

Dear SCC members, Leaders, and fellow Democrats,

The 2023-2024 election cycle for IDP combined two ideas that are hard to hold at the same time. First, I am proud of the work our team has done to rebuild IDP as an institution. When I was elected, IDP had laid off all but 2.5 staffers. We did not have full-time Finance, Communications, or Data staff. We were \$100k in debt. Over the last two years, despite challenges including a hostile DNC, a complete turnover in staff, and a cancer diagnosis, we have stabilized IDP and built a team that can execute an off-year plan starting in January 2025.

However, it clearly was not enough and we have a great deal more work to do. Two years ago, I wrote to you: "...serving as IDP Chair has never been an ambition of mine, but I care deeply about the success of Iowa Democrats. As a teacher, a farmer, a state senator, LG and congressional candidate, I have seen time and time again how the policies our leaders implement affect every day lowans. **My focus is squarely on helping our party begin winning elections again.**" It is cold comfort that Iowa swung to the right less than the rest of the country (6 points nationally vs. 5 in Iowa) or that Christina Bohannon had one of the strongest overperformances in the country. We need to win.

In March, I told you my intention was to continue to serve as IDP Chair if you will have me. That is still true. In 2023, I wrote: ***"I want to be clear about where I intend to take our party and what I want our staff focusing on. I do not want to offer vague wishy-washy promises to earn your support and then have hard feelings when we misunderstood our promises to one another."*** Obviously we did not get to everything we wanted to do in Mandate for Change and some of it was adjusted to fit circumstances, but I hope you feel I have honestly tried to carry out the promises I made to you and maintained true to the principles of that document.

With that in my mind, I am sharing a sequel to the "Mandate for Change" document I shared in 2023. I am calling it "Forward: Victory 2026." Getting more Democrats elected up and down the ballot is my North Star and it will be how I measure success in the 2026 cycle.

While I want to be clear on my principles and direction, this is a working document and I look forward to your thoughts and feedback. There is also a good deal of work to do to flesh out many ideas. I look forward to working with you to make it a reality and finally make November 2026 a good Election Night.

Thank you for all you do,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rita R. Hart". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rita Hart

Forward: Victory 2026 Principles

- 1) The mission of the Iowa Democratic Party is to re-elect Democratic officeholders and elect Democratic candidates to office.**
- 2) In the last two years, IDP has stabilized as an institution with a stronger balance sheet and a built-out team. Now, we must turn that progress and stability into electoral results.**
- 3) Roughly a dozen party officers and staff on Fleur Drive do not have enough hours in the day to support all the needs of a statewide organization. Every staffer must also be an organizer to help us have “more people doing more things” (covered more in “Staff structure” section)**
- 4) When we add new positions or new responsibilities to IDP, we must have an answer for the question: “How will it be funded?”**
- 5) IDP has modernized its fundraising operation. The next steps are to continue to grow our small-dollar donor base and induce more national investment. (covered more in “Staff Structure” section)**
- 6) IDP must be part of the conversation of what it means to fix the “brand” of Iowa Democrats. This will be an ecosystem-wide conversation including elected officials, candidates, and partner organizations. (covered more in “Programming” section)**
- 7) All county parties - rural, urban, suburban - should have access to tools, training, and guidance on organizing work in their communities. (covered more in “Programming” section)**
- 8) The two “off-year” responsibilities of an organizing program are A) building capacity for the on-year through accessible community activities (i.e. not necessarily direct voter contact) and B) Building relationships with presidential, but not midterm Democratic voters. Capacity building is a priority before voter contact if resources are limited. (covered more in the “Programming” section)**
- 9) It is inevitable that the 2028 primary nominating process will be a topic of discussion in Iowa politics and among Iowa Democrats. The role of IDP is to lead a “family conversation” about the choices in front of us and potential trade-offs involved in each choice. Iowa Democrats will be in a stronger position if we are unified on the path forward. (covered in detail in “Programming” section)**

“Forward: Victory 2026” Programming

The most important accomplishment of the last two years for IDP as an institution is that our finances have stabilized and we have retired our outstanding debt. That means more of this document is focused on the public-facing parts of politics and campaigns - messaging, organizing, data. **This is all only possible if we continue to grow our revenue streams.** We must continue to have a consistent call time operation, further grow our small dollar and recurring donor program, and use congressional races and the Senate race to encourage EARLY national investment we did not see in 2024.

During my first term, we identified three “lanes” that the IDP automatically is responsible for because of its place in the ecosystem:

- 1) Turning out Democratic voters
- 2) Holding Republicans accountable through earned media and organic content
- 3) Provide the best data & tools to our county parties, volunteers, candidates

This section will lay out a skeleton of principles and ideas for fulfilling these responsibilities as well as recognizing the challenges in each area. Further work will be needed by staff and SCC committees to flesh out each area and establish digestible goals and timelines.

Turning Out Democratic Voters - Organizing

Our county parties and volunteers have experienced quite a shock the last couple of cycles - a dramatically reduced organizing footprint from IDP. Historically, the IDP coordinated campaign has been funded with support from national organizations. Off-year organizers working to administer the Iowa Caucus have usually been paid for using the VAN payments from presidential campaigns.

Without national investment, it is very difficult to have a paid year-round organizing program. The large-scale coordinated campaign was funded by transfers from national committees and presidential candidates, not the IDP operational budget. **A program of one Organizing Director and eight field organizers (two per congressional district) will cost roughly \$1 million for the cycle.** Unlike other departments, organizing requires hiring multiple staffers. An Organizing Director or an organizer for all 99 counties will not be able to pro-actively organize. Only one staffer would be able to hold very similar training to what our Data, Party Affairs, and Comms teams are already able to do, but not spend time on the phone or meeting with volunteers and activists because there would be just too much work to do.

To be very clear, this does not mean we should throw up our hands and give up on year-round on-the-ground organizing! We definitely should not.

First, the upcoming DNC Chair election is a very clear opportunity to explain Iowa’s needs to potential Chair candidates and move on from the strained relationship of the past four years. Iowa is home to multiple winnable congressional districts, a governor’s race, and a Senate race in 2026. We have a strong case to make for early investment -

and we want the assurance of candidates they will move towards a funding process that rewards the strength of arguments - not about settling political scores.

Second, necessity is the mother of invention. We are fortunate in Iowa that the legacy of the caucuses is a well-trained cadre of volunteers and activists. Unfortunately, we are still recovering from the pandemic in getting many of those folks active. **Helping county parties - rural, urban, and suburban - build capacity, regardless of how many paid organizing staff are hired, must be the focus of 2025 organizing work.**

2025 Organizing Objectives

1) Capacity building

A dozen staff on Fleur cannot run an organization in all 99 counties. A Chair and a Vice Chair can't do everything a local party needs to do. **The first goal for all organizing in 2025 should be more people doing more things - rural, urban, suburban - everywhere.** IDP will provide guidance and training on holding accessible community events (events to get folks in the door, not direct voter contact) and VAN training to help county parties build lists of potential invitees.

County parties should build events that fit their own communities (what makes sense in Iowa City might not make sense in Red Oak or Osceola), but there are likely to be opportunities to organize around issues opposing the Reynolds' and Trump agenda, highlighting how one-party rule is eroding the government services and community values Iowans were raised with, and what Democrats will offer as solutions. We must build points of entry across the state for younger voters, folks that have not consistently been involved with county parties, and those that are more interested in issues than party affiliation.

Additionally, we will have candidates for statewide races and Congress announcing their runs in 2025. Where possible, IDP should encourage cross-county cooperation for events and candidates to travel together to highlight the strength of our potential ticket. Of course this is dependent on the candidates' strategy and schedules.

The goal of all these events will be foot traffic and attendance. We are trying to grow the pool of potentially involved Democrats.

2) Direct Voter Contact: Drop-off Democrats

Counties with the ability to focus on work beyond growing their capacity have very clear work to do: talking to Democrats that voted in 2016, 2020, or 2024, but did not vote in 2018 or 2022. Democrats should collect information on important issues and voting method.

Our metric for this work needs to be outputs, not inputs: actual conversations. Too often, Democrats have focused on inputs: doors knocked, phone calls made, relationships mapped. We should instead be talking about the numbers of IDs for ballot preference, most important issue, and voting method.

We will review voter file data from 2024 and share it with the SCC to review best practices, but we should not dogmatically iterate on the 2012 Obama campaign model in 2025 (reverse engineering goals based on assumptions about attempts per shift). Parties and campaigns must have the opportunity to innovate - if it is resulting in conversations.

3) What role for persuasion?

Ambitious county parties can absolutely add a “persuasion” universe to direct voter contact. The IDP data team will create a model target universe for all county parties that want it. Again, we will track actual conversations as a metric. The universe will focus on independents/Ds and Rs with middling support scores and a strong midterm turnout history.

Calendar

There are certain things that county parties and IDP must do because they are expected (or, in some cases required by state law): hold caucuses, take part in parades and festivals, have an annual dinner, etc. A former IDP staffer once described our job as “figuring out how to turn these things you have to do into organizing opportunities to win elections.” That is how we will approach 2025. There are four clear periods we can use to organize the year:

- January - March odd year caucus and county re-orgs
- April/May Org/institution building (training of new leadership and helping build county-level leadership capacity, sharing of best practices, explaining plans and getting buy-in)
- June - August parade, festival season and district workshops (hopefully candidate recruitment)
- August - November (municipal/school board election capacity building and DVC)

In each of these phases, IDP will provide templates, data assistance, and training. The goal of each period should be to come out with more engaged Democrats than at the beginning.

Staff supports even without organizing staff

In 2017, Dan Sena, the ED of the DCCC who led the party to flipping 40 seats in the House described the DCCC’s responsibility as “arming the rebels.” **With IDP now fully staffed, we are entering the off-year with the capacity to provide training and guidance to all county parties that want it.** In 2023, we were not even able to resume regular county party calls until July. This year, regardless of the outcome of Officers elections, a County Chair call is scheduled for January 11.

I further elaborate on our training plans in the third section on programming: “providing the best data and tools to our county parties.”

We also must continue to develop on the ideas behind the Ambassador Program. At its core, the program is about providing additional communication to county parties and getting “more people doing more things.” Understandably, county chairs and district committees were concerned about Ambassadors usurping their roles in the structure.

My initial proposed reform is to have Ambassadors focus on counties that need the most help building infrastructure and getting connected to resources at the State Party - counties that struggled to knock doors or send postcards this cycle.

We also must fold the Ambassador role more seamlessly into the SCC structure. The first round of new “ambassadors” in 2025 will be volunteers from our SCC. We will tap into the relationships that our district officers have with the county parties to enhance the programmatic work going on. The object of the ambassador’s work should be supporting the county party on specific projects and programs.

Finally, we will create a separate category of ambassador for specific types of training. Instead of being responsible for a geographic area, we will have ambassadors for VAN training and building neighbor-to-neighbor programs (assuming people are willing to serve in this capacity).

Building additional funding sources for county parties

All of this work takes resources - time, technology, people. As IDP spent 2023 getting back on its feet, Iowa saw the rise of new sources of funding and support in the infrastructure. Groups like Contest Every Race¹, the Central States Council of Carpenters PAC, and Lift Iowa PAC provided monetary support to our county parties and candidates. IDP should support these efforts in two ways: **1) Providing county parties more knowledge of available grants and resources** and 2) Bringing potential funders together for county party projects and ensuring they fit within broader ecosystem objectives.

Holding Republicans Accountable through earned media & organic content - Comms

Any conversation about communications inevitably becomes a conversation about messaging. **It is fair to say that Iowa Democrats have a deep and pervasive brand issue. It is also fair to say that we have a message delivery problem - our message needs to reach the voters who we are trying to persuade!** Beyond that, I want to be careful about pretending to have all the solutions. There are always tactical and operational improvements to make - but Democrats likely need to dig much deeper than that. IDP will work with Auditor Sand, HTF/SMF, and our partners to undertake a thorough review of Iowans' perceptions of “Iowa Democrats.”

The Iowa Democratic Party is not a Politburo. We cannot impose solutions on the party. Inevitably, our brand is defined by our elected leaders and candidates far more than

¹ I am aware IDP has had issues with Contest Every Race’s recruitment program in the past. This proposal is only focused on working in conjunction with CER on their rural organizing program

anything comes out of the IDP office on Fleur Drive in Des Moines. However, **IDP can ensure that county parties, candidates, and partners have a strong understanding of what the current brand of Iowa Democrats is through training and content dissemination.** IDP can also use its convening power to encourage hard conversations with partners and stakeholders about where we go from here and to be honest about actions that move the ball forward and those that hold us back.

The primary job of IDP is to hold Republicans' accountable (often thought of as the "attack dog" role). There are three areas we just build programs to fulfill this responsibility:

1) Content Generation

Two years ago, I wrote: "A statement from the IDP Chair saying Kim Reynolds is bad is unsurprising and unlikely to make news. The stories of people lowans relate to and how they are affected by Republican policies can make a much bigger impact if voters read their stories and can relate to them.. It also generally requires looking outside traditional Democratic circles." We began to build the kernel of our storyteller program this year - specifically having success talking with women about their experience with reproductive health care - but we need to do more. We need to tell stories that underscore the issues that are real and important to lowans' lives and are very specific in nature.

IDP has to build the capacity to do more than respond to incoming press requests. We have built that infrastructure over the last two years. **The next two steps are 1) growing our stable of storytellers and surrogates and 2) creatively deploying our communications assets beyond just traditional media.** We cannot simply fight the Republicans in the pages of the *Des Moines Register*. *That means understanding how voters are receiving their news via social media, streaming services, podcasts, etc.*

Additionally, an idea that has existed for a long time is for the IDP to create a "Speaker's Bureau." We need to create a surrogate operation. Again, the kernels of this operation were developed in the 2023-2024 cycle - closer coordination between IDP and elected officials, a county party calendar that is regularly updated, etc. The next step is working with candidates, elected officials, and potential surrogates to centralize requests and build trust with local parties that requests will be handled in a timely manner.

In that vein, IDP also needs to engage more closely with our local elected officials. The IDP Constitution reads "the elected representative of the Democratic County Elected Officials Organization, and the elected representative of the Association of Democratic County Executives shall be extended an invitation and may attend all meetings regular or special of the State Central Committee in ex-officio, nonvoting status." Currently, neither such organization exists. Rebuilding such organizations in 2025 will ensure IDP is hearing from more on-the-ground voices, increase opportunities for cross-party cooperation, and create another pool of leaders that can be deployed as surrogates.

2) Training & Message Dissemination

The SCC Communications Subcommittee under the direction of its chair Sarah Eastman and IDP Communications Director Paige Godden did a fantastic job building the IDP County Party hub in 2024. Now, we have to increase adoption and provide additional resources and training.

Growing our comms capacity will need to continue to be a priority. **We should be communicating to county parties - rural, urban, and suburban - about messaging and comms as much as we do organizing because comms fuels the organizing work.** We need uniformity of internal and external messages across platforms - our email list, the Amplify list newsletter, press conferences, messaging templates, etc. This is a very difficult world in the constant news cycle we live in, but critical to our success.

The mechanics are also now in place for IDP to serve as a “hub” and leader within the infrastructure. IDP Comms staff meet weekly with partners and allies. We must take that interaction from meeting to true coordination. Democrats and aligned groups must tell a singular story about Republican misrule and neglect.

3) Press relations

Press requests will continue to pour in. And reporters will continue to ask for IDP reactions to breaking news. In 2026, we will still have an older electorate more reliant on traditional forms of media. We absolutely have to build a program that meets all voters where they are - for some voters that means the evening newscast.

While the messaging work will always get the lions’ share of attention, not all IDP communications work is external. Day in, day out, there is a lot of “internal” communication that must be handled. We have labelled this work “constituent services.”

Constituent services

The IDP can count on a demand for common constituent services: Iowans calling the office wanting to know where they can get yard signs; A county party leader needing some information about compliance but not quite sure who is the best contact; new voters walking in wondering how they can register to vote. These are all regular occurrences at IDP. Unfortunately, too often the work of engaging with these folks has been triaged due to the demands of a statewide organization.

We need to transform this work into an opportunity. **Congressional office constituent service operations offer a useful model for how IDP should handle incoming requests.** VAN and NGP already exist for database management - emails, phone calls, etc should all be logged. Conversations should be used as opportunities to get Iowans more involved with the Party and the specific programs we are running. This process has already begun at the office with the development of constituent response templates for staff, but need to be developed further.

A staff member is now answering the phone in person and staffing the front desk on a daily basis. This is a great improvement, but is not always possible depending on the

business of the cycle. The goal is to recruit volunteers to handle some of these responsibilities, but building that capacity takes time. Devoting specific staff capacity and tracking traffic will better inform how we can serve the 600,000 Democrats in Iowa.

Provide the best data & tools to our county parties, volunteers, candidates - Data

Following the first County Party survey, IDP embarked on a cycle-long effort to help county parties spend their money more efficiently. This included recommended language for GOTV mailers and recommendations on prioritizing spending. Lynsey Hart and Bob Ward held regular training sessions for the Reach app and VAN. We need to continue to build on this work. We have focused training on the skills volunteers and county parties need to win elections. We need to spread these skills further and do a better job of ensuring folks know they are available.

Training programs focused on organizing skills

Volunteers to build neighbor-to-neighbor programs, using VAN and recruiting volunteers already exist to run these trainings and build supporting documentation for volunteers and county parties. Those efforts need to be built into an organized curriculum with training available throughout every month. Training will begin in January for VAN and the odd-year caucuses. The Data and Party Affairs teams will work with their SCC committees to develop curriculum for the whole year. The focus will be specifically on the skills needed to grow local parties and have conversations with voters.

VAN pricing

The cost of VAN access for campaigns has long been a source of frustration. Money for VAN does not go to the IDP operating budget - it funds the coordinated campaign. However, the 2026 cycle appears likely to have a large coordinated campaign and it is an appropriate time to discuss how buy-ins are structured. **IDP will meet with HTF and SMF leadership during Q1 and work on a plan to reduce the topline costs of VAN while ensuring a consistent flow of federal hard dollars into the campaign.**

Recommended vendors

In 2024, the Data team built a list of approved vendors for texting programs for county parties. This work should be expanded to include vendors for regular needs of county parties and made available on the county party hub.

Party Affairs Institutional Knowledge

Between our sister state parties, the IDP archives, our county parties, and our SCC members, we do not need to reinvent the wheel for training materials for the work of running local parties. However, it will be a substantial task collating and organizing what already exists. A volunteer team is already in place working with the Party Affairs Director to build out this library.

DNC/2028 plan - family conversation

An open presidential primary will take place in 2028. Conversations about the calendar are already occurring in the DNC Chair race.

In March, I promised my focus for the remainder of 2024 would be on the Election and in 2025, we would begin a “family conversation” about the 2028 process. **Right now, we do not know anything about how the DNC and RBC will handle the calendar process. I am not firmly committed to any single course of action on the calendar because Iowa Democrats are divided on how to proceed.** Any time the calendar comes up, I will hear many different well-intentioned opinions. Rather than focus on one specific outcome, I want to hear from Democrats on the principles that Iowa Democrats believe should guide our decision-making.

Following county reorganizations, we will have a series of meetings across the state to discuss the appropriate priorities for our 2028 nominating process. People should have a chance to rank the following principles and provide additional comments. To be clear, this is a conversation about values, not an endless string of people at a microphone pitching their own solutions to the calendar:

- Timing: First, early, not a priority (When the Caucuses are held)
- Inclusion/voting pool: (Who is able to participate)
- Cost (\$\$\$, time, etc) (How do we actually implement a process and what resources are we willing to expend?)
- DNC and state law compliance (Why are we holding the caucus?)
- Voting process (How do we tabulate presidential preference?)

My focus as your Chair will continue to be winning elections again. I want Iowa Democrats to have a conversation about how our presidential nominating process should or should not fit into that goal.

Governance and Staff Structure

Chair, Executive Board, and Operations Committee

January provides an opportunity to reset the leadership structure. I want to thank our phenomenal Executive Board - Vice Chair Gregory Christensen, Treasurer Sam Groark, and Secretary Paula Martinez. We met regularly and I intend to continue to do that.

In 2023, the SCC created a Steering Committee for IDP composed of statewide elected officials, the House Leader, the Senate Leader, and five members of the SCC. I believe those involved found it to be a useful forum - for raising issues, hearing from staff, and understanding the work actually happening at IDP. It also served as a smaller, representative group of the SCC (the Board of Directors) to provide more timely feedback to the Chair. In order to be as effective as I can be as your Chair, a similar operational structure needs to exist.

Starting in January, I intend for the E-Board and Operations Committee to hold one joint meeting per month. Like the Steering Committee, these meetings will be open to SCC members. Meetings will consist of budget updates, staff reports, and discussions of goals and programs members want to see action on.

Reinvigorating the committee structure is critical to the future of the IDP. The SCC should be a “working board.” I discussed this at length with members of the SCC when they were elected and was thrilled that they too embraced that vision. I want to thank Data & Technology, Comms, and Fundraising & Compliance for beginning their work.

We have more work to do to get Operations and Party Building going. Simply put, the work of the election got in the way of institution building. In the new year, we’ll reopen membership of all committees for SCC members who declined to join as we begin planning off-year projects.

Desking model

The biggest structural change that was not in the original “Mandate for Change” was the introduction of a “desking” system. IDP has always informally had consultants, but we have changed how we think about their role relative to staff.

Organizations like the DCCC, DLCC, DSCC, and DGA all have regional “desks” for every department on a campaign. Alongside the Regional Political Director, who works with Campaign Manager, there are Regional Finance Directors, Regional Field Directors, and Regional Data Directors. These positions are incredibly valuable to targeted campaigns. **The desks have all been in the job of the campaign’s staffer, bring a perspective and ideas from across the country, and generally have some knowledge of the region they are working in (we have prioritized folks with Iowa experience to help us).**

IDP does have a Regional Political Director at the DNC and ASDC. It does not have the rest of the structure. We have been able to recreate it somewhat by bringing on outside help for each of our Departments - Data (STAC Labs), Finance (Lara Henderson), Communications (Erin Moynihan), and Compliance (Political CFOs). Obviously, there is a cost associated with it, but I think all our department heads see value in the support and, in one department, we are renegotiating our contract where we think we can get more value. The desks also provide another potential source of institutional knowledge - as they can continue while staffers might not move on to other positions.

Senior Leadership

Chair Hart divided the traditional Executive Director role into two positions - one that focuses on the electoral work of the Party - (Campaigns Director) the other that focuses on the internal work (Party Affairs Director). Obviously, these roles cross over and must work closely together both with the chair and each other.

Once again, a new term provides an opportunity for a reset. IDP has stabilized - now it has to stabilize practices and norms. While the Campaigns Director focuses on rebuilding IDP as the hub of the Democratic ecosystem, the Party Affairs Director will work internally to ensure IDP's longterm stability. They will manage IDP's budget process and cashflow in conjunction with the Chair, the Treasurer, and the Operations Committee.

Campaigns Director (currently: Senior Advisor Zachary Meunier)

The Campaigns Director will focus on IDP's support roles for campaigns. That means working with the Comms, Organizing, and Data Departments to build a successful off-year program. It includes serving as a point-of-contact for organizations like the DCCC, DGA, and DSCC. In state, the Campaigns Director will work with elected officials and partner organizations like ABI.

In 2025, the Campaigns Director will assist with statewide and congressional campaign recruitment, lead the effort with the Chair to form county and municipal elected official organizations, and build a municipal and school board elections program with partners.

Party Affairs Director (currently: Lynsey Hart)

Loss of institutional knowledge when staffers depart is a fact of life for any organization, but over the past decade, A LOT of institutional knowledge has been lost and policies have not been in place to bridge those losses. It is the job of the Party Affairs Director to build systems so IDP operates like an organization that will exist beyond the next cycle - because it will.

The Party Affairs Director will be the point-of-contact for internal party work - the SCC, the ASDC, the DNC. The PAD will work to create internal systems of accountability and make work more efficient. Finally, the PAD will work in concert with the Campaigns Director to ensure our organizing efforts and County Parties are having their needs met.

Finance

Two years ago, I wrote: *"There is a saying among political staff: "Never starve the profit center." While always being frugal with donor dollars, the Chair, senior leadership, and (Finance Director) should not hesitate to add additional finance capacity if the opportunity to net more money with more staff is there."* This continues to be true. **We have spent more money on fundraising the last two years, but moving to a model that focused on net profit instead of cost has allowed for our fundraising success.** This is the department with the most outside consultants, but those consultants are paid for a product and performance. If our email or mail programs show signs of losing profitability, we will make changes to return to profitability.

Finance Director (currently: Kevin Sobkoviak)

The Finance Director runs the Finance Department and is ultimately responsible for reaching fundraising goals. The Finance Director works with Senior Leadership to develop the party's fundraising plan that meets budget needs and works with the Chair to execute it.

The Finance Director is a management position that hires and manages the Finance staff and coaches and holds staff accountable.

The position also has execution responsibilities. The FD works directly with the Chair to run the Regional Events program. The FD also runs the high-dollar donor maintenance process - ensuring major investors can see their money is well-spent. Finally, the FD will be responsible for the money element of the Liberty & Justice Dinner.

Call Time Manager (currently: Amy Smith)

Under the guidance of the FD, the Call Time Manager runs the donor research process and staffs the Chair's call time on a daily basis. The Call Time Manager is also responsible for small- and mid-tier donor maintenance (ensuring thank you notes go out, pledge chase letters, etc). Finally, as the staffer that spends the most time with the Chair, the Call Time Manager has scheduling responsibilities for the Chair.

Consulting roles:

E-mail program

The IDP has tried a hybrid approach for running its email in the 2023-2024 cycle - a junior staffing writing copy with an email consultant desking the effort. I now believe the junior staff capacity is better spent on other projects (see Political and Communications Assistant role). The "Small Dollar Director" envisioned by the Mandate for Change would need significant desk support and end up costing more than moving the program outside. Email performance will be regularly tracked, the firm's weekly meeting with the staff will be maintained. While IDP made substantial steps forward in 2024 in building an online small-dollar donor base, all digital fundraising spend will continue to be subject to cuts if it ever ceases to be profitable.

The email program is an important messaging tool for our strongest supporters. We will refocus our efforts on this plan and continue to work to build a donor base that understands what IDP can, and cannot, do.

Direct mail program

IDP's direct mail program became much more aggressive in 2024. 2025 is the opportunity to grow it significantly. For whatever reason, direct mail fundraising is particularly successful with Iowa donors. Our message will be similar to the email messaging - the 2025-2026 plan, the path to victory, and a focus on what the party can actually accomplish.

Communications

Unfortunately, IDP only briefly had a "fully staffed" Communications Department focused on Iowa electoral work this cycle. The Communications Director and Platforms Director roles are both critical just for dealing with the basic work of the party. It is adding the

Assistant role that will allow this department to flourish and “push” out a message, as opposed to just responding. That position is now filled with a committed lowan and the position has been reformed to focus purely on comms work.

Communications Director (currently Paige Godden)

The Comms Director is responsible for the communications spoke of IDP’s role - holding Republicans accountable in earned media and organic content. There are three parts of this responsibility 1) managing the department, Comms SCC committee, and other volunteers, 2) fulfilling traditional press secretary roles: serving as an on-the-record-voice, writing and sending press releases, developing relationships with major reporters. 3) serving as the point-of-contact for Comms work across the infrastructure - elected staff, caucuses, DCCC, DGA, DSCC, etc.

The Comms Department has an Assistant role to assist with the logistics of these tasks. The Director will lead in synthesizing and producing information that should reach across the infrastructure - from partners to candidates to county parties.

Platforms Director (currently Sabrina Smith)

This position is focused entirely on the communications and persuasion side of digital, not fundraising. There are two parts of the role: content generation and digital organizing.

This position is the hub of the “content generation” work described in the programming section. Content generation includes managing IDP’s platforms (including undertaking a rebuild of the IDP website) and building relationships with potential surrogates and storytellers. Doing this work well is incredibly time intensive.

As a digital organizer, this position will work with the Comms club to build relationships with online influencers and recruit and manage a team of digital volunteers to amplify content. The team should develop metrics that measure whether metrics get outside of political “bubbles” and to voters in target audiences.

Political & Communications Assistant (currently Christian Jauron)

This position has undergone change over the course of the cycle. When it was determined the Small Dollar Director role was impractical, writing email copy, with the oversight of our email firm, became a key (and time consuming) part of this role.

The first role of this position is leading the constituent services operation. As I mentioned, we should use the Legislative Correspondent role in a congressional office as the model. Over time, this likely includes managing volunteers. Right now, it means being in charge of the email response templates, creating a process for logging and managing incoming constituent requests, and connecting incoming requests with the appropriate department.

The second role is logistics support. While the Comms Director will take the lead on synthesizing and generating messaging to disseminate across the infrastructure, this

position will be in charge of making sure it actually gets to people who can use it. It will set up training and actually recruit people to attend. It is not just creating a website, but measuring traffic and working to increase participation.

Organizing/Field

Securing funding for on-the-ground organizing is the next hiring priority. **To be clear, IDP organizing staff, focusing on electoral organizing, have never been on the IDP operating budget.** Organizers have either been hired through the coordinated campaign with dedicated dollars from national funders or been tasked with administering the Iowa Caucuses. We will doggedly work to change that this cycle and have an organizing staff focused on having conversations with voters and increasing our volunteer capacity across the state.

As mentioned above, a program of one Organizing Director and eight field organizers (two per congressional district) will cost roughly \$1 million for the cycle. Unlike other departments, organizing requires hiring multiple staffers.

Data

Operations Director (currently Bob Ward)

I have tried to keep these job descriptions as impersonal as possible, but IDP's data structure is unique because of personnel. Bob Ward took on responsibilities for managing VAN when he was hired in 2023. He has done an excellent job of 1) project managing problems and 2) providing excellent customer service to users who have needed it.

Bob will continue to be responsible for "customer service" and VAN training in 2025. Additionally, Bob will work with the Data and Technology committee to continue to grow our overall capacity. We need more activists who can comfortably use VAN.

This is a unique structure. We will reassess in early 2026 as we get a better sense of what the coordinated campaign will look like.

Deputy Data Director (currently Julia Lundstrum)

In this structure, Julia will handle most of the technical aspects of managing VAN - some of which are normally reserved for a Data Director. Julia is a trained data scientist and her expertise has been instrumental in the caucus-to-convention process, paid media for the coordinated campaign, and improving our data hygiene and infrastructure. This position will be flexible according to IDP needs.

Ops/Compliance

Operations Director (currently Bob Ward)

This is the second half of Bob's role. This position works with the compliance consultant and oversees the compliance assistant to handle the logistics of managing the budget and HR. That includes coordinating the bill pay, payroll, and budget reconciliation process, ensuring all compliance reports are completed on time, and working with

vendors on general office needs. This has moved IDP into alignment with most other state parties across the country and will lower compliance costs overall.

Operations and Compliance Assistant (currently Zach Finley)

The Ops and Compliance Assistant handles the day-in, day-out logistics of the IDP's operations and compliance. The Operations Director and compliance consultant institute effective systems to ensure task completion. On a day-in, day-out basis, the position is something of a utility infielder, but the Assistant is held accountable for ensuring tasks are completed on a timely basis.

Additionally, the position may provide some support to the Party Affairs Department on an as-needed basis for one-off projects such as State Convention, special nominating conventions, or odd-year caucuses.

Conclusion

We have much to accomplish in 2025-2026. The election results were definitely a gut punch. However, thanks to the work of the SCC, volunteers, county parties, and our team, we now have an institutional foundation to build upon. IDP has had seven chairs since Jeff Kaufmann was elected Chair of RPI. 2026 has the potential to be a transformative year for both Iowa and IDP. Let's move forward together.

2025 Operational Calendar

January

3 - new Congress

4 - IDP Officer elections

13 - legislative session starts

18-20 - Day of Action

20 - Inauguration Day

Operations Committee Meeting

February

17 - First day for Odd-Year Caucuses

Operations Committee meeting

March

31 - Last day for Odd-Year Caucuses

County re-org meetings

Q1 SCC meeting

Operations Committee meeting

April

30 - End of first 100 days of Trump 2.0

Beginning Regional HoFs

Target: District meetings that include briefings on 25-26 plans and “family conversation” about values to inform 2028 DNC strategy

Operations Committee meeting

May

2 - leg sine die

Regional HoFs continue

Operations Committee Meeting

Beginning of summer festival/parade/county fair season

June

Q2 SCC meeting

Regional HoFs continue

Operations Committee meeting

July

Regional HoFs continue

Operations Committee Meeting

August

State Fair

District workshops

Regional HoFs continue

Operations Committee Meeting

Filing deadline for municipal and school board election

September

Q3 SCC meeting

Regional HoFs end

Operations Committee meeting

October

City primary elections

Operations Committee meeting

November

4 Municipal and school board elections

Liberty & Justice Dinner

Operations Committee Meeting

December

City primary run-off

Q4 SCC meeting

Operations Committee Meeting