MISSISSIPPI DEMOCRATIC PARTY

3rd Congressional District
Democratic Executive Committee

County Democratic
Executive Committees & Members

Resource Guide

PURPOSES OF THE COUNTY DEMOCRATIC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (DEC)

The County Democratic Executive Committee forms the basis of Democratic candidate success throughout the state. No campaign effort succeeds without a congenial, coordinated effort on the ground. It is the County Democratic Executive Committee that is closest to the people, and that is where campaigns are won.

Below are the major responsibilities of county committees:

- **To conduct primary elections**
- **To certify Democratic candidates**
- **To assist Democratic candidate campaigns**
- **To raise funds**
- **To register and educate voters**
- **To invite all county Democrats to join together to spread the Democratic message to all voters**

The materials to follow expand on the responsibilities of the county committees.

PART I

SECTION 1

CONDUCT COUNTY, STATE, AND FEDERAL PRIMARY ELECTIONS

(*Miss. Code Ann. §§ 23-15-263; 23-15-265; 23- 15-266*)

A. Receive qualifying forms and fees from the circuit clerk
B. Certify candidates for nomination
C. Prepare election materials
D. Hire and train Poll workers (chair or designee must attend annual Secretary of State's election training)
E. Issue and receive election materials
F. Canvass and certify election results
G. Hear election contests

[County Election Officials: Primary Elections County Party Executive Committees are responsible for conducting primary elections. County Election Commissions have no authority, absent a written agreement, to conduct primary elections for the political parties. (Miss. Code Ann. §§ 23-15-263; 23-15-265; 23- 15-266)]

SECTION 2

MANAGE PARTY ORGANIZATION

A. Conduct precinct caucuses and county conventions
B. Meet at least four times annually (monthly or bi-monthly is recommended)
C. Conduct party affairs within the county

[Article III of the Mississippi Democratic Party Constitution]

SECTION 3

REPORT TO STATE COMMITTEE

A. Hold and report precinct caucuses and county convention results
B. Report county committee membership and officers

[Article III, Section 7 of the Mississippi Democratic Party Constitution]

SECTION 4

SUPPORT PARTY NOMINEES IN GENERAL ELECTIONS

A. Organize county campaign efforts
B. Coordinate efforts with State committee
C. Conduct get-out-the-vote (GOTV) drives
D. Open a party headquarters for campaigns (if possible)

SECTION 5

BUILD THE PARTY AT THE GRASSROOTS LEVEL

A. Assist in establishing municipal Democratic executive committees
B. Register voters
C. Work with Democratic elected officials
D. Establish Young Democrats chapters at high schools and colleges
E. Write letters to the editor, publicize activities and work with the news media
F. Maintain communication among Democratic activists and supporters in the county
G. Conduct party events: dinners, debates, forums, etc

PART II

ORGANIZATION OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES

SECTION 1

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

[Procedures for election of officers for the county Democratic Executive Committee are found in the Democratic Party of Mississippi Constitution, Article VIII]

Elected officers are:

- **Chair**
- **Vice Chair**
- **Secretary**
- **Treasurer**
- **Parliamentarian**

[Article VIII of the Mississippi Democratic Party Constitution]

SECTION 2

OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities of County Democratic Executive Committee Chairperson, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and Parliamentarian

Chair - The duties of the Chairperson shall be those of Chief Executive Officer. The Chairperson shall convene and preside at all official Committee meetings and shall have such other powers and duties as may be granted to him or her from time to time by resolution of the Committee.

Vice-Chair - The Vice-Chairperson shall in the absence of the Chairperson, convene and preside at all official Committee meetings and shall assist the Chairperson in the management of the business and financial affairs of the Committee. In addition, the Vice-Chair shall provide leadership in Committee organization and shall have such other powers and duties as may be provided from time to time by resolution of the Committee. The Vice-Chairperson shall be of a different race and sex from the Chairperson.

Secretary - The Secretary shall be in charge of all the files and records of the Committee and shall keep records of the minutes of the proceedings of meetings of the Committee. All records shall be maintained by the Secretary. The Secretary shall preserve such files except such as shall be in charge of the Treasurer and shall open them for inspection at the convenient and appropriate time at the request of any official of the Committee.

Treasurer - The Treasurer shall have custody of the funds of the Committee and shall render written accounts of the receipts and disbursements of the Committee to each meeting. The Treasurer shall deposit all money and valuables received in the name of and to the credit of the Committee in such insured banks and depositories as the Committee shall designate by appropriate resolution. Copies of the Treasurers' report shall be sent to all members of the Committee as directed. The Treasurer shall write checks and expend money of the Committee only as authorized by the budget or appropriate resolution and then only upon presentation of received bills, vouchers, or other appropriate written instruments and upon the counter-signature of the Chair or other designated official. The Treasurer shall be of a different race and sex from the Secretary.

Parliamentarian - The Parliamentarian shall advise the Chairperson on parliamentary procedure as all Committee meetings and shall, when called upon, make parliamentary and procedural rulings as to the conduct of such meetings.

I. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS:

A. <u>Regular business meetings</u> will be needed to implement the work of the County Democratic Executive Committee (DEC) to achieve the above goals.

It is standard practice to call at least four meetings a year. (Monthly or bi-monthly meetings are recommended).

Have your committee meetings announced and scheduled for the same location and date of the month (example: first Tuesday at 6:30pm) so that committee members can put the meeting on their calendars and know the location. Provide directions and signs to the meeting room.

B. <u>Invite all Democrats</u>.
Meetings of the Democratic Party are open to all Democrats (as stated in the Constitution of the Democratic Party of the State of Mississippi). Democrats should be welcomed to DEC meetings and be allowed to participate. ***<u>Only Democratic Executive Committee Members shall vote.</u>***

From State Party Constitution

Article II: 'All public meetings at all levels of the Democratic Party. Shall be open to all members of the Party.

C. <u>Publicize your DEC meetings</u>:
All county Democratic Executive Committee meetings should be published in newspaper calendars and other ways to attract new Democrats and to increase volunteer activists and interest in the Party.

From State Party Constitution,

Article IV: 'All Democratic Party units shall be publicized fully. To assure all interested parties… a description of the procedures for selection of Party officers and representatives on all levels…in time to participate in each selection procedure…'

D. The Secretary shall be in charge of all files of the committee and keep records of all of the minutes and proceedings of the committee.

II. FUNDRAISING & COMPLIANCE:

- ◆ Lead the county party's fund-raising efforts. County parties rely on grassroots financial support in order to stay afloat.

- ◆ Help the State party solicit Yellow Dog memberships throughout your county. ($10 per month). It is only with the monthly support of Democrats that the State party can meet overhead and provide services to Democratic candidates.

- ◆ Identify Democrats in your county with the means to join the County Party's Finance Council or Chairman's Club or whatever is decided to call your sustaining donor program.

- ◆ Maintain financial records for the DEC; providing financial reports as needed to members and maintaining compliance with the State Party, MS Sec. of State; FEC; ActBlue and other entities.

SECTION 3

SUBCOMMITTEES

After the County Executive Committee has elected officers, it is recommended that the Executive Committee appoint the following sub-committees to carry out the above goals:

A. Elections: This committee is responsible for training poll workers and conducting primary elections.

B. Budget & Finance: This committee is responsible for developing a budget for the Committee for the year.

C. Education & Membership: This committee is responsible for implementing plans to carry out educational activities.
D. Party Development: This committee is responsible for outreach to local Democrats, voter registration, and assisting campaigns.

E. Platform: This committee is responsible for providing a forum to discuss issues of importance and to compile a platform to send to the National Party.

F. Campaign: This committee is responsible for serving as a liaison between duly certified candidates and their campaigns.

Additional Potential Sub-Committees are:

- Young Democrats
- Senior Democrats
- Federation of Democratic Women
- Affirmative Action
- Voter Registration
- Social Media

PART III

COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

SECTION 1

Tips For County Party Fundraising

The best place to start when putting together a fundraising plan is to prepare “THE LIST”. The list should contain every possible contributor you can think of and the level at which each can be expected to give. Suggestions of how to build your list include the following:

- Past County Donors
- Donors to the State Democratic Party
- Donors to municipal, county, legislative, state-wide and federal candidates

- ♦ Donors to interest groups (progressive, labor, affiliated)
- ♦ Elected Officials

Types of Fundraisers

There are many ways to raise money for political parties. The most important thing to remember is to keep it personal. It is also important to keep the cost of hosting the event as low as possible to increase your profit. Ways to keep costs down are looking for donated food, finding a free facility and asking a local elected official or prominent community member or civic leader to speak. The following is a list of some successful fundraising tools:

- $ Personal/ Direct Solicitation
- $ Dinners – Bar-B-Ques, fish fries, beans & greens, spaghetti dinners, soup dinners, potluck or catered
- $ Bake Sales
- $ Auctions
- $ Direct Mail Solicitation

.

SECTION 2

Coordination with State Party

A. Send an updated list of your county DEC members each year to the State Party Headquarters. Make sure the Party Headquarters has an email address and phone number for each officer and committee member.

B. After each primary election, provide the State party with a list of your poll workers, other good Democrats, and key workers for Democratic candidates so they can be invited to Democratic Party events.

C. Send a list of County Democratic elected officials in your area, ie, Democratic Sheriffs, Circuit Clerks, Supervisors, etc. The State Party does not get this information except from you.

D. Attend as many State Executive Committee and Association of

County Democratic Chairpersons meetings as possible to keep abreast of Democratic issues. Invite committee members to attend with you. Bring the news back to your committee. Ask State Executive Committee members to attend your meetings.

Campaign Related Activities

In addition to the basics of conducting smooth and efficient primary elections, it is important to have well-trained, enthusiastic county Democrats to offer help to our Democratic nominees. Once party nominees have been elected:

A. Give all nominees the public endorsement of your county committee. Notify local newspapers, radio, and television stations. While some people may assume this is a given, the public statement of endorsement from the committee will generate publicity for the nominee.

B. Call a special executive committee meeting to meet with the nominees. Show that your committee is actively supporting your nominees and find out what they need your help with.

C. Provide all nominees with a list of county Democratic executive committee members' names, addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses.

D. Collect a list of supporters willing to have signs on lawns or to distribute literature.
If the campaign is running low on these items, raise money and have some printed.
Be sure to get the candidate's permission and print a campaign disclaimer on the materials. Check with the State Party office or the Secretary of State about contribution reporting requirements.

E. Organize phone banks urging voters to vote Democratic. Keep records of voters who need special assistance or a ride to the polls on election day. Encourage eligible voters to vote by absentee ballot. Have them check with the circuit clerk to see if they qualify to vote absentee.

F. Organize a GOTV drive for election day. Provide rides to the polls and scour Democratic precincts to maximize Democratic voter turnout.

G. Organize an ongoing voter registration project. Every committee member should keep blank mail-in voter registration voter forms available at all times.
Voter Registration Forms are available online at www.sos.ms.gov.

Meeting Suggestions to Attract Democrats

Have an "Elected Officials Appreciation Event" to which you invite all local elected Democratic Officials. Let Democratic officials know that the Party doesn't forget them once they are elected and that County committee members will work to keep them in office in the next election. Democratic activists and volunteers are interested in meeting elected officials also.

Sponsor a fund-raiser such as a 'Beans & Greens Dinner' to get your county together. Statewide Democratic officials and State Executive Committee members are happy to attend such events. Beans & Greens Dinners' can be pot-luck, usually are low cost, and can boost interest in the Party. Be sure to publicize the event.

Activities to Engage Area Democrats

- Set up a county Democratic website with links to other Democratic sites.
- Select Precinct Captains for each precinct within your county and task them with signing up 5 more.
- Organize Young Democrats chapters at local high schools and community colleges.
- Organize a county chapter of the Federation of Democratic Women.

- Establish a county party headquarters, if possible. This is important during general election campaigns. Find someone to donate office space. Remember to check the Secretary of State's contribution and expenditure reporting requirements.

- Conduct training covering state election laws. Ask the persons in your county experienced in conducting local elections to share their knowledge. Or have election law training at the DEC meeting.

- Plan public forums on important issues of the day. Examples: Have local experts speak about issues important to Democrats. Invite competing Democrats to meet with your committee to let them know what the candidates have to offer.

- Voter Registration Drives: Have voter registration drives at high schools for 18-year-old students; make sure voter registration forms are available at public libraries, churches; set up voter registration tables at flea markets, festivals, grocery and area stores.

Provided by: Mississippi Third Congressional District Democratic Executive Committee

Dr. Peggy J. Rogers, Chair- Oktibbeha County
Vicki Robinson Slater, Vice Chair- Madison County
Thelma Lorentz, Secretary- Rankin County
Jackie Andrews, Treasurer- Hinds County
Mike Biggs, Parliamentarian- Rankin County

Compiled by: Committee Guide Subcommittee
Committee Chair, Thelma Lorentz- Rankin County
Dr. Peggy Rogers- Oktibbeha County
Mike Biggs- Rankin County
Pam Johnson- Rankin County
Jimmy Durr- Simpson County
Laverne Johnson- Rankin County
Vicki R. Slater- Madison County