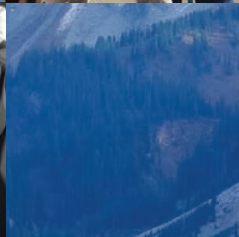
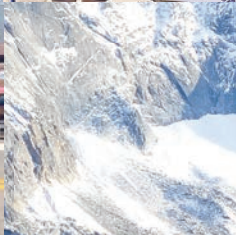




COLORADO
DEMOCRATS
BY THE PEOPLE, FOR THE PEOPLE

Colorado Precinct Organizer Power

*A Guide for Unleashing the Power of
Precinct Organizers (formally PCPs)*



YOU are the Party...The Party is YOU



Table of Contents

Jump into this manual any way that fits your needs and interests.

*“Government in a free **democracy** is us — **all** of us. It reflects the goals and values of those who participate and the absence of those who don’t. When we are dissatisfied with any aspect of how government works, it’s easy to disengage and give up, but doing so ensures we’ll be governed by narrow, well-funded special interests rather than broad public interests.”*

—Morgan Carroll,
Colorado Democratic Party Chair

Colorado Democratic Party
789 Sherman St.,
Suite 110
Denver CO 80203
303.623.4762
www.coloradodems.org

Introduction: Colorado Precinct Organizer Power	3
Why Should I Get Involved In the Democratic Party?	4
What We Believe	4
The Scoop on Being a Precinct Organizer	5
What is a Precinct Organizer, What Do They Do and How Do I Get to Be One?	6
Some Questions Your Neighbors May Have	7
Precinct Organizer Quick-Start Guide	8
How Can I Be Efficient and Effective?	10
An Interview with a Longtime Precinct Organizer	11
How Can I Engage My Neighbors in the Political Process?	13
What are Some Good Neighborhood Activities?	14
Conclusion	16
Glossary of Terms and Acronyms	17



photo by Tyler McDermott

V1.0 Revised 12/1/2019

Colorado Democratic Party thanks Julia Bristor, Corey Nikoloric, Meike Babel, Dave Russell, Tyler McDermott, Erica Stull, and precinct leaders across Colorado who provided suggestions and materials. For updates and corrections email: volcoordinator@coloradodems.org

Paid for by the Colorado Democratic Party
789 Sherman St, Suite 110, Denver, CO 80203 | (303) 623-4762
Not authorized by any candidate or candidate's committee.

Introduction

Colorado Precinct Organizer Power

Do you want to help (re-)elect qualified, responsible, and progressive candidates to every Colorado office, and keep Democratic values in action?

You're in the right place and you've got the power! This manual is for everyone who wants to transform our nation, one community at a time. Use it to promote the change you want in our government and party. It's packed with grassroots organizing tactics and resources for Colorado Democratic Party Precinct Organizers (formally "PCPs").

We hope you'll make time to go over the entire manual, but feel free to jump into it any way that fits your needs and interests. Good places to jump in:

- Being a Precinct Organizer, page 5
- Precinct Organizer Quick Start Guide, page 8

There are many links in this document to the [Precinct Organizer Toolkit](#). The Toolkit includes sample flyers, scripts, and other useful communication. The [Precinct](#)

[Organizer Toolkit](#) is broken into sections including *Caucus Materials*; *Your Elected Officials*; *Party Leaders*; *VAN Information*; *What Down Ballot Offices Do*; *Voter Registration*, and *Sample Communications*.

You'll find this manual helpful all across Colorado; it's easily customized to each area's needs, but isn't meant to replace any district's materials. This is a dynamic place to start, with general guidelines and best practices for engaging and leading our state's progressive voters.

Please share your materials and ideas with us, and your fellow volunteers.

Email volcoordinator@coloradodems.org.

[org](#). Think of this manual as an evolving document. Your contributions will improve it and help everyone respond to our changing needs.

The best time to start is now.
Relationships and change take time.

★ ★ ★
The best
time to start
is now.
Relationships
and change
take time.

The state of Colorado is divided into 64 counties. Nine Colorado counties have a population in excess of 250,000 each, while eight Colorado counties have a population of less than 2,500 each. The ten most populous Colorado counties are all located in the Front Range Urban Corridor.

On the cover: Capitol Peak, a 14,000' mountain in the Elk Mountains of Colorado.



WHAT WE BELIEVE

We believe that if you work hard, you deserve the opportunity to earn a good life.

We believe that our economy should work for those who work hard, not just those at the top.

We believe that government should work for the people, not just the well-connected and special interests.

We believe in creating more opportunities to earn a good life and increase incomes that allow families to get ahead and save for the future.

We believe that every Coloradan should have access to affordable health care, and that no one should go broke because they get sick.

We believe all children in Colorado deserve a high quality education, regardless of family income or their zip code.

We believe in rewarding businesses that create jobs here in Colorado and do right by their workers — not special interests and irresponsible corporations.

We believe that everyone should be treated equally under the law, and everyone should have the freedom to make their own choices and live the life they want.

We believe that everyone is entitled to clean air and water, and safe, livable communities. We believe in protecting our public lands.

We believe in managing our growth to maintain the Colorado way of life. That means upgrading and modernizing our transportation, infrastructure, and our schools.

We believe that we all have a responsibility to ourselves, our families and our communities.

We believe that we have the power to change Colorado for the better.

Join us at www.ColoradoDems.org

Why Should I Get Involved in the Democratic Party?

You want competent, progressive officials who share democratic values.

Elections, governing, and policy are decided by those who show up. It's simple election math – the side with the most votes wins, even if it's by only one vote. By working together to mobilize a statewide grassroots effort, we can beat the effects of gerrymandering, big money, and blatant falsehoods spread by other parties about our candidates.

You want a responsive party.

Want our party to be more relevant to you? You are the future of the Colorado Democratic Party so become a change agent and make it the Party you want it to be!

Attend your local county, house district, or other Democratic meetings, become a precinct leader, run for leadership positions, and join committees that work on policy issues you're passionate about. Connect with and support progressives running for office. OR... why not run for a legislative office yourself? The Colorado Democratic Party has training, handbooks, and other resources for prospective candidates. Email volcoordinator@coloradodems.org. Check with your county Democratic Party, house district or the Colorado Democratic



Those giving a voice to transgender women include Brianna Titone, a Democrat elected in Colorado's HD 27.

Party office about offices you can run for.

YOU are the future of our party! You want Colorado to remain blue.

What was the secret to our historic 2018 blue tsunami?

No secret at all: **YOU!** Democrats crushed the election because of the thousands of passionate grassroots volunteers like you who dedicated countless hours to make it happen.

You knocked, called, listened, texted, wrote postcards, registered voters, resisted, and protested.

And it worked!

But we can't become complacent. Our country still needs us!

You're already on the right side of history. Keep our massive grassroots effort strong and we'll continue to elect officials who share our values.

★ ★ ★

Keep our massive grassroots effort strong and we'll continue to elect officials who share our values.

The Scoop on Being a Precinct Organizer

Precinct Organizers (formerly PCPs) are the most important local organizers within the Democratic Party

WHAT IS A PRECINCT?

Precincts are the smallest political subdivision in Colorado. In a Metro area, a precinct may be a few square blocks; in rural parts of Colorado, a precinct may be half of the county. Colorado has 3,133 precincts.

WHAT IS A PRECINCT ORGANIZER (formerly PCP)?

Precinct Organizers are grassroots neighborhood leaders and party officers. They are crucial to our Party's success.

Precinct organizers do voter outreach and education within their neighborhood. This may include distributing candidate literature, helping register voters, and providing information about elections and caucus, and getting everyone to vote the whole ballot for every election.

Precinct organizers are encouraged to recruit volunteers to help.

Precincts elect up to two precinct organizers at Caucus in even years to serve a two-year term. If there's a vacancy, Precinct organizers can be appointed any time.

Precinct organizers are members of their county's Central Committee — the County Party's governing body — and represent all of the Democrats within their precinct at meetings.

HOW DO I BECOME A PRECINCT ORGANIZER?

Up to two Precinct organizers are elected at caucus to a two-year term. Many precincts however do not elect two Precinct organizers for their precinct and have vacancies which can be filled by appointment. Contact your local county party to see if your precinct has any vacancies you can fill.

HOW DO I KNOW WHAT MY PRECINCT IS?

Visit www.govotecolorado.com, click on "find my registration", enter your information and your 10-digit precinct number will be shown with all of the districts you reside in. All you need to remember is the last three digits of the number.

Tips For Being An Effective Precinct Organizer

- **GET A LIST OF VOTERS AND A MAP OF YOUR PRECINCT** from your county party.
- **WORK WITH YOUR HOUSE DISTRICT OR COUNTY PARTY** to create a welcome letter or literature to use in your precinct introducing yourself and how your neighbors can reach you if they have questions.
- **GET TO KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORS.** Contact (door-knocking, phone, email) democratic households in your precinct. Introduce yourself, confirm you have the correct name, address, phone and email. Then make sure to update the voter file. See if anyone else in the household needs to register to vote or update their voter registration information.
- **CONTACT LEFT-LEANING UNAFFILIATED VOTERS** in your precinct.
- **GET AND GROW AN EMAIL LIST** of voters in your precinct so you can communicate more quickly and easily.
- **EDUCATE NEIGHBORS.** Tell them about elections including dates, voting options, what the election is for. Tell them who their representatives are.
- **INVITE NEIGHBORS** parties, events and meetings.
- **HOST A HOUSE PARTY** to get to know each other. Consider inviting a speaker like a representative or candidate.
- **HOST NEIGHBORHOOD EVENTS** – BBQs, coffee, drinks. Talk about your important issues. Maybe even recruit a volunteer or two.
- **WORK WITH YOUR COUNTY PARTY**, candidates and campaigns to organize canvasses and other election activities.

What is a Precinct Organizer, What Do They Do and How Do I Get to Be One?

A precinct organizer is one of the most important persons in the Democratic Party. You are the most local, most personal, most accessible, and most effective point of voter contact in the entire political system.

A precinct organizer is a grassroots leader that forms the critical link between voters in their precinct and the Democratic Party. National issues are often really local issues, and there's no better way to understand them than by building local relationships and working directly with voters. Each precinct has 500–1,500 registered voters and is supported by two precinct leaders. If we have two well trained, local organizers in every precinct, we win!

You know your neighborhood. As a precinct organizer, you know best how to serve the people who live there. That's why you decide what to do in your precinct, how to do it, and when.

Make this mission your own!
You can:

- Meet and build relationships with your neighbors
- Listen to your neighbors talk about key issues they care about
- Connect neighbors to their elected officials and candidates

- Recruit volunteers
- Hold house parties, BBQs, meet-and-greets, and other events
- Register voters
- Get out the vote

WHAT DOES A PRECINCT ORGANIZER DO?

You have just a few basic duties, and a LOT of opportunities. Your ultimate goal is to engage your neighbors in the political process.

You're a grassroots neighborhood leader. You're the voice of

your neighbors to our party, and the face of our party to your neighbors. You'll engage neighbors in the political process by listening to their concerns, discussing important issues, and sharing knowledge with them.

You're a neighborhood educator. You're more engaged in the

political process than most residents. So it's no surprise that many fellow Democrats don't know there's an active neighborhood Colorado Democratic Party leader let alone other key information.

That's where you come in. Sharing information is your chance to engage and educate voters, and encourage progressive-leaning unaffiliateds to vote the Dem ballot. You'll be surprised how quickly you become your neighbors' go-to political resource.

Important to know: Party officers must remain neutral in contested primaries. However, precinct organizers can endorse a candidate if they do so in their individual capacity and not in their role as a precinct organizer. A precinct organizer must work with and equally assist all filed candidates even if they have endorsed a particular candidate in their individual capacity.

WHO CAN BE A PRECINCT ORGANIZER AND HOW DO I GET TO BE ONE?

You can be a precinct organizer if you've been a registered Democrat for at least two months and a resident of your precinct for at least 30 days. Each precinct can elect up to two precinct organizers, but there is always room or need for more volunteer help in a precinct.

Precinct organizers are nominated and elected at Precinct Caucus meetings. You can also volunteer and be appointed by county or house district leaders if your precinct has an opening. If you want the job, you have a good chance of being appointed. If there are already two organizers in your precinct, we guarantee they'll welcome your help.

LET'S GET STARTED!

★ ★ ★
Being a PCP is all about connecting with people, forming relationships, and listening.

Here are Some Questions Your Neighbors May Have

Elected Officials: Who are my elected officials? Finding your representatives is easy by entering basic information on the Colorado Democrats' website. Click the "Democratic Officials" tab to find. Use the "Your State, County, and House and Senate District Leaders" worksheet in our Toolkit to keep track of them.

Districts: What district do I reside in? Many! As of 2019 Colorado has:

- Seven U.S. Congressional Districts (see map at right)
- 35 State senate districts
- 65 State house districts
- 64 Counties, and
- 3,133 Precincts

There are also districts for county commissioner, city council, judicial, school boards, and more.

Finding district numbers is easy. Go to the Secretary of State's website www.govotecolorado.com, click "Find my Registration", and enter a voter's basic information. This site only provides district numbers, not names, so the Colorado Democrats' website may be more helpful.

Precinct Caucus: What elected offices do we caucus for? Colorado no longer conducts a presidential preference poll at caucus. We'll vote for our preferred presidential candidate in the state primary. We will, however, still hold a preference poll for the next highest contested office, and discuss candidates for other statewide elections.

Primaries: Who can vote in a primary? Unaffiliated voters can now vote in either the Democratic or Republican primary, but not in both. If they vote in both, their ballots are thrown out. Other parties (e.g., Green Party) typically don't hold primaries.

Election Information: *What offices are we voting for, who's running, when are ballots mailed, when do they need to be returned, how, and where?* In addition to these basic facts, as a Colorado Democratic Party representative, it's most important for you to stress how

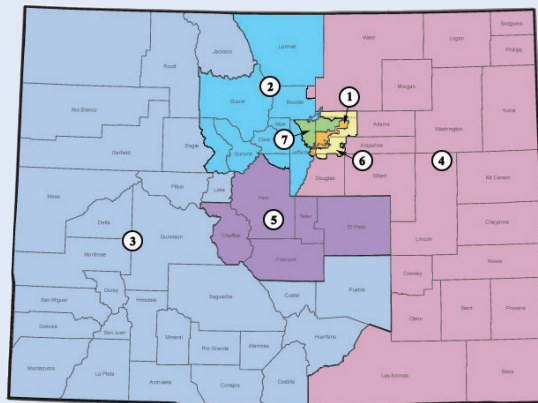
important it is to vote, what officials in various offices do, and why they need to vote the entire ballot. Use the "What Do Down Ballot offices Do?" flyer in the [Precinct Organizer Toolkit](#) for information about what offices do.

You attend party meetings and have a voice. Depending on where you live, you attend your county and house district meetings, and other party functions.

You have a vote on members of your county central committee. You'll vote for your county/house and senate district leaders — it's your chance to influence the nature and future of the Colorado Democratic Party at higher levels.

To show how important precinct leaders are, they're eligible to run for party leadership positions!

You run your precinct's caucus...with a lot of support. Caucuses reflect voters' voices at the most basic level. They're held in even-numbered years. Colorado recently changed to a presidential primary from a presidential caucus system. However, the caucus and assembly system remains for other candidates to get on the ballot, election of county, state and national delegates, and election of precinct leaders. Our Toolkit contains more information about caucus.



Precinct Organizer Quick-Start Guide

Congratulations! Your leadership skills and passion for connecting with voters have been recognized by your election or appointment as a precinct organizer. Welcome!

Details follow, but here's a quick checklist to start. Don't worry, materials and support are available from this manual, your county/house district leaders, other precinct organizers, and the Colorado Democratic Party. The [Precinct Organizer Toolkit](#) provides lots of sample communications you can borrow.

- ☐ Get a paper or electronic list of voters and a map of your precinct.
- ☐ Develop a 30 second introductory script, and write a welcome letter with your contact information.
- ☐ Contact your neighbors— Democrat and Unaffiliated leaning left. Start with ones you know.
- ☐ Verify their information and ask for an email and cell phone if they're not on your list.
- ☐ Check if anyone else in the home needs to register to vote.
- ☐ Take steps to engage some of your neighbors in a way you feel comfortable. Take them to a county/house district meeting. Plan a gathering at home or a coffee shop and invite a speaker, candidate or representative.
- ☐ Educate your voters about representatives, candidates, elections, ballot arrivals and drop-offs, and in-person voting.
- ☐ Get a list of your state, county, house and senate district leaders.

- ☐ Get a list of your elected officials.
- ☐ Ask your leadership for a calendar of meetings to attend.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Set reasonable expectations.

Engagement is a process, not an event. As a Democratic activist, you're more engaged than your neighbors, most of whom have had little or no Colorado Democratic Party contact. Some will be glad to meet you, others may be suspicious or cynical.

If you get discouraged or encounter roadblocks, reach out to your county or house district leadership, fellow precinct leaders in your county/house district and precinct leaders around the state.

Above all else, remind yourself — **often** — that you're doing important, valuable work, and that your neighbors, legislators, and the Colorado Democratic Party need you!

Meet with your co-precinct organizer and build your partnership.

If you have a co-precinct organizer, meet up and get to know each other's passions, concerns, and ideas. Decide how you'll work together.

If you don't have a co-precinct organizer, keep an eye out for another enthusiastic neighbor who may be interested.

Scope out your precinct. After you know your precinct's boundaries, scope it out. Your county or district leadership should provide you with paper or electronic maps and lists of voters. This data and more come from our Voter Action Network ("VAN") database. VAN is an electronic database contain-

SAMPLE INTRODUCTION

Hi there. Are you Matt Priest?
My name is Shontel Bland.
I live on South Waltham Road
and I'm the precinct leader for
our neighborhood. I just dropped
by to introduce myself.
My role is to provide you with
party/election information,
and to find out about any
issues you have.

Sample probes:

Do you know what offices we're
voting for in the next election?

Are you familiar with the
Democratic candidates
running in the election?

Will you be able to attend
our upcoming caucus?

ing information on all registered voters regardless of affiliation. The [Precinct Organizer Toolkit](#) contains more information on VAN.

Introduce yourself to your neighbors. You don't have to do it all at once. Ideally you and your co-precinct organizer can split the labor and break it up into manageable time chunks.

Start by developing a 30 second in-person introduction. Don't worry about sounding super polished – focus on listening and being genuine. It's simply about connecting, developing relationships, and listening to what they have to say. Don't worry if you sometimes get a cold shoulder. It happens.

continued on page 9

Quick-Start

continued from page 8

Create a flyer to hand out and/or leave if your neighbors aren't home. Check out some basic templates in the [Precinct Organizer Toolkit](#). Provide your contact information, and other useful things such as your representatives' name and numbers, and candidates for upcoming elections.

If time allows, hand write their name at the top and sign your names in colored ink at the bottom. "Sorry I missed you" sticky notes are great too. Although it's time-consuming, this personal touch is very effective.

Important to know: *It's illegal to leave materials in a mailbox – slide it partly under a door mat, roll it up and tuck it in the door handle, or slide it in the door jamb.*

Do a little training. There's a lot to learn. Take your time. You don't have to be an expert to connect with people or remind them to vote. Connections happen through passion and sincerity, not by knowing all the answers. It's OK to say, "I'll check on that and get back to you." Your follow-up is a second chance to show your commitment.

Connect with other precinct leaders. Seek out fellow precinct leaders at meetings, or ask your county or house district leaders for contacts.

The Colorado Democratic Party has a Facebook group. Search for "Precinct Leaders-ColoradoDems". We also have a list serve and website, exclusively for precinct organizers to connect, learn, and share what does and doesn't work. You'll also



photo by Tyler McDermott

find examples of flyers, postcards, and other materials you can customize. All have restricted access so email volcoordinator@coloradodems.org for access.

Meet local elected representatives. Intimidated? Don't be. Elected officials work for you! Start with those who attend your local meetings. If you're in a hurry to talk to them, send them an email, make an appointment, or visit if they hold office hours. Many hold town hall meetings, and they attend county and state meetings, assemblies, conventions, and various local functions.

Use the "Your Elected Officials" worksheet in The [Precinct Organizer Toolkit](#) to keep track of them.

Start learning a bit about the Colorado Democratic Party. Here are a few important things to know about how the Colorado Democratic Party is organized.

The first is very straightforward – the Colorado Democratic Party is organized by county. Each county has a central committee which is the party's county-wide governing body. It's led by officers such as chair and vice chair, as well as an executive committee.

Among other things, each county

central committee holds an assembly in even numbered years (convention in presidential election years) to elect state assembly (convention) attendees.

As a precinct organizer, you belong to your county central committee and can be elected to attend the state assembly/convention.

The second is mostly straightforward — Colorado is organized into numerous districts such as precinct, house, senate, state school board, judicial/D.A., and U.S. Congress. All except precincts and counties are represented by an elected official.

The Colorado Democratic Party has a supporting infrastructure for each of the districts, including the precinct and county, led by party volunteers — like you. Except at the precinct level, we elect central committee members and officers to support each district. Among other things, those folks are responsible for:

- Nominating candidates for an elected office
- Running their district meetings
- Filling elected-office vacancies

District central committee members are elected at county reorganization ("Reorg") meetings held in odd years. As a precinct organizer

continued on page 10

Quick-Start

continued from page 9

you can be elected to any district.

The third, well ... it's a bit confusing and here's why. Most districts cross county lines and are referred to as "multi-county districts".

- Senate District 5 is multi-county because it encompasses all of Chaffee, Delta, Eagle, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Lake, and Pitkin Counties.
- Senate District 32 isn't multi-county because it's fully contained within Denver County.

Obviously population density influences this. In geographically smaller counties and house districts, house districts hold monthly or regular meetings that precinct leaders attend. In geographically larger counties and districts, regular meetings are more likely to be held for the county or a smaller geographic division. Fortunately, all you need to do is show up at the appointed time and place.

Use the "Your State, County and House District Leaders" worksheet in the [Precinct Organizer Toolkit](#) to keep track of them.

If you really want to dig into the details, located under "Resources" the Colorado Democratic Party has:

- Rules/bylaws
- A platform
- Initiatives

The same is true for your county party. Check with them for information.

There are numerous national organizations as well but we'll save that for a different manual.

How Can I Be Efficient and Effective?

Borrow liberally. Before you create your own flyers, scripts, and events, check out and modify our samples provided in the [Precinct Organizer Toolkit](#). Check with your county or house district leadership and fellow precinct leaders. And don't forget our Facebook page, Precinct Organizer section of our website and our list serve.

Recruit additional volunteers. Volunteers are the lifeblood of our party. People want to get involved, but they have no idea how. Leverage this into action.

Some recruiting techniques:

- Make a specific ask (activity, time, and place). It's more effective than a general one, so invite them to a county/house district meeting. Ask them to make some phone calls, distribute flyers on their block or in their building, or knock on a few doors.



- Ask previous caucus attendees, family, and friends to help. Don't ignore unaffiliated friends who always vote progressively.
- Run a VAN search for prospects by filtering on different fields (or ask your county or house district leadership to do it). You can find people who:
 - Attended previous caucuses
 - Voted in primaries and elections in odd years
 - Voted continuously over the years
 - Volunteered previously
 - Voted in the 2018 Democratic

continued on page 12



photo by Dave Russell/Buffalo Heart Images

An Interview with Alma Cremonesi, Longtime Colorado Springs Precinct Organizer

Alma, what's your back story?

I'm a lifelong activist and a "pioneer feminist". My first campaign was for John Kennedy when I was 17 and too young to vote. In California in the 1970s, I worked to develop the first safe-spaces for battered women — at a time when the problem was barely discussed. When I moved to Colorado Springs, I did the same thing. I became a Precinct Organizer (formerly referred to as PCP) in 1978, and never quit.

Why did you become a Precinct Organizer or "PCP"?

Starting in 1978, I felt that volunteering for Dems was the most valuable way to spend my volunteer time. Now in 2019, helping Democrats seems more urgent than ever.

Why have you continued to be a Precinct Organizer for over 40 years?

Two reasons: First, I feel like being a Precinct Organizer is how I can make the greatest difference. It's a chance to connect with people, build trust, and get them to vote. Second, we don't have enough volunteers to cover all our precincts.

What's changed over your forty years as a Precinct Organizer?

Better technology and easier voting. It's a lot easier now to reach neighbors and run Get-Out-The-Vote campaigns. But underneath, it's still all about making voter contacts and building relationships.

For example, phone banking, cell phones and texting are relatively new. Michael Merrifield's HD 18 campaign in the early 2000s used a union office's phones to recruit volunteers, and then we made hundreds of calls for Michael. It was a slim margin, but he won!

Also, when I started as a Precinct Organizer, we had one day — election day — to run our Get-Out-the-Vote

campaign. It was legal for a party member to go to the polls with their voter list, cross out names as they voted, and dash out to get non-voters in before the polls closed. With mail-in ballots and three weeks to vote, it's much easier! But participation hasn't really increased, so we have to continue to do extensive voter contact. In 2018, I increased my precinct's voter turnout by about 12% with my "Last Six Days Plan".

What's your "Last Six Days Plan"?

It's a simple plan to spend the last six days before the election getting Democrats who haven't voted to turn in their ballot. If every Democrat in Colorado would vote, we'd win practically every election.

First, I had a flyer ready with important election information, ballot dropbox locations, and my contact information. Then I found my targets by extracting a list of non-voting Democrats from VAN, an electronic tool available to all Precinct Organizers and County/House District Leaders. [Learn more about VAN in the the [Precinct Organizer Toolkit](#)] I recruited six volunteers to help me and concentrating on the weekend, we knocked on doors. Besides leaving the flyer, we encouraged everyone to vote for Democrats for all the offices even if they weren't familiar with the candidates.

If someone acted like they were blowing off the election, I asked them to go get their ballot and fill it out right then. Then I just waited. It was very effective. I also told them where to drop off their ballot, offered to take them to the dropbox, or take it myself. (It's legal to drop off a maximum of nine ballots per election.)

What's kept you going through discouraging times?

I keep my eye on the prize — firing



Republicans. And I tell people that if they're upset with Trump, get involved. Do something to help get Republicans out of office. You'll feel better.

What advice do you have for other Precinct Organizers?

If you do nothing else, focus on getting out the vote the last six days before the election. And read *The Greatest Salesman in the World* by Og Mandino (1968). We all meet hostile voters but it's a numbers game of getting to as many people as possible, so you just have to pick yourself up and move on and keep your eye on Dems winning. This little book helps you overcome rejection. When someone is nasty and rejecting you have to move on quickly and not dwell on it.

What's planned for 2020?

My goal is to use my Last Six Days Plan to raise my precinct's voter turnout rate by another 10-15%. I'll also use VAN to find those Democrats who didn't vote in 2018 and knock on their doors — just to have a friendly conversation. Find out how they feel about the state of affairs and ask about their top concerns. Emphasize how important it is that every Dem vote in 2020. I'll try to close the sale by asking "Can we count on you to be a participant in the next election?"

Be Effective

continued from page 10

- primary as an unaffiliated voter
- Are millennials (we really need to reach them.)
- When neighbors thank you for your work ask them to volunteer.
- Replacing a precinct organizer who's still in the area? Check to see if they'll continue to help occasionally.
- Recruit people who have political signs on their lawns or cars. Put a political button on your dog's collar, or a stroller. People love talking about pets and kids and it's a great ice breaker!
- Ask fellow precinct organizer, neighbors, activists, and county or house district leaders if they know someone who could help.
- Email the Colorado Democratic Party headquarters at volcoordinator@coloradodems.org and ask them to search the talent bank for people in your area.

Don't be discouraged if it takes a lot of asks to find one or two volunteers. Circle back later to people who "don't have time now".

Connect with your neighbors.

The best contact with your precinct's voters is face-to-face so we recommend you and fellow volunteers do this at least once if your precinct isn't too spread out. People are more likely to open their door to a neighbor — a great argument for asking volunteers to visit people near them.



photo by Tyler McDermott

■ **Important to know:** *Safety is key. Don't ever visit a residence or area if you feel unsafe. We don't want you to deal with hostile people, aggressive dogs, and gates/fences that obscure property. Don't forget to close gates.*

You also may prefer to avoid residences with signs and stickers that make you uncomfortable. Legally, dropping off literature isn't soliciting, but some precinct organizers prefer to avoid residences with "No Soliciting" signs.

Access to gated communities or locked buildings is a challenge. If you see "No Trespassing" signs, or encounter locked doors, don't attempt to get in. Instead:

- Check your voter list to see if you can find someone there who'll help.
- Call or email voters if you have their information.
- If budgets allow, send postcards.

Realistically, you won't connect with everyone in person. Email, text and phone calls are the next best options and can be more efficient. It's challenging to build a contact list given many peoples' privacy concerns. Promising to keep infor-

mation on a spreadsheet that's only accessible to you and your co-precinct organizer sometimes allays fears. If so, don't enter it into VAN as it'll become part of the party's information.

Start by scanning your voter list to see what you have. Then get creative.

- Ask your friends for their information — you probably have it but check if you can use it.
- Ask friends to contact people on their street to introduce you, or get the information on your behalf.
- Make a target list so if you attend events where you might see neighbors you can (discreetly) collect information.
- Contact voters by mail if your district or you have the resources.
- Include a request for contact information on everything you leave at their door. This is less effective, but there's no harm in trying.

When you find incorrect information on your list pass it along to your county or house district leadership for updating.

How Can I Engage Neighbors in the Political Process?

Engaged voters vote. The challenge is how to engage them because people don't think their vote makes a difference. It's challenging to convince them that their voices matter.

Since you have a wealth of knowledge, pass it along. You'll be surprised how many will rely on you for information.

Listen to your neighbors. A precinct organizer is a listener, not a talker. Voters have a lot of ideas and pent-up frustrations. It's pretty easy to engage them in conversation by creating a short list of questions to ask.

- How could your elected representatives better serve your needs?

- What matters most to you in the next election?

- What circumstances would help you get more involved?

- What should a candidate do to get your vote?

Practice listening actively, or take notes when they're talking. Tune in to what voters say and you'll quickly get a sense of how to educate, assist, and guide them.

Make engaging easy for your neighbors: Provide them with important information to help them become knowledgeable, active voters. Share what you know. Keep in mind that the more you connect with your voters, the more awareness you'll build. Here are some

suggestions — be sure to tailor your communications to what you feel is most effective.

- **Ask them to attend an upcoming Caucus.** Provide (flyer, text, email, phone) a "Save the Date" notice a month in advance. Your district should send notices as well, but a personalized note from you is more effective.

- **Remind them about upcoming primaries and general elections.** Tell them when their mail ballot will arrive, what to do if it doesn't, when ballots are due, and who our candidates are and what their offices do.

- **Ask them to commit to voting.** Target voters who don't have a regular voting history and give them a "Commit to Vote" card. VAN will find these voters for you.

- **Give them ballot initiative information.** The Colorado Democratic Party, and sometimes your county endorse initiatives. This is useful for many people so they don't have to do their own research.

- **Educate them about what the elected offices do, and ask them to vote the entire ballot.** Many Democrats and Democratic-leaning unaffiliated voters don't vote for "down-ballot" races because they don't know

who the candidate is, and/or they don't know what the office does. Check the [Precinct Organizer Toolkit](#) for the "What Do Down Ballot Offices Do?" flyer. You play a critical role in sharing information about who all of the candidates are and what the offices do.

- **Talk to progressive-leaning unaffiliated voters.** VAN will find these people too. Educate them about our candidates, issues, and why they should vote for Democrats.

- **Tell them about Colorado Democrats People to People.** The Colorado Dems' created the People to People listening initiative so the party can hear from voters and be more responsive. This program includes postcards that can be filled out and returned to party headquarters. Prompts include:
 - What issue is of most concern to you right now?"
 - If you could tell your elected officials anything, what would you want to say?
 - What can the Democratic Party do to best serve you?
 - If you could snap your fingers and fix any problem, which would it be?Feel free to take notes on the cards or leave at voters' doors. Email volcoordinator@coloradodems.org for postcards and there are sample postcards in the [Precinct Organizer Toolkit](#) along with more information.



You play a critical role in sharing information about who all of the candidates are and what the offices do.



photo by Tyler McDermott

What are Some Good Neighborhood Activities?

This section offers a menu of suggestions, NOT a to-do list, of ways to engage your neighbors. Try ideas that appeal to you and see if they work. If not, try something else. Group activism helps create a community based on shared social values, is more fun than solo, and cuts down the intimidation factor. But some of these activities can be done solo too.

HOLD A NEIGHBORHOOD GET-TOGETHER

It doesn't have to be big or fancy. Inviting a few friends and ask them to bring one or two others to talk about a topic, candidates or their concerns. Hold it at a local bar or coffee house, or your home.

If you have a gathering at your home, people are usually willing to contribute snacks, drinks, or a few dollars if you have expenses to cover. Don't be discouraged if only five people attend – they'll still have plenty of issues.

People who attend care about politics — be sure to ask them to commit to volunteer, attend a district meeting, etc. Also ask them to help spread the word to others who might want to get involved.

COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR REPRESENTATIVES – THEY WORK FOR YOU

■ **Invite your representatives to a house party or gathering.** They actually like to do this - just plan for sufficient scheduling time. House parties are easier than you may think thanks to our "[How to Host a Grassroots Fundraising Party Play-book](#)". Or email volcoordinator@coloradodems.org for help.

■ **Invite neighbors to attend a representative's town hall meeting.** Many of our representatives hold community meetings. Prepare questions in advance, whether they're Democrats or not.

To learn about meetings, sign up for

your representatives' mailing lists via their website. Then invite others to attend. Even if just one other person comes, it's a success.

■ **Write, call and/or text your representatives.** This is the heart of democracy. When you communicate, be specific about what you want from them — to know their position on some legislation, to support or not support a bill or a nominee, to stand up to the President, or publicly condemn someone's action.

Important to know: *It's more efficient to send mail to a federal legislator's Colorado office. Snail mail delivery to U.S. House and Senate representatives' Washington offices will be delayed by security procedures applied to sealed envelopes.*

Search online for apps that allow you to text/fax your message from your smart phone or tablet.

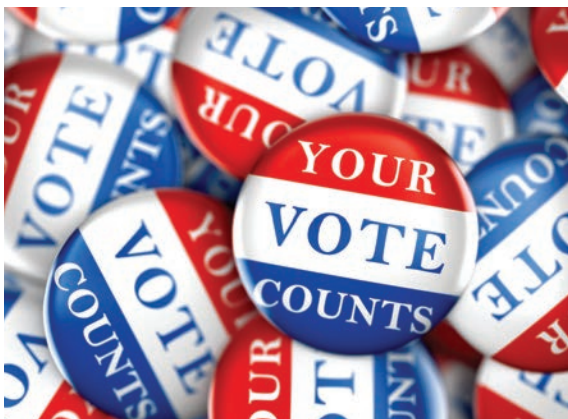
■ **Even more powerful: take your neighbors to meet with your representatives or their staff.**

Request an appointment or attend office hours and talk about an issue you are passionate about. If they don't hear from you, how will they know your issues? And if your legislators won't meet with you, or aren't responsive to your concerns, vote them out of office.

GET INVOLVED IN AN ELECTION

■ **Hold or attend candidate meet & greets.** This doesn't mean you are endorsing them and it

continued on page 15



Good Activities

continued from page 14

doesn't need to be a fundraiser. When candidates first launch their campaigns, they're eager for exposure. You may get to know the next Secretary of State, Senator, or Governor.

Leading up to the fall 2018 elections, districts and activist groups like Indivisible held dozens of meet and greets, forums and debates across the state.

■ **Campaign for a candidate.** As soon as there is only one Democrat on the ballot, you can/should support them in your precinct organizer role. As a private individual, you can support whomever you want. Pick a candidate you and your neighbors are passionate about. The Toolkit contains a sample campaign script.

Even easier — contact the candidate or their manager. They'll welcome your help and provide you with everything you need to knock on doors, call, write, or text. Maybe you have a specialized skill they need, like social media, messaging, or computer technology.

■ **Campaign for a candidate in a high-stakes district.** In previous years, many districts successfully "adopted" a swing district by lending campaign support.

■ **Participate in a "Get Out the Vote" (GOTV) campaign.** GOTV campaigns may target selected groups of people such as registered Democrats, and unaffiliateds who are "leaning Democrats" and ask them to vote for our candidates. The Colorado Dems, county party or your house district will probably organize them.

REGISTER VOTERS

People can't vote if they're not registered. As an activist, this is one of the most fulfilling activities you can do — guaranteed. It's tremendously satisfying to help the disenfranchised find their voices.

You'll register:

- Brand new citizens
- Folks without a permanent

residence — many of them think they've lost their right to vote

- 16-year-olds (pre-register)
- People on parole. As of July 2019, parolees may register and vote. People on probation also have the right to vote.

Voter education and engagement will always be a critical mission. That means reminding voters when the next election is, why voting is important, the importance of voting the whole ballot, etc.

Registering also helps voters verify that their registration information is current and/or make changes. The U.S. Postal Service doesn't forward ballots. If address information is out of date, the voter won't receive a ballot by mail.

See our Toolkit for information about voter registration options.

VOLUNTEER

Your precinct leaders, the Colorado Democratic Party, and your house/county districts all welcome your

continued on page 16



photo by Tyler McDermott

Good Activities

continued from page 15

help. Other than legislators and the Colorado Democratic Party chair, we are ALL volunteers!

Join our Talent Bank and let us know about your skills and interests. Go to www.coloradodems.org and find the "Volunteer" tab. Learn about other opportunities through your county and house district leadership.

We need your help no matter where in Colorado you live. We need your help whether you're an introvert or extrovert. You can help for an hour a month or an hour a day. There's something for everyone. You can:

- Enter data, write postcards, make phone calls, send texts, and/or talk with voters, help "Get Out the Vote" (GOTV), and campaign for candidates when there's only one Democrat running.

- Contribute unique talents such as research, graphic and web design, photography/videography, event planning, media and communications. We really need help with translation to Spanish and other languages.

- Staff the front desk at the Colorado Dems office for a couple hours a week.

★ ★ ★
Your voice matters!
However you participate, you'll make a difference in choosing candidates to represent us.



■ Join a State Party Initiative. Your county may have initiatives as well. Initiatives include:

- African American
- Asian American
- Pacific Islanders
- Dems with Disabilities
- Education
- Energy and Environmental
- Labor
- Latino
- Progressive Dems
- Rural Dems
- Stonewall Dems
- Young Dems
- Veterans
- Women

■ Volunteer for county/district and state committees or sub-committees. You need to be a Democrat, but you don't need to be a precinct organizer.

ADVOCATE FOR ISSUES OR MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES

Follow your passions. There are dozens of groups that focus on communities that our political system has historically overlooked and their specific issues. Many are active

in shaping legislation and many are experts at giving testimony. An online search will give you lots of possibilities.

Our website has advocacy guides from the very local to federal level. Look under "Resources".

Your voice matters! However you participate, you'll make a difference in choosing candidates to represent us, choosing how we spread the word, and deciding what issues to demand that our candidates pursue.

Conclusion

Now that you've gotten acquainted with the basics, it's time to put your knowledge and energy into action. With your determination, a wealth of resources at your disposal, and fellow Colorado Democrats behind you and alongside you, we can move mountains. Thank you for your passion and commitment, and for taking an active role in making government of the people, for the people a reality.

Glossary of Terms & Acronyms

ASSEMBLIES: County, congressional, state, and other non-presidential Democratic meetings held in even-numbered years for the purpose of nominating one or more candidates to the ballot.

CAUCUS: A precinct-level meeting of registered Democratic voters held in even-numbered years. It's a meeting of neighbors who together elect precinct leaders, propose platform planks, determine which candidates they will support to run on the Democratic ballot, and elect delegates to the county assembly. Colorado no longer caucuses for President.

CHAIR, COLORADO DEMOCRATIC PARTY: The chief executive officer of the state party, and a member of the Democratic National Committee.

COLORADO DEMOCRATIC PARTY ("CDP"/"COLORADO DEMS"): The CDP is the statewide Democratic Party. The state is divided into various election districts: 64 Counties, seven U.S. Congressional Districts, 22 Judicial Districts, 35 State Senatorial and 65 State Representative Districts, over 3,100 precincts, and other election districts. The CDP's governing bodies are the State Central Committee and the State Executive Committee.

The CDP is led by the chair, the first and second vice chairs, secretary, treasurer, and any other statewide officer positions.

COLORADO GENERAL ASSEMBLY: The state legislature of Colorado. It consists of the Senate and House of Representatives — the upper and lower houses of the Colorado legislature respectively. Of its 100 members, 35 are senators, 65 are representatives. Members may not serve more than eight consecutive years — four two-year house terms, two four-year senate terms. The session convenes annually for 120 days beginning in January.

COLORADO HOUSE DISTRICT ("HD"): Colorado has 65 state house districts. With 64 counties, 65 HDs, 35 senate districts and seven congressional districts, geographic boundaries cross. HD boundaries are adjusted every 10 years based on the Federal Census.

House districts are supported by district officers such as chair, vice-chair, secretary, and precinct leaders although titles may vary by area. Some house districts are divided into sub-districts that have a Captain and Co-Captain. A precinct leader can be elected to any of these positions.

The house district's responsibilities include managing the house district assembly at the county assembly in even-numbered years to nominate candidates for the state house, running the district

meeting at the reorganization meeting held in odd-numbered years, and filling office vacancies. Some house districts hold monthly meetings, others hold county level meetings.

COLORADO HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: The lower house of the Colorado General Assembly consisting of 65 members elected to a maximum of four consecutive two-year terms. House district boundaries are adjusted every 10 years based on the Federal Census.

COLORADO SENATE DISTRICT, ("SD"): Colorado has 35 state senate districts. With 65 house districts, 35 SDs and seven CDs, geographic boundaries cross. SD boundaries are adjusted every 10 years based on the Federal Census. The central committee's responsibilities include managing the SD Assembly at the county assembly held in even-numbered years to nominate candidates for the state senate, filling office vacancies, and running the SD meeting at reorganization meetings.

CONVENTIONS: County, congressional, state and national meetings held every four years during presidential election years and in conjunction with the corresponding assembly for the purpose of electing delegates to the national convention.

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT ASSEMBLIES: Congressional district-level meetings held in even-numbered years to designate candidates for the district's U.S. House of Representatives, State Board of Education, and University of Colorado Board of Regents.

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT CONVENTION: Congressional district-level meetings to select delegates to national conventions, and to nominate presidential electors.



CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT, U.S. (“CD”): One of seven Colorado geographic divisions represented by an elected official in the U.S. Congress. Since there are 65 house districts, 35 senate districts and seven CDs, geographic boundaries cross. CD boundaries are adjusted every 10 years based on the Federal Census.

The CD’s central committee’s responsibilities include managing the CD assembly in even-numbered years to nominate candidates for the U.S. House of Representatives and running the CD meeting at reorganization meeting.

COUNTY ASSEMBLIES: County-level meetings held in even-numbered years to designate candidates as needed for the Board of County Commissioners, County Clerk, Sheriff, Coroner, Treasurer, Surveyor, and Assessor, and conduct other business. Candidates receiving the threshold percent of votes will run in the general election. Delegates to the county assembly are elected at the precinct caucus.

COUNTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE: The county-wide governing body of the party. Precinct leader belong to the county central committee as do house district captains and co-captains, if any, eligible elected officials, and others. Central committee members are eligible to participate in all county central committee elections.

The county central committee is led by officers such as chair, vice chair, secretary, treasurer and others. Officers are elected at county reorganization meetings held in odd-numbered years.

The central committee’s responsibilities include supporting all party nominees, electing county officers, adopting party rules and passing resolutions.

COUNTY CHAIR: The chief executive of the county party. The chair’s responsibilities include overseeing all county central and executive committee meetings and overseeing financial and business affairs. They are the public spokesperson of the party, and responsible for turning out the Democratic vote in all elections.

COUNTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: An advisory committee to the county chair. The county executive committee consists of county central committee officers, and others. Precinct leaders may serve on the county executive committee if they serve in one of the above roles.

Responsibilities include party organization, registration of voters and assisting the county chair with political campaigns of the party in the county.

COUNTY CONVENTIONS: County-level meetings held in presidential years to select delegates to national conventions. They may be held in association with assemblies. Delegates to the county convention are elected at the precinct caucus.

COUNTY PARTY: The party organization within each of Colorado’s 64 counties. The county includes house districts, senate districts and others that fall within or partially within the county. With 64 counties, 65 house districts and 35 senate districts, there isn’t a 1:1 district correspondence (see “multi-district counties”). Its governing body is the County Central Committee. Counties may also have committees such as rules, health care, education. Any registered Democrat residing in the county is eligible to serve on committees.

DELEGATE: A party member elected at a caucus, assembly or convention to attend upcoming assemblies or conventions where they put their support behind particular candidates. They vote for candidates for all offices at the event, thus are influential in determining which candidates ultimately appear on the ballot.

DEMOCRATIC CONGRESSIONAL CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE (“DCCC”): The official campaign arm of the elected Democrats in the U.S. House of Representatives. Their principal mission is to support Democratic house candidates.

DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE (“DNC”): The governing body of the U.S. Democratic Party. The DNC plans the Party’s presidential nominating convention, and promotes the Democratic Platform. It also raises money, hires staff, and coordinates strategy to support candidates for local, state, and national office.

DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION: The Democratic National Convention nominates the Democratic candidates for president and vice president of the United States and approves the national party platform.

ELECTION JUDGE: Electors hired to ensure proper, orderly voting at polling service centers. Efforts are made to have representatives of all political parties at a service center. Judges earn a stipend.

GET OUT THE VOTE (“GOTV”): Organized efforts to get registered voters to vote. Techniques include door knocking, phone calls, emails and texting.

JUDICIAL DISTRICT: One of 22 judicial districts in Colorado served by an elected District Attorney. Depending on overlap between judicial districts and counties, the judicial district central committee may be composed of chairs, vice chairs and other members of the county central committee, the elected Democratic district attorney, and others. A precinct leader may run for elected positions.

The district’s central committee’s responsibilities include overseeing the campaigns of nominees from their districts.

JUDICIAL DISTRICT ASSEMBLIES: Meetings held in even-numbered years to designate district attorney candidates for each of 22 judicial districts.

MULTI-COUNTY DISTRICTS: A legislative district that encompasses more than one county. Examples: senate district 5 encompasses all of Chaffee, Delta, Eagle, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Lake, and Pitkin Counties; house district 13 encompasses all of Clear Creek, Gilpin, Grand, and Jackson Counties, and part of Boulder County. Other parts of Boulder are in house districts 10, 11, 12, and 33. Delegates to assemblies and conventions are allocated according to representation rules adopted by the district's central committee.

PRECINCT: The smallest political subdivision containing about 1,000 – 1,500 registered voters. In metropolitan areas, a precinct may be a few square blocks; in rural areas, a precinct may be half of the county. There are currently over 3,100 precincts. Boundaries are periodically redrawn based on population growth.

PRECINCT ORGANIZER (FORMERLY “PCP”): A precinct organizer is a party officer and grassroots leader responsible for organizing their precinct. Their job is to organize and inform neighbors, get out the vote and participate in key party meetings. Precinct organizers are elected to two-year terms at caucus.

PREFERENCE POLL: A vote taken at a precinct caucus for the highest contested race to determine whether a candidate has viability to run. Unlike a “straw poll”, preference poll votes are counted and recorded. If a candidate's votes meet threshold requirements, they advance to the county assembly to determine their viability.

PROXY: A ballot vote cast by one person on behalf of another member unable to attend all or part of a central committee meeting.

REORGANIZATION (“REORG”) MEETINGS: Reorganization meetings are held in odd-numbered years to elect all Democratic party officers (except precinct leaders). Officers are elected and party business conducted. Any registered Democrat may attend, but only members of the district central committee, which includes precinct leaders, may vote at their respective meetings.

STATE ASSEMBLY: State-level meetings held in even-numbered years to designate statewide candidates for the offices of U.S. Senate, Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State, Treasurer, At-Large members of the University of Colorado Board of Regents, and At-Large State Board of Education. State assembly delegates are elected at county assemblies.

STATE CENTRAL COMMITTEE: The supreme governing body of the party. The committee is led by the Colorado Dems chair, first vice chair, second vice chair, secretary, treasurer, all of whom are elected at the state reorganization meetings. Other committee members include county committee chairs and vice chairs, representatives from Colorado Dems initiatives, eligible state and federal elected officials, and others. Some precinct leaders may also belong to the state central committee if they serve in one of the above roles.

Responsibilities include electing Colorado Democratic Party officers, and approval of rules changes, and new initiatives.

STATE CONVENTION: State-level meetings held in presidential years to select delegates to national convention to nominate presidential electors, and to elect the Colorado's Democratic national committee persons. State Convention delegates are elected at the county conventions.

STATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (“SEC”): An advisory committee to the state chair. The state executive committee consists of the chair, first vice chair, second vice chair, secretary, the treasurer of the state central committee, chairs and vice chairs of counties, congressional districts, and members from counties and regions. SEC members are not required to be members of the State Central Committee. Some precinct leaders may also belong to the SEC if they serve in one of the above roles.

Responsibilities include approving the State Party's annual budget, advising and assisting county organizations, and coordinating activities between the state and party organizations.

STATE REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLIES: Meetings held in even-numbered years to designate state representative candidates for each of 65 state representative districts.

STATE SENATE ASSEMBLIES: Meetings held in even-numbered years to designate senatorial candidates for each of 35 state senate districts.

STATEWIDE INITIATIVES: An Initiative is a group of registered Democrats whose members work together to organize their respective communities into the Colorado Dems for activities, goals and purposes consistent with the overall activities, goals and purposes of the Colorado Dems. See the Colorado Dems' website for a list of initiatives.

STRAW POLL: A simple show of hands (not counted) at a precinct caucus for a candidate to determine the precinct's level of support for them.

TURF: A turf is a sub-set of precinct residences. Precincts are “cut”, i.e., divided into turfs to facilitate door knocking or flyer distribution by precinct leaders and other volunteers.

VAN (FORMERLY KNOWN AS “VOTER ACTION NETWORK”): Electronic voter database used by the Democratic entities such as the State Party, districts, candidates, and activist groups. VAN is used for field organizing and tracking voter interactions. Its features allow a user to filter data by district, demographics, voting behavior, and other characteristics to create custom lists for desired activities.

VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE (“VRD”): A drive to register voters led by an organizer certified by the Secretary of State. The organizer is responsible for training circulators, maintaining custody of forms, and returning them within strict deadlines. They also assume legal liability for rule violations which may carry stiff penalties.