

**DEMOCRATIC
CANDIDATE
RECRUITMENT
COMMITTEES**

by

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INTRODUCTION

Voters deserve a choice on Election Day!

The **State of Illinois** and the **Nation** will be well served by highly qualified Democrats running in every election.

To this end, every **Democratic County Central Committee** is encouraged to create a **Democratic Candidate Recruitment Committee** ranging in size from **3-15 members**. Many **County Central Committees** have already done so and are to be congratulated.

This manual is intended to serve as a blueprint for the creation of effective **Democratic Candidate Recruitment Committees** in the **State of Illinois** and the **Nation**.

STATEMENT OF VALUES

- Service rather than self-promotion
- Respect for others and their opinions
- Kindness
- Willingness to listen
- Willingness to change
- Commitments honored
- Generosity
- Fairness
- All have an equal voice
- All have an equal vote
- Joy in serving others

COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Democratic Candidate Recruitment Committees (DCRCs) can range in size from **10 - 20** members depending on the needs of the **County Central Committee**.

DCRC responsibilities include the following:

- Identify and recruit candidates to fill vacant township and precinct committee chairs.
- Obtain and make available a list of all open offices in the upcoming election.
- Establish candidate qualification criteria.
- Create needed subcommittees.
- Draft an action timeline with key dates for recruiting candidates.
- Identify and recruit qualified candidates for all federal, state, county, township, city and village offices open in the upcoming election.
- Co-ordinate recruitment efforts with other **County Central Committees** for open offices having representation districts falling in more than one county.
- Announce recruitment results and post on **County Central Committee Website**.
- Organize new candidate training sessions.
- Assist new candidates in timely filing of all registration documents with relevant election commission.
- Provide new candidates with candidate training manuals and other needed materials.
- Match each new candidate with a veteran political advisor.

COMMITTEE POSITIONS AND SUBCOMMITTEES

Let's consider the case of **Grand County, Illinois**.

Grand County is located in **Central Illinois**. The **Democratic County Central Committee** has determined that it will need a recruitment committee of **20 members**.

Grand County has **12 townships** each with an elected township committee chair. Each township has elected a representative to the **Candidate Recruitment Committee (CRC)**. The **County Chairperson** has appointed eight additional representatives to serve on the **CRC**.

The **CRC** has elected a **Chairperson**. The **Chairperson** has asked one of the committee members to serve as **Deputy Chairperson**.

To identify all open offices in the upcoming election, the **Deputy Chairperson** has contacted the **Illinois Board of Elections**, the **Grand County Clerk's Office**, and the **City of Democracy Election Commission**. **Democracy**, the largest city in **Grand County**, has a population of around **120,000** citizens. From the information provided by these agencies, the **Deputy Chairperson** has compiled and distributed a list of all open offices in the upcoming election to all **CRC** members.

To make the work more manageable, the **CRC** has decided to create **four subcommittees**. These subcommittees are:

- Federal and State Candidates
- County Candidates
- Township and Local Candidates
- New Candidate Education and Training

The **CRC Chairperson** has appointed committee members to serve on these subcommittees as follows:

- Federal and State (**four members**)
- County (**four members**)
- Township and Local (**ten members**)
- New Candidate Education (**two members**)

The Federal and State Candidate Recruitment Subcommittee

The Federal and State Candidate Recruitment Subcommittee (**FSCRS**) is responsible for identifying and recruiting at least one qualified candidate for the following offices:

- U.S. Congress
- State Senate
- State Representative

As these offices have representation districts that extend beyond **Grand County**, candidate recruitment efforts must be coordinated with other relevant **Democratic County Central Committees**.

County Candidate Recruitment Subcommittee

The County Candidate Recruitment Subcommittee (**CCRS**) is responsible for identifying and recruiting at least one qualified candidate, for each of the following open offices:

- Clerk
- Sheriff
- State's Attorney
- Corner
- Board Member(s)

Township and Local Candidate Recruitment Subcommittee

The Township and Local Candidate Recruitment Subcommittee (**TLCRS**) is responsible for identifying and recruiting at least one qualified candidate, for each of the following open offices:

- Township Trustee
- Township Assessor
- Mayor
- Alderman
- Librarian
- School Board
- Park District Commissioner
- Park Board

- Village Trustee

Each **candidate recruitment subcommittee** has elected a **chairperson** responsible for guiding the work of the subcommittee.

The **CRC Chair** coordinates the efforts of **all subcommittees**, and acts as liaison with other **Democratic County Central Committees** in recruiting candidates for **U.S. Congress, State Senate, and State Representative**.

New Candidate Education and Training Subcommittee

The New Candidate Education and Training Subcommittee (**NCETS**) is responsible for the following activities:

- Organize new candidate training sessions.
- Assist new candidates in timely filing of all registration documents with relevant election commission.
- Provide new candidates with candidate training manuals and other needed materials.
- Match each new candidate with a veteran political advisor.

IDENTIFYING QUALIFIED CANDIDATES

What are the characteristics or qualifications of an “**ideal**” Democratic candidate?

While no individual is perfect, it is possible to develop a list of desirable qualities to use when identifying possible candidates.

These qualities include:

- Integrity
- Wisdom
- Life experience
- History of community or public service
- Education (formal or self-taught)
- Strong work ethic
- Self-knowledge
- Sensitivity to needs of others
- Willingness to listen
- Willingness to speak
- Willingness to change
- Effective communicator

Also desirable though not essential are:

- Prior political experience
- Specialized knowledge and skills
- Knowledge of community needs and issues

Where is the **CRC** to find qualified and ethical candidates willing to commit the time and energy necessary to run a strong campaign?

Qualified and ethical candidates may be found among the following groups and organizations:

- Democratic county, township and precinct committees
- Former elected officials, candidates or Democratic committee members
- Voters casting ballots in Democratic primary races
- Religious organizations
- Educational organizations
- Places of employment
- Friends
- Neighbors
- Relatives
- Law enforcement agencies

- Veterans groups
- Retirees
- Unemployed workers

Documents and sources, which may be consulted, include voter lists, organizational directories, membership lists, personal phone directories, rolodexes, newspaper articles, op-ed letters, email list serves, and web sites.

RECRUITING QUALIFIED CANDIDATES

Why should any citizen over 18 years of age consider running as a political candidate? Because the **Bush Administration** and other **Republican Administrations** are leading this Nation to **economic, social and environmental disaster**.

The **American Heritage Dictionary** defines the word **patriot** as follows:

Patriot – One who **loves, supports and defends** his country

The United States currently faces these **critical issues**:

- A rapidly deteriorating economy with widespread loss of decent job opportunities
- High cost and increasingly inaccessible medical care, prescription drugs and health insurance
- Global warming and an emerging water crisis
- An apparently endless war and military occupation in the Middle East
- A growing dominance of corporate money over government policy and media reporting
- Cutbacks in funding for education, law enforcement and social services.

Former Illinois Senator **Paul Simon** states “**politics is the way that we create a better future.**”

Our **Nation** is in desperate need of **true patriots** – citizens who love **America** and **all** her people, who are willing to **fight** for the **hungry**, the **ill**, the **aged**, the **environment**, our **children’s education** as well as to **defend** our **borders** from aggression.

Our **Nation** in the **house** that we all **share in common**.

From time to time **household members** must **come together**, **hold meetings** and **decide how to address** the **important issues** that affect **all** its residents.

Our Nation needs **mature adults** who are willing to do **what is necessary** to **protect** our **common dwelling**.

Former **President Dwight Eisenhower** once made a statement to the effect that **all American adults** need to be **part-time politicians**. Only through **committed** and **caring adults** will we be able to create and maintain a political system dedicated to the **flourishing** of **all our citizens**, **not** just the **wealthy few**.

Our **Nation** needs **candidate patriots!**

RECRUITMENT TIMELINES

A candidate recruitment timeline should be developed for each candidate sought. A **sample timeline** follows:

2011 - 2012 Election Timeline

June 15th 2011	Initial recruitment committee meeting
June 15th - August 15th 2011	Recruit potential candidates
August 15th- November 15th 2011	Identify candidates who will run
September 16th 2011	Begin circulating nomination petitions
December 8th - 15th 2011	Approximate dates for filing petitions
February 2nd 2012	Primary Election Day
May – August 2012	Approximate dates for filling vacancies
November 6th 2012	General Election Day

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Getting Ready:

- ✓ Decide on purpose of meeting
- ✓ Create meeting plan
- ✓ Identify meeting coordinator
- ✓ Prepare and distribute agenda
- ✓ Set up meeting area

Starting:

- ✓ Begin on time
- ✓ Introduce meeting coordinator
- ✓ Allow participants to introduce themselves
- ✓ Ask for volunteer timekeeper
- ✓ Ask for volunteer recorder
- ✓ Review agenda items (change order if necessary)
- ✓ Set time limits
- ✓ Review prior meeting action items

Meeting Courtesy:

- ✓ Raise hand and be recognized before speaking
- ✓ Be brief and to the point
- ✓ Make your point calmly
- ✓ Keep an open mind

- ✓ Listen without bias
- ✓ Avoid side conversations
- ✓ Respect other opinions
- ✓ Avoid personal agendas
- ✓ Come prepared to do what's good for the organization
- ✓ Have fun

Finishing:

- ✓ **Develop action items (who, what, when, how)**
- ✓ Summarize meeting (Meeting Coordinator or a willing volunteer)
- ✓ Set time and date for next meeting
- ✓ As a group, evaluate the meeting
- ✓ Finish on time

Next Steps:

- ✓ Prepare meeting minutes
- ✓ Distribute minutes prior to next meeting
- ✓ Follow up on action items
- ✓ Start preparing for next meeting

SUMMARY

A strong **Democratic Party** is essential to the well being of our **Nation**.

Effective **Democratic Candidate Recruitment Committees** play a key role in getting **ethical** and **qualified** individuals to step up and run for **elected office**.

Recruiting these candidates will require effective **organization** and **dedicated effort**.

We can do it! We can create a just and prosperous nation for all our citizens.

But to do so, we need **high quality** elected officials with the **knowledge** and the **moral courage** to do the right thing once elected.

It will take **courage, intelligence** and **dedication**. As a nation, we have all of these in **abundance**.

So let us **begin!**