Precinct Chair Position

Job Description

The Precinct Chair serves as the main communication source between the Indiana Democratic Party and current and future Democrats in their precinct. The Precinct Chair is charged with connecting the people in the precinct to the Democratic Party, and the Party to the people. The Precinct Chair is responsible for filling the roles that follow, keeping in mind that it is okay to begin slowly, filling one or two at the start. Your District or County Chair is always available to provide support and answer questions. Remember, you are providing a wonderful service to the Party and to your community. Have fun!

Essential Functions

1. Obtain the precinct map and walking lists for your precinct from your county party organization and familiarize yourself with your neighbors and the geography of the precinct.
2. Get to know your Democratic and Independent neighbors:
    - Host a house party and invite your neighbors to talk about politics and issues concerning your precinct.
    - Canvass the precinct using the walking list or call list provided by your county party organization. Keep track of changes in voter data on your lists (change of address or phone, candidate preferences, etc.) and update the Voter File with the new data (through your Chair or local Dem HQ)
    - Finish your packets and return them to HQ within 20 days. See your County Chair for deadlines.
3. Register new Democratic voters, either at their door or online.
    - Canvass Democratic households and make sure all eligible voters in the house are registered at their residence address. A voter is responsible for updating their registration any time they move or change their name!
    - Check your local paper for home sales in your precinct to welcome new neighbors and register them to vote.
    - Contact members of groups you belong to and register them to vote, either in person or online (at https://www.indems.org)!
    - Canvass the non-party-affiliated voters in your neighborhood; encourage them to register to vote if they are not already.

4. Participate in county Democratic Party meetings, events, and activities including providing assistance to your local Democratic Party by staffing registration drives and tables, supporting local candidates, and taking part in local fundraising efforts. Eligible precinct chairs may also be called upon to vote in a Party caucus to fill a ballot or office vacancy.
5. Be a visibly proud Indiana Democrat – display yard signs, window signs, campaign buttons, bumper stickers.
6. Recruit other volunteers in your precinct and communicate with them regularly. Adding volunteers means you can divide the precinct for more personal contact with the voters. It also means providing additional support and backup for each other and for your candidates. Develop winning strategies by utilizing the group's collective skills, contacts, and energy to get the job done!

Election Year Responsibilities

1. Reach out to all who want to volunteer within your precinct and get them active (utilizing the Party's Voter Activation Network, or VAN, database).
2. Obtain petition signatures for Democratic candidates to qualify them for the ballot when necessary. Get direction from your county party organization to be sure current forms are being used so the signatures will count!
3. Distribute Party and candidate literature through door-to-door canvassing.
4. Register voters and maintain regular contact with those newly registered voters.
5. Help identify where Independent voters stand on our Democratic candidates.
6. Hold house parties for Democratic candidates.
7. Promote absentee-by-mail, absentee-by-travel board, and absentee-in-person voting among Democratic supporters.
8. Help the Party to "chase" early absentee ballots to ensure they are returned.
9. Help ensure a strong and effective Get-Out-The-Vote (GOTV) effort in the final four days of the campaign – the Party will design the GOTV Plan; you will help implement it.
10. Recommend Democrats within your precinct to work as Poll Workers on Election Day – our front line of defense in voter protection.

11. Attend training and other party-building activities sponsored by the State Committee.

Qualifications of a Precinct Chair

1. According to state Party rules: A Party member may only be a candidate for precinct chair if: • They are a qualified voter;
    - They reside in the precinct in which they are a candidate;
    - Their most recent primary vote was cast in the Democratic primary; or
    - They have never voted in a primary and has declared affiliation with the Party; or
    - The County Chair of the county in which the person resides certifies that the person is a Democrat; or
    - A candidate is not disqualified for not having previously voted in a primary election.
2. Even if you meet all the qualifications above, keep in mind that you need the heart and the desire to roll up your sleeves to help achieve Democratic victories.

Becoming a Precinct Chair

One becomes a Democratic Precinct Chair (PC) by:

Appointment: Most PCs start out as appointed PCs because Democratic PC elections are held every four years in the non-presidential, or "mid-term," federal election. Becoming an appointed precinct chair begins with a Democrat in good standing expressing interest to their County Chair. Appointed precinct chairs need not reside in their appointed precinct, but you must live in the county where you want to serve in this capacity. It is best to reside in or around your appointed precinct, although being a PC only requires the commitment to help achieve Democratic victories. While there is a limit to the number of PCs per precinct (one Chair and one Vice-Chair of differing genders), there is no limit to the number of volunteers per precinct. Appointed PCs serve at the pleasure of the chair, and we support all incumbent Democratic elected officials.

Ballot Election: Democrats in your precinct elect one Precinct Chair during designated primary elections (the next one is 2022!). To become an elected PC, you must:

1. Meet the qualifications to run for PC according to State Party rules (see above).

2. File your declaration of candidacy with the County Clerk no later than noon, local prevailing time, on the date filing closes.
    1. CAN-37 Forms are available from the County Clerk's office; please do not use outdated forms! Forms for the 2018 election cycle should be ready by December 2017.
    2. Fill out the form accurately and make sure you are registered to vote at the address you list on the CAN-37 form.
    3. Wait to sign the document until you are in front of a notary, who must witness you signing the form.
    4. Forms must have an original "wet" signature, and hand-delivery remains your best option to file. Your form may be hand-delivered by another individual if already notarized. A declaration of candidacy form may not be faxed or emailed!
    5. Noon means noon on deadline day! If you file late, your declaration of candidacy cannot be filed with the county clerk.
    6. State law does NOT require candidates for precinct chair or state convention delegate to open a campaign finance candidate committee or to file a statement of economic interest (CAN-12).
3. If your race is contested, your name will be placed on the Primary Election Ballot, where all registered Democratic voters in your precinct can vote for the PC of their choice! Term of Office All elected PC terms run from the Primary Election of the midterm election (even numbered years)to the Primary Election four years later. Thus, even if you became an appointed PC in early 2020, to remain a PC you must become either an elected PC in the Democratic Primary in 2022 or be appointed again by your County Chair. Once in office, a Precinct Chair appoints a Vice Chair who must be of a different gender identity. Elected PCs must be a registered voter in their precinct according to State Party rules. However, according to State Party Rule 11(l), if a chair moves out of their precinct and the County chair has knowledge of the same, the chair shall notify said chair by certified mail of their retirement in absentia as chair. If the chair challenges such action in writing within seven (7) days of receipt of notice, the chair shall schedule a review before the county central committee. Following this review, the committee shall vote to uphold the chair's action or find that the chair is still duly qualified. A majority vote of the officers present and voting shall constitute final action.

Privileges/Removal

Whether elected or appointed, all PCs serve the same purpose: to get Democrats elected at the local, state, and national levels. PCs have certain rights and privileges by state law and Indiana Democratic Party Rules:

- PCs elect qualified replacements for office holders that have resigned or otherwise vacated local and state legislative offices and may also be asked to fill early or late ballot vacancies in an election year.
- PCs elect their respective County Chairs, Vice-Chairs, Treasurer, and Secretary.
- The total of all appointed and elected PCs combined with county Party officials constitutes the County Central Committee of the Democratic Party. According to Rule 19 of the Indiana Democratic Party any elected Party officer including Precinct Committee Chairs can be removed for the following reasons:
- Neglect of Duty
- Willful Violation of Rules
- Conviction of a Felony
- Disloyalty to the Democratic Party
- Any course of conduct that does not promote the best interest of the Party or creates dissension within the Party.

[SCHEDULE A MEETING WITH OUR CHAIR TO BECOME A PRECINCT CHAIR]