

2009



VOLUNTEER

GUIDE

TheVoicesOfAmerica.org

Note: The information provided is deemed accurate to the best of our knowledge, but should be confirmed with your local Board of Election. For reference purposes we use the State of Ohio.

CANVASSING YOUR PRECINCT

1. Canvassing Your Precinct on Foot

There are two types of canvasses that are conducted: 1) Walk and Talk, and 2) Literature Drop.

- An excellent time for both types of canvassing is prior to a primary or general election.
- We suggest a two person approach, if possible, with each person working opposite sides of the street within eyesight of each other. In rural areas, working as a team, one person could drive the car, with the other going to the door. This work could also be done by phone.

2. Walk and Talk is an important tool in identifying voters in your precinct.

With your precinct map, walking list, and voter registration information together on a clipboard, you are ready to perform your precinct canvass Walk and Talk. A Walk and Talk is a time-consuming endeavor. Unless you have no other demands on your time, it is realistic to expect that finishing your precinct will require the help of others.

PROCEDURES:

- Every two people recruited cuts down the time needed to cover an area by 2 to 5 hours, depending upon the territory. Friends and neighbors are obvious sources of volunteers.
- If possible, assemble volunteers in one location before beginning the distribution. This will allow an opportunity to give special instructions, to review the guidelines and let each volunteer feel like a part of a group.
- Call at the door of each household in your precinct, even those with no registered voters on your walking list. Introduce yourself by name as a volunteer for *TheVoicesOfAmeric.org Project* and explain that you are trying to bring your precinct records up to date and see that everyone is registered to vote.
- You could say “I’m _____. We are conducting a voter registration drive. Are all the adults living here registered to vote?” If any adults are not registered, offer to register them or leave registration cards. Try to determine if they would volunteer or want to attend a *TheVoicesOfAmeric.org Project* affiliated organization meeting, such as the local 9/12 Project or Tea party organizations.
- If any voter has recently moved into your precinct, ask them to fill out a voter registration card. Offer to register anyone who is not registered to vote or direct them to places where they may register.

3. An alternative is a **literature drop**.

A literature drop is when the material or brochure is left on the door step, in a screen door, etc. While this is quicker, it is also much less effective. Literature is usually left at every occupied house. Most precincts can be covered by a two-person team in two or three hours.

- Literature is not placed in or on a mailbox.
- Literature should be placed in a secure place.
- Do not walk on lawns.
- Obey any posted signs.
- Speak to everyone you see.
- Do not distribute literature after dark.
- Do not argue. Keep moving.
- Do not go inside the house.

4. **Locked Apartment and Condominium Complexes**

Locked apartment buildings represent a challenge to the canvasser. Try to find a friend inside to let you in and/or escort you around the building. Usually at least one voter or manager will let you in if contacted over the intercom. One approach is to say, "I'm _____. I am canvassing your area with voting information."

If all else fails, leave your literature by the mailboxes (not in – it is illegal) or by all entrances. Sometimes you get a good response by leaving a note with each packet giving your name and how to contact you for information or voter registration.

If canvassing may not be possible in locked apartment buildings or complexes, one alternative is a telephone canvas of registered voters.

5. **Canvassing by Phone**

If you live in a rural area, or a precinct with many inaccessible apartment complexes, a telephone canvas may be the only way to accomplish your canvas goals. The approach to the voter would essentially be the same.

"Hello, I'm _____ from *TheVoicesOfAmeric.org Project*. We're conducting a registration drive. Is there anyone currently in your family or household that needs to be registered to vote? "

Carefully note all information that you receive and politely thank the person at the conclusion of the conversation. Remember that phone canvassing can be just as intrusive as doorbelling ... some people will object strongly to being approached in this manner. In the event this happens, politely thank the person and terminate the call. Note the response of the voter so that the person is not approached in this manner again.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

- Note the ages of those present in the household. Those turning 18 at a later date will need to be registered then.
- Elderly and handicapped people should be noted so that you can ask them if they want an absentee voting application, in order to avoid a trip to the polling place.
- Always be polite and friendly; never argue. Avoid the dinner hour and after 9:00 p.m. If possible, do your door to door work during daylight hours. When people are not at home, make a note and return at another time of day.
- Show personal interest in the residents.
- When canvassing, be alert for good places for yard signs.
- Always be alert for potential volunteers to help.
- When you complete your basic canvass, give a copy of your annotated list to your Precinct Committee captain. Good information leads to victories.

VOTER REGISTRATION

1. Qualifications to Vote

- You are a citizen of the United States.
- You are 18 on or before the day of the General Election. If you will be 18 on or before election-day, you may vote in the primary election for candidates, but not on issues.
- You will be a resident of Ohio for at least 30 days immediately before the election.
- You register to vote at least 30 days before the election.

2. Registration Materials

- You should be familiar with how to register voters. The opportunity to register to vote is a service and should be made available to all new residents of the community, to persons reaching 18 years of age, and any other interested eligible resident.
- It is your legal responsibility to return any completed registration cards to the Board of Elections at least 30 days before the next scheduled election (that date announced by the Board as the closing date of registration.) Failure to do so is a violation of law.

3. Absentee Voting Qualifications

- Any qualified Ohio voter may request an absentee ballot without stating a reason.
- The ballot must be applied for in writing with the following information: your name, original signature, address at which you are registered to vote, date of birth. One of the following is required: Ohio driver's license number, last four digits of Social Security number, copy of current and valid photo ID, military ID, current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck or other government document that shows your name and current address.

- Statement identifying the election for which you are requesting an absentee ballot.

6. Absentee Voting Applications

- Offer absentee voting applications in your precinct.
- Offer to send it in for them after they have filled it out.
- Offer to provide information on issues and candidates early to the absentee voter.
- Absentee voting applications may be requested from the county Board of Elections beginning January 1st of each year.
- Mail requests for absentee ballots must be received no later than noon on the Saturday preceding the election.
- In the case of a Primary Election the voter should indicate a Party or request an “issue only” ballot.
- In-office absentee voting ends at 4:30 p.m., the Monday preceding the election on Tuesday.
- All absentee ballots must be received at the Board of Elections no later than 7:30p.m. on election day.

7. Getting Out the Vote

- Getting out the vote can be as simple or as complicated as you make it.
- Your information as a volunteer will prove invaluable in getting out the vote.
- Remember every vote is important. Often an election is decided on a very few votes, and the extra effort that is required with getting the vote out strategy can very well put in a favorable candidate or decide an important initiative.