

February 20, 2021

# LaPorte County Democratic Party Engagement Survey Report

## Introduction

*Progressive Democrats of LaPorte County distributed an online survey to as many local Democrats as we could connect to asking about their expectations of Party leaders AND what commitments they are personally prepared to make to make the LaPorte Democratic Party more effective. There were 49 responses.*

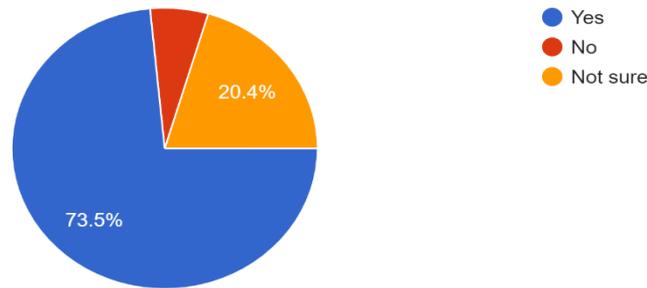
*These responses are worth a close read. Respondents took time to think about the future of the Party. We'll only be successful if we learn from what they have to say.*

*The survey shows that the LaPorte County Democratic Party has a wealth of energy and talent to draw upon as it turns the County Blue.*

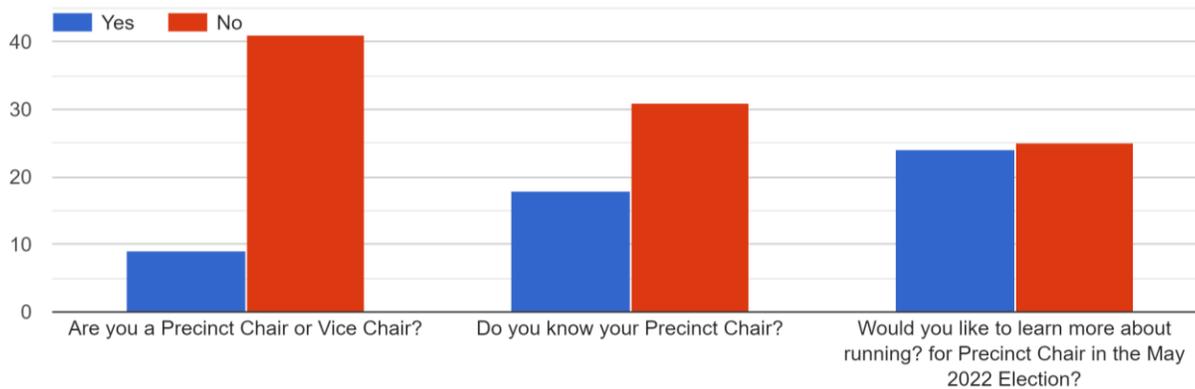
*Stephen Perkins, Chair, Progressive Democrats of LaPorte County*

## Are you interested in becoming more active in the LaPorte Democratic Party?

Would you like to become more active in the LaPorte Democratic Party?  
49 responses



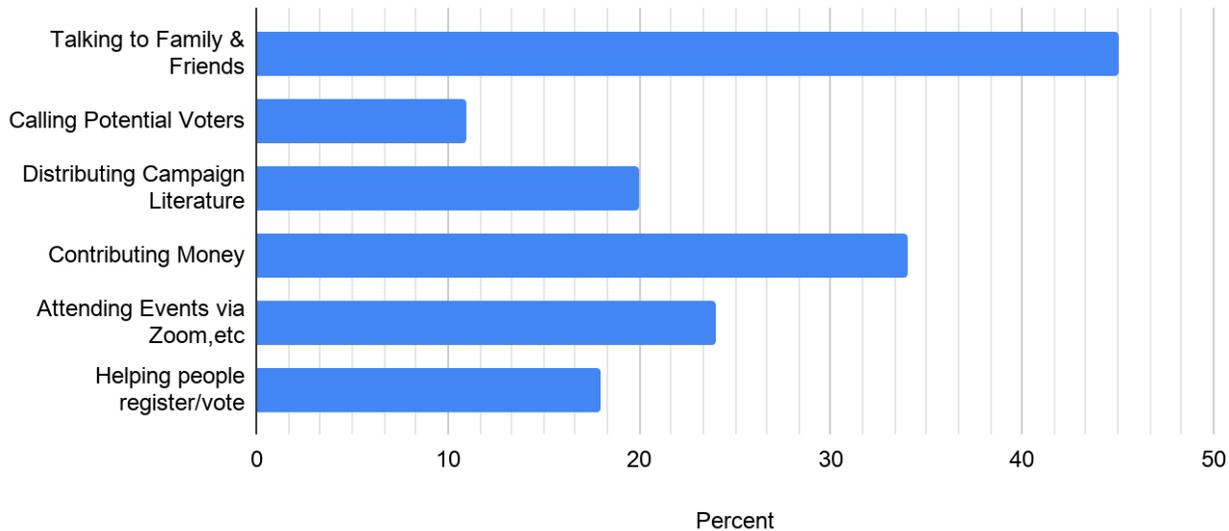
## Are you interested in becoming a Precinct Chair?



## How were you involved in the 2020 Election?

### Involvement Percentage

47 responses



### Other single responses:

- Candidate
- working the pools
- actual canvassing
- created and put out signs
- organizing forums
- yard signs
- wrote many postcards
- encouraged my students to vote, although I was unable to endorse anyone due to my position
- wrote letters to the editor
- made a movie
- called radio/tv shows
- set out candidate signage
- web/email support
- inspector at 2020 polls
- wrote 100 postcards to voters in MI and SC.

### How do you want to volunteer?

#### Complete category descriptions

**Precinct Chair & Vice Chair Network:** Connect, train and support elected precinct chairs in every precinct,

**Voter Registration:** Lead an ambitious, year-round voter registration effort with goals, event presence, and high school registration of young voters across the county,

**Get Out The Vote:** Lead planning and/or engagement to get Dems to the Polls,

**Civics Education:** Making sure that high school students, civic organizations, and others receive education about government and elections processes that inspires them to participate; arrange for elected officials to speak to high school students,

**Year-Round Dem Party Community Services:** Organize events/programs for the benefit of the community. E.g., food drives; community clean-ups; special programs such as financial literacy, employment tips, housing education...

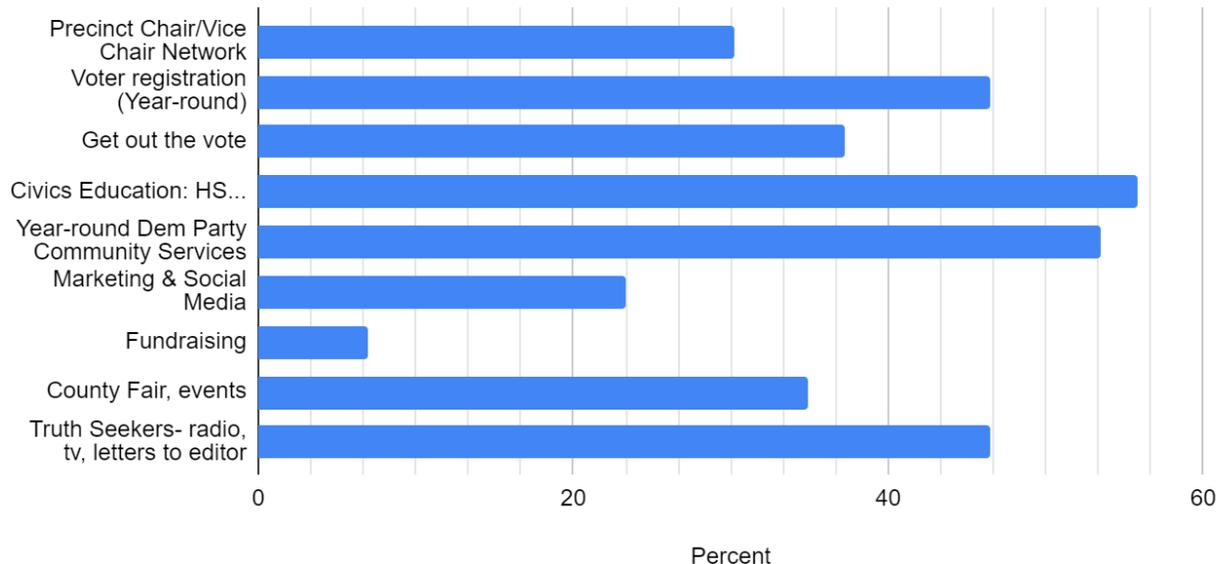
**Marketing and Social Media:** Communicating updates; engage with citizens on community news and provide current news about the Democratic Party, its positions and its candidates via social media, press releases, etc.,

**County Fair and other community events:** Organize our presence at the county fair and create a coverage plan so candidates/elected officials are greeting citizens; folks are welcomed and can also register to vote.

**Truth Seekers:** Serve as a voice for honest discourse by calling into radio shows, writing letters to the editor, commenting on social media to help advance FACTS and Democratic positions/issues.

## Volunteer for Task Force

43 responses



### Additional answers:

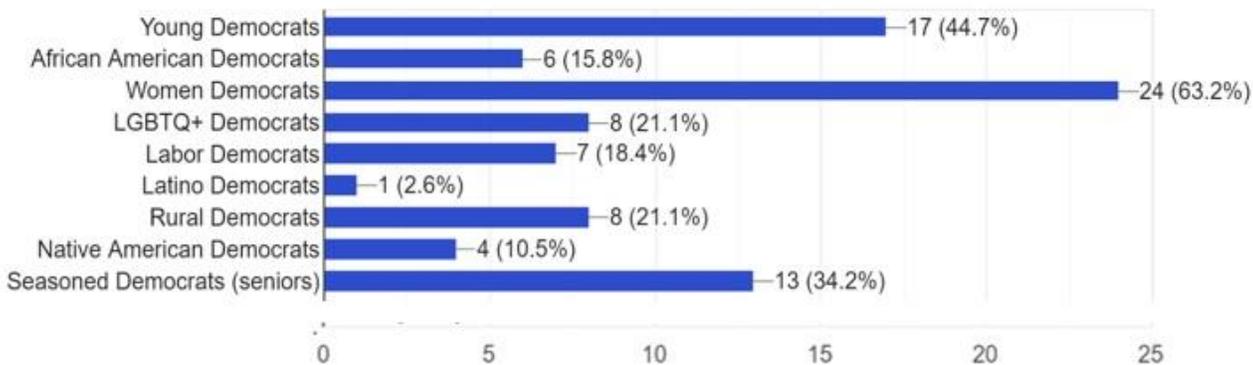
- I do many of these things through the League of Women Voters La Porte County,
- Learn more about candidates and local Democratic Party. In this past election I found it difficult to find the Democratic Party. I did eventually and I went to LaPorte and passed out literature to potential democratic voters. I would suggest we pass out literature to every home. People saw me out there in their neighborhood and wondered what I was doing. I think it would have been better to inform everyone- especially in tis past election,
- Be precinct committeeman/chairman

- I do not know how I can be of help. I do think it would help if your organization was easier to find. I also never received any info regarding our local state representative. That would have been good info. I voted for him because I voted straight democratic but I never heard anything about him.
- Watch my movie, "The Millennium Marijuana Rally and March" on YouTube

### What Democratic Constituency do you particularly care about?

If you are interested in working on a task force with any of the following groups, we can put you in touch with others who have the same interests:

38 responses



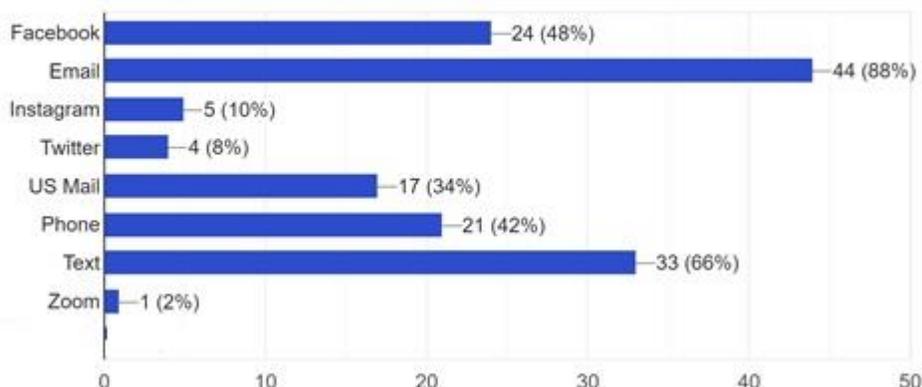
### Other single responses:

- Listening to and educating young democrats,
- Democrats who want to end pot prohibition and the drug war,
- introduce Toastmaster classes
- workshops in political engagement and civic classes for grades 5 through 12

### How Should the Party Connect with You?

How can the party best connect with you? (Check those that you use regularly)

50 responses

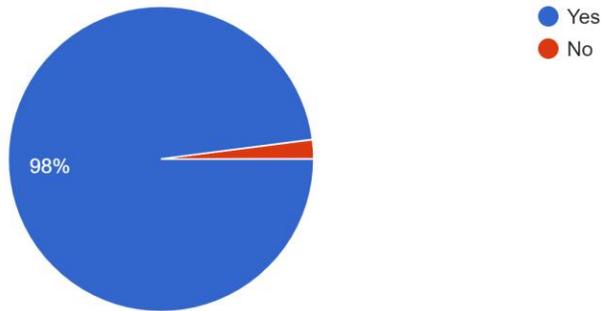


## County Democratic Party Chair Job Description

The survey included a proposed job description for the Party Chair (included as an appendix to this report) and asked whether respondents agreed with it.

Do you agree with this list of expectations?

49 responses



## What else would you like to see in the County Chair Job Description?

- Learning and focusing on key issues
- Be positive! Be hopeful! Be respectful!
- represent economic concerns of working class people; have a rural policy strategy for agriculture
- Open-minded & Accepting
- Ensure the Democratic Party empowers voters across class lines. Help register formerly incarcerated voters
- nothing
- Nothing
- Time to fulfill their responsibilities
- No
- I suggest a bulleted point including language that indicates that one must be respectful of others.
- Fully support all candidates.
- address farm policy and rural issues; working class values
- Excellent Public speaker...ability to discuss current issues.
- no
- Communication with voters that keeps up with technology and changing conditions.
- Enthusiastic American with grasp of our history and constitutional guidelines

## What changes would you like to see in the County Party under the leadership of the new Chair?

- Reach out and engage all county Democrats in some way- continuously- not just before an election.
- More activity and inclusiveness. Also allowing members of the party to attend meetings.
- Civility, empathy and knowledge.
- I have lived in LaPorte for over 7 years and have never once heard of a Dem event, or been contacted by a local member. It has been very discouraging. So... ENERGIZE and don't stay just within a small cadre of individuals!
- Organizing and engaging precinct chairs and young people
- I have heard that the voices of people of color, women, and more progressive people are not very welcome. You need these grassroots people in such a red state as this. Reach out! Do continue to have the forums on Zoom! It can never be business as usual again.
- economic bread and butter issues; that's why people turned to Trump
- More activity and inclusiveness. Also allowing members of the party to attend meetings.
- More acceptance of people that might not think \*exactly\* the same way as the leader or the core group does.
- I don't know enough to comment. However I did hear there are study groups and I am interested in learning and helping. I am also interested in what the state party is doing to prepare congressional candidates for the midterm elections. It is important to be ready!
- Reestablish trust in Democratic leadership with rural voters. Outreach programs to register formerly incarcerated individuals
- Transformation into an activities community organization
- County-level officers: Be as open and accountable as those Porter and St. Joseph Counties, and Berrien County in Michigan. Hold regular monthly meetings as they do. Put proposals up for votes.

Our most recent LPC Dem Chair seemed overworked. Another bullied volunteers with a management style I'll call "The Floggings Will Continue Until Morale Improves." He seems suitable for managing only some remote island penal colony —with no internet access, I hope. He's no leader; he wants only to be a boss.

- Let's not have hidden kingmakers and shot-callers. Those who want to call the shots with no accountability are those who want to use the rest of us, including the LPC Dem Party officers, as sock puppets. If those would-be shot-callers have better ideas, let them propose them openly, argue for them, and be accountable for the outcomes. I know I would respect the input from a few I suspect to be acting as long-time hidden shot-callers. Others might not, perhaps due to long-held grudges or even bigotry. But good guidance, considered on its merits, can win arguments, and gather proponents. And that's why Democracy works—shared decisions are better decisions.

Stop protecting incumbent Republicans with the gift of no challenger, whether the incumbent is a personal friend, a go-along-to-get-along Republican, or

otherwise. Just stop that. Never, ever, leave an elected position uncontested. Scout for candidates well before the filing deadlines. To fill an uncontested ballot slot by caucus is preferable to letting it remain uncontested.

And a pointer from a wise manager from my own work experience: when you find yourself facing a decision point with no good options, choose the least bad among them, and fairly quickly. Don't let a lack of good options stall you. That approach would help us fill ballot slots.

- More emphasis on ending cannabis prohibition!
- Finding qualified leaders to manage various Dem Party activities
- A more inclusive group that equally includes ideas from all sides.
- More interested in taking bold action to improve Democratic party standing throughout the county especially outside of Michigan City (but not taking MC for granted either!)
- Inclusion
- Engage the public more in community events
- Engage the public more in community events
- Better communication
- More direct engagement with rural voters.
- Be more visible in the county.....get more press----
- Visibility and building grassroots support
- Outreach and communication with rural voters.
- More reach out to youth and visual presence
- Dunno yet
- Inclusion of younger Dems. Deviation from the Old Boys Club. Independence from the antiquated political leadership of the last 2+ decades which pays lip service to progressive ideals but doesn't support candidates who will act accordingly.
- More inclusive.
- More engagement, a dedication to getting Democrats elected up and down the ticket
- More emphasis on ending pot prohibition and the drug war
- None
- Bringing all democrats together, including those in La Porte and Michigan City
- Unify this county group. Join forces.
- More inclusive, diverse, ethical, available, transparent, young, passionate
- Open membership and large events- not a good old boys club - welcome everyone - reach out to youth - find well qualified and eloquent candidates - help promote civility
- Nothing
- None
- Commitment to Growth by Youth Outreach