

Bylaws of the North Carolina Green Party

Revision I, ratified April 26, 2008

I. Name

The name of this organization shall be the **North Carolina Green Party**. It may also be referred to as the **NCGP**.

II. Mission, Vision, & Purpose

a. The North Carolina Green Party is a political party in support of a national and global movement of values that include Ecological Wisdom, Grassroots Democracy, Social Justice, and Nonviolence. The North Carolina Green Party is an affiliate state of the Green Party of the United States (GPUS).

b. The North Carolina Green Party will work to facilitate communication and support between local Green chapters, will work to support and grow the party at the local level, will work to gain statewide ballot access and support statewide candidates, will elect delegates to national committees of the Green Party of the United States, will support statewide grassroots efforts for peace, social justice, democracy and ecological wisdom, and will work to communicate Green ideas and values with its members and with the public.

III. Membership

a. The North Carolina Green Party is an individual membership organization, open to all North Carolina residents who subscribe to the following Ten Key Values of the Greens:

Ecological Wisdom

Grassroots Democracy

Social Justice

Nonviolence

Decentralization

Community-based Economics

Feminism

Respect for Diversity

Personal and Global Responsibility

Future Focus / Sustainability

b. Membership is open to all, regardless of gender, perceived race, ethnicity, religious views, occupation, age, sexual orientation, citizenship status, disability, or other criteria, except as specifically stated in the party's bylaws.

c. Membership in a local is automatically membership in the NCGP. Locals develop their own by-laws, which may vary in some ways from State rules, but membership rules are determined by the State Party.

d. Anyone may join the NCGP as a registered member by joining an accredited Local, or if there is no Local nearby, joining the State Party directly. Membership requires supplying and maintaining up-to-date contact information with the Party. Locals will send new member information to the State Party on an ongoing basis, and the State Party will direct new members to Locals in their area.

e. All registered members are encouraged to become active members by attending meetings, joining committees, working toward party growth, and taking on administrative duties at the local, state, and national levels.

f. Members are also encouraged to become supporting members by donating to the Party either at the Local or State level, or both. Pledges for regular monthly or yearly donations are particularly encouraged. There are no dues required of members. Donations will be solicited periodically, but are entirely voluntary and can be made at a level determined by the individual member.

g. NCGP is affiliated with the Green Party of the United States, which is an association of state Green Parties. Individual membership does not exist at the national level – membership resides with the state Parties.

h. Procedure for suspension and expulsion of a member

i. The North Carolina Green Party shall be an inclusive body, which respects its members' right to disagree with each other. It is vital that members not be suspended or expelled merely over personal conflicts or antagonisms, lifestyle choices, or legitimate differences of opinion. However, any political party must have a procedure for dealing with members who cause serious trouble or danger.

ii. North Carolina Green Party members may only be expelled at a statewide gathering/convention. However, the Coordinating Committee may suspend a member upon vote of a 2/3 majority of the Committee, if and only if the Committee is convinced that the member has engaged in activities that expose the party to duly warranted prosecution, or is working for an openly racist, fascist, or physically hostile organization, or one that persecutes persons or groups for their political beliefs or activities, or if the member poses a clear, provable and grave threat to the safety and personal security of the party or its members.

iii. Any verbal attack of a racist, homophobic, xenophobic, ageist, sexist or personally derogatory nature by one member against another, either on the various NC Green Party listserves or in the context of any NCGP meeting, will be cause for the EC to suspend the perpetrator of such attack from the moderated groups or from NCGP meetings (except for the provision in the following paragraphs, whereby a suspended member may attend any meeting at which his/her final expulsion from the NCGP would be brought to a vote) until such time as the offending member has resolved the issue either to the satisfaction of the offended member or to the satisfaction of the NCGPEC.

iv. Upon making any such decision to suspend a member, the Coordinating Committee must notify the suspended member of the action and the reason for it, by registered mail, within 10 days, and must notify the general membership by mail or e-mail within 10 days. The Committee shall either recommend expulsion of the suspended member at the next gathering, meeting, or convention with a suitable quorum, or reinstate the member by that time. A suspended member recommended for expulsion shall have full opportunity to make his/her case to the membership, and the decision shall be treated in accordance with Section II of the bylaws. A suspended member who does not show up to defend him/herself shall be deemed to be accepting the action of the party without contest.

iii. Suspended members may not vote or attend NCGP functions, except as required to defend themselves as described above, in which case the suspended member may attend and speak, and may vote only on the question of his own and others' expulsions. Suspension or expulsion shall not be deemed cause for any refund of dues or contributions. Any suspension or expulsion from the North Carolina Green Party applies only to this organization, and not to any other Green organizations in which the person may hold membership. However, the Coordinating Committee shall, to the best of its ability, inform all other Green organizations that would have reasonable need to know about the decision.

IV. Statewide Gatherings/Conventions

a. The North Carolina Green Party shall have no less than one statewide gathering/convention per year.

b. The Coordinating Committee of the North Carolina Green Party shall be the body charged with organizing the statewide gatherings /conventions.

c. All members of the North Carolina Green Party must be sent notification of the date and location of the statewide gathering no less than thirty days prior to the event.

d. While statewide gatherings are open to all Greens, only members in good standing are entitled to vote.

e. Elections for the NCGP Coordinating Committee, delegates to the GPUS National Committee, and other relevant statewide business shall take place at statewide gatherings/conventions.

V. Decision-making process/Consensus

a. The North Carolina Green Party shall attempt to reach consensus before moving to other modes of decision-making. Consensus for purposes of this organization is defined as approval by "aye" vote of not less than 80% of eligible persons, with a maximum of 20% abstentions and no "nay" votes. After a minimum of ten minutes of effort to reach consensus, and upon a motion and two seconds to the motion, the body may move to

first-level fallback decisionmaking.

b. First-level fallback

i. For decisions undisputedly involving a choice between no action and one proposed action, a 2/3 majority shall be required for action. For decisions undisputedly involving a choice between two possible actions or candidates, and where inaction is undisputedly not an option, a simple majority (>50%) vote shall determine the choice. In event of a tie vote, the presiding officer or convener shall have the power to break the tie. For decisions undisputedly involving a choice among three or more actions or candidates, the party shall use a system of instant runoff voting. Where one action or candidate is to be chosen, this shall operate as follows:

1. Voters cast a single ballot. On this ballot, the voter may specify ranked choices, up to a number as great as the number of available choices, in order of the voter's preference. The voter may not specify the same choice twice.
2. On the first round of counting, all ballots are counted by first choice only. If any action or candidate achieves a simple majority (>50%), that action or candidate is the winner.
3. If no action or candidate achieves a first-round majority, the action or candidate scoring the lowest number of votes is dropped, and all ballots having that action or candidate as first choice are scored by next choice. If any action or candidate achieves a simple majority this way, that action or candidate is the winner.
4. If no action or candidate achieves a second-round majority, the process repeats as described above, until one action or candidate achieves a majority.
5. If the process ends as a final round with only two actions or candidates remaining, and a tie vote occurs, the presiding officer or convener shall have the power to break the tie.

ii. For decisions involving selecting two or more actions or candidates from a field of three or more possibilities, the process shall operate as follows:

1. Each voter casts ballots specifying ranked choices, as described above.
2. On the first round of counting, each ballot is scored one vote per specified selection, up to the number of actions to be chosen or seats to be filled. For example, if three seats are to be filled, each voter's first three choices are counted on the first round.
3. Any action or candidate receiving >50% on the first round is a winner.
4. If additional winners are needed, the action or candidate scoring lowest is dropped for the second round, and all ballots including that choice are re-counted by moving all choices below the one eliminated up one position.
5. Additional rounds of counting are done as above, until enough actions or candidates receive >50%. It is possible that in some cases there will be an insufficient number of winners this way, with no actions or candidates remaining to be eliminated. In such cases, additional winners are determined by simple plurality as of the last round of counting.
6. In the event that any tie votes exist at this stage, the presiding officer or convener shall have the power to break these ties.

c. Second-level fallback

i. In the event that there is disagreement about whether inaction is an option, or about the

number of options considered eligible to be voted upon, any disputed options shall be approved or disapproved for admittance to the ballot by simple majority vote, one proposed option at a time.

ii. The presiding officer or convener shall have the power to break any ties.

d. Basis of percentages and majorities

The percentage and majority requirements in the fallback voting procedures above are based on number of voters actually voting, not number of eligible voters.

e. Voting shall not be compulsory

f. Quorum requirements

For decisions involving expenditure of funds above spending limits as stated in the yearly budget as approved by the general membership at the annual gathering, meeting, or convention; expulsion of members; election of officers; or revision of bylaws, any meeting or convention must have a registered attendance of at least 10% of the total paid-up statewide membership, and at least 2/3 of all registered attendees at the event must be present when the decision is made.

VI. North Carolina Green Party Coordinating Committee

a. The Coordinating Committee of the North Carolina Green Party (hereafter referred to as NCGP CC), shall be the decision-making body of the North Carolina Green Party in between statewide gatherings/conventions.

b. The voting members of the NCGP CC shall consist of five at-large elected officers: two gender-balanced co-chairs, a vice-chair, a treasurer and a secretary. Each accredited local and identity caucus of the North Carolina Green Party is entitled to up to two voting delegates on the NCGP CC.

c. The NCGP CC shall also have an assistant treasurer and assistant secretary who will take over the functions of the elected secretary and treasurer in the event that they can no longer perform those duties. These are non-voting members of the Coordinating Committee except when they are attending meetings in the place of the treasurer or secretary.

d. The NCGP CC is charged with ratifying a yearly fiscal budget before the end of the previous fiscal year. The NCGP fiscal year begins January 1st and ends December 31st.

e. The NCGP CC shall make every practical effort to communicate with and serve the will of the general membership, consistent with the Ten Key Values.

f. NCGP CC decisions can be overruled by a 2/3 vote at the following convention.

g. The NCGP CC may create ad hoc committees to address specific issues, tasks, or

concerns, as the need may arise.

h. All NCGP CC meetings convened to make decisions about any NCGP business shall be announced to and open to all members of the North Carolina Green Party, who must be allowed to observe, but not necessarily to participate in, the proceedings.

i. All decisions by the NCGP CC require a simple 2/3 majority vote of CC members in attendance, and at least three at-large voting members of the NCGP CC must be in attendance.

VII. Offices

NCGP Officers are elected by the general membership at any duly convened statewide gathering/convention. In the event that these positions are vacant between gatherings, the NCGP CC has the power to appoint interim officers to fill these positions. Interim officers must then be elected by the general membership at the following statewide gathering/convention. Ideally each of these offices should be filled by different NCGP members, however we recognize that may not always be possible. While the NCGP will strive to fill these offices with unique members, members are not prohibited from serving multiple offices simultaneously. However, the treasurer and assistant treasurer must be two distinct individuals, as must the secretary and the assistant secretary.

a. The **Co-chairs** of the North Carolina Green Party shall be gender-balanced and shall be the main interface between the North Carolina Green Party and all other persons and organizations; shall train new NCGP CC members, shall organize meetings of the NCGP CC, shall be sensitive to the needs of all NCGP members; shall work to grow and build the NCGP and ensure its long term viability; shall work on issues of statewide ballot access; shall oversee the accreditation process for Green Locals and Identity Caucuses. The co-chairs shall be voting members of the NCGP CC.

b. The **Vice-chair** shall fulfill the duties of the chairs or secretary in their absence and shall act as the political and legislative affairs coordinator for the NCGP.

c. The **Treasurer** shall maintain the financial records of the party; shall receive and disburse funds in accordance with the party's bylaws and all relevant legal requirements; shall keep lists of dues-paid members; shall keep the membership and other officers informed of the party's financial condition and affairs; and shall comply with all reporting requirements of the Federal Election Commission, the State of North Carolina, and any other government entities having jurisdiction over the NCGP; shall be a voting member of the NCGP CC.

d. The **Assistant Treasurer** shall assist the Treasurer as the Treasurer may require, and shall serve in the Treasurer's place if the Treasurer is absent or is incapacitated.

e. The **Secretary** shall take notes and prepare minutes of meetings, and circulate minutes to the membership following meetings; shall be familiar with the bylaw's rules of

governance and decision-making and strive to enforce those rules; shall keep lists of past and current NCGP members; shall maintain current revisions and history files of all bylaws, resolutions, position papers, brochures, flyers, and other nonfinancial documents of the party; and shall convey these files to the next Secretary when the position changes hands; and shall announce all NCGP CC meetings and statewide gatherings/conventions to the membership. The Secretary shall be a voting member of the NCGP CC.

f. The **Assistant Secretary** shall assist the Secretary as the Secretary may require, and shall serve in the Secretary's place if the Secretary is absent or is incapacitated.

g. The **Fundraising Officer** shall maintain lists of donors and give quarterly updated documents to the treasurer; shall raise money for the NCGP in an ethical manner; must fully comply with all North Carolina campaign finance and reporting laws

h. The **Newsletter Editor** shall be responsible for composition, production, and distribution a NCGP newsletter no less than twice per year.

i. The **Website Manager** shall solicit content for the NCGP website and update it at least monthly, shall maintain comprehensive online archives.

j. The **Membership Officer** shall maintain a database of contacts and members; shall give updated documents to the secretary quarterly; shall work independently and with Locals and Caucuses to increase the membership of the NCGP.

k. The **Media Officers** shall keep an up-to-date date database of state and local media contacts; shall send out GPUS press releases to state and local media outlets; shall send a press release whenever the NCGP passes a resolution or joins a coalition; shall send a minimum of one relevant issue-based press release per month; shall identify and work with a Green media contact in each NCGP local and caucus.

l. The **Local Growth Chair** shall help newly forming locals with accreditation, shall provide support and mentoring for new locals.

m. The **Green Speakers Bureau Coordinator** shall be the contact person for all entities requesting Green speakers or representatives, shall maintain a current list of NCGP members who can speak on various topics, shall attempt to match speaking requests with NCGP speakers.

n. The **Delegates to the GPUS National Committee** shall be non-voting associate members of the NCGP CC.

o. All officers shall be chosen at the annual gathering, meeting or convention of the NCGP in odd-numbered years, and shall serve until the annual convention or gathering in the following odd-numbered year. Method of choosing officers shall be in keeping with general decisionmaking procedure as specified in the party's bylaws.

p. NCGP CC at-large officers will be considered resigned from office by giving notice to other CC members of their resignation or after their failing to attend three consecutive CC meetings or after failing to perform clearly defined duties of their position for more than three months. At this point, the remaining CC members shall appoint an interim officer who will serve until the next state-wide gathering where a new officer will be elected, unless the gathering chooses to reinstate the resigned officer, at his/her request.

VIII. Accreditation of NCGP Locals and Identity Caucuses

a. The definition of a Green Local is a green-identifying organization whose boundaries are defined by a specific geographic location

b. Conditions of Accreditation for NCGP locals

i. Shall hold at least two publicly announced meetings in a 6 month period

ii. Shall commit to supporting and upholding Green principles

iii. Shall adopt bylaws that define membership, principles of governance, and its decisionmaking process

iv. Shall have at least five members as defined by its bylaws

v. Shall have treasurer who is familiar with North Carolina laws and filing requirements for political parties. It is recommended that the treasurer attend one of the free training sessions provided by the North Carolina Board of Elections.

vi. Shall complete all paperwork with the state of North Carolina to become an official political committee of the North Carolina Green Party

c. The definition of an identity caucus is an organization of self-identified individuals who share common experiences or characteristics. The purpose of identity caucuses is to give representation to groups who have been historically underrepresented, marginalized, and oppressed in order that individuals can better work together across the state to support struggles against injustice and the institutional privilege that exists in our society.

d. Conditions of accreditation of NCGP Identity Caucuses

i. Shall have membership from at least 50% of accredited locals

ii. Shall commit to supporting and upholding Green principles

iii. Shall adopt bylaws that define membership, principles of governance, and its decisionmaking process

iv. Shall have at least five members as defined by its bylaws

v. Shall have three members who are also be members in good standing of the North Carolina Green Party

vi. Shall have treasurer who is familiar with North Carolina laws and filing requirements for political parties. It is recommended that the treasurer attend one of the free training sessions provided by the North Carolina Board of Elections.

vii. Shall complete all paperwork with the state of North Carolina to become an official political committee of the North Carolina Green Party

IX. Ratification and revision of bylaws

a. Initial ratification

The attendees admitted to the first party gathering shall have the power to vote on ratification of the first three sections of these bylaws. This decision shall be made in accordance with procedures outlined in Section II.

b. Revision

- i. Additions or changes to the bylaws shall be incorporated into the body of the Bylaws document, not added as a list of amendments at the end.
- ii. Additions or changes to the bylaws may only be made at a meeting or convention of the general membership, where a quorum for this purpose is present.
- iii. All proposed bylaw amendments must be submitted in writing to the secretary at least fourteen days in advance of any statewide gathering/convention
- iv. Ratification of changes shall be in accordance with decision-making procedures outlined in Section II.
- v. The bylaws shall carry a revision level designation and date, positioned in the header, which shall appear on pages. The revision level shall be part of the Bylaws document's title for filing purposes. Un-ratified, proposed versions of the bylaws shall carry numeric revision levels, starting at 0, or no revision level at all. Portions of the bylaws with proposed revisions may be written up for purposes of discussion by any member, with no need for revision designation or control. Ratified and released versions of the Bylaws document shall carry alphabetical revision levels, starting at A.
- vi. The Secretary shall incorporate into the Bylaws document all ratified revisions at the conclusion of any meeting or convention where revisions have been ratified. The secretary shall roll the revision level one increment, re-file the document with the new revision level, and send copies of the new revision to all members. The Secretary shall maintain a history file all past revisions, and shall convey this file to the new Secretary when the position changes hands.

X. Dissolution

In the event of the dissolution of this organization, all assets shall be disbursed to another Green organization, to be determined by majority vote of the NCGP CC members who were elected at the last duly convened statewide gathering/convention.