

Washington State Republican Party

PCO Manual 2013-2014

THE PARTY STRUCTURE

The Precinct

Precinct Committee Officers form the grassroots base of the Republican Party. The precinct is the starting point or the basic building block of the WSRP's political unit. Without an organized precinct, county parties and the WSRP would not be able to function effectively. In a party structure, party members working at the precinct level connect the precinct to the county and state-level party organizations.

The Legislative District

District organizations function as the next level in the PCO's involvement. The legislative district committee's primary responsibilities in conjunction with the County Party are to support State Senate and State House campaigns, specifically focusing on candidate recruitment, campaign training, finance, grassroots trainings and volunteer recruitment and coordination.

The County

The County Central Committee is comprised of all elected and appointed PCO's. Typically, you will meet in December or January of alternate years to elect the officers (County Chairman, Vice Chairman, State Committeeman and State Committeewoman, etc.). These county officers will be in charge of leading the county organization for the next two years and will represent you as members of the Republican State Committee.

The State

The 117 voting members (County Chairs, State Committeeman and State Committeewoman) of the Republican State Committee elect a State Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Washington State Republican Party. The State Chairman is the party's Chief Executive Officer and manages the party's business on a daily basis. State Party officers serve two-year terms. The State Committee members also meet by region to elect people from among themselves to serve on the State Executive Board. The State Executive Board, consisting of the 22 regionally selected members, National Committeeman, National Committeewoman, Vice Chairman and Chairman, oversees implementation of State Party programs on behalf of the State Committee, develops party policy, reviews the party's finances and conducts other official party business on behalf of the State Committee.

The Nation

The Republican National Committee consists of three representatives from each state and territory. These representatives are the National Committeeman and National Committeewoman (elected by the State Committee in the year of each Presidential election) and the State Party Chairman.

PCO Authority & Duties

“Your hard work and dedication to accomplishing the following tasks will help build a stronger, better and more effective county, state, and national party”

The Precinct Committee officer is the official **representative** of the precinct to the Republican Party. This is a partisan office established to represent the voters within a specific geographical area. The PCO’s duties and responsibilities are set forth in state law and the WSRP’s bylaws.

Below are the legal responsibilities specified in the Revised Code of Washington (RCW):

1. Legal Duties (RCW 29A.80.030 – WA Const. Art II Sec. 15)

- a. Assist in organizing your County Party by electing officers of the county’s Central Committee.
- b. Serve as a voting member of the County Central Committee.
- c. Responsible for electing replacements to fill vacancies in other elected partisan offices such as County Commissioner or State Legislator.
- d. Call and conduct precinct caucus, as directed by the County Chair.

2. PCO Eligibility (RCW 29A.80.041)

- a. Be a member of a major political party
- b. Be a registered voter in the precinct
- c. Pay a filing fee and file for election in even numbered years
- d. To be elected in the primary election, you must receive at least 10% of the total vote received by the party candidate receiving the high number of votes in the precinct.
- e. Serve a two year term starting December 1st following the November election.

3. PCO Appointment (RCW 29A.28.071)

- a. Appointment for open precincts must be after the county reorganization meeting.
- b. Eligibility: must be a member of a major political party, registered voter in the precinct, no filing fee is required.
- c. Appointment is made by the County Chair and may require approval of the County Executive Board

4. PCO Captain (WSRP Bylaws)

- a. If the County Chair cannot find a person with a precinct to serve as a PCO, then he or she may appoint a precinct captain. This individual acts as a PCO but does not live within the precinct.
- b. Same eligibility and process as a PCO appointment except appointee may live outside precinct to which he or she is being appointed Captain.

A strong and effective party relies on its PCO’s to perform the tasks below.

On average, these duties may take a minimum of ten hours per year. Accomplishing additional tasks will make all our efforts more effective. This manual will describe the basics of how to create a successful and streamlined precinct organization. You will find each individual task takes very little time.

Administrative Duties:

- Represent the views of precinct voters to the Republican Party; and represent the party and its candidates and officers to the precinct voters.
- Attend County Party and Legislative District meetings, help formulate policy, assist in recruiting party candidates and volunteers.
- Build relationships and identify Republican voters in your precinct. This will greatly increase Republican turnout. Assist the County Party in updating your precinct voter list by participating in voter identification and voter outreach programs.
- Support ALL Republican candidates after the Primary Election.
- Assist with fundraising events when possible.
- Volunteer on various campaigns.
- Doorbell your precinct before each election with our candidates.
- Stay involved and remain active in the community.
- Notify County Party officials and Republican candidates when Democrat activity is spotted in your precinct (e.g. direct mail pieces, doorbelling, TV ads, newspaper ads, polling, etc.)
- Assist the County Chair by leading your precinct caucus in each even-numbered year. This participation designates you as an automatic delegate to the County Convention.

A few hours a month is all it takes to create a strong and vibrant precinct.

These few hours will allow you to build a relationship and rapport with your neighbors. By doing this, your neighbors will seek your advice on leading political issues and candidates. Since you will be able to provide them valuable information, they will contact you as they are preparing to vote or write to their representatives in government. In many cases, you will be the only direct contact a voter has with our candidates and elected officials - So remember to be positive and always put your best foot forward!

Remember the tasks of the PCO are spread out over the year, which will make each vital task easier to execute. Unfortunately, if tasks are put off you'll find that activities will pile up. After being elected as a PCO, we recommend you sit down with your County Party and work on a long-term plan for your precinct which will make your job much more effective and easier. Should at anytime you find yourself falling behind significantly on your assignments; call your county organization immediately so they can assist you with your tasks.

Furthermore, you will find your work as a PCO very rewarding as you meet volunteers and friends from your precinct and county, have the opportunity to attend many events and fundraisers, and work directly with our stellar candidates who are proud to wear the Republican label.

Step 1 - Identifying Republican Voters

Plainly put, our goal as a party is to elect Republicans. The first step in accomplishing this goal is to identify and register Republican voters in your precinct.

The four major components to identifying and registering new Republican voters are:

1. Knowing your precinct
 2. Obtaining voter lists
 3. Canvassing your precinct
 4. Registering Republican voters
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1. **Knowing the Precinct:** Obtain a map of the precinct from the County Chair, County Clerk, or elections administrator. Drive around the precinct and walk through the neighborhoods to learn its geographical boundaries and characteristics. Knowing your precinct allows you to plan precinct activities, including canvassing, locating convenient meeting places, deciding where to distribute literature, registering voters, etc.
 2. **Obtaining Voter Lists:** Obtain a list of voters in the precinct by accessing the WSRP's voter file on our online file via GOP DATA CENTER or ask your County Chair for a printed list.
 3. **Canvassing the Precinct: Voter Identification/List Maintenance/Voter Registration**
There are two components to canvassing your precinct
 - Door-to-Door canvassing
 - Phone calls

A precinct canvass is similar to a political census. You will be visiting or phoning every household in the precinct. Your goals are to:

- Verify that people categorized as a 1 or 2 still self-identify as Republican.
- Identify those voters with no party affiliation (categorized as a 0).
- Identify people who are not registered but would probably support Republicans.
- Update lists by correcting or adding voters' phone numbers.
- Identify key issues that are important to a voter (e.g. education, transportation, health care, taxes, etc.)
- Find volunteers who will help with local, county, legislative, state and federal campaigns.

Prior to the canvass you'll need to prepare your walking list (**to learn how to prepare a walking list please consult the GOP Data Center section located in the appendix of this manual or ask your County or Legislative District Chair**):

1. Check the identification code for each voter.

Voter Code:

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 = Strong Republican | 5 = Strong Democrat |
| 2 = Leans Republican | 6 = Undecided/Refused to say |
| 3 = Independent | 0 = Unidentified |
| 4 = Leans Democrat | |

2. Prior to canvassing look up names identified as 1, 2, 3, 6 and 0 on your list and check the phone numbers in the phone book or internet (e.g. www.411.com). This is a very important task since studies have shown anywhere from 15% to 20% of a list can change over a one year period as people move and/or change phone numbers.
3. Mark the phone numbers that do not match the information you have and the names without phone numbers. You now have a list that identifies the names with incorrect phone numbers and the names without phone numbers. You will need to knock on the doors of these houses and discover who lives there. They may have a new phone number or they may be people who have recently moved into the precinct.

Now you're ready to walk:

- Wear a name badge that also includes your precinct number and name.
- Contact every registered voter.
- Verify that people categorized as a 1 or 2 still self-identify as Republican, as well as people categorized as a 4 or 5 still self-identify as Democrat.
- Identify people who are not registered but would probably support Republicans, such as eligible but unregistered individuals in Republican households.

Sample scripts

"Hello, I am _____, your elected Republican Precinct Committee Officer. Are you _____?
We are bringing our precinct records up to date and would like to ask a few short questions"

The script should **always** be as follows:

"Thinking back over the past few elections, would you say you voted: (1) Mostly or only for Republicans; (2) more Republicans than Democrats; (4) more Democrats than Republicans; or (5) Mostly or only for Democrats.

Note:

Never ask if an individual is an (3) independent voter. An (3) independent voter is someone who offers that answer without prompting, or says they vote for Republicans and Democrats equally or vote for the person, not the party.

If someone refuses or is undecided mark them as a (6). Don't try to convince them.

Please remember - To ensure fellow Republicans and candidates have access to your updated information, enter any new information you gather into GOP Data Center in a timely fashion!

While information and conversations are still fresh in your head, consider entering data into Voter Vault at the conclusion of your door-to-door activities.

Signing up and getting access to GOP Data Center is easy. Simply contact your County or Legislative District Chair and apply for an account today (see attached form). If you are unable to enter the data collected, you will need to make arrangement with your county or legislative district organization to have it entered. Knowing where Republican voters are located will decrease your workload and increase Republican turnout during election cycles. Please remember that Data Center is our secure database. Do not give your username or password out to anyone. Doing so will result in a suspension of all Data Center access and steep fines! Fellow Republicans and candidates seeking access should be referred to their County Chairs.

Telephone Calls: If you cannot walk your precinct, your walking list also contains phone numbers. Follow the same steps outlined for canvassing your precinct. Calling is another great way to identify and register new Republican voters.

Suggested Calling/Canvassing Times:

For canvassing / ID'ing (to speak to a person.)

Mon to Thu - 6 PM to 8:30 PM

Fri - Typically not a good day to call

Sat - 10 AM to 4 PM

Sun - 1 PM to 4 PM

Mon to Sat - To speak to senior citizens call from 10 AM to 5 PM

For Get-Out-The-Vote (GOTV) (or a message that can be left on a recorder)

Mon to Thu - 9 AM to 9 PM

Fri - 9 AM to 7 PM

Sat - 10 AM to 8 PM

Sun - 1 PM to 8 PM

Remember: No matter how you canvass your precinct, each contact you make with a voter is valuable to the Republican Party.

*** If you have opted not to have Data Center access please note all data changes on your Precinct Walking List and return to your team leader so that the data will be entered into Data Center.

Step 2 - Get-Out-The-Vote (GOTV)

The second and major step to electing Republicans is participating in the WSRP's GOTV program. Each County Party, Legislative District Party, club and PCO must do their part for the overall campaign effort to work effectively.

Without votes even the best Republican candidate can't win. Therefore, the Get-Out-The-Vote (GOTV) drive after absentee ballots drop and on Election Day is one of the most important jobs you have as a PCO. The best GOTV efforts typically include door-to-door and phone calls.

Currently Pierce County is the only county that gives voters the option of voting at the polls.

GOTV BEGINS 21 DAYS PRIOR TO ELECTION DAY

The County Republican Central Committee, coordinating with the candidates' Victory campaigns, should have a system which includes:

- Telephone banks during the 21-day window for ballots to be mailed
- Volunteers to take incoming calls regarding drop box locations
- Official Ballot Drop site watchers in every county

Precinct leaders should have full instructions from the candidates' headquarters and the County Chairman. PCO's should know their assignments and how to perform them. Well before the 21-day GOTV effort begins, PCO's should enter into Voter Vault or return all canvass information to the appropriate leadership so that the county organization and campaigns have the best possible information available for GOTV.

During the last five days before the deadline to mail and or deliver ballots to ballot drop sites or the County Elections Office, PCO's and block workers will have contacted the favorable voters to determine if we can be of any assistance.

Election Day – Ballot Chase

Getting out the vote consists of comparing the list of voters who have voted (accessible via Voter Vault) to the identified Republicans in the VV. After obtaining this list, call all Republicans who have not yet voted and remind them of the importance of the election and encourage them to turn out. In some cases, if appropriate, offer them a ride if they are unable to make it to a ballot drop site or County Elections Office.

ON ELECTION DAY, EACH FAVORABLE VOTER WHO HAS NOT YET VOTED SHOULD BE CALLED AGAIN.

DOCUMENT YOUR CALLS DURING THE 21 DAYS OF VOTE BY MAIL for entry into Data Center after the election

Thank Your Workers!!!

Remember to thank all the people who have worked with you to turn out the Republican vote. Make sure volunteers are invited to victory celebrations. Be sure to write every one of them a personalized thank you note. It is important to take the extra steps to recognize and appreciate everyone's hard work and dedication.

PRECINCT CAUCUS

The Republican Precinct Caucus is traditionally the biennial (every two years) meeting of the Republican voters who reside in the precinct. During the meeting the process of electing delegates to the County, State and National Conventions begins. In addition, the caucus is an excellent opportunity for voters in your precinct to discuss candidates for elected office, issues, and other matters that may be of interest.

It is your responsibility as a PCO to:

- Establish a location for the caucus and notify the County Chairman or confirm your precinct location if your county uses pooled locations.
- Conduct the caucus.

The meeting structure is very flexible and may be as formal or informal as attendees would like. All voting should be done by paper ballot, and the results of the election shall be announced at the caucus in the presence of the voters and certified to the County Republican Central Committee by the chair and secretary of the caucus. Each precinct will be allotted a certain number of delegates and alternates to the county convention by the County Central Committee. As a PCO, if elected or appointed a sufficient time in advance of the caucus, you will be an automatic delegate to the county convention and need not stand for election.

Legislative District Caucus/County Convention

Delegates who are elected at the precinct caucus attend a Legislative District and/or County Convention, where delegates are elected to attend the State Convention.

State Convention

Delegates to the State Convention adopt our State Party Platform and, in presidential election years, also elect delegates to the Republican National Convention.

GOP DATA CENTER (GDC)

What is GOP DATA CENTER?

GOP Data Center is an online version of our state's voter file. The Data Center was created so that you, the PCO, can have direct access to your precinct's voter list with the hope that you will use the system to continually update and improve the file – and to help turn out our vote during the election period.

Please contact your County Chairman for a contract to access the Data Center (GDC).

Using GDC

After a PCO has completed the proper request forms, signed the user agreement, and the County Chair approves his or her access, the Washington State Republican Party will then issue you a **Login and Password**.

You will need access to the **Internet** to use GDC. If you do not have access to the Internet, please work closely with your Legislative District or County Party to obtain the voter lists you'll need to start communicating with voters in your precinct.

Once you have logged in with the Login and Password provided by WSRP staff, you will then select your precinct and come to a Main Menu of options. As a PCO, you will likely use two main options. They are described below.

1. The Precinct Walking List

First, you will want to create a Precinct Walking List. Click on "MY DATA,". A drop down menu will appear. Click on "MY COUNTS- My Basic Counts- NEW Basic Count" A Menu with many drop-downs will appear where you can customize who you want to include in your list.

Next, select which voters you want included in this list. The default setting includes all voters. Initially, this will probably be a good starting point. However, we have built in choices that allow you to create the specific list you want.

Once you have selected the voters you want included in your Precinct Walking List, click on the create list green tab on the upper right of the page. This will take you to a page where you can customize the sorting order of your walk list, and it will tell you how many people are included in your list. Once you have made your selections click on "CREATE LIST NOW."

Note: This may sound complicated on paper, but when you access the system and try it for yourself, you will no doubt realize that it is quite easy and user-friendly. If you need help, contact your County Chair or the political staff at the WSRP for assistance.

2. Editing Voter Information

As a PCO, one of your duties is to maintain and update your precinct voter file. The best way to do this is by adding or correcting certain information, including: identifying voters as Republican, Democrat or Independent; correcting the voter ID of persons listed incorrectly; and adding or correcting phone numbers.

To add information about a voter select “MY DATA” and click on the My Voters drop down from the main menu. Then, using a voter’s name or street address, you can look up an individual voter’s file. This will contain information about party affiliation, address and phone number, and other information useful to Republican campaigns. Additionally, you can mark a box for “moved” if you know that person(s) have moved.

You will find that some information can be updated or changed and some cannot. Generally, you should be looking at phone numbers and party affiliations, as this information will benefit Republican campaigns the most. Add or edit the information you have (either that you know or that you have learned by talking with the voter), and then use your mouse to click on the “Save” button to save it to the system. You will need to click “Save” for each voter whose information you alter.

CAUTION: All changes to GDC are recorded, and will be periodically reviewed and verified by WSRP staff. Please be certain that any information you alter or add is accurate. Because our County Parties, State Party and Republican candidates rely on the information in GDC, intentional misuse or abuse will not be tolerated and may result in the revocation of your access. To avoid problems, please double-check your data before adding it to GDC