

By-Laws of the Green Party of Allegheny County, PA

(Unofficial Typesetting by Keith Maki)

Adopted: December 4, 2003; amended May 7, 2015

Mission Statement

The principles of the Green Party of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania are articulated in the ten key values of the Green movement in the United States of America: grassroots democracy, social justice and equal opportunity, ecological wisdom, non-violence, decentralization, community-based economics and economic justice, feminism and gender equity, respect for diversity, personal and global responsibility, and future focus and sustainability. The Green Party of Allegheny County, PA shall govern itself in a manner consistent with and in actualization of these values.

Preamble

Embracing our responsibility to our community and our world, and in the hope of creating an organization that will participate in making Allegheny County, Pennsylvania a model of a just and sustainable society, we, the members of the Green Party of Allegheny County, establish these Bylaws to govern the operations and functions of this Party.

I. Declarations

The name of this organization shall be the Green Party of Allegheny County (GPOAC). The Green Party of Allegheny County is both an electoral political party and a grassroots political activist organization.

II. Membership

- A. All residents of Allegheny County, PA who are registered as Green Party electors (voters) are members of the GPOAC regardless of age, race, sex, sexual orientation, gender, religion, disability or any other basis of unjust discrimination. Membership in the GPOAC is satisfied when at least one (1) of the following items have been verified:
 1. Being listed in the most current and available Allegheny County Voter Registration Database as a registered Green voter.
 2. Possession of a Voter Registration Identification Card indicating a Green registration in an Allegheny County municipality.
 3. Possession of a completed copy of a Pennsylvania Voter Registration Application indicating Green registration, that is stamped Received by the Allegheny County Voter Registration Office, and has been dated at least twenty (20) days prior to a GPOAC meeting or event in which the registered Green desires recognition as a voting participant.

Comments welcome at: info@gpoac.org
This document is available at <http://www.gpoac.org>

- B. Registered Green Party voters are encouraged to participate in Green Party of Allegheny County General Assembly meetings as voting participants. In addition to registered Greens, individuals who are not registered Green may participate in Assembly meetings with an advisory voice but not a vote. Voice will normally be granted immediately to any person invited to a meeting by a registered Green. Otherwise, voice will be tenured upon appearance at a third Assembly meeting.
- C. Only Green registered individuals may vote at Executive Committee or General Assembly meetings, or hold elected positions in the Green Party of Allegheny County.
- D. At the discretion of the members present at a meeting, nonmembers are welcome to participate in discussion.
- E. Members shall be encouraged to make financial contributions, however, recognition of membership is not conditioned on making such contributions.
- F. A complete list of the members of the GPOAC shall be kept and maintained by the Secretary.

III. General Assembly Meetings

- A. The Green Party of Allegheny County membership, meeting together at a General Assembly Meeting, shall be the highest governing body of the GPOAC.
- B. General Assembly Meetings are gatherings of the members to consult together, share knowledge and information and communicate in order to make decisions and otherwise declare, maintain and further the ideals, policies and objectives of the GPOAC.
- C. As the main deliberative body of the GPOAC, the General Assembly Meeting shall have the following functions:
 1. Define general goals, policies, and priorities of the GPOAC;
 2. Make endorsements of candidates and ballot measures;
 3. Make recommendations and proposals and provide direction to the Executive Committee;
 4. Review and approve the decisions and actions of all committees, Working Groups, and Neighborhood Groups;
 5. Establish and dissolve Working Groups and approve the establishment and dissolution of Neighborhood Groups as required;
 6. Approve issuance of public statements in the name of the GPOAC and approve or retract statements made by any other GPOAC body or by any individual claiming to be a representative of the GPOAC;
 7. Nominate, elect, and recall members of the Executive Committee;
 8. Elect delegates to the Green Party of Pennsylvania;
 9. Discuss, deliberate and make decisions on any fundamental issues of policy, strategy, or structure pertaining to the GPOAC;
 10. Delegate decisions as required to the Executive Committee, the Finance Committee, a working group, or a neighborhood group.
- D. General Assembly Meetings must be held at least once every three months, but may be held more frequently at the discretion of the Assembly members or the Executive Committee with the following exceptions:
 1. To allow for Executive Committee Elections, the first General Assembly Meeting of each calendar year shall be held before January 31. The second shall be held before February 28, but at least 4 weeks after the January meeting.

- E. The attendance of at least eight (8) GPOAC members at a General Assembly Meeting shall be considered as sufficient to satisfying a necessary quorum requirement, and the right to conduct General Assembly business.
- F. Each General Assembly Meeting shall be facilitated by a member selected by the Executive Committee from a pool of members who have indicated their willingness to discharge this task.
- G. General Assembly Meeting dates and locations shall be set by the Executive Committee or by a General Assembly Meeting.

IV. Executive Committee

- A. The General Assembly membership shall elect, from within its body, an Executive Committee to carry out the will and effectuate the decisions of the membership and be responsible for the general administration of the GPOAC. The Executive Committee corresponds to the Steering Committee in other organizations.
- B. The Executive Committee shall consist of the following six members: Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, and two (2) Members-At-Large.
- C. Elections to select the members of the Executive Committee shall be held every year. The term of the Executive Committee members shall commence upon election. Each term will last one year.
- D. Only members of the GPOAC who are registered to vote with the Green Party may be elected to the Executive Committee.
- E. In the event of a vacancy on the Executive Committee, nominations and a special election will be held at the next General Assembly Meeting.
- F. If a vacancy occurs in the office of the Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, or Member-At-Large, the Executive Committee shall insure that the duties of the vacant office shall be carried out until the special election can be held.
- G. The quorum necessary to conduct Executive Committee business shall be four of the six members. If, due to resignation or removal from office, the Executive Committee temporarily has fewer than six members, the Executive Committee quorum shall be equal to one less than the total number of remaining Executive Committee members.
- H. The duties and powers of the Executive Committee shall be as follows:
 - 1. To propose the agenda for the General Assembly Meeting.
 - 2. To monitor all financial activities of the GPOAC.
 - 3. To be ultimately responsible for seeing that all financial and legal responsibilities of the GPOAC are met.
 - 4. To notify members and interested parties, by email and other generally accepted means, on the time and place of all General Assembly Meetings and other GPOAC events.
 - 5. To select and train facilitators for General Assembly Meetings.
 - 6. To make recommendations and proposals to General Assembly Meetings (this power is not exclusive to the Executive Committee).
 - 7. To ask for and receive reports and recommendations from Working and Neighborhood Groups and standing committees.
 - 8. To coordinate the efforts of the various Working and Neighborhood Groups.
 - 9. To act as a conduit for information between Neighborhood and Working Groups, and to make recommendations to these Groups as indicated.

10. To propose to the General Assembly Meeting the creation of new Working Groups or the dissolution of Working and Neighborhood Groups.
 11. To make such decisions as are normally reserved to a General Assembly Meeting but which, owing to the need for a timely decision, cannot be delayed until the next scheduled General Assembly Meeting. Such decisions shall be subject to revision, rejection, or retraction by a vote or by consensus of the next General Assembly Meeting.
 12. To issue statements for or to authorize individuals, other than the Executive Committee Chair, to speak for the GPOAC, within the general parameters of established GPOAC policy and platform, the state and national Green Party policies and platforms, and recognized Green values.
 13. To make any other decisions which, within reason and without abusing either the spirit or letter of these bylaws, can help to carry out the will of the General Assembly Meeting or the powers of the Working and Neighborhood groups, subject to the approval of the GPOAC membership.
 14. To enter into contracts on behalf of the GPOAC. The Chair and the Secretary have signatory power, but they may not sign any document on behalf of the GPOAC without the approval of the Executive Committee.
 15. The Executive Committee is allowed to authorize expenditures of the GPOAC up to one-fourth (1/4) the value of the treasury. Expenditures greater than 1/4th of the treasury, require prior approval of GPOAC membership at a General Assembly Meeting.
- I. It is preferable that the Executive Committee use the consensus process for decision making. The Executive Committee may, however, establish its own rules of procedure.
 - J. All Executive Committee meetings shall be open to all members of the GPOAC. These members may participate in the discussion and the consensus process. However, only members of the Executive Committee may vote, unless the Executive Committee chooses otherwise.
 - K. The Executive Committee shall meet on a regular basis and shall make a reasonable effort to schedule meetings at the same time and location, and on the same day of the week. This location and time shall be announced at General Assembly Meetings.
 - L. The Executive Committee shall make a good faith effort to publicize to the General Assembly membership the time and location of any irregularly scheduled meetings.
 - M. Minutes of Executive Committee meetings shall be made available to all members of the GPOAC in a timely fashion.
 - N. The Executive Committee may delegate any of its duties and functions to Internal Committees when needed. These Internal Committees may contain non-Executive Committee members and may act in all other respects as if they were a Working Group of the GPOAC, but they shall be directly responsible to the Executive Committee.
 - O. Roles and Responsibilities of Officers:
 1. The Chair of the Executive Committee shall be responsible for the management of the Executive Committee. The duties and powers of the Chair shall be as follows:
 - a. To schedule Executive Committee meetings;
 - b. To develop an agenda for Executive Committee meetings;
 - c. To facilitate Executive Committee meetings;
 - d. To act as spokesperson for the GPOAC;
 - e. To sign contracts on behalf of the GPOAC.
 2. If the Chair is unavailable for a short period of time, the Vice-Chair shall perform these functions. If both are unavailable, the remaining members shall designate one of their number to perform these functions in the interim.

3. The Treasurer of the Executive Committee shall be responsible for the management of the finances of the GPOAC and shall be the Chair of the Finance Committee.
4. The duties and powers of the Secretary of the Executive Committee shall be as follows:
 - a. To record minutes at all Executive Committee meetings and to see to it that minutes are recorded at all General Assembly Meetings.
 - b. To make the minutes of these meetings available to all members of the GPOAC in a timely fashion.
 - c. To ensure that all Committees and Working and Neighborhood groups keep minutes and that these minutes are made available to all members of the GPOAC in a timely fashion.
 - d. To provide training in minutetaking to committees and groups as requested or as needed.
 - e. To maintain the records of the GPOAC in an orderly fashion.
 - f. To ensure that the membership is informed of the dates of the General Assembly Meetings and the Executive Committee meetings in a timely manner.
5. The Secretary may appoint other members of the GPOAC to assist with these tasks.
6. Additional duties and powers of the Secretary shall be as follows:
 - a. To maintain complete and accurate information regarding the names, addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses and other vital information about the membership of the GPOAC;
 - b. To collect and keep records of attendance at General Assembly Meetings;
 - c. To sign contracts on behalf of the GPOAC when the Chair is unable to do so.
7. The duties and powers of the Members-AtLarge shall be as follows:
 - a. To attend and participate fully in all Executive Committee meetings.
 - b. To become fully knowledgeable about all the Executive Committee offices in order to perform these offices if called upon.

V. Working Groups

- A. Working Groups are associations of members of the GPOAC organized to carry out work on a particular issue of interest.
- B. Non-members may also take part in Working Groups. It is up to the discretion of the Working Group whether non-members can participate in decision-making.
- C. By default, Working Groups shall make decisions by consensus, but they may establish their own rules of procedure, according to the specific needs of the Group.
- D. Working Groups shall be established or dissolved by the General Assembly Meeting.
- E. Working Groups are responsible for making an annual report to the General Assembly Meeting, as well as any other reports that are requested by either the General Assembly membership or the Executive Committee.
- F. The Executive Committee will be responsible for keeping track of which groups are active, and which are not.
- G. No Working Group may make any financial commitment or statement on behalf of the GPOAC, unless previously authorized by the General Assembly membership or Executive Committee to do so.

VI. Neighborhood Groups

- A. Neighborhood Groups are Working Groups of the GPOAC based in a particular Allegheny County municipality or city neighborhood, and focusing on issues concerning that locality.

- B. Any group of GPOAC members may start a Neighborhood Group. Once they have at least five ongoing, active members, they may submit a mission statement and a proposal of responsibilities to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will be responsible for making sure that the proposals and activities of the new group reflect Green values and are in accordance with the goals and purposes of the GPOAC. Once a group meets the above criteria, the Executive Committee shall recommend to the General Assembly Meeting that the new group be recognized.
- C. Responsibilities, financial accountability, and other aspects of the relationship of each neighborhood group with the rest of the GPOAC will be negotiated separately by each Neighborhood Group and the Executive Committee, according to the needs and abilities of a particular neighborhood.
- D. Each Neighborhood Group will have a mission statement and decision-making structure, both of which must conform to recognized Green values and the goals of the GPOAC.
- E. Neighborhood Groups must remain active to retain their status.
- F. In all matters pertaining to a Neighborhood Group not governed under this article, or under the terms by which the Neighborhood Group was recognized by the GPOAC, the rules set down for Working Groups under Article V shall apply.

VII. Consensus

- A. By default, all bodies of the GPOAC shall seek consensus in all decision-making.
- B. Any item or resolution presented to a body of the GPOAC which has not chosen another process as provided for under these Bylaws must be passed through the following formal process of consensus.
- C. Within the judgment of the facilitator and the limits of the agenda, any item presented to the meeting will be given adequate time for discussion and consideration.
- D. When satisfied that the proposal is sufficiently understood by the membership, the facilitator will ask for, and recognize members to present, concerns. Each concern may be addressed by further discussion and proposals to amend the item.
- E. When, in the judgment of the facilitator, concerns have been addressed as well as possible, the facilitator shall call for consensus by asking for unresolved concerns.
- F. If there are no unresolved concerns, then the proposal has passed.
- G. If unresolved concerns remain, then the facilitator shall ask if the member presenting the concern will stand aside. If the member is willing, then the proposal has passed; and the concern will be recorded verbatim in the journal of the Meeting.
- H. If, however, the member is unwilling to stand aside, then the Meeting shall proceed to vote on the proposal. The total number of votes for and against the proposal, and the number of abstentions, shall be recorded in the journal of the Meeting.
- I. A 2/3 (two-thirds) majority is required for the proposal to pass.
- J. At the request of any two members, the vote shall be taken by secret ballot.

VIII. Election of Officers and Delegates

- A. This article describes the nomination and election procedures for Executive Committee members and state delegates. For other nominations and elections within any body of the GPOAC, the body is free to choose the election procedure.
- B. Executive Committee Elections

1. Nominations for all members of the Executive Committee shall take place at the first General Assembly Meeting in January every other year on the odd years.
2. Any member may place names in nomination for any of the Executive Committee seats.
3. Nominations shall be confirmed by the Secretary and placed on the ballot.
4. Candidates may make brief speeches to the General Assembly membership at the time of nomination.
5. All known registered Greens not present at this General Assembly Meeting will be notified of the nominations by the Secretary via e-mail and/or telephone tree within 1 week.
6. If, for good and sufficient reasons, it is impossible to nominate a candidate, or for a candidate to accept or decline nomination during this meeting, nominations shall be accepted and confirmed by the Secretary at any time up to and including the meeting at which the balloting occurs. These late nominees may make brief speeches to the membership.
7. If a valid nomination occurs between the meetings, the Secretary shall notify the membership of the name of the new candidate as quickly as possible, using e-mail or telephone tree.
8. Balloting shall take place during the second General Assembly Meeting, to be held in February of the same year, no less than 4 weeks and no more than 6 weeks after the January nominating meeting. If a quorum is not reached at the second General Assembly Meeting, balloting shall occur at the first General Assembly Meeting where a quorum is reached.
9. Voting for all Executive Committee positions shall be by Secret Ballot.
10. For the Executive Committee positions of Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer, each voter selects one candidate for each office. Each election that has a majority winner is over and the candidate who received the majority of the votes is elected. If there is not a majority winner for an officer position, every candidate besides the top two are eliminated, and there is an immediate runoff election between the top two candidates.
11. For the Member-At-Large positions, each voter ranks their top two choices in order of preference, assigning 1 to their first choice and 2 to their second choice. The total number of first choice votes and second choice votes are tabulated for each candidate. Each candidates total votes shall be the sum of that candidates first choice votes multiplied by two, and their second choice votes multiplied by one. The two candidates receiving the most total votes shall be elected.

C. Election of State Delegates

1. Following the same election schedule of Executive Committee Officers per Section 1 and 8 of Article VIII, Paragraph B, Allegheny County delegates to the State Committee or State Convention of the Green Party of Pennsylvania shall be elected by a General Assembly Meeting of GPOAC for oneyear terms. The number of delegates shall be in accordance with the Rules of the State Committee of the Green Party of Pennsylvania. All registered Green Party members of Allegheny County are eligible to serve as delegates.
2. The General Assembly Meeting of the GPOAC has the authority to exercise a Voter Ranking method of electing delegates, similar to the method described in Section 11 of Article VIII, Paragraph B.
3. If a delegate resigns or is removed, nominations for a replacement shall be made at the next General Assembly Meeting and an election held at the General Assembly Meeting following. The Executive Committee may temporarily fill any vacancies by appointing registered Green individuals to be alternate delegates. It may also elect delegates if the General Assembly Meeting fails to elect or provide for the election of sufficient delegates.
4. If during a State Committee Meeting or State Convention, an insufficient number of delegates are present, then the delegates present may choose alternates from any members of the GPOAC who are present, or follow any specific Rules of the State body for these circumstances.

- D. Interim Elections of Executive Committee Officers and GPOAC Delegates to the PA Green Party may be invoked by a two-thirds vote of GPOAC members present at a General Assembly Meeting. Under these special circumstances, the results of the Interim Elections will be in effect for Officers and Delegates until the next January/February election cycle occurs per Article VIII, Paragraph B.

IX. Nomination of Candidates for Public Office

- A. The provisions of this article apply to any candidate seeking to run as a “Green” for public office in the County of Allegheny, Pennsylvania, or any subdivision thereof. This article shall apply so long as the Green Party remains an officially recognized “Minor Party” in Pennsylvania. Should the Green Party lose its minor party status, or acquire major party status, these bylaws shall be amended accordingly.
- B. Candidates must first obtain the endorsement of the General Assembly membership at a General Assembly Meeting. Following such endorsement, the Chair and Secretary shall deliver to the Allegheny County Board of Elections an Authorization of Candidacy listing the offices for which candidates have been nominated and the names and addresses of such candidates. The Board of Elections shall not certify the nomination of any Green Party candidate for whom such Authorization has not been received. Such Authorization may be supplemented at any time prior to the last date on which nomination papers may be filed. In the case of a substitution candidate (ref. Article IX, Paragraph E), such Authorization may be amended following the filing of nomination papers.
- C. Following endorsement, GPOAC will initiate a petition drive to place each endorsed candidates name on the ballot as a Green.
- D. Following endorsement, GPOAC members shall establish a Campaign Committee which shall be responsible for managing all campaign related activities and ensuring that all such activities are in compliance with local, state, and federal election laws.
- E. Any vacancy that occurs in a Green Party nomination for any public office in Allegheny County by reason of the death or withdrawal of a candidate, the calling of a special election, or other cause, shall be filled by the Executive Committee, which shall only nominate candidates who have been endorsed by a GPOAC General Assembly Meeting.

X. Conflict Resolution

- A. Each new Executive Committee will nominate, and with the consent of a General Assembly Meeting, appoint three Arbiters to a Council of Mediation & Arbitration. The term of office of this Council will be the same as the Executive Committee, except that current Arbiters will continue to serve until the new Executive Committee appoints Arbiter replacements. None of the Arbiters may be a member of the Executive Committee.
- B. The Council of Mediation & Arbitration will have the final say within the GPOAC about disputes arising over interpretation of these Bylaws. The Council will also mediate disputes between Groups within the GPOAC if the Executive Committee is unable to resolve them, or if the Executive Committee is a party in the dispute.

XI. Finance

- A. The Finance Committee of the GPOAC is a standing committee of the Executive Committee.
- B. The Finance Committee is responsible, under the Executive Committee, for the sound management of the finances of the GPOAC. The duties and responsibilities of the Finance Committee include financial planning, development and monitoring of the budget, financial record keeping, day-to-day fiscal management, and fundraising.

- C. The Finance Committee is empowered to make decisions only within the parameters set down in this Article; the Executive Committee reserves the right to approve all business decisions made by the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee shall report to the Executive Committee every month. The Finance Committee is empowered to propose specific rules and guidelines to implement its duties and responsibilities as set down in these bylaws, subject to the approval of the Executive Committee.
- D. Meetings of the Finance Committee shall be open to all GPOAC members.
- E. The Finance Committee will consist of the Treasurer, at least two permanent members, and any other active members of the GPOAC who wish to participate.
- F. The Executive Committee shall appoint, for one-year terms, at least two permanent members to the Finance Committee. These appointed members are responsible for attending Finance Committee meetings and insuring that the work of the Committee continues.
- G. The Treasurer shall be the Chair of the Finance Committee.
- H. The Treasurer is responsible for seeing to it that the day-to-day bills of the GPOAC and any other duly budgeted and authorized expenses of the GPOAC are paid. The Treasurer is also responsible for the timely reporting of all campaign-related financial activities to the city and state in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local regulations. The Treasurer must maintain familiarity with such guidelines and regulations and insure that the GPOAC is in compliance with campaign finance laws.
- I. The Treasurer may, with the consent of the Executive Committee, appoint one or more Assistant Treasurers to help the Treasurer carry out his or her duties.
- J. All revenue and expenses of the GPOAC are to be deposited and withdrawn from a single bank account with check writing service. The Treasurer, and at least one other member of the Finance Committee, shall be co-signers on the account.
- K. No transaction may be made with the GPOAC funds without proper documentation. All revenue, including cash donations, is to be deposited in the GPOAC bank account. No transactions may be made with un-deposited revenue; all expenses should be paid from the GPOAC bank account. However, the Finance Committee may keep a reserve of petty cash no greater than \$50. Small expenses and reimbursements may be paid out of petty cash provided that all transactions are recorded.
- L. All checks for amounts greater than 1/4th of the bank balance, requires prior approval of a General Assembly Meeting.
- M. If a cash transaction is necessary, and the expense has been budgeted, then an individual may pay the expense, to be reimbursed later.
- N. Any individual who spends personal funds on an expense which has not been budgeted or specifically approved by the Executive Committee may not be reimbursed unless the unbudgeted expense has received prior approval by the Finance Committee.
- O. All potential fundraising projects must be reviewed by the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee will evaluate all fundraising projects based on their financial feasibility, including startup costs and potential rate of return. Each fundraising project must report monthly to the Finance Committee, providing details of revenue and expense as well as rate of return.
- P. Fundraising projects that are losing money may be terminated at the discretion of the Finance Committee.

XII. Amendments

A. Amendments to these Bylaws must be in accordance with one of the following procedures:

- (a) By the approval of two consecutive General Assembly Meetings of the GPOAC.
- (b) By a special General Assembly Meeting of the GPOAC, which shall occur once every two years, in the even-numbered years, and shall be designated as a GPOAC Convention. This Convention shall specifically review and re-approve or revise these Bylaws, as directed by the delegates to this Convention.