

RICHLAND COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY MISSION and BYLAWS

Adopted March 19, 2015

Article I - Name

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

Article II – Relationship with the State Democratic Party

The RCDP, including but not limited to the county party organization and the County Convention, shall be governed by the South Carolina Democratic Party Rules (“State Party Rules”). State Party Rules, as amended from time to time by the State Party, are incorporated into these bylaws in their entirety. The State Party Rules shall reconcile any inconsistencies between these County Party Bylaws and State Party Rules.

Article III – Mission

The mission of the Richland County Democratic Party is to elect Democratic candidates and to encourage participation in the political process by people of all backgrounds who support Democratic principles. Funds raised by the RCDP will be used to help elect Democratic candidates and to support Democratic programs.

To achieve this mission, RCDP will:

- ❖ Register voters, recruit and support candidates, and organize get-out-the-vote strategies.
- ❖ Educate the community about Democratic ideals and the Democratic Party platform.
- ❖ Inform voters about political events and about issues such as education, the environment, transportation, healthcare, and the economy.
- ❖ Support the organization and development of Precinct teams and regional organizations.

Article IV – Participation

Section 1 – Eligibility

This organization shall be open to and inclusive of all interested Democrats (as defined by State Party Rules) who reside in Richland County. Members are encouraged to register and make a personal commitment to vote in all elections.

Section 2 – Inclusion and Non-Discrimination

RCDP does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, ethnic or national origin, age, disability, veteran status, social or economic status, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other factor unrelated to membership and the mission of RCDP. In conducting any business at any level, including the election of Party officers and members of the State Executive Committee and

the selection of delegates and alternates to the County and State Conventions, the RCDP and its Precinct clubs are committed to encouraging the full participation of all citizens of South Carolina including members of both sexes and all sexual orientations, members of all racial groups, members of all age groups, all economic groups and people of varying levels of educational attainment.

Section 3– Dues

There shall be no fees or dues associated with participation in the RCDP or attending any business meeting of the RCDP. In lieu of dues, donations may be requested at Executive Committee meetings or at other times.

Section 4 – Voting

No proxy voting and no secret ballots may be used in any meeting at any level of the Richland County Democratic Party.

Section 5 - Compensation

No officer of the RCDP shall receive any compensation for any services rendered in support of RCDP, other than reimbursement for expenses approved in advance by the County Chair.

Article V – County Officers & County Executive Committee

Section 1 – County Chair and Vice Chairs

A County Chair and three Vice Chairs shall be elected for two-year terms by the biennial Richland County Democratic Convention and shall serve *ex officio* on the County Executive Committee. The First Vice Chair shall be of a race different from the Chair, the Second Vice Chair shall be of a gender different from the Chair, and the Third Vice Chair shall be between the ages of 18 and 30 years of age. These officers and those named in Sections 2, 3 and 4 shall be residents and voters in Richland County prior to their election.

Section 2 – Secretary, Treasurer, and Finance Director

After consultation with the County Chair, the County Executive Committee shall elect a Secretary and Treasurer, and may elect a Finance Director, as set forth in the State Party Rules. Election of the Secretary, Treasurer, and Finance Director (if any) must take place at a meeting of the County Executive Committee within 30 days following the County Convention.

Section 3 – State Executive Committee Representatives

The Richland County Convention shall elect two members, a man and a woman, to serve and vote on the State Executive Committee, along with two alternates. The County Chair and Vice Chairs may not hold the office of State Executive Committee Representative. If Richland County shall be unrepresented by either State Executive Committee Representative or an alternate at three consecutive meetings of the State Executive Committee, the Committee member(s) shall be deemed to have vacated his/her position.

Section 4 - County Party Officers need not have been elected by their Precinct clubs as members of the County Executive Committee, nor must they have been elected Delegates to the county convention.

Section 5 – Officer Duties

The County Chair, Vice Chairs, Secretary, Treasurer, Finance Director, and State Executive Committee Members shall work collaboratively to create a strategic plan for the County Party, set and achieve goals, provide adequate funding for all activities, and attend meetings appropriate to their offices.

The **County Chair** is responsible for insuring that all duties of the County Party, as set by State law or Party rules, are carried out in a timely manner. He or she must lead the officers and Executive Committee in political and organizational activities aimed at strengthening the Democratic Party and electing Democrats at every level. He or she speaks for and represents the County Party to the public and the media.

The **Vice Chairs** lead meetings and other activities in the absence of or at the request of the Chair. In addition, they assist in carrying out the responsibilities of the County Party and may be given specific assignments according to their abilities. In the absence of the Chair their numerical designation dictates their order of precedence.

The **Treasurer** maintains records and reports on RCDP income and expenditures and is specifically responsible for submitting State ethics reports on time. It is also the Treasurer's responsibility to submit regular monthly financial reports and copies of all ethics reports to the County Chair before such reports are filed or made public. The Treasurer assists in raising funds for the County Party.

The **Secretary** shall maintain meeting minutes as well as records of Precinct officers, County and State convention delegates, and any other lists and records related to the County Party. All Precinct officers, except delegates to the County Convention, shall be reported by the County Secretary to the County Chair for required reports to the Clerk of Court of the County and to the Secretary of State prior to the State Convention. The reports shall be public record.

The **Finance Director's** duties shall include assisting the Treasurer in soliciting financial contributions and providing adequate financing for the County Party.

The **State Executive Committee members** are also members of the County Executive Committee. In addition to attending State Party meetings, they inform Richland County Democrats of activities of the State Party.

Section 6 –County Executive Committee

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

Article VI – County Meetings

Section 1 – County Executive Committee Meeting Schedule

The RCDP Executive Committee shall meet at the call of the County Chair or 20% of the elected members thereof, but not fewer than five members, at such time and place as he/she or they determine. A minimum of four business meetings of the County Executive Committee shall be held each year with proper notification of the committee members, as required by the State Party Rules. These meetings are open to all Democrats.

Section 2 – County Officer Meeting Schedule

The Chair and Officers of the RCDP shall meet at least quarterly at the call of the County Chair.

Section 3 – Meeting Locations and Notice

The time and place for all RCDP meetings shall be publicized fully and in such a manner as to assure timely notice to all interested persons. Such meetings shall be held in places accessible to all and large enough to accommodate all interested persons.

At least a ten-day notice must be given to all County Officers, Executive Committee members and alternates by first class mail for all meetings of the County Executive Committee. Mailing of official notice of meetings may be waived and only e-mail used for those members who agree in writing to this form of notice.

Section 4 – Voting

Only duly elected County Executive Committee members may vote in meetings of the Committee. Alternate Executive Committee members shall vote only if their Precinct's committee member does not vote. County Party Officers elected by the County Convention may vote except that the Chair may vote only in case of a tie.

Section 5– Quorum

A quorum for meetings shall be 35% of elected Executive Committee members (or their elected alternates). A majority vote of those present is required to pass Party business.

Section 6 – Rules

In all matters not specifically addressed in these Bylaws or the Rules of the SC Democratic Party, the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall govern.

Article VII – Financial Management

Section 1- Budget

Within 60 days after his or her election, a County Chair must submit to the Executive Committee for ratification a budget covering the remainder of his/her term in office. Such budget should include detailed expenditures for operation of the County Party, as well as general projections for the campaign expenses of any forthcoming general election. The budget should be accompanied by information on projected revenues and sources of funds.

The Chair shall, in the development of the budget and revenue projections, consult with others who have expertise or experience in these matters, including County Party Officers with such experience.

Should a financial shortfall or other circumstance necessitate alteration of the ratified budget by more than \$3500, the Chair must inform the members of the Executive Committee. No unbudgeted expenditure of more than \$2500 may be made without the approval of the Executive Committee.

Section 2 – Check Writing

The Chair, or the Treasurer at the request of the Chair, may only sign checks (or a series of checks in the same month to one payee) for amounts up to \$500, providing that such checks are for expenses covered by the budget and also provided that invoices are retained for such expenditures. Any check for more than \$500 must be signed by both the Treasurer and the Chair.

In no case may any person borrow money or in any other way create debt for the County Party. No person other than the County Chair or his/her designee may commit the County Party to pay for goods or services.

Section 3 – Financial Reports

The Treasurer shall provide financial reports consisting of a balance sheet and a profit and loss statement at each Executive Committee meeting.

Article VIII – Precincts

Section 1- Organization

Each general election voting Precinct provided for by law shall organize a party club and shall be named by the Precinct name. The club shall elect officers and County Executive Committee members at Precinct Re-organization as set forth in the State Party Rules and on a date set by the State Party. Members of the Democratic Party shall belong to the voting Precinct set forth in their respective registration certificates.

Both the county party and the Precinct officers have the responsibility of publicizing the Precinct meetings to Democrats throughout the county in order to encourage participation. For this and other purposes the County Party should make available to Precinct organizations a list of known Democrats within the Precinct.

Precincts shall be organized and operated as set forth in State Party Rules. In case any existing Precinct fails to reorganize on the day fixed, the County Chair may fix a day for such Precinct to meet for reorganization by giving two weeks' notice. If during a party organizational cycle a new Precinct is created from part of an already organized Precinct, previously elected Officers who are now within the boundaries of the new Precinct may request that the County Chair set new organizational meetings for both the new and the old Precinct so that officers may be elected in both.

The County Chair shall appoint a Committee that will assist in the organization of the new Precincts that have been created.

Section 2- Officers

Where possible, every Precinct should elect a full slate of officers as prescribed by the SC Democratic Party. Most important are the President and a member of the County Executive Committee. The President's responsibilities include recruiting others to help with the work of the Precinct organization, such as identifying and turning out Democratic voters. It is also the job of the President to see that the lists of Officers and Delegates are submitted to the County Party, and to assist the County Party in putting together the next Precinct organizational meeting. Other officers assist the President as requested.

At any time, giving 10 days' notice, the Precinct President or at least five members of the Precinct shall have the power to call a meeting to fill vacancies or conduct other business, excluding precinct reorganization.

The Executive Committee member represents the Precinct on the governing body of the RCDP.

Section 3- Activities

Every Precinct should plan activities aimed at identifying and turning out Democrats to vote for our Party's nominees in general elections. Such activities might include, but are not limited to, holding regular meetings and social events, raising money, distributing literature, using social media, holding volunteer workdays to contact voters in the Precinct or register voters, and organizing phone banks to contact voters.

Section 4 – Delegates

The RCDP will notify each Precinct club, prior to its reorganizational meeting, of the number of County Convention delegates and alternates that Precinct is entitled to elect. Where possible, half of those Delegates and half of the Alternates should be men and half women.

If there are not enough attendees at the meeting to elect the prescribed number of Delegates and Alternates, those at the meeting may authorize the President or a subcommittee to fill the slate with Democrats from within the Precinct, provided that no one should be put on the list who has not given permission to add his/her name, and further provided that the list of Delegates and Alternates must be completed and submitted by the appropriate deadline.

Article IX–Conventions

Section 1 – County Convention

Every general election year, a County Convention shall be called by the County Executive Committee in accordance with State law and State Party Rules for the purpose of electing officers, receiving reports of Officers and Committees, and for any other business that may arise. The Convention must be composed of Delegates elected from the Precincts in Richland County as set forth in the State Party Rules. The State Executive Committee retains authority to set Convention times and dates.

Section 2 – County Convention Rules

Every County Convention shall, after it elects its temporary President, adopt the rules by which it shall operate.

Section 3- State Convention

The County Convention shall elect Delegates and Alternates to the State Convention, in such numbers as are directed by the SC Democratic Party. Such Delegates and Alternates shall serve for two consecutive State Conventions.

Article X – Nomination and Election Process for County Officers

Section 1 – Nominating Committee

The County Chair shall appoint a Nominating Committee consisting of five members. The Nominating Committee shall be responsible for recruiting qualified candidates for Party office, making nominations, and managing all aspects of the election process. This Committee shall submit to the delegates at the County Convention a slate of names for the offices of County Chair, First Vice Chair, Second Vice Chair, Third Vice Chair, State Executive Committee Members and Alternate State Committee Members.

Section 2 – Nominations from Delegates

Nominations will be accepted from the floor at the County Convention.

Section 3 - Election Process

Only delegates (or properly elected Alternates replacing Delegates) to the County Convention as elected by each Precinct club are allowed to vote. A majority of the votes is required for election.

Section 4– Conduct

No person who has been convicted of a State or Federal crime related to voting or the conduct of an election shall hold office at any level of the party. Officers may be removed for other reasons as set forth in the State Party Rules including public support of a candidate of an opposing political party or indictment for a crime involving moral turpitude.

Section 5– Vacancy or Recall

In the event that a County Party office becomes vacant, the County Executive Committee shall have the power to fill the vacancy until the organization of the next County Convention. County Officers are subject to recall by a petition of 20% of the Delegates to the most recent County Convention and a recall process as outlined by the State Party Rules.

Article XI – Ad Hoc Committees and Area/Constituent Clubs

Section 1 - The County Chair may appoint ad hoc committees and recognize area Democratic clubs to assist in organizing and executing the work of the County Party. Members of ad hoc Committees are not required to be members of the County Executive Committee. Where feasible, an officer of the RCDP should be appointed to membership on every ad hoc Committee.

Section 2 - Democratic Clubs

Such clubs may include, but are not limited to, clubs organized within a particular region (such as the Northeast Democrats or Irmo Democrats) and clubs organized by constituency (such as the Richland County Democratic Women or the Richland County Young Dems of the Central Midlands), or clubs organized by policy/issue and recognized by the Executive Committee. While not governed by the County Party, such clubs should be encouraged to assist in the work of the Democratic Party, and should be supported in such ways as the County Chair finds feasible and worthwhile.

Article XII- Candidate Filing, Nominations, and Primary Elections

The laws of the State of South Carolina and the State Party Rules shall govern candidate filing, nominations, elections, and protests.

Article XIII – Candidate Support

Section 1 - Eligibility

Only nominees of the Democratic Party in partisan elections are eligible for support by the RCDP.

Section 2 – Equal Access

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

Section 3 – Officer Support

Officers of the RCDP may support any national, state, or local Democratic candidates prior to the primary as long as they do so as private individuals without any connection to their role in the organization.

Article XIV – State Party Rules

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

Nothing in these bylaws shall be construed to vary the express provisions of the South Carolina Election Law, and any matter not specifically covered by these rules shall be governed by the provisions of the said election law.

Article XV- Amendment of Bylaws

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

Article XVI – Ratification

The Mission & Bylaws of the Richland County Democratic Party will be in effect upon its adoption by a majority vote of all Executive Committee members present at a regular meeting of the County Executive Committee. The approved document will be dated accordingly. A copy of the Mission & Bylaws will be posted on the RCDP website and presented to every Officer and Executive Committee member following election.