

What is a Precinct Caucus?

In an election year, political parties have to nominate candidates, write platforms, and organize their efforts to get out the vote on Election Day. Colorado's process starts with precinct caucuses based on state law, party rules, and a delegate selection plan. Only the Democratic Party and the Republican Party hold caucuses and each establishes their own rules.

Precinct caucus

Precincts are the smallest political unit in the state. They are held in homes, schools, churches, or other locations in the neighborhood. All precinct caucus locations must be accessible to people with disabilities. There are close to 4000 precincts in Colorado.

In Presidential election years, the caucus will be held on the first Tuesday of February. In 2008, the caucuses will be held on February 5 at 7:00 p.m. Anyone is welcome to attend the caucus, but must be a registered Democrat in their precinct. The voter must be affiliated with the Democratic Party no later than December 5, 2007. There are two exceptions: if you turn 18 or become a U.S. citizen during the two-month period prior to the caucuses.

At every caucus, the general agenda is the same:

- Elect a Chair and Secretary of the caucus;
- Elect two precinct committee people to represent the precinct on the Party's County Central Committee
- Elect delegates to the County Assembly/County Convention
- Introduce, debate and approve or reject resolutions and platform issues.

That is the basic agenda. In reality, it's a lot more fun. Your caucus reflects you and your neighbors. Some meet, do their business and adjourn. Others will debate for hours.

Getting Started

First, the caucus elects a chairperson to run the meeting and a secretary to write the minutes of the meeting.

In 2008, we are asking that a Presidential preference poll be conducted as the *first order of business* after the election of the Chair and Secretary, and *immediately* report those results to your County Party Chair, so that the County Chair can report the county results to the State Party to report to the press and media *by 9:30 p.m. on caucus night*.

The election of precinct committee people will represent the caucus on the County Party Central Committee for the next two years. They are expected to do precinct work, get out the vote for all candidates in their party on Election Day, and assist in the planning of the next caucus.

People at your caucus can also introduce items to be included in the party platform; these can range from fascinating to truly bizarre. There will be debate on the proposals as well as a vote. If the item is approved, it will be passed on the county platform committee, which will discuss incorporating into the county platform. Not all items will end up in the County Platform or the State Platform.

The County Assembly

At the County Assembly, the process starts all over again:

- Only this time, candidates are nominated for countywide offices;
- The State Assembly, which nominates candidates for statewide offices and considers the State platform;
- The Congressional District Assembly, which nominates candidates for Congress and the State Board of Education;
- The State Senatorial and Representative District Assemblies, which nominate candidates for the Colorado General Assembly;
- The Judicial District Assembly, which nominates candidates for District Attorney

The County Convention

At the County Convention the process:

- Elects delegates to the Congressional Convention and the State Convention based on fair reflection of Presidential Candidates.

There are a number of assemblies/conventions but most are held on the same day at the same location. Usually, the Congressional District Assembly/Convention is held prior to the State Assembly/Convention or a location and time to be determined by the Congressional Central Committee.

The Primary Election for Non-Presidential Candidates

A candidate must receive 30% of the vote at the County Assembly in order to be placed on the August Primary Ballot. If more than one candidate gets 30% of the vote at an assembly, then both names will appear on the August primary ballot to be elected by the voters of their party.

The General Election

The winners of the primary get their party's nomination and go on to the General Election in November.

More Information

If you need additional information, please contact the Colorado Democratic Party at 303-623-4762 or check the state party website at www.coloradodems.org for party rules and the Colorado National Delegate Selection Plan for 2008.