

**LIBERTARIAN PARTY OF NEW YORK
GUIDE TO INAUGURAL CONVENTIONS
VERSION MARCH 24, 2021**

INTRODUCTION

Congratulations, you are ready to hold a convention in order to establish a new County Affiliate of the Libertarian Party of New York! This guide will outline how to organize the meeting and ensure the business is completed in an organized manner. *Note: you may see the term “organization meeting” in different places. This is an election law term that has been used interchangeably with the term “convention.” It’s basically the business portion of the convention.*

1. BEFORE YOU BEGIN

See the *County Contacts Quick Reference Guide* to learn how to get ready to establish your County Affiliate. The guide will cover the role of the County Contact, the requirements for establishing a County Affiliate, reaching out to enrolled Libertarians, holding monthly planning sessions, and finally, the planning of the convention.

2. SCHEDULE YOUR CONVENTION

Once you are ready to hold your inaugural convention, you'll need to pick a date. It's best to schedule at least 30 days ahead of time. Be sure to make a reservation at the venue you are holding the inaugural convention, if you are holding the event in-person. You can also hold the event via teleconference such as Zoom. Sometimes the venue will set up tables before you get there, or provide a back room for you to hold the meeting. Common venues include libraries, local restaurants, private club facilities, hotel conference rooms, etc.

3. GET THE WORD OUT

You will need to provide notice to all enrolled Libertarian voters in the county. You can do this by mail. To reduce the cost of the mailings, you may give notice by telephone. Any subsequent notice can be given on your county’s Facebook page. It is also a great idea to advertise to the public through social media, website/blog, local newspaper, community calendar, etc.

4. CREATING AN AGENDA

Every meeting needs an agenda. This lets participants know the topics of discussion in advance and keeps the meeting on track. See the *LPNY Inaugural Agenda Template* (coming soon) for a recommended example. The following topics are required to be covered:

1. Adoption of rules compliant with NYS Election Law and the Rules of the LPNY. See the County Rules Template and associated guide.
2. Election of Election District Delegates/Representatives. See *LPNY Guide to Election District Delegates* (coming soon).

3. Election of officers. At least Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary.
4. Authorization of Executive Committee (if desired and using the County Rules Template)

EXAMPLE AGENDA

The following is an example of an agenda:

1. Call to Order - by the Presumptive chair or county contact
2. Credentials report - by the Presumptive Secretary or acting secretary for meeting
3. Adoption of County Rules
4. Election of election district delegates
5. Election of officers (Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, At-Large if applicable)
6. Guest/keynote speaker (if any).
7. Adjournment.

5. GATHER YOUR SUPPLIES

Before you hold the meeting, make sure you are prepared and bring the following supplies:

- **Voter list.** Obtain the latest list of the enrolled Libertarian Party voters in your county from your County Board of Elections. Make sure the list includes each voter's election district. You could bring a physical copy or have one ready on a laptop, tablet, or phone.
- **Sign-in sheet.** You will need to keep track of those attending the meeting and ensure they are enrolled Libertarians. It's best to keep a contact list including their address, phone number, email, etc. This will help you connect with them after the meeting as well as find them in the voter list for quick identification.
- **Printed agenda.** When you have finished putting the agenda together, print enough copies for at least twice your expected turnout to distribute to the meeting participants.
- **Pens/pencils.** Writing implements are very useful in all meetings.
- **Laptop/tablet/smartphone/camera/speakers/etc.** If you want to have a hybrid meeting (which is a meeting held both in-person and online via teleconference) and allow participation online and/or to stream online, this equipment will be useful. You may also want to have a recording device for the meeting, whether it is recording the convention for others to view later, or for the Secretary to go back when they prepare the minutes.
- **Literature/buttons/stickers/signs.** If you have any general Libertarian promotional items, or if there is a campaign occurring, be sure to bring such material. A great resource is lpstore.org.
- **Optional supplies.** Printed copies of the proposed rules up for adoption.

6. SETTING UP YOUR MEETING

Now that you have your supplies, be sure to arrive early to set up. Sometimes this requires moving tables/chairs around and placing literature and paperwork out for participants or finding an outlet to plug in electronics. It is also helpful if you have others helping you set up.

7. CALL THE CONVENTION TO ORDER

Call the convention to order at the scheduled time. Make sure you have designated someone to serve as Secretary for the meeting in order to keep minutes. See *LPNY Guide to Meeting Minutes* (coming soon). Typically, this should be the person that has shown interest in running for that office. You should not keep minutes yourself as it will be difficult for you to do while running the meeting at the same time. After the call to order, just follow the order of the agenda.

8. DETERMINING THE VOTING MEMBERS

Using the voter list, all participants in the meeting who are enrolled Libertarians are the voting members at the meeting. Once you have determined the voting members, the Secretary should announce how many are present and how many votes a majority would be, as most motions are determined by a majority vote.

9. ELECTION OF THE COUNTY COMMITTEE

The County Committee will be the governing body of the Libertarian Party County Affiliate in your county. The first order of business is the election of the County Committee. All enrolled Libertarians are eligible to be elected to an election district delegate position. Use the voter list to determine which election district a voter resides in. This will usually be the district they represent. Once the body has determined the list of election district delegates and the Secretary has confirmed that they have made note of it (including who represents which district), the body then votes on those appointments (this can either be done by voice vote or secret ballot), either individually or as a slate (all at the same time).

10. ESTABLISHING QUORUM

Now that you have elected the County Committee, only those who have been assigned an election district delegate position are eligible to vote. The Secretary should announce how many election district delegates are present and how many votes a majority (50% +1) and two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) would be, as most motions/decisions are determined by a majority or two-thirds vote.

NOTE: additional election district delegates may be appointed at any time during the meeting or at a later meeting. Each election district has a limit of two enrolled Libertarians to serve as election district delegate per district, but don't need to reside in that district. They are only required to live in the same Assembly District within the county as the election district they represent. See the *LPNY Guide to Election District Delegates* (coming soon) for more information.

11. ADOPTION OF THE COUNTY RULES

In advance of the convention and when participants arrive, you should distribute a copy of the proposed County Rules to all participants, either in physical form or by electronic means. The voting members must adopt the County Rules by a majority vote in order to proceed with the rest of the business of the meeting. Amendments (changes) to the County Rules may also be made prior to adoption. See the *LPNY County Rules Template* and *LPNY Guide to the County Rules Template*.

12. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Now it's time to elect officers. Your county may choose to elect officers in any number of different ways. Typically, elections on the county level are often uncontested with only a single interested candidate, and a voice vote may suffice. You or the meeting participants may also wish to hold a secret ballot. Regardless, the typical procedure for holding an election of officers is as follows, and typically they are done in this order: Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer.

NOTE: the presiding officer (the person running the meeting) at the meeting may pass the gavel off (temporarily have someone else run the meeting) to another individual if they plan to run for any position and do not wish to preside over their own election.

1. The presiding officer calls for nominations for the first office, Chair.
2. The body (the meeting participants) nominates candidates for that office. You may nominate yourself or nominate someone else. Anyone nominee should be asked to accept or decline the nomination.
3. Once there are no more nominations, the presiding officer closes nominations.
4. The presiding officer then proceeds to a vote on that particular office.
 - A. If there is only one candidate you will have a vote for the candidate, then a vote for NOTA ("None of the Above"). If NOTA beats the candidate, you must open nominations again.
 - B. If there are multiple candidates, you will be voting for one of them or NOTA. A candidate must get a majority vote. If a candidate does not receive a majority you will eliminate the candidate with the lowest votes and hold an additional round. This will continue until a candidate receives a majority. If NOTA beats any candidates, all of those candidates' names are removed from the ballot for the next round. If NOTA receives a majority, you must open nominations again.
5. Repeat the process for the remaining offices: Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer. This is also how you will elect any At-Large Executive Committee members.

13. OTHER BUSINESS

Your county may want to conduct other business, such as provide time for a guest speaker to speak, establish committees, nominate candidates, or make any other motions. If you would like to authorize an Executive Committee to meet between now and your next full Committee meeting, this is when that motion should be made. It would also be good to discuss future events such as meetings, social, or outreach events as well as any upcoming activism activities.

14. CLOSING THE MEETING

After the business is conducted, someone will need to motion to adjourn the meeting. Once a majority votes to adjourn the secretary will notate the time adjourned. After the meeting the minutes should be finalized by approving them at the next meeting.

15. AFTER THE MEETING

In order to receive your affiliation with the Libertarian Party of New York, you just provide the following documentation to the LPNY Secretary at Secretary@LPNY.org

1. Minutes of the convention
2. List of convention attendees
3. List of elected officers and their contact information (email/phone)
4. List of Election District Delegates
5. A copy of the adopted County Rules

It is also a good idea to send a copy of your County Rules to your County Board of Elections.

16. NOW WHAT?

Now that you have created a County Affiliate of the LPNY, you are ready to begin advocating for liberty in your county. Your committee should decide which issues to fight, which candidates to back, other activist activities to participate in, etc. The Local Affiliate Development Committee holds monthly training sessions on these topics, and you are encouraged to attend. For more information email affiliates@lpny.org.