Libertarian Party of Arkansas
Affiliate Building Handbook

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How to Use this Handbook

Use of this handbook is free. These sample policies and procedures are provided to provide guidance in developing a political affiliate. Policies and procedures are subject to change as more sophisticated organizational ideas develop. This guide has been inspired by the work of the national Libertarian Party and its state affiliate county guides as well as resourceful ideas from all activists and members of the party.

The most recent version of this handbook is available online at lpar.org.

Questions and feedback may be sent to the state executive committee At Large member at atlarge@lpar.org.

Introduction

Welcome! Whether you are new to political party structure or are a prospective chair interested in starting your own branch of the Libertarian Party, this handbook will serve as an instruction manual toward building county affiliates as designated by the bylaws of the Libertarian Party of Arkansas.

Though county affiliates are encouraged to operate freely and without hierarchical micro-management, they still must function within the bounds of LPAR bylaws and platform so that we can ensure each county represents uniform libertarian principles. County leaders should review the LPAR bylaws and platforms before beginning their affiliate.

LPAR Party Structure

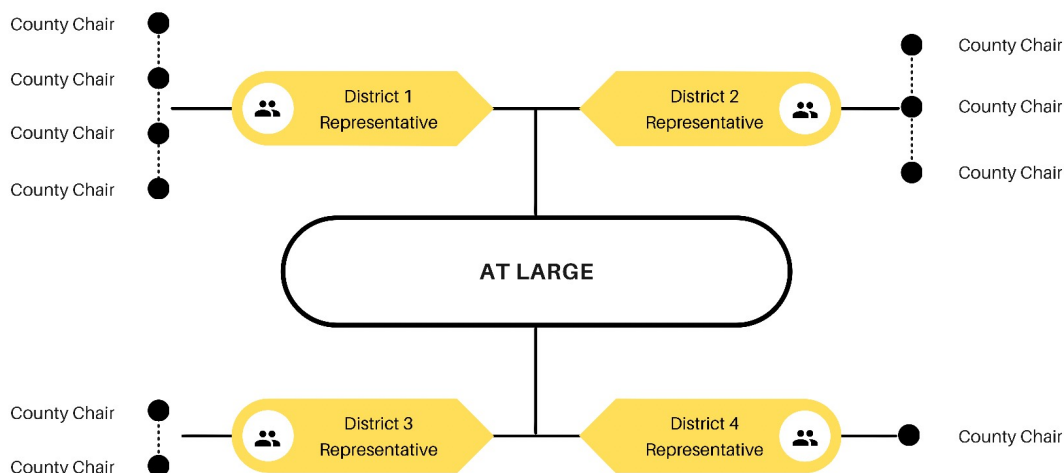To start, a brief overview of how the Libertarian Party of Arkansas is structured:

- **Members** are the foundation of the Libertarian Party. They are the

individual units behind candidacy, initiatives, and inner party work. They are also the donors of the organization. Members can support the party further by starting or participating in an affiliate.
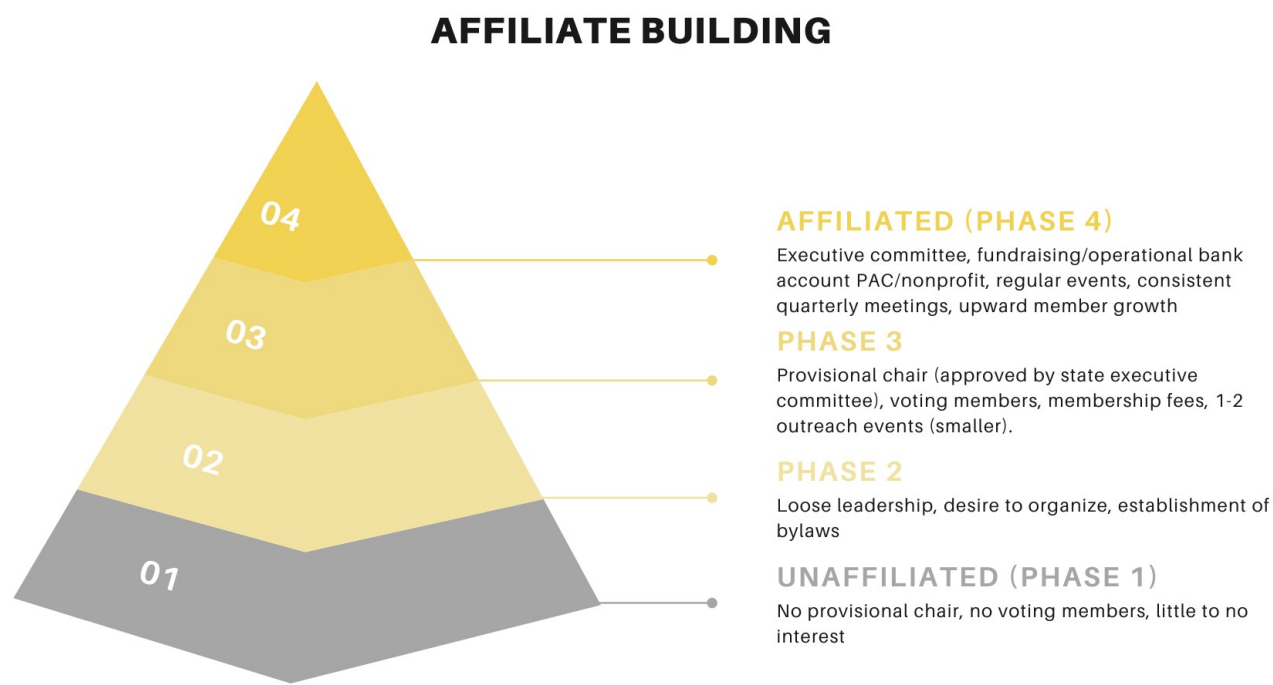
- **County Affiliates** are the groundwork of the party organization. County affiliates are comprised of members working with their community to grow membership, fundraise, recruit local candidates, and manage creative outreach. County affiliates are led by a county executive committee and occupied by a membership body. These county parties are affiliated according to the state party bylaws.

- **State Affiliate** is the affiliate at the state level that provides party resources and assistance to county affiliates when necessary as well as manages statewide party growth. Leadership at the state level includes an Executive Committee and appointed directorship positions. Each State Party is an affiliate of the National Libertarian Party. Want to learn more? Visit https://www.lp.org/ for structural resources.

Affiliate Building: What Does it Look Like?

The Libertarian Party of Arkansas affiliate building strategy is managed within a three pronged structure between (1) an executive committee At Large member, (2) four congressional district representatives, and (3) all established and prospective county chairs in order to help grow and maintain affiliates. This structure allows the state to directly serve and provide intelligence to the counties in a cohesive and timely manner, enabling county affiliates to thrive with guidance. The following diagram illustrates the management strategy:

County Party Organization

AFFILIATE BUILDING

AFFILIATED (PHASE 4)
Executive committee, fundraising/operational bank account PAC/nonprofit, regular events, consistent quarterly meetings, upward member growth

PHASE 3
Provisional chair (approved by state executive committee), voting members, membership fees, 1-2 outreach events (smaller).

PHASE 2
Loose leadership, desire to organize, establishment of bylaws

UNAFFILIATED (PHASE 1)
No provisional chair, no voting members, little to no interest

Phases of a County Affiliate

If you are interested in joining or starting your local libertarian affiliate, the first place to visit is lpar.org/about-the-lpar/county-affiliates/ to review the list of organized affiliates. If you find your county listed as organized, get in touch with the county chair and get involved!

If your county is not organized, email atlarge@lpar.org to get started. From here you will be provided with a district representative who will guide you into chairship, or at least temporary chairship of your new affiliate until you establish your county's executive committee board. Once you have committed to the organization of your new libertarian county, your mission to turn your community gold will be completely in your hands!

Phase 1: Unaffiliated

The beginning of a county party is usually an effort by a single or a small group of interested activists wanting to organize their efforts. These activists are **unaffiliated**, meaning that even if they are libertarians they are not quite an official local organization yet. These interested parties should begin by planning to hold a meeting to gain interest. They should also begin operating a social media account (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.) so that they may better broadcast their potential meetings and updates, as well as to establish themselves as an official presence in their community. Letting the community know what the party is about will give interested members the chance to learn more about it before attending a meeting. Contact atlarge@lpar.org to inquire about social media platforms for your county as they might have already been established by a previous temporary member.

Phase 2

If business is to be conducted at a county meeting, it must be established who is eligible to participate in the decision making process. Once bylaws are established, a county affiliate or single temporary chair can prepare to present themselves for a vote of affiliation by the state executive committee.

Phase 3

Once a county affiliate has reviewed their responsibilities through bylaws and the LPAR platform and is prepared to operate as a local organization, they may be presented by the At Large to the LPAR state executive committee for an approval vote. Once a county is official, it can start looking into setting up a bank account for fundraising, establishing a full executive committee board (Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, At Large) of its own to conduct matters of outreach and business, and begin conducting one or two outreach events a year at minimum to establish a county presence.

Phase 4: Affiliated

A fully functioning affiliate is one that has consistent membership growth, regular quarterly meetings, multiple outreach events per year, a bank account that is either a nonprofit, PAC, or both, and a fully operational executive committee board. This is the ultimate model of growth for all counties.

Outreach and Recruitment

As mentioned before, social media will be the first and best outreach tool to employ on a regular basis. Platforms such as Facebook provide immediate interaction with community groups all over your county. Establish a presence and make it consistent. You want people to be able to understand your political messaging but also be able to rely on its ability to provide commentary on a regular basis.

Social media is also a great recruitment tool. Find local groups in your area whose interests are similar to yours. If you have a local constitutional group, a lone voice that opposes government mandates, or an event page for tax cuts, follow them and get to know them. Build relationships with those we have things in common with.

Being offline also has plenty of opportunities for reaching people with the message of liberty. Make flyers with removable contact tags and leave them at your local university, park, or chamber of commerce. Attend events that are relevant to causes you support. Drop libertarian philosophy books off at Little Libraries. Adopt a road or highway. Do anything to get your organization on the front page of the community.

Outreach also includes maintaining the party's internal communications. It will be important to establish how you will communicate with your affiliate for newsletters or updates, whether that be an email service or a website. You will also benefit from access to a CRM, or customer relation management system, that will manage all of your county's vital data concerning contact information, related accounts, leads, and interactions that will benefit your recruitment.

Assembling a Voting Body

It is necessary to establish a voting body so that you may properly conduct business that affects the entire affiliate. According to the Libertarian Party of Arkansas' bylaws section II.3, each member shall "have one vote on any business presented to the membership at the State Committee meeting or County Committee meeting where he or she resides, any sub-committee that he or she has been appointed or elected to, or any other official business may be conducted." This is a great way to formally induct a member into the affiliate and allow them to participate and to impress upon members a level of commitment to the organization. Voting bodies may be responsible for how an

affiliate uses its funds, if it will require membership dues, how it amends its bylaws, how its executive committee members are elected, and much more.

Creating Bylaws

Adoption of bylaws will grant a county affiliate operating rules to continually conduct business by. **Bylaws** are rules established by an organization to regulate itself. They help the county understand the basics of how to operate as a political organization. The basis of county bylaws should be written in concordance with the LPAR state bylaws. You may receive a bylaws template from your district representative.

Establishing an Executive Committee

An executive committee is a group of directors elected to represent and conduct business on behalf of the county affiliate. Led by a Chair, the executive committees usually also contain about five members total: a Vice Chair (who is designated as immediately subordinate to a chairman and serving as such in the latter's absence), Secretary (conducts daily business operations, takes meeting minutes, keeps records, etc.), Treasurer (administers or manages the financial assets and liabilities, conducts fundraising), and At Large (reviews status or progress, conducts outreach, manages membership).

Finance

In order to establish a financial structure for your county party you will want to find a bank that your affiliate board trusts to begin an account. This should primarily be the job of the Treasurer. Make sure you weigh the benefits of the bank you choose to use and record whether it requires fees, how many branches of that bank exist, and other relevant information for the ease of your financial uses.

Once you have an account, apply for an Employer Identification Number, or EIN, as a Section 527(f) Political Organization. This is very important when your party raises funds, as political parties are subject to filing requirements.

Filing as a Political Party: This option will connect all funds to your county party as an organization but has limitations to how the funds can be used.

Filing as a Political Action Committee (PAC): This option will allow you to spend money raised on campaigns and candidates.

To apply for an EIN, visit EIN Start Up

To start a PAC, visit: GPAC Start Up.

Events

Schedule and advertise **regular events**! There is no requirement on when or what kind of meetings you should hold, so find out what works to build a vibrant party in your county. An example framework could look like this:

- Hold a county meeting each quarter.
- Alternate between a fun "social" and "outreach" event each month.
- Host a meet & greet with the candidates on your ballot.
- Throw a couple big events each year, supporting an activist group or a relevant issue, possibly partnering with LPAR and other county affiliates.

Every meeting serves as a good opportunity to keep members informed, solicit donations, and raise community awareness by bringing branded signs and apparel to your event venue.

Parliamentary Procedure: Robert's Rules

Parliamentary procedure is the organized process for proposing, amending, approving, and defeating all legislative motions. County affiliates are not required to follow parliamentary procedure in order to conduct meetings, but it can make business more efficient and can provide a better way to prevent actions of the affiliate from being declared illegal according to their own bylaws/state bylaws if they violate procedure.

The Libertarian Party adheres to one of the foremost guides to parliamentary procedure, *Robert's Rules of Order*. Full terms and rules can be found here: robertsrules.org

Affiliate Questionnaire

Use this questionnaire to build your foundation for your new county affiliate

<u>*Why should I start an Affiliate?*</u>

What motivated you to take action with the Libertarian Party?

What is your vision for a freer county and how does building a county affiliate fulfill that vision? How will you communicate this vision to potential members who may not be familiar with the Libertarian Party?

<u>*Running an Effective Affiliate*</u>

Why should there be a Libertarian affiliate in your county?

*What is/will be your affiliate's **mission statement**?*

What is your short term vision/goals for the affiliate (1-2 years)?

What is your long term vision/goals for the affiliate? (5-10 years)?

How do people join your affiliate (membership fees, county card etc.)? How does this structure benefit new members and retain them?

What are your financial goals for the year/cycle?

<u>*Political Landscape and Candidate Support as an Affiliate*</u>

What is the demographic makeup of your county? (Who are you trying to reach/get to vote for your candidates?)

What are the political trends in your county? How will your affiliate take advantage of projected changes and trends?

Who are your competitors (Green Party, GOP, Democrats) and how will your affiliate compete with them?

Workshop

Identify three issues your county prioritizes/takes issue with and provide a libertarian solution to each one.