

By-Laws of the
AIKEN COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Article I - Name

The name of the organization shall be the Aiken County Democratic Party, herein also referred to as “ACDP,” “County Party” or “Party.” It shall be affiliated with the Democratic National Committee and the South Carolina Democratic Party (“State Party”) and shall work in harmony with other Democratic Party organizations across the State of South Carolina and Aiken County, including clubs organized by area or constituency.

Article II – State Democratic Party

The ACDP, including but not limited to the County Party organizations and the County Convention, shall be governed by the South Carolina Democratic Party Rules (“State Party Rules”). State Party Rules, as amended by the State Party, are incorporated in their entirety. The State Party Rules shall take precedence should there be any inconsistencies between these County Party Rules and State Party Rules.

Article III - Mission

The mission of the Aiken County Democratic Party is to educate and encourage participation in the political process by people of all backgrounds who support the Democratic National Committee Platform.

To achieve this mission, ACDP will:

Register voters, recruit, and support candidates, and organize get-out-the-vote (GOTV) activities.

Educate the community about Democratic Party ideals and the Democratic Party platform.

Inform voters about political events and issues.

Support the organization and development of precinct teams and regional clubs as is outlined in the State Party Rules.

Article IV – Membership

Section 1 – Eligibility

The membership of this organization shall be open to and inclusive of all interested Democrats who reside in Aiken County. Members of ACDP are encouraged to register and make a personal commitment to vote in all elections.

Section 2 – Inclusion and Non-Discrimination

ACDP shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, ethnic or national origin, age, disability, veteran status, social or economic status, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or any other factor unrelated to membership and the mission of ACDP.

At the county conventions and precinct meetings, the full participation of Democratic Supporters of Aiken County is encouraged, including members of all genders and sexual orientations, members of all racial/ethnic groups, members of all age groups, all economic groupings, and people of varying levels of educational attainment.

In the selection of delegates, the numbers should reflect the proportion of women, youth, and members of minority groups in the population of the county.

Section 3 – Dues

In lieu of dues, donations may be solicited at any ACDP meetings, gatherings, or events. Funds collected will be used for ACDP expenses and ACDP programs or may be donated to Democratic Party candidates within the limits defined by law.

Section 4 – Voting

Only duly elected County Executive Committee members shall have voting privileges at County Party Executive Committee meetings. Alternate Executive Committee members shall vote only if their precinct's committee member is not present.

Section 5 – Supporter Data

A database of supporters and friends of the ACDP will be maintained and may be shared only with County Party Executive members, upon request.

Section 6 - Compensation

No officer or member of the ACDP shall receive any compensation for his/her services rendered in support of ACDP, other than reimbursement for expenses approved in advance by the County Chair.

Article V – County Officers & County Executive Committee Members

Section 1 – County Party Officers

The County Officers shall be the County Chair, three vice-chairs, Treasurer, Secretary, State Executive Committee members with Alternate State Executive Committee members and Finance Director.

- A. The county chair, vice chairs, secretary and treasurer elected in 2024 will serve a term of only one year. Subsequently, at the county convention in odd numbered years, officers will be elected to serve for a two-year term; the secretary and treasurer will be elected by the county Executive Committee at its first meeting after the other officers are chosen.
- B. The nominating committee will require candidates for party office to file ahead of time. There will be no nominations from the floor unless no candidate has filed. The filing period will be two weeks ending two days before the county convention.
- C. Members of the state Executive Committee and their alternates who were elected in 2022 will serve until their replacements are elected by their county convention in 2025. Subsequently, elections for the state Executive committee will be held in the odd numbered years.
- D. Subsequent to 2024, county conventions will meet in both even and odd numbered years, election their officers and members of the state committee in the odd years.
- E. Delegates to the State convention will be chosen by county conventions in even numbered years and will serve for two years.

Section 2 – County Chair and Vice-Chairs

A County Chair and three Vice-Chairs elected at the Aiken County Convention and shall serve on the County Executive Committee. The First Vice-Chair shall be of a race different from the Chair, the Second Vice-Chair shall be of a gender different from the Chair, and the Third Vice-Chair shall be between the ages of 18 and 36 years of age. These officers and those named in Sections 3, 4 and 5 shall be residents and voters in Aiken County.0

Section 3 – Additional members of the County Executive Committee

The Secretary and a Treasurer shall not necessarily be members of the Committee, except as designated by the Executive Committee. In consultation with the County Chair, the County Executive Committee may elect a Finance Director as set forth in the State Party Rules. The Finance Director's duties shall include assisting the County Party Chair and Treasurer in soliciting financial contributions and providing adequate financing for the County Party. Other members of the Aiken County Democratic Party Executive Committee may include the Communication Director, Chair Emeritus, Rules Committee persons and the Platform & Resolutions persons.

Section 4 – State Executive Committee Representatives

The Aiken County Convention shall also elect two Executive Committee members, a male and a female, and two Alternate Executive Committee members, a male and female, to serve and vote on the State Executive Committee. The County Chair and the Vice-Chairs may not hold the office of State Executive Committee Representative. The State Executive Committee representatives are also members of the County Executive Committee and shall serve as liaisons between the State Party and ACDP.

If Aiken County shall be unrepresented by either State Executive Committee Representative or an alternate at three consecutive meetings of the State Executive Committee, the Committee member(s) shall be deemed to have vacated his/her position.

Section 5 – County Executive Committee Members

The Precincts in Aiken County shall operate under the control of a County Executive Committee, which shall consist of the Executive Committee Members as defined in Sections 2, 3 and 4 above, as well as one Executive Committee person from each Precinct, elected at the county convention as outlined in the State Party Rules. Individuals will file two weeks prior to the convention who want to represent their precincts as members or alternates on the county executive committee. Any participant in the convention may also submit their name on the list to be a county executive committee person. As elected officials, Executive Committee members are the foundation of the Democratic Party's base and are critical to the grass roots organization of Precincts. Any Officer of the County Executive Committee shall be entitled to vote on any question, except the Chair and then only in the case of a tie vote.

Section 6 – Tenure

Terms of office shall be set by the State Party.

Section 7 – County Party Officer Duties

The County Chair, Vice-Chairs, Secretary, Treasurer, Financial Director, and State Executive Committee Members shall work collaboratively to create a strategic plan for the county party, set and achieve goals, provide adequate funding for all ACDP activities, and attend meetings appropriate to the office.

In addition to the above, the Treasurer maintains and reports on ACDP income and expenditures and is specifically responsible for submitting any required State ethics reports on time. It is also the Treasurer's responsibility to submit copies to the County Chair and Vice-Chairs.

All precinct officers except delegates to the County Convention shall be reported by the County Secretary to the County Chair for required reports to the Clerk of Court of the County and to the Secretary of State prior to the State Convention. The reports shall be public records.

Section 8 – Attendance Requirements

If an elected officer anticipates being absent from regularly scheduled meetings such as the County Executive Committee, County Convention, County Party Officer Meetings, meetings appropriate to the office, and/or ad hoc committees, the individual will contact the Chair of the Party as to the reason. If an elected officer is absent three times within a 12-month period without notifying the chair, the elected officer will be deemed to have resigned, and the position declared vacant.

Section 9 – Conduct

No person who has been convicted of a State or Federal crime related to voting or the conduct of an election shall hold office at any level of the party. Officers may be removed for other reasons as set forth in the State Party Rules including public support of a candidate of an opposing political party or indictment for a crime involving moral turpitude.

Section 10 – Vacancy or Recall

In the event that the office of County Chair shall become vacant, the County Executive Committee shall have the power to fill the vacancy until the organization of the next County Convention. Should other officer or committee member positions at other levels become vacant, State Party Rules apply. County Officers are subject to recall by a petition forty percent (40%) of the delegates to the most recent County Convention and a recall process as outlined by the State Party Rules.

Article VI – Nominations and Election Process for County Officers & Executive Committee Members

Section 1 – Nominating Committee

The County Chair, in consultation with the Executive Committee, shall appoint a Nominating Committee consisting of three members. The Nominating Committee shall be responsible for recruiting qualified candidates for County Party offices, informing prospective candidates of the roles and responsibilities of the office, presenting nominations, and managing the election process at the County Convention. This committee shall submit to the members at the County Convention a slate of names for the offices of County Chair, First Vice-Chair, Second Vice-Chair, Third Vice-Chair, and the two (2) State Executive Committee Members with alternates.

Section 2 – Candidate Nominations

Nominations are to be submitted in writing to the Nominating Committee up to two calendar weeks prior to the County Convention. Self-nominations are permitted. The Nominating Committee will confirm that all nominees are aware of their nomination, agree to be nominated, and if elected, will serve in that office for the term of the office. There will be no nominations from the convention floor unless there would otherwise be no candidates for a particular office.

Section 3 - Election Process

As determined by the Convention agenda, the Nominating Committee Chair will announce the nominee(s) for each office. Each candidate for a Party office will be given an opportunity briefly to speak to the convention delegates describing their qualifications for office and reason for their candidacy. Convention attendees will then vote for each office. Candidates who are uncontested for their position can be elected by acclamation. For positions where there is more than one candidate the vote will be taken by paper ballot. Any Democrat who is a registered voter have full voting privileges. The person receiving the most votes for each office is elected to the office.

Section 4 – Candidate Qualifications

Nominees for the Aiken County Democratic Party Executive Committee must be registered voters in Aiken County.

Nominees for County Executive Committee offices should be able to demonstrate commitment to the Democratic Party and a history of participation in the Democratic Party. This may be accomplished in numerous ways including, but not limited to, a voting record as a Democrat, having run for or served in elected office, having held office in the State or County Party or its subdivisions, having worked for a campaign(s) as a volunteer or paid staff, having served as a county, state, or national party convention delegate, having volunteered with the party and/or having participated in Democratic Party events.

Article VII – County Meetings

Section 1 – County Executive Committee Meeting Schedule

The ACDP Executive Committee shall meet at the call of the County Chair or twenty (20) percent of the members thereof, but not fewer than five (5) members, at such time and place as he/she or they determine. A minimum of four meetings of the County Executive Committee shall be held each year with proper notification of the members, as required by the State Party Rules. These meetings are open to all Democrats.

Section 2 – County Officer Meeting Schedule

The Chair and Officers of the ACDP, as defined in Article V, Section 1, shall meet quarterly, at a minimum, at the call of the County Chair.

Section 3 – Meeting Locations and Notice

The time and place for all ACDP meetings shall be publicized fully and in such a manner as to assure timely notice to all interested persons. Such meetings shall be held in places accessible to all party members and large enough to accommodate all interested people. No voting by proxy shall be permitted in any level of organization, including precinct meetings, state and county conventions and Executive Committee meetings.

At the beginning of each calendar year a tentative schedule of the Executive Committee meetings will be sent to all members of the Executive Committee by first class mail, email, or other means for the calendar year. At least a ten-day notice by first class mail, email, telephone, or other means must be given to all County Officers, Executive Committee members and alternates of any changes to the published schedule.

Section 4 – Quorum

A quorum for meetings shall be those Executive Committee members or alternates present but no fewer than five (5) members. A majority vote of those present is required to pass party business. Proxy voting shall not be permitted.

Section 5 - Fiscal Year

The fiscal year will begin the first of January and will run through December 31st.

Article VIII – Precincts

Each general election voting Precinct provided for by law shall organize a party club and shall be named by the Precinct number. The club shall elect officers and County Executive Committee members at Precinct Re-organization as set forth in the State Party Rules. Members of the Democratic Party shall belong to the voting Precinct set forth in their respective registration certificates. Precincts shall be organized and operated as set forth in State Party Rules.

Article IX– County Convention

Section 1 – County Convention

Beginning in 2025, a County Convention shall be called by the County Executive Committee in accordance with state law and State Party Rules for the purpose of electing officers, receiving reports of officers and committees, and for any other business that may arise.

Section 2 – Failure to Convene

In case any County Convention shall fail to meet on the day fixed, the State Party chair may fix a day for such county to meet for reorganization by giving two weeks' notice.

Section 3 – County Convention Rules

Every County Convention shall, after it elects its temporary president, adopt the rules by which it shall operate.

Section 4 – State Convention Delegates

County Party Delegates to the State Convention shall be elected in accordance with SCDP Rules.

Article X – Ad Hoc Committees and Area/Constituent Clubs

The County Chair shall have the right to appoint ad hoc committees and establish area Democratic clubs to assist in organizing and executing the work of the County Party.

Ad hoc committees may include, but are not limited to, committees for leadership (including officers and area/constituency club leaders), legislative action network, community action network, and political operations such as: data organization, get out the vote, precinct leadership and recruitment, fundraising, candidate recruitment, and program and membership outreach. The chairs of any ad hoc committees will serve the ACDP or Executive Committee in an advisory capacity only.

Area Democratic clubs, under the auspice of the ACDP, may include, but are not limited to, clubs organized within a particular region (such as Aiken, North Augusta, Beech Island/Jackson, Ridge Spring/Monetta, and Wagener/Salley, Midland Valley, New Ellenton), and clubs organized by constituency (such as the Aiken County Democratic Women’s Club, the Aiken County Young Democrats, or the South Carolina Stonewall Democrats), or clubs organized by policy/issue and recognized by the Executive Committee.

Article XI - Candidate Filing – Nominations – Primary Election

The laws of the State of South Carolina and the State Party Rules shall govern candidate filing, nominations, primary elections, and election protests.

Article XII – Candidate Support

Section 1 - Eligibility

Only declared candidates of the Democratic Party in partisan or non-partisan elections are eligible for support by the ACDP. ACDP will not support any Republican, Green, or other independent party candidate.

Section 2 – Standards

Candidates seeking the support of the ACDP must display integrity, ethical behavior, and a resolve to serve the best interests of all members of our community, state, and nation.

Section 3 – Equal Access

The ACDP will strive to provide equal access to meetings and events for Democratic primary election candidates. Normally, the ACDP shall not endorse or support any candidate prior to the primary election that selects the Democratic Party candidate. However, the Aiken County Democratic Party Executive Committee reserves the right to endorse a candidate whose values and principles are most consistent with the Democratic Party, should there be another Democratic Primary candidate(s) who does not reflect the principles and values of the DNC Platform, the SCDP, or the ACDP, or who has a long primary voting record or previously declared preference for another party.

Section 4 – Officer Support

Officers of the ACDP may support any national, state, or local Democratic candidates prior to the primary as long as they do so as a private individual, without any connection to their role in the organization.

Article XIII - Amendment of Rules

Amendments to these Rules may be made at any regular meeting of the ACDP Executive Committee, provided that all such amendments shall have been submitted to the Executive Committee in writing at the previous meeting and provided via e-mail or other means to the Executive Committee members at least two weeks prior to the meeting. A majority of the quorum of Executive Committee members present and voting at a properly called meeting shall be required for adoption of any amendments to these Rules.

Article XIV – Ratification

These By-laws of the Aiken County Democratic Party will be in effect upon its adoption by a majority vote of a quorum of Executive Committee members present at a regular meeting of the County Executive Committee. The approved document will be dated accordingly.

A copy of the By-laws will be made available to every Officer and Executive Committee member following ratification as well as to any Ad Hoc Committee Chairperson, when appointed. Members may request a copy. These By-laws shall supersede previous By-laws of the County Party.

By-Laws Adopted – January 12, 2012

Revised – April 15, 2014

Revised – March 12, 2019

Revised and approved – October 5, 2023

Revised and approved – December 7, 2023

Revised and approved: March 7, 2024

APPENDIX 1

Definitions

Aiken County Democratic Party, also referenced as the ACDP, Count Party or Party

South Carolina Democratic Part, also referenced as the SCDP or State Party

Democratic National Committee

Precinct – Aiken County electoral district (86 precincts as of Sept 2023)

County Officers: Chair, First, Second, Third-Vice Chairs, Secretary, Treasurer, County Executive Committee members and Finance Director (if so designated)

County Executive Committee (ExCom) members:

County Officers (elected),

One Precinct (County) Executive Committee person from each precinct (elected).

State Executive Committee Representatives (elected)

If so, designated by other members of the Executive Committee:

Treasurer

Secretary

Finance Director

Other County Executive Committee (ExCom) members: Chair Emeritus, Communications Director, Rules Committee persons and Platform and Resolutions persons

Clubs – groups of ACDP members organized by area or constituency.

Officers of Clubs – Per Club Bylaws as defined by the County Party

State Executive Committee Representatives – A male and a female, with each having an alternate per the State Party Rules

Alternate State Executive Committee Representatives – persons who may vote in the absence of the duly elected State Executive Committee Representative

State Convention Delegates: elected at the County Convention

Alternate State Convention Delegates: elected at the County Convention to fill State Convention Delegate vacancies.