



County Leader Handbook

Message From Staff

Dear County Leader,

Thank you for stepping up to be a leader in your county Libertarian Party. You are the heart, soul, and strength of this party. The Libertarian National Committee in support of your state party, has committed itself to strengthen the Party from the ground up in every county, and this handbook is an essential tool for any one interested in organizing at the grassroots level.

This guide is intended to provide basic useful facts about the party process for coordinating candidates, information, and events. There are many questions and rules associated with being a County Leader. We have prepared this guide to help assist you with understanding the process and what to anticipate and better prepare yourself to be part of local Libertarian leadership.

We want to ensure the resources are there to support leaders, activists, candidates, at all levels and have included white paper reference links throughout especially in the appendix.

As this is just a resource, always keep in mind that your state's revised code and state Libertarian bylaws are the ultimate authority so please refer to those with any concerns.

With Liberty,

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Introduction

Welcome! Whether you are new to political party structure or are a prospective chair interested in starting your own branch of the Libertarian Party, this handbook will serve as an instruction manual toward building county affiliates.

Though county affiliates are encouraged to operate freely and without hierarchical micro-management, they still must function within the bounds of state party bylaws and platform so that we can ensure each county represents uniform libertarian principles. A robust county party would include the following each month:

- Business Meeting
- Social Event
- Volunteer Event

Know Your Party Leadership

Organizational Structure

The organizational structure of the party should operate with relative autonomy in providing grassroots and advocacy efforts -- while still adhering to the messaging and strategy of the state party. Properly utilizing volunteers and activists even when specific campaign directives have not been issued will produce higher turnouts and a more engaged base for this and other elections. Using coordinated campaign efforts with down ticket candidates, party leaders, and initiatives we will engage a larger audience, optimize turnout, and maintain a constant campaign presence in each state.

<https://www.lp.org/state-affiliates/>

Activists Are the foundation of the Libertarian Party. They are the individual units behind candidacy, initiatives, and inner party work. Activists can support the party by starting or participating in an affiliate, becoming a member, or becoming a donor!

County Affiliates are the groundwork of the party organization. County Affiliates are comprised of activists working with their community to grow membership, fundraise, recruit local candidates, and manage creative outreach. County affiliates are led by a county executive committee and occupied by a membership body. These county parties are affiliated according to the state's party bylaws.

State Affiliate Is the affiliate at the state level that provides party resources and assistance to county affiliates when necessary as well as manages statewide party growth. Leadership at the state level includes an Executive Committee and appointed directors

positions. Each State Party is an affiliate of the National Libertarian Party. Want to learn more? Visit lp.org for structural resources.

Forming Your Affiliate

Connect with your state party

Find your state's [contact information here](#). Do a little research. Ask your state LP what process they have to get an affiliate started. Talk to other party members who have started successful affiliates to learn about the legal requirements in your city or state. Attend some meetings of other local affiliates to observe how they run their group. This will give you ideas. They may even agree to come to your first few meetings to help you get things going.

Get a list of supporters

Ask your state leadership for a list of people in your area who have expressed an interest in the party (they may be willing to contact them on your behalf). You may also want to get a list of the registered voters in your area.

If your state participates in the [National CRM](#) program (Constituent Relationship Management), you can start the user onboarding process by signing up to an orientation event held weekly ([Thursday](#) | [Saturday](#)). Once you sign up, it will walk you through the steps needed to request access.

If your state is not on this program, please ask your regional rep or state leadership how you can gain access to their system or list of contacts.

Recruit the “founders”

You can't do this alone. Start by contacting other LP members in your area to find the most dedicated founders. County Leaders are responsible for organizing the campaign effort within their designated geographical area. Your role is to build and strengthen the Libertarian Party from the grassroots up, assist in the election of Libertarian candidates, and promote the Libertarian philosophy.

As a County Leader, the party is counting on you to do the following:

- Participate in Libertarian County Executive Committee meetings
- Recruit new registered Libertarians and Libertarian Party members
- Canvass your county in support of the party and our candidates
- Recruit poll watchers for election day and early voting
- Attending county and legislative district meetings
- Participate in meetings by enacting, amending, and abiding by County Bylaws, Political Plans, and rules of the organization .

- Voting on matters presented to the committee (resolutions, endorsements, vacancies, etc.)
- Electing convention delegates

Initial planning meeting

Have an initial planning meeting amongst the founders of your local affiliate (2-5 people). Best is in person if you can find a party room or other meeting space, but you can do this first one online if need be.

Make a timeline

At the meeting, brainstorm potential goals and create a timeline of the next 1-2 month of action items to start the affiliate. Please use the County and Affiliate guide found in the Appendix.

Secure your monthly meeting location

Find a local business, restaurant or other suitable location that will allow hosting regular public meetings. Many restaurants will allow you to use their meeting rooms at no extra charge if attendees purchase food.

Get assistance from state party

Ask your state affiliate to advertise the creation of your affiliate through their distribution channels, including email, social media, their website blog and calendar.

Give plenty of notice for first event

Announce your first kick off meeting at least 3 weeks in advance.

Focus heavily on personal appeals

Reach out to the list of Libertarians you received earlier. That means organizing a phone bank or calling remotely to turn out people to your first meetup.

Promote the event

Use as many other avenues as possible to get the word out. At a low cost, you can print flyers, mail out postcards or letters, make phone calls, put an ad in the local print media, use social media or any combination of the above. You may be able to keep in touch with everyone simply by using your own personal email account at first. See appendix for press releases and other outreach/communication helpful guides.

Collect contact information of attendees

Have sign-up sheets ready to get the contact information for everyone who shows up at your meetings, especially new people, and be sure to follow up. Follow up procedures are listed in the Volunteer and Member Onboarding Doc found in the appendix.

Make goals

At your initial meetings, solidify your goals and projects (with timelines) you will be focusing on. Without direction, your affiliate could fizzle fast.

Develop a County Strategic Plan

- Establishing a timeline consistent with State directives
- Making volunteer assignments for necessary tasks
- Providing appropriate follow-up on volunteer assignments
- See Appendix for Strategic Planning Guide

Recruit volunteers

You need to fill mission-critical functions you need, such as recruiting or vetting candidates, outreach director, managing your list, and fundraising – ask them to volunteer a few hours a month of their time to help get things organized. Build a core bench of doers.

Create a Volunteer County Team

- Recruiting & Training of volunteers for needed tasks, as needed
- Maintaining an electronic volunteer roster
- Keep county members informed of volunteer opportunities. See Appendix for Member and Volunteer Onboarding.

Equip your affiliate with materials

Visit [Libertarian Party Shop](#) or contact your state party to get any materials you may want to hand out.

Establish an official communication channel

to keep collaboration going in-between meetings. Slack is one option.

Be consistent

Hold meetings at the same place, day, and time every month.

Be patient

Know that it may take several meetings for the number of attendees to grow beyond the dedicated handful.

Know Your Local Election Laws

Be sure to follow state law and local rules regarding election paperwork filings, fundraising, business meetings, and election of local officers.

Know the deadlines for registering for the Primary and General Elections and what the calendar is for absentee voting. Be aware of the laws concerning poll workers and poll monitors. Know the facts about national, state, city and school board elections. Know the deadlines for some statewide candidates and all school board candidates to submit signatures in order to be placed on the ballot. (Independent candidates must collect

signatures as a matter of ballot access.) Don't fret! You will learn all this information and more by simply attending your monthly state / county Libertarian Party meetings.

Know your Issues

As a county affiliate, you want to focus on local issues heavily. Attend city council meetings. Find open commission seats (appointed) to give people real-world experience in government. Watch your local news to learn about the prevalent issues in your community and how people in your county feel about them.

Stay informed with what the Libertarian Party is doing by visiting the national and state Libertarian website and [sign up](#) for updates.

It's all about the campaigns

Nothing energizes an affiliate like a campaign, it's the LP's mission! Stay focused on recruiting and assisting candidates. Beware of organizational drift.

All politics is personal. As the Party's most direct link with the voter, you are responsible for establishing a neighbor-to-neighbor relationship with the residents in your precinct. These voters may often seek your counsel as they make election decisions. A good Precinct leader will try to visit every home in the precinct, or at least will see that every home has been visited by a Libertarian volunteer. When a visit occurs, be sure a calling card of some kind is left behind.

The suggestions in this handbook have proven helpful over the years for party leadership, but they are suggestions, not rules cast in stone. There is no single formula for success. Good judgment and personal knowledge of your area will be your guide in deciding which suggestions work for you. Your goal is to register new voters, inform voters, identify favorable voters and get them to vote. How you attain this goal is best determined by your own experience and creativity, coupled with the guidelines contained in this handbook.

Participate in the election process

- Be, or recruit volunteers to be, an election watcher, challenger, or judge
- Be a visible supporter of the Libertarian Party and its candidates
- Vote

Each state is divided into counties or parishes and then further divided into precincts; the smallest political unit in the country. Most often 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 local leader! It is the county leaders, actively participating in the campaign at the local level, who wins elections and promotes

Libertarian values and ideals at the local, state, and national levels and most importantly to help get out the vote on Election Day.

Know Your Precinct Demographics

Become familiar with the economic and cultural makeup of your precincts, the number of union members, veterans, students of voting age, total Libertarian population, Independents, etc. You can find a lot of this summary info online. You will obtain who these people are by canvassing your precinct and by checking the walking lists provided by the state Libertarian Party or directly from the registrar of voters or county board of elections.

Know Your Neighbors

Get acquainted with the Libertarians in your precinct; meet their families and learn their interests and concerns. Get to know them on a personal level as much as possible and make sure they know you are a resource for them. Keep track of young people who will be turning 18 on or before Election Day in November and get them registered to vote. Offer to speak to government classes. Get tied into local social media forums (NextDoor, etc). Most importantly, focus on relationships; build trust.

NOTE: We are NOT focused on Democrats or Republicans; they would be a priority only after you've gotten to know ALL the Libertarian and ALL the non-primary Independent voters.

Record Keeping

Help coordinate data management efforts and keep our information up to date

- Updating volunteer lists
- Update media lists
- Help track data analytics
- Update and edit internal documents

The Divisional structure provides a way for sustainable and effective volunteer placement and engagement. Divisions have the freedom to make the necessary decisions to carry out their mission while having role clarity within the party as a whole. When tied with vision and motivated leadership, this structure will help your party run more effectively. You can download the template for all divisions and role descriptions below.

You can view the roles and responsibilities below.

Divisions

The Libertarian Party of [state] operates through the Divisions listed below. Please visit each Division page for more information about each Division, view the leadership roles and see how you can get involved!

Political

The Political Division is responsible for recruiting and training Libertarian candidates for public office. This includes working with volunteers and maintaining a list of all elected and appointed offices. The Political Division provides support to candidates such as assistance with filing the proper paperwork and assisting campaign strategy. The Political Division will support the Libertarian Party Presidential nominees.

Visit the [Political Division](#) page for more information.

Communications

The Communications Division is responsible for communicating the policies, positions, and opinions of the Libertarian Party to the public at large. This responsibility includes maintaining the content of our web site, establishing and maintaining our social media presence, managing relationships with all media and press and communicating with the party members.

Visit the [Communications Division](#) page for more information.

IT

The Informational Technology (IT) division is responsible for implementing all aspects of technology within the Libertarian Party.

Visit the [IT Division](#) page for more information.

Outreach

The Outreach Division is responsible for grassroots-level contact between the Libertarian Party and the public at large. These responsibilities include maintaining useful contacts and coordination with student organizations, recruiting key demographics into the party, building coalitions with like-minded groups, and coordinating outreach events.

Visit the [Outreach Division](#) page for more information. See the Appendix for additional resources.

Field Development

The Field Development Division is responsible for establishing, developing, and maintaining Congressional District-level affiliates (CD), which shall mirror and augment existing Libertarian Party of Divisions at the CD level. This includes training CD's on best practices, and providing necessary logistical support. Additionally, they will assist in training and supporting CD affiliates on successful event planning techniques and strategies.

Visit the [Field Development Division](#) page for more information. See Appendix for additional resources.

Events

The Events Division primary function is event planning and production for all Libertarian Party events including the State Convention. The Events Director will also work with other event organizers to negotiate sponsorship and joint events. Additionally, they will provide leadership, training, and mentoring to local parties.

Visit the [Events Division](#) page for more information. See Appendix for additional resources.

Public Policy

The Public Policy Influence & Advocacy (PPIA) Division is responsible for developing and maintaining interactions between the Libertarian Party and elected government officials, as well as tracking the results of interactions to help shape candidacy strategy. The PPIA Division is also responsible for ensuring that the Libertarian Party input is provided for key legislation and initiatives when and where possible.

Visit the [Public Policy Division](#) page for more information.

See last page for Appendix


Appendix

Member and Volunteer Onboarding

 Volunteer and Member Onboarding White Paper

 Membership Drive - Region 7.pptx

Strategic Planning for Affiliates

 Cara Affiliate Planning and Strategy


All Event Related White Papers

 Tabling  Outreach  How to Make Your Social Successful

 Outreach and Events  How to Find Events

 Canvassing aka Door to Door

Phone and Text Banking

 Phone and Text Banking White Paper

Additional information for Field operations can be found here:  Field Ops

Leadership and Volunteer Tips

 Leadership and Volunteer Tips

Yard Signs and GOTV

 Yard Signs and GOTV

Additional resources are available on the [LP wiki](#) (password: volunteer@lp) and a link to the campaign / affiliate leadership presentations. Both are available upon request. Check with your county committee or the State Executive Board for supply and funding details for Libertarian Party literature, signage, and more.

Branding resources are available here: <https://lpaction.org/>