

Putting On a Field Mobilization (Door-knocking)

Volunteers participating in the walk should expect to put in about 3 hours, including about an hour of training and travel time, plus 2 hours going door to door.

A. PREPARATION

Arrive at the meeting place at least an hour before your scheduled start time. That will give you time to set up the room, put out your food and drinks, and hang up your butcher paper and precinct map. Bring refreshments – preferably including coffee if you have a morning start time!

You'll need the following materials:

- Sign-in sheets with space to record location that volunteers head out to. Get their cell phone numbers! (If you're using a barcode scanner attached to a PDA to keep track of the volunteers, you'll need to assign a barcode to each volunteer.)
- Large precinct map to hang on a wall, if available; otherwise, a large city map with the streets that volunteers will be walking clearly marked
- The day's agenda written out on butcher paper
- Butcher paper blow-up of voter registration form (if you're doing voter registration) – you'll use this for training
- Butcher paper blow-up of the walk sheets that volunteers will carrying with them to record voters' responses
- Blank butcher paper and markers
- Your cell phone number posted prominently
- Masking tape
- Extra pens
- Organization and/or campaign signs
- Precinct packets for each door-knocking team containing:
 1. Walk sheet (the list with voters' name, address and other relevant information, and space to mark their responses to volunteers' questions)
 2. Instructions for marking voter list
 3. Map of precinct
 4. Script for voter identification and/or persuasion
 5. Campaign literature or non-partisan voters' guide

B. CHECK-IN

- As volunteers arrive, have them sign in.
- Put them in pairs (or, sometimes, small groups) and assign them to precincts. You'll have at least two people working each precinct, deployed as a team.
- Try to connect volunteers who have cars with those who don't.
- Give your volunteers their packets right away, so they'll begin to get familiar with the contents.
- Record the exact location assigned to each person next to his or her name on the sign-in sheet. This can be done by hand or, if you're tracking volunteers by barcode, with a PDA equipped with a barcode scanner.
- If you will be working in an area where folks speak a language besides English, try to pair up one English speaker with one speaker of the other language.

C. THE TRAINING PROGRAM

The training program is a balancing act between getting people out the door (and not boring the experienced volunteers with stuff they already know) and making sure all volunteers feel fully equipped to do their jobs. It's not easy to get right, but worth working on.

1. **Introduction** (15 minutes): Begin by introducing yourself. Briefly review the day's schedule, which you have posted on butcher paper. If you have 30 or fewer volunteers, have everyone go around and say his or her name. With 20 or fewer, you can also ask for one sentence about why people care enough to work on the turnout project or initiative campaign.
2. **Campaign update** (5 minutes): Share information with volunteers on how the campaign is working toward victory or tell them about last week's canvassing success.
3. **The training** (20 minutes)
For the training, you will need:
 - a) Butcher paper with the main talking points of the campaign..
 - b) Butcher paper blow up of the Voter Registration form and/or Walk-sheet.
 - c) Sample walk sheet for each person to look at.
 - d) Butcher paper listing the goals of the walk: identify voters, record the results, register, recruit volunteers, distribute lawn signs, etc.
 - e) One or more large maps of the area, preferably with the precincts shown on it.

First, go over the goals of the walk. These may include some combination of:

- a) *Identify* our supporters.
- b) *Record* the results on walk sheets. Take the time to explain just how to do this: go over the components of the sheet, the information that it contains, the meaning of any abbreviations, etc.
- c) *Register* people to vote.
- d) *Recruit* volunteers.
- e) *Post* a campaign sign.

Then, talk to volunteers about what they'll be saying at the doors. Do a role play using the voter ID script. Ask lively, experienced volunteers to participate – or, if need be, staff. Let the group critique the role play: for example, did the walker remember to see whether the person s/he talked to would post a sign?

Third, go over the voter registration form and/or voter ID walk-sheet, line by line. Explain any abbreviations. Indicate how volunteers should mark voters' responses. Use the role play as an example.

Finally, take questions from volunteers, but try to keep it short. If individuals want really detailed explanations about something, don't let them take over the training – offer to answer their questions after the send-off.

D. THE SEND-OFF

- Plan to spend about ten minutes on the send-off.
- Make sure people know what time to return to the send-off site.
- Make sure they have your cell phone number.
- Emphasize that they *must* come back and return their materials.
- If people will be traveling some distance from the send-off site, this is the moment when you may have to sort out transportation. Usually there are enough folks with cars to get everyone where they need to go, but occasionally organizers may need to drive people.

E. THE INTERIM

Be sure that at least one organizer stays at the send-off site to catch stragglers and deal with volunteers who return early or are lost.

F. THE RETURN

- As people return, check them in (or scan them in) on the sign-in sheet.
- Offer them some food and refreshment and ask them how it went.
- Ask them to tally up their results on a big butcher paper tally sheet on the wall: Number of voter IDs, voter registrations, how many volunteers they recruited and how many signs they distributed. Record this next to the volunteers' names on the tally sheet, so they get credit for their work.
- If most folks come back at the same time you can do a group debrief, but unfortunately this doesn't usually happen. You'll probably need to debrief each team or a few teams at once.
- Thank them for their work!
- Sign them up to come back to walk again. And ask if they'd like to work a phone bank!