



## **Democratic Party of Garland Party Strategic Plan for 2017**

The Democratic Party of Arkansas (DPA) requires local county parties to develop a strategic plan. The plan must address three areas: (1) enact actions to recruit and support democratic candidates running for office; (2) identify actions to promote the Democratic Party and democratic values; and (3) develop organizational and financial strategies that support county party operations.

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### **1. Candidate Recruitment & Support**

The Democratic Party of Garland County (DPGC) recognizes that the election of Democratic Candidates at all levels of government is critical to the success of the party. Consequently, the DPGC will implement the following actions:

#### **1.01 Identify all open positions upcoming in 2018.**

The DPGC will create a spreadsheet listing all elective offices in Garland County, including local school boards, City offices, County offices and state legislative offices. This list will be used to identify offices Democratic candidates should pursue.

#### **1.02 Identify and recruit potential candidates.**

The DPGC intends to recruit a deep bench of potential candidates as soon as possible, preferably by early summer 2017. The sooner qualified Democratic candidates are recruited, the more time they will have to prepare for a successful election campaign. Also, it is possible the primary for the general election may again be held in March 2018, which means Democratic candidates for county and state offices will need to be in place by November 2017.

#### **1.03 Identify local networking opportunities for candidates.**

The DPGC will identify networking opportunities including neighborhood associations, civic clubs, and business and professional associations. Candidates will be encouraged to interact with such groups in order to promote name recognition and foster support.

**1.04 Offer candidate training on campaign operations and legal requirements.**

Members of the DPGC have extensive expertise in mounting local elective campaigns as well as complying with financial disclosure requirements. Plans call for offering day classes and/or informal individualized tutoring to candidates regarding: (1) organizing a campaign; (2) formulating effective campaign messaging and election strategies and tactics; (3) using social media in political campaigns; and (4) compliance with state financial disclosure requirements.

**1.05 Offer leadership and skills training for candidates.**

The DPGC will promote opportunities for candidates to improve their public speaking skills (for example, by joining Toastmasters) and when requested, the DPGC will provide training on improving interpersonal skills intended to enhance a candidate’s ability to connect with voters.

**1.06 Offer the DPGC Headquarters for use by Democratic candidates.**

The DPGC maintains an office at 608 Grand Avenue, Hot Springs. Our headquarters is equipped with networked computer and a large 55” color display, a kitchenette, and a large meeting room. As scheduling allows, the space can be used for fundraising events, campaign rallies, etc.

**1.07 Create and finance a “Candidate Support Fund” for the 2018 General Election.**

Efforts to recruit qualified candidates will depend, at least in part, on the DPGC’s ability to offer financial support to local Democratic candidates. Providing timely financial resources (specifically “seed money” early during the General Election campaign season) is especially important. To this end, the DPGC will undertake fundraising efforts in 2017 to build up a “Candidate Support Fund” for use after the 2018 Democratic primary. Funds will be provided only to Democratic nominees in contested races.

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**2. Promoting the Democratic Party**

The Democratic Party of Garland County has adopted the motto “Fighting for You: Real People, Real Change” and recognizes that it is necessary to promote democratic values in our community as a means of building support for the party and its candidates. Consequently, the DPGC will implement the following community outreach and advocacy activities in Garland County:

**2.01 Utilize a coordinated quarterly messaging strategy.**

Each quarter, the DPGC will identify specific a pressing social or economic issue and then plan actionable events to foster greater public awareness regarding these issues. Where possible, a focus will be on garnering free coverage in local media (such as the newspaper) by promoting both the issue at hand and the Democratic Party and its values.

**2.02 Integrate free local news media coverage into DPGC messaging.**

Use of free media—including local radio and the newspaper—can expand the “reach” of the DPGC’s messaging efforts. To this end, the DPGC will promote party activities, rallies, and events to local media outlets. Distribution of press releases will be

standardized and a DPGC spokesperson will be made available whenever possible for media interviews.

**2.03 Host monthly educational classes at the Garland County Library.**

The DPGC will host monthly educational civics classes at the Garland County Library. This lectures series will explain how various government entities operate (such as the County Quorum Court, Hot Springs City Government, etc.) with the intent of promoting public interest in local politics and empowering individuals to become more engaged in the political process. As currently envisioned, the lecture series will be conducted in partnership with other progressive organizations. These lectures will be an opportunity to draw additional members into the DPGC and may aid in identifying potential Democratic candidates for local offices. The end goal is to promote political engagement.

**2.04 Host monthly “brown bag” speakers at the DPGC headquarters.**

The DPGC will host a monthly noon-day lecture series at the DPGC Headquarters. Again, the goal will be to draw additional members to the DPGC, aid in identifying potential Democratic candidates for local offices, and reinforce that the DPGC works to protect and promote the interests of Garland County residents on important issues.

**2.05 Create and distribute “Legislative Alerts.”**

The party will distribute to DPGC members and other interested parties information about pending legislation and the voting record of Garland County legislators as well as contact information for legislators at both the state and federal level. The intent is to keep people informed on important issues as well provide information on how constituents can voice their opinions to their respective legislators. The goal is to encourage individuals to interact with their elected representatives, keep voters engaged in the political process, and promote the idea that the DPGC is an effective partner in promoting political engagement.

**2.06 Promote voter registration efforts.**

The DPGC will continue its ongoing voter registration efforts in Garland County. The goal is to engage as many local residents as possible in the political process.

**2.07 Publish a monthly newsletter.**

The DPGC’s monthly newsletter reinforces Party goals and informs our members about important issues and upcoming events. The newsletter promotes political engagement.

**2.08 Implement a comprehensive social media outreach program.**

The DPGC will develop and implement a plan to employ all social and web media platforms (Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and the DPGC website) to promote the party and important political issues. The intent is to expand the “reach” of DPGC’s messaging efforts and enhance political engagement with the larger community.

**2.09 Promote writing “Letters to the Editor.”**

The DPGC will encourage letter writing efforts to the local newspaper (the Hot Springs *Sentinel-Record*) addressing issues of concern to Democrats. The opinion page of the local newspaper is widely read in our community, especially among older residents (the demographic with the highest voter participation rate). The DPGC will offer free copy-

editing services to potential letter writers. Such letters will expand the reach and promotion of DPGC's goals and platform.

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### **3. Operational and Financial Activities**

The Democratic Party of Garland County recognizes the need to have in place an effective organization to promote our candidates, support the Democratic Party, and connect with voters. In terms of fundraising, the DPGC has adopted a "work smarter, not harder" philosophy; the end goal is to maximize income without overwhelming the party's volunteer base with elaborate or exhausting work assignments. To this end, the DPGC will implement the following actions to support party operations:

#### **3.01 Make regular monthly DPGC meetings engaging and educational events.**

There will be a reduced focus on conveying information about routine DPGC administrative and operational matters at our monthly meetings. Such information can be distributed to attendees via handouts. Instead the monthly meetings will have a speaker focusing on an engaging topic intended to promote the Party and Democratic issues and values. Operational matters will be administered by the DPGC's Executive Committee; Executive Committee meeting minutes will be made available to DPGC members upon request. The end goal is to expand attendance at our monthly meetings, energize attendees, and encourage greater political engagement.

#### **3.02 Continue the outreach efforts of the Sunshine Committee.**

The DPGC recognizes that political engagement often benefits from a "personal touch." Promoting interpersonal ties creates stronger connections among our membership. To this end, the DPGC will send notes expressing congratulations, sympathy, or concern to our members in the event of illness, bereavement, or other milestone events.

#### **3.03 Develop and expand our volunteer pool.**

Recently the DPGC has seen an influx of people willing to volunteer in support of the Party and its activities. The DPGC will maintain a list of interested volunteers to staff our Headquarters and to assist in political events sponsored by DPGC in Garland County.

#### **3.04 Develop an action plan for the Headquarters staff.**

The DPGC maintains an office/headquarters at 608 Grand Avenue, Hot Springs. It is our goal to have a trained volunteer on site during the week to answer calls and provide assistance to visitors. The DPGC will encourage all volunteers to aid in our outreach activities by making calls or sending letters to recruit new members, making calls or sending emails and letters to legislators, and assisting in other administrative tasks, provided they are willing to do so.

#### **3.05 Improve the DPGC Headquarters.**

DPGC Headquarters at 608 Grand Avenue needs updating. The DPGC has created a capital fund to pay for such improvements, and while the amount available is modest, the DPGC hopes to use volunteer labor to bring about significant improvements at minimal cost. Also, some changes can be completed at no cost, e.g. de-cluttering.

**3.06 Use the VAN list to recruit DPGC members and expand support in the community.**

The DPGC will use information provided by VAN to identify potential supporters in our community and invite them to join the Party as well as take part in our outreach events. The DPGC recognizes that direct personal contact with likeminded individuals is an effective way to motivate those individuals to take an active role in promoting and supporting the Democratic Party and Democratic candidates.

**3.07 Develop contacts with other community organizations and interest groups.**

The DPGC will undertake efforts to identify and establish a working relationship with neighborhood associations, civic clubs, and business and professional associations on issues of common interest. This will afford the DPGC an opportunity to recruit additional members, foster support for the Democratic Party in the larger community, and reinforce the DPGC's goal to protect and promote the interests of Garland County residents on important issues.

**3.08 Utilize the DPGC Headquarters to its full potential.**

The DPGC maintains an office equipped with networked computer and a large 55" color display, a kitchenette and a large meeting room. As scheduling allows, the space can be used for fundraising, campaign rallies, promotional events, meetings, rallies, and other events. Our intention is to host more actionable events at our Democratic Headquarters to promote the positions of our members and other Garland County residents on important issues.

**3.09 Executive Committee members shall assume a title with clearly defined tasks.**

In order to clearly delineate responsibilities and roles among members of the DPGC's Executive Committee, each committee member will have a title. Tasks will be assigned, and individuals will be required to provide regular updates on their areas of responsibility at board meetings of the Executive Committee of DPGC.

**3.10 Establish an ActBlue account.**

The DPGC will maintain an account with ActBlue to process online payments. DPGC members and other interested parties will be encouraged to make automatic monthly contributions using ActBlue. A link to our ActBlue account will be promoted on the DPGC's website, Facebook page, and through other online media efforts.

**3.11 Complete three fundraising mailings.**

The DPGC has scheduled three fundraising solicitations for 2017. The mailings will be sent out in February, mid-July and November. In order to encourage contributions, each mailing will seek funds for a specific purpose (e.g. to keep the headquarters open, to support our candidate fund, etc.). Also, the mailings will contain other information about ongoing and upcoming DPGC activities. Our mailing list of potential donors contains nearly 300 names. Previous experience has shown that such efforts are very cost effective—bringing in between 4 to 10 times the amount spent on the mailing.

**3.12 Host quarterly fundraising events/dinners at the DPGC Headquarters.**

As part of its “work smarter, not harder” fundraising philosophy, the DPGC has determined that multiple smaller events are the best way to maximize income given the party’s limited pool of volunteers. Plans call for holding quarterly fundraising events/dinners at the headquarters in lieu of that month’s regular DPGC meeting. In the past, such events have proven financially successful without overtaxing the DPGC’s volunteers.

**3.13 Solicit funds at DPGC events and meetings.**

The DPGC realizes that having sufficient monies to fund operations is critical if the Party is to be engaged in the larger community and electorally successful. To this end, where appropriate, the DPGC will solicit funds from attendees at all DPGC-sponsored events.

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\_\_\_\_\_ Date

\_\_\_\_\_ DPGC Chair Hayden Shamel

\_\_\_\_\_ DPGC Secretary Elizabeth Alderman