, together with the reasons given by the chair for his/her ruling.
- Adjournment.
- Signature.

Treasurer's Report: There should be a Treasurer's Report at every meeting detailing all the financial activities since the last meeting. A sample report is provided in Chapter 9 under 'Money,' but the report should reflect each organization's own budget

Conflict Resolution

As the committee's chief executive officer, the Chair must develop a working knowledge of the State Party Plan and the local committee's bylaws in order to conduct business in a fair and orderly manner. As boring as bylaws and rules often seem, they provide a way to resolve disputes and determine policy fairly and openly.

However, as with any group, it is natural to have some disputes or conflicts as you're trying to make decisions. These disputes can be resolved, but it is important to remember you should only begin a conversation about a conflict in order to learn something new, express your views and feelings, or to problem-solve. You should also make certain that you note areas of agreement as well as areas of disagreement. Reaching a resolution will come from understanding, not from convincing them you are right. There is a tip sheet for resolving conflicts in the resources at the end of this chapter.

Regional differences

What works in one part of the state will not always work in another part. As Virginians, we know there are distinct areas that party leaders and campaigns need to recognize when conducting party activity:

- Northern Virginia, Southwest Virginia and the Valley, Southside, Tidewater/Hampton Roads, Central Virginia, the Northern Neck, the Eastern Shore, rural v. urban v. suburban.

There are definite differences economically, socially, and politically between regions. Always take these differences under consideration when developing plans and projects.

IV. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Does our committee have to have bylaws?

Answer: Yes. Article 10.2 of the State Party Plan states that:

“All Democratic committees shall adopt bylaws, rules or regulations deemed necessary for the proper operation of such committee. Such bylaws, rules or regulations when not in conflict with law or this Plan, shall be considered valid and binding. Such bylaws, rules or regulations shall be mailed to state headquarters within fourteen (14) days of approval by any Democratic committee and shall be kept on permanent file and made available for public viewing.”

A copy of your bylaws, once adopted, should be sent to the state headquarters ASAP. If you don't know if the State Party has a copy on hand, check with the Party Affairs Manager.

2. **Why do we have to pay dues assessments?**

Answer: Your dues help to underwrite the cost of operating the party office, its quarterly meetings and its services. These assessments are based on a formula that utilizes the number of delegates apportioned to each county and city in the most recent State Democratic Convention.

Article 8.14 of the State Party Plan states that:

“Every county and city committee shall be responsible for paying to the treasurer of the Central Committee in a timely manner the annual dues provided for under Section 4.15 under this Plan.”

Examples of such service are the training workshops and this handbook that are prepared and distributed to all chairs in all 133 jurisdictions. In 2015, a permanent toll-free number voter hotline was established that can be used by voters across the Commonwealth year after year. These are just a few examples of how your dues help the party to provide needed services back to you.

ADDITIONAL CHAPTER RESOURCES

- Robert's Rules of Order Summary
- Robert's Rules of Order Cheat Sheet
- Conflict Resolution Guide
- Sample Local Committee Bylaws 1
- Sample Local Committee Bylaws 2

Robert's Rules of Order - Summary Version

For Fair and Orderly Meetings & Conventions

Provides common rules and procedures for deliberation and debate in order to place the whole membership on the same footing and speaking the same language. The conduct of ALL business is controlled by the general will of the whole membership - the right of the deliberate majority to decide. Complementary is the right of at least a strong minority to require the majority to be deliberate - to act according to its considered judgment AFTER a full and fair "working through" of the issues involved. Robert's Rules provides for constructive and democratic meetings, to help, not hinder, the business of the assembly. Under no circumstances should "undue strictness" be allowed to intimidate members or limit full participation.

The fundamental right of deliberative assemblies require all questions to be thoroughly discussed before taking action!

The assembly rules - they have the final say on everything! Silence means consent!

Guidelines

- Obtain the floor (the right to speak) by being the first to stand when the person speaking has finished; state Mr./Madam Chairman. Raising your hand means nothing, and standing while another has the floor is out of order! Must be recognized by the Chair before speaking!
- Debate can not begin until the Chair has stated the motion or resolution and asked "are you ready for the question?" If no one rises, the chair calls for the vote!
- Before the motion is stated by the Chair (the question) members may suggest modification of the motion; the mover can modify as he pleases, or even withdraw the motion without consent of the seconder; if mover modifies, the seconder can withdraw the second.
- The "immediately pending question" is the last question stated by the Chair! Motion/Resolution - Amendment - Motion to Postpone
- The member moving the "immediately pending question" is entitled to preference to the floor!
- No member can speak twice to the same issue until everyone else wishing to speak has spoken to it once!
- All remarks must be directed to the Chair. Remarks must be courteous in language and deportment - avoid all personalities, never allude to others by name or to motives!
- The agenda and all committee reports are merely recommendations! When presented to the assembly and the question is stated, debate begins and changes occur!

The Rules:

- **Point of Privilege:** Pertains to noise, personal comfort, etc. - may interrupt only if necessary!
- **Parliamentary Inquiry:** Inquire as to the correct motion - to accomplish a desired result, or raise a point of order
- **Point of Information:** Generally applies to information desired from the speaker: "I should like to ask the (speaker) a question."
- **Orders of the Day (Agenda):** A call to adhere to the agenda (a deviation from the agenda requires Suspending the Rules)
- **Point of Order:** Infraction of the rules, or improper decorum in speaking. Must be raised immediately after the error is made
- **Main Motion:** Brings new business (the next item on the agenda) before the assembly

- **Divide the Question:** Divides a motion into two or more separate motions (must be able to stand on their own)
- **Consider by Paragraph:** Adoption of paper is held until all paragraphs are debated and amended and entire paper is satisfactory; after all paragraphs are considered, the entire paper is then open to amendment, and paragraphs may be further amended. Any Preamble can not be considered until debate on the body of the paper has ceased.
- **Amend:** Inserting or striking out words or paragraphs, or substituting whole paragraphs or resolutions
- **Withdraw/Modify Motion:** Applies only after question is stated; mover can accept an amendment without obtaining the floor
- **Commit /Refer/Recommit to Committee:** State the committee to receive the question or resolution; if no committee exists include size of committee desired and method of selecting the members (election or appointment).
- **Extend Debate:** Applies only to the immediately pending question; extends until a certain time or for a certain period of time
- **Limit Debate:** Closing debate at a certain time, or limiting to a certain period of time
- **Postpone to a Certain Time:** State the time the motion or agenda item will be resumed
- **Object to Consideration:** Objection must be stated before discussion or another motion is stated
- **Lay on the Table:** Temporarily suspends further consideration/action on pending question; may be made after motion to close debate has carried or is pending
- **Take from the Table:** Resumes consideration of item previously "laid on the table" - state the motion to take from the table
- **Reconsider:** Can be made only by one on the prevailing side who has changed position or view
- **Postpone Indefinitely:** Kills the question/resolution for this session - exception: the motion to reconsider can be made this session
- **Previous Question:** Closes debate if successful - may be moved to "**Close Debate**" if preferred
- **Informal Consideration:** Move that the assembly go into "**Committee of the Whole**" - informal debate as if in committee; this committee may limit number or length of speeches or close debate by other means by a 2/3 vote. All votes, however, are formal.
- **Appeal Decision of the Chair:** Appeal for the assembly to decide - must be made before other business is resumed; NOT debatable if relates to decorum, violation of rules or order of business
- **Suspend the Rules:** Allows a violation of the assembly's own rules (except Constitution); the object of the suspension must be specified.

Source: <http://www.robertsrules.org>

Robert's Rules of Order Cheat Sheet

ROBERTS RULES CHEAT SHEET

To:	You say:	Interrupt Speaker	Second Needed	Debatable	Amendable	Vote Needed
Adjourn	"I move that we adjourn"	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Recess	"I move that we recess until..."	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Complain about noise, room temp., etc.	"Point of privilege"	Yes	No	No	No	Chair Decides
Suspend further consideration of something	"I move that we table it"	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
End debate	"I move the previous question"	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Postpone consideration of something	"I move we postpone this matter until..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend a motion	"I move that this motion be amended by..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Introduce business (a primary motion)	"I move that..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

The above listed motions and points are listed in established order of precedence. When any one of them is pending, you may not introduce another that is listed below, but you may introduce another that is listed above it.

To:	You say:	Interrupt Speaker	Second Needed	Debatable	Amendable	Vote Needed
Object to procedure or personal affront	"Point of order"	Yes	No	No	No	Chair decides
Request information	"Point of information"	Yes	No	No	No	None
Ask for vote by actual count to verify voice vote	"I call for a division of the house"	Must be done before new motion	No	No	No	None unless someone objects
Object to considering some undiplomatic or improper matter	"I object to consideration of this question"	Yes	No	No	No	2/3
Take up matter previously tabled	"I move we take from the table..."	Yes	Yes	No	No	Majority
Reconsider something already disposed of	"I move we now (or later) reconsider our action relative to..."	Yes	Yes	Only if original motion was debatable	No	Majority
Consider something out of its scheduled order	"I move we suspend the rules and consider..."	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Vote on a ruling by the Chair	"I appeal the Chair's decision"	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority

The motions, points and proposals listed above have no established order of preference; any of them may be introduced at any time except when meeting is considering one of the top three matters listed from the first chart (Motion to Adjourn, Recess or Point of Privilege).

Conflict Resolution Guide

Conflict Resolution Tips

1

Step back and slow down

- * Most of us repeat unhelpful behaviors in conflicts because we are unaware of what we are doing
- * We can only change habits through awareness
- * Plan what you want to say to avoid saying something that will escalate a conflict

2

Be clear about your intentions and goals for the conversation

- * If your most important goal is to win, blame or change the other party, the conflict will probably escalate, no matter what skills you use
- * If your intention is to blame or change others, you don't learn how to prevent the problem from repeating itself
- * Only begin a conversation about a conflict in order to learn something new, express your views and feelings, or to problem-solve.

3

Listen first to understand—ask questions to explore the other person's story

- * If others feel listened to they are more likely to try to understand you
- * Leverage for change comes from understanding, not from convincing them you are right
- * It is rare for people to feel truly listened to and still experience the conflict as negative
- * Be aware of your internal barriers to really listening, such as thinking you are right and strong feelings about the subject matter

4

Express strong feelings without blame

- * Strong feelings make it impossible for us to really listen
- * Use "I-statements" to express what you're feeling
- * Be sure to state a feeling (as opposed to a judging statement) after saying "I feel"
- * Be sure to carefully describe the other party's behavior without adding evaluations to it
- * The key is to be completely honest without blaming the other

5

Be aware of how your own self image might make you more defensive

- * Avoid an all or nothing, black and white view of yourself—in this way you will become more open to feedback

6

Take responsibility for your assumptions

- * Be willing to let go of your interpretation—believing that our beliefs and conclusions about others are "the truth" creates a lot of conflict
- * Share with others what you see as the raw data and how you interpret it (your thought process)
- * When others speak about their conclusions, ask how they came to those conclusions

7

Find common ground

- * Be sure to note areas of agreement as well as areas of disagreement
- * Identifying areas of agreement reduces defensiveness

8

Explore what is most important the other person by listening and asking questions out of curiosity

- * People do not usually enter a conflict by stating what is most important to them
- * You can only problem solve if you know what the other person really wants
- * People usually enter a conflict with only one solution (theirs) to a problem

9

Let go of the myths about conflict

- * Conflict is not a contest—don't make it one
- * Conflict is not always negative

10

Remember the four principal approaches to conflict

- * Acknowledge the conflict
- * If you resist, they will push even harder
- * To acknowledge does not mean to agree
- * Be willing to change

11

When initiating a conversation about a conflict

- * Ask the other party if they are willing to have a conversation
- * Tell them the topic and the importance of the conversation to you in maintaining a good relationship
- * Allow them to save face

12

Be open to learning new information

Dispute Resolution
CENTER of KING COUNTY

RESOLVE IT IF YOU CAN—CALL US IF YOU CAN'T, (206) 443-9603 Or, visit us at kcdrc.org for more options.

Sample Local Committee Bylaws 1

BYLAWS OF THE JEFFERSON/PIEDMONT DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE

ARTICLE I. MEMBERSHIP OF THE DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE

Membership of the Democratic Committee shall be elected by Mass Meeting between the 1st of December of every odd numbered year and the 15th of January of every even numbered year. This meeting shall be open to any person who is registered to vote in Jefferson County, Virginia, or the City of Piedmont, Virginia.

Any such person attending the Mass Meeting may be elected, or if unable to be present at said meeting, may be considered for membership on the Committee for the succeeding two-year term. Said individuals will be nominated by current members of the Committee except for the initial membership which will be chosen by a simple majority of those eligible to vote and present at the Committee's first meeting.

Dues assessments for membership may be levied at the discretion of the Executive Committee of the Jefferson/Piedmont Democratic Committee.

ARTICLE II. ELECTED OFFICERS

At each organizational meeting, officers of the Jefferson/Piedmont Democratic Committee will be elected. The permanent Chair of the Committee will take nominations from the floor and all persons who are members of the Committee will vote for the following: Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. The office of Secretary and Treasurer may be combined if agreed to by the Committee.

ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee of the Jefferson/Piedmont Democratic Committee shall consist of the elected Officers, and any County or City Officials and elected Constitutional Officers who announced, campaigned and were elected as members of the Democratic Party.

Persons elected to the Executive Committee shall serve a term of two years from the date of the organizational meeting or until a proper subsequent election is conducted, whichever occurs later.

ARTICLE IV. DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS

The **Chair** shall:

Preside at all meetings. Ascertain that a quorum is present prior to calling any meeting to order for the conduct of business. Represent the Committee at Legislative District Committee meetings unless the Chair does not live in a particular district, or unless the Chair appoints another Officer to fill in temporarily.

The **Vice-Chair** shall:

Perform such duties as may be assigned by the Chair to perform his or her duties. Assume the duties of the Chair in event of absence. Assume the duties of the Chair in event of resignation or inability of the Chair to perform his or her duties until the election of a new Chair at the next regular meeting.

The **Treasurer** shall:

Be responsible for all monies of the Committee, and act on behalf of the Committee to collect all monies and pay all proper bills which must be approved by the Committee and itemized receipts presented before such payment. No checks may be written to cash. Both the Chair and the Treasurer shall be required to cosign all checks. The Treasurer shall submit a written financial report at each meeting.

The **Secretary** shall:

Keep minutes of every meeting of the Committee. Maintain attendance records. Keep all records organized in an orderly fashion and have minutes of all previous meetings at each regular meeting.

ARTICLE V. MEETINGS

The full Democratic Committee shall meet on the fourth Thursday in January, May and September of each year.

The Executive Committee shall also meet whenever it is considered necessary to execute party business.

Special meetings of the Democratic Committee may be called by the Chair in case of an emergency, with three days notice being given.

Twenty percent of currently elected members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum at Committee meetings.

A simple majority of those present and voting shall be necessary for the passage of any motion or resolution by the Democratic Committee.

“Robert’s Rules of Order” shall govern all Democratic Committee, Executive Committee or Special Committee meetings.

Any member of the Committee who, without notification to the Chair, is absent from three consecutive regular meetings shall be sent a letter by the Secretary asking if he or she desires to remain a member of the Committee. This section does not apply to public office holders.

ARTICLE VI. REMOVAL

No member of the Committee shall publicly support, endorse or assist a candidate who is opposing a Democratic candidate. The Committee may remove from both office and membership, by a majority of those eligible, present and voting, any person found guilty of neglect of any duty imposed upon him or her.

ARTICLE VII. VACANCIES

Vacancies on the Committee shall be filled at any regular meeting of the Committee. Nominations will be accepted from the floor, and voted on by a majority of members present.

ARTICLE VIII. AMENDING BYLAWS

These Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the Jefferson/Piedmont Democratic Committee members present and eligible to vote after presentation at a meeting, of which members were given advance notice.

ARTICLE IX. PRECEDENCE OF LAWS

If any provision of the Bylaws is in conflict with the Democratic Party of Virginia Party Plan, Federal or State laws, said plan and/or laws shall supersede.

Sample Local Committee Bylaws 2

BYLAWS OF THE PAMUNKEY COUNTY DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE

ARTICLE I. NAME

Section 1.

The name of this organization shall be the Pamunkey County Democratic Committee, hereafter referred to as "the Committee."

ARTICLE II. ORGANIZATIONAL AUTHORITY AND PURPOSE

Section 1.

The Committee is organized under the authority of and in accordance with the Code of Virginia and the Party Plan of the Democratic Party of Virginia currently in effect. Nothing contained in these bylaws is intended to conflict with either the Code of Virginia or the Democratic Party Plan. If any such conflict should occur between these bylaws and the Code of Virginia and/or the Party Plan, then the Code of Virginia or the Party Plan, as the case may be, shall have precedence.

Section 2.

All activities of the Committee, including mass meetings and conventions, shall be conducted in accordance with the relevant provision of the Party Plan.

Section 3.

The purpose of the Committee shall be to conduct the affairs of the Democratic Party of Virginia in Pamunkey County, including the nominating process for, and support of, Democratic candidates in Pamunkey County, and the active encouragement of registration and voting by qualified residents of the County. The committee shall adhere to, and implement, the policies and platform contained in the national and state Democratic Party Platforms.

ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1.

The Committee shall consist of the persons elected at mass meetings called for the purpose of the reconstitution of the Committee, pursuant to the Virginia Democratic Party Plan. One member shall be elected from each election precinct. Additional at-large Committee members may be elected.

Section 2.

Membership shall be limited to those person signifying that they are registered to vote in Pamunkey County, that they are Democrats, that they believe in the principles of the Democratic Party, and that they will do all within their power to aid in the victory of Democratic Party nominees in all local, state, and national elections, except as otherwise provided in the Virginia Democratic Party Plan.

Section 3.

Declarations of candidacy for election to the Committee shall be filed in writing with the Chair prior to the convening of the mass meeting called for the purpose of reconstitution of the committee. There shall be a \$10.00 filing fee which shall accompany the signed declaration of candidacy. The Chair shall give ten (10) days notice of the mass meeting, in order that maximum participation by all Democratic voters may be encouraged. Those persons filing but not being elected to the Committee will be refunded the \$10.00 filing fee.

Section 4.

Vacancies to the Committee and new members shall be filled at regular meetings or at a special meeting called by the Chair. Nominations may be made by any member in good standing of the Committee. Prospective new members shall be approved by a simple majority of those in attendance at any meeting of the committee, and if approved, shall become members in good standing of the Committee.

Section 5.

Any member of the Committee may be removed from the committee in accordance with the Virginia Democratic Plan. Charges may be brought by any member of the Committee and the offending member may be removed by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the Committee membership present at the meeting.

Section 6.

In addition to all other members of the Committee described in the Article, the Democratic member(s) of the Pamunkey County Electoral Board and each state legislator and elected local official representing Pamunkey County, or a part thereof, who is elected as a Democrat and lives in Pamunkey County shall become a member of the Pamunkey Democratic Committee. Those who are not elected members of the Committee shall be ex officio members. Members of the Twelfth Congressional District Democratic Committee who reside in Pamunkey County and who are not members of the Committee shall, upon election to the Twelfth Congressional District Democratic Committee become ex officio members of the Committee.

Section 7.

The absence without justification of a member from four (4) meetings of the committee during the member's two (2) year term of office shall constitute grounds for removal. Justification for absences from called, special or regular meetings must be given either in writing or orally to the Secretary or Chair. When four (4) unjustified absences occur, the Chair shall notify the member in question, in writing, that removal from the Committee shall be announced at the next meeting of the committee unless such member shall file a written request with the Chair to be first heard at the next meeting. After such hearing, at which the member in question may explain the absences, the Committee may, on motion duly made and seconded, vote to retain such member. Such vote shall be by a majority of the members present and voting.

Section 8.

Any member desiring to resign from the committee shall inform the Secretary in writing, who will notify the Committee at the next regular meeting.

ARTICLE IV. OFFICERS

Section 1.

The officers of the Committee shall consist of a Chair, First Vice-Chair, Second Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer.

Section 2.

The Officers shall be elected by the membership from among members within forty (40) days following the selection of members. Unless they resign or are removed from office, they shall serve for a term of two(2) years or until their successors take office.

Section 3.

The duties of the Chair shall include presiding at all meetings of the Committee, administering and executing all rules adapted by the Committee, and appointing a Committee member to serve as Parliamentarian, Sergeant-At-Arms, all standing and special committees including chairs thereof. The Chair shall be an ex officio member of all such committees.

Section 4.

The First Vice Chair shall preside at meetings in the absence of the Chair, shall perform all duties delegated by the Chair, and have all the authority of the Chair when the latter, for any cause, is unable to act. The First Vice-Chair shall assume the position of the Chair should the position become vacant.

Section 5.

The duties of the Second Vice-Chair shall be to preside in the absence of the Chair and the First Vice-Chair and shall have all the authority of the Chair when both the Chair and First Vice-Chair are, for any reason, unable to act. He/She shall perform all duties delegated by the Chair. The Second vice-Chair shall assume the position of First Vice-Chair should the position become vacant.

Section 6.

The duties of the Secretary shall include keeping a record of all meetings of the Committee and proceedings thereof. This officer shall keep a file of all reports and official correspondence and a current roll of the membership. This officer shall keep a record of attendance of members and immediately notify the Chair when a member has four (4) absences which are unjustified. Within the (10) days after each organizational meeting of the Committee, the Secretary shall submit to the State Headquarters of the Democratic Party of Virginia the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the newly elected officers and of the membership of the committee. The Secretary shall send notices of all meetings to all members of the Committee, shall conduct all correspondence, and perform such other duties as pertained to this office.

Section 7.

The duties of the Treasurer shall include administering the funds of the Committee, and exercising general supervision over the income and expenditures of the Committee. He/She shall submit to the Chair, no later than the 31st day of December of each year, a detailed written report of all receipts and expenditures of the committee. This report shall be presented to the Committee at its next meeting.

Section 8.

Vacancies in the office of Second Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer shall be filled at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Committee, by vote of a majority of those members in attendance.

ARTICLE V. INSPECTION OF RECORDS

Section 1.

The minutes of meetings of the Committee, records and statements of the financial affairs of the committee, the Bylaws of the committee, and a roster of the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of all members of the committee shall be made available for inspection to any member of the Committee at any reasonable time upon reasonable notice to the custodian of those records.

ARTICLE VI. MEETINGS

Section 1.

There shall be at least six (6) regular meetings of the committee each year.

Section 2.

Meetings of the Committee shall be held: (a) upon the call of the Chair whenever it is in the interest of the party, or (b) within fifteen (15) days following receipt by the chair of a written request, signed by at least five (5) members of the membership, stating the purpose for which a meeting is requested. In (b) above the Chair shall give at least ten (10) days notice by mail to the entire membership stating the purpose for which the special meeting is called, and at such meeting no other business shall be transacted except upon the two thirds (2/3) majority vote of the members present and voting. Should the Chair fail to call such a requested special meeting within the specified time, then those members requesting the special meeting may call such a meeting by giving at least ten (10) days notice by mail to all members of the Committee, stating the date, time, place and the purpose of the meeting. The expense of such a meeting shall be borne by the Committee.

Section 3.

At least ten (10) days notice shall be given before each regular meeting.

Section 4.

A quorum shall consist of ten (10) members of the Committee present.

Section 5.

All regular meetings of the Committee shall be public. The Committee shall adjourn to closed executive session upon a majority vote of those Committee members present at any meeting.

Section 6.

The use of proxies is prohibited.

Section 7.

In accordance with the Party Plan, all events associated with the Committee at all levels should be ADA accessible.

ARTICLE VII. THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Section 1.

The Executive Committee shall consist of the elected officers of the committee, the immediate past Chair, if a member of the current Committee, and Pamunkey County members of the Democratic Party state Central Committee. If the immediate past Chair is not a member of the Committee, then the last Chair who is a member of the Committee shall serve on the Executive Committee.

Section 2.

The Executive Committee shall have the general supervision of the Affairs of the Committee between its regular business meetings, make recommendations to the Committee, and shall perform such other duties as are specified in these bylaws. As early as practicable after each of its meetings, the Executive Committee shall report to the full Committee any actions taken.

Section 3.

All meetings of the Executive Committee shall be called by the Chair, except that a special meeting may be called upon the request of the three (3) members of the Executive Committee.

ARTICLE VIII. STANDING COMMITTEES

Section 1.

As soon as practical after the election of officers the Chair shall appoint the following standing committees and the Chair of each, who must be a member of the Pamunkey County Democratic Committee:

- A. A finance committee, consisting of the Treasurer and two (2) other members, which shall have the responsibility of preparing an annual budget. This committee shall present its budget to the Committee for action by March 31st of each year.
- B. An auditing committee of three (3) members which shall audit the Treasurer's accounts annually and report its findings to the Committee.
- C. A precinct organization committee which shall consist of a minimum of one member from each voting district, and such other members as the Chair may appoint. This committee shall select a captain from each precinct and, in cooperation with the Precinct Captains, shall have the responsibility of perfecting the Democratic Party organization in each precinct in the County in whatever way advances the best interests of the Party.
- D. A fundraising committee, consisting of at least one member from each voting district, whose responsibility it is to raise funds to finance the activities of the Committee.
- E. A legislative committee, which shall act as a liaison between the Committee and the elected officials and governing bodies. This committee shall keep the Committee informed of legislative and governmental matters of interest. Size and duties of this committee shall be at the discretion of the Chair.
- F. A bylaws committee, which shall consider any proposed amendments to the current bylaws. This committee shall consist of three (3) members.

Section 2.

The Chair may appoint such special committees as may be deemed necessary to carry out the responsibilities of the committee. Such special committees shall serve at the pleasure of the Chair.

ARTICLE IX. PRECINCT CAPTAINS

Section 1.

The Precinct Captains, selected by the precinct organization committee, shall coordinate the execution of Committee activities in each precinct.

ARTICLE X. TECHNOLOGY CAPTAIN

The Technology Captain, selected by the Chair, shall coordinate the use of the Registered Voter File, email list serve, website and any other technology based products. The Chair may assign additional duties as necessary. The Technology Captain shall serve at the pleasure of the Chair.

Setting Your Priorities

Evaluating Your Committee and Developing a Plan

Before you can develop a strategy and set priorities for a plan of action, you must first understand the expectations ‘key’ Democrats have for the Party; assess the status of Party operations; determine what kind of political and financial resources are available to you; and begin building a consensus of support for your program.

Many of the questions you will face are covered on the following pages. If you ask yourself these questions, give them some hard, honest thought, and write down your answers, you will be well on your way to establishing your priorities and your plan.

The process involves three basic steps:

1. Evaluating your role and situation within the party, including the status of existing party operations, the political environment, and others’ expectations;
2. Setting your long term agenda; and
3. Writing a plan to serve as a basis for accomplishing your goals.

I. EVALUATING YOUR ROLE AND SITUATION

The first step in developing and setting priorities for an effective plan of action is to evaluate your role and situation. You must understand your responsibilities to and the expectations of key political players, including both those responsible for your being selected as local Chair and others who are

critical to your success. This evaluation will help you determine how you fit into the “big picture” and how you define both your personal role as Chair and the roles of other party officers, and members.

Who Are You Responsible To?

- Were you elected due to your relationships with party leaders in order to set an agenda for the party?
- Were you selected because of your extensive campaign experience in order to help the party upgrade candidate support and services?
- Were you selected to use your contacts to help raise funds and provide financial stability for the party?
- Were you selected to use your public relations talents to enhance the party’s image and serve as its spokesperson?
- Was a combination of these factors involved in your becoming Chair?

What Are the Factors under which You Will Operate?

- Is your committee deeply in debt? Do committee finances or financial potential allow you to fund new plans of action?
- Do you plan to enhance existing programs or must you also make major changes and plot a whole new agenda for the committee?

What Will Your Role Be?

- Are you a hands-on leader or will someone else handle daily details?
- Will you be a highly visible spokesperson or behind the scenes?
- How much time can you devote to your duties?
- What are your personal assets and limitations: physical, financial, talent, etc.?

Your situation is unique. No other party organization is exactly like yours. No individual is exactly like you. In most cases, city/county committee chairs can write their own job descriptions and those of committee officers, provided they stay within the guidelines of local bylaws and the DPVA *Party Plan*, and election law requirements. The challenges, possibilities, and opportunities are immense. Choose your agenda and plan carefully to make sure your efforts are manageable and successful.

II. SETTING PRIORITIES FOR YOUR AGENDA

Many of your agenda items may already be set by established policies, priorities, and political circumstance, so you may not have to start from scratch (always be ready to re-evaluate as you go along, however). Limit yourself. Do not try to do everything alone. In addition to the obligations you

must perform, select three or four activities or projects you can do well. Take on additional projects only when you are sure you have involved everyone it takes to secure the funding and people required to carry out the project.

The following set of questions can assist in the planning process. You may want to ask major supporters, party officers, and elected leaders to help develop your agenda, or you may want to involve all these people in a special planning committee. Your plan is more likely to succeed if you involve key players “up front” and give them a sense of ownership in the party agenda.

- **Why do we exist?** (To get Democrats elected to public office!) Identify problems or goals.
- **What should we do?** Identify possible solutions or objectives.
- **What does it take to do the job?** Identify people and financial resources.
- **What must be done to do the job?** Identify specific tasks and activities.
- **When should this be done?** Develop a schedule or time line.
- **What might stop us?** Identify potential obstacles.
- **Did we do it well?** Provide for an honest evaluation.

III. DEVELOPING YOUR PLAN

Well-run programs don’t just happen. Although you may not actually submit a written plan to anyone, write down your plan so that you can refer to it. A plan is not a plan unless it is in writing. An unwritten plan is just an idea.

Any plan for an item on your agenda should have the basic components listed below. In the end you will have many small plans that make up your complete agenda for the party. At that point you must look at the overall “big picture” to set priorities, establish individual responsibilities, coordinate schedules and timelines, and allocate resources.

EIGHT BASIC PLANNING STEPS	
1. Description of Problem	5. Available Resources
2. Possible Solutions	6. Anticipated Obstacles
3. Goals and Objectives	7. A Time Line
4. Description of Activities	8. Evaluation

A series of worksheets have been included in the resources section at the end of the Chapter for you to use as you work through the steps outlined in this Chapter. These worksheets include:

- **Party Organization Assessment**—you can use this worksheet as part of “Step 1. Evaluating your role and situation.” It will help you determine where your committee stands.
- **Political Brainstorming**—you can use this worksheet as part of “Step 2. Setting your long term agenda.” It will help you develop new ideas and goals.

- Step-by-Step Planning Worksheet—you can use this worksheet as part of “Step 3. Writing a plan.” It will help you draft a plan to accomplish the goals you’ve outlined in Step 2.

ADDITIONAL CHAPTER RESOURCES

- Party Organization Assessment
- Political Brainstorming
- Step-by-Step Planning Worksheet
- Sample Plan

PARTY ORGANIZATION ASSESSMENT

PARTY ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

- How many party officers are there? What are their roles?
- How many members are on the Executive Committee? What is their role?
- How many members are on the local committee? What is their role?
- How many part-time staff members in a non-election year?
- What are the job titles, duties, and salaries of staff members?
- To whom do they report? How are they evaluated?
- What staff is added in an election year?
- What is the greatest need in terms of staff?
- Does the party have legal counsel? Is counsel paid or *pro bono*?
- Does the party have an accountant? Is the accountant paid or volunteer?

THE MONEY

- How much money is in the bank?
- What bank accounts does the party have?
- Who are the account signatories?
- What other entities (e.g. credit card company) deposit funds for the party?
- How much money was raised during the last non-election year?
- What was the party's operating budget for that year?
- How much money was raised during the last election year?
- What was the party's operating budget for that year?
- Does the party have a debt? How much?
- How much does it cost to run the party every month?
- Are there any ways to reduce operating costs?

PARTY OPERATIONS

- Does the party own or rent office space?
- How much is the rent? When is the lease up?
- What furniture and equipment does the party own? Lease?
- What computer hardware is used?
- What computer software is used?
- What are the office's greatest needs?
- Does the party maintain a database of names? In-house?
- How many names are on the list? When was it last updated? By whom?

COMPLIANCE

- Does the committee need to file campaign finance reports with the state? The FEC?
- Who does the campaign finance report filings (SBE and/or FEC) for the party?
- Does that person have other responsibilities?
- What software programs are used for reports?

- Does your committee need to file tax returns and reports? If so, who files them?
- Does the party have bylaws or rules governing its operation?
- What Virginia laws apply to the party?

POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

- What local offices do Democrats hold?
- Number of House of Delegates Members or State Senators in the locality? Number of Democrats?
- What is each political party's percentage of registration?
- How many local offices are partisan? How many are held by Democrats?
- How many constitutional offices are partisan? How many are held by Democrats?

PARTY BUILDING & TRAINING

- Does the party conduct or sponsor trainings? In what areas?
- Does the party publish training manuals? On what topics?
- What training materials are most needed?
- What techniques or programs have improved party training?
- What specific successes has the party achieved in party building?

COMMUNICATIONS

- Does the party publish a newsletter? For whom? How many? When?
- Who is responsible for the newsletter?
- Does the party send out email briefings? To Whom? How many?
- Who is responsible for the email briefings?
- Does the party issue regular press releases?
- Does the party hold press conferences?
- Who speaks for the party?
- Does the party have a rapid response network? Who is responsible?
- Does the party have a "talk back to talk radio" program? Who is responsible?
- Does the party have a program of organized letters to the editor? Who is responsible?
- Does the party have a website? Who is responsible for contents and updates?
- Does the party use DPVA/DNC research and talking points?
- What are the specific problems or challenges in communications?
- What techniques or programs have improved communications efforts?
- What specific successes has the Party achieved in communications?

FUNDRAISING

- Does the party have a finance subcommittee? Who chairs it? How many members?
- What is the subcommittee's role? How are members recruited? Is it successful?
- Does the party have a trustee program? Dues or other membership requirements? Benefits?
- Does the party have a major donor council? Dues or other membership requirements? Benefits?
- How much money is generated by the trustee program and donor council?

- Was there an increase or decrease in the last year? Why?
- Does the party have a sustaining program? Dues? How many members?
- Who handles billings and follow-up for trustees, donor council, and sustaining programs?
- What recruitment materials are on hand? When were they last updated?
- What is the cost to administer each program?
- Does the party have a grassroots fundraising program?
- How many people are involved? How much money does it generate?
- What other solicitation programs have been successful? Unsuccessful?
- Does the party have a database of contributors? How many names?
- What information is on the database? When was it last updated? By whom?
- What fundraising events did the party sponsor in the last year?
- How much money was raised at each event (gross and net)?
- Why did each event succeed or fail?
- Are elected officials supportive of party fundraising efforts?
- Who are the party's major funding partners?
- Are there specific problems or challenges in the area of fundraising?
- What techniques or programs have improved fundraising efforts?
- What specific successes has the party achieved in fundraising?

CANDIDATE RECRUITMENT AND SERVICES

- Does the party actively recruit candidates? For which offices?
- How does a candidate get on the ballot?
- Does the party have a role in that process?
- Does the party work with local and constitutional leadership? In which areas?
- Does the party provide training services to candidates?
- Does the party provide volunteers or field coordinators to candidates?
- Can the party make donations to candidates? How much?
- Does the party make direct donations to candidates?
- Does the party have an incumbent protection program?
- Does the party do research for candidates?
- Does the party provide "know thyself" research for challengers?
- Does the party have an in-house opposition research program?
- Does the party use consultants to conduct opposition research?
- Does the party have a media-monitoring program? Press clipping service?
- Does the party track candidates? For what purposes?
- Does the party work with the Democratic Party of Virginia Headquarters in the area of candidate recruitment?
- Are there specific problems or challenges in the area of candidate recruitment?
- What techniques or programs have improved candidate recruitment and training?
- What specific successes has the committee achieved in candidate recruitment?

COORDINATED CAMPAIGN

- What was the last Coordinated Campaign's budget?
- How much money did the party contribute?
- Do Coordinated Campaign representatives meet year-round?
- Who convenes and conducts the meetings?
- Who writes the plan? Is DPVA involved?
- Does the party use the **VAN** voter file and targeting from DPVA?

CONDUCT OF ELECTIONS

- Does the party have an aggressive Absentee Voter program?
- Are there term limits for local or constitutional elected officials?
- Are there Virginia or local campaign finance laws that help or hurt the party?
- How does the party deal with ballot propositions and initiatives?
- Are there ballot propositions that alter party influence?
- If so, what is the party doing to protect its role in elections?
- Are there ballot propositions that can help turn out Democratic voters?
- Does the party engage in voter protection and expansion activities?

POLITICAL BRAINSTORMING

“It just won’t work where I live!”

“You just can’t do that in politics!”

How many times have you heard those words in political discussions? It seems the pessimists are on their feet the moment anyone comes up with a new idea. It is rude if you don’t let them talk, but it is often disastrous to progress if you do.

To get *positive* suggestions, to bring out *new* ideas, to *avoid* useless criticism, we recommend ***Political Brainstorming***.

Brainstorming **IS**:

- A technique that gives everyone a chance to talk.
- A technique that encourages original thinking.
- A technique that frees discussion from the usual political handicaps.

Brainstorming **IS NOT**:

- An ordinary political discussion such as a workshop or panel.
- An occasion for griping or complaining.

HOW POLITICAL BRAINSTORMING WORKS

Step 1: Frame a leading question ahead of time.

Example: “Tell us just one way we can locate new people who can be invited to participate in Democratic politics.”

Or: “Give us the best idea you know of for an unusual program for a single club meeting.”

Or: “Make one suggestion that we can use to give the average citizen, who has never been interested in politics, a sense of identity with the Democratic Party.”

Step 2: Divide the audience group into groups of 20 or less and assign a discussion leader and recorder to each group. Supply each person with a pad and pencil.

Step 3: Have each leader explain to his/her group how brainstorming works.

Example: “I am going to read you a question that states a problem we face in politics. I want you to write on a slip of paper the first suggestion you can think of that answers the question or would help to solve the problem it states. You will be given only two minutes to do this.

“Then give me your written response. I will read everyone’s suggestions aloud and I want everyone to comment on each orally. You can add to each suggestion, improve on it or tell us another new idea that this one suggests to you.

“I want to caution you about just one thing. Your comments must be positive. You must not knock the idea or say it won’t work, that it would cost too much, or that it would be too hard to do. You must not make any kind of negative comment about it.

“Remember that this is not an ordinary discussion. We are brainstorming to get new ideas and discover new techniques. We are not concerned with whether or not they will work in every area.”

Step 4: Proceed with the brainstorming as described above.

Step 5: The recorder takes down notes on all of the above discussion. It is apparent immediately after each written response is taken up whether it is thought provoking or not. In the example, Ms. Jones’ written response about air terminals stimulated ideas so the recorder should mark that section of her notes for future reference. Mr. Smith’s response about pills brought no new ideas so the recorder makes no special mark beside it.

Step 6: With a group of 20 people, it usually takes about 30 minutes to cover the written responses and comments a good leading question provokes. When all written responses have been covered and all comments have been heard, the group can go onto another leading question that has been prepared in advance.

Step 7: When the brainstorming session is completed or at the end of a given period of time, the separate brainstorming groups then assemble together. The discussion leader and recorder of each group take 10 minutes to run over the session notes and winnow out the best suggestions and comments made on each of the leading questions.

Step 8: Each discussion leader reports to the full audience. Allow only three or four minutes for each report.

Step 9: Have the chair summarize the discussion leaders’ reports, emphasizing the half dozen or so best ideas to come out of the entire brainstorming session.

TIPS ON BRAINSTORMING

1. If you cannot devote an hour or an hour and a half to a session where two or three leading question can be considered simultaneously, have each small group take up a different question. That way you can cover several subjects in a shorter period of time. However, the more people who consider a single question, the more ideas you get and the more likely you are to come up with several good solutions.
2. Discussion leaders should be designated in advance and should do a dry run on the questions to be used. This dry run training session for leaders is particularly helpful if the leaders have not had previous experience in brainstorming sessions.
3. The discussion leaders can also be the group that frames the leading questions. In framing your leading questions, you may wish to arrange them so each question is a build up for the next one. For example: The first question might ask for ideas for community service by your club. Then the second question may ask for ways to finance such programs. But remember: In searching for ideas in the first question you do not have to consider any problems that might be connected with the ideas such as financing or administering. All you are after are ideas. Later, the people who like particular ideas can figure out ways to implement them.
4. In the unlikely event that your audience does not produce written responses quickly, it is a good idea for the discussion leader and recorder to be prepared with some written responses that will prime the audience.
5. If the group is slow to turn in written responses, don't wait for everyone. Start reading written responses as soon as you get half a dozen in hand. The slow starters will be stimulated by the discussion and will turn in their responses after the discussion starts.
6. Permit participants to turn in more than one written response if they wish but ask them to put only one idea on each slip of paper.
7. It is up to the discussion leaders to keep their sessions lively. Don't try to wring the last drop of juice out of every written response. If comments are not spontaneous, do not bother to dig for them, go on to the next one.
8. The discussion leader should be ready to impose a fine on the very first negative statement that pops into the discussion. If you let criticism start, you can be flooded with it and you will lose the effect of the brainstorming session.
9. Provide small pads and pencils for the audience. The small paper encourages brevity in written responses.
10. Collect all recorders' reports and have a written summary report prepared listing all the good suggestions. In the short time leaders have to prepare for the summary and the short time they have to report, some good may be overlooked. Send a copy to all who participated in the brainstorming session.

Step-by-Step Planning Worksheet

1. Description of Problem

Plan in the context of problem solving. Analyze and describe the problem you face objectively and completely. Unless the problem can be clearly explained, it will be difficult to develop a consensus to support a proposed solution.

- What is the scope of the problem?
- What are the causes of the problem?
- What previous attempts have been made to solve it?
- What are the consequences if the problem is not solved?

2. Possible Solutions

- What can be done to solve the problem?
- What resources are needed to implement each suggested solution?
- How long will it take to implement each proposed solution?
- Does the proposed solution provide a long-range or a temporary solution?

3. Goals and Objectives

Goals are general statements of purpose. Objectives are specific measures that determine how the goal will be accomplished. Both are important. For example, the goal may be to develop a Voter Identification Program; one objective would be locating and collecting all voter registration and voter history data.

Goals and objectives are difficult to write at first, but once you begin thinking of activities in terms of how they relate to overall organizational goals and specific objectives, the task will become much easier.

- What is the general purpose (goal) of solving the problem?
- What are the specific measures (objectives) to be used to accomplish the goals?

4. Description of Activities

- What specific tasks need to be done?
- Who will do what?
- Which tasks need to be done first? Second? Third?

- What skills are needed to perform the tasks?

5. Available Resources

- What people (party officers, staff, consultants, and volunteers) are available?
- What materials are available?
- How much will it cost?
- How will the funds be raised?
- What allied groups will help?
- What technical or highly specialized skills or equipment are required?

6. Anticipate Obstacles

- What could possibly go wrong?
- What risks are inherent in choosing a solution to the problem?
- What alternative solutions are there to the problems you are addressing and whose ideas are they?
- What is already being done to solve the problem and meet the need?
- Will your activities threaten what is already being done and/or create other problems?

7. Time Line

- How long will it take to carry out the solution?
- Can the solution be achieved on its own time line or does it depend on the timing and success of other related activities?

8. Evaluation

- By what standard will you measure success in solving the problem?
- How much should be accomplished by set target dates? (Quantity)
- Is the proposed solution achieving the desired results? (Quality)

SAMPLE PLAN

The sample plan that follows was developed using the Step-by-Step Planning Worksheet. The plan outlines an intensive, aggressive small-donor fundraising program for the Party.

THE PROBLEM

The committee always runs out of money before the end of non-election years, making it difficult to maintain a professional operation year-round. We often have to cut back on programs, and are unable to effectively meet many challenges that should be addressed long before the election.

SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

This lack of funds is a statewide problem. Currently we raise only about 65% of the funds necessary for an effective year-round operation. The office is understaffed, and we have trouble carrying through on planned programs, or even communicating effectively with party officers, elected officials, and constituency groups.

CAUSES OF THE PROBLEM

1. Party fundraising efforts are out of step with the need for a full-time staff and a year-round party building program. Funds are adequate during election seasons, but much harder to come by in off-years, when the party could be building for the future.
2. The party has not brought in officeholders and other key players to establish the need for and develop support for a year-round party operation.
3. The party has relied on a single annual event to fund its basic operations. That event cannot provide sufficient funding for year-round operations.
4. The party has a handful of generous major contributors. These contributors are weary of constant “emergency” appeals. In addition, some have had to cut back because of the Virginia’s economy.
5. Projections for other kinds of fundraising are difficult to make; no real continuity in fundraising programs has been established from one local chair to the next.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM

1. A former Democratic Mayor hosted an event for the party using his own list of small donors. However, after the Mayor was defeated the Chair and officers resigned and these efforts were never carried forward in an institutional manner.
2. The party at one time had a consultant whose program was to solicit every registered Democrat in the county by telephone. They lost an enormous amount of money on this program and party officers are loath to invest in direct fundraising as a result.

CONSEQUENCES

Without concerted attention, the party's contributor base will continue to erode. The party will continue to operate without the expertise and continuity provided by a fulltime staff. We will not be able to execute party programs to take advantage of the periods between elections to build the party's organization. We will be unable to develop professional campaign services for our candidates, and both we and our candidates will be less prepared for campaign season.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

A comprehensive fundraising program for the party offers the best long-term solution to the party. The effort must be coordinated, aggressive and constant so that the party can build a stable small-donor base.

RESOURCES NECESSARY

- Chair or party officer to head up the program
- Finance Subcommittee members
- Members assigned to coordinated fundraising
- Seed money set aside from existing revenues: House Parties
- Commitments from officeholders, allied groups
- Lists of prospective donors
- Volunteers

TIME FRAME AND EFFECTS

Components of the fundraising plan will be phased in over a two-year period. The party will begin by enhancing the performance of existing programs and events, then add new projects only when it can maintain the existing programs at current levels.

Initial efforts may seem stop-gap at first, but will build toward a long-term solution.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

THE GOAL

To double the party's small donor base so that small contributions will provide 50% of the Party's projected operating budget.

OBJECTIVES

1. Aggressively increase prospecting efforts through grassroots solicitation phone-banking
2. Phase-in a new in-house direct mail "membership" program with our existing monthly newsletter.
3. Establish a new "sustaining" program through which contributors authorize the party to withdraw a small amount from their bank account each month.

4. Schedule and carry out a series of special events around the county to attract small-to-moderate donors who do not respond to mail or telephone appeals and to raise the party's profile.
5. Investigate the potential for passage of a political party finance law to secure a broad-based, dependable funding source.

ACTIVITIES

TASK: WHO, WHEN, AND HOW

1. Seek top-level countywide support for the plan. (Chair, Summer)
 - Show how increased funds can help provide elected officials with professional campaign support services.
 - Discuss the feasibility of legislative changes that would provide long-term party finances.
 - Emphasize the ways key leaders could enhance or provide lists, promote the plan, and provide seed money to expand and build existing or proposed institutional programs.
2. Appoint and convene special Finance Subcommittee. (Chair, Summer)
 - Ask top Democratic elected official's Finance Chair to co-chair with party officer.
 - Ask key party officers, legislative leaders and major Democratic contributors to serve.
 - Ask party members to critique and approve overall fundraising plan, suggest candidates for Chair job.
 - Ask subcommittee to develop guidelines for setting aside and reinvesting new revenues in further fundraising.
 - Ask subcommittee to set policies for sharing increased revenues with the Democratic Party of Virginia.
3. Collect/develop lists for enhanced grassroots solicitation phone-banking program prospecting. (Chair, October)
 - Develop and maintain a database.
 - Contact recent major campaigns, allied groups, local Democratic groups, and Democratic officeholders to ask for names from their contributor lists for one-time prospecting.

- Review lists available commercially. Consult with professionals to determine if lists would be productive.
 - Maintain known-contributors prospecting lists separately, both by source and by type of appeal responded to, so that lists can be directed to the appropriate program (e.g., direct mail givers into the newsletter fundraising program).
4. Begin party “Sustaining Member” automatic monthly contribution program. (Chair, with Finance Subcommittee, officeholders, party officers, from January)
- Research methods: printed preauthorized drafts, electronic transfer.
 - Develop promotional materials and enrollment cards, and determine benefits of “sustaining membership.” Establish revenue-sharing terms with DPVA.
 - Review schedule for already scheduled events where there may be an opportunity for promoting program: Training sessions, delegate selection workshops, community events.
 - Enlist Finance Subcommittee members and committee members as sales reps. Promote “charter membership” within the Sustaining Member program (meaning the first group to sign up).
 - Establish procedures to include program information with general Party communications: Requests, convention program, newsletters.
5. Develop special events series for small and moderate donors (Finance Subcommittee, Chair, party officers, officeholders, through late Summer).
- Recruit or appoint event chair for each special event.
 - Develop unified “hook” or theme for the series, or determine if events should be different in different regions.
 - Review political calendar to avoid conflicts. Set full event schedule. Determine any revenue-sharing arrangements with the Democratic Party of Virginia.
 - Review and approve event chairs’ budgets, goals and plans.

SKILLS

Small-donor fundraising requires enormous attention to detail and a lot of tedious work. Members assigned to these kinds of fundraising programs must be organized, methodical, and accurate. Budget

and general fundraising experience, and a commitment to following through on assignments, are helpful for committee members and event chairs.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE

PEOPLE

- Current party officers and committee members who are well-connected in both the political and business communities.
- Current committee members skilled in list management, other areas including design and desktop publishing, mail preparation.
- Chairs, consultants to candidates/officeholders who may be willing to advise on programs.
- Former party leaders and campaign staff, officeholder staff members who may be willing to volunteer.

MATERIALS/TANGIBLE RESOURCES

- Donor lists from past campaigns
- Member lists from allied groups
- Demographic contributor targets based on **VAN** voter file information
- Committee computers for list maintenance
- A Democrat's estate offered for events.

COSTS AND TIMELINES

Seed money needed for start-up costs will come from several sources:

- Set-aside from newsletter revenue.
- Personal solicitations by party Chair and Finance subcommittee members.

At least initially, the Finance Subcommittee should agree that the majority of increased revenue from these programs will be reinvested in building the fundraising program. All small-donor programs, especially those that start from a small base list, require time and investment in prospecting efforts to pay off.

(See sample timelines following plan text.)

ANTICIPATE OBSTACLES

What if no one wants to serve on the Finance subcommittee?

- First identify a leader who will serve to establish credibility.

What if some campaign organizations will not cooperate?

- Set goals for those who will and provide public/political “rewards.”

What if no one shows up at an event?

- Analyze what went wrong: date conflict, insufficient publicity, wrong ticket price for audience, no “star” to attract people. Use the information on the next event.

What if donors feel unappreciated?

- Make sure all donors are formally thanked and receive recognition. Include donors on regular party mailings to stay in touch.

EVALUATION AND OVERSIGHT

- Set goals on a timeline for each activity.
- Establish systems to capture information about program performance. (for example, measuring percentage increases/decreases in dollars and in members)
- Provide regular progress reports to Finance subcommittee members, Party leaders, and key elected officials.
- Evaluate progress with staff and the Finance subcommittee and make program adjustments.

Nominating Process

Primaries, Caucuses, and Conventions

One of the key duties of a chair is to coordinate nominating processes in your locality. Year to year, the purpose might change but the basic process stays the same. For state wide offices and federal candidates, the determination of the method for nominating candidates will either be made by the State Party, in the case of state wide offices, or the Congressional District Committee for U.S. House of Representative Candidates. However, you may have other obligations if a caucus and/or convention process is selected.

As a local committee chair, you and your committee have the right to determine the method by which a party nomination will be made for any other offices in your locality. If the office in question overlaps multiple localities, you or your designee(s) will work in conjunction with the other chairs of those local committees to determine the method of nomination as part of a nominating committee. Whether nominating a candidate, electing delegates to a congressional district convention, electing committee members in a committee reorganization – the options on how to accomplish those goals stay the same:

I. PRIMARY

Primaries are covered by the *Code of Virginia* (Chapter 5, Article 4 of the 2015 edition of Virginia Election Law) as well as by the Party Plan (Article 13). The State Board of Elections sets the date for primaries and conducts them in conjunction with the local electoral board and registrar. The

only requirement is that the chair must notify both the State Board of Elections and the State Party that a primary has been selected (i.e., as the method of nomination for a candidate). The requirements for this notification are covered in Chapter 3. This is the most common form of nominating a democratic candidate in general elections. The Chair receives the forms from the persons who file to be candidates in the primary and then submits the list of candidates who qualify for the primary to the SBE and/or registrar.

II. CAUCUS

The conduct of caucuses is entirely governed by the *Party Plan*. Caucuses can either be held on their own or in conjunction with a Convention. A caucus typically occurs in one of three situations: when it is selected as a form of nominating a candidate, when committee reorganization occurs, and when it is used to select delegates to send to a Convention, such as during presidential years when it is used to select delegates to send to the State and CD Conventions. The only requirements imposed by the Commonwealth of Virginia on this process are on the forms to be filed, and the period during which the caucus may take place and certification by the chair of the candidate selected in this process, if the caucus is held to nominate a candidate.

A. Assembled v. Unassembled Caucuses

There are two types of caucuses:

- Assembled (also known as a mass meeting), and
- Unassembled (sometimes called a firehouse primary).

Each has merits and the type of caucus you choose is largely a matter of local preference and tradition.

The Assembled Caucus is highly structured. There is a definite starting time. Everyone meets in the same room at the same time. Doors are locked and no one is admitted after the caucus begins. Those who leave during the caucus may not be allowed to return. Persons standing in line at the time the caucus is to begin are allowed to participate. We have attached sample rules for an Assembled Caucus that you may use as a guide.

The Unassembled Caucus is much looser in its operation. Voting takes place over a period of time and people are allowed to come in, vote, and leave – similar to a polling place on Election Day. This type of caucus usually runs for a few hours. Sample rules for an Unassembled Caucus are attached.

B. The Call To Caucus

The first task of the committee, once a caucus has been chosen as the method to conduct whatever party business needs to take place, is the drafting of a document called the Call to Caucus.

As per Section 14.2 of the *Party Plan*, any committee issuing a Call to a Caucus:

- Shall specify the time, place, and purpose of the convention or caucus;
- May restrict the convention or caucus to the purpose stated in the call notice;
- Shall make all convention and caucus arrangements; and
- Shall state the conditions for cancellation of the caucus or convention, if so desired;
- Shall state that all conventions or caucuses shall be held in a location that is ADA accessible; and

- Shall ensure that the convention or caucus is held in accordance with the Plan.

Each Call to a Caucus should also include:

- Specification of assembled (mass meeting) or unassembled caucus (firehouse primary);
- Pre-filing requirements, including fees, if any;
- The basis of allocation of votes, if appropriate;
- Notice requirements;
- A description of caucus committees, if any;
- A statement about affirmative action;
- Specification of the method of distribution of the call;
- Candidate filing fees and deadlines.

The Call to Caucus is drafted, adopted, and distributed by the committee. Rules for the conduct of the caucus must also be adopted.

C. Notice Requirements

Every Democratic caucus or convention must be publicized least seven (7) days prior to the date of such selection. Where a caucus/convention process is used and the initial notice provides information as to the time and place of the convention, a second notice is not required.

Committees must post this notification using channels of communication typically used by the committee, and which shall provide the widest possible dissemination within its jurisdiction.

Committees are required to post this notification on either their own committee web site or the DPVA web site and provide a press release to all relevant newspapers of general circulation. See Section 9.1 of the Party Plan for the specific requirements.

D. Fees

No fee of any kind may be charged to attend and vote at a caucus.

E. Caucus Participation

Participants in a caucus are required to sign a Caucus Declaration form certifying that the participant:

- i. is a Democrat;
- ii. is a registered voter within the jurisdiction for which the caucus is held;
- iii. believes in the principles of the Democratic Party; and
- iv. does not intend to support any candidate who is opposed to a Democratic nominee in the next ensuing election.

This is a required statement and **must** be signed by every caucus participant. See Section 18.3 of the Party Plan for this requirement. We strongly urge you to add the names of caucus participants to VAN with a specially created activist code.

F. General Caucus Considerations

As you plan your caucus, you should consider the following:

- Do you want an Observers' area for people who want to watch but not participate? If so, it should be separated from the actual caucus area so that when voting occurs, only caucus participants are actually voting.
- Do you want a Press area? If you are going to have cameras there, you may have some special needs (electrical outlets) that must be met. Make sure that any cords are taped to the floor so that participants don't trip. The press area should also be separate from the actual caucus area.
- Do you want to prohibit campaign material inside the caucus? You may also restrict distribution of such material to the registration area only. Any restrictions should be noted in the rules for the caucus.
- You will need an official device by which time is kept. Make sure that it is visible and can't be tampered with.
- As for all Democratic Party functions, the caucus location should be accessible to persons with disabilities, in compliance with guidance set forth under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

G. Caucuses in Statewide Convention Years

In Statewide Convention years, caucuses held in localities across the Commonwealth will elect roughly 2,000 State Delegates and 500 Alternates (these numbers vary from year to year) who will attend their Congressional District Convention and the State Convention. If it is a presidential year, those state delegates will elect the National Convention Delegates, both at the Congressional District Convention and at the State Convention.

The State Delegates are apportioned among Virginia's cities and counties using a formula based on Democratic votes in recent elections, and sometimes population. The specific numbers of the allocation will be included in the DPVA Call to Convention.

Often, these types of caucuses are cancelled because the number of individuals filing to be delegates and alternates does not exceed the number of delegates to be elected. The Call to Caucus must clearly state that the Caucus may be cancelled if the maximum number or fewer delegates/alternates file. If the conditions for cancellation occur, the chair of the nominating committee shall be responsible for deciding whether to cancel or conduct the caucus, making public notice of such decision, and advising those individuals who filed of their election.

III. CONVENTION

The conduct of a Convention is actually a two-step process, caucus then convention. First, delegates and alternates are elected at local caucuses. Then, these delegates and alternates attend the Convention, which may be used for nominating candidates for state and federal offices. The delegate selection caucuses must be held before the Convention but may be held on the same day as the Convention. The conduct of Conventions is governed by the *Party Plan* and the committees convened for that purpose.

The only requirements imposed by the Commonwealth of Virginia on this method of nomination are on the forms to be filed and the period during which the convention may take place (if nominating a candidate). The chair must also certify any candidate nominated by this process to the State Board of Elections.

As per Section 14.2 of the *Party Plan*, any committee issuing a Call to Convention:

- Shall specify the time, place, and purpose of the convention or caucus;
- May restrict the convention or caucus to the purpose stated in the call notice;
- Shall make all convention and caucus arrangements; and
- Shall state the conditions for cancellation of the caucus or convention, if so desired;
- Shall ensure that all conventions or caucuses shall be held in a location that is ADA accessible; and
- Shall ensure that the convention or caucus is held in accordance with the Plan.

The first task of the committee, once a Convention has been chosen as the method to conduct whatever party business needs to take place, is the drafting of the Call to Convention. The Call to Convention is drafted, adopted, and distributed by the committee. Note that this process is more complicated than a caucus in that you must first decide how you will allocate delegates, how you will elect delegates and alternates, and credentialing delegates at the Convention. DPVA staff provides the detailed documents when needed.

IV. REORGANIZATION

Every two years, as required by the Party Plan, new City and County committees are elected or reorganized between December 1st of odd numbered years and January 15th of even numbered years. This is an opportunity for you and your committee to broaden your base and to include new members. Those of you who have been involved in local committees for a long time know that reorganization sounds much worse than it really is. Put simply, reorganization is a caucus held for the purpose of electing members to the Democratic committee.

A. Rules

Rules that apply to caucuses in general also apply to the reorganization caucus. In addition, there are some specific rules that apply:

- Caucuses for the purpose of the election of such committees shall be held on Saturday or, if provided by county or city committee bylaws, on any other weekday evening. Any waiver of this requirement as to the time for elections must be granted by the State Party Chair or the Steering Committee
- **Soon after the caucus**, each new City and County committee must elect a chair, secretary and any other officers deemed necessary by the committee (section 8.6 of the *Party Plan*). Your committee may choose to elect officers at the reorganization meeting after a new committee has been formed (i.e., you adjourn the caucus and convene the committee meeting – only the newly elected members participate).
- Should you choose to require filing for candidates for membership on the committee, your filing deadline cannot be more than 10 days before your election. The filing deadline has the same notice requirements as the caucus.

- Each person participating in your election must certify that he or she: is a Democrat; is a registered voter within the jurisdiction for which the caucus is held; believes in the principles of the Democratic Party; and does not intend to support any candidate who is opposed to a Democratic nominee in the next ensuing election. (Section 18.3 of the *Party Plan*). We've provided you with a sample Caucus Participation Form in the resources section at the end of this chapter.
- **Temporary rules, prepared by the chair of the local committee, are required for the election.** They must be prepared and available to any interested Democrat **at least one week before** the caucus. If you hold an assembled caucus, the caucus will adopt the rules; if you hold an unassembled caucus, your current committee must meet to adopt the rules prior to the date of your election.

B. Requirements

After your committee has reorganized, **the chair is required to submit a copy of the committee bylaws to the State Party** (section 8.7 of the *Party Plan*). In addition, **the secretary should submit the names, addresses, e-mail address and phone numbers (home, office, and mobile, if applicable) of the officers and members of the committee** (section 8.6 of the *Party Plan*).

It is extremely important for you (or possibly the new chair if they are elected immediately following the reorganization) ***to provide the State Party with your bylaws and to make sure that a complete list*** (including addresses, emails, and phone numbers) ***of your new committee has been forwarded.*** We routinely receive requests for committee lists from candidates and campaigns.

C. Suggestions for Expanding Participation

Democrats have an opportunity this year to expand our ranks, recruit new volunteers, and change the demographics of our local committees.

Here are some ideas for recruiting for your committee.

- Work the voter file. From your committee's *VAN* account for the Registered Voter List, use the Party ID fields to identify potential recruits to the cause: SD/Strong Democrats is the list to use.
- Post notices at coffee shops, libraries, churches, union halls, community centers, and laundromats. Use every device you can think of to publicize your reorganization, including social media tools like Facebook and Twitter.
- Contact members of local unions and teachers' associations.
- Adopt an "each one, reach one" program that encourages each of your current committee members to bring a new face with them to reorganization.
- Many local committees combine reorganization with a celebration of some kind. Have a volunteer appreciation potluck dinner or celebrate the victories of local candidates in this year's election. A social hour or meet and greet immediately following is easy.

ADDITIONAL CHAPTER RESOURCES

- Caucus Check List
- Sample Rules For An Assembled Caucus
- Suggested Agenda For An Assembled Caucus (Mass Meeting)
- Sample Rules For An Unassembled Caucus (Firehouse Primary)
- Sample Declaration Of Candidacy For Democratic Nomination
- Sample Ballots
- Delegate or Alternate Pre-filing Form
- Sample Henrico Caucus Participation Form

Caucus Check List

QUICK AND EASY STEPS FOR CONDUCTING A CAUCUS

This is an easy to follow to do list for getting ready for a caucus.

1. **Selection of the date.** This must be within the window allowed by the State Board of Elections.
2. **Selection of the site.** This should be a generally easy to find location within the district, and must be ADA accessible. If the district is a large geographic area, multiple locations can be arranged for an unassembled caucus.
3. **Selection of the type of caucus.** Assembled (mass meeting) or Unassembled (firehouse primary)? See above. Don't confuse this slang term of firehouse primary with the 'big P' Primary conducted by the Board of Elections.
4. **Notification of the date/site/type of caucus should be sent ASAP** the Party Services Director at **DPVA**. We need to know!
5. **Preparation of Candidate Filing Form, Filing Fee and Deadline to File.** All candidates seeking nomination by the Democratic Party are required to fill out a Declaration of Candidacy form. (See sample below.) The committee can set the filing fee as you deem appropriate, at a minimum to cover your costs for the ad and any other expenses associated with the caucus. The filing deadline can be more than ten (10) days before your caucus, but within a reasonable amount of time before the caucus. The filing deadline **must** be advertised.
6. **Preparation of caucus rules.** Copies should be available.
7. **Preparation of Caucus Participation Form.** Make more than enough copies.
8. **Preparation of Ballot.** This occurs after the candidate filing deadline, when you have all the candidate names.
9. **Day before the Caucus:**
 - a. Make sure all your volunteers know they should arrive at least a half hour before the Caucus begins.
 - b. Make sure you have a sufficient number of Caucus Participation Forms.
 - c. Make sure you have the following to take with you: magic markers, masking tape (in order to put up signs or notices), scissors, filled stapler, pens for voters and others to use, box in which to put ballots.
 - d. Make sure you have laptops available to check the registration status of all caucus participants using the VAN or the State Board of Elections Website. This is to check that everyone participating in the caucus is a registered voter.

10. Day of the Caucus:

- a. Get to the site early and make sure all is in order (room is set up the way you requested) and put up directional signs, if needed. Have an area for people to fill out the Caucus Participation Forms and a Registration area to check that they are registered to vote.
- b. Open the doors and relax – don't worry about what might happen.

Immediately Following the Caucus: The Chair fills out the Certification form sent by the State Board of Elections and submits it back to the SBE (follow the instructions on the form), and copies the Party Services Director at DPVA.

SAMPLE RULES FOR AN ASSEMBLED CAUCUS

1. The doors of the caucus room will open and the certification process will begin at 6:30 pm. An official clock will be identified by the Temporary Chair of the Caucus. This clock will be used for all timekeeping.
2. The doors to the caucus meeting room will be closed promptly at 7:30 pm. A five minute warning will be issued by the Temporary Chair at 7:25 pm. Persons standing in line to complete a certification form at the time the doors close will be allowed to complete their forms and participate in the caucus.
3. The Temporary Credentials Committee will be responsible for checking in caucus participants by confirming that they are registered to vote in the district. Every person who participates in the caucus must complete a certification form and sign a statement that says they are a registered voter of the District, a Democrat, and that they do not intend to support a candidate opposed to the Democratic nominee in the next ensuing election.
4. The caucus will be called to order by the temporary chair. The District chair or his/her designee shall act as the temporary chair.
5. The first order of business shall be the election of a permanent chair.
6. The permanent chair shall appoint the permanent caucus secretary.
7. The chair shall call upon the Temporary Credentials Committee for a report of the number of credentialed participants in the caucus.
8. The chair shall thereupon offer a report on Temporary Rules. Upon a motion for adoption, the Temporary Rules may be amended from the floor (but must comply with the Call to Convention), put to a vote, and adopted.
9. Immediately prior to the distribution of ballots, the permanent chair shall ask if there are any slates to be recognized. Only those slates properly prefiled as a slate of delegates on or before the deadline will be recognized as such. First name, middle initial, and last name of each of those properly prefiled shall be listed on the caucus ballot in alphabetical order. They must also be numbered. A slate may be presented on the ballot and designates as "Slate A," "Slate B," etc. It is prohibited to give any preferential treatment to any slate and none will be listed as the "official slate." Each slate will be announced and the names of the members of each slate read by the chair.
10. Ballots will be distributed only to those persons who can produce a signed copy of the certification form in exchange for a ballot.
11. Caucus participants will be instructed by the chair as to the maximum number of delegate and/or alternate candidates for whom they may vote. Those wishing to vote for a slate may mark only the slate in the appropriate space provided. Ballots showing votes of more delegates than is allowed will be declared invalid. If a slate is offered which does not contain the maximum number of delegates, a participant may vote for the slate simply by marking in the appropriated space and then mark the names of the other candidates listed in alphabetical order so long as the maximum number is not violated. Slates may also include alternates.
12. Caucus participants may vote for individual delegate candidates by placing an "X" beside the appropriate name. They may vote for a slate by placing an "X" on the slate space provided on the ballot.
13. Alternates elected shall be those persons receiving the next highest number of votes from the delegates, unless they have prefiled on a slate to be an alternate.

14. A tellers committee, representative of the assembly, shall be appointed by the chair to collect and count the ballots. Each candidate is entitled to have one representative who will observe the tellers committee count the ballots.
15. Upon collection of the ballots, the caucus meeting shall stand in recess until the tellers committee has reported its count to the chair. The tellers committee shall report directly to the chair who will announce the vote. The number of ballots may not exceed the number of credentialed participants as reported by the Credentials Committee.
16. Upon the announcement of the results and the collection of all documentation, the caucus will adjourn.
17. The official ballot will be yellow and be marked with the word "official" at the top. The names of all delegate candidates will be listed in alphabetical order and numbered. Space will be provided at the bottom portion of the ballot for any pre-filed slate of delegates and alternates.
18. Tie votes will be decided by the flip of a coin.

Signature_____Date_____

SUGGESTED AGENDA FOR AN ASSEMBLED CAUCUS (MASS MEETING)

___am/pm Time should be adjusted for those cities' and counties' choice (daytime or evening)

Doors to meeting room should be closed after a five (5) minute warning.

Prior to the caucus, the nominating committee will have appointed a temporary chair, temporary secretary, and a credentials committee.

Call to order by Temporary Chair.

An explanation of the purpose of the caucus and a statement that no other business other than that which was in the notice of the caucus can come up. This may be done by the Temporary Chair.

The election of a permanent chair:

- “Do I hear nominations for a permanent chair of the caucus?” (No second needed)
- “Are there further nominations?”
- “Do I hear a motion to close nominations?”
- “Is there a second?”
- “All in favor of closing nominations say ‘aye’. Opposed say ‘no’.”
- “Nominations for chair are now closed.”

If there is more than one (1) nomination, you may allow for very brief (no more than two (2) minutes) speeches. Then say:

- “Those in favor of candidate A raise your hands (tellers will count); those in favor of candidate B will raise your hands.”

If there is only one (1) nomination, say:

- “Those in favor of _____ as the permanent caucus chair raise your hand. Those opposed raise your hand. _____ has been elected permanent chair. I’ll turn the meeting over to her/him.”

The permanent chair appoints a permanent secretary.

- “We’ll now hear the report of the credentials committee.”

If there is a question about the credential of any participant, say:

- “You have heard the question concerning the right of _____ to participate in this caucus. _____, do you wish to say anything in your own defense?”
- “You have heard the discussion. Those who feel that Mr./Ms. _____ should be seated, raise your hand; those who oppose, do likewise. (Tellers count each.)
- “The assembly has voted to seat/not seat Mr./Ms. _____. All in favor of the credentials report say ‘aye’; those opposed say ‘no’.”

The chair shall read or have the secretary read the temporary rules.

- “Is there a motion to adopt the rules as read? Is there a second? Is there a discussion?”

If an amendment is proposed, stop and discuss the motion to amend and vote only on the motion to amend which takes a majority to pass. Then say:

- “Is there further discussion on the motion to adopt the rules *as amended* (if the amendment passed)?” If no further amendments are offered or if no amendments at all were offered, say: “Those in favor of the rules say ‘aye’; those opposed say ‘no’. The motion is carried and the rules are adopted.”

Slates: This depends upon the adopted rule in #6 on the slates. Although no slate may be recognized as the “official slate”, some caucuses recognize slates prefiled prior to a set deadline so that a participant may simply mark “A” slate or “B” slate on the ballot and not mark each person’s name individually. On the other hand, some caucuses do not require pre-filing of slates and require each participant to mark on the ballot each name for whom he/she wishes to vote.

In any event the chair should call attention to whatever rule has been adopted on slates at this time and should read aloud each slate.

Distribution of ballots: A ballot will be given to each participant in exchange for his/her signed copy of the certification form which should be distributed and filled out before entering the caucus room, and after they have been verified as being a registered voter in the district.

Announce the maximum number of delegates or candidates for whom they may vote by placing an “X: by the appropriate name. If the slate rule is adopted in #6, they may state this on the ballot. In the event a slate does not contain the maximum number for whom one may vote, he/she may mark an “X” by the additional number of votes to which he/she is entitled.

Announce the names of the tellers and the private space in which they are to count the ballots. (This space should be a nearby room in same building, or in a corner of the room sequestered from other caucus participants. Press should not be allowed in the room or area where ballots are counted. ONE designated representative from each candidate’s campaign may be allowed to observe all processes during the caucus, provided that they have a signed letter from the candidate designating that person as their Authorized Representative.)

Following the collection of the ballots, say:

- “The caucus is recessed until the ballots are counted. At that time, I will announce the results and adjourn the caucus. The caucus is now in recess.”

After the counting of the ballots, the chair returns to the meeting room (usually empty by this time and announces the results of the election and says: “This caucus is adjourned.”

ADDENDUM: AN APPEAL OR CHALLENGE OF THE CHAIR DURING A CAUCUS

At any time during a caucus or mass meeting, should the ruling of the chair be challenged over the election of a chair, adoption of the rules, etc., say:

- “Do you wish to move to appeal/challenge the ruling of the chair?”

If he/she responds ‘yes’ then say:

- “Is there a second?” As chair you do not relinquish the chair, but explain immediately why you ruled as you did. Then say:
- “Is there further discussion of the motion to appeal the chair’s ruling?”
- “Those who feel that the chair ruled correctly, raise your hand.”
- “Those who feel that the chair ruled incorrectly, raise your hand.”

It takes a majority for passage.

- “The majority feels that the chair ruled correctly; thus we’ll move on to the next item on the agenda.”

Or,

- “The majority feels that the chair ruled incorrectly; thus the ruling of the chair is reversed on that item. We’ll move to the next item on the agenda.”

SAMPLE RULES FOR AN UNASSEMBLED CAUCUS

(FIREHOUSE PRIMARY)

1. All times shall be read from the official clock located above the check-in area.
2. The doors of the caucus room will open and the certification process will begin at 12:00 noon on Saturday, June 4, 2015.
3. The doors to the caucus meeting room will be closed promptly at 4:00 pm. Persons standing in line to complete a certification form at the time the doors close will be allowed to complete their forms and participate in the caucus. Participants will have their voter registration verified at the Registration table prior to voting in the caucus.
4. Every person who participates in the caucus must complete a certification form and sign a statement that says they are a registered voter, a Democrat, and that they do not intend to support a candidate opposed to the Democratic nominee in the next ensuing election.
5. The chair of the Legislative District Nominating Committee shall act as the permanent chair of the caucus.
6. The recording secretary of the Legislative District Nominating Committee shall act as the permanent chair of the caucus.
7. Caucuses shall be conducted in accordance with the Virginia Democratic *Party Plan* and the Call to Caucus.
8. The permanent chair shall appoint a tellers committee.
9. Ballots will be prepared listing the first name, middle initial and last name of the candidate(s).
10. Caucus participants may vote for a candidate(s) by placing an "X" beside the appropriate name.
11. The tellers committee shall count the ballots.
12. There shall be no campaigning inside the caucus room or check in area. While buttons or lapel stickers may be worn, no candidate material may be distributed. Any material must be distributed outside the building in which the caucus is held.
13. There will be no Press or Observers permitted in the room in which the balloting takes place. ONE designated representative from each candidate's campaign may be allowed to observe all processes during the caucus, provided that they have a signed letter from the candidate designating that person as their Authorized Representative.

14. Tie votes will be decided by the flip of a coin.

Adopted: _____ **(date)**

Signed: _____ **(Chair)**

SAMPLE DECLARATION OF CANDIDACY FOR DEMOCRATIC NOMINATION

(#) LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT DEMOCRATIC NOMINATING COMMITTEE

I, _____, declare myself a candidate for the Democratic Nomination as a candidate for election to the office of Member, Virginia House of Delegates, (#) District in the General Election to be held Tuesday, November 5th, 2015. In making this declaration, I certify as follows:

- I will not support any candidate who is opposed to a Democratic nominee in the next ensuing general election;
- I am a Democrat;
- I am a registered voter in the district in which I am declaring my candidacy;
- I am a resident of _____.

My permanent address is:

My Mailing address is:

My telephone numbers are:

(H) _____ (W) _____
(
C) _____

My e-mail address is: _____

SIGNATURE _____ **DATE** _____

Declaration and filing fee of \$350.00 received by:

Chair _____ Date _____

Authorized by the (#) Legislative District Nominating Committee and
Paid for by the (LOCAL) Democratic Committee

SAMPLE BALLOTS

**OFFICIAL BALLOT
FOR
NOMINEE FOR
3RD HOUSE OF DELEGATES
DISTRICT**

Saturday, May 14, 2015

VOTE FOR NO MORE THAN
1 PERSON (BY MARKING AN 'X'
IN THE BOX NEXT TO CHOICE)

- ☐ ☐ David Layman
☐ ☐ Lorene Martin
☐ ☐ Jim Turpin

Paid for by the Democratic Party of Virginia

**OFFICIAL BALLOT
For**

**DELEGATES TO
DISTRICT CONVENTION**

VOTE FOR NO MORE THAN 6
INDIVIDUALS OR ONE SLATE
(BY CIRCLING CHOICES OR BY
CHECKING A BALLOT)

1. **Harold Bannister**
2. **Diane Cherry**
3. **Edward Fleming**
4. **Daniel Redwood**
5. **Marcia Speck**
6. **Sandra Timmons**
7. **Louise F. Ware**
8. **Robert Weinberg**
9. **James Willis**

-
- ☐ Slate A
☐ Slate B

Paid for by the Democratic Party of Virginia

Delegate or Alternate Pre-Filing Form

2016 STATE / CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT CONVENTION

Delegate or Alternate Prefiling Form (to be filled out and submitted by the prefiling deadline)

Democratic Party of Virginia

I, the undersigned, certify that I am a Democrat, am a registered voter in _____, subscribe to the principles of the Democratic Party, do not intend to support any candidate who is opposed to a Democratic Nominee in the next ensuing election, and will not participate in the nominating process of any other political party.

Please Print:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip Code _____

Phone (H) _____ (O) _____

E-mail _____ Fax _____

Congressional District _____

County or City _____

Precinct / Ward _____

Filing For: Delegate / Alternate (Circle One)

Presidential Candidate Preference _____
(Candidate Name)

U.S. House Candidate Preference _____
(Candidate Name, Uncommitted, or No Candidate)

Fees: State \$10.00 + District \$____ + Local \$____ = Total \$____

Congressional District, county and city committees may request voluntary administrative fees for each delegate and alternate candidate to the Congressional District Convention. The total may not to exceed \$25.00. No person shall be denied the right to participate in the delegate selection process due to nonpayment of the voluntary administrative fee.

County and city committees must submit the certified list of delegates and alternates to the appropriate Congressional District committee.

If elected a delegate or alternate to my Congressional District and State Conventions, I understand that, having expressed the above candidate preferences, I will in all good conscience vote in that candidate's caucus on the first ballot at both Conventions.

Signature _____ Date _____

Authorized by the Democratic Party of Virginia and Paid for by the (Your committee name) Contributions to the Democratic Party of Virginia are not tax deductible.

Sample Caucus Participation

HENRICO COUNTY DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE

2013 CAUCUS DECLARATION FORM

Henrico County Democratic Caucus – June 8, 2013

For the purpose of electing a Democratic Candidate for the 72nd General Assembly District

As stated in Paragraph III.A.3.f of the Virginia Delegate Selection Plan:

“Any person attending a caucus, before participating in that meeting, shall sign a standardized declaration form approved by the State Democratic Party stating that he or she: is a Democrat; does not intend to support any candidate who is opposed to a Democratic nominee in the next ensuing election; is not a member of any other political Party; has not participated and will not participate in the nominating process of any other Party for the 2013 elections; and is registered to vote in the jurisdiction in which the caucus is held.”

I, the undersigned, having read the above provisions, hereby state that I:

- am a Democrat,
- do not intend to support any candidate who is opposed to a Democratic nominee in the next ensuing election,
- am not a member of any other political Party,
- have not participated and will not participate in the nominating process of any other Party for the 2013 elections, and
- am a registered voter in Henrico County.

Signature: _____ Dated: June 8, 2013

PLEASE PRINT:

NAME: _____

RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS: _____

(City) _____ VA (zip code) _____

Mailing Address, if different: _____

Phone: (h) 804- _____ (w) _____ (other) _____

E-Mail: _____ @ _____ . _____

Magisterial District _____ **Precinct** _____

General Assembly District: 72nd

Voter Registration Verified By: Voter Registration Card ☐ Voter List ☐ Affidavit ☐

Authorized by the Democratic Party of Virginia - Paid by the Henrico County Democratic Committee

Preparing for Elections

Year Round Party Building Activities

Committee planning means *always* looking ahead to the next election and planning activities that will help get Democratic candidates elected. That's it. That's why we exist as a Party. Period. If you don't remember anything else from this handbook, remember our overall and constant goal: ***electing Democratic candidates to public office and expanding the Democratic electorate.***

How do you plan ahead? Follow the election calendar provided by the State Board of Elections included in the resources section at the end of this chapter. Every year there is an election in Virginia (sometimes multiple)! We are only one of two states in the country with a non-stop round of election cycles (New Jersey is the other one).

Nearly every Democrat has heard the term “Coordinated Campaign” a thousand times over. Although Coordinated Campaigns vary from election to election and from county to county, the term describes the basic ticket-wide general election campaign to identify, motivate, and turn out the Democratic vote. The “year-round Coordinated Campaign” concept simply assumes that Democrats cannot wait until election time to coordinate and plan mutually beneficial activities that involve committee officers, office holders, donors and key constituency groups.

The key to this effort is simple in concept, but not always easy to achieve: **All Democrats must feel they have a stake in the program.** The effort requires the committee Chair to work not only with the Democratic Party of Virginia officers and staff, but also with local officeholders, key constituency organizations, and Democratic contributors. The goal is to involve everyone year-round in the

planning, funding and execution of party building programs, instead of waiting until 90 days before the general election to start a Coordinated Campaign. Waiting until after the primary election to start working together won't win elections and won't build a strong committee.

The kinds of programs that benefit from year-round coordination and attention include:

- Candidate recruitment and development for Candidates and Committee Leaders with assistance from the House/Senate Caucuses or DPVA staff
- Voter File & I.D. development and maintenance with assistance from the DPVA
- Outreach programs to build local Democratic-friendly Coalitions
- Voter Expansion activities to grow our Democratic electorate, including voter registration, restoration of rights, and voter education.
- Fundraising and Event Planning (covered in Chapter 9)
- Communications (external & internal) and Message Delivery (Covered in Chapter 10)

I. CANDIDATE RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Candidate recruitment and development is a key role for local committees. It not only allows you to develop strong candidates for local offices, but also helps to build the bench for legislative and statewide elections. Candidate recruitment should be an ongoing activity for you and your committee, as the more time that can be put into vetting and developing your potential candidates the stronger they will be when they run for office.

The nomination process must be open to any qualified Democrat who wants to run. There will often be cases where there are several qualified candidates and a contested primary may be healthy for the Party. Nevertheless, candidate recruitment can be a delicate and potentially divisive activity, but there are some things you can do to avoid causing problems:

- Very early on form a committee or an ad hoc group to recruit and assess candidates. The group should include representatives from key funding and allied organizations, legislative campaign committees, and Democratic Party of Virginia leaders.
- Analyze and assess the districts and offices that are “in play” for partisan challenges. Agree on recruitment targets.
- Create and maintain a list of strong prospective candidates regardless of the office. This is an important role for committees to fill, since you are best placed to know what talent is out there locally. Community leaders, current elected who may be interested in higher office, past candidates, local activists – keep a database of names that you can pull from should any vacancy arise, be it anticipated or unanticipated.
- Have group members check with their contacts in the districts and around the county to determine who is running or considering a race, whether or not they have the resources and ability to win, and problems or attributes they have that will affect their electability.
- Have influential community figures contact them about making the race, possible commitments of resources, etc.

- Be clear with each prospective candidate with regards to what they can expect in terms of support from the committee, and giving them a realistic sense of the expectations on their timing and the effort that is required to run a successful campaign.
- Assume that the Republicans are recruiting, too, and use the groups' contacts and information to alert your incumbents who may be facing serious challenges.

A. Candidate Recruitment

Long before the campaign season begins, city or county committee officers should be evaluating potential candidates for future election. Even in those districts where long-term Democrat incumbents hold office, city or committee officers should be preparing for the day their elected official decides not to seek re-election (or accepts a job which requires him/her to resign the seat). It is important to constantly be thinking about the bench. Keep a database of qualified prospective candidates that you can pull from as/when vacancies arise. Keep in mind the following ideas when developing a list of possible candidates:

- School boards, town boards, city councils and county commissions are excellent proving grounds for future legislators. Your district should consider whether you should begin endorsing selected candidates for these offices; some local party organizations currently endorse for “non-partisan” offices, which permits those candidates to start developing a base within the DPVA Party. If you choose not to endorse, you should consider playing a role in finding candidates for these offices – once elected they can begin to develop their reputation in the community.
- Activism in a popular community issue or event is an important quality for a candidate. The president of a youth athletic or civic association, the leader of a recycling campaign, or a community activist or attorney who helped save park land, brings to a campaign a built-in base of supporters and volunteers separate from the party organization.
- A person does not need to be a popular community leader or elected official to be a good candidate. Analyze these factors about your district:
 - what issues tend to be important to your district
 - what outside factors will impact your race (such as national economic change or a statewide candidate who will have a strong impact in your area)
 - what are the weaknesses of the most likely Republican candidate in the race
- Finding a candidate who can take advantage of these factors can be as important as finding a “name” candidate.
 - Often candidates need to run more than once before they are successful. Rather than being a handicap, an initial loss often provides seasoning for a campaign:
 - candidates can build on their new name recognition
 - candidates can learn from earlier mistakes

Your role in selecting a future candidate will be determined by the conditions surrounding the vacancy, as well as the mood of the Democratic community. In some districts, party chairs are expected to play an active role in candidate recruitment and selection; in other areas, the Democratic activists prefer that all potential candidates come to a meeting for scrutiny.

There is a wealth of additional information – regarding timelines, rules and myriad other topics – on the State Board of Elections website: <http://elections.virginia.gov/candidatepac-info/becoming-a-candidate/index.html>

B. Candidate And Campaign Staff Training

Training is an important service the committee can provide for local and constitutional office candidates and campaign staffs. Many candidates, campaign managers, and staff do not always know what to expect about the time commitment it will take to run for office and have little or no experience in campaign “basics”: using the voter file, targeting, polling, message delivery (paid and earned), GOTV, and the advantages of coordinating with other local campaigns.

Even experienced candidates and campaign staff need to keep abreast of changes in campaign technologies and techniques, as well as campaign finance and reporting laws. These also provide an opportunity for staff and candidates from different campaigns to come together, and for the committee to learn more about what the local infrastructure and the wider DPVA can do to support these individual efforts. (The Democratic House and Senate Caucuses train for General Assembly races. The national Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee trains for races for the U.S. House of Representatives, and the national Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee trains for races for the U.S. Senate.)

Training programs help develop relationships that establish the committee’s credibility and role in the Coordinated Campaign and beyond. Every candidate you help get into office is a potential ally of the committee when you need their help down the road.

For successful candidate training programs, you should:

- Involve experienced campaign managers, consultants, and DPVA staff to prepare training materials and conduct workshop sessions and help identify additional resources.
- Involve key players and high-profile community leaders in planning and promoting the training.
- Set a budget and a timeline for preparation of materials, securing locations, sending invitations, and scheduling trainers and facilitators.
- Invite and encourage experienced current and past candidates to attend, too. Old dogs must occasionally learn new tricks to survive in politics. Additionally, they will have valuable local knowledge that they may be willing to share with other candidates.
- In larger cities or counties, consider holding regional training sessions in order to involve and include more campaigns.
- Look to groups and individuals who normally fund campaigns to sponsor training sessions. Donors have an obvious interest in providing funds to pay for training programs.

C. Schedule of Office Election Years

Here’s a quick list of the different elections in Virginia:

Local Offices: Varies widely for length of terms and when staggered. You have to know your locality.

- County Board of Supervisors
- City and Town Councils
- City and Town Mayors

- City and County School Boards
- City and County Soil and Water Conservation Directors

Constitutional Offices

- Clerk of Court: Every eight years, staggered between city and county by four years
 - City Clerks: (2019, 2027, etc.)
 - County Clerks: (2023, 2031 etc.)

Note: If a city shares these offices with a county, the city elects the same time as the county.

- Commonwealth's Attorney, Commissioner of Revenue, Sheriff, Treasurer:
 - Counties: Every four years in odd years (2019, 2023, etc.)
 - Cities: Every four years in odd years (2017, 2021, etc.)

Note: If a city shares these offices with a county, the city elects the same time as the county.

General Assembly

- House of Delegates: Every two years in odd years (2017, 2019, etc.)
- Senate of Virginia: Every four years in odd years (2019, 2023, etc.)

This means that every fourth year the entire General Assembly is up for reelection.

Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Attorney General (Gubernatorial years)

- All three at the same time: Every four years in odd years (2017, 2021, 2025, etc.)

United States Congress

- U.S. House of Representatives: Every two years in even years (2016, 2018, 2020, etc.)
- U.S. Senate: Every six years in even years, staggered (2018, 2020, 2024, 2026 etc.)

United States President and Vice President

- Every four years in even years (2016, 2020, etc.)

The State Board of Elections website has a wealth of information available on election calendars, district maps, ballot issues, voter registration – every thing relating to elections in Virginia.

D. Winning Elections

DPVA has been very successful in helping its nominated candidates win elections. Local party leaders can play an important role in protecting this success rate by:

- Having a contribution ready for first-time or cash-poor candidates immediately after the nomination; even \$500 goes a long way at the beginning of a campaign.
- Recruiting party officers and caucus attendees for a summer campaign event, to get a “leg-up” on possible opponents (and perhaps deter them from filing).

Whenever possible, holding early nominations. Make sure that unsuccessful nominations candidates and their volunteers are welcome on your team.

II. VOTER FILE & I.D. DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

The statewide voter file of all the registered voters in Virginia and all the information you can record for each voter, is essential for planning, budgeting, and executing any successful campaign effort to target, contact, identify (whether they are D, R or I), and turn out voters. A voter file can also be helpful in small donor fundraising efforts, polling, and a number of other year-round and campaign related activities.

A. VAN

VAN, one of the most valuable services offered by the Democratic Party of Virginia, is the online database which holds the voter file (all of the registered voters in Virginia). In other words, this database contains the names and other important information about registered voters – information that we can use to target likely voters for Democratic campaigns. Using VAN is an essential part of any winning campaign. It is an important resource tool because of its ability to target and locate specific voters.

VAN users, campaigns and local committees can find information about individual voters, identify groups of likely voters and turn those groups into walk or call lists, and enter the data from those completed lists. Through a separate section called “My Campaign,” VAN can be used to track and manage volunteers and committee member activities.

VAN is operated by the Democratic Party of Virginia in partnership with the Democratic National Committee (DNC). From President to Dog Catcher nearly every Democratic Campaign in Virginia for the past 10 years has helped to build one of the largest and most reliable voter file programs in the country. This unique and robust repository of historical voter ID in Virginia enables better targeting, higher certainty and better decision making.

The Virginia VAN is available to all Democratic Candidates and committees through the State Party. If your committee does not have access to VAN, you should email

votebuilder@vademocrats.org. **Please be aware that the file is maintained by the state party.**

Local committees are required to sign a contract to purchase the file and must adhere to the contract in regard to use of the information in the file. The contract is available in the Resources section at the end of this chapter.

B. Voter File Development and Maintenance

Unlike many other States, voters in Virginia do not declare a party. The list of registered voters provided by the state tells us only that a voter voted – not for which candidate. For this reason, consistent candidate participation, data management and ID collection in VAN over time has allowed us to provide every registered voter a Likely Party Score. This indicator is a “real-time” algorithm that calculates partisan leaning by analyzing the voter voting history as well as every response recorded by every campaign who has contacted that voter. To date over 19 million individual survey responses have been collected in the DPVA VAN database. In addition to Likely Party, with our national partnerships with the DNC and OFA, there are more than 50 targeting models and other demographic data to further increase a campaigns efficiency and save money.

Contact DPVA for more information on developing and using VAN. The voter file may be the most valuable resource the Democratic Party of Virginia owns, so make sure you carefully discuss all the factors involved in assisting the Democratic Party of Virginia in developing and managing your respective committee file. Enhancing and maintaining VAN Voter File for your city or county requires:

- **Enhancing the basic file:** Adding or matching additional information, such as telephone numbers or emails. Identifying more voters through I.D. phone banks, door-to-door canvasses, or direct mailings are also encouraged to help target future voter contact.
- **Maintaining the file:** The Democratic Party of Virginia undertakes all efforts and costs in negotiating, building, and maintaining VAN. All committees will sign contracts with the DPVA Information Technology Director to obtain access to and update their respective committee's VAN voter file.

For questions on how to use VAN, visit our training site at www.votebuilder.vademocrats.org or email your questions to data@vademocrats.org.

III. OUTREACH

One of the greatest challenges facing committees is finding the troops needed to carry out the Party's program and Campaigns in the field. For many people who are busy with family, work, and household responsibilities, political activity is simply not a priority. **To attract volunteers and workers in this busy age, the Party has to be relevant to their lives and active and visible in the community.**

Aggressive outreach is central to any good Democratic organizational program. Each campaign brings new people into the Democratic Party, people who are drawn to the campaign by a particular candidate or issue. We must not only keep those people involved, but also reach out to others who usually support Democratic issues, causes, and candidates but who have not been active in Party organizational campaigns. In 2010, the DPVA Outreach Committee, led by the Vice-Chair for Outreach, compiled an Outreach Plan for local committees. That plan is included in the resources section at the end of this chapter.

In 2010, the DPVA Outreach Committee, led by the Vice-Chair for Outreach, compiled an Outreach Plan for local committees. That plan calls for local committees to establish an Outreach Committee and to elect a Vice Chair for Outreach or appoint an Outreach Committee Chair. This committee should be charge with developing partnerships with key constituent groups and connecting with Democrats in the locality. The 2010 Outreach plan is included in the resources section at the end of this chapter.

An aggressive outreach program should involve young people and retired people, teachers and farmers, environmentalists, labor and business leaders, African-Americans, Hispanics, Asian Americans, and other minorities, women's organizations, the LGBT community, people with disabilities, pro-choice activists, community leaders, and all the others it takes to win year after year.

A successful outreach effort involves:

- **Re-establishing** our relationship with the traditional Democratic voters.
- **Demonstrating** to our "natural" constituencies that the best way to advance their issues, causes, and concerns is to work through and with the Democratic Party of Virginia staff and the committee organization.
- **Working** year-round. We cannot simply show up in the last month before the election.

We have three basic resources: people, time, and money. The more we use our time year-round to involve more people in our efforts, the more we can do with less money. The more active and visible we are as a Party, the more people we can attract and involve.

A. Traditional Democrats

It's a political fact of life that candidates must spend time and resources courting independent or "swing" voters, but the voters who make up the Democratic Party's base need to be wooed as well. Democratic outreach efforts should focus on two groups of people:

- **Traditional Democrats in core precincts**, many of whom were once active in organizational efforts but have not been as involved in recent campaigns; and
- **New recruits**, especially young people and members of Democratic-leaning constituency groups who have never been involved in organizational efforts.

Getting traditional Democrats involved again is critical. Far too often, Democrats in core precincts (precincts that vote at least 65 percent Democratic) feel taken for granted. They have seen campaigns and candidates come into their communities late in the campaign and disappear until the next election.

Last-minute programs are no substitute for the year-round attention needed to establish a solid organizational presence, a dependable volunteer base, and the good will it takes to turn out the vote margins we need from our core precincts. There are some basic steps committee leaders can take to reach out to Democrats in core precincts to start rebuilding our organizational base.

- **Hear what our voters have to say** about organizing their communities. Bring in Precinct Captains or Neighborhood Team Leaders (both discussed in Chapter 8) and key organizers long before the election for one-on-one and small group meetings to discuss their needs.
- Work with the Precinct Captain and key organizers in the precinct to **set up a precinct meeting** – a coffee or luncheon at someone's house, for example – that will bring together people from the precinct. Include caucus and convention participants, volunteers from candidate lists, members of community organizations, and regular primary voters.
- If you don't have a Precinct Captain or a Precinct Captain cannot perform necessary organizational work because of time constraints or poor health, **involve "precinct coordinators"** and clubs to make sure there is an active worker in that precinct. This is a way to involve energetic new recruits identified in your outreach effort.
- **Form a precinct committee** or divide the precinct among block or area captains and develop a plan to canvass the precinct to identify and register voters. Schedule some future events, such as a rally or neighborhood barbecue or party, to reward your workers and establish a presence for the Party.
- **Recognize those who do the work.** The committee leaders should communicate regularly with them. Invite Precinct Captains, active precinct committee members and block captains to events to give them a chance to meet the people they help elect. Organize special events to honor their work.
- **Provide lists and materials** needed for precinct canvassing and voter registration. Ask to have these lists returned with updated phone numbers, yard sign locations, volunteers, etc. noted so that you can continue to build your organization.

B. “Natural” Constituencies

Many groups regularly support or endorse individual Democratic candidates and causes, but do not know how or why to get involved in the city or county Democratic committee – or have never been asked. Lateral organizing efforts focus on letting members of community and issues-oriented groups know that the Democratic Party and its candidates care about their concerns, and that we need their help in order to elect people who will further our mutual interests.

There is no limit to the kinds of organizations you can approach to assist your committee with resources: social, issue-oriented, professional, civic, and ethnic and cultural groups. There are good Democrats and potential Democratic Party activists in almost every organization. In planning an outreach program, you may want to consider these basic suggestions:

- Identify receptive groups. Find a local Democrat who is a member or has an established contact in the group to provide you with an entry (i.e. Farmers, Peace organizations, Sierra Club, and ACLU).
- Find articulate, credible spokespersons to represent the committee: an officeholder with a positive record of supporting the group’s interests, a Democrat with expertise in the issues that concern the organization, or a committee officer with recognized standing in the community.
- Do your homework before addressing a group on behalf of the committee. Find out what issues or concerns are fundamental to the organization and know the record of the committee and its officeholders on those issues. Also find out the Republicans’ record. Our record may not be perfect in the eyes of an organization – but theirs may be worse.
- Respect the organization’s rules and customary operating procedures. Some groups are sensitive about direct partisan pitches, although they are glad to have a partisan come and speak with conviction about an issue that matters to them.
- Give out a business card, and get an organizational membership list to use in a follow-up recruitment effort for the committee. Always try to get a list of the people you talked to for thank-you notes and follow-ups.
- Acknowledge that Democrats are unlikely to be 100-percent “pure” on every issue of concern to the group. New recruits can become disillusioned when a Democratic officeholder or candidate does not fully meet their expectations.

Finally, **make an extra effort to involve young people**. Go to high school and college campuses, speak to classes, and meet with Young Democrats and College Democrats. Young people have energy, ideas, and the abilities to play many helpful roles, including helping the committee as an intern or volunteer. Given the Republican agenda, young people are much more likely to be aligned with the Democratic platform. You can find ideas on how to do outreach to specific constituency groups in the resources section at the end of this chapter.

C. Values in Action: Community Visibility

Personal communication has long been the reason and basis for grassroots precinct organization. No matter how strong a candidate’s appeal may be through the mass media, an individual or cause will always enjoy stronger and broader support when people in the community are talking about the candidates and the issues to the folks they see when going about their normal daily activities.

“Values in Action” involves sponsoring or leading community projects and activities that will attract citizen interest and positive publicity. When you put “values in action,” you bring the Democratic

message to life and give people a reason to work with us. The following are **examples** of possible “Values in Action” projects:

- Democrats believe in educational opportunity, so the committee sponsors a tutoring project, or an essay-writing contest about the democratic process that results in a small scholarship for the winner.
- Democrats believe in the environment and fighting crime, so the committee organizes an effort to clean up a run-down park, drawing attention to the need for clean, safe places where families can play and picnic. Or the committee can sponsor a local youth sports team, or hire a kid from one of the summer jobs programs, to spotlight Republican cuts in programs for youth jobs and recreation programs.
- To call attention to the issue of poverty and hunger in our communities, the committee can host a food drive for and/or a volunteer day at a local food bank.

In this way, we deliver a message, build organization, and combat cynicism. “Values in Action” activity can help in all neighborhoods: **It connects to the people who feel taken for granted in core Democratic precincts where we need turnout, and it establishes us as “neighbors” in swing and marginal precincts.** Finally, it can help the committee better understand what voters are worried about and what they expect from us and our candidates.

D. Outreach FAQs

1. My committee does not reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of my community. How can we improve our outreach efforts?

Answer: The Democratic Party Plan states in Article 3.1: “Every Democratic committee shall adopt and implement an outreach program to encourage Democrats to participate in all organizations at every level and in all delegate selection processes.”

The State Party has a number of Caucuses that work to encourage the growth and active participation of important constituency groups in all levels of party activities. Your committee should work with the Caucuses that represent the underrepresented constituents of your community to develop a plan to increase outreach efforts to these groups.

Your Democratic Party of Virginia staff is always willing to assist you in any way possible to help you to be more effective in your communities. Whether you represent a large or small, rural or urban, established or revived committee, there will always be someone available to provide you with information or material that we hope will be useful to you. And while we may not always have ready answers for all your questions or problems – please be assured that we will make every effort to give you the best answers and advice possible or refer you to the appropriate resources. Please see the Staff contact list that identifies our present staff and their areas of responsibility. It is located in the resources at the end of Chapter 3.

2. I live in a heavily Republican district. My committee is small and we have a hard time finding Democrats. What should I do?

Answer: First, the DPVA has a tool for manipulating the information (data) in the Registered Voter File (the statewide list of every registered voter). The name of this tool is **Votebuilder or VAN** and it can give you access to the list of voters for your locality, updated on a monthly basis with any newly registered residents or changes of address.

The information provided is an invaluable resource, not only for candidates seeking office in your locality, but for you as a chair, because it provides you with one central place to see all available info on a voter, including precinct, contact info, physical address, age, sex, and identification. Also included for each voter is a detailed voting history, as well as a Likely Party rating system allowing you to sort voters by potential Democratic voting performance. If people are historically voting for Democrats, then some of them may be good candidates for *recruitment by you to join your committee*. The same holds true for consistent campaign volunteers. Invite them to an activity or a committee meeting if the meeting agenda includes an interesting speaker or program. Example: Hold an ice cream social and invite all the people who voted in the Democratic Primary – free of charge or for a small donation. Or your committee can send a Welcome to the Neighborhood informational packet (when and where the committee meets, location of the polls, etc.) to newly registered voters.

Identify one or a couple of people on your committee who will serve in the capacity of **Welcome Committee**. Make your committee members aware that they must make special efforts at greeting guests and making them feel welcome and appreciated. Establish a buddy system so that one established committee member will be responsible for letting new people know what it is you do as Democratic committee members. Don't ever assume they know! There should be some form of orientation provided for new committee members and guests. This could be accomplished via a handout or in an informal workshop. For example, at the end of each meeting an Officer can provide an orientation for new members and guests that discuss the purpose of the committee and how the meeting's program fits in with that purpose.

IV. VOTER EXPANSION

Voter Expansion is a component of the DPVA Voter Protection Program. While Voter Protection is an important part of GOTV issues, voter expansion is also active throughout the year on such issue areas as voter registration, restoration of rights, redistricting, election law education, voter education, and tracking and influencing legislative and administrative decisions.

A. DPVA Voter Protection Council

The Virginia voter expansion and protection programs are organized by the DPVA's landmark Voter Protection Council (VPC). The VPC is one of the first volunteer run councils devoted to voter expansion and protection in the nation. The VPC was formed at DPVA's March 2015 State Central Meeting. They work to ensure free, fair, and accessible elections for every citizen of the Commonwealth. Some of our efforts are non-partisan, but we are a Democratic organization. You can join the VPC at www.dpvavote.com.

B. Voter Registration

Voter registration is one of the most important activities that a committee can engage in. Through voter registration, the Democratic Party can expand the electorate and incorporate new voters into the party. Voter registration has a lot of requirements in Virginia. It is very important that you make sure that you are following the rules when registering voters. There is some guidance on voter registration in the resources section at the end of this chapter.

C. Restoration of Rights

Virginia does not automatically restore voter registration to felons—nonviolent felons have to fill out a simple form and violent felons have a more extensive application process. As part of their voter expansion efforts, DPVA encourages local committees to do outreach to spread the word

about this process. A fact sheet on the Restoration of Rights process is included in the resources at the end of this chapter.

D. Voter Education

While turning out our voters is very important, we also have to make sure the voters we are turning out are educated. The VPC provides materials on frequently asked voter questions, a photo ID guidance document, absentee voting information, and other important voter education materials. Some of those guidance documents are available in resources section at the end of this chapter.

E. Legislation

Lobbying for or against changes in laws that benefit our election efforts is becoming an important role for Virginia Democratic Party and its local party organizations. Legislative activity is important because it has long-lasting effects on the election process in Virginia. In a close election, the laws governing the election process can literally be a factor in determining who wins and who loses. The DPVA Voter Protection Council will monitor proposed legislation and have posts on their website, www.dpavvote.com, that will discuss proposed legislation that DPVA encourages you to lobby for or against.

V. RELATIONSHIPS WITH DEMOCRATIC ELECTED OFFICIALS

Another key aspect of elections is developing and maintaining positive working relations with current Democratic Electeds. As local committee chair, you should maintain a list of all of the Democratic local elected officials in your area and their contact information. Such elected officials should be encouraged to attend as many city or county committee meetings as possible. They can be called upon to pass on information regarding pending legislation and coordinate efforts within the city or county to build community support for the legislation.

ADDITIONAL CHAPTER RESOURCES

- [VAN Access Policy](#)
- [2010 DPVA Outreach Plan](#)
- [DNC Talking Points for Democratic Constituency Groups](#)
- [Voter Registration Guidance](#)
- [Restoration of Rights Guidance](#)
- [Photo ID Guidelines](#)
- [Voter FAQ](#)

VAN Access Policy



Democratic Party of Virginia Voter File (Votebuilder) Policy

Adopted February 10, 2006

Revised 1/2016

The following serves as the policy for access to the Democratic Party of Virginia Voter File through Votebuilder (and its successors). Throughout the document the following definitions shall apply:

Votebuilder: The Democratic Party of Virginia's voter file management system—including both the data (voter data and tags) and the functionality.

Voter File with vote history: A data extract from Votebuilder which provides voter data (name, address and phone number) along with vote history.

- I. Candidates Seeking Election To Open (no Democratic incumbent) State Legislative (Senate/House of Delegates), Congressional (Senate/House of Representatives) or Statewide Offices**
 - a. A candidate wishing access to party resources shall make that request to the state party headquarters in accordance with the process defined by the Executive Director.
 - b. Access to the Voter File and/or Votebuilder shall be provided if:
 - i. The candidate is verified to be a bona fide Democrat using a variety of methods (party leader/elected official assurances, primary voting history, research);
 - ii. The candidate meets the legal requirements of candidacy;
 - iii. The candidate is seeking the Democratic nomination for election to office in the Commonwealth of Virginia;
 - iv. The candidate intends to utilize the data in a manner consistent with the Code of Virginia, as well as the state and national Party Plan documents;
 - v. The candidate has signed a copy of the access agreement;
 - vi. The candidate has provided payment of all applicable fees;
- II. Candidates Seeking Election To Partisan Local Offices (City Council, Board of Supervisors and Constitutional Officers)**
 - a. Access to the Voter File and/or Votebuilder shall be determined according to policy adopted by the applicable local committee. That policy shall be communicated to

the state party headquarters within 3 months of the adoption of this policy, and renewed bi-annually upon committee reorganization. In absence of such a policy, Section I shall govern the process.

III. Candidates Seeking Election To State Legislative, Congressional or Statewide Offices Where the Democratic Incumbent is Seeking Reelection

- a. A candidate wishing access to party resources shall make that request to the state party headquarters in accordance with the process defined by the Executive Director.
- b. Access to the Voter File with vote history shall be provided if:
 - i. The candidate is verified to be a bona fide Democrat using a variety of methods (party leader/elected official assurances, primary voting history, research);
 - ii. The candidate meets the legal requirements of candidacy;
 - iii. The candidate is seeking the Democratic nomination for election to office in the Commonwealth of Virginia;
 - iv. The candidate intends to utilize the data in a manner consistent with the Code of Virginia, as well as the state and national Party Plan documents;
 - v. The candidate has signed a copy of the access agreement;
 - vi. The candidate has provided payment of all applicable fees;

IV. Candidates Seeking Election as Independents To State Legislative, Congressional, or Statewide Offices Where No Democratic Candidate Is Running

- a. A candidate wishing access to party resources shall make that request to the state party headquarters in accordance with the process defined by the Executive Director.
- b. Access to the Voter File with vote history shall be provided if:
 - i. The committee(s) representing the majority of the voters in the applicable area has voted either to endorse the Independent candidate or approve release of data.
 - ii. The candidate meets the legal requirements of candidacy;
 - iii. The candidate intends to utilize the data in a manner consistent with the Code of Virginia, as well as the state and national Party Plan documents;
 - iv. The candidate has signed a copy of the access agreement;
 - v. The candidate has provided payment of all applicable fees;

V. Candidates Seeking the Democratic Endorsement for Election to Non-Partisan Local Offices

- a. A candidate wishing access to party resources shall make that request to the Chair of the applicable local Democratic Committee, and the Committee must approve the release of the data.
- b. Access to the Votebuilder or the Voter File with vote history may be provided by the State Party to a candidate if:
 - i. The candidate is verified to be a bona fide Democrat using a variety of methods (party leader/elected official assurances, primary voting history, research);
 - ii. The candidate meets the legal requirements of candidacy;
 - iii. The candidate intends to utilize the data in a manner consistent with the Code of Virginia, as well as the state and national Party Plan documents;
 - iv. The candidate has signed a copy of the access agreement;
 - v. The candidate has provided payment of all applicable fees;

If the local committee chooses to endorse a candidate in the election, access to Votebuilder shall be provided to that candidate upon request, and verification of that endorsement. Once elected the access shall remain active until such time as the committee endorses an alternate candidate for that office.

2010 DPVA Outreach Plan

DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF VIRGINIA LOCAL DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE OUTREACH PLAN

Step 1: Organize your local Outreach Committee!

- Elect a Vice Chair of Outreach / Chairperson of Outreach Committee.
- Recruit Committee Members - Vice Chair of Outreach/ Chairperson of the Outreach Committee should recruit members (internally & externally) to serve on the local outreach committee. Preferably, find members of the groups below and ask them to serve on the committee. This person is charged with targeting and being plugged into their assigned affinity group in your locality.

-African American	-Veterans
-Latino American	-LGBT
-Asian Americans	-Disability
-Women	-Young People
-Labor	-Seniors

- Seek out community groups in the above demographics and ask to come to their meetings
- Write out a one-page presentation on your local committee for members to use when they go out into the community.
- Use THE VAN to identify Strong Democrats and Leaning Democrats (SD/LD) and communicate with them.
- Inform your members about the Constituency groups we have available for them to join.
- Have a comprehensive list of civic associations; know the leadership, attend their meetings and ask them to attend yours.

Step 2: Be Visible

- Get Democratic committee t-shirts, hats, buttons, lapel pin.
- Get a business card for all members to carry with them that gives all the pertinent info about your committee (name, address, e mail, phone, website, meeting location, day and time and mission statement).
- Get a website or face book page
- Get an identifying E-mail Address (example: abcdems@gmail.com)
- Create a MASTER calendar of all events in your locality. Quick Exercise: At your next committee meeting, **distribute a survey asking all members to list the organizations, associations, clubs and churches they belong to/ are active with in the local area.** This will give you a major list to work from.
- Set up booths & tables at fairs and festivals
- Walk / create floats/ ride in cars in ALL local parades

- Buy tables or tickets to banquets, dinners, luncheons, breakfasts & receptions
- Buy ads in souvenir journals and program books for church groups & other non-profits

Step 3: Engage in Community Service; DPVA Branded "Values in Action!"

- Adopt-a-Highway
- Volunteer for Habitat for Humanity as a group
- Give Scholarships
- Form teams for charity "walk" events (Kidney Foundation, Heart Association, Cancer Society, MS)
- Volunteer at Animal Shelters
- Cleaning playgrounds
- Plant a community garden
- Deliver for Meals on Wheels
- Collect items for homeless shelters or serve meals at homeless shelters
- Back to School Supply Drive
- Food Drive for local food bank or volunteer at the food bank
- Holiday Toy Drive
- Blood Drive
- Winter Coat Drive
- Visit www.serve.gov the President's Community Service initiative for ideas

Additionally,

- PICK A LOCAL CHARITY!
- Partner with other community groups (churches, guilds, leagues, sororities, fraternities)
- Submit activities to the Annual DPVA "Values in Action" Initiative (Nov & Dec)
- Submit them to the local paper

****Hold Voter Registration Drives (Voter Reg. Plan)

****Provide rides to the polls (GOTV PLAN)

Step 4: BE RELEVANT LOCALLY!

- Track local issues in your community; pick a side and advocate for it! IMPORTANT: Be certain to align yourself (if possible) with your local democratic elected officials.
- Attend city council/ board of supervisor and school board meetings regularly; speak on issues that are important; Identify yourself as a member of the <INSERT NAME> Democratic Party. **Wear your democratic t-shirt, hat, button, lapel pin.**
- Write letters to the editor; add well written and informed comments to newspaper websites
- Add well written and informed comments to biogs
- Have engaging monthly meeting speakers; put them at the beginning of your meeting and do business afterwards.
- Do Constant Voter Education (especially for new voters and new members)
 - Virginia has Elections every year ! Review election cycles:
 - '08- Presidential/Senate/US House
 - '09- Gubernatorial/Lt. Gov/ Attorney General/ VA House
 - '10- US House

- '11- Local/ VA Senate/ VA House
- '12- Presidential/Senate/US House
- '13- Gubernatorial/Lt. Gov/ Attorney General/ VA House
- '14- US House

- Explain Difference between Primaries and General Election

Review list of local electeds (Mayor, City Council, Delegates, Senators, Congress, Supervisors, School Board).

DNC Talking Points on Democratic Constituency Groups

The DNC has created a variety of fact sheets and talking points on Democratic priorities that can be used when doing outreach to various constituency groups. The links to each page are below.

- **African Americans:** <https://www.democrats.org/people/african-americans>
- **Americans with Disabilities:** <https://www.democrats.org/people/americans-with-disabilities>
- **American Jewish Community:** <https://www.democrats.org/people/american-jewish-community>
- **Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders:** <https://www.democrats.org/people/asian-americans-and-pacific-islanders>
- **Democrats Abroad:** <https://www.democrats.org/people/democrats-abroad>
- **Ethnic Americans:** <https://www.democrats.org/people/ethnic-americans>
- **Faith Community:** <https://www.democrats.org/people/faith-community>
- **Hispanics:** <https://www.democrats.org/people/hispanics>
- **LGBT Community:** <https://www.democrats.org/people/lgbt-community>
- **Native Americans:** <https://www.democrats.org/people/native-americans>
- **Rural Americans:** <https://www.democrats.org/people/rural-americans>
- **Seniors and Retirees:** <https://www.democrats.org/people/seniors-and-retiree>
- **Small Business Community:** <https://www.democrats.org/people/small-business-community>
- **Union Members and Families:** <https://www.democrats.org/people/union-members-and-families>
- **Veterans and Military Families:** <https://www.democrats.org/people/veterans-and-military-families>

Voter Registration Guidance

THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF VIRGINIA

VOTER PROTECTION COUNCIL

VOTER REGISTRATION GUIDELINES



Note: Virginia Law requires training and registration for individuals and groups obtaining 25 or more applications from the Department of Elections or their local registrar. At least one individual from that group or organization must take the training. The registration and training module is at www.sbe.virginia.gov/.

Who is eligible to register to vote in Virginia?

In order to be eligible to register to vote:

- You must be a United States citizen.
- You must be a resident of Virginia.
- You must be 18 or older on Election Day. If you are 17 years old, but will be 18 by the time of the general election, you will be allowed to register in advance.
- You must not currently be declared mentally incompetent by a court of law.
- If you've been convicted of a felony, your right to vote must have been restored

Voter Registration Dos:

- Introduce yourself and the organization you represent.
- Explain the qualifications to vote in Virginia and whether you will be delivering the completed application for the applicant.
- Only register eligible Virginia voters, or those whose registration information is not up to date.
 - If they are uncertain of the registration status, they can check it at <https://www.vote.virginia.gov>.
- Complete and provide applicants a receipt if offering to deliver a completed application to the appropriate registrar.
- Ensure completed applications are delivered to the appropriate local voter registration office or to SBE **within 10 days of the signature date or by 5:00pm**

Paid for by the Democratic Party of Virginia, www.vademocrats.org, not

Restoration of Rights Guidance

THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF VIRGINIA VOTER PROTECTION COUNCIL RESTORATION OF RIGHTS GUIDELINES



For Non-Violent Felonies:

If you have been convicted of a non-violent felony in a Virginia court or a U.S. District court, your rights should be automatically restored once you meet these criteria:

- Have completed serving the prison sentence and been released from supervised probation or parole;
- Have no pending felony charges.

Any individual that meets the requirements will be mailed a letter to either their last known address or their home address. If you have had a past non-violent felony conviction(s) and have not had your rights restored to date, you can submit an automatic restoration of rights request form either online on the Secretary of the Commonwealth's website or by mail to have your voting rights restored.

For Violent/More Serious Felonies:

If you have been convicted of violent/more serious felonies in a Virginia court or a U.S. District court, you must complete an application to have your rights restored and:

- Be free from any sentence served and/or supervised probation and parole for a minimum of three years.
- Not have any felony convictions in the three years immediately preceding the application and/or pending criminal charge

A complete list of crimes that require an Application for Restoration of Rights is available on the Secretary of the Commonwealth's website. An Application for Restoration of Rights is Secretary of the Commonwealth's website or you may call the office and they will mail an application to you.

If you applied for your restoration of rights before January 2014 and your application was returned as ineligible due to an outstanding balance of court costs or fees, you should reapply as you might now be eligible due to a change to the law. For more information on the Restoration of Rights, please visit the Secretary of the Commonwealth's website at <https://commonwealth.virginia.gov/judicial-system/restoration-of-rights/> or call 804-692-0104 or 1-855-575-9177.

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Photo ID Guidelines

**THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF VIRGINIA
VOTER PROTECTION COUNCIL
PHOTO ID GUIDELINES**



What do you do if you encounter someone who doesn't have an appropriate form of photo ID?

First, make sure they actually don't have a valid photo ID.

Valid IDs include:

- A Virginia driver's license or other ID issued by the DMV;
- A U.S. passport or other ID issued by the federal, VA, or local government;
- A tribal enrollment card issued by one of the 11 tribes recognized by VA;
- An employee ID card issued in the ordinary course of business;
- A military ID;
- A student ID issued by a VA institute of higher learning or public or private high school;
- A nursing home resident ID, if issued by a government facility;
- A free voter ID card issued by the Department of Elections.

A valid ID means that it is genuine, bears a photograph of the voter, and is not expired for more than 12 months.

If they do not have a valid ID, then...

Let them know free IDs are available to any voter who lacks proper identification under the law. Voters can apply for a free ID card for the purposes of voting **only** with their local registrar. It will take two to four weeks to obtain the ID, so encourage them to get one as soon as possible.

If it will be a problem for them to get to their registrar's office, then...

Take down their name and contact info. Check if the local democratic committee will provide a ride to the registrar's office, many do. If not, send their information to the DPVA Voter Protection Council at voterprotection@vademocrats.org and the VPC will do its best to find them transportation.

Paid for by the Democratic Party of Virginia, www.vademocrats.org, not

Voter FAQ

Voter Protection FAQs



Election Day Resources:

Voter Hotline: 1-844-4-VAVOTE

(1-844-482-8683)

Website: www.govoteva.com

Who is eligible to register to vote in Virginia?

In order to be eligible to register to vote:

- You must be a United States citizen;
- You must be a resident of Virginia;
- You must be 18 or older on Election Day. If you are 17 years old, but will be 18; by the time of the general election, you will be allowed to register in advance;
- You must not currently be declared mentally incompetent by a court of law; and
- If you've been convicted of a felony, your right to vote must have been restored.

How do you register to vote?

You can register to vote in person at your local registrar's office; by obtaining, filling out, and mailing in a voter registration form; or, the easiest way, by going to the Department of Elections website or to www.govoteva.com and filling out a voter registration form online.

How do you check your voter registration?

It's important to check your voter registration status before Election Day to make sure your registration is up-to-date, you're registered at your current address, and your registration is still active. You can check your voter registration status at <https://www.vote.virginia.gov>.

What steps should you take if you've moved?

If you have moved within the Commonwealth, you should change your voter registration. You can make changes to your registration by filling out the form on the back of your voter card, completing a change of address notification provided by the DMV, filing out a paper voter registration form, or by going to <https://www.vote.virginia.gov> and filling out the online registration form.

How do you check your polling place?

In order to have your vote counted in Virginia, you must vote at your correct polling place. You can check your polling location and ballot at www.govoteva.com. If you've moved since the last election, you should also check to see which address you're registered to vote under at <https://www.vote.virginia.gov>.

What can you do if your voter registration application has been rejected?

If your registration is denied because you failed to sign the application or failed to provide a required item of information in the application, you should simply fill out completely and return the new application included with your denial. If your application was denied for other reasons, you have a right to appeal that decision to the circuit court of the county or city in which you were trying to register within 10 days of the denial. The person appealing the decision should fill out and file with the clerk of the court a form prescribed by the State Board and included in the denial of the application's application to register to vote.

What photo IDs are accepted under the new voter ID law?

In order to vote you must show an approved form of valid photo identification, which include:

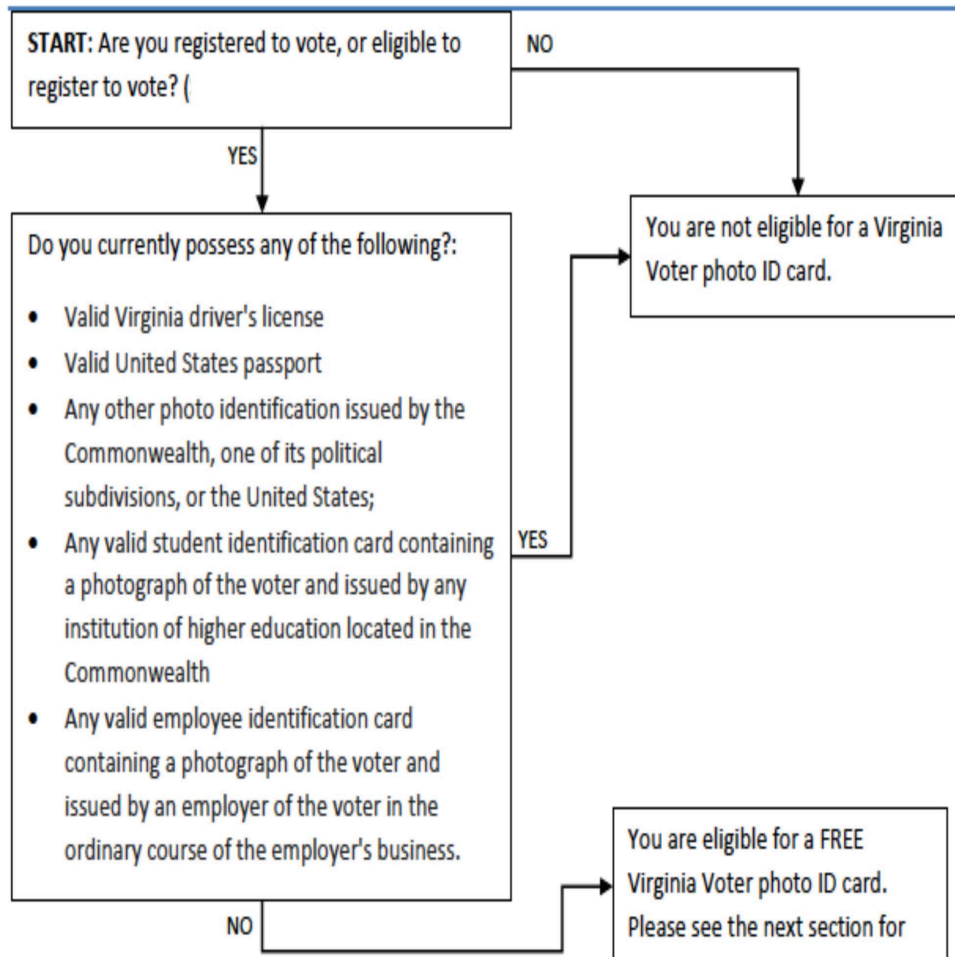
- A Virginia driver's license or other ID issued by the DMV;
- A U.S. passport or other ID issued by the federal, VA, or local government;
- A tribal enrollment card issued by one of the 11 tribes recognized by VA;
- An employee ID card issued in the ordinary course of business;
- A military ID;
- A student ID issued by a VA institute of higher learning or public or private high school;
- A nursing home resident ID, if issued by a government facility;
- A free voter ID card issued by the Department of Elections.

A valid ID means that it is genuine, bears a photograph of the voter, and is not expired for more than 12 months.

Are you eligible for a free photo ID from the Registrar?

Registrars are issuing free photo IDs, for voting purposes, only to those voters that do not already have a valid form of ID. These IDs can be obtained from your local Registrar, or from one of the Registrar's mobile units, if they have one in your locality. A schedule of mobile units, and the address and contact info for your local registrar, is available on the back of this form.

Do I Qualify for a Free Voter Photo ID?



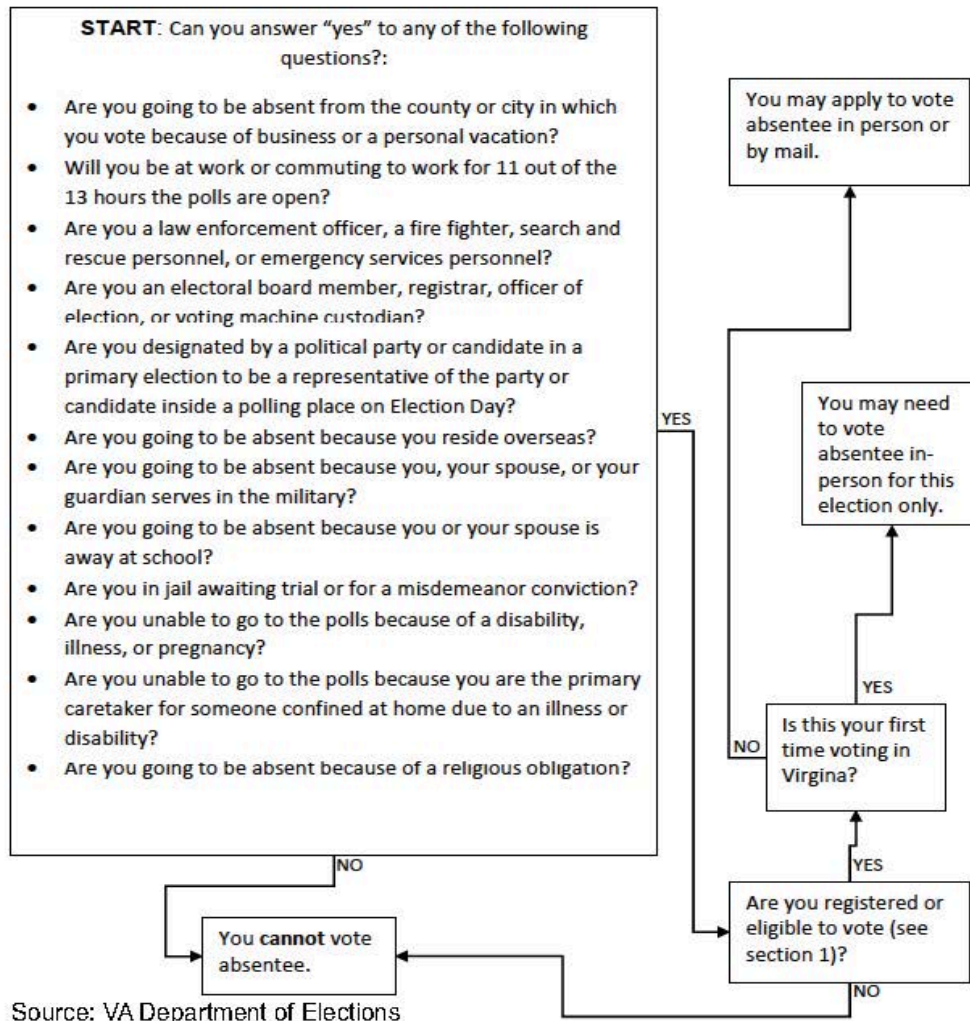
Source: VA Department of Elections

Are you eligible to vote absentee?

Virginia does not have early voting, however, you can vote absentee by mail and in person. However, in order to vote absentee, you must have a qualifying reason, as

detailed below.

Can I Vote Absentee?



How can you vote Absentee by Mail in Virginia?

In order to vote Absentee mail you have to apply. You can fill out an application for your

mail in absentee ballot here:

<http://sbe.virginia.gov/Files/Forms/VoterForms/VirginiaAbsenteeBallotApplication.pdf>

How can you vote Absentee In Person in Virginia?

Your local registrar's office will have absentee in person voting during their office hours and some offices also have satellite absentee in person voting locations. You can check the schedule by calling the office, a list of registrars is on the last page, or by going to www.govoteva.com, where there is a list of registrars and schedules.

Are polling places accessible?

In accordance with the Help America Vote Act, Virginia is in the process of making all of its polling places accessible for all voters. However, if you're concerned about your ability to get into the polling place, curbside voting is available for voters over the age of 65 or those with disabilities. If you choose to vote using this option, an election officer will bring voting equipment out to your car so you can vote. You also have the option of requesting an absentee ballot. More information on that process is available [here](#).

All polling places in Virginia are required by the Help America Vote Act to have at least one accessible voting machine, so that voters with disabilities are able to vote with the same private and independent manner as those without disabilities. However, if you feel as though you require assistance with voting due to a physical disability or an inability to read or write, you can receive assistance if you request it.

Can you vote in Virginia if you are a student at a college or university?

If you are a Virginia resident who attends school in-state, but in a different precinct, you can vote in the precinct where you live while attending school only if you change your registration. You can change your registration at <https://www.vote.virginia.gov>. If you do not want to update your registration, you can vote Absentee in your home precinct.

If you're a student from Virginia who attends school in another state, you should determine whether you're a Virginia resident or a resident of the state where you attend school. The important thing to keep in mind is that you may only cast your vote in one state.

How do you get your voting rights restored if you're a felon?

If you have lost the right to vote as a result of a felony conviction in a Virginia court or a U.S. District court, you must have your rights restored to qualify for voter registration. The restoration of rights restores the rights to vote, to run for and hold public office, to serve on juries and to serve as a notary public.

If you have been convicted of any non-violent felonies and are currently incarcerated or on supervisory probation, your rights should be automatically restored once you meet the following criteria:

- Have completed serving the prison sentence and been released from supervised probation or parole;
- Have no pending felony charges.

Any individual that meets the criteria will be mailed a letter to either their last known address or their home address restoring their rights. If you have had a past non-violent felony conviction(s) and have not had your rights restored to date, you can submit an automatic restoration of rights request form either online on the Secretary of the Commonwealth's website or by mail to have your voting rights restored.

If you have been convicted of violent/more serious felonies in a Virginia court or a U.S. District court, you must complete an application in order to have your rights restored. A complete list of crimes that require an Application for Restoration of Rights is available on the Secretary of the Commonwealth's website. In order to be eligible for restoration of rights by the Governor, an applicant who has been convicted of a violent/more serious felony must:

- Be free from any sentence served and/or supervised probation and parole for a minimum of three years.
- Not have any felony convictions in the three years immediately preceding the application and/or pending criminal charge

If you have been convicted a violent/more serious felony, you must complete an application and mail it to the Secretary of the Commonwealth's Office. You can download the Application for Restoration of Rights on the Secretary of the Commonwealth's website or you may the office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth at 804-692-0104 and they will mail an application to you.

If you applied for your restoration of rights before January 2014 and your application was returned as ineligible due to an outstanding balance of court costs or fees, you should reapply as you might now be eligible due to a change to the law. For more information on the Restoration of Rights, please visit the Secretary of the Commonwealth's website at <https://commonwealth.virginia.gov/judicial-system/restoration-of-rights/> or contact the Restoration of Rights division at 804-692-0104 or 1-855-575-9177.

List of Voter Registration Offices
(General Registrar) as of 7/01/2013

Accomack County

PO Box 97
Accomack, VA 23301-0097
(757) 787 - 2935

Albemarle County

PMB 404, 536 Pantops Center
Charlottesville, VA 22911
(434) 972 - 4173

Alexandria City

132 North Royal St. Ste. 100
Alexandria, VA 22314-3283
(703) 746 - 4050

Alleghany County

110 Rosedale Ave. Ste. D
Covington, VA 24426-1294
(540) 965 - 1690

Amelia County

PO Box 481
Amelia, VA 23002-0481
(804) 561 - 3460

Amherst County

PO Box 550
Amherst, VA 24521-0550
(434) 946 - 9315

Appomattox County

PO Box 8
Appomattox, VA 24522-0008
(434) 352 - 5302

Arlington County

2100 Clarendon Blvd. Ste. 320
Arlington, VA 22201-5400
(703) 228 - 3456

Augusta County

PO Box 590
Verona, VA 24482-0590
(540) 245 - 5656

Bath County

PO Box 157
Warm Springs, VA 24484-0157
(540) 839 - 7266

Bedford County

County Admin Building
122 East Main St. Ste. 304
Bedford, VA 24523-2000
(540) 586 - 7649

Bland County

PO Box 535
Bland, VA 24315-0535
(276) 688 - 4441

Botetourt County

PO Box 62
Finchastle, VA 24090-0062
(540) 473 - 8235

Bristol City

300 Lee St.
Bristol, VA 24201-4327
(276) 645 - 7318

Brunswick County

100 Tobacco St. Rm. 103
Lawrenceville, VA 23868-1823
(434) 848 - 4414

Buchanan County

PO Box 975
Grundy, VA 24614-0975
(276) 935 - 6534

Buckingham County

PO Box 222
Buckingham, VA 23921-0222
(434) 969 - 4304

Buena Vista City

2039 Sycamore Ave
Buena Vista, VA 24416-3133
(540) 261 - 8605

Campbell County

PO Box 103
Rustburg, VA 24588-0103
(434) 332 - 9579

Caroline County

PO Box 304
Bowling Green, VA 22427-0304
(804) 633 - 9083

Carroll County

Governmental Center
605-3 Pine St. B 110
Hillsville, VA 24343-1404
(276) 730 - 3035

Charles City County

PO Box 146
Charles City, VA 23030-0146
(804) 652 - 4606

Charlotte County

PO Box 118
Charlotte CH, VA 23923-0118
(434) 542 - 5856

Charlottesville City

PO Box 911
Charlottesville, VA 22902-0911
(434) 970 - 3250

Chesapeake City

411 Cedar Rd.
Chesapeake, VA 23322-5566
(757) 277 - 9797

Chesterfield County

PO Box 1690
Chesterfield, VA 23832-1690
(804) 748 - 1471

Clarke County

PO Box 555
Berryville, VA 22611-0555
(540) 955 - 5168

Colonial Heights City

PO Box 3401
Colonial Heights, VA 23834-9001
(804) 520 - 9277

Covington City

515 E. Pine St.
Covington, VA 24426-1534
(540) 965 - 6380

Craig County

PO Box 8
New Castle, VA 24127-0008
(540) 864 - 6190

Culpeper County

151 North Main St. Ste. 301
Culpeper, VA 22701
(540) 825 - 0652

Cumberland County

PO Box 125
Cumberland, VA 23040-0008
(804) 492 - 4504

Danville City

515 Main St.
Danville, VA 24541-1317
(434) 799 - 6560

Dickenson County

PO Box 1306
Clintwood, VA 24226-1306
(276) 926 - 1620

Dinwiddie County

PO Box 365
Dinwiddie, VA 23841-0365
(804) 469 - 4500 option 7

Emporia City

PO Box 1092
Emporia, VA 23847-1092
(434) 634 - 9533

Essex County

PO Box 1561
Tappahannock, VA 22560-1561
(804) 443 - 4611

Fairfax County

12000 Govt Ctr Pkwy. Ste. 323
Fairfax, VA 22035-0081
(703) 222 - 0776

Fairfax City

Sisson House
10455 Armstrong St.
Fairfax, VA 22030-3640
(703) 385 - 7890

Falls Church City

300 Park Ave. Rm. 1C1E
Falls Church, VA 22046-3332
(703) 248 - 5085

Fauquier County

212 Waterloo St. Ste. 207
Warrenton, VA 20186-3238
(540) 422 - 8290

Floyd County

100 East Main St. Rm. 302
Floyd, VA 24091-2101
(540) 745 - 9350

Fluvanna County

PO Box 44
Palmyra, VA 22963-0044
(434) 589 - 3593

Franklin County

1255 Franklin St. Ste. 106
Rocky Mount, VA 24151-1289
(540) 483 - 3025

Franklin City

PO Box 42
Franklin, VA 23851-0042
(757) 562 - 8545

Frederick County

107 North Kent St. Ste. 102
Winchester, VA 22601-5039
(540) 665 - 5660

Fredericksburg City

Executive Plaza
601 Caroline St. Ste. 500-A
Fredericksburg, VA 22401
(540) 372 - 1030

Galax City

PO Box 1045
Galax, VA 24333-1045
(276) 236 - 7509

Giles County

201 N. Main St. Ste. 1
Pearisburg, VA 24134-1611
(540) 921 - 2802

Gloucester County

PO Box 208
Gloucester, VA 23061-0208
(804) 693 - 3659

Goochland County

PO Box 1013
Goochland, VA 23063-1013
(804) 556 - 5803

Grayson County

PO Box 449
Independence, VA 24348-0449
(276) 773 - 2842

Greene County

PO Box 341
Stanardsville, VA 22973-0341
(434) 985 - 5213

Greensville County

PO Box 1092
Emporia, VA 23847-1092
(434) 348 - 4228

Halifax County

PO Box 400
Halifax, VA 24558-0400
(434) 476 - 3322

Hampton City

1919 Commerce Dr. Ste. 280
Hampton, VA 23666
(757) 727 - 6218

Hanover County

PO Box 419
Hanover, VA 23069-0419
(804) 365 - 6080

Harrisonburg City

PO Box 20031
Harrisonburg, VA 22801-7531
(540) 432 - 7707

Henrico County

PO Box 90775
Henrico, VA 23273-0775
(804) 501 - 4347

Henry County

PO Box 7
Collinsville, VA 24078-0007
(276) 638 - 5108

Highland County

PO Box 386
Monterey, VA 24465-0386
(540) 468 - 2013

Hopewell City

309 North 2nd Ave.
Hopewell, VA 23860-2704
(804) 541 - 2232

Isle of Wight County

PO Box 7
Isle of Wight, VA 23397-0077
(757) 365 - 6230

James City County

PO Box 3567
Williamsburg, VA 23187-3567
(757) 253 - 6868

King & Queen County

PO Box 56
King & Queen CH, VA 23085-0059
(804) 785 - 5980

King George County

PO Box 1359
King George, VA 22485-1359
(540) 775 - 9186

King William County

PO Box 173
King William, VA 23086-0173
(804) 769 - 4952

Lancaster County

PO Box 159
Lancaster, VA 22503-0159
(804) 462 - 5277

Lee County

PO Box 363
Jonesville, VA 24263-0363
(276) 346 - 7780

Lexington City

PO Box 922
Lexington, VA 24450-0922
(540) 462 - 3706

Loudoun County

750 Miller Drive, SE, Ste. C
Leesburg, VA 20175-8916
(703) 777 - 0380

Louisiana County

PO Box 220
Louisa, VA 23093-0220
(540) 967 - 3427

Lunenburg County

160 Courthouse Sq.
Lunenburg, VA 23952-9999
(434) 696 - 3071

Lynchburg City

3236 Odd Fellows Rd.
Lynchburg, VA 24501
(434) 847 - 1609

Madison County

PO Box 267
Madison, VA 22727-0267
(540) 948 - 6533

Manassas City

9025 Center St.
Manassas, VA 20110-5403
(703) 257 - 8230

Manassas Park City

City Hall, 1 Park Center Ct.
Manassas Park, VA 20111-2395
(703) 335 - 8806

Martinsville City

PO Box 1323
Martinsville, VA 24114-1323
(276) 403 - 5122

Mathews County

PO Box 328
Mathews, VA 2310
(804) 725 - 3200

Mecklenburg County

PO Box 431
Boycton, VA 23917-0436
(434) 738 - 6191

Middlesex County

PO Box 358
Saluda, VA 23149-0358
(804) 758 - 4420

Montgomery County

755 Roanoke St. Ste. 1F
Christiansburg, VA 24073-3175
(540) 382 - 5741

Nelson County

PO Box 292
Lovingston, VA 22949-0292
(434) 263 - 4068

New Kent County

PO Box 128
New Kent, VA 23124-0128
(804) 966 - 9699

Newport News City

2400 Washington Ave
Newport News, VA 23607-4305
(757) 926 - 8683

Norfolk City

PO Box 1531
Norfolk, VA 23501-1531
(757) 664 - 4353

Northampton County

PO Box 510
Eastville, VA 23247-0510
(757) 678 - 0480

Howard Cumberland County

PO Box 84
Heathsville, VA 22473-0084
(804) 580 - 4655

Norton City

PO Box 225
Norton, VA 24273-0225
(276) 679 - 1162

Nottoway County

PO Box 24
Nottoway, VA 23955-0024
(434) 645 - 8148

Orange County

146 Madison Rd. Ste. 204
Orange, VA 22960-1449
(540) 672 - 5262

Page County

551 Mechanic St.
Stuart, VA 24171-0635
(540) 743 - 3986

Patrick County

PO Box 635
Suffolk, VA 24171-0635
(276) 694 - 7206

Petersburg City

PO Box 1031
Petersburg, VA 23804-1031
(804) 733 - 8071

Pittsylvania County

110 Old Chatham Elementary Ln
Chatham, VA 24531
(434) 432 - 7971

Poquoson City

500 City Hall Ave, Rm. 139
Poquoson, VA 23662-1996
(757) 868 - 3070

Portsmouth City

801 Crawford St. 1st Fl
Portsmouth, VA 23704-3822
(757) 393 - 8644

Powhatan County

3834 Old Buckingham Rd. Ste. G
Powhatan, VA 23139-7051
(804) 598 - 5604

Chapter

8

Elections

Getting Out the Vote

The city or county is the primary level of organization for the Democratic Party of Virginia. Because of this, committee members are a main source of volunteers and support for political campaigns. Strong committees can have a significant impact on the success of an election. Therefore, it is extremely important for city or county chairs and other party leaders to establish positive working relations with their slate of Democratic-nominated candidates and campaigns.

City or county chairs have demanding roles during an election. There is constant pressure to play lead roles in the campaigns of city, county, state legislative and congressional candidates. All of this comes on top of the responsibility of organizing party unit functions such as meetings, fundraisers, door-to-door canvasses and phone banks.

The task can be overwhelming. The most effective party leaders avoid becoming too involved in any one particular campaign, focusing instead on maintaining the party unit, running a coordinated campaign and recruiting volunteers. However, some members of your committee should be closely involved in specific campaigns to keep the lines of communication open between the party and its candidates.

I. ENDORSEMENTS IN NONPARTISAN RACES

Candidates who must or who choose to run as Independents: In Virginia, many localities have passed ordinances making all local elections non-partisan – every candidate has to run as an

Independent. Sometimes, in areas where one party is significantly stronger than the other a candidate may choose to run as an Independent rather than seek a party nomination. In either of these instances, the committee can decide to endorse an Independent candidate. **This should only be done when there is no doubt that candidate is truly a Democrat and a supporter of our party.** If you do choose to endorse nonpartisan candidates, please send those names to the DPVA by **September 1st** of that election year.

II. PRECINCT ORGANIZATION

The character of the precinct makes it a natural political unit for organization by the political party of each committee. When precincts are organized, the Democratic vote is maximized and our candidates win elections. However, precinct level organization may not be feasible in your committee locality. Sometimes there are areas in your locality where there are only a small number of Democrats and it is impossible to organize in that area. In other areas, precinct boundaries may not make sense with neighborhood growth and development. In such situations you may prefer to use the neighborhood team model instead. The neighborhood team model consists of groups of volunteers who work a specific area, which could be multiple precincts or a combination of sections from two or more precincts. For the sake of simplicity, this section will use the term “precinct,” but you can also substitute in “neighborhood team” for the term “precinct.”

A. Precinct Captains

The Precinct Captain can aid campaigns in finding existing volunteers for campaigns who will talk with voters in the precinct through canvassing (contacting by door-to-door) or phone-banking, arranging meet and greets or house parties, recruiting new volunteers, and training and directing those volunteers.

The Precinct Captain gets the party’s message to the individual and carries out the party’s program to get the voters to the polls on Election Day. An active, effective Precinct Captain makes a huge difference in the success of the party and our candidates. What follows is a very brief review of what a Precinct Captain can and should do to make a real difference in electing Democrats. *A Precinct Captain plays an essential role in our formula for success:*

1. **Organize and Canvass your Precinct:** Get a list of UNIDENTIFIED voters in your precinct from the VAN database. Design a program to involve friends or other strong Democrats to act as volunteers to hold “block parties,” to recruit volunteers, to do door-to-door or phone-bank, and to carry out the precinct canvassing/organizational program.
2. **Know the Law and the Rules:** Learn the Virginia Election Law, like photo ID requirements and Absentee Voting rules, and the DPVA *Party Plan* (our state bylaws).

The Precinct Captain’s task should be clearly defined. Further, the individual who agrees to become the Precinct Captain should understand the minimum duties expected of him or her. (Party Chairs should have a job description that lists basic specific duties the Precinct Captain will be asked to do.) Here are some basic duties a Precinct Captain could accomplish:

- Know their precinct.
- Coordinate campaign activities within the precinct—at minimum maintain a list of volunteers.
- Represent and attend committee meetings.
- Register Democratic voters.

- Reach out to newly registered voters.
- Coordinate the schedule for Outside Poll Observers/Poll Greeters on Election Day

The above tasks can be done alone, but it is a lot easier if the Precinct Captain has help. Gather around you two to five talented workers in your precinct. The best way to recruit these workers is to personally contact Democrats that have attended your committee caucuses or other events, or you and the committee have identified as Democrats in the voter file.

Know the precinct. Maps of your area are generally available online. This important task is to show the boundaries and the streets or highways in the precinct. (It is a good idea for the committee Chair to drive around their city or county, acquainting him/herself with the various areas and visiting the Precinct Captains.)

Campaign Coordinator. The Precinct Captain can be the most useful person a city or county has in assisting a candidate during the election campaign. The Precinct Captain should be willing to recruit volunteers for voter identification and get-out-the-vote phone banks, literature dropping and door knocking. If the Precinct Captain is not interested taking the lead on campaign volunteer activities, he or she should maintain a list of those volunteers in the area who are interested in participating to pass on to campaign.

Represent Your Precinct. The Precinct Captain is the precinct's representative on the committee. The Precinct Captain should attend the city or county committee meetings, thereby making sure the precinct is represented. Some city or county committees meet once a month, while others meet less frequently. (Committees are encouraged to meet once per month – there is work to do all year and getting it done requires planning and communication.)

Register all Democratic Voters. One of the most important tasks of a Precinct Captain is to make sure that all Democratic voters are registered. Setting up a registration project for one evening/Saturday every three months, in the precinct would be a wonderful social project for Democrats in the precinct. *Note: You want to target areas that are more likely to have Democratic voters.*

Reach out to newly registered voters. A newly registered voter program lets you contact voters with your message after they register to vote. You can find newly registered voters in VAN after each month's new update. The volunteer can then immediately send a pre-written note from the candidate and your palm card to every voter on the list. This is one more voter contact method and one more opportunity to share your name and message before a voter casts a ballot.

Coordinate Outside Poll Observers/Poll Greeters. The Precinct Captain should compile a schedule of volunteers to stand outside the precinct polling location on Election Day. These volunteers will hand out sample ballots, answer simple voting related questions, report to the voter protection boiler room any issues with the polling location, and assist voters in contacting the voter hotline if they have issues voting.

III. TRAINING LOCAL PARTY LEADERS AND ACTIVISTS

A key component of activating and involving activists in your area is providing them with the proper training. You should think about holding trainings, or encourage your committee members to take trainings, on topics such as:

- Using VAN

- Building an effective Precinct Organization or Neighborhood Team
- Direct Voter Contact
- Voter Protection and Election Law issues you should know
- Organizing and Outreach
- Using media effectively
- How to host a successful fundraiser or house party

Local training efforts will be more successful if you:

1. Prepare materials for Precinct Captains and organizers. Contact the DPVA Headquarters office to get examples of materials prepared by other local committees.
2. Schedule a high-profile speaker for each event to emphasize the importance of local activity and boost attendance.
3. Prepare your schedule and budget in advance to allow yourself time to locate trainers, speakers, and sponsors, and to make other arrangements.
4. Be inclusive. Invite all local Precinct Captains, officeholders and their staffs, members of allied campaign and constituency groups. Even if they do not attend, they will know there is an active committee with an active program that involves local leaders.
5. Keep lists of all attendees for committee files and small donor prospecting. Thank the attendees for participating.

IV. VOTER CONTACT

Typically, the campaigns working in your locality will run the field program for that area. However, you can enormously help them by having a energized and active group of volunteers ready to go. We encourage you to compile a list of committee members who are interested in volunteering with campaign field programs that you can provide to campaigns. You should also familiarize your self with how voter contact works.

Voter contact can be **direct** or **indirect**. **Direct voter contact** is any voter contact done by a volunteer or paid worker; for example, door-to-door canvassing and phone calling. **Indirect voter contact** does not use a person to deliver the message; for example, yard signs and bumper stickers. The difference is in the persuasiveness of the delivery of the message. If you have, and we all do, a finite amount of resources (including time), you want to use the most effective methods available.

The following information focuses on two key elements of any field program:

- **door-to-door canvassing, and**
- **phone banking.**

A. Door-To-Door Canvassing

The door-to-door canvass is the single most effective direct voter contact tool. No amount of television, radio or direct mail can influence a persuadable voter the way that one-on-one, face-to-face voter contact can. Even the best media consultants cannot produce a mailing or radio spot that will move that voter as well as another human being can. Door-to-door canvassing serves four specific purposes:

1. Identify voter preferences (voter identification, 'I.D.')

2. Increase the candidate's name identification
3. Locate campaign volunteers or donors
4. Establish the credibility of the campaign in the community

A basic volunteer door-to-door program should persuade and identify (ID) voters in the most persuadable precincts that can be canvassed by foot. Volunteers should be given a script and trained to talk to voters about the candidate. Canvassers are the candidate's/party's surrogate for every voter they meet, and it is important that they make a good impression.

Volunteers should distribute literature to voters. All voter preference information gathered during canvassing should be added to the committee's or campaign's VoterBuilder file for use in fundraising, volunteer coordination and, ultimately, GOTV.

The more times you convey your message to the undecided voter, the better chance you have of winning them over and getting them out to vote on Election Day.

B. Telephone Program

Local races and state legislative campaigns are often won or lost by a small number of votes. Even a difference of 5% in such an election may translate into a few hundred votes. If you have a reliable phone match on your voter file, phones are the most appropriate tool for:

- Finding undecided voters who are likely to vote and determining the most significant issue that influences them.
- Persuading those undecided voters, using their issues.
- Getting all known supporters to the polls.

V. GOTV PLANNING

'Committee planning' means *always* looking ahead to the next election and planning activities that will help to get Democratic candidates elected. Each member of the city or county committee should be willing to work for the benefit of our candidates – right down to the precinct level, house by house and voter by voter. Each member of a Precinct Team has basic responsibilities:

- a) **Voter records.** Local committees should maintain their own registered voter files. Each Precinct Team should be responsible for entering updated information (people who move, deaths, party ID's) on to VAN.
- b) **Voter identification.** This is a task critical to Get Out the Vote (GOTV) efforts. It consists of individual identification of favorable voters and every committee member should be involved in this identification process.
- c) **Get Out the Vote.** This is the reason you identified all those voters. GOTV implementation begins the last three to four weeks before the election, and becomes intense during the final week. Calling back your identified supporters and reminding them to vote is the most important component. If you are well organized, you will have poll workers inside checking off names of your "good guys" as they vote, so calls can be made to those who haven't.
- d) **Election Day.** Your polls should be covered inside and outside. If it is cold, try to bring hot coffee to share with your volunteers. Organize rides to the polls. Have flushers go into high-density, Democratic neighborhoods. And, make sure everyone knows where the victory party is in the evening!

- e) **Voter registration.** Watch for new housing developments in your precinct and report them to the chair. Get a few folks together, pick up some mail-in registration forms from your Registrar, and go visit your new neighbors. Of course, take some campaign literature with you!

VI. ABSENTEE VOTING PROGRAM

In close races, an absentee ballot program can be the deciding factor. Determine whether you should send an absentee ballot request form mail piece. Then implement your voter contact strategies with absentee voters earlier than with Election Day voters: ID them earlier, persuade them earlier, and encourage them to apply for an absentee ballot, fill it out, and return it to the election office.

Virginia also has an absentee in person voting program. You can also put together mailings on absentee in person voting in your area to spread the word about this option. Things you should include in any mailing are: 1. Dates, times, and locations for absentee in person voting; 2. What you need to bring with you in order to vote—this is the same as what you would bring to vote on Election Day; 3. A list of the Democratic candidates that will appear on the voter's ballot.

VII. VOTER PROTECTION

Virginia has a very active and successful voter protection program and it is one we are hoping to grow even larger in the coming years. Here are ways you can participate in and assist the voter protection program.

Designate a point person and an election counsel. This can be an elected position or an informal one. This person can coordinate all your voter protection activities. This person does not need to be a lawyer. It is also helpful to have someone (it can be the same person) to act as counsel on Election Day. This person would need to be available throughout election day to run to the local court house and file and court documents needed at the request of DPVA or the campaigns. This person will need to be a lawyer and licensed to practice in Virginia.

Recruit inside and outside poll observers. If you don't have the resources to cover all your polling locations on Election Day, you should at least try to cover your most important polls. The DPVA will provide training to the inside poll observers if you send their names and contact information to the Voter Protection Director. Inside Poll Observers need a signed authorized representative form. You can find a copy of the form at the end of this chapter.

Report problems on Election Day. As Chair of your local Democratic Committee, you are one of our best resources for learning about Election Day issues. If you see any problems that you feel should be reported, please call the legal boiler room number. You will be provided with a contact number ahead of each election.

Share our resources. The DPVA has a permanent voter hotline number. It is 1-844-4VA-VOTE ([1-844-482-8683](tel:1-844-482-8683)). This is a number you can use year after year on any literature you print and we will have it staffed with volunteers who can answer any voting related questions. We will also have a permanent voter information page on our website at www.govoteva.com. This page will have

information on voting in Virginia and a polling place locator. Please spread the word about both of these resources.

After Election Day—Canvass and Provisional Ballot Meeting. In Virginia, often the election does not end on election day. We frequently have very close race and so it is a good idea for you to prepare for a potential recount ahead of time. You should designate people ahead of time to cover the canvass (one for every table—you can call your local registrar to find the number of tables) and the provisional ballot meeting (one observer and, if possible, one individual to act as a voter advocate). The Canvass and Provisional Ballot Meeting start the day after Election Day. You can get a schedule of the meetings by calling your local registrar. The DPVA will provide training to those individuals if you send their names and contact information to the Voter Protection Director. Provisional Ballot Meeting Observers need a signed authorized representative form. You can find a copy of the form at the end of this chapter.

If you would like to get more involved in or learn more about voter protection in Virginia, you can join the DPVA Voter Protection Council at www.dpvavote.com.

ADDITIONAL CHAPTER RESOURCES

- Sample Ballot Format
- Outside Poll Observer FAQ
- Sample Volunteer Sign Up Form
- Canvassing Guidelines
- Voters' Bill of Rights
- Authorized Representative Form for Inside Poll Observers
- Authorized Representative Form for Provisional Ballot Meeting Observers

Sample Ballot Format

☆☆☆ DEMOCRATIC SAMPLE BALLOT ☆☆☆

THIS IS THE OFFICIAL SAMPLE BALLOT OF THE DEMOCRATIC
CANDIDATES OF THE HENRICO COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY.

PLEASE CARRY THIS WITH YOU INTO THE POLLS!

☆☆ Tuesday, November 4th, 2014 ☆ Polls are open 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. ☆

Member United States Senate

- ☐ Ed W. Gillespie – R
☒ **Mark R. Warner – D**
☐ Robert C. Sarvis – L

YOUR BALLOT WILL HAVE EITHER:

Member House of Representatives 3rd District

- ☒ **Robert C. “Bobby” Scott – D**

**O
R**

Member House of Representatives 7th District

- ☐ Dave A. Brat – R
☒ **John K. “Jack” Trammell – D**
☐ James A. Carr, Jr. – L

Member House of Representatives 7th District

(for the unexpired term to end January 3, 2015)

- ☐ Dave A. Brat – R
☒ **John K. “Jack” Trammell – D**

PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

QUESTION: Shall Section 6-A of Article X (Taxation and Finance) of the Constitution of Virginia be amended to allow the General Assembly to exempt from taxation the real property of the surviving spouse of any member of the armed forces of the United States who was killed in action, where the surviving spouse occupies the real property as his or her principal place of residence and has not remarried?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Paid for and authorized by the Henrico County Democratic Committee, www.henricodemocrats.org.
Not authorized by any candidate or candidates committee.

Outside Poll Observer FAQ



Outside Poll Observer 2016 FAQ

Election Day Resources:

Voter Hotline: 844-4VA-VOTE (844-482-8683)

Website: www.govoteva.com (where you can look up polling location, absentee in person voting location, and Democrats on the ballot)

Outside Poll Observers have a very important role in this election. In addition to passing out sample ballots and literature on Democratic candidates, outside poll observers have the opportunity to help voters coming in and out of the polling location with any questions or issues that may arise. They can also connect voters with the voter hotline (844-482-8683) to answer more complicated questions the voter might have.

Frequently Asked Questions

What photo IDs are accepted under the new voter ID law?

This year, in order to vote, you must show an approved form of valid photo identification, which include:

- A Virginia driver's license or other ID issued by the DMV
- A U.S. passport or other ID issued by the federal, VA, or local government
- A tribal enrollment card issued by one of the 11 tribes recognized by VA
- An employee ID card issued in the ordinary course of business
- A military ID
- A student ID issued by a VA institute of higher learning or public high school
- A nursing home resident ID, if issued by a government facility
- A free voter ID card issued by the Department of Elections

Note that a valid ID means that it is genuine, bears a photograph of the voter, and is not expired for more than 12 months. If a voter does not have an acceptable form of photo ID, they can get a **free** voter ID card, for voting purposes only, from any Registrar in the Commonwealth, even after election day.

What if a voter doesn't present an acceptable ID or doesn't bring unacceptable ID on Election Day?

1. First, determine if they can easily retrieve their acceptable form of ID.
2. If they cannot, they will be required to cast a Provisional Ballot, which they can cure by sending a copy of their ID to their local registrar prior to 12:00 PM on Friday, November 11.
3. If they do not have an acceptable photo ID, they can still get a free ID from the registrar prior to 12:00 PM on Friday, November 11 and get their vote counted.

How does a voter check their voter registration?

It's important to check their voter registration status before Election Day to make sure their registration is up-to-date, they're registered at their current address, and their registration is still active. They can check your voter registration status at <https://www.vote.virginia.gov>.

How can a voter check their polling place?

In order to have their vote counted in Virginia, a voter must vote at their correct polling place. They should check their polling location at www.govoteva.com, or you can check it for them. If they've moved since the last election, they should also check to see at which address they're registered to vote at <https://www.vote.virginia.gov>.

Why might a voter have voted a Provisional Ballot?

1. You arrive at the polling place without an acceptable form of photo identification, and you cannot go and retrieve your ID.

2. Your registration status cannot be verified either by the election officer or the voter registrar.
 - a. Note: if you are in fact registered in another precinct, your provisional ballot cast in the wrong precinct **will not count**.
3. When you get in line to vote after 7:00 pm on Election Day and that precinct's voting hours are extended by court order.

If a voter votes a provisional ballot, you should direct them to the voter hotline with any questions.

What should a voter do if they have an absentee ballot but want to vote in person?

They can vote in person, but if they want to vote a regular ballot, they will have to take their Absentee Ballot with them to the polling location and return it to the election officials to show that they are not voting twice. If they do not have their absentee ballot with them, they will have to vote a provisional ballot.

Why might a voter's name not be in the pollbook?

1. The voter's registration application was received after deadline or not received.
2. The voter's registration application was denied due to incomplete information or other requirement.
3. The voter's registration was cancelled for some legally required reason (e.g., DMV non citizen report).
4. The voter's is in wrong precinct.
5. The voter's registration was lost by an agency authorized to receive registration forms.
6. The voter's registered at the DMV.

If a voter is not in the pollbook, but is at the precinct they registered to vote at, they should vote a provisional ballot.

What if the voter is at the wrong precinct?

If the voter is certain their registration status is up to date, use the poll look up tool at www.govoteva.com. If the voter is uncertain if their registration is current, go to sbe.virginia.gov.

If the voter insists on voting provisionally in the wrong precinct (rather than going to the correct one), **the voter's vote will not be counted**. This is why updating your address information is so crucial.

What if a voter is unable to get out of the car?

If the voter is physically disabled or age 65 or older they may ask to vote outside the polls, as long as they are within 150 feet of the entrance to the polling place. They should mark ballot in the election officer's presence but in a private manner unless they have requested assistance and *Request for Assistance* form has been completed.

What if a voter needs assistance voting?

A voter may ask for help in voting due to a physical disability or an inability to read or write (includes needing ballot translation)

If assistance is needed for a ballot language translation, the voter's assistant may be:

- i. **ANY PERSON** designated by the voter (e.g., your child),
- ii. **BUT NOT** an authorized representative of a candidate or party in the polling place.

If assistance is needed for anything OTHER THAN ballot language translation, the voter's assistant may be:

- i. **ANY PERSON** designated by the voter (e.g., your child),
- ii. **BUT NOT:**
 - a. Your employer or agent of your union, or
 - b. An authorized representative of a candidate or party in the polling place or neutral observer authorized by the Electoral Board.

For any other questions, please call the voter hotline or have the voter call the voter hotline.

That number again is 844-4VA-VOTE (844-482-8683)

Sample Volunteer Sign Up Form

INSERT CAMPAIGN LOGO HERE

Scheduled to volunteer:

Volunteer Commitment Form

Name:

Date:

Phone Number:

Email:

Address:

Precinct:

Community (please circle the neighborhood, town, city, or county in which you reside):

Region Name	Region Name
Region Name	Region Name
Region Name	Region Name
Region Name	Region Name
Region Name	Other (please specify):

I am interested in helping with:

Being Part of my Precinct Team

Canvassing / Voter Registration

Phone Banking

Hosting a House Party

Data Entry

Writing Letters to the Editor

Greeter / Reception

Providing Items from the Wish List

Providing Meals, Snacks & Beverages

Providing Supporter Housing

I am available to help:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
am pm eve	am pm eve	am pm eve	am pm eve	am pm eve	am pm eve	am pm eve

Note that volunteer assignments are made based on the priorities of the day

Insert campaign disclaimer here.

Printed in house

Canvassing Guidelines

THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF VIRGINIA VOTER PROTECTION COUNCIL CANVASSING GUIDELINES



Is going door-to-door to talk to voters legal?

YES. The Supreme Court has repeatedly reaffirmed the right of individuals to go door-to-door for political activity. *Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York v. Village of Stratton* (2002), 536 U.S. 150; *Martin v. City of Struthers* (1943), 319 U.S. 141; *Thomas v. Collins* (1945), 323 U.S. 516, 540-41; *Hynes v. Mayor and Council of Oradell* (1976), 425 U.S. 610; *Murdock v. Pennsylvania* (1943), 319 U.S. 105; *Jamison v. Texas* (1943), 318 U.S. 413; *Cantwell v. Connecticut* (1940), 310 U.S. 296; *Schneider v. State* (Town of Irvington) (1939), 308 U.S. 147; *Lovell v. City of Griffin* (1938), 303 U.S. 444.

As a canvasser you have the right:

- to be on public property
- to knock on doors, even ones with “no soliciting” signs
- to encourage voters to learn more about the issues
- to offer literature about a candidate
- if you live in a private gated community, housing complex or apartment building, you usually have the right to knock on doors in your own community – consult your community bylaws

As a canvasser you have the responsibility:

- to walk on public walkways, not through private lawns
- to leave literature on doorknobs – never in mailboxes
- to get permission before canvassing on private property
- to be patient and courteous at all times
- **to respect “no trespassing” signs (it’s the law)**
- to conduct the canvass in accordance with all applicable law

Paid for by the Democratic Party of Virginia, www.vademocrats.org, not

Voters' Bill of Rights



VOTERS' BILL OF RIGHTS

IT'S YOUR RIGHT TO VOTE. PROTECT YOUR VOICE.

You have the right to:

1. Register to vote

Most voter registration deadlines are in October. Find your state's deadline.

2. Verify that you are registered to vote

Call your local elections office to make sure there are no problems with your registration, especially if you have moved recently, changed your name, or have not voted in recent elections.

3. Vote Early

For greater convenience, some states allow early voting in person and/or by mail. Find out whether you can vote early. This will also allow you to volunteer on Election Day.

4. Find Your Polling Place

Call the local elections office to find out the location of your polling place and ask about any new voting procedures or requirements. Locations may change, and a vote cast at the wrong place may not be counted.

5. Bring Proper Identification

Find out what identification is required to vote in your state. Bring identification to the polls in case it is needed, preferably government-issued

identification or a utility bill, phone bill, or paycheck with your name and current street address. Requirements may be different if it is your first time voting.

6. Bring A Friend or Family Member

Under federal law, you can bring an assistant of your choice into the voting booth to help you vote.

7. Ask for a new ballot, if you make a mistake

Under federal law, you have a right to a new ballot if you make a mistake.

8. Don't Leave Without Voting

If you arrive late in the day and are in line when polls close, stay in line, because you have the right to vote.

9. What to do if you get a provisional ballot

A poll worker might tell you that there is a problem with your registration (for example, that you are not on the voter list) and offer you a provisional ballot. Ask if you are in the correct precinct. If no alternative is available, cast a provisional ballot.

Federal law guarantees your right to cast a ballot even if someone says you are not eligible. If you are qualified to vote and registered in the jurisdiction, do not leave the polling place without at least voting a provisional ballot.



Paid for by the Democratic National Committee - www.democrats.org. This communication is not authorized by any candidate or candidate's committee.

Authorized Representative for Poll Observers

Designation of Representative in the Polls for the General Election

I hereby designate _____, a qualified voter of the Commonwealth of Virginia, as the representative of the Democratic Party for the November 3, 2015 general election.

This representative shall be the Party's representative before the opening of the polls (pursuant to Virginia Code § 24.2-639), during polling hours (pursuant to Virginia Code § 24.2-604(C)), and during the ascertainment of votes (pursuant to Virginia Code § 24.2-655).

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Chair
Democratic Committee of _____

Authorized Representative for Provisional Ballot Meeting Observers

Designation of Authorized Representative for Provisional Ballots Meeting

I hereby designate _____, a qualified voter of the Commonwealth of Virginia, as the authorized representative of the Democratic Party at the Electoral Board's meeting on November 4, 2015, to address provisional ballots cast (pursuant to Virginia Code § 24.2-653(B)).

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Chair
Democratic Committee of _____

The Money

Budgeting, Fundraising, & Reporting

Money is the mother's milk of American politics, and the subject of money has come up numerous times in this handbook. This section provides a brief overview of budgeting, fundraising, and reporting considerations.

I. BUDGETING THE NECESSARY FUNDS

To develop a budget, you must have your plan* outlined in full detail, so that you can set priorities, project costs, and establish fundraising goals. This is your personal blueprint for action. The budget should be clear, straightforward and on paper.

A. Annual Budget

Every committee which incurs expenses needs a means to cover these expenses. Revenue anticipated for the year should be projected at the same time as an annual budget of expenses is adopted. The projected revenue should equal or exceed the projected expenses.

Annual income projections should include member dues, delegate and alternate pre-filing fees (in convention years), interest from bank accounts or investments and any other regular, anticipated revenue. The bulk of your annual income will most likely be generated from active fundraising. An overall

fundraising plan should be prepared each year in conjunction with the budget cycle. Each fundraising activity should be itemized in the projected revenue, with actual income goals listed.

1. **Keeping Accurate Financial Records.** It is important to have accurate financial records as your positive proof that all committee funds have been handled appropriately. The role of the committee Treasurer is to keep all financial records including records of all contributions and disbursements.
2. **Adopt a realistic budget:** Adopt the actual amount your committee has for its expenditures each year. The following is a list of items most commonly used. Please modify these recommendations as you see fit.

Operational Expenses:

- Printing
- Postage and mailing expenses
- Office supplies
- Equipment: a copier and/or printer, laptop, etc.
- Rent
- Utilities
- Telephones
- Voter file purchase
- GOTV expenses
- Miscellaneous

Fundraising Expenses—It takes money to make money:

- Advertising and Promotion: Invitations, Announcements, Fliers, Balloons, Newspaper Ads.
- Postage
- Facility rental
- Equipment rental: microphone, audio visual equipment, stage, electrical hookups
- Catering
- Wine, beer, and/or liquor and an ABC license
- Entertainment
- Decorations
- Security
- Phone: calls to increase turn out
- Thank you letters

Note: a donor can purchase items for your operations or fundraising events. In this event, your committee needs to track the in-kind donation like any other monetary contribution for campaign finance reporting.

B. Treasurer's Report

There should be a Treasurer's Report at every meeting detailing all the financial activities since the last meeting. A standard report would have the following items, but the report should reflect each organization's own budget:

Balance last report	\$		
	This Period	Year to Date	Budget
Receipts:			
Membership			
Direct Mail			
Fundraiser			
Contributions			
Special Events			
Other			
Total	\$	\$	\$
Disbursements:			
Newsletter			
Fundraiser			
Tickets			
Meetings			
Contributions			
Training			
Other			
Total	\$	\$	\$
Ending Balance	\$		

II. FUNDRAISING

A. Fundraising Plan

A successful fundraising plan will include a mixture of activities and will target high as well as low dollar contributors. This chapter will highlight two types of activities recommended for the local committees – individual solicitations and special events. Other types of fundraising, such as direct mail and telemarketing, are usually not cost-effective when attempted in relatively small numbers most local committees can supply.

A fundraising plan should include the following:

- A goal stated in quantifiable terms (make realistic projections of income to be received from each activity). Revenue from each fundraising activity should be projected. These financial goals should be realistic and attainable. The amount raised in previous years and projections on how to increase the revenues should be considered.
- Time frame (e.g., when the event will be held, when the solicitations will occur). We suggest that a committee have at least one annual special event and an annual solicitation drive for individual contributions. These two activities should be planned at such times as to maximize the income from each one. Consideration should be given to other activities in the community such as parades, festivals, and fundraising drives/events of other organizations. Also to be considered when determining the timing of events and solicitations should be campaigns, voter registration drives, and other political events held by local and statewide elected officials. Determining the appropriate timing of fundraising events and solicitation drives is critical and should be carefully considered.

- Strategies outlining steps to be taken, responsible persons, targeted audience, follow up, etc. Each fundraising activity should have an individual plan of action or strategy. A committee may be assigned responsibility of developing such a strategy. Included in a successful strategy are:
 - Steps to be taken to accomplish the goal;
 - Time frame when each step is to be completed; and
 - Person(s) identified who will take responsibility for each step.

Every local committee is unique and its fundraising plan should be appropriate to the interests, size and characteristics of the locality. For the purposes of this chapter, it is necessary to present general guidelines which must be adapted to each committee. Also, it is easier to raise money for specific projects or items such as voter registration drive, a computer or other equipment, or a building for an office. Any specific need can be incorporated into a fundraising plan.

B. Individual Solicitations

Individual solicitation is an important way to build a continuing, sustaining donor base. Although it may be more difficult to find volunteers to help with this type of fundraising, individual contributions are a cost effective way to support your operating budget (your ‘bread and butter’ money).

There are many people who are able and willing to make contributions to the Democratic Party if they are asked. Most people allocate a certain amount of their income for charitable or political donations. These people should be given the opportunity to participate in and support the Party through their contribution.

Your committee may want to consider creating a sustaining donor program. They are often predicated on having members, as well as other community members, make annual or monthly contributions in excess of their annual dues. They can be set up where there are levels of giving for the sustaining donor to choose from. For example:

- \$5 per month or \$60 per year
- \$10 per month or \$120 per year
- \$20 per month or \$240 per year
- \$50 per month or \$600 per year
- \$100 per month or \$1200 per year

Sustaining donors may receive benefits such as discounted or free admission to committee events, and benefits may be tiered based on the level of support.

With online fundraising sites such as ActBlue, it is easy for sustaining donors to make monthly contributions to your committee via credit card.

All written solicitations should include the following disclaimer, either in its own paragraph or the first sentence of the paragraph that it is in:
“Contributions or gifts to *[insert name of party committee]* are not tax deductible.”

C. Events

It is important to have fundraising events not only during campaign season, but also throughout the year. Fundraising events provide Party members with an opportunity to socialize and maintain contact with other party activists. It also provides an opportunity to recruit new volunteers, recognize Party faithful and local elected officials, and gain publicity for the local committee. A good annual revenue-generating event is to have a ‘staple’ event that happens every year that people can look forward to and give money to and plan their personal budgets accordingly every year to contribute to the committee.

Every local committee should have at least one **annual** fundraising event. Some ideas for annual fundraising events include:

- Cocktail reception
- Dinner or banquet
- Picnic, barbeque or pig roast
- Holiday party
- Celebrity roast
- Formal ball
- Auction
- Pancake breakfast or ice cream social

Please keep in mind that there are legal restrictions on how a federal officeholder or candidate may be listed on materials for your event. Moreover, additional signage must be included at such events. Likewise, there are legal restrictions on the ability of state officeholders to solicit funds during regular legislative session. Please consult your lawyer or call the DPVA for additional information.

III. CAMPAIGN FINANCE REPORTING/COMPLIANCE

As with any campaign or political entity, local committees are subject to state and federal campaign finance laws. A summary of the state laws as of October 2014 and federal laws as of January 2015 are below. These laws are subject to change.*

* For full details and the latest updates on state law, please visit the Department of Elections website: <http://elections.virginia.gov/candidatepac-info/regulation-and-policies/index.html> and click on the link for Political Party Committee Summary. For full details and the latest updates on federal law, please visit the Federal Election Commission website: <http://www.fec.gov/pages/brochures/locparty.shtml>.

A. Virginia Department of Elections Requirements

Do I need to register and file with the Department of Elections? Virginia Code exempts county and city political party committees in counties and cities which have a population less than 100,000 (2010 Census) from registering and reporting as a Political Party committee until such time that they receive contributions totaling \$15,000 in a calendar year or make contributions and expenditures which total more than \$15,000 in a calendar year. Upon meeting the threshold, the committee must register and report all receipts and expenditures back to January 1 of that year.

For all other local committees, registration with the Department of Elections and quarterly reporting of all receipts and expenditures is required.

What types of reports are required and when are they due? Local committees are required to file three types of reports:

1. **Quarterly reports** that include information on all contributions received and all expenditures made.
 - Due the 15th of the month after each quarter (ex: April 15th for January – March)
 - **Contributions must not be anonymous.**
 - Committees are required to report the name, address, occupation (individuals) or principal type of business (organizations), and date received for all contributions in aggregate of \$100 each calendar year. It is best practice to collect this information for all contributors.
2. **Large Contribution Reports** are required for all contributions (monetary or in-kind) of \$10,000 or greater.
 - Each large contribution must be reported within three (3) business days of receipt of the contribution.
3. **Independent Expenditure Reports** are required if the committee makes independent expenditures in excess of \$1,000 or more to a candidate for statewide office or in excess of \$200 or more to any other candidate in the aggregate during an election cycle.
 - Independent Expenditure reports are due **within 24 hours** after the committee has made the expenditure or when the advertisement supporting or opposing the clearly identified candidate is disseminated, whichever is first.

Are there contribution limitations? There are NO contribution limits on nonfederal contributions in Virginia. However, federal law prohibits any political organization to accept contributions from a foreign national or foreign corporation. Individuals who are permanent residents and have a valid green card are not considered “foreign nationals” and may contribute.

Can contributions be anonymous? No. **Virginia law prohibits anonymous contributions.** Further, committees are required to report the name, address, occupation (individuals) or principal type of business (organizations), and date received for all contributions in aggregate of \$100 each calendar year. It is best practice to collect this information for all contributions, since the contributor may exceed \$100 in the future.

What are the disclaimers requirements for local committees?

- The disclaimer criteria are different for television, radio, and telephone calls. For details on the disclaimers required for these communications, refer to the Department of Election’s Political Party Committee Summary and the “Disclaimers Handout” at the end of this chapter for more

details.

For more information on how to file a Statement of Organization and file quarterly campaign finance reports can be found on the Department of Elections website: <http://elections.virginia.gov/candidatepac-info/regulation-and-policies/index.html> and click on the link for Political Party Committee Summary. In addition, we provide a list of frequently asked questions at the end of this chapter.

The DPVA Operations Director is available to provide guidance to local party chairs and officers on campaign finance reporting.

B. Federal Election Commission Requirements

If your local committee does not already have a federally registered committee, you are subject to FEC limitations that if exceeded would necessitate registering and filing with the FEC.

What is the threshold for Direct Contributions made to federal candidates? The threshold for direct contributions to federal candidates is **\$1,000 per calendar year**. Direct contributions in excess of \$1,000 would necessitate registering and filing with the FEC. Please note the following:

- The \$1,000 limit on direct contributions and expenses is in the aggregate to **ALL** federal candidates and is per calendar year.
- Direct contributions include money and in-kind contributions.
- When there are two or fewer candidates listed on the materials, sample ballots or slate cards featuring federal candidates are considered an in-kind contribution if distributed within a certain proximity of the election and coordinated with the candidate.
- If a local committee is paying for the phones being used for a phone bank that is doing candidate IDs, this is considered an in-kind contribution.
- If a local committee is paying to participate in a community fair or parade in which it does not usually participate in order to promote a federal candidate, then the costs associated with the event are considered a direct contribution.
- Allocation of in-kind contributions is determined by a “time or space” ratio. In the case of sample ballots when there are two races, the direct in-kind contribution would be 50% of the cost of the sample ballots for each candidate (e.g. for a \$1,000 printing expenditure \$500 for a US Senate candidate and \$500 for a US House of Representatives Candidate).

What is the threshold for Exempt Party Activities expenditures? There is a \$5,000 threshold for exempt party activities that refer to federal candidates. These activities include:

- When there are three or more races listed, sample ballots or slate cards are considered exempt party activities. In 2016, jurisdictions with local or special elections in November or that are represented by two or more Congressional districts but only produce one sample ballot may meet this condition.
- Campaign materials (bumper stickers, yard signs, etc.) are considered exempt party activities.

What if the threshold for federal contributions received? The "contributions received" threshold is \$5,000 for local party committees. Funds specifically solicited or donated for the purpose of influencing federal elections count against this threshold, as do funds received in response to a solicitation that indicates any portion of the receipts will be used to support or oppose a clearly

identified federal candidate.

What are the disclaimers requirements for federal elections?

- Disclaimers are required on materials that expressly advocate the election or defeat of a clearly identified federal candidate.
- The disclaimer must identify who paid for a communication and must state whether it was authorized by a candidate or candidate's campaign committee. For example, "Paid for by the [Locality] Democratic Committee and authorized by [Candidate Committee]." Or "Paid for by the [Locality] Democratic Committee, [committee's website, street address, or phone number] and not authorized by any candidate or candidate's committee."
- Disclaimers for fundraising invitations for federal candidates are subject to FEC regulations which are different than Virginia's Department of Elections regulations. Please defer to the appropriate campaign for the required language.

Are there federal limitations for Volunteer Activities? Yes. Common examples are below:

- Volunteers who host house parties and fundraisers in their home can spend up to \$2000 per calendar year on food, beverages, and invitations without it being an in-kind contribution. If someone pays for an event somewhere other than their home, then it is an in-kind contribution.
- Phone banks where volunteers use their own cell phones are not part of a committee's direct contributions or exempt party activities.
- Individuals may use their homes or the recreation room of their apartment complex to conduct volunteer activities. Individuals may also use a church or community room for volunteer activities, as long as the room is used on a regular basis by members of the community without regard to political affiliation. Nominal fees paid to use these rooms are not contributions or expenditures.

For more information on federal election limitations, please visit the Federal Election Commission website: <http://www.fec.gov/pages/brochures/locparty.shtml>.

If your committee plans to exceed any of these federal limits in 2016 and does not already file with the FEC, please speak with the DPVA Operations Director for further guidance. The DPVA Operations Director is also available to provide advice to local party chairs and officers on campaign finance reporting.

ADDITIONAL CHAPTER RESOURCES

- Tips on Successful Special Events
- Tips on Successful Individual Solicitation
- Fundraising Event Planning Sheet
- Post Event Checklist
- Event Timeline Checklist
- Disclaimer Rules
- Memorandum on Local Party Federal Campaign Finance Activity
- Department of Elections Summary of Laws and Policies for Political Party Committees

Tips on Successful Special Events

- ***Set ticket price high enough*** to generate the desired profit. Determine the ticket price by estimating the overall cost of the event and the number of people who will attend. You can set goals based on staggered amounts (50 donors at \$20, 10 donors at \$50, 5 donors at \$100).
- ***Plan the event well in advance.*** It is important to have enough time to obtain the desired location, properly publicize, send invitations and receive replies, and to arrange catering, entertainment and other logistics of the event. Many popular locations (parks, ballrooms, etc.) are reserved a year in advance. Keynote speakers, bands or other entertainment may need even more advance notice.
- ***Choose your date wisely.*** Check the state party website calendar (www.vademocrats.org) to make sure there are no other fundraising events in your locality that day. Consult with local elected officials, candidates or other guests of honor before scheduling an event. Be aware of community activities such as festivals, parades, other groups' fundraising activities, holidays, etc. when choosing your date. The key is selecting a date and time when most of your targeted audience will attend. **(Note: After you choose a date, forward the information to the state party so that it can be placed on the calendar.)**
- ***Structure ticket sales carefully.*** It is necessary to have a realistic plan of advance ticket sales/reservations and a way to know how many people will attend the event. Monitor ticket sales all along and make necessary adjustments – in food and beverage numbers and other expenditures. Some committees have each of their members take responsibility for selling a specified number of tickets. Others may establish a separate committee to sell tickets. In any event, the key to your success is selling the number of tickets necessary to reach your goal. We recommend using an excel spreadsheet to track this information.
- ***Get your venue, food, and drinks donated!*** There are two ways to cover expenses of events through donations. In-kind donations and sponsorships.
 - ***In-kind donations.*** An in-kind donation is when an individual donors pays for event items such as food, beverages, or the event venue. Designate someone from your committee to specifically solicit these in-kind donations.
 - ***Sponsorships.*** Ask local companies or groups to be a sponsor of the event, donating a lump sum to cover some of the direct costs. Sponsors may be interested in contributing funds to cover a specific item such as the entertainment, travel expenses for the guest of honor, food, or beverages. In return for their donation, companies or sponsors should be properly recognized. This may take the form of a listing in a program or on signs at the event. Verbal acknowledgement and thanks during the event is also appropriate.
 - Always write a thank you letter to anyone who donates items or funds for your event. (Note: Be sure to list all these direct donations as *'in kind' contributions* on your financial records and reports)

- ***Negotiate for the best prices.*** Most caterers and hotels are negotiable. Request proposals from several different vendors and compare prices. Use this process of competition to negotiate prices. Also, if a hotel or caterer can anticipate future business from your group, they may be more negotiable.
- ***Maintain records for future use!!*** Keep records of people who donated funds or items, volunteers, and people who attended in a spreadsheet format or database. This information will be useful again next year as well as during campaigns. Please make sure to share these records with multiple committee members; for successful annual fundraising events it is imperative to keep the institutional knowledge from prior events.

Tips on Successful Individual Solicitation

- ***Recruit someone to chair a finance committee*** This person should be a well known, influential individual who has experience raising money through individual solicitations and is able to make the time commitment necessary for fundraising.
- ***Establish a small committee*** of volunteers who are willing to serve on the finance committee and make individual solicitations. Local elected officials could be asked to help in this effort. Not all committees are large enough to set up a finance committee, but there should be one or two people on your committee that meet these qualities and feel comfortable personally soliciting donations from local democrats.
- ***Set an overall goal*** with the committee. Have each committee member commit to raising a set portion of that goal.
- ***Determine a time frame*** for your solicitation drive. It is important to have a beginning and ending date. Perhaps the same month each year will be designated for individual solicitations.
- ***Develop a prospect list*** with the committee. Review lists of former Party donors and contributors to groups with related causes. Include former elected officials. Have each committee member suggest potential donors that he/she knows. Divide the prospect list among committee members. Committee members should solicit those individuals that he/she knows.
- ***Potential donors should be asked to give at an appropriate level.*** Someone who is capable of contributing \$1,000 should not be asked for \$50. And, someone capable of giving \$25 should not be asked for \$500. It is important to know enough about your potential donor to determine the level of contribution to solicit. You may want to establish categories of donations and different levels of your giving program. If you are unsure how much a person is able to donate, you can look up their political giving history to Virginia candidates on this website, www.vpap.org. Go to the website and search the person's first and last name in the search bar in the top right corner. This way you can be confident you are not over asking or under asking when soliciting contributions.
- ***Prepare the committee members to make the individual solicitations.*** Supply the committee with promotional material, background information or whatever training necessary to prepare the committee for the solicitation drive. It is helpful to have a written script for committee members to rehearse with if they are unfamiliar with soliciting contributions.
- ***Have each committee member make their solicitations.*** This may vary with individuals, but basically the committee member will be responsible for contacting each potential donor on his/her list. The committee member may take the potential donor to lunch, may write the person a letter, may call him/her or may set up an appointment to visit with that person.
- ***Assist the committee member when possible.*** You may offer to set appointments or accompany committee members to meetings with potential donors. Follow up with each member to provide support and guidance along the way.
- ***Properly organize all donors.*** As contributions are received, promptly send a thank you letter. It is very important to properly acknowledge all gifts and find opportunities to continue to recognize donors. Invite these donors to Party events. Make sure they are on your mailing/emailing lists for newsletters, invitations, etc. List them on programs when appropriate.

- ***Thank and recognize the committee's chair and its members.*** You will want to enlist their assistance again next year for your next annual event!
- ***Maintain records*** on donors so that you can call on them annually. The first gift is the most difficult to receive. Renewals, second time donations, are much easier to obtain. It is important to build your base and maintain information for continuity from year to year. It is imperative to keep these records to have a successful finance operation for the committee.

Fundraising Event Planning Sheet

- I. Pick a date. Make certain that there is no other conflicting fundraiser on the same day you wish to hold yours. It is always beneficial to check with a few key members of the community to make sure they are free to attend. Another good resource is to check out the calendars on political websites such as the DPVA or State Pulse websites www.vademocrats.org or www.statepulse.com. Also set realistic goals for the event in terms of fund-raising. **Pick an attainable goal** – if this means choosing a later date to ensure high attendance, then move the date.
- II. Find a place to hold your event. In Richmond there are several great places to hold receptions or luncheons that are accessible to those attending. Wherever you choose to hold your event, make sure it is in the best possible place to showcase the candidate. If someone in your committee or a fellow Democrat owns a restaurant this is an easy way to get a free venue. The owner can in-kind the committee use of their venue.
- III. Find a Sponsor. In some cases this is very easy. Find a person who can find a company or several individuals to hold the event. If they can pay for the food, invitations, or the place the event is being held it will help you to raise money. Be sure to include sponsor recognition in any event information beforehand and especially at the event. Have different monetary levels of sponsorship.
- IV. Design Invitations. This is the easy step. Decide what type of event you are having and illustrate that by the title on the invitation. For example if you are holding your event at Maymont Park you could name it the “Party In the Park.” Usually titles help with the enthusiasm for the event. On the invitation make certain to include contact information, directions to the event, ticket prices on a return card, hosts, if any, and your name. Also, make certain to get them to the printer as soon as possible and send them out at least 4 weeks in advance so respondents have enough time to fit it in their calendars. Please remember to include a space on the return card to send money even if the person cannot attend. It might be a good idea to have your invitations printed by a union printer, this way the invitation includes the union logo. If you need assistance finding a union printer, don’t hesitate to call the Party staff we will locate one for you. DON’T forget the authority line, which should read, “Paid for and Authorized by (committee name)”. For more information, see the Appendices regarding *Stand by Your Ad* from the State Board of Elections.
- V. Make Fund-Raising Calls. This is the **MOST** important part of a successful fundraiser. Make calls to members of the community to insure their attendance and participation in the event. Maintain a list of those who received invitations and call all the the people you feel closer to and have them commit to a specific dollar amount. Once a donor has made a pledge on the phone, be sure to follow up with a confirmation/ thank you letter stating the exact amount of the pledge. You want to have a good time at your event, but you also want to raise money. Makikng 15 calls a day beginning three weeks prior to the event to ensure it is a success. Remember even if a prospect says they cannot attend the event, be sure to ask for a contribution anyway. ALWAYS ask for specific amounts of money, do not undersell yourself.
- VI. Food & Beverages. Depending on your event the food will vary. For those having receptions, finger foods are usually best. If you are having a sit down meal (brunch, lunch or dinner) see if the location where you are having the event prefers a certain caterer or can give

you some names of those that can handle your event. Most, if not all, receptions have spirits, and most establishments require a licensed bartender to be present while alcoholic beverages are being served. Remember this when you plan your event. Be sure to carefully review the details of any venue or catering contract before signing it.

- VII. The Event. Most of you have had plenty of these events, but remember to thank everyone involved and greet all who attend. Your event will only be as successful as your staff and volunteers make it. You will be busy greeting your guests and asking major donors for money, so it is up to your staff and event volunteers to make certain your event goes off without a hitch. Be sure the people helping you are reliable and hard working.
- VIII. Clean Up. Most establishments will have a staff that will take care of the clean up. You should find out prior to the event.
- IX. The Thank You Notes. Everyone who gives money likes to know that their gift is appreciated, and there is no better way of accomplishing that than through a Thank You Note. Thank you notes should go out immediately following the event (1-2 days); those that gave in-kind should receive special notes of thanks for their assistance.
- X. Follow -Up. All of us know that some folks mail the check after the event, but you need to make sure it is in the mail. Anywhere from 3-5 days after your event you should call those that pledged to give you money for the event and remind them that you appreciate their support and wanted to check on the progress of the contribution. Remind them the address to send the check and who to make it out to are good first lines on these types of calls.
- XI. Lists. Computerize and keep your Contributor List up to date. A good list is second in importance only to CALLING YOUR GIVERS. Remember these are the people that help you elect Democrats, make certain to keep them involved, not just during an election year. A good way to do this is by adding them to your newsletter lists, or start a regular mailing just for your contributors.

Post Event Checklist

- _____ Tabulate and Keep A Record of Checks Received, amount and date
- _____ Follow up with pledges that didn't come through
- _____ **Thank You notes** -- To those who contributed money and to in-kind donors
- _____ **Thank You notes** -- To Host Committee Members and volunteers
- _____ Report in-kind contribution information and receipts
- _____ Collect Press Clippings
- _____ Collect all left over reusable materials
- _____ **Create Master List of All Invitees** (will be useful in the future)

Event Timeline Checklist

Event Name _____

8 Weeks Before The Event

- _____ Establish Event Host Committee Members
- _____ Send Host Committee Invitation Letter and Email
- _____ Begin Tabulation of Money Pledged and Received
- _____ Collect Mailing Lists for Invitations
- _____ Plan the Logistics for the event
- _____ DATE
- _____ PLACE
- _____ TIME

7 Weeks

- _____ Finalize Event Host Committee (need to be people who will raise money)
- _____ Kick-Off Meeting (optional but helpful)

6 Weeks

- _____ Print Invitation Envelopes, Return Envelopes, & Invitation Inserts (union printer if possible)

4-5 Weeks

- _____ Mail Invitations
- _____ Distribute Invitations to Event Committee

3 Weeks

- _____ Make Follow-Up Calls to All Invitees (schedule time to make calls & stick to your schedule)
- _____ Follow Up with Event Committee to Track Ticket Sales

Week Of The Event

- _____ Recruit Volunteers, Finalize Details, and Complete Name Tags

Disclaimer Rules

Public communications that expressly advocate the election or defeat of a federal candidate

If independent:

Paid for by [name of party committee], [street address, phone number, or website], not authorized by any candidate or candidate's committee

If coordinated:

Paid for by [name of party committee], authorized by [name of candidate]

Disclaimer should be at least 12-pt font and in printed box

Printed communications that expressly advocate the election or defeat of a nonfederal candidate¹

If independent:

Paid for by [name of party committee]. Not authorized by a candidate.

If coordinated:

Paid for by [name of party committee]. Authorized by [name of candidate], candidate for [list office]

Disclaimer should be at least 7-pt font.

Television communications that expressly advocate the election or defeat of a nonfederal candidate

Written disclaimer at beginning or end of ad (for 4 seconds):

Paid for by [name of party committee].

Spoken disclaimer by CEO or treasurer of party committee, accompanied by full-screen image of CEO/treasurer (either photographic or actual appearance), at any point in ad:

The [name of party committee] sponsored this ad.

Radio communications that expressly advocate the election or defeat of a nonfederal candidate

Spoken disclaimer by CEO or treasurer of party committee at beginning or end of ad, lasting at least two seconds:

This ad was paid for by [name of party committee].

¹ These rules presume that the party committee is registered with the Virginia Department of Elections as a political committee. If they are not, different rules would apply and an attorney should be consulted.

Paid “campaign telephone calls”²

Sometime before the end of the call:

Paid for by [name of party committee], [Virginia Dep’t of Elections ID #]

Additional disclaimers are required for automated telephone calls. Additional federal and state laws apply to automated (robo) calls. Failure to comply with these laws can result in serious penalties. A party committee should not sponsor automated calls without a thorough review by counsel.

² A paid “campaign telephone call” is one made (i) to 25 or more telephone numbers, (ii) during the 180 days before a general or special election or during the 90 days before a primary or other political party nominating event, (iii) conveying or soliciting information relating to any candidate or political party participating in the election, primary or other nominating event.

Memorandum on Local Party Federal Campaign Finance Activity



Jan. 14, 2016

TO: Interested Parties

FROM: Counsel to the Democratic Party of Virginia

RE: **Local Party Organizations**

This memorandum addresses how federal campaign finance law applies to “local party organizations” – e.g. district-, county-, or municipal-level Democratic party organizations in Virginia that are not registered with the Federal Election Commission (“FEC”) as “political committees.” The memorandum presumes that the local party organizations do not wish to engage in activities that would require registration with the FEC.

We understand that some district-, county-, or municipal-level Democratic party organizations in Virginia are registered with the FEC as political committees. The rules governing these registered committees are substantially different than those governing unregistered organizations. This memorandum is not intended for such registered committees.

This memorandum is an overview, not a comprehensive recitation of all federal rules governing local party organizations. Local party organizations are subject to Virginia campaign finance law as well. Accordingly, we recommend that counsel review proposed activities to ensure compliance with federal and state law.

FEC Registration Triggers

Local party organizations that raise or spend funds above certain thresholds and for certain activities must register with the FEC as political committees.

- A local party organization must register with the FEC as a political committee once its contributions to federal candidates or party committees *plus* its expenditures to influence federal elections exceed \$1,000 per calendar year.
- A local party organization must register with the FEC once it has received more than \$5,000 in donations specifically solicited or donated for the purpose of influencing federal elections.
- A local party organization must register with the FEC once it has spent more than \$5,000 per year on so-called “exempt activities” (more on these below).

Satisfying any one of these three criteria triggers political committee status.

Contributions and Expenditures

As noted above, a local party organization may make up to \$1,000 per calendar year in contributions or coordinated expenditures to federal candidates (and party committees) without registering with the FEC.

Paying for Federal Election Activity (“FEA”)

Federal law requires that local party organizations pay for federal election activity (“FEA”) entirely with federally permissible funds or with a combination of federally permissible funds and Levin funds, depending on the type of FEA.

- Federally permissible funds mean contributions of up to \$10,000 per year from individuals and \$5,000 per year from federal multi-candidate PACs. They do not include any corporate or labor treasury funds.
- Levin funds mean contributions of up to \$10,000 per year per donor.¹

The following types of FEA must be paid entirely with federally permissible funds:

- Public communications that promote, attack, support, or oppose a federal candidate.²
- The salaries and benefits of staff that spend 25 percent or more of their time in a month on federal elections or FEA.

The following types of FEA must be paid with a combination of federally permissible funds (no less than 28 percent in 2016) and Levin funds (no more than 72 percent in 2016):

- Voter registration activity between certain periods of time in 2016. The FEC has yet to release the dates for 2016.
- Get-out-the-vote and voter identification activity, and communications that support or oppose a political party without referring to a candidate, between certain periods of time in 2016. The FEC has yet to release the dates for 2016.

To assure that federally permissible funds or Levin funds are used, a local party organization may either use a reasonable accounting method or place the funds in a separate bank account. The local party organization must maintain records for three years showing that it used the proper mix of funds.

¹ There are restrictions on how Levin funds may be solicited and received. If a local party organization is interested in raising Levin funds, it should first seek guidance from counsel.

² Emails and an organization’s own website are *not* “public communications” and are not subject to this requirement.

Exempt Party Activities

As noted above, a local party organization may only pay for up to \$5,000 per year in exempt party activities without triggering political committee status with the FEC. These include:

- Sample ballots or slate cards referring to three or more candidates, at least one of whom is a federal candidate;
- Grassroots campaign materials (*e.g.* pins, bumper stickers, yard signs, brochures, and posters) supporting the party's nominees for federal office in the general election;³ *and*
- Voter drives (*e.g.* voter registration or GOTV) for presidential nominees in the general election.

Please note that certain party exempt activities qualify as FEA and must be paid as outlined above.

Federal Candidates Soliciting Funds for Local Party Organizations

Federal officeholders and candidates may solicit up to \$5,000 from individuals and federal multi-candidate PACs for local party organizations. They may not solicit funds in excess of this amount, nor may they solicit funds from federally prohibited sources (such as corporate and labor treasury funds). Federal officeholders and candidates may also attend, speak, or be a featured guest at fundraising events sponsored by the local party organization, as long as certain disclaimer notices are included on publicity and at the event itself. Counsel should review any such materials to ensure compliance.

Please let us know if you have questions or would like to discuss.

³ To qualify as an exempt activity, these grassroots materials must be distributed by volunteers. There are also restrictions on the use of transfer-down and earmarked funds to pay for this activity.

Department of Elections Summary of Laws and Policies for Political Party Committees



★ VIRGINIA ★
DEPARTMENT *of* ELECTIONS

Summary of Laws and Policies Political Party Committees

DEPARTMENT OF ELECTIONS
1100 BANK STREET, FIRST FLOOR
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA 23219-3497

Toll-free within Virginia 800-552-9745 or 804-864-8901

Fax Number: 804-786-1364

Visit our website: www.elections.virginia.gov

*Revised October 28, 2014
Supersedes All Previous Versions*

Virginia's Campaign Finance Disclosure Act
Title 24.2, Chapter 9.3, and 9.4 of the *Code of Virginia*

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CHAPTER 1 – General Information

Section 1.1 - Purpose of *Summary*

In accordance with § 24.2-946 of the *Code of Virginia*, the Virginia Department of Elections has prepared this *Summary of Virginia's Campaign Finance Laws and Policies for Political Party Committees* (hereafter referred to as “Summary”), which will assist treasurers on how to file the required campaign finance reports and outlines the provisions of the Campaign Finance Disclosure Act (“CFDA” or the “Act”), Chapters 9.3, 9.4 and 9.5 of Title 24.2 of the *Code of Virginia* and the policies adopted by the Virginia Department of Elections related to those laws.

It is important to understand that there is more to the law than just timely filing the required campaign finance reports. As a candidate or treasurer, you should familiarize yourself with this Summary for it will serve as a valuable resource.

The Virginia Department of Elections makes the Summary available on the Internet to all candidates, their treasurers and the general public. The Virginia Department of Elections will also mail a copy of the Summary upon request.

Section 1.2 - Campaign Finance Staff

The Virginia Department of Elections staff is available to assist you in preparing reports and interpreting the requirements of the CFDA. Should you have questions or require clarification, please contact:

Brooks C. Braun, Policy Analyst: brooks.braun@elections.virginia.gov

Rise Miller, Service Specialist: rise.miller@elections.virginia.gov

Section 1.3 - Related Publications

If your committee is required to file its campaign finance reports electronically, or if you have chosen to file electronically, please refer to the *COMET* User Manual found online at Virginia Department of Elections website: http://www.elections.virginia.gov/cms/documents/CF/COMET_User_Manual.pdf

Candidates will also need to familiarize themselves with the appropriate candidate bulletin for the office they seek. These can be found online at the Virginia Department of Elections website: http://www.elections.virginia.gov/cms/Cidate_Information/Cidate_Bulletins_Forms.html

Section 1.4 - Elections Not Covered

The provisions of CFDA do not apply to primaries and elections for:

- Members of the United States Congress;
- President and Vice President of the United States;
- Town office in a town with a population of less than 25,000;
- §24.2-945 allows, by adoption of an ordinance, the governing body of any town with a population of less than 25,000 may provide that the provisions of the Act shall be applicable to elections for town offices in the town.
- Directors of soil and water conservation districts; or
- Political Party Committee Officers.

In addition, persons (defined in Section 1.7) that make contributions from their direct operating or personal funds are not subject to the requirements of CFDA unless they make independent expenditures, in the aggregate during an election cycle, of \$1,000 or more for a statewide election or \$200 or more for any other election (see § 24.2-945.2).

Section 1.5 - Federal Laws and Requirements

A federal candidate is required to file campaign finance reports with the Federal Election Commission (FEC). The FEC (and *not* the Virginia Department of Elections) enforces federal campaign finance laws. The following are candidates who must file with the FEC, not the Virginia Department of Elections:

- President of the United States;
- Vice-President of the United States;
- United States Senate;
- United States House of Representatives; or
- Any political committee wishing to support or oppose *federal candidates*.

These committees must contact the Federal Election Commission (FEC) to obtain forms and information pertaining to federal campaign finance requirements and filing deadlines. You may contact the FEC at:

800-424-9530 (toll-free) or 202-694-1000 (within the Washington, D.C. area)

www.fec.gov – Internet address

999 E. Street, NW, Washington, DC 20463-0002 – U.S. Mail

Federal Committees that are registered with the Virginia Department of Elections who file their reports with the FEC are not required to file campaign finance reports with the Virginia Department of Elections. Candidates for office in Virginia may accept contributions from these types of candidates or political committees. However, it is important for you to review the provisions of § 24.2-947.3:1 and Section 3.7 of this Summary prior to accepting contributions from these types of committees.

The Virginia Department of Elections has no authority to provide any guidance regarding federal tax laws. Please contact the Internal Revenue Service if you have questions regarding your committee's tax filing requirements. Their website address is

<http://www.irs.gov/charities/political/index.html>.

Section 1.6 - Cash-Basis vs. Accrual-Basis Reporting

Virginia's campaign finance reporting system works on an accounting principle known as 'cash-basis' reporting rather than 'accrual-basis' reporting. In an accrual-basis reporting system, contributions are reported in the period for which they are earned (e.g., once contracted services are provided), regardless of when the cash from these contributions are received. Expenditures are recorded as they are owed (e.g., when supplies are ordered, the printer finishes your brochure, employees actually perform the work, etc.), instead of when they are paid.

In a cash-basis reporting system, contributions are reported when the cash is received. Expenditures are reported in the reporting period when the expenditures are paid. Therefore, it is important to remember that, in Virginia, contributions are reported on the dates when the funds are actually received (not deposited) and on the dates when the funds are actually expended. It is very similar to the method that most people use to balance their check books.

The exceptions to this rule apply only in cases where debts on material goods have been received or for In-Kind Contributions with regards to services or advertisements purchased on behalf of a candidate where coordination has also occurred (See [Chapter 4](#)). Since no money is actually changing hands in this

type of contribution, the information should be reported on the same date that the service was provided or when the advertisement benefiting the candidate was disseminated.

Section 1.7 - Definitions

The following are definitions of the terms used in the Summary that are of principal importance to candidates and their treasurers. Please keep in mind that some of the terms, while not specifically defined in CFDA, are useful in understanding this document. If you wish to read the exact definitions as they appear in CFDA, you may refer to § 24.2-945.1, 24.2-955.1 or 24.2-101 of the Code of Virginia.

Adjournment sine die – Adjournment on the last legislative day of the regular session (the regular session does not include the ensuing reconvened session or any special session following in the same year).

Advertisement – Any message appearing in the print media, on television, or on radio that constitutes a contribution or expenditure under Chapter 9.3 (§ 24.2-945 et seq.) of this title. “Advertisement” does not include issue advocacy or novelty items authorized by a candidate including, but not limited to, pens, pencils, magnets, and buttons to be attached to wearing apparel.

Agent of the candidate or candidate’s campaign committee – One empowered to act for or represent the candidate made through an agreement, verbal or otherwise, between the candidate and the person. The term shall not include unpaid volunteers.

Aggregate Contribution – The total amount of contributions (cash and in-kind) made by an individual or other entity during an election cycle.

Authorization – Means the express approval or consent by the candidate, the candidate’s campaign committee, or an agent of the candidate campaign committee after coordinating the expenditure with the candidate, the candidate’s campaign committee, or an agent of the candidate campaign committee.

Candidate – Means an individual who seeks nomination for election, or election to public office, in the Commonwealth of Virginia whether or not that person’s name is on the ballot. The definition includes ‘write-in’ candidates. An individual is considered, for campaign finance purposes only, a candidate seeking nomination for election or re-election under the provisions of the Act if they have:

- Provided payment of a filing fee for any party nomination method;
- Submitted a Statement of Qualification form (see § 24.2-501) (whether or not funds or resources have been solicited, received or expended);
- Personally, or through another person, solicited or received funds or other things of value, or made expenditures, including expenditures from personal funds, for the purpose of bringing about such individual’s nomination or election to any office;
- Has been endorsed or nominated by a Political Party and is thus entitled to a position on the ballot at an election or primary (whether or not funds or resources have been solicited, received or expended);
- Has otherwise been qualified for placement on the ballot pursuant to the election laws (whether or not funds or resources have been solicited, received or expended);
- Has appointed a campaign treasurer, designated a campaign committee, or designated a campaign depository;
- Has not filed a final report for the previous election cycle prior to a new election cycles begin date. In this instance, an individual will be considered a candidate for

the same office in the succeeding election for administrative purposes (see §24.2-947).

- **Candidate Types:**
- **Local Candidate** – Candidate for a city, county or town’s local or constitutional offices.
- **General Assembly Candidate** – Candidate for Virginia State Senate or House of Delegates.
- **Statewide Candidate** – Candidate for Governor, Lieutenant Governor or Attorney General.

Candidate’s Campaign Committee - The committee designated by a candidate to receive all contributions and make all expenditures for them or on their behalf in connection with their nomination or election. A Candidate’s Campaign Committee may not be established for multiple candidates.

Candidate’s Election Cycle – An election cycle begins on January 1 of the year that the candidate first seeks election for the office through December 31 immediately following the election for such office. The election cycle provides for the aggregation of contributions and expenditures for the candidate’s campaign finance reporting. A candidate with any activity to report in a new election cycle shall be presumed to be a candidate for reelection in the succeeding election solely for the purpose of filing campaign finance reports.

Conspicuous – So written, displayed, or presented that any reasonable person can notice it.

Contribution – Money or services of any amount, and any other thing of value, given, advanced, loaned, or in any other way provided to a candidate, campaign committee, political committee, inaugural committee or person for the purpose of influencing the outcome of an election or defraying the costs of the inauguration of a Governor, Lieutenant Governor or Attorney General. “Contribution” includes money, services or things of value in any way provided by a candidate to his own campaign and the payment by the candidate of any primary filing fee.

Coordinated or Coordination – An expenditure that is made (i) at the express request or suggestion of a candidate, a candidate’s campaign committee, or an agent of the candidate or his campaign committee or (ii) with material involvement of the candidate, a candidate’s campaign committee, or an agent of the candidate or his campaign committee in devising the strategy, content, means of dissemination, or timing of the expenditure.

Debt – Any and all outstanding financial obligations.

Depository – The account(s) in a designated financial institution established to maintain all monetary receipts of a committee.

Designated Contribution – Means a contribution that is designated specifically and in writing for a particular candidate or candidates and that is made using a political committee solely as a conduit.

Election – Any general, primary, special election or referendum.

Expenditure – Money or services of any amount, and any other thing of value, paid, loaned, provided or in any other way disbursed by any candidate, campaign committee, political committee, inaugural committee or person for the purpose of influencing the outcome of an election or for defraying the costs of the inauguration of a Governor, Lieutenant Governor or Attorney General.

Express Advocacy – A direct or indirect contribution, in-kind contribution, independent expenditure or loan made to a candidate or political committee for the purpose of influencing the outcome of an election; an advertisement that refers to a party or candidate(s) by name and states “Vote for...”, “Support”, “Elect...”, “Smith for Congress”, “Send Him Home”, “Oppose”, etc.

Failure to File – Any required campaign finance report not received by the Virginia Department of Elections or local electoral board within 60 days after official notification from the Virginia Department of Elections or local electoral board. For candidates for Statewide Office, a report shall be considered *failure to file* if the report is not received within fourteen days after official notification from the Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Elections.

Federal Political Action Committee – Any political action committee registered with the Federal Election Commission that makes contributions to candidates or political committees registered in Virginia.

Full-screen – The only picture appearing on the television screen during the oral disclosure statement that (i) contains the disclosing person, (ii) occupies all visible space on the television screen, and (iii) contains the image of the disclosing person that occupies at least fifty percent of the vertical height of the television screen.

Inaugural Committee – Any organization, person or group of persons that anticipate receiving contributions or making expenditures, from other than publicly appropriated funds, for the inauguration of the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, or Attorney General.

Incomplete report – A campaign finance report that does not include all required information.

Independent Expenditure – An expenditure made by any person or political committee that is not made to, controlled by, coordinated with, or made with the authorization of a candidate, his campaign committee, or an agent of the candidate or his campaign committee. It includes an expenditure made by a candidate campaign committee (i) that is not related to the candidate's own campaign and (ii) that is not made to, controlled by, coordinated with, or made with the authorization of a different candidate, his campaign committee, or an agent of that candidate or his campaign committee.

In-Kind Contribution – The donation of goods, services, property or anything else of value that is offered for free or less than the usual and normal charge; or payments by a third party for goods and services rather than money. The basis for arriving at the dollar value of an In-Kind gift is as follows: new items are valued at retail value; used items are valued at fair market value and services rendered are valued at the actual cost of service per hour. Services are not to include personal services (outside of the person's professional occupation) for which no compensation is asked or given.

Occurrence – One broadcast of a radio or television political campaign advertisement in violation of the expanded disclosure requirements for television and radio.

Out-of-State Political Committee – Means an entity subject to § 527 of the United States Internal Revenue Code that is not registered as a political committee or candidate campaign committee in Virginia and whose contributions made to political committees and candidate campaign committees registered in Virginia is 50% or more of the committee's expenditures made in the form of contributions. The term does not include federal political action committees.

Person – Any individual or corporation, partnership, business, labor organization, membership organization, association, cooperative or other like entity who makes contributions from their direct operating funds, or their own personal funds as in the case of an individual. Persons are subject to independent expenditure reporting requirements.

Petty cash fund – Fund established by a campaign treasurer for the purpose of making expenditures or reimbursing verified credit card expenditures of less than \$200. The total must never exceed \$200 and if established, the treasurer must maintain complete records, as required by CFDA, of any expenditure less than \$200 (see § 24.2-947.2).

Political Action Committee (PAC) – Any organization, person, or group of persons, established or maintained in whole or in part to receive and expend contributions for the purpose of influencing the outcome of any election. The term shall not include a campaign committee, federal political action

committee, out-of-state political committee, political party committee, referendum committee, or inaugural committee. **Note:** May also be referred to as Political Committee.

Political Committee – A general term refers to any political action committee, political party committee, referendum committee, or inaugural committee. The term does not include:

- Federal Political Action Committee,
- Out-of-State Political Committee,
- Campaign Committee, or
- Person, which in making contributions does so out of their own personal funds or the entity's direct operating funds.

Political Party Committee – Any state political party committee, congressional district political party committee, political party committee for a county or city, other election district political party committee, organized political party group of elected officials, which anticipates receiving contributions or making expenditures in whole or in part, for the purpose of influencing the outcome of an election. **Note:** May also be referred to as Political Committee.

Primary Purpose – Means that 50% or more of the committee's expenditures made in the form of contributions shall be made to candidate campaign committees or political committees registered in Virginia. Administrative expenditures and the transfer of funds between affiliated or connected organizations shall not be considered in determining the committee's primary purpose. The primary purpose of the committee shall not be determined on the basis of only one report or election cycle, but over the entirety of the committee's registration.

Print Media – Means billboards, cards, newspapers, newspaper inserts, magazines, printed material disseminated through the mail, pamphlets, fliers, bumper stickers, periodicals, website, electronic mail, and outdoor advertising facilities. If a single print media advertisement consists of multiple pages, folds, or faces, the disclosure requirement of this section applies only to one page, fold, or face.

Radio – Any radio broadcast station that is subject to the provisions of 47 U.S.C. §§ 315 and 317.

Referendum Committee – Any organization, person, group of persons, or committee, that makes expenditures to advocate the passage or defeat of a referendum legally placed on the ballot.

Reporting Period – Means the activity beginning and activity ending dates for a particular campaign finance report.

Residence – Means and requires both domicile and a place of abode for all purposes of qualification to register and vote.

Scan Line – A standard term of measurement used in the electronic media industry calculating a certain area in a television advertisement.

Solicit – To request a contribution, orally or in writing. This does not include a request for support of a candidate or their position on an issue.

Sponsor – A candidate, candidate campaign committee, political party committee, political action committee, individual, or other entity that purchases an advertisement.

Surplus funds – The funds remaining after the payment of all debts (including penalties assessed by the Virginia Department of Elections) and expenses incurred by a committee. **Note:** May also be referred to as Excess Funds.

Television – Any television broadcast station, cable television system, wireless-cable multipoint distribution system, satellite company, or telephone company transmitting video programming that is subject to the provisions of 47 U.S.C. §§ 315 and 317.

Treasurer – The appointed bookkeeping officer of a candidate’s campaign committee.

Un-obscured – Means that the only printed material that may appear on the television screen is a visual disclosure statement required by law and that nothing is blocking the view of the disclosing person’s face.

CHAPTER 2 – Statement of Organization

Section 2.1 - Becoming a Party Committee

Virginia recognizes only two political parties: Democrats and Republicans. All other party organizations are required to register as Political Action Committees. Please see the [Summary on Laws and Policies for Political Action Committees](#) for more information on their reporting requirements.

Local Party Exemptions

County and city political party committees in counties and cities which have a population less than 100,000 (2010 Census) are exempt from registering and reporting as a Political Party committee until such time that they receive contributions totaling \$15,000 in a calendar year or make contributions and expenditures which total more than \$15,000 in a calendar year. Upon meeting the threshold, the committee must register and report all receipts and expenditures back to January 1 of that year.

Types of Party Committees

A political party committee can be any of the following types of organizations:

- State Committee;
- City Party Committee;
- County Party Committee;
- Local District Party Committee;
- Congressional District Party Committee;
- State Legislative District Party Committee; or
- Organized Political Party Group of Elected Officials.

Section 2.2 – Establishing a Party Committee

In order to form a party committee, a *Statement of Organization* for a Political Party Committee must be submitted to the Virginia Department of Elections within 10 days of organization; or 10 days after the date on which the committee has information that it expects to receive contributions and/or make expenditures of more than \$200. For county or city party committees which are exempt, a Statement is due within 10 days as soon as receive contributions totaling \$15,000 in a calendar year or make contributions and expenditures which total more than \$15,000 in a calendar year.

The Statement of Organization

A party committee that intends to spend more than \$200 in order to influence the outcome of a non-federal election in Virginia or is no longer subject to the exemption described above must include the following information on its *Statement of Organization*:

- The name of the political party committee and its address in the Commonwealth;
- The name and business address of the treasurer and his residence address in the Commonwealth who shall be deemed the agent of the political party committee for the purpose of service of process on the political party committee;
- The name, residence in the Commonwealth, business address, and position of the custodian of the books and accounts, who works under the direction of the treasurer, and the address where the books are maintained;

- The name, address, office sought, and party affiliation of each individual whom the committee is supporting or opposing for nomination or for election to any public office whatever, or if supporting the entire ticket of any party, the name of the party;
- Date that the committee first accepted contributions and/or expenditures exceeding \$200 (exempt committees should enter the date which they reached the \$15,000 threshold), date the committee established its designated depository, or the date the committee's treasurer was appointed; and
- The designated depository to be used for the receipt and holding of funds and contributions received by the political party committee, in an account in a financial institution within the Commonwealth; and

Mailing Address

The address must be within the Commonwealth. Post Office Boxes are acceptable. This address will be the primary mailing address and all official notifications will be sent to this address. It is the responsibility of the committee's treasurer to ensure that the Department of Elections has the most recent mailing address filed with us on the committee's Statement of Organization.

Treasurer Information

The treasurer must be a resident of Virginia but is not required to be a registered voter in the Commonwealth. See Section 2.3 for more information on the treasurer's requirements.

Custodian of the Books

The custodian of the books must be a resident of Virginia but is not required to be a registered voter in the Commonwealth. The address where the books are maintained must also be located within the Commonwealth. See Section 2.3 for more information on the treasurer's requirements.

List of Candidates Supported

The committee must disclose, at its time of registration, the names, addresses and party affiliation of each candidate supported or opposed. Political party committees can simply list the name of the political party that they intend to support.

Establishing a Depository

Party committees are required to establish a depository in a financial institution located within the Commonwealth. The *Statement of Organization* will require your committee to identify the name and address of the committee's PRIMARY financial institution. You are not required to provide the committee's bank account number.

*****PERSONAL BANK ACCOUNTS MAY NOT BE USED UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES*****

The name of the account must match exactly with the name of the committee. All checks drawn off of the committee's depository must include the name of the committee.

In most instances, the financial institution will require your committee to obtain an Employee Identification Number or EIN from the Internal Revenue Service. It is not difficult, nor does it take long, to obtain this number. Simply visit the IRS website (www.irs.gov) and type "Employee Identification Number" into the search field and you will be able to find the necessary information to obtain this number.

Establishing Secondary Depository Accounts

Committees are able to transfer funds from the primary depository to another account or instrument for the purpose of earning interest on those funds. This can be done as long as:

- Complete records are maintained for each election cycle;
- All interest earned (reported on Schedule C) and fees paid (reported on Schedule D) are reported on the committee's campaign finance reports;
- The establishment of such an account is reported on the Campaign Committee's Statement of Organization;
- Expenditures are made only from the primary checking account; and
- Before filing a Final Report, the transferred funds and any earned interest are returned to the primary checking account.

Filing Method - Electronic or Paper?

The Virginia Department of Elections requires committees to indicate if they intend to file their campaign finance reports electronically or on paper. Committees who raise or spend \$10,000 in a calendar year, or who raised or spent \$10,000 in a previous calendar year, are required to file their campaign finance reports electronically. A committee which raised or spent \$10,000 in a previous calendar year, but does not intend to do so in the current calendar year, may file an exemption from the requirements to file electronically.

To become an e-filer, you must register and submit your Statement of Organization using "COMET" (Committee Electronic Tracking System). More information on COMET can be found on our website: www.elections.virginia.gov.

The Virginia Department of Elections offers COMET at no charge to any registered committee in the Commonwealth. The Department of Elections provides all of the support for this application and is available to assist you with your questions. However, if your committee wishes to use an outside company, they may choose from one of the Virginia Department of Elections Approved Vendors. The Virginia Department of Elections certifies all companies who wish to sell their software for the purposes of creating campaign finance reports to be filed in Virginia. Once their software is approved, the Virginia Department of Elections will accept campaign finance reports created from the company's software.

The committee cannot change its filing method without first notifying the Virginia Department of Elections by submitting an Amended *Statement of Organization*. An electronic filer who submits a report on paper will not be considered to have filed a timely campaign finance report.

Section 2.3 – Treasurer and Custodian of the Books

Treasurer Requirements

In order to serve as a treasurer for any party committee the individual must be a resident of the Commonwealth of Virginia. The treasurer, for purposes of the service of process, is deemed the agent of the party committee and is the person ultimately responsible for all aspects of campaign finance reporting for the committee.

Custodian of the Books

The custodian of the books works under the direction of the treasurer and is eligible to perform all of the duties of the treasurer including, but not limited to, signing checks, signing campaign finance reports, making deposits, etc.

The committee is not required to appoint a custodian of the books if the treasurer also serves as the custodian.

Duties and Responsibilities of the Treasurer

The custodian of the books can perform all of the duties of the treasurer. However, the treasurer is ultimately responsible for the records of the committee. The committee's treasurer should not allow any person (other than the custodian of the books) to sign checks, receive contributions or make expenditures on behalf of the campaign. The ultimate responsibility for compliance with the requirements of the Act always rests with the treasurer, and it is the treasurer's or the custodian of the books' signature that is required on all campaign reports.

The treasurer is responsible for the receipts and expenditures of campaign or committee funds for political purposes. The duties of a treasurer can include, but are not limited to:

- Filing complete, accurate and timely contributions and expenditure reports and *Statement of Organization* Forms;
- Signing contributions and expenditure reports and *Statement of Organization* Forms;
- Authorizing expenditures (may also be authorized by any other officer of the committee);
- Monitoring disclosure to ensure compliance with Virginia's Campaign Finance Laws; and
- Keeping detailed and accurate records for at least three years after the report is filed.

Changes or Vacancies in the Position of Treasurer

The treasurer must keep the committee's addresses, phone numbers and email addresses current to help ensure receipt of periodic notices and compliance materials. If the treasurer position becomes vacant, the committee is responsible for notifying the Virginia Department of Elections within 10 days of the change and after appointing a replacement. Please be advised that a vacancy in the treasurer's position does not relieve the committee from filing timely disclosure reports.

Disposal of Records

The treasurer must keep detailed and accurate records of all contributions and expenditures in their possession for at least one year from the date of filing the final report or three years after the December 31st immediately following the election cycle.

Records

Campaign Finance Records include, but are not limited to:

- Receipts;
- Invoices;
- Bank statements;
- Copies of checks from contributors;
- Any communications from the Virginia Department of Elections or local electoral board;
- Copies of checks for expenditures; and
- Completed solicitation forms.

Section 2.4 - Where to File the Statement of Organization

Committees must file an original, signed copy of their Statement of Organization with the Virginia Department of Elections within 10 days once their population reaches 100,000 (by census records) or as soon as an exempted party committee has received contributions or made expenditures of \$15,000 or more during a calendar year.

County, city and local district party committees must also file a copy of the Statement of Organization with their local Electoral Board/General Registrar of their county or city.

All committees must maintain a copy of this form for their records.

Amending the Statement of Organization

The committee must file an amended *Statement of Organization* within 10 days of any change to the committee's information (e.g., a change in address) to the Virginia Department of Elections and a copy to the local electoral board, if applicable.

If there is no change to the information submitted, the original *Statement of Organization* will continue in effect until a Final Report is filed or until a change in the information occurs.

CHAPTER 3 – Schedule A: Cash contributions

Section 3.1 – Limits on Contributions

There are no contribution limits in Virginia. A committee can accept contributions from any individual, corporation, union, association or partnership. It is required that all contributions received by the committee, and that all required information identifying the contributor, be reported on the committee's campaign finance reports.

Federal law prohibits any political organization to accept contributions from a foreign national or foreign corporation. An exception to the law is granted for individuals who have a valid green card. For more information concerning the prohibition of contributions from foreign nationals please visit the FEC website at www.fec.gov.

Section 3.2 – Types of Cash contributions

A committee can solicit contributions from any source mentioned in Section 3.1. A cash contribution may be made in the form of, but is not limited to:

- Cash;
- Check;
- Money Order;
- Credit or Debit Card.

Section 3.3 – Itemized Contributions vs. Unitemized Contributions

Contributors who have contributed an aggregate amount of more than \$100 to a committee during an election cycle (begins January 1 each year) must be "itemized" on the committee's campaign finance report. This means that the committee must include the required occupation or business information for the contributor on the campaign finance report.

Contributors who have contributed an aggregate of \$100 or less to the committee during an election cycle are reported as "unitemized" on the report. This means that the committee is not required to list the name of the contributor and other required information on the report. The contributor will have to be "itemized" if the contributor provides additional contributions which increase their aggregate contribution for the election cycle to be more than \$100. The committee is required to gather at least the name and address from each contributor no matter how small the contribution to ensure that full disclosure is possible should the individual's aggregate contributions go above \$100.

Designated Contributions

A designated contribution means a contribution that is designated specifically and in writing for a particular candidate or candidates and is made using a political committee solely as the conduit.

- For each designated contribution received from a political committee, out of state political committee, or federal PAC, the conduit committee is required to provide the recipient committee the name of the person who designated the contribution and provide the following information:
- The name and address of the person paid;
- A brief description of the purpose of the expenditure;
- The name of the person contracting for or arranging the expenditure;
- The amount of the expenditure; and

- The date of the expenditure.
- The recipient committee must report the information provided by the conduit committee for each individual whose contribution exceeds and aggregate of \$100.

Anonymous Contributions

If a committee receives any cash contributions from an unknown source, the receiver of the contribution may donate the money to any organization described in § 170(c) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Committees Must NOT Accept Anonymous Contributions

Section 3.4 – Contributor’s Required Information

The committee is required to report the following information about each contributor who contributes an aggregate of more than \$100 in an election cycle:

Name of the Contributor

The report must contain the individual or organization’s name as it appears on the check. The name of the cardholder must be reported for contributions received by credit card. If the contributor submitted their contribution by any other means, then it is the responsibility of the treasurer to retain the name of the contributor for purposes of reporting.

The full name of the contributor is required to be reported, in alphabetical order, on the campaign finance report. For businesses and other types of organizations, the name of the company should be listed in alphabetical order. For individuals, the order must be alphabetical by the person’s last name. The committee must report the full name of the organization. Acronyms are not acceptable.

Address of the Contributor

The full address of the contributor is required to be reported on the campaign finance report. The report must contain the individual or organization’s address as it appears on the check. For contributions received by credit card then the address of the cardholder must be reported. If the contributor submitted their contribution by any other means, then it is the responsibility of the treasurer to retain the address of the contributor for purposes of reporting. Post Office Boxes are acceptable addresses in all instances.

Occupation of the Contributor (Individuals Only)

The occupation of the contributor must not state the title or position of the individual. The report should indicate the type of work the individual is employed to do.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of acceptable occupations:

- Construction
- Marketing
- Financial Advisor
- Entrepreneur
- Student
- Retired
- Homemaker/Housewife

Every person has an occupation even if that occupation is “retired” or “student”. In no case should a committee report the individual’s occupation as “N/A”.

Principal Type of Business (Contributions from Businesses)

The treasurer must enter the type of business for the organization making the contribution. For example, a committee that received a contribution from an electric utility would enter “Electric Utility.”

Date Received

A contribution is considered “received” the date that it knowingly comes into the hands of an “agent” of the committee (“agent” is defined in Section 1.7). Contributions should never be reported as the date that the money is deposited unless the contribution was received on the same date that the contribution is deposited. Contributions should also not be reported as the date written on the check unless that is the same date that the check is received.

If a contribution is provided by credit or debit card on a website, the date the contribution is considered received is the date the contributor submitted their contribution via the website. The treasurer should not report the contribution as being received on the date that the information is reported from the collecting entity to the committee. Contributions received via services such as PayPal should be reported when the funds are released to the committee’s account.

Section 3.5 – Soliciting Contributions

The Virginia Department of Elections strongly recommends that all committees make every effort possible to gather the required information at the time that a contribution is collected even if the contributor’s donation is \$100 or less. Although this information is not required for contributors who contribute \$100 or less, their aggregate contribution may exceed \$100 in the future. If the information is obtained at the time of the first contribution, time and energy will be saved in the future.

Recording Contributor’s Information

When keeping records of contributions, each committee should maintain, at a minimum, the following detailed information:

- Contributor’s full name;
- Contributor’s mailing address;
- Contributor’s occupation, employer and location (city/town and state) of principal place of business if the contributor is an individual;
- Type of business and location (city/town and state) of the corporation or business if the contributor is a business or corporation;
- Type of committee and the location (city/town and state) of the committee if the contributor is a political committee;
- Date contribution received;
- Amount of the contribution; and
- Contributor’s total contributions to date, including “In-Kind” Contributions (see Chapter 4).

Solicitation Form

Certain efforts can be made to secure a contributor’s required information. The Virginia Department of Elections recommends that each contribution be accompanied by a solicitation form and that the form be maintained with a copy of the contribution in the committee’s records.

Each solicitation should include a request for the contributor's full name, complete mailing address, occupation, name of employer, and location of principal place of business. The following is an example of a solicitation form:

The Great Party

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

Occupation: _____

Employer: _____

Place of Employment: _____

Contribution Amount: \$ _____

Are you a U.S. Citizen or Have a Valid Green Card: Y N

"Virginia law requires all candidate campaign committees to maintain a record of the name, mailing address, occupation information (includes type of work, employer and principal place of business) for each individual who contributes to our committee. Your information will not be made public if your cumulative contribution is \$100 or less for this calendar year."

Best Efforts Policy

Most committees, at one time or another, will receive unsolicited contributions which do not include the required information necessary to comply with the Act. In such instances, the committee must make every effort to contact the contributor in order to gather the required information. The Virginia Department of Elections considers a "best effort" made by the committee to include sending a written request to the contributor asking for the required information.

If the campaign finance report is due and, after sending a written request, any of the required information of the itemized contributor is still unknown, it shall temporarily suffice to report "Unable to Obtain" or "Information Requested" in the field missing the required information. The committee is also required to submit, along with the committee's report, a copy of the written request to the contributor asking for the required missing information. The Virginia Department of Elections does not consider a report complete if more than 20% of the total number of contributors or other required itemized information is missing.

Section 3.6 – Other Contribution Policies

Joint Checks

It is unacceptable to enter two names on the committee's campaign finance report when referring to one contribution. There are cases when the committee will receive a check which has two names listed in the address field. In most cases, these are contributions written on checks from married couples who have a joint checking account.

In these cases the treasurer must report the contribution as being received by the person who signed the check. This cannot be changed unless there is written authorization from both persons listed on the check. For example, both individuals could sign the check in order to split the contribution between both

individuals listed on the check. Conversely, a solicitation form could be submitted which states that the contribution should be designated to the individual's listed on the solicitation form.

Returned Checks

If a contributor's check is returned by the committee's depository for insufficient funds or is otherwise not accepted by the committee, then the committee has the option to not record the contribution on its report if no report was due between the time the contribution was received and the time that the contribution was returned.

If the contribution was reported on a Campaign Finance report and later returned by the depository for insufficient funds, then the committee has the option to amend the report by removing the contribution. This policy is to prevent potential public embarrassment from a contributor whose bank account was overdrawn.

Contributions by Credit Card

A contribution that is made by credit or debit card may be made either in person, over the telephone or via the Internet. If this method of payment is used, the entire amount charged to the contributor's account must be reported. Any service fees charged to a candidate's campaign committee by the card processing agent must be reported separately on the report as an expenditure by the committee. Even if the company charges the committee a "per transaction fee," the fee per transaction shall not be used to reduce the amount of the contribution shown, but must be reported as an expenditure made by the committee for the period being reported. "Per transaction" fees can be bundled into a single line item on the Schedule of Expenditures.

Contributions During a Legislative Session

Contributions or promises of contributions may not be made, accepted or solicited by the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, any member of the General Assembly or any person acting on behalf of these individuals on and after the first day of a Regular Legislative Session which annually begins on the second Wednesday in January and continues for no less than 45 days in odd years and 60 days in even years. The Regular Session does not end until the General Assembly agrees to *adjournment sine die* which signifies the end of the Regular Session. Contributions can be made to these committees during Special Sessions or during any other non-Regular Legislative Session including the Veto Session.

These restrictions do not apply to contributions made by the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General or any member of the General Assembly from their personal funds or to contributions made to the campaign committee of a candidate in a special election.

Section 3.7 – Fundraisers

Many PACs will wish to raise funds for their committees by organizing and hosting fundraisers. There are several issues to be aware of when thinking about organizing fundraisers.

Contributions vs. Expenditures

Purchasing a ticket to a fundraiser is considered a contribution to the committee.

A committee must report all expenditures related to the event. If other persons have paid for particulars of the fundraiser, then they must be reported as in-kind contributions. (See Chapter 4 for more information on in-kind contributions.)

In no case is it acceptable for the committee to defray the costs from the amount raised. The contributions received must be reported independently of the expenses of the event.

Joint Fundraisers

All contributors should write one check for each committee participating in the fundraiser. At no time should a contribution be made to both committees on a single check.

Common Fundraising Scenarios

The Act requires that all contributions collected by individuals for a committee be accompanied by certain identifying information. Anonymous contributions are illegal. As a result of this requirement, The Virginia Department of Elections has provided some examples of fundraising scenarios to avoid:

Pass the Hat

In a “pass the hat” scenario, the persons in the room may already be large contributors. Any additional monies contributed by those contributors would have to be itemized. In this fundraising scenario the contributor’s required information is not being gathered since each contribution is anonymously placed in the “hat”. It is also possible that someone could contribute more than \$100. Anonymous contributions are illegal; therefore, “pass the hat” type fundraisers are also illegal.

Golf Tournaments

In most cases golf tournaments require a monetary contribution to the host committee to participate. Once at the tournament the competitors can purchase “mulligans” or other additional items. The money from these purchases is considered additional contributions to the host committee from the contributor and it is the responsibility of the committee to record the purchaser’s required information. Conversely, the committee could sell “mulligans” and give the money to charity. In this case all contributions should be made out directly to the charity and the campaign should not deposit these funds.

Raffles

According to *Code of Virginia § 18.2-340.15*, political organizations in Virginia may not, under any circumstance, use raffles as a fundraising tool. The Virginia Department of Elections does not regulate this activity. Please see Department of Charitable Gaming’s website for more information: <http://www.dcg.virginia.gov/>.

CHAPTER 4 – Schedule B: In-Kind Contributions

An in-kind contribution is the donation of goods, services, property or anything of value that is offered for free or at less than the usual and normal charge, or payments by a third party for goods or services. This type of contribution does not include a donation of cash, checks, or promissory notes. In-kind contributions must be itemized in the same manner as cash contributions (see Chapter 3 for more information).

Section 4.1 - Types of In-Kind Contributions

Some types of in-kind contributions can include, but are not limited to:

- Voluntary contributions of advertising materials;
- Voluntary contributions of use of an automobile;
- Voluntary contributions of free lodging;
- Voluntary contributions of catering for a fundraiser;
- Voluntary contributions of printing of literature; and
- Voluntary contributions of office space and equipment.

Discounts may also be considered in-kind contributions. A discount is the difference between the usual and normal charge for goods or services and the amount charged to the recipient committee. Committees which are using coupons available to any other consumer should NOT report the discounted amount as an in-kind contribution.

Example 1:

A business entity sells to a committee food or beverages that normally would cost \$1,000, at a discount of 20%. The \$200 savings by the committee is considered an “In-Kind” Contribution from the business entity and this amount should be listed on Schedule B of the disclosure reporting forms. The remaining \$800 would be reported on Schedule D as normal.

Although services provided to a committee can be considered an in-kind contribution, the uncompensated time volunteers spend working for the committee – stuffing envelopes, knocking on doors, etc. is not considered an in-kind contribution.

Example 2:

Mrs. Dee Designer, a professional webpage developer, designs a website for ALL PAC free of charge. Since designing web pages is something Dee would normally charge \$2,500 for doing, she has made an in-kind contribution of \$2,500 to ALL PAC. This \$2,500 counts toward Mrs. Designer’s aggregate contributions to date to the committee.

Dee Designer still wants to do more to help ALL PAC. She volunteers to answer telephones at the committee headquarters and to distribute flyers in the neighborhood. Since answering telephones and distributing flyers is not a service that Dee normally charges for, her activities are NOT considered an in-kind contribution to the committee.

Section 4.2 – In-Kind Contribution vs. Independent Expenditures

An independent expenditure is an expenditure which is intended to benefit a candidate (either by showing support for the candidate, or by showing displeasure with the candidate’s opponent(s)), but one which has not been coordinated with the candidate or an agent of the candidate’s campaign committee. A candidate

or an agent of their committee may have knowledge of an independent expenditure, but that does not necessarily mean that they have received an in-kind contribution.

To qualify as an in-kind contribution, the candidate or an agent of the candidate's campaign committee must have either expressly requested or suggested to the person or committee that the expenditure be made, or the candidate or an agent of the candidate campaign committee must have material involvement in devising the strategy, content, means of dissemination, or timing of the expenditure.

Section 4.3 – Reporting In-Kind Contributions

It is the responsibility of the recipient of the in-kind contribution to obtain the information necessary to a report the receipt of the contribution accurately and timely.

Date Received

In-kind contributions must be reported as being received on the same date that the good or service was received and NOT the date the committee is informed of the cost of the good or service.

Service or Goods Received

As stated above, in-kind contributions can be professional services or material goods offered for free or less than the usual and normal charges or payments for goods or services through a third-party. The committee is required to indicate the type of service or the good received on their campaign finance report.

Basis Used to Determine Value

All in-kind contributions have an attached value whether they are a service or a good. Therefore, the committee is required to report what basis was used in order to determine the value for the service or goods received. The Virginia Department of Elections recognizes only two bases for determining an in-kind contribution's value:

Actual Cost:

This basis must be used when the actual cost of a good or service was determined to be the value of the In-Kind Contribution.

Fair Market Value:

This basis is used when an actual cost is not able to be determined.

Aggregate-to-Date

A contributor's cash contributions are aggregated with their in-kind contributions in cases where a contributor has given both directly and in-kind.

CHAPTER 5 – Schedule C: Rebates, Refunds and Interest

A committee may receive income from sources that are not direct or in-kind contributions. Typically, these are funds received by the committee which did not come from entities who support the committee's stated purpose. These types of income are known as miscellaneous receipts and must be reported on Schedule C of the disclosure report.

Section 5.1 - Types of Miscellaneous Receipts

Bank Interest

Treasurers are allowed to establish depositories that accrue interest. At the end of every month, the bank will report to the committee the amount of interest accrued on the statement. Bank interest is required to be reported on each committee's campaign finance report.

If the treasurer establishes a secondary depository for the purpose of earning interest, such as a money market account, it is required that all interest accrued from that account be reported on Schedule C as well.

*Please note that interest income exceeding \$100 in a calendar year may be subject to federal tax. Please contact the IRS for more information.

Refunded Expenditures

There are situations when a committee issues a check and it is returned to the committee or it is not cashed. In these instances, the committee must report the expenditure (see Chapter 6) and report the income back into the committee on Schedule C.

Rebates

If a committee receives a rebate on a previous expenditure, then it is to be reported on Schedule C. For example, if a committee purchases a computer and the manufacturer rebates the committee \$100 after the purchase, then the receipt of this income must be reported on Schedule C.

CHAPTER 6 – Schedule D: Expenditures

Section 6.1 - Reporting Expenditures

It is the treasurer's responsibility to ensure that all required information is retained at the time that the expenditure is made. The following is what is required to be reported on the committee's schedule of expenditures:

- **Full Name of Payee** - The report must contain the full name of the entity to which the expenditure was paid. For individuals, businesses and persons the full name is required. Entries containing acronyms for companies are not acceptable (unless the entity is more commonly recognized by its acronym [e.g. AARP]).
- **Mailing Address of Payee** - The report must contain the full mailing address of the entity to which the expenditure was paid.
- **Item or Service** - The committee should make every effort to be as descriptive as possible when reporting the item or service that was provided for the expenditure. Vague or incomplete descriptions should be avoided.
- **Date Paid** - The report must list the expenditures in order by the date that the expenditure was made (earliest first). It is not acceptable to report the expenditure on the date that the expenditure cleared the bank account.

Section 6.2 - Other Types of Expenditures

Independent Expenditures

Every person, campaign and political committee who makes an independent expenditure in an aggregate amount of \$1,000 or more for a statewide campaign or \$200 or more for any other election within an election cycle for the candidate supported or benefiting from the expenditure, must file an Independent Expenditure Form within 24 hours of making the expenditure or within 24 hours after the expenditure is disseminated, whichever is first.

Any independent expenditure made by a committee must also be reported on Schedule D of the committee's next required campaign finance report.

Credit Card Expenditures

The Act requires that a committee itemize all credit card expenditures on its campaign finance report. It is not acceptable to report a single expenditure to the credit card company. Each individual item must be reported on the date that the expenditure was made.

The committee should not report the payee as being the credit card company. The payee should be listed as the entity which actually received the funds through use of the credit card. For example, if the candidate uses a credit card to purchase a hotel stay, the report should list the name of the hotel as the payee and NOT the candidate or the credit card company.

Reimbursements

The treasurer may only reimburse authorized members of the committee's staff with a check from the committee's primary depository if the staff member has used their personal funds for an expense made on behalf of the committee. It is the treasurer's responsibility to ensure that proper records for reimbursements are kept.

A reimbursement should not occur if the staff member does not provide the treasurer with a complete record of the expenditure including receipts that identify the nature of the expense and the names and addresses of each entity paid by the staff member who is being reimbursed.

To report a reimbursement, the committee may list the entity which was paid initially on the date that the expenditure was made. For example, on October 1st, Joe Staffer uses his personal credit card to purchase office supplies from "Office Warehouse." On October 9th, Mr. Staffer requests a reimbursement from the treasurer for \$50 providing a receipt for the expenses. On October 12th, the treasurer writes a check for \$50 to Mr. Staffer. In this case, the treasurer would report an expenditure paid on October 1st of \$50 to "Office Warehouse" and not an expenditure of \$50 to Mr. Staffer.

In the case of reimbursements to a single person which account for multiple expenditures of the same nature by said person, it is proper to report the single expenditure made by the campaign committee. For example, if Joe Staffer pays for parking for the month of June at \$6 per day for 20 days, it is proper for the campaign to reimburse Joe Staffer \$120 and report the payee as "Joe Staffer" with the item or service indicated as "Parking for the Month of June."

Entering "reimbursement" in the item or service column is not considered proper disclosure.

Reimbursements for mileage should be valued at the current state rate. The state rate can be found on Virginia's Department of Accounts' website: <http://www.doa.virginia.gov>

Petty Cash Fund

A treasurer may establish a petty cash fund up to \$200. These monies are inclusive of the committee's total expendable funds. The fund should be used for the purpose of making expenditures or reimbursing credit card expenditures of less than \$200. Receipts must be kept and the expenditure made for reimbursement must be reported on the date the expenditure was made and not the date that the reimbursement was provided. The treasurer may replenish the petty cash fund as needed provided the total balance of the fund never exceeds \$200.

CHAPTER 7 – Schedule E: Loans

Section 7.1 – Types of Loans

Loans are funds advanced to a committee that must be repaid sometime in the future. Loans must be recorded on Schedule E of the campaign finance report.

Section 7.2 - Reporting Loan Receipts and Repayments

Loans received and loans repaid are reported on Schedule E only.

When reporting loan payments list the:

- Date the loan was made;
- Name and address of the person making the loan and any co-borrower, guarantor, or endorser of the loan;
- Amount of the loan; and
- Date and amount of any repayment of the loan.

Schedule E – Part I (Income)

Part I of the form requires the disclosure of loans received (income).

Unpaid loans are reported on Schedule F (see Chapter 8) as an unpaid debt until the loan is fully repaid or forgiven.

Schedule E - Part II (Repayment)

Part II of the form requires the disclosure of loans repaid.

Requires the disclosure of loans repaid (expenditure). An expenditure for a loan repayment should never be reported on Schedule D.

Section 7.3 - Forgiving Loans

If there is an outstanding loan to the campaign, the contributor has the option of forgiving the loan and converting it into a contribution. The campaign finance report must show the conversion of the loan to a contribution by listing the outstanding amount on Schedule A as a cash contribution and on Schedule E as a loan repayment.

CHAPTER 8 – Schedule F: Debts Remaining Unpaid

Section 8.1 Types of Reportable Debts

Any obligation for payment for a good, a service or a loan should be listed on Schedule F until the obligation is paid in full.

Virginia's campaign finance system operates on a cash-basis reporting system. Therefore, it is not necessary to report debts for outstanding bills from utility companies, etc.

Loans

As soon as a committee receives a loan, the campaign finance report must report the amount of the loan remaining unpaid on Schedule F.

Section 8.2 - Reporting Outstanding Debts

It is required that the committee enter the full name and mailing address of the creditor, the date that the debt was incurred and the remaining balance of the debt. The committee must continue reporting any debt on Schedule F on each subsequent report until the debt is fully repaid.

Purpose of Obligation

The committee should make every effort to be as descriptive as possible when reporting the purpose of the debt's obligation. Vague or incomplete descriptions must be avoided.

CHAPTER 9 – Schedules G and H: Summary Pages

Schedule G is a statement of the information on contributions, receipts, expenditures and loan transactions for the reporting period.

Schedule H contains a summary of the total of contributions, receipts, expenditures of the current election cycle (current reporting year for committees).

Schedules G and H are used to summarize the data contained in the campaign finance report. Be sure to follow the instructions on each form to accurately complete the schedules.

Negative Balances and Outstanding Debts and Loans

The Virginia Department of Elections will not accept a report if the report shows a negative balance. Negative balances do not occur with correct reporting. A negative balance is usually due to a failure to report all income or a failure to report or properly disclose in-kind contributions.

CHAPTER 10 – Schedule I: Disbursement of Excess Funds

Section 10.1 - Filing a Final Report

All committees are required to file a Final Report in order to discontinue filing campaign finance reports for a committee.

A committee must file a Final Report when the committee determines that they will no longer raise or spend more than \$200 in a calendar year.

Negative Balances, Outstanding Debts and Loans

The Virginia Department of Elections will not accept a Final Report if the report shows a negative balance. In this case, the committee must first amend the appropriate reports and resolve the problem before the Final Report will be accepted.

If there is an outstanding loan to the committee, the lender has the option of forgiving the loan and converting it to a contribution. The campaign finance report must show the conversion of the loan to a contribution by listing the outstanding amount on Schedule A as a cash contribution and on Schedule E as a loan repayment.

Outstanding debts to the committee must be repaid prior to filing a final report.

Section 10.2 – How to Dispose of Surplus Funds

Surplus funds must be properly disposed of by one or any combination of the following methods:

- Transferring the excess to an affiliated organization of the committee;
- Returning the excess to a contributor in an amount not to exceed the contributor's original contribution;
- Donating the excess to any organization described in §170(c) of the Internal Revenue Code;
- Contributing the excess to one or more candidates or to any political committee that has filed a statement of organization;
- Contributing the excess to any political party committee; and
- Defraying any ordinary, non-reimbursed expense related to his elective office.

It is unlawful for any person to convert any contributed moneys, securities, or like intangible personal property to his personal use or to the use of a member of the candidate's "immediate family" as that term is defined in § 30-101.

Section 10.3 – Disbursement of Tangible Items of Value

Gifts of goods to the committee must also be disbursed. The disposition of this type of contribution may be carried out as follows:

- The tangible item may be sold to any buyer for fair market value. The proceeds of the sale must be reported as a rebate on Schedule C and used to pay off the debts of the committee or as part of a surplus distribution.
- The items may be distributed as non-cash surplus to any eligible recipient described above.

- If any item is leased, the committee should simply return the item and discontinue the leasing agreement. If any item is loaned to the committee, it should discontinue use and return the item.

CHAPTER 11 – Special Reports

Section 11.1 – Types of Special Reports

Party committees will sometimes be required to file other reports in addition to the required regular campaign finance reports. These are called “special reports.”

Section 11.2 – Large Contribution Reports

A large dollar contribution report is required at any time that the committee receives a single direct contribution, in-kind contribution or loan of \$10,000 or more from a single source.

When to File Large Contribution Reports

A large dollar contribution report is due within three business days of the actual receipt of the contribution or loan.

Where to File Dollar Contribution Reports

Large Contributions must be filed using COMET or an approved vendor.

Section 11.3 - Independent Expenditure Reports

An Independent Expenditure report is required **within 24 hours** if the committee makes independent expenditures in excess of \$1,000 or more to a candidate for statewide office or in excess of \$200 or more to any other candidate in the aggregate during an election cycle.

Reporting Independent Expenditures

The Independent Expenditure reporting form requires the filer to have the following information:

- Listing of the candidate(s) supported or opposed, including the office sought;
- Identifying the independent expenditures made, the payee, the amount and a description of the expenditure.

Any independent expenditure filed by the committee must also be reported on the committee’s next required regular campaign finance report.

Where to File Independent Expenditure Reports

The Independent Expenditure report is to be filed **within 24 hours** with the Virginia Department of Elections if the candidate(s) supported or opposed is a candidate for statewide office or the General Assembly.

If the candidate supported or opposed is a candidate for local or constitutional office then the Independent Expenditure report must be filed with the local electoral board of that county or city.

In cases where multiple candidates are supported or opposed in multiple localities, one report must be filed in each candidate’s locality which is supported or opposed.

Independent Expenditure Reports must be filed on paper and can be faxed to the appropriate office to meet the deadline with an original copy sent and postmarked **within 24 hours** after the funds are expended.

When to File Independent Expenditure Reports

Independent Expenditure reports are due **within 24 hours** after the committee has made the expenditure or when the advertisement supporting or opposing the clearly identified candidate is disseminated, whichever is first.

CHAPTER 12 – Where and When to File Campaign Finance Reports

Section 12.1 - Filing Periods

Political Party Committees are required to file the following reports in each calendar year:

Activity Beginning	Activity Ending	Report Due
January 1	March 31	April 15
April 1	June 30	July 15
July 1	September 30	October 15
October 1	December 31	January 15

Section 12.2 - Where and When to File Reports

County, city or local district party committees who file their reports on paper must submit the original, signed report to the Virginia Department of Elections and a copy with the local county or city electoral board.

Party committees who file electronically file **only** with the Virginia Department of Elections.

When a report's due date falls on a weekend or holiday then the report is due the first business day following the report due date.

- Paper reports filed with a local electoral board must be filed by the close of business for that office. The report must be turned in by hand. Faxed and postmarked copies are not acceptable.
- Paper reports that are filed with the Virginia Department of Elections must be mailed and postmarked by the deadline for filing the report.
- Reports that are electronically filed with the Virginia Department of Elections must be filed no later than midnight pm on the report's due date.

Section 12.3 - Extension of the Filing Deadline

The *Code of Virginia* authorizes the Virginia Department of Elections or the local electoral boards to grant an extension of a filing deadline in certain situations. The Virginia Department of Elections or the local electoral boards will not impose civil penalties if an appropriate written request is received by the report's due date describing any of the following situations:

- Death of treasurer or immediate family of either within 72 hours of report due date;
- Personal Computer (PC) failure that prevents timely filing, if accompanied by documented statement from a computer company licensed to do business in Virginia;
- Fire or natural disaster within 72 hours of the report due date, resulting in destruction of equipment or documents required for completing the report.

The following excuses are not sufficient and will not be considered for granting an extension of the filing deadline. They include, but are not limited to:

- Inclement weather;
- Treasurer or custodian of the books transition that may result in a “paper shuffle;”
- Committee’s lack of knowledge of how to file, the need to file or due date of filing;
or
- Committee’s failure to have copies of necessary forms.

The Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Elections has additional authority to extend an established filing deadline for filing during emergencies that interfere with the timely filing of reports. The extension shall be limited in scope to the areas and times affected by the emergency. The emergency extensions can only be granted in the case of an emergency declared by the Governor pursuant to Chapter 3.2 (§ 44-146.13 et seq.) of Title 44 or declared by the President of the United States and confirmed by the Governor by executive order as an emergency.

Section 12.4 - No Activity Reports

All committees are required to file a report on the required deadlines even if there is no financial activity for the committee, except for bank interest or bank fees, during the reporting period. In such cases, the committee can simply file a cover sheet and fill out the “No Activity” box indicating that there has been no financial activity, other than Bank Interest or Fees. The filer must promise to report all interest and fees on the next required report in which the committee has financial activity.

Committees who file electronically can simply create the electronic report being sure to indicate in the required area that there is no activity for the reporting period.

Section 12.5 - Other Reporting Policies

- It is the responsibility of the filer to ensure that they receive documentation that the statement or report has been received by the Virginia Department of Elections or the local electoral board. All receipts should be maintained with the committee’s records.
- E-filers will be provided an automatic receipt at the time that they submit their report. No e-filing committee should consider the Virginia Department of Elections as having received the report until such time as they have been provided a receipt.
- No report can be filed before the date through which activity is required to be complete.
- No report can include activity before or after the reporting period for the report.
- The first report filed must include all activity for the entire period from the time the committee met any of the requirements for establishing the committee.
- Any form required to be filed must be signed and certified as true and correct by the treasurer or custodian of the books required to file it.
- The security code used by the committee when filing electronically is considered the signature as long as the committee has indicated their intention to file electronically.
- In order to close a committee, a Final Report must be filed for that committee or they will be required to file all required reports for that election cycle.

CHAPTER 13 – Campaign Finance Reporting Penalties

Section 13.1 – General Provisions

Any person who violates, or aids, abets, or participates in the violation of, the Act shall be subject to a civil penalty not to exceed \$100.

For purposes of establishing penalties, the *Code of Virginia* creates three categories of violations: (i) the failure to file reports (§24.2-953.1); (ii) the late filing of reports (§24.2-953.2); and (iii) incomplete reports (§24.2-953.3). In addition, a special category exists to provide for additional civil penalties that relate only to statewide campaigns (§24.2-953.4). As to each category, the Code provides for a specific range of civil penalties and, where appropriate, the type of notice that must be provided before a penalty may be imposed.

The sections relating to the failure to file reports (§24.2-953.1) and the late filing of reports (§24.2-953.2), do not require that notice be provided before the imposition of penalties. Thus, if the statutory filing deadline is missed, the penalty is automatically triggered.

The procedure to be filed for the assessment of penalties relating to incomplete reports is governed by §24.2-953.3. It provides, in part: “Prior to assessing a penalty ...for the filing of an incomplete report, the Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Elections, or the general registrar or secretary of the local electoral board, as appropriate, shall notify, by certified mail, the candidate and treasurer, or person or political committee required to file a report...No penalty shall be assessed if the information required to complete the report is filed within 10 days of the date of mailing the written notice.”

In a similar fashion, §24.2-953.4, which provides for additional penalties relating to statewide races, also explicitly requires that a prior notice must be given before a penalty may be imposed. It provides, in relevant part: “Prior to assessing a penalty pursuant to this section the Commissioner shall notify...the candidate and treasurer in writing that a report has not been filed or that a filed report has not been completed...No penalty shall be assessed pursuant to this section if the report or information required to complete the report is filed within seven days of the date of mailing the written notice.”

It will be noted that the above analysis does not address the terms of §24.2-953, which does contain a 60 day notice provision. Said provision does not relate to the imposition of civil penalties. Instead, it relates solely to the steps that might be followed if the Virginia Department of Elections seeks to create a rebuttable presumption of willfulness as to the violation of campaign finance laws. The potential of a rebuttable presumption is only triggered, however, after actual receipt of the mailing and only after the passage of 60 days, a time period much greater than that necessary to impose a penalty under §24.2-953.3 (10 days) and §24.2-953.4 (7 days).

The Virginia Department of Elections has formally adopted the following schedules for the assessments of civil penalties. To ensure uniformity throughout the state, this schedule must be followed when the filing officer is assessing civil penalties.

“Official Notification,” or any variation of this phrase, as stated within this chapter refers to the letter sent via United States Postal Service Certified Mail to the committee’s primary mailing address as reported on the committee’s most recently filed Statement of Organization. The date of “official notification” is either the date that the letter is received and signed for or the date on which the USPS returned the mail to the Virginia Department of Elections or the local electoral board. The notification is considered made even if the notification is not signed for, or was undeliverable, so long as the notification was sent to the committee’s primary mailing address.

Section 13.2 - Procedure to Collect Penalties for Campaign Finance Reports

Late Report = \$100 civil penalty automatically imposed after the conclusion of the report's filing deadline. The Virginia Department of Elections or the local electoral board will notify the committee of civil penalty and collection procedures via email or regular postal mail. If the payment is not received within 60 days of the deadline, the matter is referred to the appropriate Attorney for the Commonwealth for collection.

Failure to File Report = if no report is filed within 60 days of the due date, the Virginia Department of Elections or the local electoral board will notify the committee via certified mail. The penalty will increase to \$500 and the committee will be provided an additional 60 days to submit the report. If, after 60 days has passed, the committee has not filed the report, then the matter is sent to the appropriate Attorney for the Commonwealth for collection and determination as to whether the violation is willful. The penalty notification will increase from \$500 to \$1000 if second or subsequent violations.

If delivery of the certified letter to the committee's primary mailing address is returned undeliverable or the recipient refused to sign, then the matter shall immediately be referred to the appropriate Attorney for the Commonwealth.

The local electoral board of a county or city will notify the Commonwealth's Attorney for the county or city in which the electoral board has jurisdiction.

For candidates for the General Assembly, the Virginia Department of Elections will notify the Commonwealth's Attorney of the county or city of the residence of the candidate in violation. For candidates for statewide office, the Virginia Department of Elections will notify the Commonwealth's Attorney for the City of Richmond.

Candidates for the General Assembly or statewide office must make their checks payable to "Treasurer of Virginia" for deposit to the General Fund. Candidates for local office must make their checks payable to the treasurer of their locality for deposit to their General Fund.

Section 13.3 – Penalty Schedule for Incomplete Reports

Best Efforts Policy

Once reports are received, the Virginia Department of Elections and the local electoral boards are required to review the reports and provide requests for additional information to the committee within 21 days of the deadline. The committee's failure to file an amended report or late filing of an amended report will be assessed civil penalties.

In conducting its review, the Virginia Department of Elections and the local electoral board are required to check the following information:

- that the report is legible;
- that missing information in required fields such as "N/A", "none", "unknown" etc. In fields where "requested" or "unable to obtain" is entered, verify that copies of letters to the contributors requesting this information have been filed;
- that the beginning balance of the current report (Schedule H, Line 16) equals the ending balance of the previous period's report (Schedule H, Line 19);
- that Line 19 and Line 29 on Schedule H match;
- that contributions are reported in alphabetical order on Schedule A and Schedule B as required by § 24.2-947.4;

- that expenditures are reported in chronological order (earliest first) on Schedule D;

If any required information is not included or the report is not completed properly, the report is deemed incomplete. However, the Virginia Department of Elections has determined that some missing information does not necessarily mean that a report should be considered incomplete. The Virginia Department of Elections has adopted this “Best Efforts” policy in order to comply with the requirements of § 24.2-953.3.

Therefore, Campaign Finance reports are not considered incomplete if:

- 1) Less than 20% of contributors are missing required information on Schedule or Schedule B; or less than 20% of any other itemized information does not include the required information.
*For example, if there are 100 itemized contributors on Schedule A, then no more than 20 of those contributors can have missing information.

AND

- 2) Letters requesting the required information from those contributors is filed with the report.

If these conditions are not met, then the report is considered incomplete and a letter requesting an amended report will be mailed to the committee. Failure to amend the report within 10 days of the date of the letter will result in a \$100 civil penalty being assessed to the committee.

If the requested amended report is not filed within 120 days of the specified deadline, then the violation is presumed willful and the matter will be forwarded to the appropriate Attorney for the Commonwealth.

Section 13.4 - Willful Violations

A willful violation occurs when the Virginia Department of Elections or an investigation by an Attorney for the Commonwealth or the Attorney General’s office determines that the person or committee intentionally attempted to subvert the provisions of the Act.

In the case of willful violation, a committee will be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor and the Attorney for the Commonwealth will initiate civil proceedings to enforce any civil penalties prescribed. There will be a rebuttable presumption that the violation of the Act was willful if the violation is based on a committee’s failure to file a report required and its failure to file continues for more than 60 days following the official notification by the Virginia Department of Elections or local electoral board.

CHAPTER 14 – Political Advertisement Disclaimers

Section 14.1 - When Disclaimer Statements are Required

A disclosure statement is required for all political advertisements which uses express advocacy to support the election or defeat of a candidate or group of candidates.

A Disclosure Statement is NOT required on:

- Yard Signs;
- The Virginia Department of Elections is currently working on a regulation to define “yard sign.”
- Novelty items such as:
 - Pens
 - Pencils
 - Magnets
 - Buttons to be attached to wearing apparel.

A Disclosure Statement IS Required on:*

- Billboards;
- Bumper Stickers;
- Cards or Business Cards;
- Sample Ballots;
- Newspaper ads;
- Newspaper inserts;
- Magazines;
- Advertisement disseminated through the mail;
- Pamphlets;
- Fliers;
- Periodicals;
- Websites;
- Electronic mail (E-mail);
- Outdoor advertising facilities
- Barns, baseball stadium, buses, etc.;
- Television advertisements;
- Radio advertisements.

* No disclosure is required for individuals who incur only referendum expenses or whose aggregate expenditures for or against a candidate, in an election cycle, do not exceed \$200 for a non-statewide candidate or \$1,000 for a statewide candidate.

Section 14.2 - Requirements for Publications

It is unlawful for any of the entities listed below, to accept or receive or agree to accept or receive any money or other valuable consideration for supporting or advocating the election or defeat of any candidate:

- Owner;
- Clerk;
- Proprietor;

- Agent;
- Officer;
- Editor;
- Reporter;
- Manager; or
- Employee of any newspaper, magazine, or periodical printed or published in Virginia.

This section does not prevent any person, firm or corporation that is engaged in the publication of any newspaper, magazine or periodical from receiving from any person compensation for printing and publishing any matter or article that advocates the election or defeat of any candidate, as long as the statement “PAID ADVERTISEMENT,” appears in plain type in boldface Roman capitals in a conspicuous place at the beginning of the matter or article; and the matter or article otherwise complies with the provisions of § 24.2-955.2 of the Code of Virginia.

The person accepting a “PAID ADVERTISEMENT” for the newspaper, magazine or periodical will require and for one year, retain a copy of, proof of the identity (government issued identification) of the person who submits the advertisement for publication when the authorization statement on the advertisement is made by any person other than the:

- Candidate;
- Candidate’s Campaign Committee;
- Political Party Committee; or
- Political Action Committee (PAC) registered with the Virginia Department of Elections.

This proof of identity must be submitted either:

- In person and include a valid VA driver’s license, or any other identification card issued by a government agency of the Commonwealth, one of its political subdivisions, or the United States; or
- If other than in person, the person submitting the advertisement must provide a telephone number and the person accepting the advertisement may phone the person to verify the validity of the person’s identifying information before publishing the advertisement.
- § 24.2-955.2 (B) states that a candidate who is clearly identified in a “Paid Advertisement” is entitled to obtain the identity of the person who submitted the advertisement from the newspaper, magazine, or periodical that published in the advertisement.

Section 14.3 - Print Media Disclaimer Requirements for Party Committees

The visual statement required on print media advertisements must be displayed in a conspicuous manner. Advertisements with multiple folds, faces or pages must include the disclaimer on at least one fold, face or page.

Print media advertisements appearing in an electronic format must be displayed in at least seven (7) point font. However, if the advertisement lacks sufficient space for a disclosure statement of at least the minimum seven (7) point font, then the advertisement will meet the disclosure requirements if, by clicking on the advertisement, the viewer is taken to a landing page or a home page that displays the required disclosure statement in a conspicuous manner.

“Paid for by...” Statement

Every political advertisement sponsored by a political party committee that appears in print media must state who paid for the advertisement. The committee can replace the “Paid for by...” statement with “Authorized by...”. In an advertisement supporting or opposing the nomination or election of one or more clearly identified candidates, the sponsor must state whether it is authorized by a candidate. The advertisement shall state either “Authorized by [Name of candidate],” “candidate for [Name of office]” or “Not authorized by a candidate.”.

Section 14.4 - Television Disclaimer Requirements for Party Committees

Political advertisements that appear on Television must also comply with the Communications Act of 1934, 47 U.S.C. §§ 315 and 317 as well as the applicable laws in the § 24.2-957.2 in the Code of Virginia.

If the sponsor of the advertisement does not have control over the audio then the disclaimer requirements must be the same as for Print Media. The statements must be made in a conspicuous manner. Committees will be considered to have complied with the law if the disclosure legend or statement conveys the required information.

“Paid for by...” Visual Statement

Every political advertisement sponsored by a political party committee that appears on television must visually state who paid for the advertisement. The statement must be 20 scan lines in size and must include the name of the political party committee.

In the case of a television advertisement that has one or more sponsors, the disclosure statement must name all of the sponsors.

Spoken Disclosure Statement

A television advertisement supporting or opposing the nomination or election of one or more clearly identified candidates shall include a disclosure statement, spoken by the chief executive officer or treasurer of the political committee, containing at least the following words: “The [Name of political committee] sponsored this ad.” The advertisement shall include in the disclosure statement an unobscured, full-screen picture containing the disclosing individual, either in photographic form or through the actual appearance of the disclosing individual on camera. The disclosure statement may be placed at any point during the advertisement. However, if the advertisement is more than five minutes, the statement must be made both at the beginning and the end of the advertisement.

In the case of a television advertisement that has one or more sponsors, the disclosure statement must name all of the sponsors.

Section 14.5 - Radio Disclaimer Requirements for Political Party Committees

Political advertisements that appear on radio must also comply with the Communications Act of 1934, 47 U.S.C. §§ 315 and 317 as well as the applicable laws in the § 24.2-958.2 in the Code of Virginia. A radio advertisement supporting or opposing the nomination or election of one or more clearly identified candidates shall include a disclosure statement spoken by the chief executive officer or treasurer of the committee. The disclosure statement must contain at least the following words: “This ad was paid for (or ‘sponsored by’ or ‘furnished by’) [Name of political action committee].” The statement must last at least two seconds and spoken so that its contents may be easily understood.

Section 14.6 – Campaign Telephone Call Requirements

Campaign telephone calls are a series of telephone calls, electronic or otherwise, made to twenty-five or more telephone numbers in the Commonwealth during the 180 days before a general or special election or during the ninety days before a primary, conveying or soliciting information relating to any candidate or political party participating in the election or primary, and under an agreement to compensate the telephone callers. A violation of these disclaimer requirements will not void any election.

It is unlawful for any person or political committee making campaign telephone calls to intentionally modify the caller identification information for the purpose of misleading the recipient as to the identity of the caller.

It is unlawful for any party committee to make campaign telephone calls or to contract with persons making telephone calls without disclosing, before the conclusion of each telephone call, information to identify the party committee who has authorized and is paying for the calls unless such call is terminated prematurely by means beyond the maker's control. The person making the campaign telephone calls must disclose the following information prior to the conclusion of the call:

- The full name of the political party committee (as is written on the committee's most recently filed Statement of Organization) paying for the call; and
- If the committee has filed a statement of organization under § 24.2-945 et seq. of the Code of Virginia, the full name of the committee and a registration number provided by the Virginia Department of Elections; or, in any other case:
- The full name and residence address of the individual responsible for the campaign telephone calls.

Chapter 15 – Political Advertisement Penalties

Section 15.1 - Procedure for Reporting Violations

The person alleging any violation to print media, radio or television advertisements should contact the Virginia Department of Elections. Once the complaint is received, the Virginia Department of Elections, in a public hearing, shall determine whether to find a violation of this chapter and to assess a civil penalty. At least 10 days prior to such hearing, the Virginia Department of Elections shall send notice by certified mail to persons whose actions will be reviewed at such meeting and may be subject to civil penalty. Notice shall include the time and date of the meeting, an explanation of the violation, and the maximum civil penalty that may be assessed.

Section 15.2 - Penalties for Party Committees

The following penalties will apply only to party committees which sponsor political advertisements.

Print Media

Violators shall be assessed a penalty as follows:

- \$50 for a first time violation with explanation, apology and/or remedial measures taken
- \$100 for a first time violation without explanation, apology and/or remedial measures taken
- \$250 for any second violation
- \$500 for any third violation
- \$1000 for any fourth or subsequent violation

If the advertisement is disseminated or on display in the 14 days prior to or on the Election Day for which the advertisement pertains, the above penalties will be doubled and the maximum penalty would be \$2,500.

Television

The penalty for violating required television disclosures will be \$2,500 per occurrence unless the advertisement is disseminated or on display in the 14 days prior to or on the Election Day for which the advertisement pertains. In this case, the penalty will be \$10,000 per occurrence.

Radio

The penalty for violating required radio disclosures will be \$2,500 per occurrence unless the advertisement is disseminated or on display in the 14 days prior to or on the Election Day for which the advertisement pertains. In this case, the penalty will be \$10,000 per occurrence.

Campaign Telephone Calls

The penalty for violating required campaign telephone call disclaimers will be \$2,500.

Communications

Moving your message while building your committee

I. DEVELOPING GOOD PRESS RELATIONS

The committee should have one person who is responsible for press relations and who is skilled in dealing with the media. More often than not, this person is the Chair. The Communications Director at DPVA is always available to assist you and the best practice is to keep him or her looped in on all reporter requests and inquiries to ensure we are all speaking with one, focused message. In addition, you should make sure to:

- Be available. Make sure reporters know where and how to get in touch with you – include contact information on your website and/or social media pages.
- Know your information. Don't make something up if you're unsure and never, ever lie. Most of the time, a skilled press person will ask what information they are looking for, say you'll get back to the reporter, and return the call later. You are not responsible or expected to know how to respond to every question right away.
- Let any relevant folks at your party and the DPVA Communications Director know about the inquiry.
- Worth repeating: never, ever lie to the press.

- Do not play favorites. Be fair when releasing information. Try to release information at the same time to all media sources except when it doing otherwise may ensure a story.
- Maintain your contacts. Call reporters often, know them by name, and talk about their stories. Grab a drink or coffee with them to connect with them personally.
- Catchy quotes get used in print stories and headlines, but remember that core messaging always trumps being too cute.
- Know and beat media deadlines if you want your side in the story.
- Know the best days and times for getting coverage.
- Follow local reporters, papers, and TV stations on twitter to stay ahead of the coverage.
- Prepare and make available radio actualities – when putting out a press release with a quote, record the quote from the person being quoted and send the attachment to radio stations.
- Plan news events. Contact the media well in advance if appropriate and possible.
- Develop media kits with photos for print and slides for TV to promote events.
- TV coverage needs visuals. Think about interesting pictures, human interest impact, locations, etc.
- Follow up all press conferences with written texts or radio actualities for reporters who cannot attend press conferences.

If you get calls from the press regarding your reaction to various issues, our Communications Director is available to help you prepare press releases as well as suggesting how or if you should respond to certain press requests. Don't allow reporters to force you to say something about which you're not certain or prepared to discuss. Gathering information and calling back later is a common and good practice. Always assume you are talking on the record at all times with reporters.

If you are surprised by a reporter's call, do not hesitate to ask questions, get a phone number where the reporter can be reached, the reporter's deadline, and say you'll call back once you are fully informed. Most reporters appreciate a source who wants to give them as much accurate information as possible.

It is extremely helpful to the State Party office if you would let the Communications Director know - as soon as possible - when a representative of any news media attends a local committee meeting, or if you are contacted by the media about goings-on with your committee, candidates, or anything related to the party.

Please make your committee officers aware of this policy so that if you go on vacation or are otherwise unavailable and appoint someone else to handle press, they will call us.

A. Press 101: Dealing With The Press

City and county committee chairs can boost the committee's visibility by working with media outlets (newspapers, television and radio stations) in the city or county.

i. Know Who Covers You

As Chair, you should:

- Find out what reporters cover politics for the news organizations in your locality. Get their extension or direct line and email address.
- Let those reporters know who you are and how you can be reached. It is important that reporters know who the local chair is and how to contact you so they can talk with the local authority on Democratic Party matters when the need arises.
- If you're comfortable, offer to meet them for an off the record, informal chat to get to know each other. It's mutually beneficial – they'll begin to see you as a trusted source and you'll begin to know the issues they care about and develop a level of trust.

Finding out who covers politics is important because now you know who to contact when you have news. News for most committees involves the following:

- Regular committee meetings.
- Committee events, i.e. a fundraising event or caucuses/conventions.
- Communicating campaign talking points to reinforce party/candidate efforts.

The press can usually be notified about these events through news releases, though nothing beats a quick personal call or email to the reporter you know tends to cover these items.

ii. The Rules

There are three basic categories to speak with a reporter:

- a. On the record: Everything you say can be quoted and will be sourced to you.
- b. Off the record: This is typically background information for the reporter that they cannot use in the story. Generally, it's great to start by speaking off the record so you can speak to the truth of the story without worrying about sound bites.
- c. On background: Every reporter has a different definition for this but generally it means they can use the information in the story but it won't be directly quoted and potentially not directly sourced to you.

These are the most common definitions but they are not magic words and every person seems to have slightly different ideas of what they mean. **Always** assume you are speaking *on the record*.

If you stray from staying on the record, be certain you and the reporter are using the *same* definitions (for example: on background, no direct quotes but you can be named) **You must ask and receive confirmation from a reporter about what way you are speaking and clarify exactly what that means.**

For example, ensure if you're speaking on background that you won't be named in the story and only appear as a "democratic party source." No matter what, remember that once you say something, you can't unsay it. Never say anything "off the record" that you couldn't handle if it ended up in a story.

If you have any questions, please let the DPVA Communications Director know who can help sort through this.

iii. Keep the State Party Informed

Our Communications Director is available to help you prepare news releases as well as suggesting how or if you should respond to certain press requests. You can email or call the Communications Director.

It is extremely helpful to the State Party office if you would let the Communications Director know - as soon as possible - when a representative of any news media attends a local committee meeting, or if you are contacted by the media about goings-on with your committee, candidates, or anything related to the party.

This helps the State Party in a number of ways, but, first and foremost, it keeps us informed so the Communications Director and Press Secretary can speak knowledgeably with members of the media who may eventually call headquarters for comment. In addition, it helps us keep the Chair informed, since she is often the first person to receive a call from a reporter. More information is always better than no information.

Also importantly, it helps us stay focused with a message. A worst-case scenario is if the state party and local party accidentally contradict each other on an issue. A quick email could prevent an embarrassing story in the press.

Please make your committee officers aware of this policy so that if you go on vacation or are otherwise unavailable and appoint someone else to handle press, they will call us.

B. News Releases

A news release is one of the easiest ways to disseminate news. It must be written exactly as a news article would be written. It should reflect favorably on the committee and its event, but must be accurate.

The form for a news release is standard. The first page should bear the logo or otherwise accurately reflect the source. At the top, state that the document is a news release. Also, list the date, a contact person and a telephone number, and whether the document is for immediate release or embargoed until a specific date and time. There should be a short headline at the top. The first paragraph should begin with a dateline – the city/town of origin for the statement or event described in the release. (Sample releases appear at the end of this section.)

Keep releases short and to the point. Write clearly, simply, and directly.

The first paragraph should include the essentials: who, what when where and why. Generally, the first paragraph is a single sentence or two. As with any news story, this should be a synopsis of the most important element(s) of the story.

The second most important facts should be in the second paragraph and so on. The least important part of the release should be at the end.

The Associated Press Stylebook is helpful in writing your news releases in the style that reporters are accustomed to reading.

Follow through when issuing news releases, especially to TV stations. After emailed, a follow up call is the best way to ensure your release was read.

News releases have a value that diminishes as the volume increases. Send releases that are newsworthy; if too many releases are sent, all your releases will soon be tossed. Again, the

Communications Director of the State Party will be happy to help you with any news releases. And a release that concerns anything other than committee business should always be discussed with the Communications Director. There is a sample press release at the end of this chapter.

C. Summary: Five Points To Remember When Working With Reporters

- Always be truthful.
- Assume you are speaking on-the-record.
- Focus your pitch on the question “why is this news?” Realize that everything the committee tries to publicize is not news to those who report it.
- Keep the number of news releases to a minimum and always proofread them.
- Try not to favor one reporter over another.

II. LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: SPEAK OUT

Letters to the editor serve two purposes: They encourage and further community dialogue, and they affect the thinking of the editor. Moreover, a letter to the editor can benefit the Democratic Party immensely. Letters supporting Democratic candidates, elected officials and policies constitute a great, free form of political advertising. Here are some tips on writing effective letters:

- Before putting pen to paper, think carefully about what your letter should say.
- When writing the letter, keep to one point. Remember, the editor has the privilege of abbreviating your remarks.
- The shorter the letter, the more likely it is to be published. Always try to keep letters shorter than 250 words but each publication has their own length requirements you should be aware of.
- After you have finished writing, let a friend read the letter to see if your point is easily grasped.
- If possible, put the letter away for at least 24 hours. Sometimes it is necessary to re-think the contents and purpose of a letter before mailing.
- Read the letter again. If you still feel your letter successfully conveys your point, send it in.

And some tips to *avoid*:

- Avoid grammatical errors. Don't give them a non-content reason to reject the letter.
- Do not make open-ended statements. A good letter is concise and its main points are strongly supported.
- Do not say anything in your letter that you would not say to a small group of people. Remember, all letters to the editor must be signed.
- Do not write an overly emotional letter.

Every newspaper prints guidelines for their letter section. If you hold a public or party office (county supervisor, committee secretary, etc.) put the title below your signature. If the editor sees that you are a spokesperson for a group, your letter has a better chance of being published.

III. POSTCARDS

You can keep in contact with the Democrats in your area very inexpensively through the use of postcards. These are most effective for brief messages and to announce special events and activities such as:

- Caucuses and conventions.
- Fundraising events (picnics, dinners).
- Candidate rallies.
- Get Out the Vote/Rides to the polls.
- Committee meetings.
- Thank you note after the election.

IV. COMMUNICATIONS AND MESSAGE DELIVERY

Communicating the Democratic message means not only getting press coverage in a campaign context, but also using state and national party message to define the values for which our Party stands. One of the most important roles of the and Democratic Party of Virginia staff and its local committee organizations is delivering the message about our candidates' and office holders' accomplishments and countering the opposition's message.

A. State And National Message And Articulation

Democrats develop an overriding message into which we can fit locality-specific rallying themes that define specific issue differences between us and the Republicans. If we don't, Republicans will define us by lifting and distorting "extreme" examples from issues and concerns raised by our various constituencies.

- A message usually involves a theme that is broader than a single issue, no matter how important an issue may be. A successful message provides a framework and slogan that allows voters concerned about a variety of issues to coalesce behind a candidate, campaign, or party.
- Successful messages are amplified through the use of meaningful issues that are important to voters in their day-to-day lives.
- Message and issues must be supported by sound research, facts and message testing. In a sophisticated campaign, message testing is done by polling and focus groups. Local grassroots efforts more often must rely on anecdotal, personal feedback. In other words, listen to what people are saying and what they respond to.
- Message can be tailored without compromising principles. How you state a message can determine whether people will agree with you. For example, the "property rights movement" is fighting to weaken environmental regulations, but most landowners would gladly use those same regulations to protect their property from degradation by a neighboring landowner, a pipeline, or a waste dump.
- Attacking an opposition message can be an effective message. "Negative messages," although distasteful to some people, are essential unless you want to enter battle with one hand tied behind your back.
- An opponent's message can be successfully attacked by discrediting and disproving the facts that are its foundation. So-called "wedge issues" can also literally tear apart the fabric of the opponent's message. For example, in 1988, when Mike Dukakis ran on a message of restoring a sense of community, the Republicans tore that message apart by saying he let Willie Horton out of prison to terrorize our communities.

B. Delivering The Message: “Earned” Media, Paid Media, And Rapid Response Networks

Message development is incomplete without effective, coordinated message delivery systems and adequate resources. Democrats must do a better job of coordinating message and message delivery with allied and sympathetic nonpartisan groups, as well as with our officeholders and candidate campaigns.

Democratic officeholders and campaigns must devote sufficient resources, or perhaps pool resources with the Party, to allow designated staff to focus on message delivery. Democrats must also be willing to devote resources to communications technologies such as radio actualities, email, and social media.

V. “EARNED” MEDIA

The and Democratic Party of Virginia staff and city or county committees face a tough job when it comes to getting media coverage. Approaches and access to the media vary depending on the medium and the size of the media markets, but whether your city or county is large or small, urban or rural, some of the same principles apply if you want to get press.

- “Work” the media. Get to know editors and let them know who to work with: the city or county Chair, the DPVA Communications Director, or DPVA Chair or Executive Director.
- Identify all media outlets, what they’ll cover, and how they cover it.
- Tailor the nature--not the substance--of your message to fit the medium.

A. NEWSPAPERS AND PRINT MEDIA

- Find out whether the newspaper will run press releases or guest op-ed columns, cover events, or publish regular columns by Democrats.
- Find out publication deadlines and formats for submitting press releases or articles. Does the paper accept camera-ready copy for a column?
- Keep press releases short and to the point. Include a local angle. Get your press releases out early enough to beat deadlines.

B. RADIO

Radio is the most underused political advertising medium (especially in Southside and Southwest Virginia) and often the most accessible. Radio also provides the most immediate means for rapid response to Republican attacks.

- Find out which radio stations do call-in interviews or have local talk shows. Make key Democrats (Committee officers, issues spokespersons, officeholders) available for radio. You don’t have to be pretty for radio.
- Identify talk radio programs and their biases. Organize Democrats to call into talk shops with “the rest of the story.”
- Find out how and when each radio station assigns reporters to cover events. Get names of news editors or assignment editors and call them enough in advance to allow them to cover your events.

C. TELEVISION

In large media markets, it's hard to get on TV without a celebrity, a disaster, a controversy, or a local angle with a good visual setting. TV needs pictures, and you need a star or other visual hook to get TV coverage. In smaller markets, however, you may be able to get coverage as a local "Democratic official" who can comment on the major state or national issue of the day or provide a local angle on an important story.

- A visual "hook" is essential: a visiting candidate or celebrity, or a local impact or human interest angle on a major state or national issue is more likely to get the camera's attention.
- Learn the names of news or assignment editors who make the reporters' assignments. Personal relationships can help.
- Learn the deadlines for getting a story on the air or time big events for live remote coverage. Accommodate the reporters' and editors' needs.
- Keep your sound bites tight, brief and on the message.

D. PAID MEDIA AND POLITICAL ADVERTISING

Paid advertising has become such a part of the American political process that most campaign money today goes toward paid TV, radio, and newspaper advertising. Paid media efforts by city or county committees are usually coordinated with the Democratic Party of Virginia staff and complement our candidates' own campaign advertising.

VI. RAPID RESPONSE NETWORKS

One of the strengths of a good campaign is a 'rapid response' effort that works to make sure that there is an effective message in every media market on a daily basis. The network reaches into every level and every type of media. **The goals of a rapid response effort are to:**

- **Repeat** the Democratic message in every type of media in every area of the state;
- **Respond** to all Republican attacks on Democratic candidates and their records; and
- **Recruit** local leaders and spokespersons to validate the message locally by delivering it to local media.

The frontline of any rapid response effort is made up of **Monitors** and **Messengers**. Rapid response **Monitors**, designated by the committee Chair, Coordinated Campaign director, or another local coordinator, monitor and report back to the committee or Democratic Party of Virginia staff what is being said in the local media. Monitors are assigned to:

- Review all local newspapers to report any unfavorable news stories, editorials, op-ed columns or letters-to-the-editor campaigns so they can be responded to immediately.
- Listen to radio news reports, editorial comments, and talk show programs. Selected programs, such as interviews with our Republican opposition, should be recorded.
- Watch and tape local TV news and commentary programs in every media market, and report back any unfavorable coverage or other "surprises" to headquarters.
- Monitor opposition publications, including newsletters, leaflets distributed at churches and rallies, etc.

Messengers are local leaders who serve as surrogates to help get out the message provided by the committee or the campaign on a regular basis. Messengers may receive information for distribution or background in several formats:

- “Talking points” on campaign themes or responses to be distributed to appropriate surrogates.
- Press releases to be delivered to press outlets.
- Sample Letters to the Editor.
- “Message Alerts” for information about what the candidates are saying and doing on a particular day.

The keys to a successful rapid response effort and to winning the message war are speed, accuracy, and persistence.

Be Quick. Messages, particularly those responding to charges, need to be distributed to the media in a timely fashion before they lose their effectiveness.

Be Accurate. Rapid response teams must have accurate information from the field. Mistakes and misinformation can lead to embarrassment for everyone.

Be Aggressive. Don’t give up, and don’t be shy about voicing your displeasure with a print or broadcast report. Call the management and let them know your objections.

VII. DIGITAL OUTREACH FOR COMMITTEES: INTERNET USE BY COMMITTEES

Twenty-first century political operatives, candidates, and organizations have come to the realization that a successful campaign **must include an Internet strategy**—a mere website address is not enough. An Internet strategy is critical to the success of our candidates, campaigns, and organizations. In a world where people with the same values can come together in the digital space, it is key to incorporate digital into your political activity. The digital space also creates a unique opportunity to create your own media and create innovative ways to move messages used through traditional channels. It is important to note that local committees should create a program that does not expand beyond their capacity to maintain and update digital assets.

In this portion of the handbook, we will review key components a strong digital program and fun additions to ramp up your online outreach.

A. Website

Your website should energize and augment your offline campaign with a virtual campaign. The website should introduce and educate visitors about the city or county committee, officers and candidates as well as providing them a way to take action.

Think of your website like city hall it should house all of the critical information and resources necessary for activists to get involved and learn about your committee. You can utilize your website to integrate outreach, fundraising, social media and email list building. Before creating a website make sure that you pick a url that is easy to find and ensure it is SEO (Search Engine Optimized) friendly, this will help identify your committees site easily in web searches.

Here are the basic functions of your website

- **Introduce.** Your homepage should be an introduction of the committee to visitors. It should include your logo and color scheme.

Your homepage serves as your website's table of contents, with icons and hyperlinks that represent the major sections of your website. It should be clean and easy to read so visitors can see what is available on your website and where to find it. If you have a mechanism for receiving contributions online it is important that a link to contribute STANDS OUT on your website homepage.

Your homepage also serves as the "welcome mat" into the website. Therefore, a brief welcome message from the County Chair or local elected official should appear on this page. This could be in text or in a multimedia presentation format.

- **Educate.** These sections should educate and inform voters about the committee.

About: This section could feature key information about the city or county committee including history, county leadership, local elected officials, accomplishments, and TV/radio commercials. Also, this page could include photographs.

Press Center: This section could feature all media releases, newspaper articles, op-eds, and speeches. Corresponding pictures/multimedia presentations can be juxtaposed with speeches and articles. This area can also house a blog; blogs are a great way to create content that has a local focus that moves your message. A blog also allows you to move your message when traditional media outlets do not pick up stories about your committee.

Issues: This section could feature the committee's position on campaign issues. Position papers and links can also be listed on this page.

- **Contact.** This page could feature a list of the contacts and address information, including headquarters, leadership, and coordinators. Additionally, email addresses of any officer can be added to these lists, and visitors can have the option of emailing directly from the campaign website. A picture of the headquarters or any of the committee leadership can also be displayed next to the contact information as well.

Calendar: This section could feature upcoming events including date, time, location, and event details. This page will not only list where events are today and in the future, but also where previous events were held.

- **Take Action.** These sections should help organize and mobilize voters to take action on behalf of the committee.

Fundraising: The Internet's appeal as a new mechanism for soliciting contributions stems from many sources, including the ability to access more people in a faster, less expensive manner than the party has been able to.

Probably the most common reason for disappointing results in online fundraising is the lack of awareness among donors of your website. Almost no one is going to wander across your website by accident. They will typically find you because either:

- They already know about your existence;
- They find a link to your website on a page created by some related organization, or one that otherwise supports your activities;

- They receive an intriguing e-mail message from you that describes your mission and ask them to visit your site;
- They read about your organization in some online or off-line newsletter or other informational article created by a third-party, and includes your committee's website address;
- They are using an Internet search engine to find websites address some topic or issue, and your page has the right keywords to match their search; or
- They see a banner advertisement you have placed on another organization's website.

If your committee doesn't use at least one and preferably several of these methods to attract visitors to your website, you will get few or no contributions there. At the very least, every one of your marketing and solicitation texts should include a reference to your website's address.

Involvement Corner: This section could feature an online database supported form in which users can submit their name, address, phone, e-mail, demographic information, political involvement interests, and comments. This form will give the committee the ability to communicate and organize your supporters. The committee can deliver email updates and literature to friends and family, rapidly respond to opponent's remarks, make phone calls, get out the vote, and help at the nearest satellite office.

Links Page: This page could allow your campaign to link to other "friendly" sites including the Democratic Party of Virginia, the Democratic National Committee, online voters resources or organizations, candidates for office and local newspapers. Make sure you checkout the pages you link to, to ensure that there is nothing objectionable or controversial on them.

ALL WEBSITES MUST INCLUDE A "PAID FOR BY" DISCLAIMER!

- **Administrative.** These sections talk about other issues your website might encounter.

Bilingual Website: Depending on your city or county, this feature will allow your website to be read in other languages, as English is not the primary language for all Americans.

Privacy Policy: All websites should have a solid, up-to-date privacy policy.

B. Email:

An email program allows you to connect with voters and activists. A successful email program fundraises, moves your supporters to action, is a mechanism for rapid response to breaking news, and keeps your audience involved with committee activity. Email remains the primary form of online communication.

i. Email Management Program

Running an email program will require a supporter management system. The state party uses Blue State Digital to manage our email program. There are many free and low cost options including Mailchimp, Constant Contact, and the Action Network. These program allow you to track and manage supporters and analyze how activist interact with the emails you send. This is important so that you have data that allows you to better tailor your emails to your audience.

If you need assistance on finding the right application for your program, please contact the state party digital team at digital@vademocrats.org.

ii. Building Your Email List

Make sure you have an easy identifiable way for people to opt-in to your emails. Committees want to ensure you have email sign-ups at events and a way to sign up on your website and social media accounts. Actions and petitions are a great way to develop your list, and organize your supporters.

Advanced email programs will segment their supporters based on location, issues, volunteer frequency, and contribution amounts.

iii. Fundraising

Fundraising via email is a low cost way to raise funds for your committee. When creating an email program and drafting fundraising emails it's important that you make sure the following questions are answered in your email and program: Why now? Why me? Will it help? How much?

C. Social Media:

Social media is becoming a driving force in moving messages and creating communities in the online space. It is important that you remember social media needs to be as interactive as possible. Simply having a Facebook or twitter account is not enough, you want to make sure you are sharing content that engages your audience. There are many social networks out there and it is important you pick the platforms BEST FOR YOUR AUDIENCE. To start a good program, using Facebook is a good start.

Facebook is the largest and most used social network. Facebook can be used in a lot of ways you can create groups for internal committee communications for messaging to your supporters you want to create a Facebook Page not a Profile account for your committee.

D. Text (SMS) Messaging:

Mass text messaging services have great potential to be used in grassroots community organizing in a way that can greatly benefit your mission and your committee in the end. Text message programs are beneficial because they are direct access point to supporters. Most people use smart phones and with a text program, you can reach supporters wherever they are. Before you consider creating a SMS programs make sure you identify clear goals because you could easily annoy your supporters and have a drastic failure of a program.

Make sure you have the consent of the user to send SMS messages; just like email, you want people to organically sign up for your list. An easy way to gather numbers for a text program is to have an opt in number where supporters can directly sign up for the messages and also ensure there is an option on your event and volunteer sign up forms that explicitly ask, "*Would you like to receive text message updates from the committee/campaign?*" A few tips for SMS

- Make sure you let subscribers know that you are being careful with their information.
- Be aware of the frequency of your messages.
- Make sure you are using a tone that does not alienate your audience.

E. Tips and Tricks

- Be strategic – Do not post for the sake of posting make sure your content provides some sort of connection to your offline activity. Also, make sure you integrate all of your digital programming into the larger communications plan and field activity of your committee.
- Don't over extend – The world of digital media is new and exciting and with all of the available avenues to reach out to people sometimes committees and campaigns have too many channels to update and leave the risk of leaving some of your accounts inactive.

- Coordinate – Work with allies and campaigns to create joint actions, share content, and fundraise. This is a great way to work with like-minded organizations and grow your digital program in the process.
- Be Data Driven – Track your pages, supporters, clicks, open rates, etc. This allows you to better tailor your program for your audience.
- Have Fun – The digital space is an area that allows for innovation and exploration, try new things experiment.

ADDITIONAL CHAPTER RESOURCES

- Social Media Resources
- Sample Press Release

SOCIAL MEDIA RESOURCES

- Check Usernames – checkusernames.com allows you to verify if the screen name you want to select is available across multiple platforms. This helps in making sure your content is Search Engine Optimized.
- Tweet Deck (www.tweetdeck.com) - a dashboard program that allows you to manage your social media accounts including scheduling post.
- Hootsuite (www.hootsuite.com) - a dashboard program similar to Tweet Deck, with premium membership you can create teams and run sophisticated reports on your social media activity.
- Mail Chimp (www.mailchimp.com) - Email management service that allows for free account and a sliding scale on pricing depending on how many supporters you have.
- Constant Contact (www.constantcontact.com) - Email management service that allows for free account and a sliding scale on pricing depending on how many supporters you have.
- Action Network (www.actionnetwork.org) - Online organizing platform that allows for sending mass mailers, fundraise and create actions. (Free to individuals and small groups)
- Salsa Labs (www.salsalabs.com) - Online supporter management system that allows you to mass email, fundraise and create actions.
- Blue State Digital (www.bluestatedigital.com) - Online supporter management system that allows you to mass email, fundraise, and create actions.

One final word: Make sure you update your page on a regular basis. Nothing turns web users off faster than a “stale” web page.

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date

Contact: Contact Name, Email, Phone Number

Headline Should Be Short and Convey What's Newsworthy

Subheadlines aren't necessary but can convey any other big details

Open with a paragraph describing the who, what, where, and why in as clear and concise language as possible. Try to write from a neutral point of view as if a newspaper could outright copy and paste from your release without having to change anything.

A second paragraph may be necessary to convey important context or data points. While there are times a longer release may be called for, if you have more than 200-300 words before you get to a quote, consider another tactic than a release.

“Always include a quote from the best spokesperson for the issue you’re writing about,” said Name, Title at Organization. “A reporter does not have to use your entire quote so make sure it is concise, pithy, and immediately hits your message.”

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