

Precinct Committee Person 101

The Precinct

The precinct is the smallest political unit in the country; traditionally, each precinct responds to one polling place. A precinct is where elections are won or lost. Most importantly, it is your neighborhood. You know the people, the schools, and the community centers. You have your hand on the pulse of the precinct. You understand the assets and needs of your neighborhood and have a desire to improve it.

Never underestimate the power of the precinct-based leader! It is the PC, actively participating in the Democratic Party at the precinct level, who wins elections and promotes Democratic values and ideals at the local, state, and national levels.

The Arizona Democratic organization begins with the Precinct Committeeperson (PC). Being a PC means utilizing the tools the county and state Democratic Parties provide you to organize your precinct and educate the voters in it. It involves a minimum time commitment of a few hours a month every month (slightly more during campaign season) and the ability to help on Election Day to help get out the vote.

Party Organization

The Party's basic organization, from local to state level, is:

- Precinct Volunteer
- Precinct Committeeperson (nominated by voters in precinct and elected, number determined by the number of voters in the precinct)
- District Board and District Chair (elected by elected by PCs)
- County Committee and County Chair (elected at biannual convention by elected PCs)
- State Committee (elected at biannual convention by elected PCs)
- State Executive Committee and State Chair (elected by State Committee members; Deputy Chairs appointed by Chair)

Job Description

The Precinct Committeeperson serves as the main communication source between the Democratic Party and current and future Democrats in his or her precinct. The Precinct Committeeperson is charged with connecting the people in the precinct to the Democratic Party, and the Party to the people. The Precinct Committeeperson 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 Committee 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 Legislative District (LD) and familiarize yourself with your neighbors and the geography of the precinct.
2. Get to know your Democratic and Independent neighbors:
 - a. Host a house party and invite your neighbors to talk about politics and issues concerning your precinct.
 - b. Canvass the precinct using the walking list or call list provided by your LD. Keep track of changes in voter data on your lists (change of address or phone, candidate preferences, etc.) and update the Voter File (VAN) with the new data (through your LD VAN team)
3. Register new Democratic voters, either at their door or online.
 - a. 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!
 - b. Check your local paper for home sales in your precinct to welcome new neighbors and register them to vote.
 - c. Contact members of groups you belong to and register them to vote, either in person or online (at www.servicearizona.com)!
 - d. Canvass the non-party-affiliated voters in your neighborhood; encourage them to register to vote if they are not already.
4. Participate in LD, County and State 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 committeepersons may also be called upon to vote in a Party caucus to fill a ballot or office vacancy.
5. Be a visibly proud 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 Years 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 the Active Early Voting List for voters who want to vote by mail.

8. Help the Party to “chase” early mail-in 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 LD will design the GOTV Plan; you will help implement it.
10. Encourage 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 Committeeperson

According to state Party rules A Party member may only be a candidate for precinct committeeperson if:

1. He or she is a qualified voter.
2. He or she resides in the precinct in which he or she is a candidate.
3. His or her most recent primary vote was cast in the Democratic primary.
4. He or she has never voted in a primary and has declared affiliation with the Party.

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 Committeeperson

One becomes a Democratic Precinct Committeeperson (PC) by:

Appointment: Most PCs start out as appointed PCs because Democratic PC elections are held every two years in the federal election. Becoming an appointed precinct committeeperson begins with a Democrat in good standing expressing interest to their PC or LD Chair. Appointed precinct chairs need to reside in their appointed precinct. While there is a limit to the number of PCs per precinct (based on the number of voters in the precinct), 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. To become an elected PC, you must:

1. Meet the qualifications to run for PC according to Party rules (see above).
2. Canvass your precinct to obtain signatures on the PC nominating petition. This is provided by the party through the LD leadership. Currently 10 signatures are required for nomination.
3. File your petition and declaration with the County Clerk prior to the date filing closes. This is often done through the LD. 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 two years later. If you became an appointed PC during that period your term will end with the rest of the LDs PCs.

PCs terms also end upon moving away from the precinct they represent.

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 Arizona 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 Chairpersons, Vice-Chairpersons, 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.

Arizona Democratic Party rules 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.