



The Minnesota Participation Project: Nonpartisan Nonprofit Voter Mobilization

*The Minnesota Participation Project is an initiative of the
Minnesota Council of Nonprofits with support from Grassroots Solutions*

Voter Registration Tactics Toolbox

Updated June, 2006

prepared by

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Minnesota Participation Project: Six Easy Steps to Voter Registration

Filling out voter registration cards can seem tricky, and so can remembering what you have to do to make sure that the registrations count. This is a quick guide to the things you have to remember to do to ensure that registrations are accepted.

1. Get the cards:

- The first step is of course getting some voter registration cards. Cards are available at the Secretary of State's office, or your county elections or city elections office.

2. Fill the card out with the person:

- Make sure that they check the boxes at the top.
- Make sure that they use their full address, including St./Ave and direction.
- Follow the order of ID preference:
 - MN Drivers license or ID card (You must use this if you have one)
 - If you do not have one, you can use the last 4 digits of your social security number.
 - If you have neither, write NONE.

3. If the person says they will mail the card:

- Explain that if they do mail it, they may be asked to show a picture I.D. at their polling place on Election Day. Assure them that you are turning in many people's cards and can make sure that theirs gets to the right place in time.
- As much as possible, try to persuade voters to let you turn in their cards.

4. Get their permission to contact them with information about the election and their polling place. You could have a clipboard sign-up for this purpose.

5. Remind the voter that they should bring their ID to the polls.

6. Hand-deliver the cards within 10 days to the county elections office.

- Any mailed voter registration cards, even if they are all in one box, will be flagged for proof of photo identification, and voters may be asked to provide a photo I.D. on Election Day. As such, it is much easier and more reliable to hand-deliver the cards.
- If you registered voters who live in different counties, deliver the cards to the Secretary of State's office.

Your next steps: Voter Education and GOTV!

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Minnesota Participation Project: Frequently Asked Voter Registration Questions

1. What if I registered but I didn't receive anything in the mail from the Secretary of State?

You should receive information about where to vote within a few weeks of registering. If you do not, you should call your county's elections office and ask them to check if your registration was accepted.... And be sure to bring your ID to the polls just in case.

2. What if my driver's license has a different address from the one I live at now?

You should register using your current address. On Election Day you should be able to vote. If there are problems, you may be asked to provide proof of your new residence. A utility bill will be sufficient. You may also register on Election Day using a utility bill or a voucher. A voucher is someone who lives in your precinct and comes with you to the polls to verify your residence. Don't forget to bring your ID to the polls!

3. How do I use a voucher?

A registered voter who lives in the precinct is allowed to vouch for the residence of up to 15 people on Election Day. For example, if you go to the polls with your neighbor, he or she is allowed to tell the election judge that you live in the precinct, and his or her word and signed oath will be accepted as proof of your residence. A voucher must live in your precinct! There is only one exception to this rule: if you live in a registered residential facility, such as a nursing home or homeless shelter, employees of that facility may vouch for you and any other residents who require a voucher on Election Day.

4. What is all this HAVA stuff? Is it going to screw up the election?

HAVA is the Help America Vote Act. Congress passed it to help make sure we do not have problems like we did in Florida in 2000. If you fill out your registration completely and follow the instructions you should not have any problems. And.... just in case.... bring your ID to the polls!

5. I am a college student, where should I vote?

Students can vote in their hometowns, either by absentee or in person. They can also register and vote at their address at school. To do so they should use any document that proves they are a student at the school. Finally they can do same day registration, with a school document or a voucher.

6. I am an ex-felon; do I have the right to vote?

If you have completed the terms of your sentence, **including parole**, your civil rights are automatically reinstated. Check with your parole officer if you are unsure about this. When you go to register and vote you may have your status challenged. If this

happens, ask for the head elections judge, explain your situation, and ask to take an oath swearing your right to vote. Once you have done this you should be able to vote.

7. What about people who are homeless? How do they register?

A person who is homeless or between permanent residences can register to vote using the address of a shelter where they are staying. They can pre-register using that address, which will be most effective if they plan to be living there at least some of the time up until Election Day. Or they can register same day using a voucher who lives in the same precinct. Alternatively, if you live in a homeless shelter an employee of that facility may vouch for you provided they have submitted the names of their employees to your county – ask today if they are prepared!

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8. How can victims of domestic violence register without having their personal information on public record?

There are two ways that this can be done:

- A victim of domestic violence can ask the Secretary of State’s office to allow them to register without adding their name and information to the public voting rolls. Many police officers and judges use this same process. The victim must provide the Secretary of State’s office with a written request to have their information taken off the public rolls for fear of safety of the voter or the voter’s family. NOTE: Prior to 2005, a court order was required to remove one’s name from the public voting rolls. All that is required now is a simple written request stating that the voter fears for their safety wishes to be removed from the public rolls.
- A victim of domestic violence can also register to vote same day, vote, and then ask their county elections office to remove them from the rolls. If they choose this option, they will have to reregister the next time they want to vote.

9. How can I convince someone to register if they do not want to?

Appeal to their emotions. What do they care about? What affects their family? How do those things relate to voting? If it doesn’t work, leave them some information; tell them you would like to speak with them again if they change their mind.

10. What do I need to make sure of on the voter registration card?

- Make sure you fill out your complete name as it appears on your Minnesota ID card.
- Make sure you fill out your complete address, including ave/st. and direction.
- Sign the card.
- Use the proper ID according to the priority list.
- Turn it in within 10 days in person.
- BRING YOUR ID TO THE POLLS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

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Minnesota Participation Project: Tabling for Voter Registration

Tabling is one of the best ways to register voters. It is easy to set up and can be very effective. This guide will show you the best ways to table, and where and when you should plan to do it.

Where to Table:

- **Community events**
 - Block Parties
 - Large Celebrations
 - High School Graduation Parties
- **High traffic areas**
 - Grocery stores or malls
 - College campuses
 - Churches

Steps to Take:

- **Get permission from leaders or store owners**
- **Recruit volunteers**
- **Set up in advance**

How to be proactive

- **Clipboards**
 - Send people into the crowd
 - Approach people as they come in
- **Be entertaining**
 - Offer candy or a prize
 - Have a fun game to play
 - Entice children, that will get their parents to you

When

- **Weekends**
 - Stay out of the sun
- **Not at stressful times**
 - No holidays or days before holidays
 - Not in extreme heat or cold
 - Not during rush hour

Add registrants to your list:

- **Get permission to contact registrants**
- **Add registrants to your GOTV list**

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Minnesota Participation Project: Voter Registration in an Office

The nice thing about registering voters in an office setting is that they come to you. Here are a few ways to make sure that you get as many people as possible registered, and that their registrations count.

Benefits of Office Registration

- **They come to you**
- **There is a trust relationship**
 - People are coming to you for a service or help. They trust your judgment, and will be willing to listen if you explain how registering and voting can help them.
- **It builds your organization's issue base**
 - For example, if you run a disability advocacy organization, and you register your clients to vote, not only have you created voters who will vote on disability advocacy issues, but you can call on these people as policy advocates with decision-makers. Nice work!

Know your privacy parameters

- **Consult with your organization's leadership about privacy concerns; you may or may not have to get permission to contact people on your existing lists**
 - Explain the benefits to the organization
 - Explain the importance on voting for the issue or community you work with

Train Staff

- **Meet individually or with small groups of staff**
- **Train them on filling out the cards, and how to offer voter registration.**
 - Ensure that staff can identify problem spots with the cards, so that cards they have clients fill out will be accepted.

Get Started

- **Have cards available at the front desk**
 - Ask the people who customarily have the first contact with the people who receive your services to offer registration to everyone who enters
- **Have project managers/social workers/counselors offer registration to all their clients**
 - This is where you may need permission
 - This is also the most effective way to do voter registration in an office

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Make it Count

- **Set up a system to collect cards and turn them in**
 - Cards must be turned in within 10 days of the date they were filled out. Don't waste all your effort by forgetting to turn them in!
 - Cards should be hand-delivered to the County Elections office. If they are mailed, these registrants may be required to present their ID at the polling place on Election Day. Make the trip to the Elections office instead!
 - Follow up! Include registrants in your candidate forum and GOTV efforts. Remind them to bring their ID to the polls.

Minnesota Participation Project: Guide to Running a Volunteer Canvass

This is a guide to some of the frequently asked questions about door knocking. It should help to prepare you to run a volunteer canvass for voter registration. The more you organize and prepare for your volunteers, the easier it will be for them to get out there and sign people up!

How do I decide where we should go?

We call this decision “targeting”, and you can do it in two ways:

1. Target the people on your organization’s list who are not registered. This is effective because it hits the exact people you know need to register, and those people are already affiliated with your organization.
2. Target by neighborhood. Talk to the League of Women Voters in your community; they should have turnout statistics for precincts that tell you which neighborhoods have the lowest turnout. You can also get this information from the Secretary of State’s office. Choose a neighborhood with low turnout, and go out and get people to join the rolls.

How big of a route can each person do?

If volunteers have to drive to specific houses, it is best not to give them very many, especially if the layout of the area is not well-organized. As a rough estimate, 20 houses is probably enough in a 3 hour time span if the houses are far apart, 30-35 if they are close. If volunteers will be going door-to-door, 4-8 blocks of houses should work, depending on the skill of the volunteer.

What should I give my volunteers?

Every volunteer should get a clipboard or piece of hard paper, instructions with an emergency contact number, a helpful hints or do’s and don’ts guide, a script, a map, a pen, some voter registration cards, and a sheet they can ask new voters to sign giving you permission to contact them later.

What if they want to go in pairs?

Send volunteers in pairs, but ask them to work on opposite sides of the street or alternate houses.

What do I need to teach my volunteers?

Explain in great detail the cards themselves. Go over the trouble spots a few times. Go over the process of what they should do and the script you have prepared. Impress on them the importance of personal safety and of being respectful to the voters. Practice with them, and give them hints on how to improve their rap. Give them bottled water to take with them on their walk.

What else am I forgetting?

Make sure people have fun. Door knocking is an enjoyable activity, and voter registration is a powerful one; make sure people enjoy what they are doing.

**Minnesota Participation Project:
Sample Script for Voter Registration Door Knocking**

This is a sample script, which can be altered for your organization, and used to help you door knock to register voters. You may want to make your script more in depth. You could provide additional information, or ask other questions.

Script for Canvassers

Hi, my name is John Johnson; I am with the Minnesota Action Organization. We are out in the neighborhood today registering voters.

1. Are you registered to vote?

- IF YES: have you moved recently?
 - IF YES: Well then you need to register at your new address. (Move to question 2)
 - IF NO: Well it looks like you are all set, thank you for your time.
- IF NO: (Move to question 2)

2. Can I help you register right now? It will just take a few minutes.

- IF YES: (Register the person to vote)
- IF NO: Are you sure? It is very important to vote and it will just take a few minutes. (if the person still says no, thank them and move on).

3. We would like to add you to our organizations list. If that is ok then we will remind you of your polling place when the election gets close. Can I have you fill this out? (Hand them permission sheet).

4. Thank you very much! I am glad you decided to register and vote!

Minnesota Participation Project: Instruction Page for Volunteer Door Knockers.

This is a sample instruction sheet that can be given to door knockers. This sheet may be more complex than many of you need it to be. For others it may not give enough detail at all. Use it as a guide to the kinds of things you need to make sure your volunteers do and know.

Instructions for Canvassers

Thank you for volunteering with The Minnesota Action Organization! We appreciate your help. We want to make your door knocking effort as effective and fun for both you and MAO as possible. Please follow these instructions carefully.

- **Make sure you and your partner work closely together.** Check in with each other at the end of each block. If one of you is going slower than the other, wait for the other person to finish.
- **Please knock only on doors that reside within the route on your map.** Other volunteers will be working the area on either side, and we do not want to overlap.
- Do not enter any homes. Do not enter yards that look scary. **Do not put yourself into any situation that makes you concerned about your personal safety.**
- **Fill out the card with the person and take it with you.**
- Make sure you remember to **have them check the boxes at the top.**
- **Make sure you follow the ID chain properly** (MN ID or Drivers License/Last 4 digits of social security number/NONE).
- Make sure they fill out their whole **address, including street and direction.**
- **Encourage them to fill out the permission sheet** so that we can contact them.
- If you have questions or a problem call us at **651-999-9999**. If there is an emergency call **911**.
- When you return at the end, **cross off the streets you finished, and turn in your clipboard and cards.**
- **Thank you again, have fun out there!**

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Minnesota Participation Project: Helpful Hints for Doorknockers

Door knocking is a highly effective way to register potential voters and get them to the polls. These tips will help you make sure that your door knocking experience is fun and successful.

- 1. Grab a bottle of water. You will get thirsty and it may be hot out.**
- 2. Rattle gates and look for dogs in yards.**
- 3. Expect that you might only get an answer at 1/3 of the doors.**
- 4. Do not enter houses. Do not enter yards that look scary. Do not put yourself in any situation that makes you uncomfortable for your safety.**
- 5. Knock on the door instead of ringing the bell. Many doorbells are broken.**
- 6. Wait just 10-20 seconds after knocking on the door.**
- 7. It's okay to say that you do not know the answer to a question. In that case, try to register the person anyway.**
- 8. Be respectful of people's property. Close gates and don't walk on lawns.**
- 9. Use the emergency contact information if you have problems.**
- 10. Carry a small amount of money and/or a cell phone with you so that you can call someone if you need help.**
- 11. Never go into an apartment building by yourself.**
- 12. Do not argue, simply thank the person and tell them you have to move on.**
- 13. Do not spend too much time at one house.**
- 14. SMILE AND HAVE FUN!!!!**

