



PRECINCT COMMITTEE PERSON GETTING STARTED MANUAL

Dear Precinct Committee Person,

We are thrilled to have you on the leadership team of the Polk County Democratic Party. With your help, we will continue our efforts in every election cycle to elect strong Democrats at the local, state, and national levels.

As a Precinct Committee Person, you are at the very heart of our strategy for winning elections: ***Elections are won or lost at the precinct level.***

This manual gives you the tools to carry out your precinct duties, and we stand ready to provide you with any other help you need. Your District Coordinator, who coordinates several precincts, will support you in your work and help access information and resources. The party conducts periodic training on how to organize your precinct, as well as how to use our computer database system, VoteBuilder / VAN. And through your regular attendance at our monthly DEC Meetings (2nd Mondays) you'll be up to date on crucial information, goals and strategies, as well as casting your votes on matters of Party business and policy.

Being a precinct leader is a gratifying and enjoyable, as well as challenging, experience. You will meet many interesting people in your community and in the Democratic Party. Welcome to the team!

Thank you for working with us to achieve a better Polk County, a better Florida, and a better America.

Table of Contents

Acronyms & Terms	3
PREVIEW: What we hope you'll know after reading this Manual	4
First Three-Month Checklist.....	4
PCDP ORGANIZATIONAL CHART	5
Polk DEC Committees.....	5
Polk County Democratic Club and Caucuses	6
Polk County District Coordinators	7
The “Nuts & Bolts” of Being a Precinct Captain.....	8
Duties and Responsibilities of Members of Democratic Executive Committee of Polk County (DECPC).....	9
Use Your Resources	10
What Should the Precinct Team Do-- Right NOW and Always?.....	11
What Do You Need to Have a Successful Canvass?	12
More to know about Effective Canvassing	13
About VoteBuilder / VAN / MiniVan	14
Reasons to Vote By Mail.....	15
SOE Site Sample—Precinct List/Maps.....	16
Block Captain Responsibilities.....	17
Other Resources Available to PCP's.....	18
Ideal Learning Plan for a Precinct Committee Person	19

Acronyms & Terms

“Also known as”	AKA or aka
Calling all voters!	Phone bank
Block Captain	BC
Chartered voter affinity groups	Caucus
Democratic	D or Dem
Democratic National Committee	DNC
Democratic Executive Committee— PCDP governing body: All PCPs, officers and D elected officials	DEC
Door knocking	Canvassing
“Dropped” Vote By Mail	DVBM (VBM sign-up has expired)
Early Voting	EV
Field Organizer	FO
Florida Democratic Party	FDP
Get Out the Vote	GOTV
Headquarters	HQ
Leave campaign materials at doors	Lit (Literature) Drop
Meet & Greet	M & G
Membership and Precinct Organizing Committee	MPOC
Newly Registered Voter	NRV
No Party Affiliation Voter	NPA

Party-affiliated outreach group	Club
Polk County Democratic Party	PCDP
Precinct Committee Person	PCP
Republican	R
Rules governing the Party	Bylaws
Supervisor of Elections	SOE
Voter Access Network Database	VAN / VoteBuilder
Vote By Mail	VBM

PREVIEW: What we hope you'll know after reading this Manual

- ✓ Know the overview of the PCDP and the PCP role
- ✓ Know how to own your territory
- ✓ Know how to engage your voters
- ✓ Know your tools, resources and strategies

First Three-Month Checklist:

What you will want to do in the next three months

- ✓ Read this Getting Started Manual
- ✓ Get to know the Democratic organization in Polk County
- ✓ Go to the DEC meeting each month (2nd Monday's)
- ✓ Attend VAN Training
- ✓ Join a Committee, Club or Caucus, volunteer at the DEC Office (when open and available), participate in a county DEM event
- ✓ Start reaching out to Dems in your precinct. Canvassing, phone banking, emails, texting, postcards or some other method of reaching the voter in your precinct is vital to the health and vitality of the organization. Encourage VBM, have them sign petitions, update their contact information. We need to have you working with your voters to GOTV.

"The most important job I ever had was Precinct Captain." ~President Harry S. Truman

PCDP ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Polk DEC Committees

COMMITTEE
Steering Committee
Diversity and Inclusion Committee
Membership and Precinct Organization Committee (MPOC)
Credentials Committee
Finance Committee
Legislative Liaison and Platform Committee
Campaign & Candidate Recruitment Committee
Public Relations and Publicity Committee
Information Technology Committee
By-Laws Committee

Polk County Democratic Club and Caucuses

Club: *Party-affiliated outreach group*

Polk County Democratic Clubs

- Greater Winter Haven Democratic Club
- Lake Ashton Democratic Club
- Lake Wales Democratic Club
- Lakeland Democratic Club
- Northeast Polk Democratic Club (Davenport, Haines City, Poinciana)
- Polk Young Dems (18-40)
- Solivita Democratic Club



Caucus: *Chartered voter affinity groups*

Polk County Caucuses

- Polk County Democratic Environmental Caucus Chapter
- Polk County Progressive Democratic Caucus Chapter
- Rainbow Ridge LGBTQA Democratic Caucus Chapter
- Democratic Women's Club of East Polk Ridge
- Democratic Women's Club of Lakeland

Find more info at polkdemocrats.org

Polk County District Coordinators

The District Coordinator is the go-to person supporting PCP's with any questions or resources they need to complete their PCP responsibilities. District Coordinators report progress on goals to the MPOC Chair.

Responsibilities of a District Coordinator:

- Recruit and help train PCP's and Block Captains in your district.
- Provide initial orientation to the role using this manual.
- Provide to PC the names of any Block Captain assignments in their precinct.
- Help Coordinate events in your District such as tabling events for Voter Registration, Day of Action canvassing events, phone banking/texting events, etc.
- Organize and attend Meet & Greet events in coordination with other DC's on either the East or West side of Polk County.
- Attend Monthly MPOC Committee Meetings.
- Attend Monthly DEC Meetings
- Support PCP's with VAN resources

Polk County District Coordinators

1: Judy Haberek, 863-588-9616 judyhaberek@yahoo.com

2: OPEN

3: OPEN

4: OPEN

5 East: OPEN

5 West: OPEN

The “Nuts & Bolts” of Being a Precinct Committee Person

What is a precinct? (Polk County has 172)

Think of your precinct as your general neighborhood. A precinct is the smallest political geographical unit established by the county for voting purposes. For each 1,000 registered Democrats, there can be 2 Precinct Committee Persons.

What does a Precinct Committee Person Do?

The PCP serves as the link between our local party and the voters in the precinct. PCP's are expected to stay informed about political issues; to attend the DEC monthly meetings, PCP trainings and Area PCP meetings; to use e-mail; and to contact their precinct voters in a variety of ways before and between elections.

Goal: to motivate the highest possible Democratic turnout.

- Assume the Responsibility to Lead. The Precinct Committee Person must be depended on to organize the effort within their precinct and to carry out responsibilities capably and efficiently.
- Know Your Precinct Territory. Print your precinct map from the VAN. Drive or walk around your precinct to learn its geographical boundaries, characteristics of the neighborhoods, places to have meetings, distribute literature, register voters, etc.

Who can be a Precinct Committee Person?

You must be a registered Democrat in your precinct, and be willing to do the work.

What is the minimum time commitment?

The duration of the PCP commitment is a four-year term from Presidential election to Presidential election. You can join at any time. There is no set minimum hourly time expectation. We ask that you reach out to your neighbors on a regular basis to provide information about candidates, issues and elections. You will build a team of block captains and volunteers to assist you in your work to accomplish the goals expected throughout the year.

What are some of the “Perks”?

PCP's are Voting Members of the PCDP. They meet a multitude of people, including potential candidates and elected officials, have new learning experiences, gain skills, help determine the direction of our party, and take pride in contributing to our democracy, one voter at a time.

You can truly make a difference by working with the PCDP to make Polk County a better place through politics. We will help you learn and practice what you need to know to be an effective PCP.

Duties and Responsibilities of Members of Democratic Executive Committee of Polk County (DECPC)

The objective of the DECPC is to obtain the highest possible number of Democratic votes in each election and to elect Democratic candidates to public office.

It is the duty and responsibility of DECPC members [i.e., Precinct Committee Persons] to:

- Attend each meeting and training session of the DECPC. Note: When you can't attend, respond to the email notification of the meeting and tell us you can't be there.
- PCP's must use e-mail and respond to emails as a functional necessity.
- Contact all Democrats in their precinct, at a minimum, prior to every general election
- Participate in obtaining the highest possible Democratic registration and voter turnout
- Encourage and facilitate Democrats voting by Vote By Mail ballot.
- Contribute to and/or help raise funds for the DECPC.
- If you should move, report any change of residence to the DECPC and to the Supervisor of Elections no later than thirty (30) days after such change is effective.

Additional Points:

- A new PCP will gradually learn and develop the skills to be able to fully perform the responsibilities of the PCP role. It is not expected that a new PCP will have all the skills from the start.
- A PCP will eventually build a team of block captains and other volunteers to help meet the goals for registering voters, signing voters up for VBM, securing petition signatures, etc.
- The PCDP is governed by the rules of the Florida Democratic Party. The PCDP supports all of our Democratic candidates. When there is more than one Democrat running in a race, as in Primary elections, PCP's (in their official role), cannot endorse one candidate over others. Caucuses follow different rules -- they can issue endorsements.

Use Your Resources

- Get and use your precinct map from the VAN.
- Get and use current precinct voter lists (Create yourself from VAN or ask your District Coordinator for help).
- Build relationships with Democratic supporters in your precinct who have volunteered before, as well as new prospective volunteers.
- Build relationships with PCs in adjacent and/or similar precincts and collaborate on shared projects.
- Attend the monthly DEC Meetings to be well informed, as well as any clubs or caucuses you wish to join.
- Ask your District Coordinator about additional training you would like to receive.
- Reach out to any existing Block Captains in your Precinct to find out what activities they have coordinated in their neighborhoods.
- Share your progress and request help when needed
- Accept that this job requires hard work, persistence, and a proactive attitude: Own your turf!

What Should the Precinct Team Do-- Right NOW and Always?

Ongoing PCP To Do List:

- **Embody pride in being a Democrat and speak up about our political positions and values**
- **Training:** Work with DC to receive PCP Orientation, VAN training, other upcoming PCDP trainings, and inform yourself about current political news and issues that are relevant to your precinct.
- **Contact your Dem and NPA voters** at every opportunity, and in any/every way you can: Phone (call/text), E-mail, Social Media, Letters, Newsletters, Postcards, events, community gatherings
- **Contact Newly Registered Voters (NRV): Contact every one of your NRVs, by letter, phone, at their doors, or at Meet & Greets.** NRVs also get a welcome letter from the Party Chair and will be invited to area Meet & Greets. **Welcome these people in!**
- **Contact the “Warm” Voters** in your precinct and persuade them to engage with us-- to learn about local, state and national Democratic platforms, goals, initiatives and candidates. Get your “Warm” list from the VAN or your DC.
- **Vote-by-Mail (“VBM”) Goal: Motivate your Dem voters to sign-up for VBM** by providing information (see SOE website) VBM registration forms or VBM online registration assistance. If you know NPAs who lean Democratic, ask them to sign-up to VBM.
- **Communicate Data Changes:** Update information on your voters in the party’s VoteBuilder/VAN database computer system. As voters move in and out of your precinct, you will be able to update phone numbers and email address changes.

What Do You Need to Have a Successful Canvass?

- A central location in your walk area for people to meet before and after
- High-density locations to target
- A trainer to orient people to the job, explain materials, answer questions
- Hard surface for writing (clipboards or cardboard or folders) and a pen
- Maps of the larger area, the neighborhood and the specific streets each door-to-door canvasser is walking. (Cut your Turf with street lists from VAN or the DC will do for you.)
- Scripts and a list of essential Talking Points
- Party and candidate literature
- VBM forms
- Voter Registration
- Any candidate and issue petitions that may be relevant
- Spanish version of materials if needed for your neighborhood
- Your PCDP business cards (may be created by DEC upon your request) and canvassing supplies from the DEC office: **Door hangers and postcards that you can customize, T shirts, bags, etc.**
- Cell phones: Have MiniVAN app loaded on phones ahead of time. See section on MiniVAN, below

More to know about Effective Canvassing

- **NEVER** argue.
- **Be aware and put safety first.** Work in pairs on the street, if possible.
- **General rule: Never enter a home alone. Be cautious if you do enter a home.**
- **Never** walk across a lawn.
- **NEVER** put literature in mailboxes. That is a federal offense. Put it between an inner and outer door, or place it between the doorknob and the frame, under a mat, etc.
- Know your script.
- Study your map and know which streets you are heading toward.
- Check your list of targeted voters--note age, gender, family members
- Before you approach a house, assess whom you are going to be speaking to. Modify your message to be most effective for the voter. Example: a Prius in the driveway suggests a pro-environment voter; Republican sign tells you don't bother.
- Take an extra pen or pencil.
- Wear comfortable shoes, and bring water.
- Carry literature and other supplies in a bag or other organized way.
- Be prepared to give voters your name, phone number, and email address (business card) so they can contact you or other Precinct Committee Persons.
- Be friendly and smile when talking to a voter; you are speaking to a neighbor (feel free to bring up their newspaper from the driveway.)
- Keep your eyes on the voter – not on your clipboard, your feet, or your script. Remove your sunglasses when talking to the voter.
- When speaking to the voter, verify the telephone number and email if it is on your list. If there is no phone number or email listed, politely request whether you might have them.
- If you can't answer a question, admit it and get the information to the voter later.
- Always be polite and thank the voter for his/her time.
- Enter all information collected
- Don't linger. Canvassing takes time. Move on to the next home.

About VoteBuilder / VAN / MiniVan

Votebuilder / VAN Florida contains the Florida voter file from the Division of Elections, with additional consumer data and scores added by the Democratic National Committee. The Florida Democratic Party maintains voter data for Democrats statewide using VoteBuilder / VAN. It can be used by PCP's to maintain all forms of voter data, including voter registration data, polling results, field data, and volunteer activity data. The MiniVan is an APP that can be used on your Smartphone or iPad to use while out canvassing in your Precinct.

VAN Administrators– Each county Democratic Executive Committee has one or more administrator(s) responsible for maintaining survey questions, activist codes, scripts, report formats, and users, and for answering users' support requests or assigning VAN User Profile sign in information.

For help or questions, contact your DC.

Basic VAN Training is mandatory for Precinct Committee Persons. Training teaches you to access a wealth of information, including each voter's contact information, voting history, activity codes, notes, survey question results, contact history, etc. Knowing how to use VAN is essential to the PCP job.

What VAN can do for you: Quick Look Up allows you to find voters, phones, emails, addresses; Update/Correct Data, print street lists, and more.

How to access your own Precinct info: You can create and "Export" voter lists with Phone, Address, and Emails; Using "My Campaign" will help you find Volunteers.

How to access Vote By Mail targets in your precinct: You can create Targeted Lists; Save your Targeted List; Create Calling/Canvassing Lists.

Basic and Intermediate VAN Training: One-on-One Training

At your VAN training, you will receive the VAN Training Manual.

Reasons to Vote By Mail

Vote By Mail = A smart choice for Polk Voters

- VBM is the most convenient way to cast your vote.
- VBM ensures that no last-minute situation (illness, travel, emergency) will prevent you from casting your vote.
- Vote By Mail has been found to increase turnout by about 7%.
- VBM eliminates your need to wait in line at the polls.
- VBM reduces lines at polls for everyone.
- You can choose to hand deliver your VBM ballot to the designated polling locations during Early Voting if you prefer
- You can choose not to use the VBM ballot and vote in person at your precinct polling place on election day.
- You can track your VBM ballot online, or by calling the SOE, to be sure your ballot was received.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FROM THE SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS

“Vote-by-mail ballots cannot be forwarded so be sure we have your correct mailing address on file. Even if the post office forwards your mail . . . they will not forward absentee ballots.”

To request VBM:

- Call the Polk Supervisor of Elections Office at (863)534- 5888
- Request VBM online at Polkelections.com

Important: VBM must be renewed every two years.



SOE Site Sample—Precinct List/Maps

Note: Everything you need to know about elections and voter registration is on this wonderful website: www.polkelections.com

Voters can register to vote online, as well as with paper forms. Regular registration forms and Vote By Mail applications can be accessed online. You can access your precinct map and voter statistics, as well as election results. And more. Play with this site and learn a ton.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Polk County Supervisor of Elections website. At the top left is a circular logo with the text "SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS" and "Lori Edwards". To the right of the logo, the name "Lori Edwards" is displayed in blue, followed by "Polk County Supervisor of Elections" in red. Below this, there are links for "Contact" and "Site Map". A search bar is located in the top right corner, and a "Select Language" dropdown menu is positioned below it, with a note "Powered by Google Translate". A navigation menu at the bottom of the header includes links for "Voter Services", "Outreach", "Candidates", "Facts & Figures", "Election Worker", "About", "Maps", and "Español".

The main content area is divided into three columns:

- A MESSAGE FROM LORI**: Features a portrait of Lori Edwards.
- NOTEWORTHY**: Contains three links: "Amendment 4 FAQ's, Restoration of Voting Rights", "Update Your Signature: When you vote by mail, your signature is used to verify your identity. (read more)", and "New Residents Welcome: Here is a great way to meet new people. (read".
- COMMON TASKS:**: Lists "Voter Lookup" and "Register to Vote" with corresponding icons.

Decorative images include a large blue star with red and white stripes, a group of people holding "Vote For" signs, and a close-up of a ballot with the word "VOTE" and "EVERY VOTE COUNTS" printed on it.

Block Captain Responsibilities

Block Captains are a critical link between the Party leadership and the voters. They are a valuable asset to our cause.

Block Captains report to their Precinct Committee Person (PCP). If there isn't a PCP in their precinct, the District Coordinator is the next in line. PCP's ensure every Block Captain gets a consistent message from the party leadership.

A Block Captain's function is to contact and organize smaller groups of voters and volunteers in their own neighborhood. The GOAL of a Block Captain is to GET OUT THE VOTE ON ELECTION DAY. Following are the steps to help them achieve that goal:

1. Get the latest list of Democrats in their neighborhood from the PCP or designated person.
2. Get the current script (discussion points) and any needed handouts or forms from the PCP or designated person.
3. BC takes a map from the VAN (provided by the PCP or designated person and starts walking in their neighborhood).
4. BC uses the script to talk to their neighbors.
5. BC verifies the information about who is in each of the houses on the map and updates any information as required in the VAN list. The VAN list will have errors.
6. BC will ask their neighbors about volunteering
7. BC will ask their neighbors to VBM, registering to vote and petition signing
8. BC may ask neighbors if they'd like to help with just a yard sign, phone bank or help you get out the vote near election time.
9. BC will turn in their walking list, volunteer sheets and any other documents to the PCP who will get the information updated in the VAN and pass along all the other items.

Other Resources Available to PCP's

- Polk County Democrats Florida Facebook Page
<https://www.facebook.com/PolkCountyFLDemocrats/>
- Polk County Democrats website <https://www.polkdemocrats.org/>
- Call the Polk County Democratic Party Phone: (863) 668-7199
- Supervisor of Elections Office website <https://www.polkelections.com/>
- VoteBuilder / VAN / MiniVan training
 - Getting Started for Precinct Committee Persons
 - Advanced VAN Training (Vannual)
- Precinct Committee Person – Building your Team Manual (Not yet published)
 - How to Build, Organize and Maintain Your Precinct Team
 - Meet & Greets
 - Phone Banking
 - Text Messaging
 - Letters, Newsletters, E-Mail, Social Media
 - Voter Outreach at the Polls / Greeter Instructions
 - Voter Registration (including Snowbirds)
- Florida Democratic Party website <https://www.floridadems.org/>
- Democratic National Committee website <https://democrats.org/>

Ideal Learning Plan for a Precinct Committee Person

This training is an ongoing process. We don't want to overwhelm a new PCP with all of the activities. The timing below is a guideline for learning and training to become a fully functional PCP. If you are feeling overwhelmed, reach out to your District Coordinator and ask for help.

1. Within three months
 - a. Meet with DC to receive orientation to the role and a copy of the PCP Getting Started Manual
 - b. Attend monthly DEC meetings
 - c. Attend VAN Training and learn how to access voter lists
 - d. Join a DEC Committee
 - e. Canvass with a partner at least once
 - f. Contact any block captains already in place in the precinct
 - g. The DC will introduce the new PCP to 2-3 Precinct Committee Persons closest to them as a resource for canvassing
2. Within six months
 - a. Work a minimum of two hours with an experienced volunteer to learn the ropes
 - b. Perform phone banking with guidance
 - c. Reach out to voters in the precinct to obtain updated voter information, encourage VBM, welcome newly registered voters
 - d. Canvass to recruit Block Captains within your precinct
 - e. Join a Committee, Club or Caucus, volunteer at the DEC Office (when available), participate in a county DEM event
3. Within one year
 - a. Receive the PCP – Building your Team Manual (TO BE CREATED)
 - b. Meet goals for registering new voters, signing up voters for VBM, regularly reaching out to voters in the precinct, recruiting Block Captains

The role of Precinct Committee Person can be very rewarding. You are helping your community and neighborhoods by representing Polk County Democrats and helping to get out the vote. You will meet new people who share common values and beliefs and who have the same goal in getting Democratic candidates elected to office.