



INDEMS
INDIANA DEMOCRATIC PARTY
2021 Reorganization Guide

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I. REORGANIZATION TIMELINE: Deadlines and Dates

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January IDP scheduled Zoom conferences to discuss reorganization processes with party organizations around the state

February 2-4 County Precinct Lists must be finalized and turned into the IDP by NOON EDT

Send to Alex Fuller: afuller@indems.org

NOTES:

1. *No precinct lists may be changed within 30 days before the county reorganization meeting (there is a 30-day cutoff window before the meeting prohibiting changes to the list in Party Rules).*
2. *Precinct committee elections do not occur until the May 2022 primary election.*
3. *Counties are encouraged to keep a record of to whom meeting notices are sent to verify this was done in a timely fashion.*
4. *Precinct lists will only be released from the IDP upon request or approval from/by the county or district chair.*

February 17-19 County reorganization notices must be sent to observe 15-day notice under Rule 13(e)2 (check IDP Rules for filing notice procedures)

March 3 District reorganization notices must be sent to observe 10-day notice rule under Rule 14(d)2 (check IDP Rules for filing notice procedures)

NOTE: Notices are usually sent to existing Chairs and Vices, understanding that some officers may change on March 6. In addition, additional notices may be sent to others if desired.

March 4-6 County Reorganization meetings (must be done by 11:59 p.m. on March 6)

March 8 (not later than 1 p.m.) Election results sent to IDP and District – Rule 13g

March 13 District Reorganization meetings (must be scheduled by 1 p.m. local time)

Election results should be communicated to IDP immediately – Rule 14(d)6

March 20 State Central Committee Reorganization meeting (1 p.m. EDT via Zoom - unless COVID is better)

II. RULES AND PROCEDURES ON REORGANIZATION

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Introduction

This document is designed to provide formal and informal guidance to county and district Democratic party organizations ahead of the March 2021 party reorganization. With the COVID-19 pandemic still gripping our state and nation, it is critical that our organizational business continue, but in a safe and healthy way. **The information outlined here was approved by the State Central Committee on December 12, 2020.**

Supplemental Rules for 2021 Reorganization

13(e)1: County Reorganization Meeting

(1) Meeting Date: On the first Saturday in March 1997 and every four (4) years thereafter, at no later than one p.m., local time, such precinct committee persons and vice-committee persons shall meet in the county seat at a location selected by the retiring county chair and shall organize the county central committee by electing officers.

Supplemental Rule Passed by State Central Committee

“For the 2021 IDP Reorganization only, county central committees may hold reorganization meetings during the following dates (“hybrid” sessions are allowed, but only one session for reorganization is permitted). Meetings and election processes must be completed by 11:59 p.m. on March 6, 2021.

- Thursday, March 4, 2021
- Friday, March 5, 2021
- Saturday, March 6, 2021

If a county chooses to conduct its reorganization meeting earlier than March 6, precinct committee lists must be filed with the IDP 30 days prior to the first session taking place, and rules for meeting notices and candidate filing still apply as laid out in current IDP rules should be adjusted to reflect any new dates. Meetings may be conducted in alternate formats so long as they are in accordance with IDP Rules. Election results from county reorganization meetings should be sent to IDP and the District via e-mail by 1 p.m. on March 8, 2021.”

21(d): Restrictions on Proxy Use at County Committee Meetings

No proxy shall be valid at the organization meeting of a county central committee, on any vote to fill a vacancy among the officers of a county central committee, or on any vote to remove a county chair.

Supplemental Rule Passed by State Central Committee

“Suspending rule 21(d) allows for proxies in order to deal with COVID situations if a county conducts a meeting in person. Proxies must be in writing (texting may count as long as a record can be kept and translated as needed) from the PC Chair/Vice to the County Chair or Secretary and must be received two hours prior to the meeting beginning to be counted. Proxies must be carried by another voting member of the county committee, and a person may only carry one proxy.

Preparing for a different reorganization meeting format

The State Central Committee recognizes the pandemic puts additional stress on our volunteer organization, and we want to be as flexible as possible, but believe with that must come transparency and accountability. As such, counties and districts that are planning to conduct their meetings in a different format than the one prescribed in traditional IDP Rules should adhere to the following plan:

1. Consider which meeting options work best for your organization by meeting during the month of January to put together a meeting plan. Consult IDP staff or your district committee if you have questions or would like a plan reviewed.
2. Get this meeting plan approved by February 15 at a meeting of your county party officers or county committee. Be mindful of lead time to meet noticing deadlines. Getting the meeting format approved in advance will keep communication flowing with your party committee and could reduce the possibility of a challenge to your process under IDP Rules.
3. Prepare a timeline to publish the plan further to your precinct organization and others you wish to receive notice.

Reorganization meetings MUST:

- Be accessible to Indiana Democrats in accordance with reorganization meeting notice requirements and IDP Rule 10 (Party Access).
 - NOTE: party meetings are not required to be noticed to the general public and are closed to press unless the local/district party decides otherwise.
- Have a quorum of voting members (unless all elections will be done by acclamation)
 - If meeting organizers are unsure if an election will be contested, the meeting notice could contain two caucus options:
 - 1. A more involved physical or distanced meeting if there are contests.
 - 2. A virtual meeting if all officer elections are uncontested once the filing deadline lapses. If that is the case, the organizer could post which meeting option will be used on a website, FB, etc.
- Have a presiding officer and a method of tracking attendance to verify who is voting in the election.
- Observe proper procedure under Robert's Rules.
- Be in accordance with IDP Rules unless otherwise outlined in this document.
- Ensure votes are cast securely and with accountability of record.
- Be mindful of CDC, state and local COVID-related restrictions on in-person gatherings. This may govern what can and cannot happen.

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Secret Ballots (IDP Rule 23)

- Secret ballots for county and district elections are, in fact, not required by IDP Rules, although most elections are held in this manner. State Central Committee Officer elections are prohibited to be conducted by secret ballot.
- It is recommended that county and district meetings have a method to preserve ballot secrecy if that is decided by the body.

Further Guidance and Options for Party Reorganization Meetings: March 2021

In person meetings:

- Any plans for caucuses to be held in person should include plans for how caucus voters will be allowed to vote efficiently. Flexibility should be given with respect to business agendas and speaking times, as well as how voting is conducted for the caucus, as long as it is done in accordance with IDP Rules.
- Space chairs apart and have the event be as open-air as possible (outside is best)
- Provide rubber gloves to help count paper ballots, and make sure voters do not share writing utensils.
 - Consider providing bins for clean and used writing utensils.
- Consider having one person collect the ballots by walking around the room with a ballot box, rather than have voters form a line to put ballots in a box at the front of the room.

Virtual/More Socially Distanced Meeting Options:

- Zoom (secret ballot difficult unless one person is designated to tally votes):
 - Allows for both phone and Video participation
- Facebook Live (difficult with secret ballot):
 - Completely open to anyone unless done in a FB group
- Ballot counting options:
 - Google Forms (will not be a completely secret ballot)
 - SMS polling (will not be a completely secret ballot)
 - Consider providing each voter with a unique ID specific to them so that their ballot can be tracked and counted
 - For this method, we recommend using VAN, where specific IDs can be used for each voter. We do not recommend using the actual VAN ID number but creating a supplemental one so that votes are kept more anonymous. Please contact IDP staff for questions on this method.
- A “curbside” meeting:

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- Send ballots out ahead of time via e-mail and provide notice of a window of time people can drive through to drop their ballots off for voting, while still needing to maintain quorum.
- Secure a parking lot or use a building/headquarters and a weather-safe option for ballot collection and counting.
- There are also a limited conference call options available for larger counties who cannot gather large numbers in person, but they do cost money. Contact the IDP staff for more information by mid-January. (Lauren Ganapini: lauren@indems.org)
- Google docs or forms should also be considered for managing virtual or other event logistic – for instance attendance and proxies that need to be documented for county reorganization meetings.

Party Meetings – General Guidance

- Test your videoconferencing and teleconferencing systems to ensure that they are operational and that all necessary officers/planners have the ability to both join and create meetings;
- Be sure that, as you are making plans for any upcoming events, you are working with your venues and other vendors to include a COVID-19 clause that allows you to back out of your contract(s) with no/reduced penalty (known as a “force majeure” clause)
- Consider a “dry run” so that those conducting the meeting can test their internet, video conferencing tools, cell service, ability to remotely log in to various programs/systems needed to fulfill their duties, etc.
- Make sure all cell phones and e-mail addresses are up to date for voters and participants.
- Again, please be mindful of CDC, state and local COVID-related restrictions on in-person gatherings. This may govern what can and cannot happen.

How can we keep attendees safe at events if they do occur?

- **Share [everyday preventive actions with pre-registered attendees to help prevent the spread of COVID-19](#)**, including:
 - Wear a mask and practice social distancing.
 - Stay home when you are sick.
 - Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
 - Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects daily.
 - Try to minimize your contact with frequently touched objects—doorknobs, light switches, railings, etc.
 - Reduce unnecessary person-to-person contact, including handshakes.

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- **Clean and disinfect** commonly used surfaces before and after your event.
- **Provide** additional prevention supplies at your meetings and events for attendees, including soap, hand sanitizers, tissues and extra masks should your venue not have enough for your anticipated number of attendees.
- **Avoid** food options where individuals may share serving utensils and have an increased opportunity for exposure, such as buffet or family style services; instead, consider brown bag lunches from home, or personalized box lunches.
- **Promote messages that discourage people who are sick from attending events.** This should include messages requesting that people leave events if they begin to have symptoms of COVID-19, which include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. They should seek medical advice promptly by calling ahead to a doctor's office or emergency room to get guidance. [See CDC guidance on what to do when sick with COVID-19.](#)
- **Retain the names and contact information** of all participants for one month, to help public health authorities trace people who may have been exposed to COVID-19 if one or more participants become ill shortly after the event. (A waiver template can be provided by IDP but should be reviewed by local legal counsel).

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Have there been rule changes that would impact the process since the 2017 reorganization?

No, other than what is laid out in this document there have not been substantive rule changes that impact the reorganization process since the 2017 reorganization. Those who are organizing meetings should carefully review rules concerning reorganization meetings or contact IDP staff with questions - and be sure you are reviewing the most current version of the rules on the IDP website.

2. What about redistricting?

Although district boundaries will not be finalized until the end of the 2021 legislative session, IDP Reorganization will proceed as normal. Any district officer who is elected in their current district has the opportunity to serve out the term in that district, but may not stand for re-election if they have been drawn out of that Congressional district (Rule 14d5)

III. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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As the 2021 IDP Reorganization commences, it is important to know that existing and prospective county and district party officers know about the resources available to them from the Indiana Democratic Party. As a part of this process, the State Central Committee is recommending that local and district parties consider utilizing the following resources both as needed, and for proper planning for the 2021 party-building year.

IDP Website Resources

- IDP Staff Contacts: <https://www.indems.org/our-party/idp-staff/>
- Party Rules: <https://www.indems.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/IDP-Rules-November-2020.pdf>
- County party information: <https://www.indems.org/our-party/county-parties/>
- Party Platform: <https://www.indems.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/2020-IDP-Platform-FINAL-DRAFT-6-12-20.pdf>
- Frequently Asked Questions: <https://www.indems.org/idp-frequently-asked-questions-faqs/>
- State Central Committee information: <https://www.indems.org/our-party/state-committee/>
- Constituency Caucus information: <https://www.indems.org/constituencycaucus/>

IV. RULES CLARIFICATIONS ON QUORUM, VOTING, ETC.

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Issues Concerning Quorum and Voting of Executive Officers at County and District Levels

There has been much discussion about reorganization v. filling officer vacancies, as well as a question about whether the Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary count toward a quorum at county and district committee meetings.

- The rules separate the procedures for reorganization and simply filling officer vacancies under Rules 13 (County Committees) and 14 (District Committees). Where a guideline is not specifically laid out in the rules, the officer has discretion in how the procedure is conducted. This has come up sometimes in vacancy notice timing. In addition, the term “reorganization” refers to the quadrennial reorganization of the county, district and state committees. This will be particularly important moving into the quadrennial reorganization in 2021.
- During a reorganization procedure, only precinct committee officers or County Chairs/Vices vote because the rules specify that. The incumbent Chair presides over that reorganization. Executive Officers would not vote for those offices unless they are already a PC officer, County Chair or Vice. This could also hold true for quorum, as the only voting members of a body for reorganization are the PC officers, County Chairs and Vices.
- In all other procedures, Rules 13(u) and 14(i) should be referenced. Both concern duties of the other officers of the county or district committee and say:
 - *“The vice chair, secretary, and treasurer of the county/district committee shall, in addition to any powers and duties specified in this Rule, have the same powers and duties with respect to the county/district committee as the same officer of State Committee.”*
- Using Rules 13(u) and 14(i) as guides, an interpretation can be made that the county or district chair would only vote in the case of a tie, and that the other officers are voting members of the body, as this is the case on the State Committee.
 - All of the officers would also count toward a quorum, except in reorganization if that is the interpretation made locally.
- It is not the current intention of the Rules Committee that the rules mentioned in this section of the need to be formally changed, but rather guidance should be given to those seeking it at the district and county level.

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IDP Rule Clarifications – County Committees

County Committees (Rule 13)

- “County Committee” = the body made up by duly elected/appointed Precinct Chairs & Vices
- “County Central Committee” = the Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary & Treasurer

Quadrennial Reorganization of County Committee (Rule 13e)

Who counts toward quorum?

- Only duly elected or appointed Precinct chairs and vices (Rule 13b), since they are the voting members in this case.
- The Chair, but not the other three officers UNLESS they are already PC officers.

Who votes?

- Only duly elected or appointed Precinct chairs and vices (Rule 13b).

Who presides?

- The existing County Chair, or another one of the executive officers if the County Chair designates them (Rule 13e5). The presiding officer shall preside over the meeting until a new Chair is elected.

Who breaks a tie?

- The existing County Chair breaks a tie for the election of the Chair, and then the newly elected Chair breaks ties for the other three officers during those elections (Rule 13e5, e6). This is the case even if the Chair has already voted as a PC Chair or Vice.

IDP Rule Clarifications – District Committees

District Committees (Rule 14)

- “District Committee” = the body made up by the counties Chairs & Vice Chairs of each Congressional District.
- “District Central Committee” = the Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary & Treasurer of the District

Quadrennial Reorganization of District Committee (Rule 14d)

Who counts toward quorum?

- Only the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the District’s counties (Rule 14b), since they are the voting members in this case.
- The existing Chair, but not the other three officers UNLESS they are already a County Chair or Vice (this is consistent with county committee rules).

Who votes?

- Only County Chairs and Vices (Rule 14b).

Who presides?

- The existing District Chair presides until the election of a new Chair (Rule 14d4A).

Who breaks a tie?

- The existing District Chair breaks a tie for the election of the Chair, and then the newly elected Chair breaks ties for the other three officers during those elections (Rule 14d4A). This is the case even if the Chair has already voted as a County Chair or Vice.

V. FUTURE PLANNING TOOLS FOR YOUR COUNTY PARTY

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Implicit bias training

- In late summer 2020, the IDP adopted implicit bias training as part of its personnel policy and is recommending local and district parties participate in the training.
- A more complete module is being developed, but those interested in viewing an introductory training module can view it at this link:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/19SfC5wUKYjmGVPM_avIMPRGUVctL8wom/view?usp=sharing
- It is recommended that county parties complete the training video within the first 30 days of assuming office, and that district committees discuss implicit bias at a district committee in the second quarter of 2021.

Mobilize App

- For 2021, the IDP has subscribed to an app called Mobilize, which allows organizations to track interest and sign-ups for party events and grassroots activity. In addition, those who RSVP get reminder texts and other notifications that the event is upcoming. The IDP staff is happy to discuss a structure with local parties to make your 2021 event more successful. Capacity is limited!

Precinct Committeeperson Handbook

- The IDP Precinct Handbook will be updated by March 1, 2021 and the updated version will be posted to our website. The current version is here: <http://www.indems.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Indems-Precinct-Committeeperson-Handbook.pdf>

County Party Victory Program (CPVP)

- In 2019, the IDP created the County Party Victory Program (CPVP), a metrics-based and scalable system for county parties to create an accountability system that works best for their organization. The process begins with the county conducting a self-inventory to determine where it is on the spectrum of “levels” in seven different areas, then by following a rubric to increase its level. **Levels and rubrics can be obtained by contacting IDP staff.**