



THE IOWA CAUCUSES

FIRST IN THE NATION



Iowa Democratic Party 2016 Precinct Caucus Guide

The following is a step-by-step guide for caucus night. An additional guide will be printed for caucus chairs, which will provide a further in-depth discussion of all procedures and reporting of caucus activities. If you have questions concerning the procedures contained in this caucus guide, please contact the Iowa Democratic Party at 515-244-7292.

Paid for by the Iowa Democratic Party www.iowademocrats.org and not authorized by any federal candidate or candidate's committee.

Produced in-house

Monday, February 1, 2016 – 7:00PM

Doors open 6:30PM

Who Can Participate in the Caucuses?

In order to participate in the Iowa Democratic Party's First-in-the-Nation Caucuses, you must meet the following qualifications:

- Be a resident of Iowa and of the precinct in which you wish to participate
- Be a U.S. citizen and otherwise eligible voter (18 years old by November 8, 2016)
- Register as a Democrat* (you can register at the caucus)
- Be in the registration line or signed in by 7:00pm

Those who do not meet the above qualifications are allowed to remain at the caucus as an observer.

**Iowans who will be 18 years old by Election Day, November 8, 2016, can participate in the caucuses; however, one cannot register to vote in Iowa until he/she is at least 17 ½ years old. Because the caucuses are held February 1, 2016, it is possible an eligible 2016 voter won't be able to register as a Democrat by February 1, in which case the eligible voter must declare himself/herself a Democrat by signing a form with the Iowa Democratic Party.*

Observers at the Caucus

Iowa's First-In-The-Nation Caucuses bring with them a tremendous responsibility to provide information and access to the entire world. The precinct caucuses are open to the public, which means many people may attend a caucus to observe the proceedings. The Iowa Democratic Party welcomes these guests. Observers may include the following:

Members of the Media

Each Democratic precinct caucus in the state should be prepared to have at least one representative from a news organization. Camera crews will visit some precinct caucuses, and a few will be carried live in their entirety by a national/international news organization. Our nation's news organizations serve as the eyes and ears for the nation and we have a responsibility to help them do their jobs while also promoting the caucuses.

Youth

Other non-media guests will visit some precinct caucuses. Young people who will not be 18 years of age by Tuesday, November 8, 2016, have been invited to attend the precinct caucus in their precinct as youth attendees and sign up as youth delegates to the County Convention.

Campaign Staff and Volunteers

In many, if not most, precincts, Presidential campaign staff and out-of-state volunteers will attend precinct caucuses to observe.

Rules for Observers

There are certain rules that must be followed by guests at the precinct caucus, and the caucus is obligated to inform them of these rules:

- Only eligible, registered caucus participants may vote on caucus matters or elections.
- Guests must remain quiet and may not become involved in caucus discussions once the caucus is called to order.
- Observers will be asked to sit or stand in a separate area to avoid confusing observers with eligible caucus participants.
- Eligible caucus participants are to be considered actively participating in the caucus from the time it is convened until it is adjourned. It is not appropriate for a reporter to interview a caucus participant while the caucus is in session.
- All facilities at the caucus have been reserved for the caucus attendees and the Democratic Party. The caucus chair, as an officer of the Democratic Party, has first right to these facilities. The phone at a caucus site must be available to the caucus chair whenever he or she requests it.
- Broadcast equipment at a caucus must be set up and used in a way that will not hinder or obstruct the participation of any caucus attendee.

In the event of persistent violations of these rules, the caucus chair may ask the disruptive person(s) to leave.

Calling the Caucus to Order

- 1) At 7:00pm, or soon thereafter as registration is complete, the temporary caucus chair will call the caucus to order.
- 2) The chair will briefly read through the caucus agenda.
- 3) The chair will explain that the primary purpose of the caucus is to:
 - Elect delegates, alternates, and convention committee members to the County Convention.
 - Discuss and adopt resolutions to be recommended to the County Platform Committee.
 - Elect new leadership for the precinct—the Precinct Committee persons who will serve as voting members on the County Central Committee.

The Iowa Democratic Party Presentation

- 4) The chair will read a welcome letter from IDP Chair, Dr. Andy McGuire, and will pass the Iowa Democratic Party contribution envelope around the room.
- 5) The chair will then read a message on early voting. Attendees will be encouraged to fill out an absentee ballot request form for the 2016 General Election.
- 6) The chair will remind caucus attendees they can help the Iowa Democratic Party by using the Iowa Income Tax Check-Off to the Iowa Democratic Party.

Elected Officials Presentation

- 7) The chair will either read, or make available, letters from Iowa's Democratic elected officials.

Election of Permanent Officers

Before any official business is conducted at the caucuses, the caucus as a whole must elect permanent officers. These officers include a permanent chair and a permanent secretary. The temporary chairs that were recruited by the County Democratic Party are encouraged to seek office as permanent chair or permanent secretary.

- 8) The chair will call for nominations for the office of permanent chair. Persons may nominate themselves. It is not necessary to second these nominations.

Written ballots may be used if several persons are nominated for the position.

Note: If ballots are used, they must be signed or numbered to ensure one vote per person.

If only one person is nominated, the caucus may elect the person by unanimous voice vote:

"All those in favor of electing _____ as permanent caucus chair, please signify by saying 'aye'."

- 9) Repeat the above steps to elect the permanent caucus secretary.

Note: The permanent officers take over the caucus proceedings. It is possible to also elect vice chairs or multiple secretaries, which can be especially helpful in larger precincts.

Nomination Papers and Candidate Letters

- 10) Candidates seeking office at the federal, state, and local level are required to obtain a certain number of signatures to have their name listed on the ballot in Iowa for upcoming elections. Many of these candidates will have their petitions, as well as a letter, at the caucuses. At this time, the chair will point to the letters and petitions, and encourage attendees to read the letters and sign the petitions. This can also be done as people are registering.

Candidate letters may be read aloud, passed around to each attendee, or posted for the attendees to read before or after the caucus.

Note: Each caucus attendee may sign nomination papers for as many offices as he or she chooses and, additionally, may sign papers for as many candidates for a single office as he or she chooses.

Election of Delegates and Alternates

Note: This process may not begin before 7:00pm and until everyone is registered.

Determining Viability

In order to be entitled to elect delegates to the County Convention, candidates must have a minimum number of eligible caucus attendees in his or her group.

Viability cannot be determined before 7:00pm. The permanent chair will count the number of eligible caucus attendees and announce the number. Viability is then determined based on the number of delegates the precinct will elect (see below).

- 11) Caucuses that elect only **one** County Convention delegate:

If there is only one County Convention delegate to elect, the delegate will be elected by the caucus as a whole by a simple majority. A simple majority is a vote of more than 50%. The caucus will not divide into preference groups. Written ballots may be used. **Note:** If ballots are used, they must be signed or numbered to ensure one vote per person.

Skip to item 27.

- 12) Caucuses that elect **two or more** County Convention delegates:

The chair will determine whether the caucus attendees wish to divide into preference groups. When more than 15% of the eligible caucus attendees wish to divide, the caucus shall divide into preference groups. If more than 85% of the eligible caucus attendees do not wish to divide, then the caucus as a whole shall elect the delegates.

If your caucus does not divide into preference groups, skip to item 27.

- 13) After the number of eligible caucus attendees has been determined, the viability threshold is calculated based on the number of delegates the caucus is to elect.

Viability

“Viability” is the minimum number of eligible attendees a preference group must contain in order to be awarded county convention delegates. Viability is based on two criteria:

1. The number of eligible caucus attendees at the precinct caucus
2. The number of County Convention delegates that precinct caucus has been allocated by the county.

Note: When calculating viability, always round UP to the next whole number.

- a. In caucuses that elect **two (2)** delegates, preference groups must contain at least **25%** of the caucus attendees in order to be viable. This can be calculated by using the following formula:

Number of Eligible Caucus Attendees x 0.25 = Viability Threshold

- b. In caucuses that elect **three (3)** delegates, the total caucus attendees shall be divided by **six (6)** to determine the viability threshold. This can be calculated by using the following formula:

Number of Eligible Caucus Attendees ÷ 6 = Viability Threshold

- c. In caucuses that elect **four (4) or more** delegates, preference groups must contain at least **15%** of the caucus attendees in order to be viable. This can be calculated by using the following formula:

Number of Eligible Caucus Attendees x 0.15 = Viability Threshold

- 14) Once the viability threshold has been determined, the chair will announce that number to the caucus.

Note: The viability threshold remains unchanged throughout the course of the caucus, even if attendees leave before delegates are awarded.

Formation of Preference Groups

- 15) Before preference groups form, the caucus chair must read the following statement to all caucus attendees:

All public meetings at all levels of the Democratic Party in Iowa shall be open to all members of the Democratic Party regardless of race, sex, age, color, creed, national origin, religion, ethnic identity, sexual orientation, gender identity, economic status, or status. In order that the Democratic Party at all levels be an open Party, which includes rather than excludes people from participation, a program of effective affirmative action has been adopted by the Iowa Democratic Party. Discrimination on the basis of 'status' in the conduct of Iowa Democratic Party affairs is prohibited. [2016 IDP DELEGATE SELECTION PLAN]

- 16) At this point, the caucus will divide into preference groups. Caucus participants have up to 30 minutes to align with a preference group. If the caucus wishes for more time, this may be extended by a majority vote of ALL caucus attendees.

When the caucus divides, the caucus chair will direct the various preference groups to different areas of the room or different rooms, as the case may be.

Note: There may be an uncommitted preference group.

- 17) Each preference group will select a preference group chair by majority vote of the members of that group. The preference group chair will be responsible for collecting and reporting information from the preference group to the caucus chair and secretary. Contact information for the preference group chair must be provided to the caucus secretary.
- 18) The first formal action of the preference group chair shall be to count their group's members and report the size of their preference group to the caucus chair.
- 19) At this time, the caucus chair will determine which, if any, preference groups are not viable (has fewer members than the viability threshold). If there are any preference groups that are not viable, their members must be given an opportunity to realign.

Realignment

- 20) First realignment: During the first realignment period, any member of any preference group may realign with or into any other preference group, including uncommitted. At the end of the first realignment period, which may be extended by a majority vote of ALL caucus attendees, the preference group chairs shall count their members and report the size of their preference group to the caucus chair.
- 21) At this time, the caucus chair will determine which, if any, preference groups are not viable (has fewer members than the viability threshold). If there are any preference groups that are not viable, their members must be given an opportunity to realign. During this realignment, only members of non-viable groups may realign.
 - Members of non-viable groups can join any viable preference group, or combine non-viable preference groups in order to create a new preference group with enough members to be viable.
 - Members of non-viable groups can choose not to realign; however, they will not be awarded any delegates if they remain non-viable. Members will be able to participate in the other business of the caucus.

Note: It is not allowable to have more preference groups than there are delegates to elect. If this happens:

- The smallest preference groups must be given an opportunity to realign.
- If two preference groups are tied as the smallest preference groups, then it is necessary to flip a coin to determine which preference group must realign.

Awarding Delegates

- 22) After all the preference group sizes are reported to the caucus chair, the caucus chair will determine the number of delegates each preference group is entitled to elect using the formula described here:
 1. Multiplying the number in each preference group by the total number of delegates to be elected.
 2. Then dividing the result by the number of total eligible caucus attendees (**Note:** this is the SAME number used in step 13 to calculate viability).

Delegate Allocation Formula:

$$\frac{\text{\# of members in a preference group} \times \text{Total \# of delegates elected at the caucus}}{\text{Total \# of eligible caucus attendees}} = \text{\# of delegates to be elected}$$

Note: The result is rounded up at 0.5 and above and rounded down at less than 0.5.

- 23) The caucus chair will total up the delegates thus allocated and compare it to the number of delegates assigned to be elected at the precinct.

If the two sets of numbers match, skip to item 26; if the number is **LESS**, skip to item 24. If the number is **MORE** skip to item 25.

- 24) If the total number of delegates is **LESS** than the number to be elected, additional delegates must be awarded to one or more preference groups according to the following rule:
- An additional delegate will be awarded to the group with the highest decimal below 0.5 (the group with the decimal below 0.5, but closest to it).

Observe the following example:

Scenario – There are 100 eligible attendees in Milton Precinct. Milton Precinct will be electing 7 delegates to the County Convention. Viability threshold is 15 (100 x 0.15).

Group	# of Members in Group	Math	# of Delegates group will elect	After Rounding	Final
Roses	20	(20 x 7)/100 =	1.40	1	2
Daisies	18	(18 x 7)/100 =	1.26	1	1
Lilacs	27	(27 x 7)/100 =	1.89	2	2
Tulips	19	(19 x 7)/100 =	1.33	1	1
Daffodils	16	(16 x 7)/100 =	1.12	1	1
	100			6	7

Roses gains the delegate because it has the largest decimal that did not round up.

Note: In a case where two or more preference groups are tied for the same additional delegate, a coin shall be tossed to award the delegate to one of the preference groups.

- 25) If the total number of delegates is **MORE** than the number to be elected, delegates will be subtracted from a preference group(s) according to the following rule:
- A delegate will be subtracted from the preference group with the lowest decimal above 0.5 (the group with the decimal above 0.5, but closest to it).

Note: Once a preference group has been awarded a delegate, it cannot lose its only delegate.

Observe the following example:

Scenario – There are 100 eligible attendees in Jackson Precinct. Jackson Precinct will be electing 8 delegates to the County Convention. Viability threshold is 15 (100 x 0.15).

Group	# of Members in Group	Math	# of Delegates group will elect	After Rounding	Final
Roses	18	$(18 \times 8)/100 =$	1.44	1	1
Daisies	20	$(20 \times 8)/100 =$	1.60	2	2
Lilacs	22	$(22 \times 8)/100 =$	1.76	2	2
Tulips	19	$(19 \times 8)/100 =$	1.52	2	1
Daffodils	21	$(21 \times 8)/100 =$	1.68	2	2
				9	8

Tulips loses one of its delegates because its decimal is above 0.5, but closest to it.

During this process, keep in mind a preference group cannot lose its only delegate. If a preference group with one delegate has a decimal above 0.5, but is closest to 0.5, the preference group with the next closest decimal point will lose the delegate.

Note: In a case where two or more preference groups are tied for the loss of a delegate, a coin shall be tossed to determine who loses the delegate.

- 26) The caucus chair will inform each preference group of the number of County Convention delegates they are to elect.

Reporting the Results

- 27) **At this point, the caucus chair is required to immediately report the delegate results to the Iowa Democratic Party.**
- A representative from each preference group may be present when the results are reported.

Electing Delegates

- 28) The caucus chair must now read to each preference group the following statement from Article VIII, Section I of the Iowa Democratic Party Constitution:

"All caucuses, conventions, committees and Democratic Party officials shall take such practical steps as may be within their legitimate power to assure that all caucuses, conventions and committees shall include: men, women, various age

groups, racial minority groups, economic groups and representatives of identifiable geographically defined populations - all in reasonable relationship to the proportions in which these groups are found in the populations of the respective constituencies." [Article VIII, Section I, Iowa Democratic Party Constitution]

29) Each preference group shall elect the number of County Convention delegates to which they are entitled and as many alternates it chooses to elect. **The caucus chair must collect all contact information, including name, address, phone number, and email address for delegates and alternates.** It is the responsibility of the preference group chair to make sure their delegates and alternates provide the information to the caucus chair or secretary.

- Delegate candidates should be given a brief period of time (usually one or two minutes) to speak to their preference group prior to the voting.
- The number of alternate delegates that may be elected is not limited. It is a good rule of thumb to elect at least as many alternate delegates as there are delegates elected, but not more than two per delegate. Anyone who is elected as an alternate delegate should be ready and willing to step in for a delegate if called upon.

Note: It is possible to nominate and elect someone who is not present at the caucus; however, only those members of a preference group duly registered may vote.

- It is not a good idea to elect an individual not in attendance unless that person has requested they be nominated.
- If a caucus elects an individual not in attendance, the caucus chair must take responsibility for notifying that individual of their election.

Note: While it is not mandatory, caucuses that elect more than one delegate should try to elect an equal number of men and women (care should be taken to encourage diversity among the candidates for delegate).

30) The following steps shall be taken to elect delegates to the County Convention. The caucus chair should refer to the number of delegates to be elected on the outside of the caucus packet. The caucus chair must collect all contact information for delegates and alternates.

a. Caucuses that elect **one (1)** delegate:

- The delegate will be elected by the caucus as a whole by a simple majority (a vote of more than 50%). Written ballots may be used.

Note: If ballots are used, they must be signed or numbered to ensure one vote per person.

- Once the delegate is elected, the presidential preference of the delegate **MUST** be reported to the Iowa Democratic Party.

b. Caucuses that elect **two (2)** delegates:

- Delegates shall be elected by a simple majority vote. Written ballots may be used.

Note: If ballots are used, they must be signed or numbered to ensure one vote per person.

- c. Caucuses that elect **three or more** delegates:
- Preference groups may not elect more than a simple majority on the first round of voting. For example: If your caucus is electing six delegates, the group shall have two elections for delegates. In the first round, no more than four delegates shall be elected. Those delegates that did not win in the first round are allowed to run again in the second round.
 - Delegates shall be elected by a simple majority vote. Written ballots may be used. **Note:** If ballots are used, they must be signed or numbered to ensure one vote per person.

Ratification of the Slate

- 31) At this time, if the caucus has broken into preference groups, the caucus attendees come back together as one caucus.
- 32) The caucus chair shall now call for the ratification of the slate of delegates and alternate delegates by saying:

"All those in favor of ratifying this slate of delegates and alternate delegates shall signify by saying 'aye' . . . all those opposed, say 'no'."

Ratification shall mean that it is the sense of the caucus that the procedures used by the various preference groups were in conformity with the required procedures under the Constitution of the Iowa Democratic Party, and applicable caucus procedures and rules.

A majority vote is required. A hand or ballot count may be taken if necessary. Failure to ratify the slate may subject the delegates to challenge at the County Convention.

Election of Platform Committee & Committee on Committees Members

- 33) The entire caucus shall nominate persons to serve on the Platform Committee and the Committee on Committees for the County Convention from the delegates and alternate delegates just elected. Usually two delegates and/or alternates are elected to each committee.
- What is the Platform Committee?
Representatives on the Platform Committee will help determine which platform resolutions are submitted to the County Convention for ratification in the County Democratic Party Platform.
 - What is the Committee on Committees?
Representatives who serve on the Committee on Committees will be divided up among the following committees for the County Convention: Rules, Credentials and Arrangements. These committees assist with logistics for the County Convention.

Election of Precinct Committee Persons

The importance of electing dedicated members to serve on the County Central Committee cannot be stressed enough. These Precinct Committee members will be the first level of organization within the Iowa Democratic Party. They will be looked to as the first points of contact within their precinct.

- 34) The entire caucus will elect Precinct Committee persons (two, unless otherwise noted).
Note: A voice vote or written ballots may be used in these elections.

The Precinct Committee person is elected by the Democrats of this precinct to represent them on the County Democratic Central Committee. Responsibilities may include:

- Representing the Democrats of this precinct on the County Central Committee,
- Attending all meetings of the County Central Committee,
- Never supporting a candidate who is running against a Democratic nominee while holding this office,
- Attending other functions, events, and meetings of the Democratic County Party,
- Maintaining regular contact with Democrats in this precinct,
- Helping the county party conduct precinct caucuses and county conventions,
- Assisting the county party with fundraising efforts,
- Registering new Democratic voters,
- Assisting the county party in recruiting volunteers and new county party activists,
- Participating in the Iowa Democratic Party's Voter Identification Program,
- Participating in the Iowa Democratic Party's Get-Out-The-Vote Program and other election year activities,
- Assisting local candidates,
- Maintaining the list of registered voters through the IDP VAN, including updating contact information such as phone numbers, email addresses, and mailing addresses,
- Knowing the geography and demographics of this precinct,
- Sharing information in your possession because you are a Precinct Committee person and/or a member of the County Central Committee with all Democratic primary candidates equally (please note: this does not mean that you as a Precinct Committee person/County Central Committee member cannot support and work for your favorite Democratic primary candidate),
- Representing this precinct at special nominating conventions for ballot vacancies or special election ballots,
- Electing County Central Committee officers and filling County Central Committee vacancies,
- Performing other tasks that will assist in the election of all Democratic candidates.

Note: It is possible to nominate and elect someone who is not present at the caucus; however, only eligible caucus attendees duly registered may vote.

- It is not a good idea to elect an individual not in attendance unless that person has requested they be nominated.
- If a caucus elects an individual not in attendance, the caucus chair must take responsibility for notifying that individual of their election.

Resolutions Discussion and Adoption

- 35) At this point, the caucus will discuss and adopt resolutions to be submitted to the County Platform Committee.

The caucus participants should propose resolutions and time should be allowed for discussion before calling the resolution to a vote. The caucus chair may wish to limit discussion on resolutions by setting reasonable time limits.

An official Resolution Submission Form should be used for each resolution passed by the caucus. Please fully complete each of the forms according to the instructions on the form. Legibility of the submission is more important than any given format.

At a minimum, each resolution submitted must contain the name and some contact information of the person submitting the resolution.

The Caucus is Adjourned

- 36) At this point, the caucus chair will ask the caucus attendees if there is any other business they wish to come before the caucus. Examples may include announcements of upcoming party and candidate events.
- 37) Assuming there is no further business for the caucus, the caucus chair shall adjourn the caucus by saying,

"Hearing no further business, this caucus is now adjourned. Thank you all for coming."

Complete Paperwork

- 38) The caucus chair and secretary will need to review all the paperwork and make sure a clear summary of the events has been recorded. The names and contact information for all individuals elected to the various roles must be legibly written in the appropriate spaces on the forms provided. The correct materials must be placed into the appropriate envelopes and all turned in as noted on the envelopes.

**Sample agenda on following page*

Sample Caucus Night Agenda

1. Registration
 - Doors open at 6:30pm
 - Must be signed in or in line by 7:00pm
2. Caucus is called to order by temporary chair
 - 7:00pm or soon thereafter as registration is complete
3. Iowa Democratic Party presentation
4. Elected officials presentation
5. Election of permanent chair and permanent secretary
6. Viability threshold determined and preference groups form
 - This cannot happen before 7:00pm
7. Realignment
8. Delegates awarded to viable preference groups
9. Caucus results reported to IDP
10. Election of delegates and alternates
11. Ratification of slate of delegates and alternates
12. Election of County Convention Committee representatives
13. Election of Precinct Committee persons
14. Resolution discussion and adoption
15. New business
16. Caucus adjourned