ALLEGHENY COUNTY DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE HANDBOOK

2026-2030

Enter important information to have on hand:
US Senator: John Fetterman (D)Phone: (215) 241-1090. Phone: (412) 803-3501.
US Senator Dave McCormick (R) Phone: (202) 224-6324 Phone: (412) 803-7370
US Representative Chris Deluzio (D) (D17): Phone: (202) 225-2301 Phone: (412) 344-5583
US Representative Summer Lee (D)(D12): Phone: (202) 225-2135 Phone:(412) 214-5000
PA Senator:
PA Representative:
County Council Member:
Municipality Officials:
Allegheny County Election Board: (412) 350-4500

Introduction

Democratic Committee members are the most direct link between voters, candidates and the Party organization. You were elected by Democratic Party voters to be their party representative. They listen to your political views because they view you as knowledgeable in politics and government. In turn, the Party organization depends upon you to represent them to voters in your district. An effective committee person understands that all voters share our commitment to honest and competent government. It is the job of the Democratic Committee to inform them about our quality candidates. You were elected by your neighbors in this volunteer position to provide information to voters and support Democratic Party candidates in their campaigns – by canvassing, attending events, making donations of time, talent and treasure. No one (except the Executive Director) is paid for the work they do on the committee.

The Allegheny County Democratic Committee (ACDC) office exists to help you.

22 Wabash Avenue, Suite 205, Pittsburgh 15202
412-481-5646
https://alleghenydems.com/ (the website is a great source of information for you and voters)

Participation

Municipal and city ward committees must hold at least 4 meetings a year, according to the bylaws. Most have monthly meetings and it is expected that you will attend them as well as any special events the committee hosts (candidate meet and greets, fund-raisers, canvas launches, etc.). Attendance at meetings and events keeps you informed and able to promote the Democratic Party platform and candidates during the spring and fall election seasons.

Voters in your district may expect you to be able to provide them with:

- names, addresses and phone numbers of your U.S. Senators, Congressional Representative, State Senator and Representative, County, Municipal and School Board Officials
- when and where residents can register or change party, election laws, dates and deadlines
- what your County, Pennsylvania and Democratic National Committee is doing
- Your district's boundaries, economic status, interests and demographic profile

Effective Committee Member

- gets to know the voters in their district to become the trusted source of information about candidates and elections
- attends Party training sessions and meetings
- participates in regular door-to-door canvasses
- is always a courteous and an admirable representative of the Democratic Party
- works to increase the number of registered and voting Democrats
- knows the election-day laws
- has voter registration and candidate literature and materials handy

Political Tool kit

- Try to visit each voter in your district at least once a year.
- Make a point of calling on new people moving into the district. Even though they may have not be a Democrat, your call might pay off eventually with a change of registration or a vote for Democratic candidates.
- Keep voters informed concerning registration, absentee ballots, and Election Day deadlines.
- Provide information about Democratic candidates and how they can assist in solving problems.
- The ACDC office can provide you with
  - district map and polling locations in your district
  - current street list of voters in your district
  - Voter registration forms and absentee ballot requests
  - Candidate campaign literature, candidate biographies, and candidate positions
  - Election Calendar
  - A list of important telephone numbers

Voter Registration

Voter registration is a vital part of the political process and can be conducted at any time (registration must be received by the County Election Board 15 days prior to an election date). Always have a few forms on you anywhere you might find yourself an opportunity to ask someone "Are you registered to vote?" Forms are available at the ACDC office or you can download a QR code to your phone for potential voters to scan:
https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/pages/VoterRegistrationApplication.aspx

Your target populations might be: new neighbors who may need to change their registration, people moving back home after the service or college, new housing developments, dissatisfied Republicans.

Be prepared to let registrants know where their polling place is (you can get the list from the ACDC office)

Emphasize that they need to choose a party in order to be allowed to vote in the spring primary election.

Requirements for registration: be a citizen of the United States for at least one month before the next primary, special, municipal, or general election; be a resident of Pennsylvania and the election district in which you want to register and vote for at least 30 days before the next primary, special, municipal, or general election; be at least 18 years of age on or before the day of the next primary, special, municipal, or general election.

Once registered, voters are not required to register again unless there is a change to residence, name, or political party affiliation.

Mail In/Absentee ballots

Encourage voters you are registering to request the automatic application for a mail in ballot. While the ballot itself does not get sent every election, the request form can be automated and the voter should be encouraged to request that the form be sent annually. The request must be received by the Election Board at least 7 days before the election day. Mail in ballots must be returned to the Election Board (via mail or in person) by the end of Election Day. They cannot be returned to the voter's polling place.

Encourage all voters in your district to consider voting by mail. It has many advantages:
Convenience: Voters can review their ballots at home and take time they need to study the candidates and issues.
Accessibility: Mail voting is an option for people who are elderly or sick and for people with disabilities. It is also an option for individuals who work long hours, travel for work, pleasure, or school, work and/or live overseas, serve in the military, and for students who attend school out-of-state far from home. The option to vote by mail allows people to fulfill their civic duty without compromising their health or their roles as caregivers, employees, or students.
Reduced Wait Times: Voting by mail helps reduce the number of people in line on Election Day and makes voting less time consuming for those who vote in-person.
Higher Turnout: Studies show that reducing barriers to vote by mail significantly increases voter turnout.
Cost-Savings: States that conduct elections almost entirely by mail report that the change resulted in significant cost savings.
Economic Impact: Long lines for in-person voting negatively impacts local economies.

Voting by mail is a safe, secure, and reliable method of voting. Many safeguards are in place to ensure the security of voting by mail:

Ballot Tracking: voters can track their mailed ballot on line to see when it has been received and accepted.
Verification: Before a mail-in ballot can be counted, election officials must verify it by checking to ensure the voter's information on file matches what is on the ballot.
Chain-of-Custody: strict procedures to ensure that ballots are always accounted for, handled appropriately, and kept in secure locations.
Packaging: Ballot arrive and are sent back in tamper-proof envelopes for mail-in ballots.

Election Day Preparation

Your committee will designate a person to pick up election season and election day materials (poll watcher certificates, slate cards, yard signs, candidate literature, canvas walk lists). You may be asked to fulfill one (or more) of the following roles:

Canvasser: all committee members are obliged to distribute information to and encourage voting by people in their precincts. This may be organized by your committee or a candidate's campaign to go door to door in your precinct and engage voters in friendly conversations about their concerns and how Democrats are addressing them.

Poll Watcher: (requires certificate) verify that all counters are set to zero before the election begins; may sit inside the poll in a designated area and observe the election; challenge irregular/illegal actions of poll workers (e.g., allowing non-resident voting or assistance being given to an able-bodied voter); call the County Election Board if the local election officers cannot settle a dispute. During vote counting, including absentee ballots, poll watchers may sit in a designated area to observe the count.

Poll Greeter: greet voters warmly, provide trouble-shooting guidance, hand out slate cards

Yard sign delivery: delivering to voters and committee members that requested signs and to polling locations

Driver to the polls: your committee may have organized this service for voters who opted to vote in person but have transportation issues

Organizational Elements

- People become committee members by being elected. If seats go unfilled after the election, the committee chair may recommend people (who live in the ward and district of the empty seat) to the County Chair who then makes the appointment. The recommended person must live in the ward and district to which they are appointed and be a registered Democrat.
- Committee members will be removed from committee for: promoting other party candidates (per State Party bylaw Rule 1 Section 2); changing party affiliation; moving out of ward/district they were elected/appointed to represent; failure to participate in 2 consecutive endorsement conventions (held in March).
- Each district has a "male" and "female" committee member (per ACDC bylaw Rule III) to achieve gender parity.
- Municipal and city Committees elect a Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary. The Chair and Vice Chair must be of different gender (identities). A treasurer is appointed by the Chair of the Committee
- Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary can only be removed from those positions if they give notice of resignation to the county Chair or violate one of the rules for removal (see above). Treasurers serve at the pleasure of the Committee Chair.
- Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer do NOT have to be elected/appointed members of their committee – this is a means to expand the membership of committees (i.e., since officers do not have to occupy a male/female seat in a ward/district, those seats can be filled by other residents who are eligible).

Conclusion