

From the Bylaws of the Sarasota County Democratic Party

Article IX

Duties and Responsibilities of Members of Democratic Executive Committee of Sarasota County (DECSC)

The objective of the DECSC is to obtain the highest possible number of Democratic votes in each election and to elect Democratic candidates to public office.

It is the duty and responsibility of DECSC members [i.e., Precinct Captains] to:

1. Attend each meeting and training session of the DECSC **
2. Contact all Democrats in their precinct, at a minimum, prior to every general election
3. Participate in obtaining the highest possible Democratic registration and voter turnout
4. Encourage and facilitate Democrats voting by absentee ballot
5. Contribute to and/or raise funds for the DECSC or plan precinct fundraisers
6. Assist in filling vacancies in precinct committee offices as they may occur
7. Report any change of residence to the DECSC and to the Supervisor of Elections no later than thirty (30) days after such change is effective

** Note: When you can't attend, respond to the e-mail notification of the meeting and tell us you can't be there.

Additional Points:

1. It's not in the Bylaws, but it's a functional necessity: PCs must use e-mail and respond to e-mails.

2. The SCDP is governed by the rules of the Florida Democratic Party. The SCDP supports all of our Democratic candidates. When there is more than one Democrat running in a race, as in Primary elections, PCs, in their official role, cannot endorse one candidate over others. Caucuses follow different rules of the game-- they can issue endorsements.

How To Build a Precinct Team & How To Organize Your Precinct From Recruiting, to Action Strategies, to Social Media

WHY Start NOW?

To be successful in 2020, we need to build our organization and reach out to key voters NOW. Successful organizing depends on creating and sustaining volunteer action teams.

Our post-election analysis proves it: Precincts with active Precinct Captains and volunteer teams turn out the highest Democratic vote. In the 2018 Midterms, some precincts achieved 85% Democratic turnout!

Precinct Teams

Led by the Precinct Captain or Captains (PCs), Precinct Teams are groups of volunteers who are delegated to do specific political organizing activities. Not every Precinct Team will be identical, because the precincts are not identical. Find the volunteers you need to get the best turnout results in your neighborhood.

SCDP Volunteer Coordinators and Area Leaders work with Precinct Captains to recruit and train these Precinct Teams. Recruitment of volunteers is ongoing and never ending; it is one of the biggest challenges, due to people's unwillingness to commit or to say "yes" when they really mean "no."

What Precinct Team Members Are Needed?

Precinct Captain/s

- Assume the Responsibility to Lead.

The Precinct Captain must be depended on to organize the effort within their precinct and to carry out responsibilities capably and efficiently. Divide leadership tasks among co-PCs according to skills and interests.

- Know Your Precinct Territory.

Print your precinct map from the Sarasota Supervisor of Elections website (www.sarasotavotes.com). Drive or walk around your precinct to learn its geographical boundaries, characteristics of the neighborhoods, places to have meetings, distribute literature, register voters, etc.

- Know the People in Your Precinct.

Get to know your precinct voter demographics at www.sarasotavotes.com, by using VAN Votebuilder, and person-to-person through neighborhood / community activities.

- Create and implement the strategy and timetable of outreach to voters
- Lead the precinct team in actions to achieve goals
- Create agendas and facilitate precinct team meetings
- Serve as the liaison to the SCDP and campaign Field Organizers
- Coach, coordinate and support other members of the team

Associates – A Special Category of Volunteer

Volunteers who wish to help in a substantial way but are not willing to take on the responsibilities of Precinct Captain can be Associates. Associates take on designated tasks such as forming a street team or a condominium building team. According to party bylaws, they must be registered Democrats, must attend at least one Sarasota County Democratic Party meeting, must be introduced to the membership during that meeting, and must request Associate status. Associates cannot vote at the Democratic Party meetings but may participate in debate.

Data Captain

- Collect and manage all precinct data for the team: precinct voter lists, volunteer logs and voter contact data
- Create call and walk lists for team activities
- Enter and correct data regularly

Canvass Captain

- Create and lead door-to-door canvasses, in collaboration with others (Field Organizers, SCDP Data Team, allied organizations)
- Provide training and coaching re: goals and techniques
- Responsible for getting data to the Data Captain after each canvass

Phone Bank Captain

- Create and lead precinct phone banks, in collaboration with SCDP Data Team

- Provide training and coaching to phone bankers
- Work with the Data Captain to be sure data is entered

Volunteer Recruitment Captain

- Recruit precinct volunteers
- Match and connect volunteers with roles that fit their skills

Gated Community & Building Captain

Residents of restricted access communities can contact voters from the inside, where the Precinct Team cannot go without their help

House Party Host

House parties motivate voters within a hospitable social setting. They encourage voters to form neighborhood bonds and thus connect to the larger Democratic Party. A personal invitation and home hospitality are powerful -- there is a comfort level when you are from someone's own neighborhood.

- Bring volunteers and other voters together at Potlucks and other social events that establish a sense of community
- Motivate potential volunteers to get involved and to organize other social events
- Introduce candidates to precinct voters at social events

Going to Another Level: How To Organize a Precinct?

Get to Know Your Precinct and Find Your Voters

Every precinct is different. Precinct Captains need to develop strategies that work for their particular area and voter demographics. "Snowbirds" -- who vote in Sarasota but are often out of town -- pose a special challenge. Here are some ways you can get to know your precinct:

- Research your precinct voter statistics on the Supervisor of Elections website. You will be able to determine how many of your people voted in recent elections, how many registered Democrats, Republicans and No Party Affiliated (NPA) voters are in your precinct, and more.
- **Complete Your Precinct Survey**, found in your Orientation Manual or the pdf. form sent to you by e-mail. This Survey will provide you -- and the SCDP -- with a basic description of your precinct. Information about your turf, its voters and its facilities is needed for special events, voter registrations, GOTV canvassing and to help

candidate campaigns. Explore the communities of single-family homes, townhouses, gated communities, apartment complexes, and other large developments. Note shopping areas, senior centers, schools, and other facilities. This information will assist you later in finding voters and figuring out how to reach them.

- Get to know your neighbors. Your Data Team Rep or Area Leader can provide you with a list of all registered voters in your precinct, or you can run it yourself from VAN after getting training. From this list, you will see which voters are Democrats, Republicans, members of minor parties, and which have chosen not to register as a member of any political party – “no party affiliation” or NPA. You will see voter facts: address, gender, age, telephone number and email address, and more.
- Become an in-depth expert about your precinct voters. Use VAN to identify categories of voters based on their voting patterns:
 - Democrats who vote frequently and who are likely to vote again in the future: HOT Voters
 - Democrats who have a mixed record of voter performance and need extra encouragement to vote in the upcoming elections: WARM Voters
 - Newly registered Democrats who have not had an opportunity to vote in your precinct. NRVs should be contacted on a regular basis, welcomed to the Democratic Party, and encouraged to exercise their right to vote in the upcoming election. **You will receive your precinct list of Newly Registered Voters to contact every month.**
 - Registered Democrats who have a negligible voting record, but who should still be included in your voter contact plan: COLD Voters
 - No Party Affiliated (NPA) voters: Your Data Team Rep helps you determine which are most likely to vote Democratic. Engage them!
- Set Priorities: Contact and engage with newly registered Democrats and with people with a mixed history of voting. Frequent voters should be invited to volunteer in the precinct. Give these HOT voters the information they need and they will vote! Reach out to NPA voters who are likely to vote Democratic (based on information in the database.)

Set your goal: You should take the highest voting turnout percentage in your precinct in past elections and set a goal to increase that figure in future elections. Ask your Area Leader for this—or enjoy poring over past election results at sarasotavotes.com.

- Attend community meetings and reach out to people. Identify community leaders. Get involved in community activities in your precinct.
- Keep informed about local, state and national issues. Read the Voters Guide on the Supervisor of Elections site (sarasotavotes.com). Build working relationships with the PCs in your precinct and adjacent precincts.
- Review SCDP goals and Strategic Plans. Identify the steps needed to effectively implement that plan in your particular precinct.

Recap--Use Your Resources:

- Get and use your precinct map (SOE site)
- Get and use current precinct voter lists (Create yourself from VAN or ask the SCDP Data Team to do it)
- Build relationships with Democratic supporters in your precinct who have volunteered before, as well as new prospective volunteers
- Build relationships with PCs in adjacent and/or similar precincts and collaborate on shared projects
- Attend the monthly DEC Meetings and your Area PC Meetings to be well informed
- Use the Sarasota Precinct Captains Facebook page (or its successor, as technology changes) to collaborate with other PCs about the work we do
- Ask your Area Leader about additional training you would like to receive.
- Share your progress and request help when needed
- Accept that this job requires hard work, persistence, and a proactive attitude: Own your turf!

Resources and Leads that PCs Receive from the SCDP

- **NRVs** in your precinct: Monthly list, by e-mail

- Potential **Volunteers** in your precinct: Monthly list, by e-mail
- **Dropped Vote By Mail Voters** (DVBM) in your precinct: Periodic list
- **Special Targets**: Example, Democrats who didn't vote in a recent election and should be contacted: Periodic lists, by e-mail
- Requests and instructions for **specific actions** at specific times. Example: an important community issue or call to action that impacts your voters
- **5-3-1 Plan**: You will receive instructions during Election weeks listing what to do 5 days before, 3 days before, and on Election Day.

What Action Do PCs Take in Response?

Contact your Voters by phone, e-mail, letter, text, and/or or in person. Scripts will be provided, or are available by request.

What Should the Precinct Team Do-- Right NOW and Always?

The PC role offers the option of creating your own precinct action plans, as well as carrying out centrally organized initiatives of the SCDP and, during elections, the Combined GOTV Campaign of the Party, the FDP, and the Candidate Campaigns. At intervals, PCs receive a "What Should PCs Do Right Now?" action plan from Area Leaders or other Party Leaders. Many PCs welcome a structured timeline of actions.

Ongoing PC To Do List:

- **Embody pride in being a Democrat and speak up about our political positions and values**
- **Training**: Attend the Precinct Captain Orientation, VAN training (Emily Rizzo), other upcoming SCDP trainings, and inform yourself about current political news and issues that are relevant to your precinct.
- **Recruit PC Associates (dedicated volunteers) & other Volunteers** for your Precinct Team. Get targeted lists from your Data Rep or Area Leader.

- **Contact your D and NPA voters** at every opportunity, and in any/every way you can: Phone, E-mail, Social Media, Letters, Newsletters, Postcards, events, community gatherings
- **Contact Newly Registered Voters (NRV): Contact every one of your NRVs, by letter, phone, at their doors, or at Meet & Greets.** NRVs also get a welcome letter from the Party Chair and will be invited to area Meet & Greets. **Welcome these people in!**
- **Contact the “Warm” Voters** in your precinct and persuade them to engage with us-- to learn about local, state and national Democratic platforms, goals, initiatives and candidates. Get your “Warm” list from your Data Rep.
- **Vote-by-Mail (“VBM”) Goal: Motivate your D and NPA voters to register for VBM** by providing information (see SOE website and your PC Orientation Manual), VBM registration forms or VBM online registration assistance
- **VBM Dropped List:** You will receive these lists quarterly. Contact them and urge them to renew their Vote by Mail status.
- **Voter Registration:** Find appropriate locations and register voters in your precinct, coordinating with SCDP Voter Registration Chair Joan Roscoe.
- Organize **House Parties or other special events:** Please invite the Precinct Organization Chair and/or your Area Leader so they may assist. Use a sign-in list. Capture and enter the attendee data
- **Mobilize Ds and NPAs about community issues** that are important to your precinct voters; let them know where the SCDP stands on those issues and what actions they can take to be part of the solution

- **Communicate Data Changes:** Update information on your voters in the party's VoteBuilder/VAN database computer system. As voters move in and out of your precinct, you will be able to update phone numbers and email address changes.
- **Staff a Greeter Table at your Precinct Polling Place on Election Day** (See details in a separate section)

More on Reaching Out to Your People:

- Let voters who are registered Democrats know that they are not the only Democrats in their neighborhood — that there are other like-minded people in the area. Invite them to Democratic Party meetings, caucuses, and other political events.
- When newly registered Democrats move into your precinct, welcome them to the community. A little friendliness goes a long way in making people feel comfortable in a new setting.
- And when you talk to newly registered voters, ask them whether they have registered to Vote by Mail. If not, you can provide the voter with the “Vote by Mail request form,” a copy of which is included in your orientation packet. The party urges voters to vote by mail, because it increases the likelihood that a vote will actually get cast and counted by as much as 6-7%. For more information on voting by mail in Sarasota County, go to www.sarasotavotes.com and other pages in this manual.
- Make sure that all eligible voters in a household are registered. If one voter in a household is registered as a Democrat, ask other adults in that household whether they would like to be registered as Democrats.
- In July and August, visit college-bound students you learn about to make sure that they are registered to vote. If they are not, help them register. (A copy of a voter registration form is included in your manual.) If an election is coming up shortly, give them a Vote by Mail application and an envelope addressed to the Sarasota County Supervisor of Elections. Get their email address at college so that you can follow up with them and remind them to vote.
- Promote the use of Vote by Mail (“VBM”) ballots – and not just for people confined to their homes, people who travel frequently, college students, and the like. Every VBM ballot returned to the Supervisor of Elections before Election Day is a “vote in the bank.”

- Promote in-person Early Voting (usually the week before Election Day) among supporters.
- For those voters who have told us that they plan to Vote by Mail, the party will provide you information on which of them have and have not returned their ballots so that you can follow up with voters who have not yet sent their ballots back to the Supervisor of Elections.
- Find people willing to put up candidate yard signs, especially on heavily traveled streets, and give your Area Leader the names and contact information for those people.
- Wear political buttons in your daily life, and make sure you and your volunteers have bumper stickers on your cars. Such items raise the visibility of our candidates, remind people that an election is approaching, and spark conversations.
- Recruit volunteers within your precinct to work as poll workers and voter protection workers on Election Day. Voter protection workers help ensure that all voters entitled to vote do, in fact, get to vote. Poll workers perform a number of other tasks, both inside and outside the polling place.
- Know our candidates and issues. Get their literature, study their positions, and if you are unsure about their views, call their campaign offices and ask. Never try to explain a candidate's position to a voter if you are uncertain.

Creating and Sustaining A Precinct Team

How do you find and keep enthusiastic and reliable volunteers? SCDP Volunteer Coordinators send out the names of website sign ups or call-in volunteers, monthly. But that's not all...

As a Precinct Captain, you should always be on the lookout for other volunteers to make your work easier and to bring new people into our joint effort. In the course of your daily life, keep your eyes and ears open for people willing to help you and the party.

Some examples of precinct volunteer tasks: Deliver literature door-to-door; participate in a phone bank or make phone calls from home; help with candidate and party events, e.g., prepare food or set up tables and chairs for an event; work at candidates' headquarters doing such things as answering the telephone and welcoming people; write letters to the editor;

raise money; stuff envelopes; help with a precinct newsletter; work at the polls on Election Day; drive neighbors to the polls.

Suggestions for finding volunteers:

- Do not be afraid to talk politics with people. Most people have a number of issues they really care about. If you meet someone in line at the supermarket, and you get a sense that they might be supportive of Democratic issues, tell them you are the neighborhood Precinct Captain and give them your contact information or ask for theirs.
- When a Democratic event is occurring, invite neighbors to go with you. Offer to drive. At the event, introduce your guests to party members and officials. Bring them into the fold.
- Host an event. It needn't be elaborate – simple beverages and snacks are fine -- and can be for just a few people. You might invite a party official or office holder to speak, although this is not necessary. Circulate a volunteer sign-up sheet, with examples of a few tasks that need to be done.
- One of the best ways to find volunteers is to get a VoteBuilder list of all the people in your precinct who have volunteered in the past, people who have attended a Democratic Party event, people who have made donations –we can get such lists from the “My Campaign” section of VAN! Ask the people who have been active to tell you what they can about the precinct. Thank them for their previous efforts, and ask them if they would be willing to help again in some way.
- Go through your list of registered Democrats and identify voters who consistently vote Democratic – people like that are often willing to help.

Once you have found volunteers to help you, how do you keep them involved?

- Give them clear, specific tasks, and set realistic deadlines.
- Give them jobs they are comfortable doing. Some people like going door-to-door; others hate it or are not able to. Some people like to telephone; others will have no part of that. Some people like to work with data or do other kinds of office work. Respect each volunteer's wishes, and value every contribution.

- Ask volunteers to be responsible for their own street, or perhaps a few streets, or their apartment building.
- Invite them to party and candidate events.
- Thank them, and then thank them again. People love to be appreciated.
- After an election, send each volunteer the election results for the precinct and ask for ideas on how to improve those results in the next election.

Everyone Likes Positive Recognition

Precinct Captains must work proactively to sustain their team by deepening relationships, celebrating hard work and good efforts, at the same time holding their team accountable.

Best Practices include:

- “Respect, Empower, Include”
- Do What You Say You Will Do, and do it in an organized way
- Respect People’s Time by using smart, efficient strategies
- Encourage Creativity and Ownership
- Set Clear Team Norms
- Consistent Coaching
- Evaluate Outcomes: do what works
- One-On-One Check-Ins
- Team Meetings to review and strategize
- Let Team Members coach each other
- Learn from Mistakes
- Celebrate Success
- Promote Healthy Competition: recognize excellent work and offer incentives such as small team celebrations when the work is done. (It’s never done 😊)

Principles of Volunteer Retention: Be organized but also have fun

- It takes hard work to get a volunteer to say “yes,” more hard work to encourage them to show up the first time, and to keep on coming.

- Volunteer Retention is all about relationships. Strive to make every volunteer experience as pleasant as possible.
- Work alongside your volunteers: leaders must be the hardest working people in any group.
- Debrief with team members after activities.
- Reschedule: No volunteer should leave an activity without being asked to participate in another activity. A 50% on-site reschedule rate is a good sign.
- Make a thank you call or e-mail your thanks after every activity