

Adopted: October 21, 2009, Last Amended January 23, 2020

Mission & Rules of the Charleston County Democratic Party

Article I – Name

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

Article II – State Democratic Party

The CCDP, 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”), including but not limited to County Party Organizations and County Conventions. State Party Rules, as amended by the State Party, are incorporated in their entirety. The State Party Rules shall reconcile any inconsistencies between these County Party Rules and State Party Rules.

Article III – Mission

The mission of the Charleston County Democratic Party is to educate and encourage participation in the political process by people of all backgrounds who support Democratic principles. Funds garnered from this participation will be used to help elect Democratic candidates and to support Democratic programs. To achieve this mission, CCDP will:

- Register voters, recruit and support candidates, and organize get-out-the-vote strategies
- Educate the community about Democratic ideals and the Democratic Party platform
- Inform voters about political events and about issues such as education, the environment, transportation, health, development, and the economy
- 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 (as defined by State Party Rules) who reside in Charleston County. Members of CCDP are encouraged to register and make a personal commitment to vote in all elections.

Section 2 – Inclusion and Non-Discrimination

CCDP 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, or any other factor unrelated to membership and the mission of CCDP. In conducting any business at any level, including the election of Party officers and the selection of delegates and alternates to county, state and national conventions, the State Committee, the State Convention and the Congressional District caucuses, the county conventions and precinct meetings are urged to encourage the full participation of all citizens of South Carolina including members of both sexes, members of all racial groups, members of all age groups, all economic groupings and people of varying levels of educational attainment. In particular, it is encouraged that in the selection of delegations the proportion of women, youth, and members of minority groups be selected so that they are represented in each delegation in proportions which reflect appropriately their numbers in the entire population of the county.

Section 3 – Dues

In lieu of dues, donations may be requested at the Executive Committee meetings.

Section 4 – Voting

Only duly elected County Executive Committee members shall have voting privileges. Alternate Executive Committee members shall vote only if their precinct's committee member is not present. County Party officers who are not also Executive Committee members do not have voting privileges.

Section 5 – Membership Data

A database of members and friends of the CCDP will be maintained and may be shared only with official local, state and national Democratic Party candidates and Democratic Clubs recognized by the county party. Upon furnishing the database to an official candidate, CCDP shall stipulate that the database not be shared with any other person/organization and not be used for any other purpose other than the candidate's campaign. Any other use of the membership data shall require a majority vote of the County Executive Committee. A fee may be charged for providing this data.

Section 6 – Compensation

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

Article V – County Officers & County Executive Committee Members

Section 1 – County Chair and Vice Chairs

A County Chair and three Vice Chairs shall be elected at the Charleston County Convention held in 2020 for a special one year term and then after in odd-numbered years for two-year terms and shall serve on the County Executive Committee. The First Vice Chair shall be of a gender different from the Chair, the Second Vice Chair shall be of a race 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 2, 3 and 4 shall be residents and voters in Charleston County. Any Officer who is not also elected by his/her Precinct club to serve as its Executive Committee member shall not be entitled to vote on any question, except the Chair and then only in the case of a tie vote.

Section 2 – Secretary, Treasurer, and Finance Director

In consultation with the County Chair, the County Executive Committee shall appoint officers including Secretary and Treasurer, and may elect a Finance Director as set forth in the State Party Rules. The Finance Director's duties shall include assisting the Treasurer in soliciting financial contributions and providing adequate financing for the County Party. These Officers shall serve on the County Executive Committee, but not necessarily be elected by his/her Precinct club to serve as voting Executive Committee members.

Section 3 – State Executive Committee Representatives

The Charleston County Convention shall also elect two members, a man and a woman, to serve and vote on the State Executive Committee, along with at least one alternate. 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 CCDP. If Charleston 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 4 – County Executive Committee Members

The Precincts in Charleston County shall operate under the control of a County Executive Committee, which shall consist of one Executive Committee person from each Precinct, elected at the Precinct Re-organization as outlined in the State Party Rules. Each Precinct elects an Executive Committee member to serve and vote on the County Executive Committee. An alternate is elected by each Precinct to serve and vote in the absence of the Executive Committee member. 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.

Section 5 – Officer Duties

The County Chair, Vice Chairs, Secretary, Treasurer, Finance 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 activities, and attend meetings appropriate to the office.

In addition to the above, the Treasurer maintains and reports on CCDP income and expenditures and is specifically responsible for submitting 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 record.

Section 6 – 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 7 – 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 of twenty percent (20%) 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 Members, shall appoint a Nominating Committee consisting of five members. The Nominating Committee shall be responsible for recruiting qualified candidates for office, making nominations, and managing all aspects of the election process. 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 State Executive Committee Members.

Section 2 – Nominations from Members

Any member in good standing may submit nominations in writing to the Nominating Committee at any time prior to the County Convention. In addition, nominations will be accepted from the floor at the County Convention.

Section 3 – Party Election Process

After each candidate for a Party office is given an opportunity to address the membership, a vote by paper ballot will be made. Only delegates to the County Convention as elected by each Precinct club are allowed to vote. The person receiving the most votes is elected to office.

Article VII – County Meetings

Section 1 – County Executive Committee Meeting Schedule

The CCDP 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 CCDP including the Vice Chairs, Secretary, Treasurer, and Director of Finance shall meet quarterly at the call of the County Chair.

Section 3 – Meeting Locations and Notice

The time and place for all CCDP 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 persons. No voting by proxy shall be permitted in any level of organization, including precinct meetings, state and county conventions and Executive Committee meetings. At least a ten day notice must be given to all County Officers, Executive Committee members and alternates by first class mail for all meetings of the County Executive Committee. Mailing of official notice of meetings may be waived and only email used for those members who agree in writing to this form of notice.

Section 4 – Quorum

A quorum for meetings shall be those Executive Committee members or alternates present and in good standing at the time of the meeting. A majority vote of those 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 Reorganization 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

Every general election year, 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. The Convention must be composed of delegates elected from the Precincts in the Charleston County as set forth in the State Party Rules. The State Executive Committee retains authority to set Convention times to conform to state laws and State Party Rules.

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.

Article X – Ad Hoc Committees and Area/Constituent Clubs

The County Chair shall have the right to appoint ad hoc committees and recognize area Democratic clubs to assist in organizing and executing the work of the County Party. The chairs of any ad hoc committees will serve the CCDP or Executive Committee in an advisory capacity only. Ad hoc committees may include, but are not limited to, leadership committee (including officers, area and 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. Area Democratic clubs may include, but are not limited to, clubs organized within a particular region (such as Charleston, East Cooper, James Island/Folly Beach, North Charleston, Sea Islands, St. Pauls & Edisto Island, and West Ashley), and clubs organized by constituency (such as the Charleston County Democratic Women, the Charleston 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 members and candidates of the Democratic Party in partisan or non-partisan elections are eligible for support by the CCDP. CCDP will not support any Republican, Green, or other independent party candidate.

Section 2 – Standards

Candidates seeking the support of the CCDP 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 CCDP will provide equal access to meetings and events for primary election candidates, but shall not endorse or support any candidate prior to the selection of the Democratic Party candidate.

Section 4 – Officer Support

Officers of the CCDP 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.

Section 5 – Non-Partisan Elections

The CCDP Executive Committee, upon the recommendation of the committee appointed by the chair, and as per their established procedures, will approve referendums and highly qualified candidates for non-partisan elections. The CCDP will disseminate information regarding referendums and those candidates so designated as highly qualified.

Article XIII – State Party Rules

The most recent edition of the South Carolina State Democratic Party Rules is attached to this Charleston County Mission & Rules as an addendum and is part of this document. In case of inconsistencies between these County Party Rules and State Party Rules, State Party Rules shall prevail.

Article XIV - Amendment of Rules

Amendments to these Rules may be made at any regular meeting of the CCDP, provided that all such amendments shall have been submitted to the Executive Committee in writing at the previous meeting, and announced via email to the general membership list at least two weeks prior to the meeting. A majority of the Executive Committee members present and voting at a properly called meeting shall be required for adoption of any amendments to these Rules.

Article XV – Ratification

This Mission & Rules of the Charleston County Democratic Party will be in effect upon its adoption by a majority vote of all Executive Committee members present at a regular meeting of the County Executive Committee. The approved document will be dated accordingly. A copy of the Mission & Rules will be posted on the CCDP website and presented to every Officer and Executive Committee member following election and to every Ad Hoc Committee Chairperson when appointed. Members may request a copy. These Mission & Rules shall supersede previous Mission & Rules of the County Party.