



# Loudoun County Democratic Committee

## Precinct Captain Manual & Guidelines

### Thank you for volunteering to be a Loudoun County Precinct Captain!

This document will help you understand what a Precinct Captain does, how they fit into the Democratic Committee organization, and how this role is critical to our mission of electing Democrats to public office.

As with any position, there are different levels of commitment and participation. The intent of this document is to present all of the ways you could help, but most Captains don't operate at that level. Please don't be overwhelmed or intimidated by the ideas here – if you do the things identified as "Basic Tasks," we're already on our way to victory on Election Day! If you wish to step it up from there, you'll find ideas here to do that.

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**Addendum: Election Day Run Sheet for 2019**

## What is a Precinct and why have a Captain?

A Precinct is an area defined by the Board of Elections and the Board of Supervisors wherein all the registered voters vote at the same location.

We currently have 98 precincts in Loudoun County. Some have thousands of registered voters, and some have a few hundred. Some lean Democratic and some lean Republican.

The Precinct Captain manages the smallest, but most important component of the American political structure. You take direction from your District Leadership, and in turn direct the volunteers who will interact with voters. You become the interface between the Democratic Party and the voters in your Precinct. By reaching out to volunteers to help LCDC hand out sample ballots on Election Day, interact with potential voters at Back-To-School-Nights, and participate in the political process, you directly help elect candidates who represent your values and concerns.

## Basic Tasks of a Precinct Captain

These are the basic tasks that we ask you to take on. Beyond this, you are limited only by your time, imagination and personal interest. A more comprehensive list comes later in this document.

1. Reach out to voters (friends, family, neighbors) who might be willing to volunteer to hand out Democratic literature and sample ballots. (They do not have to be LCDC members.)
2. Keep a list of these volunteers – name, e-mail, phone number, and how they want to participate.
3. Ensure that your Precinct polling place is staffed during elections from setup before 6:00 am through shutdown after 7:00 pm. This DOES NOT mean that you have to be there all day. If you've recruited enough volunteers, you may not have to be there at all.
4. Collect candidate/campaign yard signs from District Chair for Election Day. Ensure that they are planted appropriately at the polling place before 6:00am and taken down and removed at 7:00pm. You may charge your "opening" and "closing" volunteers with this task, but most Captains accept this responsibility themselves.
5. Ensure that your Precinct volunteers understand their duties and responsibilities for the day, to include handing out sample ballots, reporting voter count when requested, staying positive and not engaging with disagreeable voters. These types of things are particularly important if you will not be present. Make sure volunteers have contact information for District runners, District Chairs, and the other volunteers before or after them at their Precinct.
6. Participate in your District meetings and LCDC membership meetings, to keep informed of Democratic priorities in the County and in your District, and to meet new members who can help in your Precinct.
7. Pass along contact information for people you meet who wish to volunteer in other ways: stuffing envelopes for mailing, make phone calls, donating money. Make sure everyone who wants to help is engaged in some way.

8. Read all communications from your District Chair, your District Precinct Coordinator and from LCDC in order to follow the rules and learn about developments.
9. Provide expertise about the needs and qualities of your precinct. Know the entrance points and parking situation and the best place to establish our presence. Understand the demographics and boundaries of the precinct, and be able to inform your precinct volunteers and LCDC about the precinct and its voters.
10. Think about who you can recruit, train and motivate as a deputy Precinct Captain who can substitute for you any time, and who might be able to step into the position if you step down. Emergencies do happen, and it is important that you have a deputy you can count on if you are unable to perform your duties on Election Day.

A copy of the 2019 Election Day “Run Sheet” is attached at the end of this document, so that you can see the kind of information you receive from your District Coordinator just before Election Day. These were District-specific. The attachment is the template.

## **LCDC Precinct Operations positions and organization**

In Loudoun County, we want to have 98 Precinct Captains – one for each precinct. The precincts are grouped into Districts. Sterling District has eight precincts; Blue Ridge has 19. The other six Districts fall somewhere in between.

We have a Precinct Coordinator in each District, and all of these make up the Precinct Operations Committee.

The Chair of the Precinct Operations Committee takes direction and guidance from the LCDC Chair and Executive Board and communicates through the Precinct Coordinators to the Captains. This includes information about coverage for the Primary, rules of engagement for election days, Back-To-School Night scheduling, distribution of handouts and yard signs, and anything else that comes up.

Although all LCDC position-holders are accessible to you, Precinct Captains should communicate information, concerns and ideas first to their Coordinator and/or District Chair, who will then pass it on to the Precinct Ops Chair. Each District has budgeted funds that may be available to you if you need them to succeed in your tasks, and it is approved by your Chair. The Precinct Ops Committee also has a budget which pays for handout literature, sample ballots, mailings and other necessary expenses.

Precinct Captain training may be organized at a county-wide level, or in your District, perhaps during a regular District meeting.

The 2020 District Leadership and Precinct Operations Team are listed at the end of this document.

## Comprehensive list of functions of a Precinct Captain

In addition to the Basic Tasks listed above on Page 2, a Precinct Captain can use gatherings and technology to build and maintain Democratic mechanism in your community. Here are some ways to do that:

- Seek to register all eligible voters in your precinct and identify all registered voters as to party identification.
- Encourage people to join LCDC and/or attend District meetings.
- Put political candidate signs in your yard and offer them to your neighbors.
- Be trained in Votebuilder (the registered-voter database) and keep a list of precinct residents up-to-date (or ask your District Coordinator to provide this.) Through this database, we can generate a list of “strong dem” voters in your precinct for you to contact. Or Independents. Or newly registered voters who haven’t voted here yet.
- Organize appropriate precinct social events to promote involvement and build your volunteer base – host a coffee gathering or walking club, talk it up at a block party, etc...
- Recruit volunteers for Committee functions
- Build a Precinct Team: Social media, canvass captain, welcome captain, voter registration
- Collaborate with leadership during campaigns to recruit volunteers.
- Maintain communication with active Democrats in your precinct.
- Welcome new residents to the precinct.
- Find out what voters are thinking and pass this information on the Committee.
- Identify and guide new members through the membership process. This will involve coordinating an outreach event or meeting of Democrats in your precinct, at least once a year. Encourage your precinct members to volunteer for events and committees. Train and encourage your precinct members to volunteer for candidate’s campaigns. Communicate with your precinct members (in person, by phone, by e-mail) if you have knowledge or feedback on important local or Committee news that affects members.
- Identify and develop Democratic leaders. Work to recruit and train active Democrats, members, Precinct Captains, Officers and Democratic candidates.

Some precincts need more effort than others. Some precinct captains are more inclined to reach out to strangers. You decide what you are comfortable doing, and what you would like assistance with.

## A Year in the Life of a well-established Precinct

This was pulled from a document at the Democratic Party of Virginia, and may be helpful in organizing your efforts throughout the year. Again, your level of activity is your decision. These are guidelines and suggestions, not orders.



**All Year:**

- Welcome new residents
- Recruit volunteers
- Identify “no data” voters in your Precinct
- Keep in touch with Dems in your Precinct

**January - February:**

- Recruit volunteers for Super Tuesday presence
- Reaffirm roles for the year
- Determine training needs
- Help candidates with petitions



**March - May:**

- Staff your polling place on Super Tuesday to hand out a message of Democratic unity and recruit volunteers and LCDC members.
- Hold a social event to meet voters in your precinct
- Promote a District fundraiser.

**June - July:**

- Hold candidate meet-and-greets
- Staff farmer’s markets in your District
- Collaborate with LCDC Outreach to begin voter contact

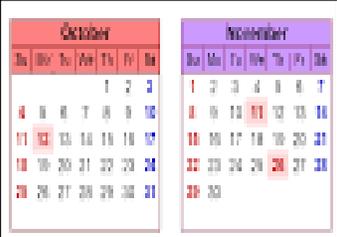


**August - September:**

- Recruit and staff volunteers to hand out literature at Back-To-School Nights in your District.

**October - November:**

- Collaborate with LCDC Outreach and campaign staffs to recruit volunteers and hold voter contact events.
- Recruit and communicate with volunteers for poll coverage in November.





**Election Day!**

- Pick up your sample ballots, table, banners, etc... from your Precinct Coordinator.
- Secure volunteers to set up and tear down your presence at your Precinct’s polling place, or plan to do it yourself.
- Staff your polling place with at least two people for all shifts, and communicate to them the rules for working an election (these will be proved to you by your Coordinator.)
- Send reminders to volunteers, check on them periodically
- Get Out the Vote by canvassing and making phone calls.

**November:**

- Thank all of your volunteers and celebrate!
- Commit to another year of being Precinct Captain or recruit your replacement.



## Volunteer Retention and Management

We can’t do anything without volunteers. Finding them is important. Keeping them is critical. And the more we have, the easier our task.

Make sure your volunteers feel welcome, appreciated and important. We’re building participation and commitment, not exploiting a one-time opportunity. We’ve seen time and time again, once people feel good about their volunteer effort, they want to do more.

Here are some Do’s and Don’ts to consider:

**DO:**

- ✓ Provide a time limit or precise time window, whenever possible
- ✓ Ask if the volunteer can bring a friend to help
- ✓ Welcome volunteers warmly and with thanks, and introduce them to others
- ✓ Have specific tasks ready to start immediately when someone shows up
- ✓ Explain the requirements and demonstrate
- ✓ Call and reschedule volunteers if you don’t need them
- ✓ Let volunteers know if the work will start before they arrive – who’s there before them and who will relieve them.
- ✓ Let them know if there will be refreshments, or if they should bring their own
- ✓ Make sure they have the tools or handouts they need

- ✓ Meet them if they're volunteering somewhere alone and show them how
- ✓ Pair up newcomers with veteran volunteers
- ✓ Increase responsibility and requests to help out as time passes

## ***DON'T:***

- ✗ Don't ask people to show up for work that is almost done or overstaffed. Reschedule.
- ✗ Don't leave people alone if they're new or uncomfortable
- ✗ Don't let them sit idle. If they feel unnecessary or unneeded, they won't come back
- ✗ Don't let them leave without collecting their contact information and asking them to volunteer again. For what? And when?
- ✗ Don't use acronyms they may not understand at first: GOTV, BTSN, etc...

Thank them, thank them, then thank them again! Remember, they may come for the candidate, but they'll stay for YOU if you treat them well.

## **LCDC Leadership for 2020**

### **County-wide positions:**

Lissa Savaglio, LCDC Chair

Justin Hannah, Vice-Chair/Districts

Kannan Srinivasan, Treasurer

David Bauer, Vice-Chair/Operations

Nicole Gore-Hayes, Vice-Chair/Finance

Shelley Tamres, Secretary

**Jackie von Wodtke, Chair/Precinct Operations Committee 571-239-4159**

PrecinctOps@LoudounDemocrats.org or Volunteer@LoudounDemocrats.org

### **District Leadership & Precinct Coordinators**



#### **ALGONKIAN**

Chair: Lauren Goldberg

Vice-Chair: Amy Bauer

Vice-Chair: Vlad Ovchynnikov

**Precinct Coordinator: Julie Garrett**

Algonkian@loudoundemocrats.org

jparsons75@gmail.com

703-628-6438



#### **ASHBURN**

Chair: Steve Schwaroch

Vice-Chair: Rachel Mai

Vice-Chair: Nathan Soules

**Co-Precinct Coordinator: Saj Mathew**

**Co-Precinct Coordinator: Rachel Mai**

Ashburn@loudoundemocrats.org

sajtheliberal@protonmail.com

rachmai@yahoo.com

703-999-9253



- ★ **BLUE RIDGE** ★
- Chair: Cathy Schonder  
Vice-Chair & **Co-Precinct Coord: Larry Pantzer**
- Vice-Chair & **Co-Precinct Coord: Barbara Gerritsen**  
**Co-Precinct Coordinator: Eileen Martin**  
Co-Precinct Coordinator:
- Blueridge@loudoundemocrats.org  
larry@uwalumni.com  
703-855-4018  
barbarasgerritsen@gmail.com  
eileen@protecht.com
- ★ **BROAD RUN** ★
- Chair: Ryan Frasier  
Vice-Chair: Mary Tondreau  
Vice-Chair: Michael Fruitman  
**Precinct Operations Committee Member: Beatriz Chung-Hogan**
- Broadrun@loudoundemocrats.org  
beaiqt@gmail.com
- ★ **CATOCTIN** ★
- Chair: Tammy Cummins  
Vice-Chair: Harrison Crecraft  
**Precinct Coordinator: Tammy Cummins**
- Catocin@loudoundemocrats.org  
Catocin@loudoundemocrats.org  
703-505-5383
- ★ **DULLES** ★
- Co-Chair: Liz Carter  
Co-Chair: Lara Larson  
Vice Chair: Betsy Scotto-Lavino  
Vice Chair & **Precinct Coordinator: Bev Ricci**
- Dulles@loudoundemocrats.org  
bricci1772@aol.com  
703-606-0993
- ★ **LEESBURG** ★
- Chair: Mary Pellicano  
Vice-Chair: Tony Fasolo  
Vice-Chair: Nicole Lee  
**Precinct Coordinator: Jackie von Wodtke**
- Leesburg@loudoundemocrats.org  
PrecinctOps@loudoundemocrats.org  
571-239-4159
- ★ **STERLING** ★
- Chair: Lauren Coyne  
Vice-Chair: Randy Moore  
Vice Chair & **Precinct Coordinator: Maria Damare**
- Sterling@loudoundemocrats.org  
mariadamare@gmail.com  
703-851-1427

(This list was compiled in January 2020, so it may change or positions may be filled as we go forward.)

## LCDC ELECTION DAY – [REDACTED] DISTRICT

All poll workers should read through this sheet **before** Election Day.

When you go to your assigned precinct, you may want to bring something to drink and a fold-up chair. Make sure that your cell phone is fully charged. Dress for the weather, bring an umbrella if rain is forecast. Remember to smile – we are the party of inclusion and tolerance!

### These are your contact people:

District Runner: [REDACTED] cell:

District Coordinator: [REDACTED] cell:

Eastern Districts Base of Operations: Rey Banks, cell: **703-894-7489**

Runners: Vinnie Savaglio, cell: 703-282-9975

Bob Moses, cell: 703-409-9028

Western Districts Base of Operations: Bryan Estey, cell: **860-371-7474**

Runners: Shelley Tamres, cell: 571-216-4867

Other TBD

LCDC Chair: Lissa Savaglio, cell: 571-278-7159

Precinct Operations Chair: Jackie von Wodtke cell: 571-239-4159

Democratic Party Voter Protection Hotline: 844-4VA-VOTE (844-482-8683)

### Rules for Everyone:

- Per law, you and the campaign signs must be at least **40 ft.** away from any entrance to the building in which the polling place is located. The 40 ft. boundary will be marked at the main polling entrance.
- Wear buttons, stickers, or T-shirts to help people identify you as a Democrat.
- If you have to go into the polling place, remove or cover up your buttons or stickers.
- If you enter the poll, take the authorization form with you and show it if you are asked. The form, signed by Lissa Savaglio, permits you to act as an LCDC representative.
- If there are two Democratic poll workers, each worker should watch for people approaching from a different direction.
- **Offer every voter a sample ballot.** Make sure that you:
  - ➔ Ask “Would you like a Democratic sample ballot?” Hold ballot out while asking; it increases the likelihood it will be taken. Don't impede their way to their destination.
  - ➔ If they decline, try to communicate that there is no D or R for most candidates.
  - ➔ If they accept one, inform the voter that there is a recycling box at the exit.
  - ➔ Always thank every person for voting whether or not they take a sample ballot.
  - ➔ Always be courteous and remember that your actions reflect on LCDC. If someone is rude, don't reply in kind...just say, "Have a nice day" or “Thank you for voting.”
- Retrieve recycled ballots during shift changes and remove any that have been written on.
- **If a voter is at the wrong polling place do not tell them where to go. Have the voter ask the Chief or other Election official. (Answering a “where do I vote” question incorrectly can actually get you and the LCDC in legal trouble, as it could be misconstrued as voter suppression.)**
- Curbside voting: A voter who is disabled, with difficulty getting out of the car or entering the precinct, is entitled to have an election official come to the car with a ballot. Find an election official inside the precinct and report that a disabled voter is waiting in their car.
- If you have any issues (verbal abuse, etc.) immediately go inside and report it to the Precinct Chief. He/She

**LCDC ELECTION DAY – \_\_\_\_\_ DISTRICT**

All poll workers should read through this sheet **before** Election Day.

will follow the Board of Elections procedures for emergencies. Then, call one of your contacts listed at the top of the sheet.

- If any voter expresses any interest in the Democrats or LCDC, offer them an LCDC outreach card. Use the sign-up sheet for anyone who wishes to be contacted or to receive our newsletters.

**FIRST AND LAST SHIFT VOLUNTEERS :**

**Openers (1st shift volunteers):**

- Text the District Coordinator \_\_\_\_\_, cell: \_\_\_\_\_ by 5:45 am to let him/her know you are in place and setting up.
- You should have a box with at least the following supplies:
  1. Sample ballots, "STOP" sign
  2. Recycling box and RECYCLE HERE signs and tape
  3. "Get Democratic Info Here" yard signs
  4. Ziploc bags for ballots and tape
  5. Authorization form signed by Lissa Savaglio
  6. LCDC info handout
  7. LCDC email list sign-up sheet
- Stake out a location at least 40 feet away from any entrance (legal requirement) and in the most desirable location (i.e. where voters will have to pass by.) Set up table if you have one.
- Set up any campaign signs you brought from home. Put them where they will be seen by people walking in, around where you'll stand.
- Find the signed authorization form and grab the recycling box with attached sign. Walk into the precinct and introduce yourself to the Precinct Chief. If you are asked for it, show the authorization form to the Chief. (Remember to remove/cover your buttons/stickers/T-shirt before entering the poll.) Ask if it's okay to leave a recycling box near the exit, and leave it there if approved.

**PICK UP PRECINCT MATERIALS AT \_\_\_\_\_**

Address \_\_\_\_\_.

When? \_\_\_\_\_

**Closers (last shift volunteers):**

- Clean up every single thing that's ours: table, chair(s), canopy, lit, trash, recycle box (you have to retrieve from inside the poll 5 minutes before they close to avoid being locked in!!!), etc. Collect all Dem signs. **Return left over sample ballots and any Dem stuff to \_\_\_\_\_ or call \_\_\_\_\_ to make other arrangements.**
- Contact/text District Coordinator \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ to let him/her know your precinct is cleaned up.
- Yard Sign Recycling: All signs should be broken down, i.e. separated the signs from the frames. You may recycle them at Potomac Metals in Sterling. Cardboard signs can be recycled in your curbside pickup, plastic signs can go to a grocery store where they recycle plastic bags.
- District Coordinators or Chairs should keep the "Recycle HERE" signs, the "Get Democratic Info" Signs and the "STOP" signs for future use.

**COME PARTY WITH YOUR FELLOW DEMS AFTER THE POLLS CLOSE AT LOST RHINO RETREAT, BRAMBLETON!!**