

Indiana County Democratic Committee

Being a Precinct Committee Person

Help your Democratic Party accomplish great things for our county and country!



What is a Precinct?

A *precinct* is the smallest political unit in the country. Each precinct corresponds to one polling place where the residents of that precinct vote, and it is at this level where elections are won or lost. Most importantly, the precinct is YOUR neighborhood. You know the people, the schools, businesses, and community centers. You understand the problems, can relate to the concerns, and have a passion for improving your neighborhood.

The precinct is the most important voting and organizational unit within the Democratic Party, and no one should underestimate the value and importance of the Precinct Committee Person (PCP). These vitally important liaisons actively work with the Democratic Party and are key to winning elections at the local, state, and national level.

A PCP is a committee person elected or appointed as an official of the Democratic Party. Each voting precinct can have up to two committee people elected by the Democratic voters of that precinct every four years or appointed by the county's Party chairperson. PCPs report to their district representative and/or municipal chair and up the county Party structure, attending periodic meetings throughout the year (usually 2-4 annually).

Becoming a PCP

PCPs—Principal Committee Persons—are elected in gubernatorial election years on the Primary election ballot or appointed in between election years. To get on the ballot to become a PCP, please follow these steps or contact indianadems@gmail.com for assistance and information.

- Be a registered Democrat.
- Reside in the district for which you wish to represent.
- Pick up a petition and packet from your county elections office. Sometimes, your county Democratic Party will also provide these materials for you if you are unable to go to the elections office.
- Gather the required number of signatures (typically 10+) on your petition during the petition period. The petition period is about three weeks long and is approximately 2 ½ to 3 months prior to Primary Election day. PADems does recommend getting at least double the number of signatures required.
- Pending petition challenges, not a typical process for PCP races, you will be on the ballot on Primary Day.
- In Indiana County, if there is a vacancy, you can also become a PCP by appointment of the Indiana County Democratic Committee (ICDC) Chairperson.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Role of Precinct Committee Persons

The Precinct Committee Person is the most important individual delivering the Democratic Party message to voters and the concerns of voters to the Party. They are also the official representatives of the Democratic Party to their neighborhoods and the neighborhoods' elected representative to the Party. For many voters, precinct committee people are the real presence of the Democratic Party they see, meet, and get to know.

Ways You Can Get Out the Vote

- **Know Your Precinct.** Strive to get to know the people in your precinct: Democrats, Independents, moderate Republicans, and unaffiliated voters. Become familiar with the demographics. What are the cultural and economic variables of your constituents? An online tool that can be helpful is VAN/VoteBuilder (check with your district representative or ICDC Chair). Canvassing will also help you learn about the precinct. Scout high traffic streets that would be good locations for yard signs.
- **Canvass Your Precincts.** Walk door-to-door or make phone calls to registered voters in your precinct. Introduce yourself as a neighbor and briefly explain your role and how you can be of assistance. Leave your contact information so people can get back to you.
- **Recruit and Train Volunteers.** When you talk with your neighbors, tell them how much you enjoy your involvement in Democratic Party politics. See if they would be interested in becoming involved and helping you with responsibilities. Make notes about voters who may be interested and in what roles they may see themselves working for the Party.
- **Register New Democratic Voters.** Work to identify unaffiliated and Independent voters. Help them register to vote. Emphasize the importance of having a voice in the Democratic Party during every election, including primaries.
- **Get Out the Vote.** In the weeks prior to an election, make contact with voters in your precinct and help them have a plan for voting. Offer rides to those who may need them. Identify yourself and your volunteers once again as a resource person for voters in your precinct.
- **Be Active in the Community and Party.** Other ways to help include being visible. Distribute Party and candidate literature, display yard/window signs, and assist with gathering signatures for petitions. Get to know Party officers and elected Democratic officials. Keep up to date on Party activities. Support activities of your county and state organizations. Know the Democratic candidates running in upcoming elections. Solicit donations. Coordinate with the County Fundraising Committee to include fundraising in your activities. Attend as many Party events, meetings, and activities as possible and encourage others to participate. Host your own Party events and invite your neighbors. Include Democrats, voters who lean Democratic, and others who might be persuadable.

Explore: INDIANAPADEMS.COM • Volunteer/Info: INDIANADEMS@GMAIL.COM

This page (April 2023) includes the highlights of a much more detailed description of duties in The Precinct Committee Person Handbook 2017 provided by the Pennsylvania Democratic Party, adapted from Version 2017.1.0 Page 6-7. The complete handbook was paid for and authorized by the Pennsylvania Democratic Party and was not authorized by any candidate or candidate committee, 229 State Street, Harrisburg, PA 17101 | Phone: (717) 920-8470 | Fax: (717) 901-7829 | www.padems.com.