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<http://www.azdem.org>

## Tips for Effective Canvassing

- What is canvassing?
- Why is canvassing important?
- Recruit volunteers
- Canvass techniques
- Reading the voters

### Effective Canvassing

As a neighborhood Democratic Party Volunteer, you know your neighborhood best. You are a local "opinion maker." This means your neighbors may come to rely on you for information, advice, and help in solving public problems.

Your canvass will prove invaluable in your role as a neighborhood volunteer. You will learn about the economic make-up of your area, what issues are important, what messages people are receiving from our candidates, and how the voters feel about the Party.

### What is Canvassing?

#### Definition:

*...To solicit political support or to determine opinions or sentiments. To seek votes. A personal solicitation of votes or survey the public opinion (Webster's Dictionary)*

### Why is canvassing important?

Face-to-face voter contact is the most effective way to meet people, exchange information, and make an impression for the Democratic Party and candidates. If you have a walking list from your state or local party, it will contain house-by-house information in terms of registered voters, party affiliation, and whether or not they have voted in the last four elections (including local elections). This will tell you who the registered Democrats in your precinct are – and which houses may not have any registered voters. Make sure you follow through on all requests for help. If you don't know the answers to questions, say, "I don't know, but I will find out and get back to you."

## **Recruiting Volunteers**

While you are canvassing, you will meet people who want to participate in the Democratic Party. Keep them in mind for the following jobs and opportunities:

- Neighborhood Leaders/ Precinct Committeeperson / Block Captains
- Volunteers: Precinct / Headquarters
- Voter Registration volunteer

**"Service" is the key word to remember in neighborhood canvassing.** The voters in your area will come to rely on you and the Democratic Party for answers to their questions and solutions to their problems.

1. Meet everyone. Start a relationship.
2. Let them know "they are not alone," that there are Democrats and others in the area that agree with them.
3. Find out what issues are most important to them and share the Democratic Vision with them.
4. Make sure everyone in the house is registered to vote.
5. Recruit volunteers.
6. NEVER try to convince someone you are right and they are wrong. We'll never gain support trying to convince people they are wrong.

Let them know you're a Democratic resource for them, and there are Democratic activities they can take part in and candidates they can vote for who share their values.

## **Be prepared when you canvass with:**

1. Precinct map
2. Walking list
3. Pencils and pens
4. literature (Democratic Doorhangers)
5. Voter registration forms
6. Something to carry your materials in

## **Tips for when you canvass:**

- Work in pairs when possible for safety, support, and fun
- Determine optimal time of day to visit
- Be prepared with a script: what will you say?
- Wear comfortable shoes!
- Bring water
- Don't leave any information in someone's mailbox
- If you aren't comfortable walking up to a particular house, skip it. Remember, safety first!

**Discuss the issues which are important to your neighbors. You can get an idea of what those issues are by looking for the following to give you more insight:**

1. **Bumper stickers or window decals:** What issues are brought up? Do they indicate issue preferences? Do they indicate particular values?
2. **Family:** What type of family do they have? For example, if they have small children, child care, education, and the future of our economy may be important to them. If they are an older couple, health care issues may be important, etc.
3. **Job:** What does the person do for a living? For example, if they are a teacher, what might that indicate about their values and daily concerns? What about a tradesman or laborer?

### **Reading the Voters**

Things to think about while you are out talking with your neighbors: Take a quick look around. What do you see and what might it tell you about the person whose home you are visiting? What might each of the cues listed below tell you about the voters who live there?

- Toys in sight
- Football, basketball, or soccer ball
- U.S. flag
- Union insignia
- Well tended flower garden
- Expensive car

### **License plate**

- Out-of-state
- Collegiate
- Environmental
- Child abuse prevention
- Veteran
- Disabled

### **Bumper stickers**

- Hate is Not a Family Value
- Rainbow flag
- My child is an honor student at...
- NRA
- Buy American
- Support our Troops
- Active Duty Military
- Veteran

- Licensed Contractors Build Confidence
- Sierra Club
- Union
- Police or Fire Department



***“Election by election, state by state, precinct by precinct, door by door, vote by vote.... we’re going to lift our Party up and take this country back for the people who built it.”***

***Governor Howard Dean  
Chair, Democratic National Committee***

**SAMPLE SCRIPT: See if your state or local party has a specific script to use**

**(Use this version if your state or local party has provided a list of voters to talk) with**

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I’m a local Volunteer with the Democratic Party. Hello is \_\_\_\_\_ home?

Today people all across America are talking with their neighbors about the Democratic Vision for rebuilding America.

Here is some information about the Democratic Party and what we are fighting for. Do you have any questions or would you like more information on a specific issue?

Thank you for your time. I hope to talk with you again soon. Like you I know together America can do better.

(If you receive positive feedback ask the voter if they would like to volunteer locally. Instruct them to sign the post card at the bottom of the door hanger. If they don’t fill it out on the spot, ask if you can pick it up later or if they will need to mail it.)

(Use this version if you do not have a walk list.)

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm a local Volunteer with the Democratic Party.

Today people all across America are talking with their neighbors about the Democratic Vision for rebuilding America.

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