

# Democratic Committee of Lower Merion and Narberth Committee Person Handbook

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## DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE OF LOWER MERION AND NARBERTH DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE PERSON'S GUIDE

### **NOW YOU ARE A COMMITTEE PERSON**

The first thing you should do is check the Election calendar and plan to take the day off for the Primary and General Elections. There are two elections every year – the primary and general elections. Local elections for county and municipal offices, school board take place in years ending with an odd number. Federal and state elections take place in years ending with even numbers.

The second thing you want to do is to contact your constituents and let them know you exist. At least once a year, you should send a mailing out to all registered Democrats in your precinct in which you introduce yourself and make an appeal for help - for telephoning voters near and on Election Day, working at the polls on Election Day and for year-round activities such as voter registration efforts. Two mailings each year, one in the winter and one in the spring, would be ideal. At the very least, however, a spring mailing is essential for purposes of finding the help you need for the fall as well as getting your voters to begin thinking about the General Election.

The next thing you want to do is be sure that all inside positions are filled. As Democrats, we have certain responsibilities for appointing those individuals depending upon the particular precinct. The Chair of the Committee will let you know annually whether there are vacancies in your precinct and what your responsibilities may be with respect to those vacancies. Once you have identified people to help out on Election Day, it is a simple matter to make up a schedule for poll coverage and confirm with your workers their commitment to the task. Remember you will also be at the polls all day, so make sure you solicit enough help to give yourself and your workers adequate breaks during the day. Also remember that you will need to obtain a Watchers Certificate for any person who will be working inside the polling place who is not an elected official - e.g., the person you want to place inside to check off the names of voters (see IV below) or anyone you want to place inside because you feel the election officials in your precinct need to be "watched."

Democratic Committee  
Montgomery County Democratic Committee  
Lower Merion Narberth Democratic Committee

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

The Montgomery County Democratic Committee, of which Lower Merion and Narberth are a part, is divided into 14 Areas. Each Area is comprised of townships and boroughs, which are further divided into wards and precincts. Lower Merion Township and Narberth Borough make up Area 13 and are comprised of 15 Wards. Lower Merion is divided into Wards 1 through 14. Each Lower Merion Ward is divided into three voting precincts each - except for the 8th Ward, which is divided into four precincts. Narberth is also divided into three precincts. The Democratic electors of each precinct are entitled to elect two committee people in the Spring Primary Election in Gubernatorial election years.

Following each such Primary Election, the elected committee persons in each Area meet to elect the officers of their committee. The Democratic Committee of Lower Merion and Narberth elects a Chair, three Regional Vice Chairs, a Secretary, a Treasurer and four Area Representatives to the Montgomery County Democratic Committee. The Chair of our Committee is the Area Leader of Area 13. In addition to electing the officers of the Area committees, the elected committee persons meet at the Montgomery County Convention to elect the officers of the County Democratic Party. These include a Chair, 2 Vice Chairs, a Treasurer, a Corresponding Secretary and a Recording Secretary.

The County Chair and other County Party officers, the Area Leaders, the Area Representatives, the elected State Committee Members from Montgomery County, the Democratic County Commissioner and the Democratic Jury Commissioner constitute the Executive Committee of the Montgomery County Democratic Committee, which is the steering committee and policy-coordinating branch of the County Democratic Party. An effective Executive Committee with a capable County Chair is the key to a strong Democratic Party in Montgomery County.

## **COMMITTEE PERSON JOB DESCRIPTION**

Committee person is an elected office with a four-year term. The election is held in the Primary Election of the gubernatorial election years.

## **SUMMARY OF SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES**

### Participate in committee structure

1. Attend post-primary election meeting in the year you become committee person to be formally inducted into the Committee and to elect the Executive Committee.
2. Attend as many committee meetings as possible, with special emphasis on attendance at any meeting at which candidates are presented.
3. Participate in specified training sessions.

4. Serve on a standing sub-committee of your choice.
5. Vote on all motions that come before the committee.
6. Attend quadrennial county convention to elect county officers.

#### Increase Voter Registration

7. Develop an on-going system in your precinct so that a Democratic representative for the purpose of registration contacts all new move-ins.
8. Participate in specific, periodic registration drives.

#### Circulate Nominating Petitions before the Primary Election during February/March

9. SELECT a Democratic candidate or candidates of your CHOICE and gather signatures for that person within your precinct on a timely basis. This should be done for all candidates from Judge of Election and Inspector for your own precinct to President of the United States.
10. Collect signatures on you own behalf when running for committee person.
11. Fill Vacancies on your precinct's Election Board. The Majority Inspector appoints the Machine Operator. The Minority Inspector appoints the Clerk.

#### Prepare for, and work on, both Primary and General Election Days

12. Contact, either door-to-door, by telephone, or through a letter, every Democratic voter in your precinct:
13. To educate them about the candidates and the issues
14. To Get Out The Vote (GOTV).
15. Arrange additional poll watchers and outside greeters to cover your polling place all day (from 7 am to 8 pm).
16. Contact your Election Board officials to make sure they are prepared.

#### Open your polling place including setting up campaign literature and making the Democratic Party visible.

17. Monitor your volunteers all day and be present yourself as much as possible.
18. Know the election laws and enforce them.
19. Set up phone squads to get the vote out after 4 pm.
20. Close polls, oversee counting of votes and report to Democratic headquarters or meeting place. Discard or remove all debris.
21. Organize Year-Long Political Activity
22. Develop volunteers in your precincts.
23. Maintain voter information records.
24. Identify potential candidates.
25. Support and initiate campaign activities in your precinct for the DEMOCRATIC candidates.
  - a. Distributing literature
  - b. Escorting the candidate door-to-door
26. Organizing coffees, etc.
27. Fund-Raising
  - a. Support and attend party fund-raisers and sell tickets among your constituents.
  - b. Support individual candidate(s) as you so desire.

## **COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

### Montgomery County Democratic Committee & Executive Committee Meetings

In accordance with our by-laws, the Montgomery County Democratic Committee meets only once every four years. In the interim, the Executive Committee, which meets every third Thursday of every month, handles its business. The Executive Committee is comprised of the Chair, the First-Vice Chair, the Second-Vice Chair, the Treasurer, the Corresponding Secretary, the Recording Secretary, the Executive Director, Area Leaders, and Representatives. Please try to attend Executive Committee meetings as often as possible; this is the best way to meet candidates and to keep updated on current issues in the county.

### Area and Municipal Meetings

The County Committee is sub-divided into 14 sub-committees, called Areas. These Areas are divided into Municipalities. As a committee person, you will first report to the Municipal Chairperson in your Area, who will in turn report to the Area Leader, who will report to the County Executive Committee and the County Chairperson. The Municipal and Area committees have meetings throughout the year. It is imperative to attend as many local and area meetings as possible, since this is where you will meet the candidates and address important issues.

## **CANDIDATE NOMINATION PETITIONS**

One of the most important responsibilities a committee person has is the circulation of candidate petitions before the Primary Election. The County Committee relies on committee people to insure that all Democratic candidates running in your district appear on the ballot by collecting enough valid signatures. The number of signatures required depends upon the elective office:

Congressional candidates need 1,000 signatures of registered Democrats.  
State Senate candidates need 500 signatures of registered Democrats  
State House candidates need 300 signatures of registered Democrats.  
County Office candidates need 250 signatures of registered Democrats.  
District Justice candidates need 100 signatures of registered Democrats.  
Township/Borough candidates need 10 signatures of registered Democrats.  
School Director candidates need 10 signatures of registered Democrats.  
Committee-people candidates need 10 signatures of registered Democrats.

The rules for collecting signatures on Nomination Petitions must be stringently followed.

1. Violation of any may invalidate the signatures you collect and disqualify candidates from appearing on the ballot.
2. Petitions can only be circulated after the thirteenth Tuesday before the Primary and only until the tenth Tuesday before the Primary.
3. All Petition circulators must be registered Democratic voters within the candidates' district for whom they are circulating.
4. All Petition signers must be registered Democratic voters in the candidate's district.
5. Petition signers must include the city, township, or borough in which they live, and NOT the post office.

6. After you have collected all the required signatures, sign the back of the petition as the circulator.

Petition notarization and collection deadlines should be clearly established and adhered to. Make sure you are well informed about when and where the petitions are to be collected. This is particularly important to insure that the petitions are submitted prior to the established deadline. Please call the County Committee headquarters, or your Area leader or Municipal chair if you have any questions regarding the petition signing process.

## **VOTER REGISTRATION**

Good precinct work wins elections. Most elections are won by just plain hard work - committee people and helpers knocking on doors of the precinct to find unknown Democrats, getting them registered to vote and bringing them to the polls on Election Day. Even candidates who are generally well known and well thought of must depend on hard work in the precincts in order to get elected. There are many more Democratic votes in your precinct than you may think. You can find them by

1. Uncovering unknown Democrats among your neighbors
2. Contacting newcomers and registering them to vote
3. Making sure people away from home (students or people in the Armed Services for instance) or people confined to their homes, vote by absentee ballot
4. Encouraging Non-Partisans and Republicans to switch to the Democratic Party - not as hard as you think once you get to know them.

Always carry voter registration cards with you. You never know when you will run into someone who is not registered - in the supermarket, on the train and, of course, when you are going door to door. The same is true for absentee ballot applications, although there is a specific time period when they are accepted, so you should be careful that they are not sent to Norristown too early.

Keep track of the registration deadlines for both the Primary and General Elections. Plan to use the two weeks before each deadline to concentrate on getting as many Democrats to register as possible. Most people wait until the last minute because they are prompted by public service announcements on the radio and TV.

Although voter registration should be considered an on-going activity independent of election cycles, the period just before the Primary and General election is the best time to focus your efforts on registration. The public's attention to politics is at its highest toward the end of an election. The folks you'll be registering must be made aware that they can exercise their right to vote in a couple of weeks. Take advantage of this heightened interest.

Remember, eligible voters must:

1. Be a citizen of the United States for at least one month prior to the next election
2. Be a resident of Pennsylvania and your election district for at least 30 days before the next election
3. Be at least 18 years of age on the day of the next election

4. Not have been confined in a penal institution for a conviction of a felony within the last five years.

A successful registration drive can provide the margin of victory for Montgomery County Democrats. Please do all you can to increase Democratic registration in your precinct between now and the General election victory will depend upon your efforts!

## **STREET LISTS**

The street list is a sheet printed by the Montgomery County Registration Commission twice a year and is available from Norristown to committee people, candidates and the County Party. The County Party delivers them to Area Leaders who in turn deliver them to committee people. Two copies of the most recent lists were included in the bag of materials you received prior to the Primary Election this year. Please retrieve them and make sure you and your co-committee person each has a copy.

If you do not have a copy of the most recent list for your precinct, you can pick one up at the Headquarters in Ardmore. The street list contains the name, address and Party affiliation of all registered voters in a precinct and is an invaluable tool for keeping track of Democrats, helping candidates when they visit your precinct, and for carrying out a host of other activities.

## **ELECTRONIC STREET LISTS**

The Lower Merion Narberth Democratic Committee has created electronic street lists available for committee persons on our website. You can view and print lists of your constituents and mailing labels.

## **ABSENTEE BALLOTS**

Pennsylvania Department of State web site has complete information on when and how to apply for an official absentee ballot. The URL is

<http://www.dos.state.pa.us/voting/cwp/view.asp?a=1193&q=442991&votingNav=|&votingNav=>

Montgomery County Election Office  
Courthouse PO Box 311  
Norristown PA 19404-0311  
(610)278-3280

The Absentee Ballot is often an overlooked, yet vital tool to achieve electoral victory. Several weeks prior to the election, you should place calls to the registered Democratic voters in your precinct to see if they need an absentee ballot. Voters may vote by Absentee Ballot if they are physically unable to go to the polls, or if they are out of the municipality on Election Day on unavoidable business, vacation, or because of military service.

There is a two-part process for absentee ballots; the first is requesting an Absentee Ballot from the County Board of Election; the second is filing the actual Absentee Ballot. Be aware that if the request for the Absentee Ballot is received too late by the Election Board, the voter may not have time to fill out the ballot and return it to the Election Board in time. In addition, if a person who filed an Absentee Ballot finds themselves in their municipality, they are required by law to appear at their polling place to announce that they are voting in person, and not to count their absentee ballot. Election Day Activities to organize political activity in their election districts thoroughly and effectively to the end of achieving a maximum Democratic vote at the polls and Democratic majorities in the elections,

First time absentee voters should include a photocopy of their driver's license or other photo ID along with their actual ballot.

## **GETTING OUT THE VOTE**

Clearly, the most important job you will be doing as a committee person is getting people out to vote on Election Day. Careful planning is the best insurance against Election Day blues. Some of the tasks that should be included in your planning are:

1. Sending out a Get Out The Vote letter to all registered Democrats in your precinct
2. Organizing pre-election telephoning to remind Democrats to vote and for whom
3. Ascertaining whether voters need rides to the polls, baby-sitters, etc. -this can be done during the telephoning -and then lining up people to provide these services
4. Organizing Election Day telephoning - this would include scheduling someone to be inside the polls until approximately 4 pm to check off the names of those Democrats who have voted and then taking your list and calling the people who have not.

## **TELEPHONE CALLS**

Telephone calls to voters starting Thursday night before Election Day and ending Monday night before Election Day. Recruit volunteers, develop a script and assign specific lists of calls to each caller. By this time, many potential voters tire of the telephone calls received during the pre-election period. Use the personal touch that you are neighbors and ask if they need ride to polls or any other information prior to Election Day. Volunteers may become discouraged by negative responses. Let them know that they may expect some negative responses, but let them know how important it is to make the calls neighbor-to-neighbor.

## **GET OUT THE VOTE (GOTV) LETTERS**

Committee persons should plan to send out a GOTV letter two weeks prior to Election Day. Letters should address all of the campaigns and provide information about help that is available for getting to the polls, such as rides, babysitting, or any other help that you can provide to your voters on Election Day.

## **BULK MAIL**

As a Committee Person, you have access to the Committee's bulk mail permit. We have an ink stamp that you can use on envelopes that you use for mailings to your voters. You will likely do this at least twice a year: once before the Primary Election and once before the General Election. You must have at least 250 pieces to get the bulk mail rate. Bulk mail is sent out from the Haverford Post Office on weekdays between the hours of 9 and 4 only. LM/N DC has forms in the Headquarters for your committee-person use.

Bulk mail that is undeliverable will NOT be returned to YOU. This makes it hard to keep track of the voters who have moved away. But, it is a much cheaper way of getting mail to your voters.

## **POLL VISIBILITY**

Committee persons should plan to spend most of the day at their polling place. Polls are open from 7 a.m. until 8 p.m. Committee people are most valuable outside of the polling place because it is an opportunity to meet voters in your precinct and provide them with sample ballots, acquaint them with the ballot, answer last-minute questions, collect email addresses, and recruit volunteers for other Democratic activity. The Committee person should organize volunteers from the precinct to provide all-day coverage allowing themselves and their volunteers to take breaks throughout the day.

During the weekend prior to Election Day, LMNDC will have materials available to be picked up by you which will include sample ballots and other materials to hand out to voters at the polls. Next to making sure that voters come to the polls, making sure they know who to vote for is your most important job.

## **POLL WATCHING**

Poll Watchers must be registered Democrats in the Precinct for which an application is being filed. Poll watcher certificates are requested through the Montgomery County Democratic Committee and should be submitted in a timely manner to ensure availability the weekend before Election Day. Instructions for applying for poll watcher certificates and forms are available for downloading from the MCDC web site, <http://www.mcdems.org/> on the Documents and Forms page.

You will need to have the following information:

1. Name of municipality, Lower Merion or Narberth, the
2. Ward and Precinct
3. Poll Watcher's name, address and telephone number

## WEB SITES

MCDC's web site, [www.mcdc.org](http://www.mcdc.org) has information about candidates, elections and a variety of documents and forms.

Documents and Forms available on MCDC web site

[2006 Committeeperson Handbook](#)

[Committeeperson Appointment Form](#)

[Watcher Certificate Request Form](#) [Watcher Certificate Request Form](#) [Watcher Rules and Guidelines](#)

[Proxy Form - MCDC Executive Committee Meetings](#)

[Proxy Form - MCDC Endorsement Conventions and Re-Organization Meetings](#)

[Election Official Appointment Form \(for one election only\)](#)

[Election Official Resignation Form](#)

Committee people will be given a Watcher's Certificate (so long as you are not seeking elective office or employed by Federal, state or local government) in order to keep track of who voted and observe the vote count at the end of the day. People acting as a Watcher must, on request, show their certificate. Please make sure you bring your certificate with you to the polling place. It is critical that you remain at the poll, observe the canvassing of votes, and report the vote count to Democratic HQ at the end of the day.

Familiarize yourself with the following Polling Place Regulations prior to the election:

1. The polls are open for all Elections between the hours of 7 A .M. and 8 P.M.
2. No person is allowed in the polling place except Poll Watchers, voters waiting their turn to vote and peace officers if necessary.
3. No person is allowed in a voting booth occupied by another, except when giving assistance permitted by law.
4. No person is allowed to re-enter the polling place once she has left, except an election officer, clerk, machine inspector or overseer, or those that are giving assistance as permitted by law.
5. No person within the polling place is permitted to solicit votes for any political party or candidate.
6. No written or printed materials soliciting votes for any political party or candidate is permitted within the polling place.
7. No persons except election officers, clerks, machine inspectors, overseers, watchers, people in the course of voting, persons lawfully assisting others, and peace officers, are allowed within 10 feet of the polling place while the polls are open.
8. When the polls close, all qualified voters waiting in line, both inside and outside the polling place, will be permitted to vote.

9. Voters are not permitted to remain in the voting booths for an "unreasonable length of time," and will be limited to three minutes when other voters are waiting.
10. Voters are permitted to bring minor children into the polling place, and may allow one minor child into the voting booth with them.
11. Watchers are entitled to keep a list of voters and challenge any person applying to vote.
12. A person is not entitled to vote in any election unless her registration card appears in the district register.
13. A watcher has the right to challenge an elector for the following reasons:
  - a. Person's identity
  - b. Continued residence in the election district
  - c. Any alleged violation of the law pertaining to the signing of the voter's certificate
  - d. Any alleged violation of the law prohibiting bribery in the election.

The challenge does not in itself prevent the individual from voting, but the following steps must be taken before she is permitted to vote:

1. Anyone so challenged must be put under oath by the judge
2. The challenged voter must then produce one qualified voter of the district who shall make affidavit as to her identity or residence in the district.
3. Said voter must sign the proper challenge and or bribery form.

## **CLOSING AND COUNTING THE VOTES**

When the polls have closed, it is the job of at least one committee person in each precinct to wait for the votes to be tabulated and to bring that information to the Election Night party held by the LMNDC. The venue for the party will be in the materials provided to you for Election Day.

Be sure to call your workers after Election Day to thank them for a job well done so that they know they are appreciated and will help you again.

## **INSIDE ELECTION DAY WORKERS (ELECTED AND APPOINTED PAID POSITIONS)**

Inside poll workers are responsible to see that the election rules are followed, that the polling place operates peacefully providing voters with a pleasant, orderly venue for casting their ballots. Judge of Election is in charge of the polling place and questions should be addressed to this person. Majority and Minority Inspectors review voter Ids, and handle the voter registries. Clerk assists the Majority and Minority Inspectors. Machine Operators direct voters to voting machines and answer questions about the operation of the machines. Constable keeps the peace at the polling place.

## **POLLING PLACE REGULATIONS**

The following regulations apply to all polling places:

1. No partisan political activity may take place within 10 feet from the entrance to the polling room. No electioneering is permitted within the polling place.
2. Police and peace officers must remain 100 feet distant from the polls unless they are in the process of voting or have been summoned by the judge to restore order within the polls.
3. Election Board members or poll watchers may not wear election buttons while they are inside the polling room.
4. Printed or written campaign leaflets, sample party ballots or other partisan materials may not be distributed inside the polls, or left or stored there during the course of the election.
5. Suggestions of any kind as to which party or candidate to vote for are not permitted inside the polling room.

## **COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

If an individual wishes to file a complaint, please provide them with a complaint form found at the polling place, if available, or direct the individual to the County Board of Elections or the Department of State at 1-877-VOTES-PA (1-877-868-3772).

Democratic National Committee (DNC) has established a help line for Democratic voters. The number is 1-800-DEM VOTE. Calls will be funneled to local democratic committees to provide help. The voter should stay at the polling place and make the telephone call. Committee people should be available to help these voters.

## PROVISIONAL VOTING

New Federal and State laws provide voters with the opportunity to cast a Provisional Ballot under certain circumstances. Individuals are to be provided the opportunity to cast a Provisional Ballot if:

<b>Individuals are to be provided the opportunity to cast a Provisional Ballot if:</b>	<b>Individuals <u>are required</u> to vote by Provisional Ballot if:</b>
The individual appears at the precinct to vote and claims to be properly registered and eligible to vote in the election district, but the individual's name does not appear on the general register and elections officials cannot determine his registration.	The voter is voting as a result of a Federal or State court order.
Regardless of whether the individual's name appears on the general register, the voter does not have an approved form of identification the first time he appears to vote in an election district (precinct).	A voter is voting as a result of an order extending the time established for closing the polls by State law that is in effect ten days before an election.
An election official asserts that the individual is not eligible to vote.	

## PROVIDING THE PROVISIONAL BALLOT

1. An individual voting a Provisional Ballot does not sign the district register
2. Ask the voter to complete and sign the BACK of the Provisional Ballot Affidavit Envelope.
3. The Judge of Election and Minority Inspector must witness the voter signing the back of the envelope.
4. The Judge of Election and Minority Inspector must then sign the envelope prior to the voter completing the ballot.
5. Direct the voter to a private and accessible location to complete his/her ballot.

## RETURNING THE PROVISIONAL BALLOT

1. Make sure the voter has sealed the ballot and Secrecy Envelope in the Provisional Ballot Affidavit Envelope, signed the FRONT, and returned the completed materials to the Judge of Election.
2. The Judge of Election will affix the Ballot Identification Number to the Provisional Ballot Envelope and give the Receipt with the corresponding number to the individual.
3. Verify the individual has not cast an Absentee Ballot for that election district.
4. Instruct the voter to refer to the Receipt for information regarding his/her ballot status, or to contact the Department of State at 1-877-VOTES-PA (1-877-868-3772) or [www.hava.state.pa.us](http://www.hava.state.pa.us)
5. Do not, under any circumstances, open a completed Provisional Ballot at the polling place.

## VOTER IDENTIFICATION

New Federal and State laws require all voters who appear to vote in an election district (precinct) for the first time to provide election officials with proof of identification.

<b>Approved forms of photo identification</b> (ID must be valid)	<b>Approved forms of non-photo identification</b> (ID and must include the name and address)
PA driver's license or ID card issued by PENNDOT	Voter's identification card issued by the issued by any other Commonwealth agency voter registration commission
ID issued by any other Commonwealth agency	Non-photo ID issued by the Commonwealth
U.S. Passport	Non-photo ID issued by the US
Photo ID issued by the U.S. Government	Firearm permit
US Armed Forces ID	Current utility bill
Student I D	Current bank statement
Employee ID	Current paycheck
	Government check

## CONSTITUENT SERVICES

*“ . . . to champion and work for Democratic principles and integrity within the Party and the administration of government, and to do all things necessary and proper to effectuate these Rules . . . ”*

As Committee person you are the most direct link between the Democratic Committee and voters in your precinct. Don't wait for an election to introduce yourself to people. Walk through your precinct and get to know your neighbors. Your involvement in the community is the most effective way to strengthen the link between the daily lives of citizens and Democratic politics. Attend as many community meetings as possible, be an advocate, and help people with their concerns and questions.

## **APPENDIX: THINGS YOU WILL NEED AT THE POLLS**

In addition to a sandwich board, card table and chairs, pack a bag for Election Day. Include the following items:

Heavy-duty stapler

Roll of packing tape

Paperweights (in case of wind)

Rubber bands

Pens

Paper

Plastic drop cloths (in case of rain)

Include other items you may need for spending the day outside at the polls, such as a thermos for coffee, tea or hot chocolate

Water