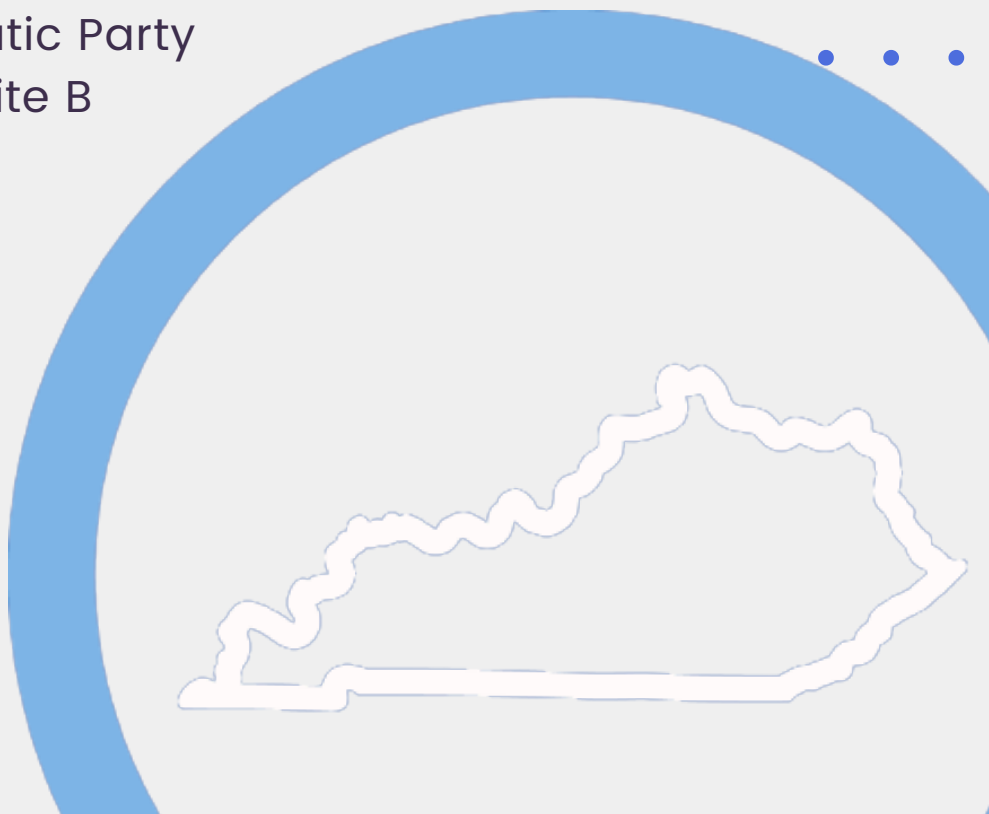




# Kentucky Democratic Party 2025 CEC Guide



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# Table of contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
How to Use This Guide	3
Party Structure	3
Road to Winning	4
<b>County Party Administration</b>	<b>5</b>
Role and Responsibilities	5 – 6
Meeting Facilitation 101	7 – 9
Bylaws	9
Reorganization and Delegate Selection	9
Reorganization	10
Democratic National Convention Delegate Selection	11 – 12
Kentucky State Laws	13
Board of Elections	13
Kentucky Registry of Election Finance	13
<b>Building the Party</b>	<b>13</b>
Recruitment Events	14
Places to Recruit	14
Making the Ask	15
<b>Communications</b>	<b>16</b>
Building Your Message	16 – 17
Social Media	18 – 21
Emails	21 – 22
Event Submissions	23
Media Relations	24
<b>Fundraising and Compliance</b>	<b>25</b>
Events	25
Call Time	25
Other Solicitations	26
Compliance	27 – 29
<b>Field</b>	<b>29</b>
Voter Registration	30
Canvassing	30 – 31
Phonebanking	31
Deep Canvassing	32
<b>Data</b>	<b>33</b>
Using VAN for Recruitment	34
Using VAN for Voter Identification	34

# Introduction

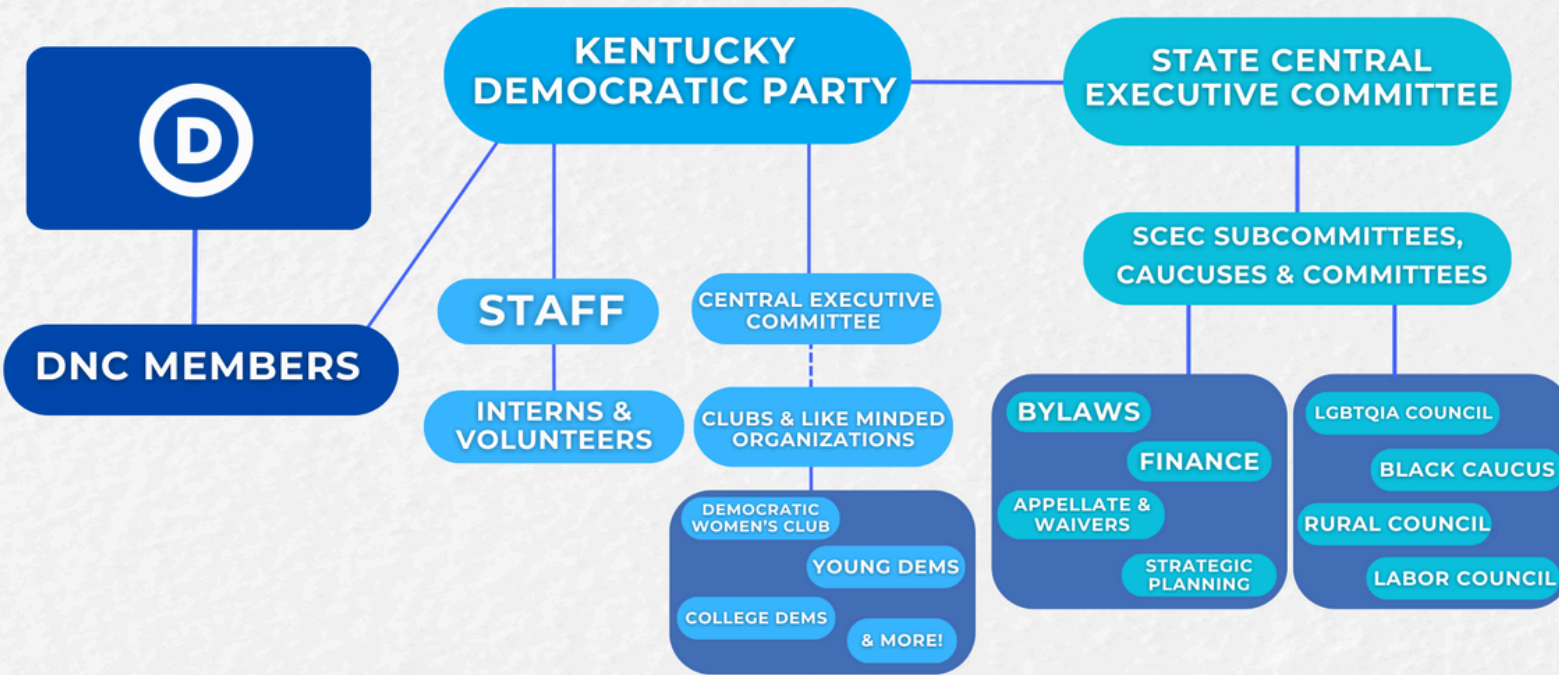
## How to Use This Guide

This guide is intended to meet you where you are in building Democratic strength in your community. Whether you are getting ready to build your local committee or you have built an organization that runs like a well-oiled machine, this guide will help you ensure that your county party is in compliance with state law and the KDP bylaws, understand how you can grow Democratic strength, and organize your community for candidates and issues that are important to you.

## Party Structure

Party structure can be overwhelming: there are voters, elected officials, candidates, committees, issue advocates, KDP staff, and others who influence the work you do as a county party. While your local party may function a bit differently, the organizational chart below is built to help you understand the part county parties play in the overall party structure.

## DEMOCRATIC PARTY ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



# Road to Winning

From City Council to the United States Senate, you and your entire CEC are critical to making Democratic gains in your community and across the Commonwealth. As chair, you serve as the lead strategist, motivator and problem solver for your CEC, who, in turn, are the chief organizers within their communities. You represent the Democratic Party's official structure and serve as an entry point for voters to get involved. To win at all levels, CECs should be identifying and mobilizing voters, engaging in year-round organizing, and identifying and supporting Democratic candidates. While organizing and mobilizing within their communities is one of the most important functions of a CEC, there is also official party business required of the CEC. Ensuring you and your CEC members build and maintain strong relationships with the KDP is key to ensure all compliance and business-related questions are addressed, and local events, local candidates, and local issues are uplifted.

The KDP believes that the work of CECs is critical to gains across the Commonwealth. As such, this guide is designed to provide you with the initial components on how to reach these goals. Below is how the KDP plans to move our party forward.

## HOW WE CAN WIN

If County Parties are provided:

- Training & guidance
- Technical assistance
- Compliance oversight

**KDP**

- Issues
- Data
- Networking

**CANDIDATES**

- Issues
- Fundraising
- Volunteers

**VOTERS**

County Parties will:

- Identify voters
- Recruit volunteers
- Comply with bylaws and state regs
- Hold meetings
- Fundraise
- Identify candidates
- Collect data

**COUNTY PARTIES**

The Party will achieve:

- More volunteers
- High-quality candidates
- Stronger local organizations
- Stronger relationships within the community
- More organized events
- Better understanding of local issues
- More reliable data

**DEMOCRATS WIN!**

KENTUCKY  DEMOCRATS

# County Party Administration

## Role and Responsibilities

As Democratic leaders in your county, the County Executive Committee (CEC) is responsible for all things associated with running a local party. The CEC is an officially recognized organization that is governed by the bylaws of the Kentucky Democratic Party (KDP) and state law. CEC members are duly elected by the precinct committees to conduct campaign and political business within the community. We will talk more about precinct committees in the reorganization section of this guide.

There are four positions within the CEC that are key to complying with the bylaws and state regulation and which also take a leadership role in organizing the community and supporting candidates.

- **CEC Chair:** The chair is the primary leader for the county party and is often the point of contact for the KDP. Some of these responsibilities are:
  - Forming and maintaining a relationship with KDP staff.
  - Submitting official records to the KDP.
  - Lead official CEC meetings at least once a quarter.
  - Lead the reorganization process every four years.
  - Ensure treasurer complies with state law and regulations in administration of CEC finances.
  - Administer special legislative election selection process in accordance with KDP bylaws.
  - Develop year-round voter contact goals and plans to reach such goals, including phone banks, text banks, canvassing and digital communications initiatives.
  - Recruit volunteers who want to help build Democratic power locally.
  - Organize the county to support Democratic candidates.
  - Participate in KDP-supported trainings and workshops.
- **CEC Vice Chair:** The vice chair is the second in command of the CEC and assists the chair in conducting their duties.
  - Lead CEC meetings when the chair is unavailable.
  - Support chair in achieving the goals of the CEC.
  - Support chair with any other needs.
- **Secretary:** The secretary is in charge of all recordkeeping for the CEC, including meeting minutes.

- **Treasurer:** The treasurer is responsible for the financial management of the CEC. The treasurer should keep up to date with all CEC fundraising and complete financial reports to the Kentucky Registration of Election Finance.

While these are the official leadership roles on a CEC, committees can come up with additional leadership roles or subcommittees to ensure goals are met. Here are a few roles you may want to create:

- **Volunteer Coordinator/Committee:** A committee like this could have the responsibility to plan and execute recruitment activities and events for volunteers to do. While it should be the responsibility of all CEC members to recruit, having a person or group focused on this activity will help grow your party!
- **Voter Contact Coordinator/Committee:** A person or committee like this could be the go-to person for phone banking and canvassing, as well as the chief organizer of GOTV activities.
- **Communications Coordinator/Committee:** A person or committee like this could take the responsibility to ensure that the goals of the CEC are well-communicated, as well as keep the CEC focused on issues that are important to the community.
- **Fundraising Coordinator/Committee:** This person or committee could help build and execute a fundraising plan. They could help identify invitees to events, find surrogates to speak, or help plan your booth at the county fair.
- **Community Building Coordinator/Committee:** This person or committee could help the CEC build community trust by sitting on boards of like-minded organizations, like the Democratic Women's Club or the Young Democrats, to align efforts. They could also plan community events, like coat/food drives or other community events.

These are just a few ideas! You can create committees for any of the work your CEC does. Just make sure that the committee supports the goals of your CEC.



# Meeting Facilitation 101

Conducting regular meetings is key to the role of CECs across the state not only to ensure communication between committee members, but also to share ideas for community building, volunteer recruitment, or plan for GOTV. According to the state bylaws, CECs are required to meet no less than once a quarter, however many committees meet once a month to plan activities like fundraisers.

One important thing to keep in mind is that CEC members are volunteers, which means that they have other responsibilities like family and work, meaning it's important to run meetings with efficiency, respecting others' time. The rule for effective meetings is 40/20/40: 40% of your attention should be on the preparation of the meeting, only 20% on the meeting itself, and the remaining 40% on the follow-through of what you discussed in the meeting.

As you plan your next meeting, here are a few things to think about:

## Building an Agenda

Agendas are an important part of having an efficient and effective meeting, keeping meetings on track, setting expectations, and focusing on key issues you want to address, rectify or move forward. Having an agenda can help keep members on topic and gives you, as the facilitator, the opportunity to keep meetings flowing.

## Meeting Facilitation

Oftentimes, people who volunteer for organizations feel strongly about issues related to that organization. Sometimes, this passion can lead to focused feelings on a particular subject. To ensure passions don't derail meetings, it's important to facilitate meetings in ways that people feel heard and respected. This can be difficult when members do not agree on how to move forward with a particular topic.

Here are a few things you may want to consider during your planning process:

- **Set an agenda and give context:** Without an agenda, there will be no structure or context for the meeting and it may quickly dissolve into chaos. Taking the time to build an agenda is key to effective and efficient meetings. It's also a great idea to share the agenda with members before the meeting so folks come prepared to discuss agenda items!

- **Set ground rules:** Ground rules are the guidelines your CEC agrees to for productive and efficient meetings. Rules should be created by the CEC and tend to include things like showing up prepared and on time or being present and respectful of others. Ground rules should be reviewed regularly to make sure everyone is on the same page on the conduct of the meeting.
- **Appreciating contributions:** CEC members are volunteers, so their time should be held with respect and appreciation. Everyone's opinion is valuable to the work of the CEC, so make sure you thank members for their ideas and contributions.
- **Actively listen to members:** You should also actively listen to the thoughts of other members. Active listening is being fully engaged when someone is sharing ideas or thoughts by paying attention, paraphrasing, or asking questions. People feel more heard when they are actively listened to.
- **Manage conflicts:** As stated earlier, oftentimes passion surrounding issues or ideas can create tension within a meeting. Managing these conflicts is important to the success of the CEC. If conflict is derailing work, it's important to stop it as soon as possible. Below are some strategies you can use to help manage these conflicts.
  - Remain calm and ask those causing conflict to discuss at a later time. Remind them of the agenda and ground rules, and **follow through** by calling folks to better understand their point of view.
  - Be conscious and don't fall into gossip by siding with one person or the other. Try to find a compromise or other resolution to the issue.
  - Review the 5 C's of conflict management and use strategies that will help overcome the issues.



## KNOW YOUR GOAL!

Approach

Use When

### Circumvent



- You have to pick your battles
- The issue is not important

### Concede



- The issue is much more important to the other person
- There is a need to maintain harmony

### Compete



- Quick, decisive action is necessary
- An unpopular decision needs to be made on an important issue

### Compromise



- You need a solution that is at least minimally acceptable to all
- You need a quick temporary solution to an important issue

### Collaborate



- A win-win scenario is needed (all parties must be satisfied)
- Looking for long-term solutions



**CAREER COMPASS**

Steer Your Career. Accelerate Our Mission.

## Meeting Follow-up

After the meeting has concluded, there is still a little work to do. Keeping members engaged means communicating regularly. Reaching out after a meeting with meeting minutes, alerting members to assigned tasks, and thanking them for their time is crucial to members in feeling appreciated. There may also be times that you have to follow up with members individually about concerns raised during the meeting or tasks they have been assigned.

## Bylaws

While much of the work of the CEC functions best when it is focused at the local level, they are governed by the bylaws of the KDP and have responsibilities it should meet to stay in compliance with the bylaws. According to the bylaws, CECs must:

- Hold meetings no less than once a quarter. However, the most successful CECs meet at least monthly.
- Have a chair, vice chair, secretary, and treasurer that supports the CEC and identifies goals and plans.
- The chair and vice chair must be of opposite genders.
- No less than 10 and no more than 20 duly elected members that are gender balanced.<sup>1</sup>
- Complete financial reporting in accordance with Kentucky state law.
- The president of the local Young Democrats Club and the Democratic Women's Club are members of the CEC due to their position.

If you have questions about the KDP bylaws and how they affect the functioning of a CEC, please call the KDP.

## Reorganization and Delegate Selection

In addition to what has already been discussed, it is also the responsibility of the CEC to lead the local processes for KDP reorganization and Democratic National Convention delegate selection. Here we will discuss both of these processes. Please note, that while they happen at the same time, the goal of each is separate.

### County vs. Legislative District (LD)

Some counties grow too large to function effectively under the county structure. Bigger counties need more people and more effort. The bylaws define these bigger counties as containing portions, wholly or partially, of seven or more legislative districts. At the time of writing, the only counties that have this effect are Fayette and Jefferson. To ensure membership is adequate to support the county, each LD elects a chair and vice chair and 18 at-large members. The chairs and at-large members serve as the CEC, while the vice chairs serve in absence of the chair. All other membership rules apply to these CECs.

<sup>1</sup> The bylaws allow for waivers for CECs struggling to meet membership requirements.

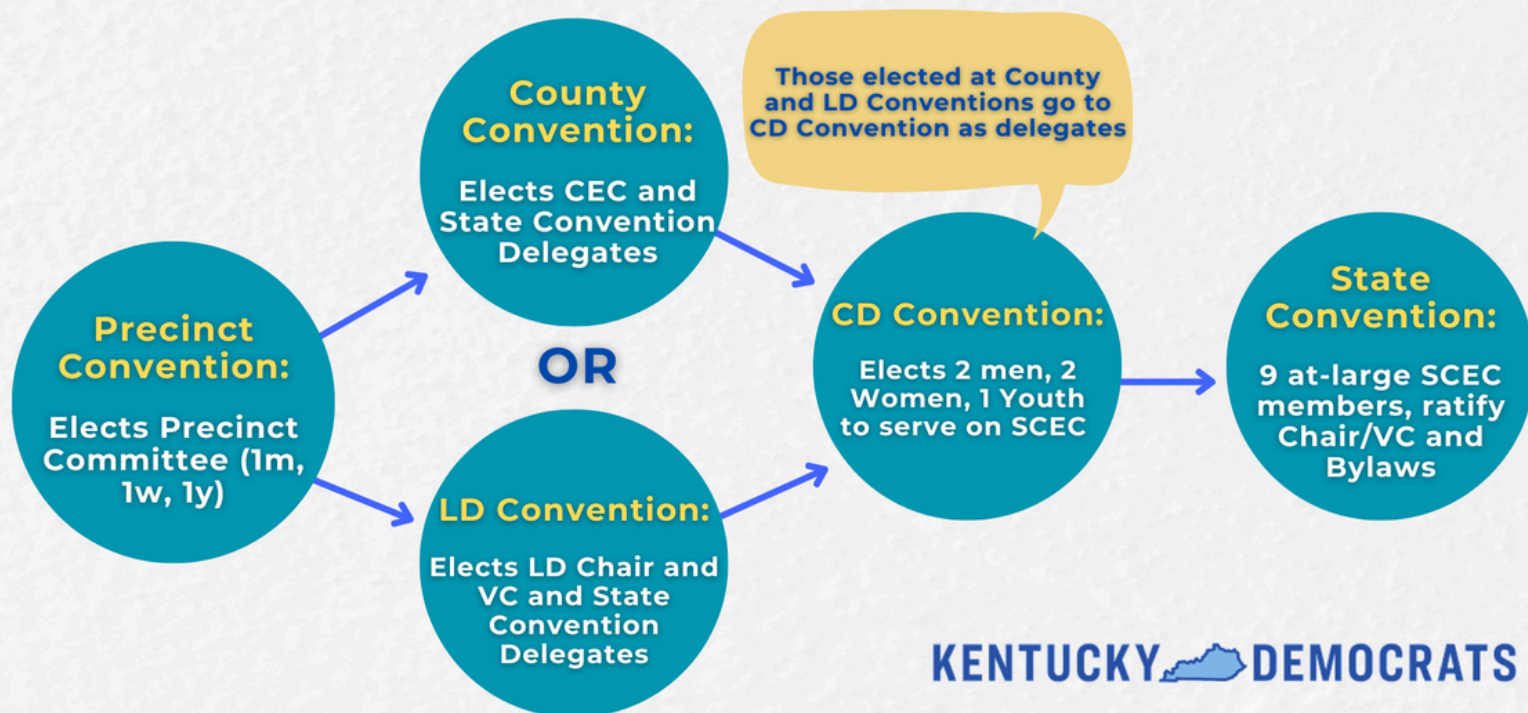
## Reorganization

As you know, the nature of the work we do is constantly changing and party leadership should reflect the values of voters. To keep up with the fluidity of politics, the state party elects (or re-elects) party officers at every level in an effort to give our constituents access to leadership positions and solicit voters' input to strengthen the [arty from neighborhoods to the SCEC. This is done through a series of conventions that we refer to as reorganization (reorg). During reorg, Democrats from across the Commonwealth come together to elect party officers that reflect the current priorities that support voters' best interest.

Reorg consists of:

- **Precinct Conventions** elect Precinct Committees that consist of 1 man, 1 woman, and 1 young Democrat who resides in the precinct. Any registered Democrat in the precinct can attend and vote. The PC should also elect a chair to ensure the role and responsibilities are met. PCs will act as delegates to the County/Legislative District Convention to elect the CEC.
- **Legislative Conventions** are held in counties that have seven or more legislative districts. Each PC member will elect a chair and vice chair of opposite genders to sit on the CEC and elect delegates to the Congressional District and State Conventions.
- **County Conventions** are held in all other counties. PC members will elect the CEC members and delegates to the CD and State Conventions.
- **Congressional District Conventions** elect 2 men, 2 women, and 1 youth from each CD to serve on the SCEC.
- **State Convention** elects nine (9) at-large members to SCEC, ratifies the chair and vice chair of the Party and the bylaws, and conducts any other party business.

# REORGANIZATION PROCESS



## Precinct Committee Roles and Responsibilities

The reorganization process begins at the most local level with the election of Precinct Committees (PC). Precincts are hyper-local, often with little more than a neighborhood as its geographical jurisdiction. Made up of individuals from the same block, street or neighborhood, PCs represent the most personal interaction a voter can have with the Party. That means that PC members are best positioned to form relationships with, and collect data from, voters on local issues and priorities. This voter contact and data collection is critical to the success of Democrats across the Commonwealth, creating a base of Democratic power and support in each and every neighborhood across the state.

PCs help build this power through hosting house parties, participating in direct voter contact like canvassing and phone banking, or attending community events. They should also regularly communicate with the CEC to ensure the membership is well aware of local issues that folks care about, and that they are meeting the goals and priorities of the CEC as a whole.

## Democratic National Convention Delegate Selection

A second, but just as important process, occurs at the same time as reorg. State parties across the nation elect delegates to their party's national convention where presidential candidates are officially nominated and other party business is conducted. This happens in all states and both parties.

Kentucky elects these delegates in a way to ensure that the interests of Kentucky voters are represented in accordance with the primary election vote by conducting caucuses at the county, CD, and state levels.

Any presidential candidate, including uncommitted, will receive delegates to the congressional district and state caucuses and the national convention if they receive more than 15% of the primary vote.



- At the **county caucus**, Democrats will pledge their support for a candidate on the Democratic party ballot, including uncommitted. Each candidate's supporters will then gather separately and caucus to choose delegates to attend the CD and state caucuses where national convention delegates will be selected. The number of delegates elected here will be provided by the State Party.
- The **congressional district caucuses** will then meet to elect the district-level delegates to the National Convention. The voting members of the caucus are those elected at the county level for each presidential candidate. The number of delegates is determined by the Democratic National Convention Committee and is led by the state party. Caucuses will also elect one (1) person and one (1) alternate to the electoral college.
- At the **state caucus**, delegates for each presidential candidate will elect party leader or elected official (PLEO) delegates and two (2) people and two (2) alternates to the electoral college.

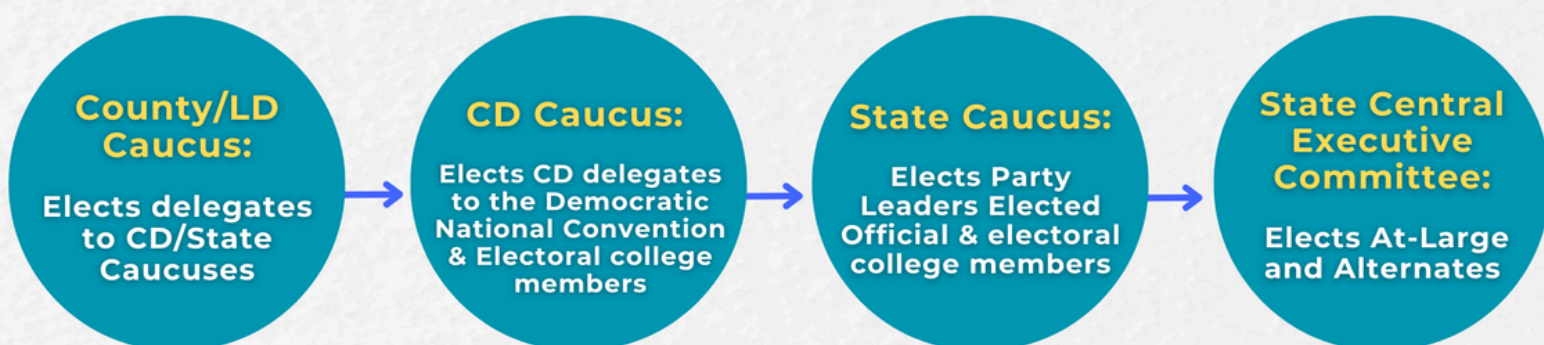
#### Purposes for Caucuses vs. Conventions

**Conventions:** To elect party officers from the precinct to state level.

**Caucus:** To elect delegates to the Democratic National Convention.

- Finally, in an effort to ensure that the delegation is reflective of Kentucky's demographics, the **SCEC** will elect at-large delegation members and delegate alternates.

## DELEGATE SELECTION



# Kentucky State Laws

## Board of Elections

Each county in the State has a County Board of Elections (CBE). The County Board of Elections administers election law under the direction of the State Board of Elections. The CBE has four members; the county clerk, the county sheriff, and one member from each party appointed by the State Board of Elections.

Pursuant to KRS 117.035(2)(d), each County Party will nominate five (5) names for these board members to the Kentucky Democratic Party, and the State Board will appoint someone from that list. To qualify to sit on the County Board of Elections, nominees must be 21 years of age, a qualified voter from the County, and not be convicted of any election law offence.

During election years, the CBE will meet every other month to plan elections and discuss business. On election days, including primary and special elections, the CBE will be in session all day to deal with issues that day, including clerical errors, curing signatures, and certifying the election.

## Kentucky Registry of Election Finance

According to Kentucky state law, CECs are also able to raise funds to support candidates, hiring staff, hosting events, and other needs. However, any money raised must be reported to the Kentucky Registry of Election Finance (KREF). We will discuss this more thoroughly later. For now, CECs should submit a financial report twice a year and must be submitted by the Chair or Treasurer. If a CEC does not comply with KREF regulations, it could result in the dissolution of the local party and funds being sent to the Kentucky State Treasurer.

# Building the Party

While CECs have limits of membership in the bylaws, that doesn't not mean your work stops there! There are a lot of ways to engage the community to spread messaging, recruit candidates, and find volunteers for voter contact or other activities. The list below is just the beginning! Be creative in how you engage your community and build the party!



## Recruitment Events

There are lots of opportunities to host events and recruit volunteers during election years. From candidate fundraisers to GOTV rallies, you should always collect attendees' information and make a plan to follow up with them after the event to explore their interest in attending meetings, volunteering or running for office. If someone attends an event, that means you already have them hooked; collecting their data and following up is the key to getting them, and keeping them involved. Use this to build your party!

There are also things you can do during non-election years to bring people together. Hosting house parties to discuss issues affecting your community, or hosting a watch party event at a local coffee shop around big political events, like the State of the Commonwealth or State of the Union speeches, are great ways to bring people together and meet folks.

There are other ways to engage your community so be creative! Some CECs will do community outreach by gathering coats and gloves for families in the winter or donate food during Thanksgiving. These are great ways to support your community, and get the community engaged with the work you are doing!

## Places to Recruit

While hosting events is a great way to gather contact information for potential volunteers, you can also recruit at community events. Have a booth at the County Festival, summer concert, or any community event where there will be a crowd. Have sign-up sheets to gather names, addresses and contact information, as well as voter registration forms and fliers advertising your next meeting or event. Don't forget to engage with people as they pass by; move out from behind your booth or table to seem more welcoming. Anytime your CEC can be visible in the community is a perfect opportunity to increase your base of support! And, most importantly, follow up with anyone whose information you received.

Also think of other community organizations with similar interests! Democratic Women's Clubs and the Young Dems are great places to start, but are there other like-minded organizations that could help support your work (e.g., nonprofits or advocacy groups)?

# Making the ask

Sometimes it's hard to call and ask folks to join your efforts from a list. At the same time, they won't if you don't ask and the worst you'll hear is no! Here are a few tips when asking folks to join your efforts:

- **Be specific:** Whether you're calling for help to support a food drive or canvassing, it's important to let folks know what to expect. Where should they be and at what time? Are you asking them to phone bank and canvas or to table at an event? Give as much detail as you can up front.
- **Start small:** Sometimes, interested folks may be uncomfortable doing a task needed by the CEC. Are there tasks they are interested in doing? Maybe tabling an event over phone banking? Or picking up litter on the road with a candidate t-shirt on rather than canvassing? Once you get them in the door, it will be easier to engage them on more difficult tasks.
- **Offer incentives:** Offering t-shirts or lunch can be a great way to encourage folks to join your efforts.
- **Use volunteer strengths:** All your volunteers have work commitments. Use their strengths to build your party! Think about other things your volunteer can do to support the CEC. Do they work with data? They can help you with data in VAN! Are they interested in social media? Let them run your Facebook, Instagram, and Bluesky!
- **Volunteers come back for you!:** Volunteers walk in the door for the issue or candidate they care about. They continue to come back because of you! Make sure they have fun while volunteering. Even during difficult issues, like hard conversations with voters, volunteers will look to you for guidance and support. That's why they keep coming back!

Finally, remember that getting folks to volunteer is difficult. You'll hear more no's than yeses. But every yes makes the party stronger and will grow your CEC!

# Communications

*For media and messaging questions, please contact our communications team, [press@kydemocrats.org](mailto:press@kydemocrats.org)*

*For social media and graphic design questions, please contact Digital Director Clarissa Fisher, [clarissa@kydemocrats.org](mailto:clarissa@kydemocrats.org)*

Effective communication is critical to growing the party across the Commonwealth. While the CEC should follow messaging from state leadership, including the KDP, there may be local issues that your CEC should consider building a communications plan around. Local parties are the ears on the ground to local issues. There are also issues that may be extra important to your community!

As you plan to better communicate with your local community, please reach out to the KDP for any updated guidance, messaging coordination, or media relations!

## Building Your Message

Messaging can be a powerful tool in increasing interest for your CEC throughout the community. While there will be local issues that you should think about when developing your communications plan, you should also work with the KDP to ensure your message follows along with statewide messaging.

When building what and how you want to communicate there are things that you should think about:

- **Focus on kitchen table issues**, like the economy, cost of living, education, or health care. These are the issues that folks care about. Don't get distracted by controversial culture war issues that don't impact the daily lives of people in your community.
- **Align your message!** Remember that your communications could impact other groups or campaigns, including the KDP, Women's Clubs, and candidates. Make sure that your plan includes the needs of partner groups.
- **Localize it!** There are issues that will affect your community that may not affect the rest of the state. Make sure you focus on issues that mean something to your community!
- **Keep it "Newsy".** Topics of interest are consistently changing. Review your messaging often to ensure that it is timely, has impact, and achieves your goals.

When crafting your message, it is important to stay authentic with your audience. Communicate your values and priorities naturally, steering clear of policy-heavy language, excessive statistics and complicated jargon. Make sure your overarching message can be boiled down to a brief elevator pitch — listeners and readers have limited attention spans. The goal should be to encourage people to vote, volunteer, or donate!

Take a look at the example below.

**TOPIC:** HB 255 (Source: [Kentucky Center for Economic Policy](#))

**AVOID POLICY HEAVY LANGUAGE THAT CAN BE CONFUSING ON SOCIAL MEDIA:** “HB 255 repeals the child labor regulation that establishes standards for employment of minors and eliminates the state statute that allows the Commissioner of Workplace Standards to promulgate future protections for children in the workforce they may deem necessary.”

**FOCUS ON PLAYING TO VOTERS’ EMOTION:** “HB 255 Weakens Child Labor Laws and Will Fuel More School Dropouts.”

**WHENEVER POSSIBLE, LOCALIZE IT:** HB 255 would put [COUNTY] kids in danger by exposing them to dangerous working conditions and making them less likely to finish school. While Democrats work to keep kids safe, Republicans like [LOCAL REP] are putting them in harm’s way.

# Social Media

*\*note: if you are having trouble logging into / creating a social media account, please reach out to Digital Director, Clarissa Fisher at [clarissa@kydemocrats](mailto:clarissa@kydemocrats) for help.\**

Getting your message out to the community has changed drastically in the last 20 years. Social media has become one the most powerful and inexpensive tools for CECs to use to get messages out to the community. As of 2024, [over half of U.S. adults](#) (54%) get news from social media. These are your voters, volunteers, donors, and reporters! While all of us can quickly add a post to our Facebook or Instagram, building a following on social media is more difficult. But with a little time and effort, you can grow your reach and get your message out to more people!

When setting social media goals, you should start by establishing two things:

Your goals and your audience.

What do you want to achieve?	Who are you trying to reach?
Increase brand/name recognition	Demographics (age, gender, location)
Educate voters on your platform	Interest, values, behaviors
Engage existing supporters	New voters
Reach potential new voters	Engaged constituents
Drive volunteer recruitment	Third-party partner groups
Raise funds for the CEC	Advocates

Once these questions are answered, you're ready to start creating your content for your social media platforms!

Social media is constantly changing. It's easy to get overwhelmed with all the platforms available to use, but don't fear! **Remember that you don't need to be everywhere, all at once.** Think about which platform may suit your needs best and choose a few to start with. Facebook and Instagram are great platforms to focus on. Here are some of the most popular social media platforms that you should consider using to spread your message.

### **Focus on these platforms:**

- **Facebook** is a great place to start building your social media presence. Being one of the first and longest lasting social media platforms, most people are on the platform. This means that the audience skews older, but also has a wide demographic range and everyone is there! Facebook prioritizes long-form content and can be a little more serious. This is a great place to start if you are already a member of Facebook.
- **Instagram** is a good middle between Facebook and YouTube. Instagram is a visual-first platform that focuses on storytelling. It is integrated with Facebook and Threads, so you can post on all three platforms at once (a real time saver)!. You can utilize stories and reels to highlight joint activities with candidates or other CECs to highlight coordination. You can also fundraise easily with a button, which can be added to your profile!

### **These platforms are good to have, but not necessary to get your message out:**

- **Threads** is another alternative to X/Twitter. It is integrated with Instagram.
- **X/Twitter** used to be a middle ground platform, but has skewed to the right and Democrats are increasingly leaving the platform. However, it's a great platform to reach audiences with different views than your own. Twitter also drives real-time conversations and uses hashtags and threads effectively. Most major news outlets also use Twitter to find stories, and post news themselves, so it's a great place to follow the press!
- **Bluesky** is a new social media platform favored by progressive and left-leaning individuals. Similar to Twitter, Bluesky drives real-time conversations and uses threads effectively and can be a place to find people who are more aligned with Democratic beliefs.
- **YouTube** is great for longer videos. To reach a larger audience, try YouTube shorts. These usually perform well (even if you don't have a lot of subscribers)!



## Here are a few tips and tricks to strategize and grow your digital presence.

- Remember, **you don't have to be everywhere all at once!** Choose one or two platforms and focus your efforts and attention on building your following there.
- Try to post at least **5-6 times a week.**
- **In addition to your goals and audience, think about the emotion you want to evoke.** Anger about injustices to drive those to donate, pride to encourage those to volunteer? Keep the emotion you want to evoke in mind when you're crafting your social media posts.
- Maintain a good balance of uplifting community events and volunteer opportunities with posts about political issues. When highlighting issues, **include county-specific statistics to make your message more relevant.** Your content mix will naturally change throughout the year — expect more legislative updates during session and increased event coverage during summer months.
- **Don't treat your social media posts like a personal essay.** Remember to keep the text in graphics concise and punchy and do the same for your captions. Linking to an article or a blog post on your website will drive home your point / message a lot stronger than a long social media caption.
- **Remember, attention spans are short.** Limit big or extravagant words, maintain a professional tone, and use accessible, concise language.
- Do a little research to **ensure your target audience is on that platform.** If your goal is to reach younger voters, maybe you should investigate Instagram. If you're looking to activate the base and get more volunteers, Facebook may be the best place!
- Think about how many social media sites you can **manage at once.** Don't overextend yourself by attempting to do too much, focus your efforts on small ways to increase your online presence.
- If you're interested in featuring photos about Governor Beshear, the official Flickr account is a great place to find high quality photos: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/govandybeshear/albums/>
- **Keep your passwords for your accounts in one document.** Share this with trusted members, so you avoid being locked out and can pass on this information to future members.
- **Connect with other partners** who are on the same platform. Democratic Women's Clubs, YD's or other CECs may also have pages on the platform. Find them and share and comment on their posts! This will grow both your and their followers.

- **Double check your posts!** Editing is important when putting information out there. Make sure the grammar is correct, event details are right, and pictures are clear before you post!
- **Don't argue!** Remember that your social media posts are available to everyone to see. That means that people who disagree with your message can and will say things to anger you or your followers. Don't engage with those posts. You won't change their minds and it could spiral into an argument on your page.
- Consider **using the strengths** of your CEC or partners to build a following! Is there anyone on your CEC or YDs who are good at social media? Do you have the funds to hire an intern for a few hours to maintain your presence and post consistently?

Finally, thanks to analytics built into these social media platforms, we now have easy ways to track the followers, engagement, and outreach. There are free and easy to use tools, like Meta Business Suite for Facebook and Instagram and Twitter Analytics, that you can use to track outreach.

If you need more help or guidance please contact our Digital Director, Clarissa Fisher [clarissa@kydemocrats.org](mailto:clarissa@kydemocrats.org)

## Emails

Email remains one of our most powerful tools for engaging with voters, volunteers, and supporters across Kentucky. When crafted thoughtfully, emails help us build relationships, mobilize our base, and advance our Democratic values throughout the Commonwealth.

### Email structure

#### 1. The Hook (First few sentences)

Your opening line must grab attention immediately. Strong hooks include:

- A compelling statistic ("Did you know that 1 in 4 Kentucky children live in poverty?")
- A powerful quote ("We can't wait another day' – that's what Sarah from Lexington told me about health care reform")
- A timely reference ("As winter approaches, thousands of Kentucky seniors are choosing between heating and medicine")

A personal story ("Last week, I met a teacher in Louisville who opened my eyes...")

## 2. The Body (2-3 Paragraphs)

Your main content should flow naturally from your hook. Each paragraph should:

- Be 2-4 sentences long
- Focus on one main point or idea
- Connect back to Kentucky Democratic values and communities
- Build urgency toward your call to action
- Use clear, conversational language

## 3. The Call to Action

Make your ask clear and compelling:

- Use action-oriented language ("Click here to donate" "Sign up now" "Join us Saturday")
- Create urgency ("Only 24 hours left" "First 100 supporters get...")
- Make it easy (One clear button and at least 2-3 links)
- Be specific about impact ("Your \$25 provides transportation for five voters")

## 4. The P.S.

Always include a P.S. line – it's often the second-most-read part of an email after the hook. Use it to:

- Reinforce urgency ("P.S. Early voting starts in just 3 days!")
- Add social proof ("P.S. Over 500 Kentuckians have already signed up!")
- Make a personal connection ("P.S. I hope to see you at Saturday's rally in Frankfort")

## Tips

- Use emojis in subject lines (just be sure use them when appropriate and don't overuse)
- Include an image or graphic in the email to grab your readers attention
- Include 2-3 links in a fundraising email and one button (linked)
- **ALWAYS make sure you include an unsubscribe link in the footer of the email**
- Maintain a balance of fundraising emails and emails that engage your audience about the interesting and positive things that are happening in your community (this is the same advice for maintaining a balance of the type of content you post on social media).

# Event Submissions

Have an event that you'd like to reach a wider audience? The KDP would be happy to add the event to the [KDP calendar](#) on the official KDP website and promote it on the [KDP Mobilize](#).

Events can include but are not limited to:

- CEC monthly meetings
- Dem booth presence at fairs / festivals
- Meet & Greets with local leaders / candidates
- Door knocking, phone banking - any type of volunteer event
- Any event you host that you'd like like minded Democrats in your area to attend

There are three ways to submit events to the KDP:

- You can be added to the KDP Mobilize account as an organizer where you'll be able to:
  - Create events
  - Edit/delete your own events
  - View volunteer shift data
- Submit via form on the [county calendar page](#) on the KDP website. The password to access the form is KYdemcounties2024#
- Email Digital Director, Clarissa Fisher at [clarissa@kydemocrats](mailto:clarissa@kydemocrats) to have your event added to the KDP county calendar and Mobilize page. Please include the following information when submitting an event:
  - Name of event
  - Date, time, and timezone
  - Location
  - Short blurb about event
  - Any graphics / flyers for the event

# Media Relations

Working with the press can be tricky, but can be part of the job of a CEC member. A good rule to go by is to **always** reach out to the KDP if a reporter reaches out for an interview. Reporters sometimes have an angle, therefore it may not be in your CEC’s interest or the KDP’s interest to respond to a media inquiry. The KDP communications department will help you prepare for your interview, ensure you're comfortable with any messaging needs, and go over any other issues that may arise.

While you should always reach out to the KDP, there may be times where the press attends an event or comes to your booth at a community event. Here are a few dos and don’ts to remember for when this happens.

Do	Don’t
The reporters’s job for them	Lie
Assume that you’re “on record,” unless told explicitly you’re “off the record” up-front	Be combative
Be up-to-date with KDP messaging	Say anything you wouldn’t be comfortable seeing printed in a newspaper
Answer the question asked	Overshare

Finally, there may be issues local to your community that you’d like to highlight. Feel free to reach out to our communications team to help you with letters-to-the-editor, op-eds, or press releases to bring attention to an issue!

# Fundraising and Compliance

Raising money should be a top priority of the CEC. Having funds is key to achieving the goals of the Committee; it's also one of the most difficult parts of this work. Your CEC will need funds for a variety of activities. From purchasing space at community events to hiring interns to printing GOTV literature, funding is key to bringing the Democratic message to voters. You should also work with your committee to create plans to achieve your fundraising goals — plans get things done!

**DON'T FORGET** that the CEC must file their financial reports twice a year with KREF!

## Events

Events are the most common way CECs raise money annually. Events like chili suppers or hot dog luncheons are an easy way to get folks out and raise a little money. CEC members and partner organizations, like the Women's Club, can work together to organize and host these events.

Here are a few things to think about when hosting fundraising events:

- Consider creating a Host Committee to help you build a list of possible attendees who can fund your work and ask them to call and make an ask.
- Remember, keep it fun but it is a fundraiser! Make sure people know it's a fundraiser by including a suggested donation on your invitation.
- Keep the expenses low! Find a member's home or other free space to hold the event and ask members to help by bringing food and drinks.
- Remember the thank-yous! You should collect and store the contact information for your donors in accordance with state law. Use this to send thank-you notes to those who donated. Believe it or not, these will go a long way to build your funding list!
- Don't forget to double check compliance rules before your event, so you know what you can spend and how you report contributions of any kind.

## Call Time

Call time refers to dedicated time that you or someone on your CEC contacts their network with a specific ask and is one of the most effective ways to raise funds. Much like with volunteering, people are more likely to help when they get a call from someone they know.



## Where to find funders:

Start with people you know. Members of your CEC, folks who have volunteered before, your elected officials, and SSEC members are a great place to start! They know your mission and goals so the ask will be easier. They may also have additional names to add to your list!

At the same time, make sure not to limit your outreach to only people CEC know. Bringing in new donors is the best way to ensure longevity and success in a fundraising program. Break out your “rolodex” or as they call it now-a-days, the “contacts” in your phone and brainstorm on how inclined a person may be to give, what their capacity might be, and who would be best to reach out to them.

Once you have a good list of folks to start with, think about ways to expand your list. Use KREF or the FEC filings to identify others who may be helpful in giving. Remember, any donation helps, even \$5 can mean the difference between no staff and a summer intern to help with social media.

If you have questions about where to find people to ask, contact Finance Director, Lucas Johnson, [lucas@kydemocrats.org](mailto:lucas@kydemocrats.org).

## Income Tax Checkoff Funds

All Kentucky taxpayers have the option of donating two dollars (\$2) to a political party of their choice. Each CEC receives fifty cents (\$.50) of that donation with the remainder going to the State Parties. This means with a little effort in publicizing ITC funds, the CEC will receive funds! There are specific compliance requirements around these funds, so read the compliance section to understand more. ***If you are ever in doubt about using funds, please contact the KDP or KREF.***

## Other Solicitations

Events and call time are two ways to raise funds for your CEC. However, there are other opportunities that you or your Finance Committee may want to also consider to help fund the work of your organization.

- Mail: Mail solicitation can be used to build and maintain your supporters list! It can be a bit more expensive than other options as you’ll need to purchase stamps and stationary. But it can be a profitable way to begin your fundraising plans.
- Email: If you already have an email list that you communicate with regularly, you should always include a clear donation ask. It doesn’t add to your time in sending an email and can get you easy funding.

If you have questions on how to get started with your fundraising plan and goals, contact Finance Director, Lucas Johnson, [lucas@kydemocrats.org](mailto:lucas@kydemocrats.org). **26**

# Compliance

Raising money is key to the success of a CEC and should always be a focus of your work. At the same time, local committees are also subject to Kentucky Revised Statutes (KRS) governing how money is raised and spent. Here we will discuss a few highlights you should be aware of to comply with KRS. ***If you are ever in doubt of what you should be doing, please call the KDP (502-695-4828) or KREF (502-573-2226).***

An individual may contribute up to \$5,000 per year to each CEC. This includes both direct and in-kind contributions. Raised funds can be used in a variety of ways, but there are limits to what CECs can use funds for.

Allowable use of funds	Non-Allowable use of funds
Non-Federal contributions to candidates or independent expenditures	Contributions to social clubs or organizations, YD's or Women's clubs, Chamber of Commerce dues, etc.
Transfer funds to affiliated executive committees	To provide "scholarships" for students
Administrative expenses, rent, utilities, phone bills, etc.	Sending flowers to individuals in the hospital or funerals
Political advertisements either for the "party" ads or for candidates	Buying advertising for YD's
Fundraising events <sup>2</sup>	Making contributions to school programs
Purchase advertising space in programs or events put on by non-political organizations (YD's, Women's Clubs, etc.)	Purchasing non-political items such as girl scout cookies, candy from school groups, etc.
GOTV literature and advertising	Equipment that will not remain with the Committee possession post election
Reimbursement to committee members for travel expenses to National and State Party Conventions	Paying cash for any items or services. All purchased items must be by check.
Staff, interns, or administrative support	

<sup>2</sup> This does not include charitable gaming, such as raffles.

## Reporting Requirements

The Kentucky Registry of Election Finance (KREF) is the oversight organization to ensure state law is complied with for executive committees, candidates, and other political organizations. In recent years, KREF has built an online application for political organizations for financial reporting. ***If you have any questions about reporting please call the KDP at 502-695-4828 or KREF at 502-573-2226.***

CECs are required to file their financial report to KREF twice a year. The first semi-annual report covers January 1 through June 30, and the report is due to KREF by July 31st. The second is due on January 31, and the report should reflect the period between July 1 through December 31st.

***These reports are due whether there were funds raised or not*** and must be completed by the Chair or Treasurer of the CEC. As Chairs and Treasurers leave the committee, KREF should ***always*** be updated to reflect these changes. Only the Chair can update information in the KREF system, so it is important to keep information up to date.

## Donation Disclosure

**Donations** to a CEC, KREF requires certain things disclosed for each person who has donated. Each of these donations are reported as itemized receipts by the individual contributor. While this may be a difficult task, remember that this is an easy way for you to collect information about your contributors so you can ask them to volunteer or future support for the CEC! This will be reported on the Itemized Receipts section of KREF reporting.

Information needed to accurately submit to KREF.

KREF has required information about donors. Please ensure you capture the below information for folks that help fund your work!

*Date of contribution*

*Contact info: Name and address*

*Employer info: Employer name and occupation*

*Type of Contribution: cash, check, or card*

Anonymous cash is another way to report funds raised. If you have a booth at a county fair and sell campaign goodies or food, you can report this as anonymous cash. However, this is limited to \$2,000 per reporting period, so keep this in mind if you raise more than that in cash!

## Income Tax Checkoff (ITC) Funds

All Kentucky taxpayers have the option of donating two dollars (\$2) to a political party of their choice. Each CEC receives fifty cents (\$.50) of that donation with the remainder going to the State Parties. This means with a little effort in publicizing ITC funds, the CEC will receive funds!

There are a few things to remember with ITC funds. First, these funds are reported separately from your general ledger, so you'll need to ensure that you can tell the difference between what you receive from general fundraising and the ITC check. Secondly, according to KRS 121.230 (1)(b) the funds are restricted to the support of candidates in the general election or administrative costs. In other words you can use the funds CEC office space, utilities, office supplies, or equipment or to fund a candidate in the general election only. ***If you are ever in doubt about using funds, please contact the KDP or KREF.***

## Field

CECs should be out in their community introducing themselves and educating voters through community events and direct voter contact. Sometimes referred to as field organizing, building relationships with voters and the community is key to winning elections and growing the party. Field is usually associated with GOTV activities, but it should be a year-round effort to ensure your local party is strong and ready for the election cycle. We've discussed a lot of ways for the CEC to be more present throughout the community.

Traditional field campaigns are run by the "three touch rule". This means that voters are more likely to engage with the CEC or a campaign and vote if they are reached three times before Election Day. The most effective way to reach voters is through direct voter contact (e.g., a face-to-face conversation), but once a relationship has been established, less direct ways can be used, like text messaging. Building the relationship first is the best way to ensure the CEC goals are being met. Here we'll discuss the importance of reaching voters where they are to grow the party and increase voter turnout.

### DON'T FORGET TO TRACK YOUR DATA

The Voter Activation Network (VAN) is one of the most powerful tools we have to identify supporters, track voters, and develop winning strategies. It is important to make sure you track the data received from voters during conversations. If you need help with VAN, please contact the Data Director at [camlopez@kydemocrats.org](mailto:camlopez@kydemocrats.org) for training, access, or questions about best practice! To request access to VAN visit <https://www.kydemocrats.org/take-action>.

# Voter Registration

Voter registration drives are one of the most popular ways to engage voters where they are. Drives are relatively easy to plan and execute. All you need is a table, registration cards, and a pen! Also, potential voters will come to you so it's a great time to engage them with the work of the CEC and invite them to participate in your work! There are a few things to keep in mind as you plan registration events.

- Make sure you're following registration guidelines! Check the Kentucky State Board of Election [website](#) regularly to make sure you're following registration laws.
- The Secretary of State now also allows [online registration](#), so make sure you have a computer or phone with internet access to make it even easier. For those who are less techy, have registration forms printed out and ready to go.
- Conduct quality control on hand written registration forms for accuracy and completeness before submitting to the County Clerks office.
- Think outside the box on where to find potential voters! Community events are great places to register voters, but there are other opportunities as well. Setting up on the local college campus or apartment complexes is a great way to find new voters, too. Before setting up, make sure you check with property owners, managers or anyone you need approval from, if required.

Finally, always follow up with newly registered voters! They may be interested in being more involved with your work, either by attending a meeting or volunteering for the next registration drive.

## Canvassing

Knocking on doors is the most effective way to reach voters in your community. While it can seem a little daunting to go door-to-door, data shows that one face-to-face conversation with voters can raise turnout by 10%. That can be the difference between a win and loss for most candidates in the Commonwealth! This personal contact with voters can help them feel heard, gives them time to ask questions, and puts a local face to the work the CEC does.

Here are some tips and tricks on canvassing your neighbors:

- **You won't talk to most voters.** No matter what time you canvass, folks won't be home. If you have a piece of literature, leave it in the door (not in the mail box) and follow up.
- **Use a script** to ensure that messaging reaching voters is consistent. Scripts also allow for questions to be asked the same, meaning data will be more accurate.



- **Use the VAN** to create walk lists with targeted voters. We'll discuss VAN more thoroughly below, you should always use VAN to develop your canvassing plan. It will have the most accurate data for canvassing.
- **Don't hit every door.** It may be tempting to talk to every voter in the neighborhood, but some of those voters are not for Democrats and no amount of conversation will change their mind. Hit doors that will increase Democratic turnout.
- **Hit as many doors as you can.** Try not to get caught up in long conversations with voters, it can lower your knock rate! Find the balance between hearing the voters' concerns and moving to the next door.
- **Put your data into VAN.** Once your shift ends, make sure you upload the data into VAN for future use. You will learn a lot about that voter that will help inform future volunteers and candidates. It's important to track this.
- **Canvass even when elections aren't happening.** Talking to voters is the best way to understand the issues that are important to them. That's information that can be used at any time to build the Party!

Thank voters for their time. People are taking time out of their day to talk with you. Remember to thank them for their time and input.

### Work with Candidates

Make sure that you are working regularly with candidates during the election cycle to ensure scripts, walk and call lists, and messaging are aligned. You don't want to knock on a door that was knocked yesterday or that your message conflicts with the campaigns. We want all Democrats to be on the same page.

### Phonebanking

Another way to contact voters directly is phonebanking. While it's not as effective as canvassing, it can be a good way to reach voters. If you can find the space to phonebank as a team, it can also be a great way for volunteers to have fun together! Keep the tips and tricks above when planning a voter contact phone bank.

You can also phonebank to announce events or to grow your volunteer base. Thanks to VAN, you can create a variety of phonebank lists to meet your needs. Call through new voters to ask them to attend the next CEC meeting. Or call through previous donors to invite them to your annual fundraiser! Be creative with how you use lists, but always remember to capture the data in VAN!



# Deep Canvassing

Deep canvassing is a term used to describe conversations with voters that are more personal than political and can help build deep personal relationships with your CEC. Deep canvassing requires longer conversations that can lead voters to consider a new point of view in order to find common ground and possibly change opinions. Studies have shown that the quality of deep canvassing conversations has a longer lasting impact on voters than traditional canvassing, in which quantity of doors is key.

Deep canvassing can be a good way to better understand the needs of your community and issues that are important to voters. These conversations can be the foundation of Democratic candidates and campaigns creating their messaging and identifying who their voters are and what they care about.

Deep canvassing gives CECs the opportunity to ask voters their opinion on specific issues and ask why they feel that way, find common ground, and provide new perspectives in an effort to change minds on those issues. A few things to remember when deep canvassing:

- These conversations are intended to be free flowing, but data should still be collected about issues and responses.
- Stay calm. Some issues, like abortion or the LGBTQ+ community, come with a lot of passion. Trying to change minds includes listening to people's opinions. Listen calmly and share your experience that may differ without putting the voter on the defense.
- Practice active listening by acknowledging what you hear and validate emotions without agreeing.
- Find common ground by connecting through shared values about the community and local issues.
- Know when to wrap up and have a polite exit ready for unproductive conversations.
- Trust your instincts and if something feels off, politely end the conversation and move to the next voter.

# Data

A lot of folks get intimidated when they hear the term “data”. Here we’ll discuss why data is important in the growth of the party at the local and state level, and in winning elections. While we’ll focus mostly on statewide data here, remember that there is data to gather at every activity your CEC does. At voter registration drives, you have names and contact information of new voters in your community. Or a sign-in sheet at your chili cook-off can be a base of volunteers later!

In this section, we’ll focus mostly on the Voter Activation Network (VAN), also known as VoteBuilder. VAN is the warehouse of Kentucky voters data. It houses voter registration data, the voter file that shows who votes, consumer data, and campaign information. This powerful tool allows us to identify the voters we want to talk to, develop strategies to win elections, and better understand the needs and wants of voters. As such, CECs should use VAN to record the data gathered in canvassing, phonebanking, and deep canvassing.

The best way to understand how to use the strength of VAN is to use it. We’re only going to talk about the importance here, but you should contact [camlopez@kydemocrats.org](mailto:camlopez@kydemocrats.org) at the KDP and visit <https://www.kydemocrats.org/take-action> for more resources. We’re here to help!

## Using Who You Have

Data gathering and analysis can be intimidating, but it is key to winning! It is important to use the VAN when recruiting volunteers and especially when conducting direct voter contact. If you aren’t comfortable using VAN, remember that there’s support out there to help you! If you have a Young Dems, College Dems, or High School Dems chapter in your county, that may be a chance to up your data game. Or maybe a neighboring CEC uses VAN and can help your committee. As always, you can reach out to the KDP to help you build and sustain a data plan at <https://www.kydemocrats.org/take-action>.

## Using VAN for Recruitment

VAN houses all kinds of information on voters in your community. It can be an easy way for you to identify folks who may volunteer for CEC activities and events. VAN houses information from previous elections, event attendees, and contact responses. You can create lists based on these responses to begin calling folks to volunteer. Remember, with lists like this, you'll likely receive more no's than yeses, but for every yes you have another volunteer!

## Using VAN for Voter Identification

The primary use of VAN is to directly identify voters based on data that includes their possible level of support. The data housed within VAN allows CEC and campaigns to find voters who are highly likely to vote for Democratic candidates, identify voters who may be persuaded to vote with a little push, or voters who only vote during certain election cycles, like the president or governor. CECs shouldn't plan to make lists for campaigns; the KDP or campaign will do that. But CECs should participate in voter contact plans and data collection.



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