



Start Here: Central Reorganization Process Basics

Introduction and a note on using this e-folder:

This folder is designed to make the process of State Central Committee reorganization a little easier for Congressional District and City and County Democratic Committees. The Virginia Democratic Party has prepared these guidelines to assist the Congressional District Committees in implementing the election process. These guidelines provide for convention processes that are flexible, fair, and fully open to all Virginia Democrats. We recommend you start your planning by reading this document.

These guidelines generally describe the processes, and the rest of the e-folder includes the current election schedule (Schedule for the Reorganization of Central Committee), and a model Congressional District Committee call and rules (highlighting the different options Congressional District Committees have), the break down of the delegates and alternates according to formula C, the Party Plan sections relating to central reorganization, and sample calls to caucus and rules for assembled and unassembled caucuses.

The Process

In gubernatorial years when the State Central Committee chooses to nominate the Democratic Candidates for statewide office in a primary, the twenty (20) members of the State Central Committee representing each congressional district shall be elected in congressional district conventions. At its December 2016 meeting, the Democratic Party of Virginia State Central Committee voted to nominate its 2017 candidates for governor and other statewide offices in a primary and not to hold a state convention. Central committee members will be elected at Congressional District Conventions as set forth in Section 4.18 of the Virginia Democratic Party Plan.

In accordance with 4.18, during its February 2017 meeting, Central Committee voted on which of the formulas set out in Party Plan Section 15.1 would be used to allocated delegates by locality during Central Reorganization. The Committee adopted the formula set out at 15.1(c) - a formula giving equal weight to the Democratic vote in the most recent elections for Governor, United States Senator, and United States President.

There are two options for electing delegates to the Congressional District Conventions. In option one, delegates to a Congressional District Convention may be elected at caucuses held within each jurisdiction that is part of the Congressional District. In option two, delegates may be elected at caucuses held immediately prior

to the Congressional District Convention at the same location as the Congressional District Convention. In both options, delegates are to be apportioned to each jurisdiction (or portion thereof) in accordance with the formula in 15.1(c).

The current Congressional District Committees will supervise the district conventions. Each District Committee may determine the number of total delegates at its convention, but each county or city within the Congressional District must be awarded a minimum of two delegates. The allocation formula may also be used, at each congressional district committee's discretion, to apportion the 20 State Central Committee members among the jurisdictions within the district.

All Party Plan provisions relating to Central reorganization are available in the "Party Plan Sections Relating to Central Reorganization" document.

Conventions

Conventions for central reorganization will be held in May, on either May 6, 13, or 20. District committees need to issue a Call to Convention by March 20th and their temporary rules at some point after that date, but at least 7 days prior to their convention.

There are a few major things your committee will need to decide prior to issuing the call to convention:

- **How many delegates and alternates do you want at your convention?** While the percentage of delegates for each locality must follow the 15.1(c) formula, calculated by DPVA, you can set how many total delegates and alternates you want to have at each district convention, since we will not be convening for a state convention.
- **Are you holding caucuses to elect delegates prior to the convention on preset dates or are you holding them immediately before convention?** Electing delegates immediately before the convention is less work for your localities and makes the central reorganization a one day process, but may create some tension if you have a lot of people interested in participating and you have them drive to the convention only to find out they cannot participate if you set a small number of delegates for your Convention. You can eliminate this problem, however, by setting your total number of delegates so high that everyone who wants to participate will be able to do so.
- **Do you want to have resolutions presented?** This is completely up to your discretion.
- **Do you want to elect your central committee members at-large or by locality or by regional grouping?** There's no requirement in the party plan

that relates to the distribution of central committee members. Some CDs choose to elect central seats at large in their convention. Others choose to allocate central seats by locality, applying the formula that central committee selected for delegate allocation to the allocation of central committee members and have the Convention at large vote on those seats, and some have localities caucus within the convention to nominate the central committee members for each locality, and then confirm them in the convention body. How you choose to divide up, or not, your central committee members is up to your CD committee and should be specified in the call to caucus and discussed in depth in the rules.

- **Can a District Committee provide for a process where attendees to the jurisdictional caucuses are all considered elected delegates if their number does not exceed the total allowed number?** Yes, and in this case, no fees should be charged to the attendees/delegates.
- **How is your district committee achieving gender parity?** Don't forget the call requires equal division so between men and women. You can choose, if you want to use the additional members specified in Section 6.2 to achieve equal division.

There are other requirements that are crucial to keep in mind as you're planning your convention. Those items are discussed below.

Call to Convention

The district committee is responsible for drafting of a document called the Call to Convention.

As per Section 14.2 of the *Party Plan*, any committee issuing a Call to a Convention:

- Must specify the time, place, and purpose of the convention;
- May restrict the convention to the purpose stated in the call;
- Shall make all convention arrangements;
- Shall ensure that the convention is held in accordance with the *Party Plan*.

Each convention must be governed by a Call to Convention, which must include:

- The time, place and purpose of the convention;
- Prefiling requirements, including fees, if any;
- Delegate and alternate selection methodology;
- Delegate and alternate filing deadlines and fees;
- The basis of allocation of delegates and alternates;
- Notice requirements;
- A description of convention committees, if any;
- The method and deadline for submitting resolutions, if allowed;
- A statement about affirmative action;

- Specification of the method of distribution of the call;
- Candidate filing fees and deadlines;
- The allocation of candidates for the congressional district committee;
- The method for filing slates, if allowed.

The Call to Convention is drafted, adopted, and distributed by the district committee. A draft call to convention is available in the convention section of the Candidate Nominations folder in the Chairs' Resource Library, vademocrats.org/chairs. That draft highlights where you have some options in your organization process.

Equal Division

Pursuant to the Democratic National Committee Charter (Article 9, section 16) and the State Party Plan (section 4.3), each District Committee is to be equally divided between men and women. The county/city chair and general assembly representative positions may be used to achieve equal division.

Full Participation

Participation in the State Central Committee election process is open to all registered voters who wish to participate as Democrats. All meetings shall be open to all members of the Democratic Party regardless of race, sex, age, color, creed, national origin, religion, ethnic identity, sexual orientation, economic status, or disability, and all meetings should be publicized fully.

Each District, county and city committee should conduct outreach programs to encourage full participation by all Democrats in the State Central Committee election process, including notice, publicity and education programs. Such outreach should be directed to all Democratic constituencies, including group such as ethnic minorities, young people, persons over 65 years of age, lesbians and gay men, persons with a high school education or less, persons with disabilities and persons of low and moderate income

Fees

Sometimes convention delegates pay voluntary filing fees, which are allocated to the county or city committees and District Committees to defray the costs of caucuses and conventions, including notice and hall rental costs. However, if you are holding you're delegate elections the same day as the convention, we recommend that you do not charge them a voluntary filing fee.

Prefiling

District committees may choose have a requirement in their call for prefiling of candidates for State Central Committee membership. Such pre-filing will allow the committee to prepare a ballot in advance. The Convention call should specify manner of filing, and in particular, if filing by mail or email is allowed. The deadline for filing as a delegate candidate shall not exceed ten (10) days prior to the convention or caucus. The Committee may establish a final deadline for filing consistent with the need to prepare ballots for such convention or caucus.

Slates

The district committee may choose to allow voting for slates. Any individual or group of Democrats may sponsor a slate of candidates for district convention delegate, and the name of that slate may appear on the caucus ballots. The provisions of Party Plan Section 14.5 apply, and the caucus call should provide pre-filing information including deadlines for filing.

Any individual or group of Democrats likewise may sponsor a slate of candidates for election to Central Committee. If that slate is to be listed on the District Convention ballot, the District Call to Convention should provide detailed information on when to file slates, how the names are to be listed, how each slate will be designated on the ballot, and any other information required to make the process clear to all participants.

Notice

Every Democratic caucus or convention must be publicized. The notice must provide the time, place and method of selection and must be given at least 7 days to the date of the caucus or convention. Notification must be posted using channels of communication typically used by the committee, and which shall provide the widest possible dissemination within its jurisdiction. Nomination Committees are required to post this notification on either their local committees web sites, congressional district web site, or the DPVA web site and provide a press release to all relevant newspapers of general circulation.

Committees are encouraged, but not required, to use other opportunities to disseminate this information to all interested parties, as they are able, including a variety of social media, e-mail databases and distribution to relevant television and radio outlets.

Participation and Outreach

Participation in the State Central Committee election process is open to all registered voters who wish to participate as Democrats. All meetings shall be open to all members of the Democratic Party regardless of race, sex, age, color, creed, national origin, religion, ethnic identity, sexual orientation, economic status, or disability, and all meetings should be publicized fully.

Each District, county and city committee should conduct outreach programs to encourage full participation by all Democrats in the State Central Committee election process, including notice, publicity and education programs. Such outreach should be directed to all Democratic constituencies, including group such as ethnic minorities, young people, persons over 65 years of age, lesbians and gay men, persons with a high school education or less, persons with disabilities and persons of low and moderate income.

Resolutions

The calls and rules allow for the adoption of resolutions at the district conventions. These resolutions are to be forwarded to the State Central Committee for consideration.

Voting

The default style of voting used in the caucus and convention documents is plurality voting, but the nominating committee can select whatever voting style it would like to use. Some basics on popular voting styles:

- Plurality: Candidate with the largest percentage of votes cast wins. This is the most straight forward of voting styles and prevents a runoff, as the candidate with the most votes in the first round is selected.
- Majority: Candidate who receives at least 50% + 1 of the votes cast wins. This can result in a runoff election, if there are multiple candidates and no candidate receives 50% + 1 in the first round of voting. This can only be used in an assembled caucus.
- Ranked Choice (Instant Runoff): Voters can rank as many candidates as they want in order of choice. This can act as an "instant runoff" of sorts. It does this by counting votes in rounds. First, each candidate is allotted all of the first choice votes that they received. If no candidate received a majority of the first choice votes, the candidate with the lowest number of first choice votes is eliminated and then the voters who selected the defeated candidate as their first choice will have their votes added to the totals for the candidates who received their second choice votes. This counting process continues until a candidate receives a majority of the votes.

General Considerations

As you plan your convention, you should consider the following:

- Do you want an Observers' area for people who want to watch but not participate? If so, it should be separated from the actual convention area so that when voting occurs, only convention participants are actually voting.
- Do you want a Press area? If you are going to have cameras there, you may have some special needs (electrical outlets) that must be met.

Make sure that any cords are taped to the floor so that participants don't trip. The press area should also be separate from the actual convention area.

- Do you want to prohibit campaign material inside the convention? You may also restrict distribution of such material to the registration area only. Any restrictions should be noted in the rules for the convention.
- You will need an official clock by which time is kept. Make sure that it is visible and can't be tampered with.
- **As for all Democratic Party functions, the convention location should be accessible to persons with disabilities, in compliance with guidance set forth under the Americans with Disabilities Act.**

You'll want to include answers to these questions in your convention rules. Draft convention rules are available in the Central Reorganization folder in the Chairs' Resource Library, vademocrats.org/chairs.

Caucuses

The allocation of and method for selecting delegates and alternates and will be set by the district committee's call to convention. District committees may choose to follow option one, which is the option that was used during delegate selection in 2016, and may set dates for caucuses, as specified in the call to convention, prior to convention, or they may choose option two and may have localities caucus immediately before the convention to select delegates to vote in the convention. Whichever option is selected, caucuses may still be cancelled if the number of delegates and alternates that file are less than the number of slots if pre-filing is required.

If the call to convention does not specify the type of caucus that is to be held, local committees have two options:

- Assembled (also known as a mass meeting), and
- Unassembled (sometimes called a firehouse primary).

Each has merits and the type of caucus you choose is largely a matter of local preference and tradition.

Assembled Caucus	Unassembled Caucus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Assembled Caucus is highly structured—typically, there are speeches from the chair and candidates. • There is a definite starting time. • Everyone meets in the same room at 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also known as "Firehouse Primary" • An Unassembled Caucus is much looser in its operation. • Voting takes place over a period of time and people are allowed to come in, vote and leave – similar to a

<p>the same time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doors are locked and no one is admitted after the caucus begins. • Those who leave during the caucus may not be allowed to return. 	<p>polling place on Election Day.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typically, there are no speeches and no other business is conducted. • This type of caucus usually runs for a few hours.
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Many of the same requirements that apply to conventions also apply to caucuses, so city and county committees planning caucuses should review the convention section of this document. Below are a few requirements that apply specifically to the caucus.

The Call to Caucus

The first task of the local committee, once a call to convention has been issued, is the drafting of a document called the Call to Caucus.

As per Section 14.2 of the *Party Plan*, any committee issuing a Call to a Caucus:

- Must specify the time, place, and purpose of the caucus;
- May restrict the caucus to the purpose stated in the call;
- Shall make all caucus arrangements;
- Shall ensure that the caucus is held in accordance with the *Party Plan*.

Each caucus must be governed by a Call to Caucus, which must include:

- The time, place and purpose of the caucus;
- Specification of assembled (mass meeting) or unassembled caucus (firehouse primary);
- Prefiling requirements, including fees, if any;
- The basis of allocation of votes;
- Notice requirements;
- A description of caucus committees, if any;
- A statement about affirmative action;
- Specification of the method of distribution of the call;
- Delegate and alternate selection methodology;
- Delegate and alternate filing deadlines and fees;
- The basis of allocation of delegates and alternates.

The Call to Caucus is drafted, adopted, and distributed by the City or County Committee. Draft call to caucuses for assembled and unassembled caucuses are available in the Central Reorganization folder in the Chairs' Resource Library, vademocrats.org/chairs.

Caucus Participation

Participants in a caucus are required to sign a Caucus Participation form certifying that the participant:

- is a Democrat;
- is a registered voter within the jurisdiction for which the caucus is held;

- believes in the principles of the Democratic Party; and
- does not intend to support any candidate who is opposed to a Democratic nominee in the next ensuing election.

This is a required statement and must be signed by every caucus participant. We strongly urge you to send a spreadsheet of all the names to the State Party. We are currently working on appending caucus attendance to the Registered Voter File so that we will have a permanent computer record of each attendee. Draft caucus participation forms for assembled and unassembled caucuses are available in the Central Reorganization folder in the Chairs' Resource Library, vademocrats.org/chairs.

The DPVA Party Plan sets specific requirements for caucus participation and those requirements are reflected in the sample Caucus Participant Form or Convention Participation Form. Any additions to the caucus or convention participation requirements need to be cleared with the Chair of the DPVA prior to implementation.

After the Convention

As set forth in Party Plan Section 4.18, the newly elected congressional district committees shall meet to elect officers and additional members (as provided in Party Plan Section 6.2) prior to the first meeting of the newly elected State Central Committee, which will be June 17th, 2017.

- **Additional Members:** The district committee, after reorganization, elects one Democratic member of the General Assembly and three county or city representatives. A "county or city representative" is a resident of the congressional district who is (a) a county or city committee chair or vice chair, (b) a magisterial district chair, (c) a ward chair or (d) a county or city committee member proposed by his or her county or city committee to the district committee. In selecting these additional members, any district committee may choose to use these positions to insure that the equal division requirement of Section 4.3 is met. The total number of the district committee members elected must be equally divided pursuant to Section 4.3.
- **Officers:** district committees organize by electing from its membership a chair, a secretary and other officers that it deems appropriate.

The State Party Chair and other officers of the Central Committee specified in Party Plan Section 4.4 will be elected by the new State Central Committee at its June 2017 meeting. (See Party Plan Section 4.18.)

What are the relevant deadlines?

There are different deadlines that apply to each method of nomination. The below calendars will provide you of the timing restrictions you need to deal with for each method of nomination.

Date	Action
March 4	Meeting of the Central Committee: the allocation formula for delegates to the Congressional District Conventions will be determined by the Central Committee (Part Plan Section 4.18).
March 20	The Call to Convention, issued by the Congressional District Committee, using the selected delegate allocation, will be due and released to the local committees in the congressional district.
April 13 or 15	Recommended local committee caucus dates for May 6 CD Convention (this is around Easter weekend). These dates may be altered by the district committee.
April 20 or 22	Recommended local committee caucus dates for May 13 CD Convention (this is around Easter weekend). These dates may be altered by the district committee.
April 27 or 29	Recommended local committee caucus dates for May 6 CD Convention (this is around Easter weekend). These dates may be altered by the district committee.
May 6	Potential district convention date.
May 13	Potential district convention date.
May 20	Potential district convention date.
June 17	The new State Central Committee meets to to elect the Party officers as enumerated in Section 4.4 of the plan.