

Committee to Elect Aaron Henry Governor of Mississippi  
Freedom Election Headquarters  
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## GUIDELINES FOR DISTRICT MANAGERS

We are interested in establishing a sound and lasting political structure which will extend from the state down to the grass roots level. You are already familiar with the form of the top level of our state organization. We would like to suggest some guidelines for building a grass-roots structure.

### I. THE BASIC UNIT FOR ORGANIZATION

The basic unit for organization should be a small area of roughly three square blocks. Flexibility can and should be used in forming these units. Sometimes they may be more, sometimes less, than three square blocks. More than likely, a unit will not be a square, but a rectangle, or no particular shape at all. In many cases, borders of a unit (which for the present we will call a section) will be predetermined, that is, Negro areas pocketed by white areas. Various other factors will undoubtedly go into determining the layout of these basic units, but their formation should be accomplished as soon as possible.

Here are some reasons for the desirability of such territorial units as the basis for political organization:

1. Small territorial units would seem to be best for comprehensive canvassing.
2. People living in a certain area share common problems (garbage collection, sewage, traffic control, bus transportation, etc.) which can lead to the growth of a political cohesiveness.
3. Organization on the basis of residence seems to be the most certain means for reaching all the people.

### II. SECTION LEADERS

Once section units are formed, every effort should be made to find some individual in each section who would undertake the responsibility of section leader. Be cautious in your selection of these leaders. Try in every case to choose people who you are certain will work.

### III. THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF SECTION LEADERS

1. Immediate functions:
  - a. Finding a location of churches or other facilities which can be used as polling places in the section.
  - b. Publicizing to the people of the section the location of these polling places for the Freedom Election. For example, they should be responsible for putting up signs and posters, and distributing flyers with the appropriate information.
  - c. Finding people who will serve as polling managers.
  - d. Setting up mass meetings and getting speakers for them.
  - e. Distributing campaign literature.

- f. As much door-to-door canvassing as possible.
- g. Getting in touch with ministers and other community leaders in the section to win their support.

2. Long-range functions: (As many of these functions as possible should be performed during the current campaign.)

- a. Find an individual on every block in the section who will serve as a block captain. If this can be accomplished, a section leader can make eight or nine phone calls, and in this way reach everyone in his section quickly. The recruiting of block captains will also facilitate the distribution of literature. Section leaders would simply hand material to the block captains who, in turn, could cover their blocks quickly. The section leader would thus be relieved of performing door-to-door work, allowing him more time for his other responsibilities.
- b. Hold regular mass meetings for the people in his section.
- c. Hold regular meetings with the block captains.
- d. Keep in close contact with the ministers and other community leaders of his section, to ensure their constant support.
- e. Distribute by means of the network of block captains any literature or information passed down from the state or district offices.

#### IV. RESPONSIBILITIES OF BLOCK CAPTAINS

1. Keep people in his block informed of general developments and distribute any literature given to him by the section leader.
2. Make a survey of his block to obtain information. This information should be put on index cards. Four copies of these cards should be made. The block captain should keep one and the others should go to the section leader, district manager, and state office. The cards should contain names, addresses and telephone numbers and occupations of all the people in his block. They should also indicate level of education, literacy, whether the individual is registered, and any other information which might be useful.

#### V. CROSS-REFERENCE CONTACTS

While the above proposed structure should serve as the basis for our future organization, every other possible means of reaching people should be used both for the current campaign and for future registration and election work.

Some suggestions:

1. Church and ministerial groups.
2. Fraternities--Elks, Alphas, etc.
3. Professional Associations--Barbers, dentists, doctors, beauticians, etc.
4. The boys on the block--cafes, pool halls, etc.
5. Women's leagues, etc.--affiliates of Conference of Federated Women.
6. PTA's
7. Teacher's Associations (Despite their well-known conservatism,

new efforts should be made in this area. Apparently, there are some teachers who are beginning to come around. A list of these should be made. Perhaps in the near future a statewide caucus could be held where such teachers could get together.)

8. Insurance men and other salesmen

9. Gas station attendants

10. Taxicab drivers

11. Use of every event at which there is a large gathering of people--dances, football games etc.

12. High school contacts (One or two in each high school could distribute literature which would reach every home in the county.)