



Office of Party Affairs and Delegate Selection

HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN THE 2024 DELEGATE SELECTION PROCESS

Democrats from across America will come together in Chicago Illinois, August 19 - 21, 2024 for the 49th Democratic National Convention. This historic event will showcase our Party's nominees for President and Vice President and highlight the core values that define the Democratic Party.

The following overview briefly explains how delegates to the National Convention are selected and provides tips on how to participate in the process to run for a delegate position.^{1*}

The Delegate Selection Process

1. National Rules and State Plans

A. A plan describing how delegates are chosen is written by each of the 57 state and territorial Democratic Parties (including the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Virgin Islands and Democrats Abroad). Each state or territory's "Delegate Selection Plan" is reviewed by the National Party to certify that it fully complies with the National Party's rules that provide guidelines to ensure the selection process is fair and open to all Democrats.

B. Each plan specifically indicates how the state or territory's delegates are to be selected – and includes specific information about what, where, how and when to file to run for a delegate position. The delegate selection process in each state varies; **anyone interested in becoming a delegate should contact their respective Democratic Party to obtain a copy or summary of the plan.**

C. To make sure all Democratic Party constituencies are included in the delegate selection process, each state and territorial party conducts education, outreach and training programs about the process beginning as early as September 2023.

2. Types of Delegates

Each state/territory is allocated a certain number of delegates to the convention, based on its population and Democratic voting strength. The types of delegates that make up each state's delegation are described below:

A. *"District-Level" Delegates.* A majority of a state's delegates are elected from local districts (usually Congressional Districts). Each district-level delegate pledges support to a presidential candidate of their choice (or, in some cases, no specific candidate – known as "uncommitted"). This is the first category of delegates to be selected. Any Democrat is eligible to run for one of these positions.

B. *"Pledged Party Leader and Elected Official (PLEO)" Delegates.* Some delegate positions are reserved for Democratic Party leaders and elected officials who pledge support to a presidential candidate (or "uncommitted").

C. *"At-Large" Delegates.* The final delegates chosen are the at-large delegates. These delegates are also pledged to support a presidential candidate. Any Democrat is eligible to run for one of these positions.

D. *"Automatic" Delegates.* Some individuals in each state will go to the convention as "automatic" delegates. This category includes Democratic Governors, Democratic National Committee Members, and Members of Congress.

^{1*} Each state and territory will also select alternates who attend the convention and serve if a delegate is unable to attend or is to be absent.

In most cases, the process of becoming an alternate is the same as for becoming a delegate. Persons interested in being considered for an alternate position should review the delegate selection plan for specific information and requirements.

3. Selection of “District-Level” Delegates

States and territories use one of two types of systems to determine support for presidential candidates: (A) Primary systems, and (B) Caucus systems. These systems determine how presidential candidates are awarded delegate positions, and how individuals pledged to those candidates are then chosen as delegates to the National Convention.

A. The Primary System

(1) In a primary system, each Democratic voter casts their ballot for president in the presidential primary election. Based on the results of the presidential primary, district-level delegates are allocated proportionately to the presidential candidates in that district. For example, if a candidate receives 50% of the vote in that district, they will receive half of the delegates. However, a candidate must win at least 15% of the vote to be eligible to receive any delegates. PLEO and at-large delegates are allocated to presidential candidates according to the statewide primary results.

(2) Under a primary system, a state or territory will use one of the following methods to select the district-level delegates awarded to the presidential candidates:

- a) *Pre-primary caucus*: Prior to the primary election, supporters of each presidential candidate meet (“caucus”) to select a slate of delegate candidates that will be allocated to the presidential candidates based on the results of the primary.
- b) *Two-part primary*: Democratic voters vote for a presidential candidate and also for delegate candidates on the same ballot.
- c) *Post-primary caucus*: Following the presidential primary election, supporters of each presidential candidate who won delegate positions will gather to vote to select the delegates to fill those positions.

B. The Caucus System

(1) In states and territories that use a caucus system, there is no binding primary election to determine the presidential preference of Democratic voters. Instead, delegate positions are awarded to presidential candidates based on the vote taken at a meeting (“caucus”) run by the State Party.

(2) The actual system for conducting caucuses varies widely. At the first caucus tier, local meetings are held across the state or territory to assess the level of support for presidential candidates. The first tier of precinct meetings will determine the number of delegates each candidate will receive. For example, if a presidential candidate gets 50% of the vote in all the precincts in a Congressional District, he or she will receive half of the delegate positions allocated to that district. However, a candidate must win at least 15% of the vote to be eligible to receive any delegates. The level of support for a presidential candidate may also determine how many delegates from the first tier they can send to the next tier. The candidate’s supporters will select individuals pledged to the candidates who will attend the next level of meetings – generally held at the county or congressional district level. In some cases, there are several series of meetings (“tiers”) to the caucus process.

(3) The last tier of a caucus system is the meeting held at either the congressional district caucus or the state convention. Here, supporters of each presidential candidate meet separately to select the individuals who will go to the National Convention as delegates pledged to that candidate.

4. Selection of Pledged “Party Leader and Elected Official” (PLEO) and “At-Large” Delegates

A. Allocation of delegate positions:

(1) In Primary States: These delegate positions are awarded to each presidential candidate based on the statewide presidential primary results. For example, if a candidate wins 25% of the primary vote statewide, they will get 25% of the PLEO and at-large delegate positions. However, a candidate must receive a minimum of 15% of the votes, on a

statewide basis, to be eligible to receive any of these delegates.

(2) In Caucus States: Since there is no primary, these delegate positions are awarded to the presidential candidates based on the percentage of votes received statewide at a specific caucus tier or at the state convention, provided a candidate received at least 15% of the votes.

B. Individuals selected to fill the pledged PLEO and at-large delegate slots are selected by one of three groups (District Level Delegates, State Party Committee, or State Convention) as determined by the State or Territorial Party. The Delegate Selection Plan will indicate who will make the selection, and when and where they will meet.

How to Run for a Delegate Position

1. Running for “District-Level” Delegate

No matter the type of selection system used by the state or territory, anyone who wants to become a district-level delegate must keep in mind several key points:

A. The number of delegates awarded to presidential candidates is based on the results of the presidential primary or caucus process. Anyone interested in becoming a delegate should work to make sure their presidential candidate does well in the primary or caucus so that they have delegate positions to fill.

B. To run as a district-level delegate, an individual must be registered to vote within the district and must file a written declaration of candidacy and a signed “pledge” of support for one presidential candidate (or “uncommitted”). Forms will be available from the state or territorial Democratic Party. **Delegate candidates should carefully review the Delegate Selection Plan for specific information about when and how the required documents must be filed.**

C. The name of each person who filed to run as a delegate pledged to a presidential candidate will be given to the respective presidential candidate (or their authorized representative) before the delegate selection takes place. The candidate (or representative) has the right to approve or disapprove anyone who signed a pledge of support for them. Therefore, **it is important for delegate candidates to communicate with the campaign of the presidential candidate they support.** Delegate candidates should talk to the presidential candidate's local campaign officials about their intention to run for delegate.

D. All state plans provide that the number of delegates will be equally divided between men and women. Gender non-binary delegates shall not be counted in either the male or female category.

E. It is important to understand how the district-level delegates are to be selected. What type of meeting will be held? Who will make the selection? When and where will the selecting body meet? This information will be in the state's Delegate Selection Plan (or summary). Remember, **this is a political position and it is important to campaign among those who are likely to attend the selection meeting.** Since the election of delegate positions is often very competitive, delegate candidates need to actively campaign to be chosen to fill one of the positions awarded to their presidential candidate.

2. Running for Pledged “Party Leader and Elected Official” (PLEO) or “At-Large” Delegate

A. Like the district-level delegates, pledged PLEO and at-large delegates must file a written declaration of candidacy and sign a “pledge” of support for one presidential candidate (or “uncommitted”). Forms will be available from the state or territorial Democratic Party. The Delegate Selection Plan will contain specific information about when and how the required documentation must be filed.

B. As with district-level delegates, presidential candidates have the right to approve or disapprove persons who file to become PLEO or at-large delegates pledged to them.

C. Priority consideration for the PLEO positions will be given to the following Democrats: big city mayors, statewide elected officials, state legislative leaders, state legislators, and other state, county and local elected officials and party leaders. As recommended above, these delegate candidates also need to understand who chooses these delegates and campaign among those people in order to be successful in this selection process.

D. If necessary, the selection of at-large delegates is used to ensure that the entire delegation is equally divided between men and women. These positions may also be used by the state or territorial Party to meet its goals for outreach to various Democratic constituencies.

3. General Information about Running for Delegate

A. *Register to Vote.* To run for delegate and to vote in a presidential primary or participate in a caucus, an individual must be a registered voter – and participating as a Democrat. Also, anyone who wishes to support a delegate candidate must be a registered voter. Contact the local Board of Elections or the local Democratic Party organization for information on how to register to vote. Many State Parties allow individuals who will be 18 by the time of the general election to participate in the Delegate Selection process.

B. *Know the State or Territory's Delegate Selection Rules.* For information on running for a delegate position, an individual should call or write their respective State or Territorial Democratic Party Headquarters and request a copy of the Delegate Selection Plan (or summary) and filing forms. These documents provide the information candidates need to know to run for delegate. These plans are also posted on the party's website.

C. *Identify Which Presidential Candidate to Support and Become Involved in Their Campaign.* Each campaign is looking for supporters to run for delegate (and alternate) positions. Delegate candidates should get involved in the campaign early. Persons interested in running for delegate should discuss their campaign strategies with the presidential campaign organizers. Delegate candidates should work hard for their presidential candidate and get others organized to support the candidate.

D. *Meet State Filing Deadlines and/or Petition Requirements.* In states where delegates are elected on the ballot ("two part primary"), delegate candidates must file a "declaration of candidacy." The deadline for this declaration varies among the states – but is specified in each state's plan. In some cases, the declaration must be accompanied with signatures of registered Democratic voters from that area. All filing requirements must be precisely followed.

E. *Get Out the Vote!* In the weeks before the primary or caucus, delegate candidates should contact all of their supporters and make sure they know when and where to vote. If necessary, arrange for transportation. In order to be successful, be sure to **Get Out the Vote!**

F. *Finally:* Whether successful or not in becoming a delegate to the 2024 National Convention – stay informed and involved. Be sure to: (1) stay informed about the presidential campaign; (2) follow the Convention; (3) support the Party's presidential and vice presidential nominees; and (4) vote on General Election Day!