

Preamble

Founded in conjunction with the New York Progressive Action Network (NYPAN) by activists inspired by the 2016 presidential campaign of Bernie Sanders, New Queens Democrats is a volunteer-run organization comprised of activists residing within Queens, New York that fights for public policies and a political culture that put people and communities first.

Article I: Name

Section 1:

The name of this organization is New Queens Democrats (“NQD”).

Article II: Purposes

Section 1:

The purposes of the organization are:

- To promote the values of democracy, transparency, equity, accountability, and justice
- To support candidates for public office and for Democratic Party positions who embrace NQD’s values of democracy, transparency, equity, accountability, and justice
- To increase civic and political engagement among the people of Queens, including by increasing transparency and participation in the Queens County Democratic Party
- To promote knowledge of politics, public policy, and political history in Queens

Article III: Membership

Section 1: Eligibility

Any person 16 years of age or older who embraces the values of NQD and is willing to work to further the purposes of NQD is eligible for membership, subject to the payment of dues.

Section 2: Dues

As of January 17, 2018, annual membership dues are \$25 except in cases of financial hardship as determined by the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee, with the consent of a majority of the general body, may adjust the rate of annual membership dues not more often than once per year.

Section 3: Voting Members

Voting Members are limited to members in good standing.

Members in good standing are defined as members who are up to date on their membership dues and have “shown up for NQD” at least three (3) times in the past year, including by attending at least one general body meeting.

“Shown up for NQD” is defined as:

- Attending a general body meeting
- Attending an Executive Committee meeting
- Attending a meeting of another NQD committee
- Attending an NQD-sponsored event, including but not limited to a public forum, debate, or fundraiser sponsored by NQD alone or in coalition
- Volunteering for the campaign of a candidate endorsed by NQD, including by:
 - Petitioning
 - Canvassing
 - Phonebanking

The Executive Committee may approve on a case by case basis activities not listed above that qualify as having “shown up for NQD.”

The Executive Committee must take attendance at all general body meetings. Each committee, including the Executive Committee, is responsible for taking attendance at its committee meetings and submitting records of attendance for each of its committee meeting to the Executive Committee. Excluding attendance at general body and committee meetings, to obtain credit toward membership in good standing, members are responsible for notifying the Executive Committee of each time they have “shown up for NQD.”

The Executive Committee must maintain accurate and up-to-date records for each member showing when each member has “shown up for NQD” in the past two years. Any member may request a copy of their membership record at any time from the Executive Committee, which record must be furnished within 30 days.

Section 4: Term of Membership

Membership is for one calendar year, from January 1 through December 31. If a new member pays dues for the first time on or after November 1, that member’s first term of membership runs through December 31 of the following year, for which the member does not need to pay dues.

Section 5: Meetings

The Executive Committee must convene at least two (2) general body meetings per year. At least two (2) weeks prior to each general body meeting, the Executive Committee must communicate the details of that meeting, including location and starting and ending times, to the full NQD member list, and publish the details of the meeting publicly (e.g. on the NQD website).

Section 6: Voting

To constitute a quorum for conducting business at a general body meeting, at least twenty-five percent (25%) of Voting Members or twelve (12) Voting Members, whichever is higher, must be present or absentee voting. Only Voting Members are eligible to vote. Absentee votes must be submitted by the Voting Member in writing to the Executive Committee prior to the start of the meeting during which the vote is scheduled.

Section 7: Membership Suspension or Termination

Membership may be suspended or terminated for persistent non-payment of dues or persistent conduct contrary to NQD's values or purposes. For membership to be suspended or terminated:

- A Voting Member of NQD ("the Complainant") must submit a written complaint to the Executive Committee demanding that the Executive Committee suspend or terminate the membership of another member ("the Complainee"), and explaining why.
- Within no more than two (2) weeks from the date of the submission of the complaint, the Executive Committee must form a subcommittee to investigate the complaint.
 - The subcommittee must include at least three (3) Voting Members, including at least one (1) Officer of the Executive Committee, and excluding the Complainant.
 - The subcommittee must investigate the complaint and make a recommendation regarding suspension or termination of membership to the Executive Committee within no more than one (1) month from the date of the submission of the complaint.
- No more than one (1) week after the subcommittee submits its recommendation, the Executive Committee must render a decision regarding suspension or termination.
- The Complainant or the Complainee may appeal the Executive Committee's decision. If a decision is appealed, the Executive Committee may overrule the appeal with a unanimous decision. If the decision is not unanimous, the Executive Committee must present its decision for approval at the next general body meeting.

Article V: Executive Committee

Section 1: Officers

All Officers of the Executive Committee are unpaid volunteers.

Section 2: Eligibility

Any Voting Member in good standing in the year preceding an election is eligible to run for a position on the Executive Committee. No one may hold more than one Executive Committee position at a time. Persons holding or having publicly declared to be running for any paid public office or paid position in a political party are ineligible to serve on the Executive Committee.

Section 3: Term of Office

Officers shall be elected to one-year terms, except in the case of Officers elected by special election to fill vacancies for the remainder of a term.

Section 4: Duties of Officers

The following responsibilities are shared by all Officers:

- Cultivating relationships with engaged community members, politicians, grassroots advocacy organizations, and other political groups – including regular Democratic clubs officially affiliated with the Queens County Democratic Party – in Queens
- Collaborating with other Officers and assuming the responsibilities of other Officers as needed to ensure the Executive Committee fulfills all of its responsibilities

- Ensuring all Executive Committee meetings and general body meetings have a designated Committee Chair, who must be a Voting Member

Communications Director:

- Primary responsibility for all NQD communications, including emails and social media
- Primary contact for all press and other public relations inquiries
- Oversees NQD's communications strategy and tactics
- Works with Political & Policy Director to define and amplify NQD's public voice
- Works with Operations Director to manage NQD's website and data pertinent to communications, e.g. email lists

Operations Director:

- Primary responsibility for organizing all general body meetings and Executive Committee meetings
- Responsible for ensuring attendance is taken at all general body meetings and Executive Committee meetings, and that NQD's membership records are updated
- Works with Treasurer and Communications Director to maintain up-to-date membership records showing which members are in good standing, and to respond to requests from members for copies of their membership records
- Works with Communications Director and Treasurer to manage NQD's email lists, website, membership data, and other data

Political & Policy Director:

- Primary responsibility for defining NQD's public platform and political positions
- Primary responsibility for managing the endorsement process
- Works with Communications Director to define and amplify NQD's public voice
- Works with NYPAN Co-Chairs to spearhead organization of campaign support when NQD endorses a candidate

Treasurer:

- Primary responsibility for managing NQD's finances, including bookkeeping and ensuring compliance with all federal, state and local laws and regulations
- Prepares and submits all required expenditure reports to New York State and County Boards of Election
- Provides written reports on all financial activity at each Executive Committee meeting
- Primary responsibility for NQD's fundraising efforts
- Recording and distributing minutes of all general body meetings and Executive Committee meetings

NYPAN Co-Chairs (2):

- Serve as NQD's liaisons to NYPAN, representing NQD and keeping NQD's Executive Committee informed of NYPAN's activities
- Represent NQD at events not sponsored by NQD

- Work with Political & Policy Director to spearhead organization of campaign support when NQD endorses a candidate

Section 5: Deputies and Committee Chairs

Each Officer of the Executive Committee may nominate one deputy for approval by the Executive Committee, to assist that Officer with their duties. Deputies are non-voting members of the Executive Committee. When an Officer is not present at a meeting of the Executive Committee, their Deputy is authorized to vote in their stead. Each committee must nominate a Committee Chair for approval by the Executive Committee. Committee Chairs are voting members of the Executive Committee. When an Officer of the Executive Committee is also a Committee Chair, that person gets only one vote.

Section 6: Executive Committee Elections

Officers are elected by majority vote by secret ballot at the first general body meeting of each year. Candidates may run for more than one office, but no person may hold more than one office.

Each candidate must personally complete and submit a brief questionnaire for each office they wish to hold. The purpose of the questionnaire is to solicit information about the relevant skills and experiences of the candidates. The Executive Committee is responsible for maintaining and distributing the questionnaire. The Executive Committee must distribute the questionnaire to all Voting Members not less than one (1) month prior to elections, and make clear the deadline by which candidates must submit their questionnaires, which deadline must occur not less than one (1) week after the questionnaire is distributed. All eligible candidates who submit a completed questionnaire by the deadline are approved candidates for each office for which they submitted a questionnaire by the deadline. The Executive Committee must share the completed questionnaires of all approved candidates for the office(s) for which they are approved candidates no less than five (5) days prior to elections.

At the general body meeting during which elections are scheduled to take place, the current Executive Committee must offer each approved candidate present equal time to briefly address the Voting Members present before voting occurs. The Executive Committee must count all ballots cast by Voting Members, including absentee votes. Two Voting Members who are not members of the Executive Committee or candidates for the Executive Committee must be present to observe vote tallying. For each office, any candidate with more than fifty percent (50%) of the vote is the winner. If no candidate receives more than fifty percent (50%) of the vote, there will be a run-off election between the two top vote-getters. If there are three or more candidates running for any one position the election will be by ranked choice voting.

Section 7: Removal of Officers

Any Officer who misses three (3) consecutive Executive Committee meetings or three (3) consecutive general body meetings without being excused may be removed from office by the Executive Committee. Officers may appeal removal by submitting in writing to the Executive Committee a request to be reinstated. Appeals may be overruled by a unanimous vote of the Executive Committee or by a simple majority vote of Voting Members at a general body meeting. If an appeal is successful, the Officer is reinstated.

Section 8: Vacancies

If there is a vacancy on the Executive Committee with less than four (4) months remaining in the year, the Executive Committee may fill the vacancy. If there is a vacancy on the Executive Committee with four (4) months or more remaining in the year, that vacancy must be filled by an election in accordance with Section 5 of this Article.

Article 6: Committees

Section 1: The Executive Committee:

The Executive Committee is the governing body of NQD. The Executive Committee must convene at least four (4) times per year, telephonic or electronic meetings to suffice, not counting general body meetings. All Executive Committee members, voting and non-voting, must be notified in writing of each Executive Committee meeting at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting. To constitute a quorum for conducting business, no less than than fifty percent (50%) of voting members of the Executive Committee or their Deputies, or four (4) voting members of the Executive Committee, whichever is more, must be present.

Before each meeting of the Executive Committee begins, the members present must designate a Chair and a Secretary for the meeting. When present, the Treasurer or their Deputy is the Secretary. The Secretary is responsible for recording minutes for the meeting and distributing a written copy of the minutes recorded to all Executive Committee members no more than (1) week after the meeting. The Chair is responsible for ensuring that all items on the meeting agenda are addressed before the meeting is adjourned, and for maintaining order and fairness during the meeting as necessary. Votes, approvals, and other decisions of the Executive Committee must occur by a majority vote of the quorum present at an Executive Committee meeting or by written approval of a majority of all voting members of the Executive Committee.

Section 2: Other Committees

Any Voting Member may propose the formation of a committee by submitting a request to the Executive Committee for approval of the committee. The request for approval must include a committee name, a statement of the purpose for the committee, and a list of members of the committee. Approved committees may at any time submit in writing proposed modifications to the name and/or statement of purpose of the committee for approval the Executive Committee. For each approved committee that does not have as a member an Officer of the Executive Committee, the Executive Committee must designate an Officer of the Executive Committee to serve as a member or ex-officio member of that committee. If an Officer chairs a committee they only have one vote on the Executive Committee.

Article 7: Amendments

Section 1: Proposals to Amend NQD's Constitution & Bylaws

Any Voting Member may propose amendments to NQD's constitution and bylaws by submitting suggested changes to the Executive Committee in writing, with a rationale for each amendment. The Executive committee must formally review the constitution and bylaws annually. To be eligible for consideration and adoption at a general body meeting, proposed amendments must be submitted to the Executive Committee for review at least three (3) weeks prior to that general body meeting. The Executive Committee must provide

all members with complete information about any amendments to be considered at a general body meeting at least five (5) days prior to that meeting, including the content of each amendment and the rationale for each amendment. For adoption, proposed amendments require approval by two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) of the Voting Members present at the meeting. Changes are effective immediately unless otherwise stipulated prior to voting.

Article 8: Endorsements

Section 1: Endorsement Process

All candidates running for public or party office in Queens County are welcome to seek NQD's endorsement. Each candidate seeking NQD's endorsement must complete a questionnaire to be provided by NQD. The Executive Committee will invite all candidates of interest to the membership to an endorsement meeting to be held before the election. The Executive Committee will then hold a vote of the Voting Members at least thirty (30) days prior to the election. Ranked choice voting will be used in all endorsement votes considering three (3) or more candidates. For every candidate endorsed by NQD, a committee will be formed to create and implement a plan to support that candidate, which plan must be approved by the Executive Committee prior to implementation.