

LIBERTARIAN PARTY OF NEW YORK
GUIDE TO OPERATING A COUNTY AFFILIATE
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This guide outlines the structural and functional operations of a County Affiliate of the Libertarian Party of New York. Guides on strategies for building membership, political activism, and digital infrastructure, etc. are coming soon as well.

WHAT IS A COUNTY AFFILIATE?

A County Affiliate is a Libertarian Party organization in a single county in New York State that has been recognized and affiliated with the Libertarian Party of New York to lead Libertarian Party activity within the borders of that county. There are two types:

- County Organization - a County Affiliate that is recognized and affiliated with the Libertarian Party of New York **but is not** recognized by the New York State Board of Elections.
- Constituted County Committee - a County Affiliate that is recognized and affiliated with the Libertarian Party of New York **and** has been duly organized and is recognized by the New York State Board of Elections including electing Election District Delegates at a Primary.

GOVERNING BODY OF THE COUNTY AFFILIATE

This section covers the governing body of the County Affiliate.

- Membership - the base of the county affiliate is the enrolled members of the Libertarian Party within the county. These members elect the County Committee either at a convention, organization meeting, or Primary.
- County Committee - the governing body of the County Affiliate, consisting of election district delegates elected either at a primary (to form a Constituted County Committee) or appointed (to form a County Organization) at an organization meeting or meeting thereafter.
- Executive Committee - a subset of the County Committee, typically consisting of the Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer and may include additional Members-At-Large or other officers, that have all the authority of the County Committee when the County Committee is not in session (between County Committee meetings).

OFFICERS OF THE COUNTY AFFILIATE

The officers of each County Affiliate are the elected leaders of the organization that holds key roles in running the organization. Each officer has distinct duties as outlined in the rules.

- The **Chair** presides over the meetings of the County Committee and Executive Committee and assigns other duties as necessary.
- The **Vice-Chair** acts as the assistant to the chair and presides over the meetings in the absence of the chair.
- The **Secretary** is responsible for keeping the minutes of the meetings.
- The **Treasurer** is responsible for keeping a record of the finances of the County Affiliate, including, but not limited to administering the bank account, writing and depositing checks, creating financial reports, and filing campaign finance reports with the Board of Elections.

Note: The State Committee has two Vice-Chair positions: the 1st Vice-Chair and 2nd Vice-Chair. However, the County Rules Template does not provide for two such offices. It is highly recommended that County Affiliates only have one Vice-Chair, due to the fact that most county committees, even in major parties, are very small.

Members-At-Large of the Executive Committee are typically not considered officers, but they are voting members on the Executive Committee. They may be given specific duties depending on the needs of the committee or the skill set of the member.

VOTING MEMBERS AND QUORUM

Every organization has a voting body that makes decisions. As outlined above, this may be the overall membership (at a convention), the County Committee, or the Executive Committee. In order for business to be conducted, a certain number of members must be present. This is known as a *quorum*. Quorum is determined based on your rules and the total number of members of the body.

For a County Affiliate, the voting members are generally the County Committee (election district delegates) or the Executive Committee in between County Committee meetings. Committee members must be enrolled members of the Libertarian Party and are either elected at primary (or an organization meeting, if a primary can't be held) or appointed to a vacancy by the existing County Committee at any regular meeting. Once you know how many election district delegates are in office, you can determine the quorum for meetings.

Under the LPNY County Rules Template, quorum for properly called meetings are as follows:

- County Committee - 25% of the Committee (or 5 members, whichever is less) and at least half the officers OR at least 50% of the Committee if half the officers aren't present
- Executive Committee - two-thirds (2/3) of the Executive Committee members.

See the [*LPNY Guide to Election District Delegates \(coming soon\)*](#) for more information.

HOLDING BUSINESS MEETINGS

The meetings are where the business of the County Affiliate is conducted. The Chair typically calls the meetings to order, but it is highly recommended that you have a regular meeting date, time, and location set on a regular basis in order to establish consistency and keep the organization active. A basic understanding of Robert's Rules of Order is recommended in order to keep business moving smoothly, but a detailed knowledge is generally not necessary. Both a full copy of *Robert's Rules of Order* and *Roberts in Brief* are recommended to have on hand at a meeting. There are many members of LPNY who are knowledgeable in Roberts' Rules. If you need assistance, please reach out to affiliates@LPNY.org and we will put you in contact with someone who can help.

1. **FREQUENCY.** The Rules of the Libertarian Party of New York require that each County Affiliate holds at least quarterly meetings of the full County Committee. However, it is recommended that County Affiliates hold regular business meetings on a monthly basis at a minimum, as well as any planning meetings that may be required for certain events and activist activities outside of the regular business meetings. The frequency of your meetings will depend on the level of activity of your organization. If you have a large County Committee, you may find it easier to hold Executive Committee Meetings on a monthly basis and full County Committee Meetings on a quarterly basis or a variation of such, as long as you still hold quarterly County Committee meetings.

2. **TIME AND DATE.** Establishing a consistent date and time to hold the monthly business meetings can simplify scheduling for you and others to improve attendance. Holding regular meetings is essential to building a base of party activists in your county. An example might be that you hold your monthly meetings on the second Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. If you are having low attendance, reach out to your committee and see what day would work best for the most people. It is not necessary for ALL members to be at the meeting, as long as you meet your quorum requirement as discussed above.

3. **LOCATION.** Typically, it is recommended to hold meetings in-person, which helps foster social development of the County Affiliate through interaction among members of the party. You may also wish to hold meetings via videoconference for convenience or ease of access. Alternatively, you can try a "hybrid" meeting, if someone has a laptop or phone, you can either stream your meetings or have a videoconference application open at the in-person meeting location to allow others to participate remotely as a hybrid meeting. You will want to make sure your location is consistent and geographically central in your county. It may be beneficial to hold additional meetings or events in various parts of your county to engage more members. Examples of in-person locations include a library, private club facility, hotel conference room, backroom of a restaurant/bar, committee members private office, etc.

4. **ADVERTISEMENT AND NOTICE.** You will want to promote your meetings, and you can do this in a number of ways. See the *LPNY Guide to Event Promotion* (coming soon).

- Set up a Facebook and/or Meetup event for your meeting.
- Promote your meeting on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and other social media platforms.
- Send out an email to your email list with the meeting invite.
- Send postcards/newsletters for the next few meeting dates and times.
- List your meeting on your County Affiliate’s website, if you have one.

Note that your County Rules likely require a certain time frame to give advance notice to committee members. In most cases, this is 5-7 days. For the LPNY County Rules template, the requirement is 5 days, except for an organization meeting which requires 30 days’ notice to ALL members.

5. **MEETING PREPARATION.** It’s best to prepare before each meeting. Of course, each officer has their own duties, but most of the duties fall on the chair, as they will be responsible for presiding over the meeting and running the organization. It is perfectly acceptable to ask other officers or committee members to help with meeting preparation if they are willing.

5.1. **SIGN-IN SHEET.** You will want to create a sign-in sheet to keep track of those who attend meetings. You could print a sign-in sheet from something you create on your computer, or bring a notebook and write the date at the top of the page. This can be useful for the Secretary when they are recording the minutes, as well as collecting contact information of new members to build your contact list and keep everyone informed.

5.2. **AGENDA.** Create a list of items that need to be discussed. A typical agenda may look something like this. You can set up your agenda any way you want, but be sure to do it to make it as easy as possible for you to have a smooth meeting. You'll likely want to distribute this ahead of time as well as provide printed copies at the meeting. It is also best to set an adjournment time so committee members know how long to plan on attending.

1. Call to Order.
2. Secretary’s report (reading and approval of previous meetings’ minutes)
3. Chair’s report (updates since the last meeting, updates from state/national party, etc.)
4. Treasurer’s report (current bank balance, new donations, bills, fundraising, etc)
5. Reports of committees (if any)
5. Old business (items discussed at previous meetings but not yet acted on)
6. New business (new items not previously discussed at prior meetings)
7. Announcements
8. Program (speakers, candidates, special business, if any)
9. Adjournment

5.3. MEETING BUSINESS ITEMS. There are many items you may want to discuss and/or report at your meeting, and these may include:

- Finances (account balance, necessary expenditures, campaign finance)
- Statistics (website traffic, social media traffic, mailings, enrollment, etc.)
- Correspondence (mail, e-mail, etc.)
- Events (fundraising, political activism, etc.)
- Elections (petitioning, candidate recruitment, vetting, etc.)
- Issues (local issues you may want to support or oppose)

5.4. MEETING SUPPLIES. Ensuring you have the proper supplies for your meeting will help you stay organized and run a smooth meeting/organization. You may want to get a bag or something to put your materials in. Keep it in a good spot so you can just grab it when you go off to your meeting. Here are some other supplies that are useful:

- **Notebook/meeting documents.** You may want to jot down notes and you may want to hand out copies of meeting documents (agenda, sign-in sheet, reports, minutes, etc.) to attendees.
- **Laptop/tablet/phone.** Whether it is for note-taking, referring to meeting documents electronically, or a means to allow people to join the meeting remotely via teleconference, there are many purposes to bringing these. Applications such as Evernote are useful for jotting down notes as the meeting goes on. However, you will want to leave as much note-taking to the Secretary as possible. This guide can also help the secretary as they perform the duties of their office. Don't forget your chargers, just in case.
- **Pens/pencils.** Very useful in all kinds of business meetings.
- **Voter registration forms.** Have these on hand in case someone new shows up at your meeting wants to change their enrollment to the Libertarian Party and/or register to vote for the first time.
- **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. See lpstore.org for more info.
- **List of enrolled Libertarian voters.** There is always an opportunity to appoint a new member of the committee. You will need to verify an election district in order to appoint them as an Election District Delegate.
- **Name tags.** Name tags will be helpful for new or growing organizations to make learning each other's names easier.
- **Donation box/fishbowl/hat.** Great for collecting donations at meetings. Be sure the Treasurer is able to keep track of the donations for campaign finance reports.

6. HOLDING THE MEETING. Get there early! It will give you time to set up and get your materials out so that you can look like you know what you are doing. Also, you never know if someone new may show up early. It would be a great time to introduce yourself and the party and get to know the person. Pass the sign-in sheet/notebook around the group.

You will want to get in the habit of starting right on time for the sake of new people and guests. Depending on your group, you may or may not want to wait for others to show up. However, you could also schedule your meeting, and then note it starts a certain time afterward.

Soon, it will be time to call the meeting to order. Make sure the Secretary is ready to start taking notes of the meeting in order to compile the minutes. See *LPNY Guide to Meeting Minutes* for more information (coming soon). Go through your agenda. You will always want to stay on topic, as the meeting may stray to discussing a political issue or current event. If you are discussing activism or campaign support this may be appropriate, but if not it should be discussed another time. Non-business topics can be discussed during a social time afterward so that you can complete the business part in a timely fashion. Remember that the agenda is set in part to respect everyone's time. For More information on running a meeting see *LPNY Guide to Running a Meeting*. (coming soon)

7. AFTER ADJOURNING THE MEETING. Once your meeting has ended, be sure to talk with any guests and new members. You may want to provide them with information, such as voter registration forms, business cards with your contact information and link them to your social media page. Get their contact information as well, so you can keep them up to date on when the next meeting and/or event will be held, and build your email list. You may also have time to socialize before and afterward, especially discussing political issues. This is a great benefit for those who may not be interested in the business but may be interested in a guest speaker or socializing and discussing current events after adjournment. You may want to advertise that there will be time to socialize, as it may entice more people to come to your meetings.

8. AFTER THE MEETING. After the meeting, the Chair may want to send a follow-up email to guests and new members. Also, set up the Facebook event for the next meeting, if you have not done so already. The Secretary will need to type up the minutes and provide other members with a copy of the minutes so they have them before the next meeting to ensure the minutes are accurate. Remember, this is usually the first order of business at each meeting.

MANAGING FINANCES

The Treasurer is primarily responsible for managing the finances of the County Affiliate. Among the jobs of the Treasurer includes:

- **Register an EIN (Employer Identification Number) with the IRS.** This number is needed in numerous places, especially for opening a bank account and taking online donations. [Click here to go to the IRS website to apply for an EIN.](#)
- **Opening a bank account.** Opening a bank account is an essential part to keep your County Affiliates' finances organized. There are some banking institutions that will allow you to open a free business account, so be sure to look out for such features when searching for a bank for your County Affiliate. You may also want to find an interest-free account so you won't have to report interest income as an organization. It is recommended that you have at least two individuals attached to the account.
- **File campaign finance reports.** One of the most important jobs of the Treasurer is to file campaign finance reports. This is done electronically through the New York State Board of Elections website (see: <https://www.elections.ny.gov/CampaignFinance.html>). NYSBOE also provides campaign finance training. See their website for more information.
- **Setting up online donations.** Using services such as PayPal or Anedot, the Treasurer, if not technically inclined, should enlist the help of someone in the County Affiliate to set up a way to collect donations online. This should be attached to your County Affiliate's website and posted frequently to your social media page(s).

FILING PAPERWORK

Filing paperwork is a major part of running a County Affiliate. There are two places in which paperwork for your County Affiliate may be filed:

- **County Board of Elections.** This includes anything having to do with local elections, including candidate paperwork (see the *LPNY Guide to Getting Candidates on the Ballot* for more information), party calls (used when we hold primaries in even-numbered years), updated committee member/officer lists, and party rules.
- **Libertarian Party of New York.** Certain paperwork such as minutes, rules, and requests for action by the State Committee must be submitted to the LPNY. You can also file any other record of proceedings to the LPNY to keep on file in case any of your County Affiliates' records get lost. Any time you update your rules, you should provide a copy to the LPNY as well as a copy of the minutes from the meeting you changed the rules.

BUILDING AND MANAGING LISTS

List-building is an essential part to grow your County Affiliate's membership, increase the number of volunteers and donors, and recruit candidates. This includes:

- **Keeping an updated contact list.** Every time you hold an event, make sure you collect everyone's contact information, including address, phone number, and email. Keeping an address will help with physical mailers when the time comes to send them.
- **Request a copy of the enrolled Libertarians in your county.** Your County Board of Elections must provide you with a copy of the enrolled Libertarian voters in your county. Contact your Board of Elections to get a copy of the list. Tip: request it in spreadsheet format so you can later import it (or provide it to a printing service) when creating physical mailers.
- **Email marketing.** Putting all your email contacts in an email marketing account helps you keep supporters updated about the happenings of your County Affiliate, and also serves as a way to recruit candidates and ask for donations. Services such as MailChimp are free up to 2,000 contacts.
- **Media lists.** Maintain a list of media contacts that report news from your county, including newspapers, radio stations, TV stations, online news websites, blogs, podcasts, etc. Use this list to send out your press releases. You may also want to keep a list of local Facebook groups which you can post each release. See *LPNY Guide to Press Releases* (coming soon) for more information.

ACTIVISM

The cornerstone of any political organization is political activism. There are several aspects to this, but the following are the most common. For more information see the *LPNY Guide to Political Activism*.

- **Organizing/Holding Events.** Besides the business meetings, your County Affiliate will want to hold other events or get involved in events, such a social/mixer, fundraising, and outreach events, in order to promote the party. See the *LPNY Guide to Events* (coming soon).
- **Political Campaigns.** Political campaigns are an essential part of a political party. From candidate recruitment to running campaigns, there are many aspects of political campaigns that will be covered in the *LPNY Guide to Political Campaigns* (coming soon).
- **Legislative Action.** Getting candidates on the ballot is difficult, but that is not the only way to effect change in your county. For more information, see *LPNY Guide to Legislative Action* (coming soon).
- **Creating Town/City Committees.** Our long-term goal is to form organizations in every town and city. Once your affiliate has grown, you may want to form these subcommittees to handle activism and elections in their locality. For more information, see the *LPNY Guide to Town/City Committees*.