

What is the Washington State Democratic Party?

What does the State Party do?

While people tend to think a lot of things about what “The Party” is, there is a fairly specific body of work that the State Party engages in, and while many more things occur in the State Party than just these, outlining the core guiding goals of the Party is an important starting point. Generally, State Parties can be thought of responsible for building and managing the “road” that all Democratic candidates and organizations drive on with the end goal of **getting Democrats elected, from the top of the ballot to the bottom of the ballot**. All other work should stem from the creation and maintenance of this highway that gets Democrats and Democratic ideals into office.

This is handled in a lot of different ways, but one of the biggest responsibilities of the State Party is the biennial **Coordinated Campaign**, which works to turn-out Democrats across the state in support of slates of Democratic candidates. The Coordinated Campaign **legally cannot** engage in persuasion campaigning, which is handled by the candidates specifically, so we focus on turning out Democrats.

In recent years, the State Party has also expanded resources and programs to compliment the work of the Coordinated Campaign through the **Rise & Organize** and **Rise & Run** programs. **Rise & Organize** has served as Washington’s first year-round organizing program, meant to collect information on what’s important to voters, recruit and train volunteers, and maintain a comprehensive organizing push regardless of the cycle. This is complemented at election time with **Rise & Run** which aims to recruit and train candidates for every race in every place. By running candidates in every legislative district in 2018 and 2020 the Washington State Democrats have dramatically widened the map and the number of districts we work in.

In addition to our turnout work the State Party is responsible for convening the **Platform Committee** every other year who revises our Platform of beliefs, as well as regularly meet to discuss and **Pass Resolutions** on current events to help inform the public’s broad understanding of Democratic beliefs.

What *doesn't* the State Party do?

Almost equally important is having a strong idea of what actions the Party *does not* engage in for legal or political reasons. A short list of the most common things people think we do that we don’t do are:

- We do not campaign to persuade Republicans, as required by law.
- We do not have lobbyists in Olympia or Washington D.C. (or anywhere, for that matter).
- We do not have any control over campaign managers or staff for any candidate campaigns.
- We do not endorse in contested Democrat on Democrat campaigns.
- We do not promote or campaign for initiative campaigns, as required by law.
- We do not have control of the Democratic *National* Committee (DNC), or any of the other D acronym groups (DSCC, DCCC, DNCC, etc).
- Most importantly we do not have anywhere near unlimited resources!

Finding Success as a member of the State Central Committee

The Washington State Democrats Central Committee is the principal governing body of the State Party with two representatives from each legislative district and two from each county, elected by the PCOs (Precinct Committee Officers) of those districts at the biennial reorganization meeting, or whenever a vacancy occurs.

While State Committee Members are elected for different reasons and represent their constituents differently, this introduction document is meant to provide some background on the normal business of a State Committee Meeting and the work that members traditionally do at these meetings to help inform your decision to run for a State Committee Member position during your biennial reorganization meeting.

What is the State Committee and what is it responsible for?

Officially, the Washington State Democratic Central Committee (WSDCC), also called the State Central Committee (SCC), is the statewide Democratic Party organization. The WSDCC consists of previously mentioned two State Committee representatives from each Legislative District and County organization as well as Special Members defined in the Charter and By-laws. The WSDCC is presided over by the Chair and other officers who are elected by the elected State Committee Members.

During these State Committee meetings and the biennial Convention, State Committee Members will;

- Vote on **Resolutions** (Party positions on current events and issues) submitted from County and Legislative district organizations, as well as Constituency Caucuses;
- Vote on the **Election** of the State Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary, as well as their Congressional District representative to the State Executive Committee;
- Submit and vote on changing the WSDCC **Charter and Bylaws**;
- Participate in both **Committees** (each member is assigned to one committee) and **Caucuses** (immutable characteristic or interest groups that members may freely join);
- And at the biennial Convention vote on a State Party **Platform**, vote on changing the WSDCC **Charter and Bylaws**, and, in presidential election years, **elect at-large delegates** to the National Convention.

What are the things a successful member participates in?

- Attend State Committee Meetings three times each year at locations throughout the state (or assign responsible proxy-holders). These meetings generally run from Friday evening through Sunday afternoon. State Committee Member should ideally not miss more than one meeting a year; a State Committee Member who misses two meetings in a calendar year should reconsider if they have the time to perform their role. Currently, due to the Covid-19 pandemic meetings are currently held virtually, so members should be prepared to participate via Zoom and have the appropriate tools to do so.
- Carefully reads all emails from the State Chair, Executive Director, Party Affairs Director, Organizers, and other State Party staff to act as a conduit between the state party and their local organization. State Committee Members are also actively encouraged to represent concerns from their LPO back to State Party staff and leadership.

- Being an active member of their assigned working committee at the State Party. This includes participating in Committee discussions, accomplishing Committee work between meetings, and performing duties assigned by their Committee Chair. The six standing committees as outlined in the bylaws are the Rules Committee, Resolutions Committee, Advocacy Committee, Finance Committee, Elections Committee and Affirmative Action Committee.
- Support the local chair and other local party officers as they perform their duties. Working as a conduit between the resources at the state level and the needs of the local parties a successful member helps familiarize their district with the resources that the State provides, and in-turn, help alert the State to the needs of their local party and bringing the state into concerns or disputes that impairing the effectiveness of their local party.
- The most successful members assist their local district in the writing and editing of Resolutions brought before the central committee so they're well prepared and conform to the WSDCC [Rules for Resolutions](#). This ensures that the central committee is debating the ideas and concepts of the Resolution, *not* where the commas should be.
- Successful members also work to bring their communities into their Local and State Party; whether that's a robust fundraising network, a local community group that doesn't interact with electoral politics, or seeking out and actively including disadvantaged or disenfranchised people in their district.

Where can I meet other Democrats at State Committee Meetings?

Each meeting will usually contain ample opportunity for interaction between members including dedicated dinner and lunches as well as showcases of the Local Party in the area hosting the meeting.

However, one of the best ways to meet like-minded Democrats both on and off the Central Committee is by joining one of the 16 Washington State Democrats Constituency Caucuses. These organizations are meant to be a direct conduit from the State Party to specific constituent groups that make up the Party and work to endorse and support candidates important to their issue group as well as promote specific activism through Resolutions.

The 16 Caucuses are: African American Caucus, Agriculture and Rural Caucus, Asian Pacific American Caucus, Disabilities Issues Caucus, Environment and Climate Caucus, Economic Justice Caucus, Hispanic Caucus, Jewish Caucus, Labor Caucus, Native American Caucus, Progressive Caucus, Small Business Caucus, Separation of Church and State Caucus, Stonewall/LGBTQ Caucus, Veterans and Military Families Caucus, and the Women's Caucus

What can I do if I need help or advice after I'm elected?

After the completion of elections each member will be asked if they consent to have their contact information shared with the rest of the body, and if they consent it will be provided. Use returning members and new members alike as a resource to get up to speed quickly! Additionally, State Party staff, particularly in the Party Affairs department are always available to discuss the role in more depth, and provide context for how things have operated in the past. They can be reached during normal business hours at PartyAffairs@wa-democrats.org.