

Precinct Organizing - Building a Winning Republican Election Team

INTRODUCTION - STRUCTURE OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY OF VIRGINIA

Party Structure & Governance Hierarchy: The most basic unit of RPV structure is the [county/city level unit committee](#). Almost all the real action in party operations - voter registration, volunteer mobilization, and party governance decisions happen at this party unit level. Every official county or independent city in Virginia - 133 in total - is entitled to its own unit. Some smaller units, 11 altogether, have joined with other local units to form combined committees. An understanding of political party operations begins by learning that these county Republican committees are where most of the real work is done, and where most of the decisions are made.

Two additional committee types - the [11 Congressional District committees, and the state party](#) itself - form a statewide structure that execute the state party plan, adjudicate disputes, perform as organizing vehicles for their county committees, and act to facilitate the winning of campaigns for public office. In addition, there are a number of non-localized, statewide units independently represented on various committees. The three major organizations - called auxiliaries - are the [Virginia Federation of Republican Women](#); the [Young Republican Federation of Virginia](#); and the [College Republican Federation of Virginia](#).

Finally, the two state legislative GOP caucuses, the Virginia House of Delegates GOP Caucus and the Virginia State Senate GOP Caucus, play a (very minor) role in state party governance, and are represented with seats on the [State Central Committee](#). Temporary committees for House of Delegates and State Senate districts are periodically convened by county committees for the purpose of nominating candidates, but serve no other organizational function.

County and City Unit Committees: County and city unit committees are where the real work of political fundamentals is done. Getting involved in your local county/city committee should be at the top of your list, if you are serious about defeating the Democrats and putting them out of power. By volume, almost all the efforts in voter outreach, party messaging and promotion, volunteer organization, and fundraising, and in the sheer number of individuals involved, are occurring through these committees.

A critical role of each committee chairman, be it county, Congressional District, or State Legislative district is to conduct the nominating contest, be it [primary, convention, Mass Meeting, or Firehouse Primary](#), then inform the State Board of Elections who the Party's candidate will be in the subsequent General Election. The county/city committee Chairman also represents the RPV to the county/city Board of Elections and participates in pre-election testing and certification of voting machines and post-election ballot counting and reconciliation.

Conventions, Mass Meetings and Canvasses: [Conventions, Mass Meetings and Canvasses](#) are three types of political decision-making processes. Conventions and Mass Meetings are performed under the party plan and the unit committee plan, according to Robert's Rules of Order, the common standard for parliamentary procedure. "Mass Meeting" is Virginia's name for what is more widely known as a "caucus".

Precinct Organizing - Building a Winning Republican Election Team

Magisterial Districts: Magisterial Districts are a peculiar feature of Virginia's political system. Magisterial Districts are a "minor civil unit" whose existence is informal and for the purposes of political organization within counties only; independent cities do not have magisterial districts. In addition, if that weren't confusing enough, not every county has magisterial districts. Magisterial districts are organizationally significant where they do exist; and each one has its own party Chairman. A Magisterial district is defined by a geographically coherent collection of precincts.

Precincts: The precinct is the smallest unit of political organization. Voting in primaries, and at the public office level, happens at the precinct level. In party organization, the organizer of party activities for a precinct is a ***Precinct Captain***. Precincts are organized within the party structure either directly from a city/county unit, or through the magisterial district sub-unit.

CITY OF WINCHESTER WARDS, PRECINCTS & POLLING PLACES

The City of Winchester, Virginia is divided into four wards comprised of six voting precincts (each with a specified voting location). Two City Council members are elected from each of the City's four wards and the Mayor is elected at-large. Each member serves a four-year term.

<https://www.winchesterva.gov/government/city-council>

First Ward: 0101 - Merrimans Precinct

Polling location: John Kerr Elementary School, 427 Meadow Branch Avenue

0102 - Old Town Precinct

Polling location: Christ Episcopal Church, 132 W. Boscawen Street

Second Ward 0201 - Virginia Avenue Precinct

Polling location: Virginia Avenue Charlotte DeHart Elementary School, 550 Virginia Avenue

Third Ward 0301 - War Memorial Precinct

Polling location: War Memorial Building (Jim Barnett Park Rec Center), 1001 E. Cork Street

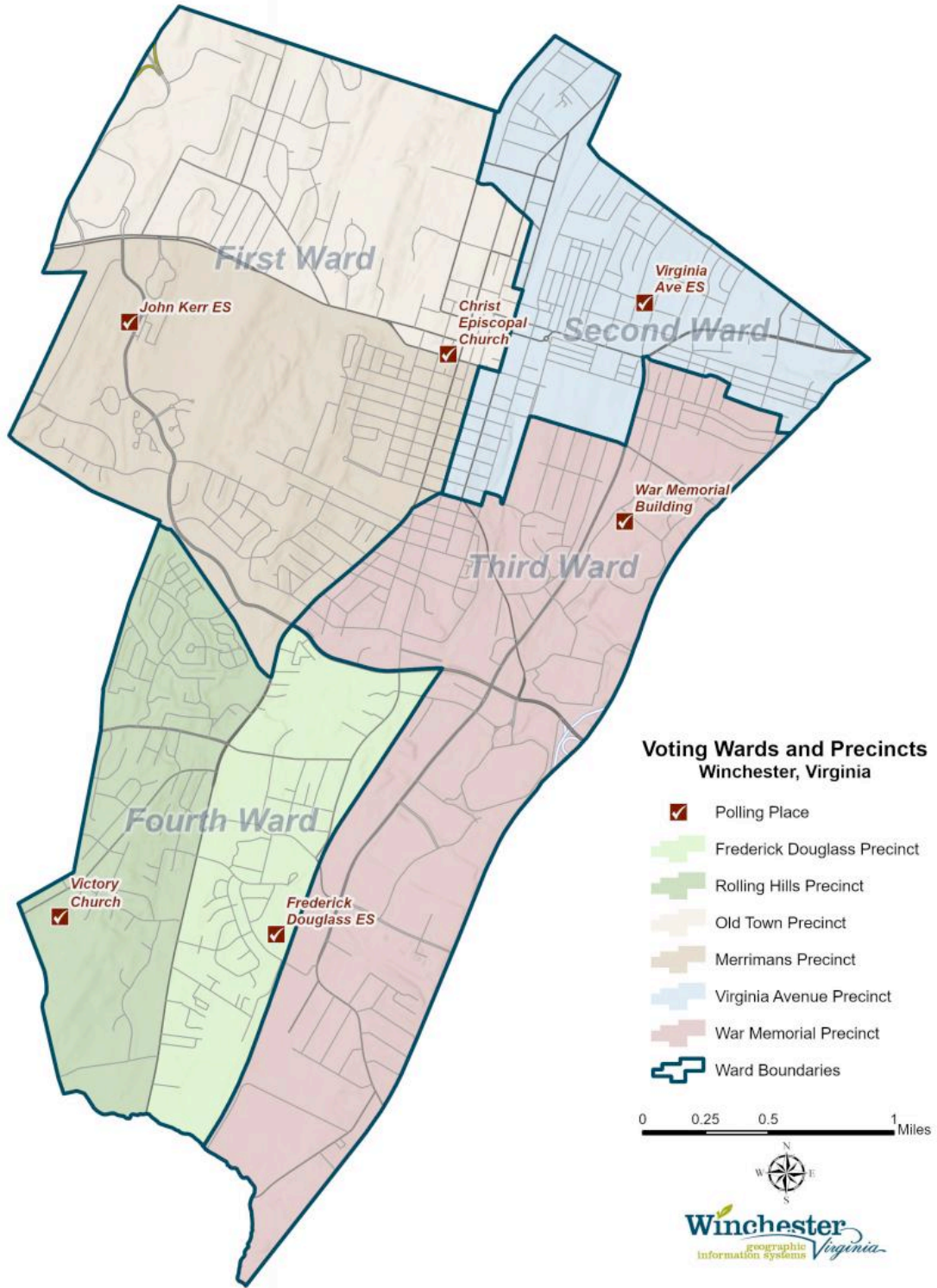
Fourth Ward 0401 - Frederick Douglass Precinct

Polling location: Frederick Douglass Elementary School, 100 W. Cedarmeade Avenue

0402 - Rolling Hills Precinct

Polling location: TBD - Victory Church has been discontinued as a polling site.

Precinct Organizing - Building a Winning Republican Election Team



Precinct Organizing - Building a Winning Republican Election Team

PRECINCT ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESS

This document will focus upon Winchester's six voting Precincts (rather than the four Wards) as the essential organizing factor for managing voting efforts as prescribed by the RPV. Each of the city precincts has approximately 4,500 registered voters each. The current precinct boundary lines were redrawn based upon the 2020 US Federal Census.

As previously highlighted in the RPV Structure & Governance Hierarchy, there is an important position designated as the **Precinct Captain**. This section provides a detailed outline and description of an ideal precinct organization structure and a range of duties for the roles of the Precinct Officers. The Precinct Captain and the Assistant Precinct Captain shall be voting members of the Local Republican Committee Unit.¹ Once the Precinct Captain and their Assistant Captain are selected, they can be supported by other Committee Member and trusted volunteers,

The Precinct Captain

Primary responsibility is the coordination of activities of volunteers within the precinct to include:

- a. Recruiting other volunteers in the precinct and friends of the Republicans from the list of strong republicansⁱ
- b. Placing Yard signs and larger signs on main entrances to the Precinct.
- c. Helping to recruit volunteers for Officers of Election and tell them how to apply for training.²
- d. Contact weak republicansⁱⁱ and Independentsⁱⁱⁱ
- e. If there is strength enough, contact weak Democrats^{iv}
- f. Schedule greeters on election day to pass out recommended Republican lists^v.
- g. Clean up yard signs and turn materials back to the Unit Committee and candidates for storage.
- h. Thank and encourage all volunteers for their work.
- i. Getting out the vote involves encouraging republican leaning people to vote early: have you voted yet?
- j. And don't forget the younger ones. Kids 16 and up can form canvassing teams. Young people and some more timid people should work by twos keeping each other in sight at all times^{vi}.

Other Precinct Officers

It is recommended that the supporting roles should include the following (listed below), although one person may work in multiple capacities:

1. **Assistant Precinct Captain:** partners with the captain to share the load. Speaks for the Captain at meetings when the captain cannot attend. Whenever possible, have an assistant in order to assure that there is a qualified backup and a potential successor for precinct captain role.
2. **Assistant Keeper of Data:** Prepares lists of people to contact and keeps track of contact reports^{vii}.
3. **Phone and texting Staff:** Contacting is easier if you have phone, text, and email information.
4. **Block Captains:** Someone older who is not as mobile but can take responsibility for a block or two.

Precinct Organizing - Building a Winning Republican Election Team

ANNUAL PRECINCT ACTIVITY PLANNING SCHEDULE

January: Initiate an organizational meeting to lay out a schedule of key events for the year. Ensure that all Committees outlined in the Bylaws are filled. Call for a precinct training session for leaders and those interested in becoming precinct officers.

February: Precinct training and selection of Precinct Officers.

March: Provide each precinct team with data on strong Republicans and explain recruiting methods using that list. Also provide teams with a handout explaining why people should volunteer to be a precinct team member.^{viii}

April: Precinct teams meet by Districts and evaluate success. The object here is to notice which district leaders are being the most successful and how the dynamics of the group are working. Meanwhile the precinct members should be contacting people on the strong republican list for volunteers as well as collecting contact information.

May: Precinct Captains in each district elect one person to be District Chairman. This should be someone who is successfully recruiting and has the respect of the other captains. This person will have the extra duty of helping weak precincts. It would be good if this person already had an Assistant Captain who could be promoted to Captain, leaving the District Captain more time to help other precincts. The Precinct team should be full on contacting strong republicans and gathering contact information.

June: Primary and picnic time, hold a get-together with all precinct volunteers for a potluck barbeque. Outline the Precinct program to all volunteers with enthusiasm.

July and August: Finish up visiting all strong and weak republicans asking for contact information and a promise to vote. Explain the early voting concept to them. Contact information means you can reach them later without going door to door. Training in this will be offered.

September: After Labor Day your team starts door to door contacting independents with information on each of our candidates and why they should be elected. This will be provided by the Unit Committee^{ix}. You may also be provided with materials from the candidates as well as a limited number of yard signs.

October: Continue contacting weak republicans and independents. If manpower and time allows, you might be able to conduct a special weak Democrat campaign^x.

November:

- Week Preceding Election Day Activities
- Election-day Support Activities
- Post-Election Day Activities

December: The Executive Committee should host a special "Precinct Team Recognition & Thank You", perhaps as part of the annual holiday Committee celebration.

Precinct Organizing - Building a Winning Republican Election Team

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Rules for Canvassing

1. Work in teams of 2 or more. For minors they should go together to each door. For more mature people they may want to go as twos to train the less experienced. Once experienced they may split up but should always be in sight of each other. Never go inside a house while canvassing unless they are known friends. Remember your partner will lose sight of you if you do.
2. Never get into an argument or insult anyone. With a weak Democrat he may just decide to vote because you got him angry. We would rather that he just stays home and does not vote.
3. Don't walk on the grass. Be extra polite.
4. Don't talk about the people you just met when leaving the house. They just may hear you.
5. Don't go around back unless invited.
6. After ringing the doorbell, step back from the door so to be less threatening.

Appendix 2 - Suggestions for Contacting

1. Get to the point and identify yourself. "Hi, I am your neighbor and contacting people for our coming elections this year. Do you vote Republican?" This works for strong and weak Republicans and Independents. Use a different approach for weak Democrats.
2. If there is something Republican about the house, thank them for their flag or military Sticker or Gadson Flag license, or even a religious statue. If you see children's toys you might tell them about our interest in improving the schools.
3. If you are having a good conversation with the contact, mention that we would like to let them know what is happening locally with the Republican party and the local candidates. Ask would it be alright to contact them later? If they say yes, hand them the clipboard with the contact information questionnaire. Leave them with the Unit Committee information palm card^{xi} after they give you their contact information.
4. You don't have to rush. A good conversation and gathering contact information is far more important than just handing out election material. People who sense your goodness^{xii} will want to help.
5. We don't take money directly. If they want to donate, tell them that would be great and direct them to our website (<https://winchestergop.org>). Worst case if they insist, have them make out a check to the WRC and turn it in to your Precinct Captain who will pass it on to the responsible people.
6. One day canvassers might wear ID badges issued by the local Republican Committee.

Appendix 3 - Contact information & other data collection points

1. This should include name of contact and other household members
2. Address
3. Email/phone
4. Preferred method of contacting: email, text phone

Precinct Organizing - Building a Winning Republican Election Team

5. Note interest in helping the precinct 'Get out the vote' activities, or working as election officer, or joining the WRC
6. Subscribe to the newsletter (free)
7. Donating to make the party stronger (website donation)
8. Would like to attend a committee meeting
9. Would like to meet candidates
10. Main interest in the community
 - a. Community Service
 - b. Public Safety, Self defense
 - c. Keeping Taxes low
 - d. Education System
 - e. Other

¹ Strong Republicans vote in most elections.

² Weak Republicans generally vote only in Presidential Elections.

³ Independents sometimes vote Democrat, sometimes Republicans, or don't vote at all.

⁴ Sometimes weak democrats are disgusted with their party and will either not vote or will switch.

⁵ Often voters know the top of the ticket but don't know the good conservatives who are running for lower offices like School Board.

⁶ See Appendix for rules for contacting.

⁷ See Appendix for suggested contact reporting.

⁸ That will cost the Unit some money

⁹ That will cost the Unit some money.

¹⁰ This requires special training as we don't want to get into arguments. "Do you think we might be able to ask you to vote for (an issue or two).

¹¹ This has the Unit's website, Facebook, and the District Chairmen's contact information as well as an encouraging message.

¹² Your Goodness is that you want a better, safer, and friendlier community that respects all people. The Republican Principles.