

Canvassing Tips

Before you leave home:

- Check the weather and adjust accordingly (umbrella, water bottle, jacket).
- Dress appropriately – casual but presentable. Wear comfortable shoes.
- Bring your cell phone and your charger (or extra battery)

Safety first:

- Always canvass in teams of two (2) or more.
- Never lose sight of the person you are teamed up with.
- Never go inside anyone's house.
- Be on the alert for dogs! If you must enter a fenced-in area to reach the door, shake the fence first and see if any dogs are waiting for you. IF IT SAYS DO NOT ENTER, it probably means it.
- DO NOT go near any house or situation that looks dangerous or jump any fences to reach a voter's house.

Collecting information:

- Take accurate notes if you are filling out the card. Be sure to write legibly so that others are able to read and enter the data
- The information you collect through canvassing is pure gold. Write down anything you think will be helpful, including correcting voter information.
- Write down follow-up items including answering questions about voter registration and absentee ballots.

Best Practices:

- Look for clues about the voter/resident from their home (bumper stickers, kids' toys, type of car, etc.). Find a way to relate to them!
- Smile! Present yourself in a positive manner and look him or her in the eyes; 90% of communication is non-verbal. Remember at this stage you are just asking for information.
- Know your message. Do as much role playing as possible before you canvass so that you feel comfortable engaging voters in a conversation.
- After knocking, step back to allow the person to open the door and talk.
- Be brief when speaking. Be a good listener.
- Show respect by using the sidewalk instead of cutting through yards.
- Don't hesitate to say "I don't know" if you are asked a question you can't answer. If you can't answer a question, write it down and follow up with them later. A common occurrence with voter registration questions.
- Remember the goal is to get the resident to fill out the information on the card. Be ready to fill it out for them by asking a few questions..
- Avoid getting into an argument with a voter. It is a waste of time.
- Spend most of your time listening, and then pivot back to your questions.
- Keep your conversations with each voter to 5 minutes. The more doors you are able to knock on each hour will increase the number of quality contacts you can make.
- If the resident is sympathetic to our message, ask them if they would like to volunteer.
- NEVER leave material in the voter's mailbox. It is against federal law.
- Write down any issues or problems you may encounter.
- Don't get discouraged, even door slams can be useful information.