



HOW TO

RUN A SUCCESSFUL  
**DOOR-TO-DOOR  
PROGRAM**



***When it comes to voter contact, one of the best and most traditional forms is canvassing door-to-door.***

***Canvassing puts the campaign in personal contact with voters, which aids in better results than phone banking.***

## WHERE TO START

There are a few questions you should ask before you start your canvassing campaign:

### 1. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF YOUR CANVASSING?

The purpose needs to be set and understood early in the process. What will both the people doing the knocking and the people at the door take away from the experience? In the beginning, you will want to focus on identifying those voters who share your candidate's stance on the issues while educating those who are unfamiliar with your candidate. You are also confirming that the voter(s) at each household are in fact registered to vote at that household. This process takes a few minutes at the door, but it will aid in persuasion next.

Once you have identified voters, you will have your canvassers reach out to undecideds with questions designed to help persuade them to support your candidate. An example of this could be, "Did you know that John Smith voted last year to cut taxes?" This style of question allows voters to gain information for your candidate.

Lastly, you want to reach out to supporters to let them know when the election is and where they will be voting. It is important to maximize your turnout to win.

### 2. WHO WILL BE DOING THE CANVASSING, AND WHAT THEY WILL NEED?

There are a few different ways you can design your canvassing army, and a lot of it will depend on your budget. With a large budget, it may be better to focus resources on hiring people to operate your door-to-door program. While this can be expensive, it should be rewarding with the results you will acquire. If you cannot afford to pay people to do door-to-door for you, then a great volunteer base will be necessary. Send staff members with volunteers, especially the first time, to show them how easy it can be.

All canvassers will need a list of people to contact, a script of questions to ask the voter, a map of where they are going to canvas, literature about the candidate and a winning attitude. The list may be a simple bubble sheet with some information on the voter, or it could be a tablet that will have the information on it. Whatever format it comes in, you must take time to explain to the canvasser how to use it. Scripts should be easy-to-ask questions and short. Maps must be clear and easy to follow, and literature should be both easy to carry and easy to leave behind, whether that's on a door or tucked somewhere safe at the door.



### 3. WHAT IS THE BEST TIME FOR YOU TO CANVAS?

Canvassing is similar to fishing. While you can go door-to-door virtually all the time, certain times are going to be more rewarding. Most people are not home during the week, so weekday knocking should be focused on communities with people who are more likely to be retired. After 3 p.m., canvassers should be out knocking on as many doors as possible. On Saturdays, you should take advantage of the fact that most people are at home and get your canvassers out any time after 9 a.m., with shifts of canvassers effectively knocking doors all day. On Sundays, door knocking should begin after noon.

### 4. WHAT IS THE GOAL?

You should always have a daily goal for your campaign and canvassers to hit, both individually and as groups. The important thing to remember is that goals should be challenging, but very much achievable. Set your volunteers up for success so they are motivated to return, and keep shifts to half-days so canvassers aren't out for more than a few hours at a time.

## PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Once you have answered all of these questions, you will have a great understanding of how to run a successful door-to-door effort. Some important things to remember: Make this fun and interesting for your volunteers. Check in on your canvassers often while they are knocking doors, and keep close track of your walk books and the data you get back. Perhaps the most important thing is the simplest ...

**REMEMBER** to say thank you.



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