

# **Essex County Democratic Committee, Inc.**



## **District Leader Manual**

Version 1.0 - June 20, 2014

## District Leader Manual

Dear Democratic Leader:

First, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to serve as chairman of the Essex County Democratic Committee, Inc. The purpose of this handbook is to be a resource to District Leaders in fulfilling our mission as effective representatives of the Democratic Party at the local level.

Our effort at the grass roots level of politics and government should be directed towards actively registering new voters, educating voters, actively participating in our neighborhoods, and in district affairs; supporting Democratic candidates for County, State, and National offices; taking an active role in the selection of Democratic candidates; and most importantly, defining and promoting issues as well as positions for the County Democratic Party based upon our understanding of the interests of Democratic Voters in our districts.

Please use this manual as a point of reference and take the liberty to offer the ECDC Headquarters feedback about how the manual may be improved in the future.

Democratically yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "LeRoy".

Chairman

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## **What Is County Committee?**

Essex County is divided into 550 election districts, each of which has its own polling place. One man and one woman represent each district from each political party. They are the party officials at the most local level. These people are officially known as “County Committee Members” and are commonly referred to as “district leaders.” Voters elect County Committee members every two years (each even-numbered year) from each party at the Primary Election in June. Their official function is to elect the municipal and county officers of the County Committee. The municipal officers are elected six days after the Primary Election, and the county officers are elected the following day.

## **The Role of County Committee**

As an elected member of the Democratic County Committee, you have the responsibility to serve the Democrats of your district; identify and register new Democratic voters; assist in all phases of Party work at the municipal and county levels; participate in planning and running of campaigns; work to build a larger Democratic vote in your district; and serve as an advocate and representative of the residents of your district regarding neighborhood or district issues.

You represent the Democratic Party, including elected officials and candidates, to the residents of your election district. Your constituents should be able to look to you for help with problems that need Party or government action.

In addition, your statutory duty is to act in all Party matters as the elected representative from your district to the county and municipal organizations, and to participate in the formulation of Party rules, platform, and policy at all levels. The Party’s vitality depends upon the leadership, imagination, and efforts of the County Committee.

The job done by the Committeeman and Committeewoman in each election district is very important. It is the basis upon which party strength is built.

## **County Committee Responsibilities**

### Elect Party Leadership

Committee members elect the County Committee Chairperson and Vice Chairperson. Committee Members also elect the municipal chairperson in their respective town.

### Register Voters

Committee member recruit and register voters in their neighborhood, voting districts, or wards, for the benefit of the Party.

### Campaign

Committee members actively participate in campaign walks and events with local and county candidates.

### Fundraising

Committee members work with the local and/or county organization on fundraising activities when, and if, appropriate.

### Issue Awareness

Committee members bring local issues to the attention of Democrat officeholders at all levels of government. You are the liaison to elected Democrats on the municipal level, as well as to the Freeholders and other county Democratic officials. If there is a prospective voter who needs any form of assistance from the state or federal government, call your State Senator, State Assemblyman representative or Congressional representative.

### Community Awareness

Committee members network with neighborhood activist groups, community groups, merchants, and civic associations, such as Rotary and Lions Clubs. It is important to have as many contacts in your community as possible. Candidates always depend on your knowledge of your community.

### Constituent Services

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Committee members should always follow up with the constituents you are trying to help. One of the reasons politicians get such a bad reputation is because the promise too much without proper follow up. Following up could mean anything from calling your Democratic officeholders until you get an answer (positive or negative as it may be) to notifying your constituent to let them know what you did to help. Remember that people like straight answers from political people.

### Election Day Staffing

Committee members, often depending on the advice of the municipal chairperson, should make sure there are poll checkers and challengers in the districts, wards, or neighborhoods they represent. Municipal chairpersons, unless the delegate this duty, are responsible for finding local poll workers to maintain the operations of the election.

### Boardworkers

Committee members may recommend board workers to the municipal chairperson. Those appointed serve for one year at a time. Each election district has a Board of Elections. These are the people who oversee the books, and who are paid to operate the elections. There are two Republicans and two Democrats on each Board.

### Challengers

The County Committee also has the responsibility of staffing the polling place with challengers who serve as on-site monitors of the election process. Committee members may act as challengers and should be on hand at 5:45 a.m. for the opening and 8:00 p.m. for the closing of the polls.

### County Committee Headquarters

The Essex County Democratic Committee is headquartered at:

50 Park Pl, Suite 1430  
Newark, NJ 07102  
Telephone number: 973-622-8300  
Fax number: 973-622-2606

## Voter Registration

A major responsibility of County Committee members is to actively register new voters.

Who may register to vote: A U.S. citizen who will, at the time of the next election, be 18 years of age and has resided in New Jersey and in the county for 30 days.

Who must re-register: Re-registration is necessary, if a voter:

- Fails to vote for four consecutive years; or
- Changes his or her residence from another county; or
- Changes his or her name by marriage, divorce or court decree
- Declaration of Party Affiliation:

If a voter wishes to change his or her party designation in order to vote in another Party's primary, the voter must notify the Commissioner of Registration 55 days before the primary. Forms to change party designation are available at the Board of Elections or at Essex County Democratic Headquarters.

Where can a voter register in person?

Commissioner of Registration

Municipal Clerk's Office

Special out-of-office registration sites

Who can I call to get a Vote-By- Mail ballot?

Essex County Clerk's Office

Hall of Records Room, 247

465 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd

Newark, NJ 07102

973-621-4922

Essex County Board of Elections

Hall of Records Room, 417

465 Martin Luther King Blvd.

Newark, NJ 07102

973-621-5071

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The Board of Elections conducts the primary, general, municipal, school, and special elections throughout Essex County. It works in conjunction with the Superintendent of Elections, the County Clerk, and the Township Clerk of each municipality to insure an orderly and accurate electoral process. The Governor appoints a bipartisan board consisting of four commissioners. The Board of Elections Commissioners also serve as members of the Board of Canvassers for the primary, general, and school elections.

The Board of Elections responsibilities include recruiting, appointing, and training board workers for each of the 569 election districts in the county; selecting and contracting polling places to conduct elections; appointing challengers as requested by candidates; tabulation of absence and provisional ballots; conduction election recounts; and rewarding election district and ward boundary lines.

### Superintendent of Elections & Commissioner of Registration

Kathy V. Sumter

465 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard

Hall of Records- Room 417

Newark, NJ 07102

973-621-5061 Fax 973-621-6464

The Commissioner of Registration has complete charge of the permanent registration of all eligible voters and maintains the update records in preparation of all elections.

The Superintendent of Elections enforces the laws regarding the conduct of elections including maintenance, programming, and transportation of voting machines to their proper locations for use on election days. In Essex County, the Commissioner of Registration and Superintendent of Elections positions are held by one person.



## The Election Campaign

The Democratic candidates for federal, state, county and local offices need your support. There are numerous ways in which you can provide valuable assistance to a candidate, including:

- Meet & Greet Events with voters in your district
- Neighborhood Tours, Parties, Meetings
- Keep the community aware of upcoming campaign events

Be a friendly neighbor, offering information and assistance for your district residents. The newer residents tend to be more in need of help, both the voter and the Democratic Party benefit when members help their new neighbors.

Keep special notes on young people about to become 18 years of age and follow-up and make sure that they are registered.

Maintain a filing system for each voter. The system should have two separate categories of information. One should have the name address and telephone number for each voter, filed alphabetically for convenient use on Election Day; the other, a card for each house number kept alphabetically by street. This system can be done by hand with index cards or with a computer database program. This is a tremendous aid in registration.

Keep a supply of campaign literature on hand. Know your candidates' qualifications and how they stand on issues.

Help raise funds and get publicity for your candidates.

Keep in mind that you are the on the scene person who is most familiar to your neighborhood. Therefore, you are best able to influence the voter in your district.

## **Support the campaign organization by:**

Volunteering your services to campaign headquarters

Distributing campaign literature house to house, as directed by the campaign organization

Alerting campaign staff of any problems that might develop in your district or municipality

Participating in the pre-election telephone canvass

## **Vote By Mail**

In every election, hundreds of votes are lost because people, who are out of election districts for valid reasons, fail to use their franchise by casting a Vote By Mail Ballot. Many elections have been lost by only a handful of votes. In 1994, the Democratic Primary race for County Executive was decided by less than one vote per town in Essex County. Committeemen and Committeewomen should make certain that every registered voter in their district uses his or her franchise.

There are two separate steps in Vote By Mail

Making and Application for the Vote By Mail

- Mail (by postcard mailed to the County Clerk); and
- Casting the Vote By Mail Ballot sent to the voter's address.

Every registered voter is eligible to apply for Vote By Mail

What is the procedure for having Vote By Mail Ballot delivered by a messenger?

An authorized messenger is someone who is authorized by the voter to pick up his or her Vote By Mail Ballot from the County Clerk. The messenger must sign in appropriate place on application in the presence of the County Clerk or his designee. A voter can authorize someone to deliver the voted ballot to the Board of Elections but the person that transports or delivers it (the

bearer) must first sign and print his or her name on the outer envelope in the presence of the voter. If the ballot is brought to the Board of Elections and the outer envelope is not sealed and/or not signed by the bearer, the ballot will be rejected. The Board of Elections will not permit the bearer to sign it at their office.

Stay informed about the people in your district. Make sure that those who are in hospitals, nursing homes, away at college, or in military service, have a Vote By Mail ballot and use it. Learn the law on Vote By Mail and see that the voters in your district know it also. Offer your assistance in obtaining and hand delivering absentee ballots. This is a very important duty of every County Committeeman and Committeewoman.

## **Election Campaign Strategies**

Every political victory is the result of organization, planning, and unified effort.

- Know the Issues
- Promote your Candidate
- Research the Opposition
- Fundraise
- Develop a Campaign Message
- Canvass your district with the Candidate
- Use Public Opinion Polls
- Phone Banking

## **Election Day Operations - GET OUT THE VOTE (GOTV)**

Prepare for Election Day

Canvass your district weeks before the election and sound out voters intentions

Identify those who need Vote By Mail Ballots, transportation, baby sitters, etc.

Identify favorable voters for an Election Day call list.

Remind voters when and where to vote

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Arrange for Election Day volunteers, including challengers to work at polls, drivers, baby sitters, runners and telephone workers.

### **GOTV**

Each District Leader should visit their polling place frequently throughout Election Day to check the voter turnout and collect the list of those who have voted. At approximately 4pm, the phone bank should begin phoning all favorable voters who have not yet been checked by the challengers at the polls. If a voter needs a ride, a baby sitter, or has a problem, there should be a telephone number to call in order to relay this information for immediate attention. By 6:00 pm, the telephone bank should call favorable voters who have not yet voted.

After the close of the polls, the County Committee person is responsible for seeing that voting result are immediately relayed to the Democratic Party Election Headquarters.

### Election Board Workers

There are 4 workers (2 Democrats and 2 Republicans) assigned to work the polls. At least 3 of the 4 must be present at all times during voting hours.

If a voter is told he or she cannot vote, he or she is entitled by law to call for a vote by the Election Board workers at the poll. If it is a tie vote, the challenge fails and the voter is permitted to vote. If a voter is not permitted to vote, he or she is entitled to appeal this decision by appearing before a Superior Court Judge which will be sitting or hear all appeals on Election Day.

Of a voter is registered but their name and/or signature does not appear in the poll book at their voting district, they are entitled to vote by provisional paper ballot.

Board workers should ensure that everyone in line at 8PM is permitted to vote. Ask a police officer or District Board Worker to stand at the end of the line, whether in or outside the building.

No electioneering is permitted within 100 feet of the polling place. This applies to any display of circulars, printed matter, wearing of campaign buttons, or the soliciting of support for any candidate, party, or public questions within the polling place or within 100 feet outside the entrance. Violation constitutes a misdemeanor.

## **Important Dates to Remember**

Municipal Elections/ Non-Partisan – The Tuesday after the second Monday in May

Primary Election Day- The Tuesday after the first Monday in June

General Election Day- The Tuesday after the first Monday in November

Nominating Petitions:

All petitions nomination candidates as Democratic Committee members shall be filed with the Town Clerk 64 days before primary election, before 4:00 pm.

Declaration of Party Affiliation:

55 days before Election Day is the cut-off date for declaration of change in party affiliation

Voter registration

29 Days before Election Day is the last day to register voters for that election.

Recount Application

Application for recount of votes cast for a candidate at an election shall be made on or before the second Saturday after the Election Day

## Essex County Government

The County Executive represents the executive branch of county government. This office is presently held by Joseph N. DiVincenzo (D, term expires 12/31/14).

The legislative branch of county government is comprised of nine Freeholders. Four Freeholders are elected “At Large”, and the remaining five are elected by “district”.

## Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders

(Terms expire 12/31/14)

Blonnie Watson	At Large
Patricia Sebold	At Large
Rufus Johnson	At Large
Gerald Owens	At Large
Rolando Bobadilla	District 1
D. Bilal Beasley	District 2
Carol Y. Clark	District 3
Leonard M. Luciano	District 4
Brendan W. Gill	District 5

The following **Constitutional Officers** are elected countywide:

County Clerk	Christopher J. Durkin	(D, term expires 12/31/15)
Register of Deeds	William Narvaez (Acting)	(D, term expires 12/31/14)
Sheriff	Armando B. Fontoura	(D, term expires 12/31/15)
Surrogate	Theodore N. Stephens, II	(D, term expires 12/31/16)

## State Legislative and Congressional Districts

Municipality.....	Legislative .....	Congressional
Belleville .....	29.....	8
Bloomfield .....	28.....	Part 10; Part 11
Caldwell .....	27 .....	11
Cedar Grove .....	40 .....	8
East Orange .....	34 .....	10
Essex Fells .....	27.....	11
Fairfield .....	26.....	11
Glen Ridge .....	28.....	8
Irvington .....	28.....	10
Livingston .....	27 .....	Part 8; Part 11
Maplewood .....	27 .....	10
Millburn .....	27 .....	11
Montclair .....	34 .....	Part 10; Part 11
Newark .....	Part 28; Part 29; Part 30.....	11
North Caldwell .....	26.....	11
Nutley .....	28.....	8
Orange .....	34 .....	10
Roseland .....	27 .....	11
South Orange .....	27 .....	Part 8; Part 10
Verona .....	26.....	8
West Caldwell .....	26.....	11
West Orange .....	27 .....	Part 10; Part 11

## Essex Delegation

### 27th District

Governor / Senator	RICHARD J. CODEY
Assemblywoman	MILA M. JASEY
Assemblyman	JOHN F. MCKEON

### 28th District

Senator	RONALD L. RICE
Assemblyman	RALPH R. CAPUTO
Assemblywoman	CLEOPATRA G. TUCKER

### 29th District

Senator	M. TERESA RUIZ
Assemblyman	ELIANA PINTOR MARIN
Assemblywoman	L. GRACE SPENCER

### 34th District

Senator	NIA H. GILL, ESQ.
Assemblyman	THOMAS P. GIBLIN
Assemblywoman	SHEILA Y. OLIVER



## **Essex County Municipal Chairs**

Bellville	Sal Carnovale
Bloomfield	Peter Strumolo
Caldwell	Susan Gartland
Cedar Grove	Terry Lowe
East Orange	LeRoy Jones
Essex Fells	Liz Durkin
Fairfield	MaryAnn Guardabascio
Glen Ridge	Jacqueline Yustein
Irvington	Bilal Beasley
Livingston	Patricia Sebold
Maplewood	Ian Grodman
Millburn	Annette Romano
Montclair	Brendan Gill
Newark East	Angelo DiFederico
Newark Central	Andre Speight
Newark North	Frances Adubato
Newark South	Patrick Council
Newark West	Ronald L. Rice
North Caldwell	Eileen Fishman
Nutley	John Gizzo
Orange	Shelley Alexander
Roseland	Stacy McCormack
South Orange	Janine Bauer
Verona	Bob Detore
West Caldwell	Marie Trento
West Orange	Sal Anderton