



INDIANA DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Precinct Committee Chair HANDBOOK

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County Party Basics

How to Use This Handbook

This guide is an excerpt from the Indiana Democratic Party County Chair Handbook and is primarily designed to help you fulfill the responsibilities of a Precinct Committee Person, but also contains valuable information for activists, and volunteers.

The intent for this handbook is to be a living document that you will come back to as new tools and resources become available. We will also have hyperlinks (underlined in blue) throughout this handbook that reference outside materials. Please check out those resources as you navigate this handbook.

While the topics covered in this handbook are universally helpful, you know your precinct and county best, so feel free to expand on these concepts to create your own county-specific handbook. You are more than welcome to adopt this handbook's content, structure, imagery, and branding. We recommend maintaining a printed version as well as a secure, but shareable, PDF version.

If you need additional guidance, we urge you to consult your county-level Democratic leaders, as well as the Indiana Democratic Party, for additional ideas. You can find these contacts on our website, linked here, under "[Our Party](#)."

Several times throughout this Handbook, you will see references to Progress Wiki. Progress Wiki is a platform we use to house valuable resources, like this Handbook. [To request access to Progress Wiki, please submit this form.](#)

What Does It Mean to Be a Democrat?

The Indiana Democratic Party brings together the political aspirations of a large and diverse group of people who share a set of core values. Democrats are the people you see in your community: at work, at church, at the store, and even at the ballpark. We come from all walks of life, but our shared beliefs and values help shape a strong state and nation where every citizen has the opportunity to succeed.

Today, federal, state, and local races still find Democrats routinely outspent by Republicans and their special interest collaborators. Ultimately, no amount of money will replace the effectiveness of neighbor-to-neighbor campaigning and direct voter contact. Democrats win when we focus our efforts on active and effective grassroots campaigns. You are joining with thousands of other Democratic Party Officials across America in this effort.

County Party Basics

Precinct Organization

Precincts are the foundation of the Indiana Democratic Party and the key to political victory.

This section provides a basis for precinct organization: you'll find materials, definitions, responsibilities, goals, tips, and other information to help county chairs, precinct officers, and precinct workers understand the nature and structure of precinct work.

What is a precinct?

The basic unit of organization in Indiana is the voting precinct. It is a geographical subdivision of a county, town, or city that is traditionally connected to one polling place. Most importantly, it is your neighborhood. You know the people, the schools, and the community centers. You have your finger on the pulse of the precinct. You understand the assets and needs of your neighborhood and have a desire to improve it. *A precinct is where elections are won or lost.*

Please see our Precinct Information Template in Progress Wiki if you need help keeping track of your precinct geographic details.

What is a Precinct Committee?

The precinct organization, called the Precinct Committee—consists of at least two active Democrats who reside in that precinct; one Chair and one Vice-Chair of differing genders. The precinct organization provides continuity for the communication of Democratic values, and an ongoing structure for party activities and organized campaigns. It also elects County Party Leadership and provides support for campaigns, party fundraising, voter registration drives, etc. While there is a limit to the number of Precinct Committee People per precinct, there is no limit to the number of volunteers per precinct.

What is a Precinct Committee Person?

A Precinct Committeeperson (PC) serves as the main communication source between the Indiana Democratic Party and current and future Democrats in his or her precinct.

The Precinct Committeeperson is charged with connecting the people in the precinct to the Democratic Party, and the Party to the people. The PC is responsible for carrying out the duties listed below.

County Party Basics

Precinct Committee Person Duties

- Attend County Executive Committee meetings and provide updates about your precinct.
- Carry out duties assigned to him or her by the County Executive Committee.
- Recommend Democratic candidates to the County Chair.
- Provide poll worker recommendations for their Election Day voting location and other positions to support local elections.
- Obtain materials for precinct organizing: maps, voter lists, and party workers.
- Begin regular precinct meetings. Plan a calendar of precinct campaign activities and assign specific responsibilities to the Precinct Vice-Chair and precinct volunteers.
- Encourage strong participation from members in precinct meetings and in the county events.
- Expand the precinct committee, bringing in volunteers from all areas of the precinct. Try to involve newcomers in the area.
- Coordinate precinct activities with the county party. Attend county or district trainings bringing information from these meetings back to precinct volunteers.
- Get to know your Democratic and Independent neighbors by:
 - Hosting a house party and inviting your neighbors to talk about politics and issues concerning your precinct.
 - Canvassing the precinct using the walking list or call list provided by your county party organization.
- Work with the County Party to arrange special voter registration events or door-to-door registration in the precinct.
- Oversee improvement of voter lists: adding/updating phone numbers and addresses, marking voters as deceased, noting those who have moved so they can be contacted in their new location, etc. Update VAN with those data changes through your Chair or local Dem HQ.

County Party Basics

- Oversee activities of the coordinated campaign (if present) as they are carried out in the precinct.
- Work with the County Party to plan the precinct's role in the GOTV program: recruiting volunteers, creating walk or phone lists, etc.
- Obtain street canvass lists for GOTV and make sure undecided or ticket-splitting voters are visited.
- Arrange for the distribution of literature and campaign materials in precinct.
- Assist in fundraising for county and state parties.
- Be a visibly proud Indiana Democrat - display yard signs, window signs, campaign buttons, bumper stickers.
- Transmit all records pertaining to the office to successor within ten (10) days of vacating office.

The duties of the Precinct Vice-Chair are:

- Preside at precinct meetings in the absence of the chair.
- Attend Precinct Committee and County Party events/meetings.
- Carry out other duties as may be assigned by the County Party or Precinct Committee Chair.
- Transmit all records pertaining to the office to successor within ten (10) days of vacating office

County Party Basics

How do I become a Precinct Committee Person?

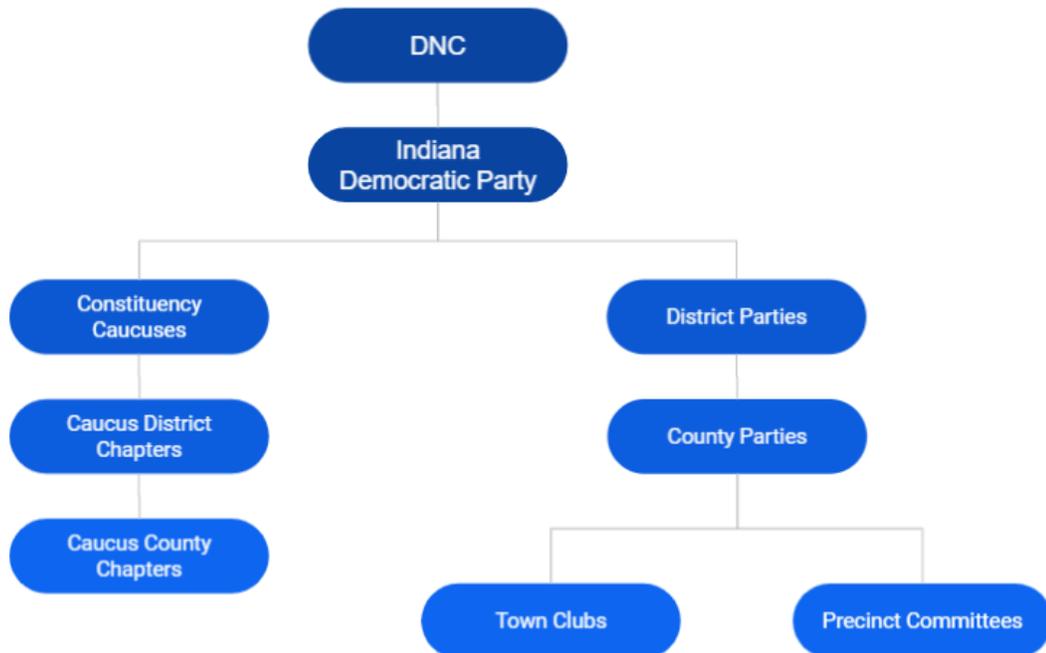
For the eligibility rules around running for Party Offices, please consult Section V of our [State Party Rules book, linked here](#)

One becomes a Democratic Precinct Committee Person (PC) via:

1. *Appointment*

- It is not uncommon that a PC starts out as an appointed PC because Democratic PC elections are held every four years in the non-presidential, or “mid-term,” federal election. Becoming an appointed precinct committee person begins with a Democrat in good standing expressing interest to their County Chair. Appointed precinct chairs need not reside in their appointed precinct, but you must live in the county where you want to serve in this capacity. It is best to reside in or around your appointed precinct, although being a PC only requires the commitment to help achieve Democratic victories. While there is a limit to the number of PCs per precinct (one Chair and one Vice-Chair of differing genders

Party Structure



Field & Data

What Is Field?

NOTE: This section will primarily focus on Field, but Data is closely connected. VoteBuilder, also known as VAN, is where we house our voter file. VAN allows you to target voters and therefore, execute a successful field plan. The IDP VANual is where we cover VAN's features and how to use them. This handbook and the VANual are designed to be used together, so we strongly recommend having the VANual ready to reference as you go through this section.

Field is all about person-to-person interaction to communicate our message to voters, often referred to as direct voter contact. TV, digital, and ads are all great ways you can communicate with voters, but none are as effective as having a real conversation with a voter at their door or over the phone and building a relationship with them. This relationship building is also known as organizing. It is important that you are using targeted lists to talk to voters.

You may do two types of field engagement in your district.

Persuasion Conversations are meant to move people closer to supporting you on Election Day. We start to talk to persuadable voters earlier on in the campaign cycle.

Mobilization Conversations are meant to ensure people turn out and vote. Many of these people are Democrats and will only vote for you after having an effective conversation. Mobilization conversations help to push turnout. We start to mobilize voters before early voting and Election Day.

How To Create A Field Plan

To access our Field Plan Template, please go to Progress Wiki.

Volunteer Recruitment

Contacting the voters in your County can feel like an overwhelming project, so that's why it's important to bring in some help. Recruiting volunteers is a necessary step in a field plan to ensure you are meeting your goals and reaching as many voters as possible.

Before recruiting additional volunteers, it's helpful to check in with your precinct committees to make sure they are walking their neighborhoods and communicating with the voters in their

Field & Data

precinct. This will give you a better sense of where you might need volunteers to bridge the gaps and fill shifts.

Once you have that information, you can start recruiting volunteers. Here are a couple of methods that can help.

- Call Time
 - Under the “My Campaign” side of VAN, you can create a list of strong Democrats, previous volunteers, etc. and then create a phone bank out of it. Call time can be discouraging at times, but a strong list and script can rake in quite a few volunteer shifts. It’s helpful to pick peak times to call, like evenings Monday-Thursday.
- Texts
 - In a world where fewer and fewer people are answering their phones, texts are a great alternative! Services like Spoke and Hustle can help you execute a peer texting campaign. The best texts are short, sweet, and include opt-out language, like “Reply ‘STOP’ to Unsubscribe.”
 - There may be some changes to political texting regulations in the near future, so check back here in the coming months as more news becomes available.
- Emails & Social Media
 - Email blasts can be a great way to reach a lot of people in a short amount of time. The only thing to keep in mind is that emailing and posts are often not sustainable methods of volunteer recruitment for a single event. 1 or 2 emails/posts may turn around a few signups, but sending too many can burn your list or annoy your followers.
 - It’s also important to keep in mind that a volunteer is more likely to commit after a real, 1:1 conversation than an indirect, mass communication.
- Tabling Events
 - Anytime you are out in the community is a great opportunity to recruit volunteers. If folks approach your table or stand, ask them if they are interested in volunteering and try to sign them up for a specific event if possible. Make sure you collect their name, email, and phone number so you can reach back out.

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- County Party meetings
 - At your County Party meeting, you're likely surrounded by dedicated and energized Democrats. This is a perfect opportunity to sign them up for a volunteer event! Carve out some time at the end of your meeting to do a field pitch. In the pitch, it is critical to convey a sense of urgency. After you pass around a sign up sheet, socialize around the room and make sure everybody has had a chance to fill it out. If they didn't, see if there's another type of event they'd be interested in helping out with in the future.
- Relational Organizing
 - While a lot of time is spent trying to recruit new folks, don't overlook the people you already know! It might seem a little intimidating to make a volunteer ask to a friend or family member, but these are the people who already know you, your story, and your passion. If they share similar beliefs, making a plan to volunteer together could happen easily! Even though you know them, make sure you're still keeping track of their volunteer shifts and other related data

Targeting Voters

Targeting voters is the primary link between Field and Data. The data behind targeting voters allows a field campaign to ensure they are having the most effective conversations with the right voters and the right time.

How you target your voters depends on what stage of the field campaign you are in, but you will always start with creating a list in VAN. You can use vote history, geography, scores, demographics, and several other list features in VAN to target.

To learn more about targeting voters, creating lists, and other related tools, please see the VANual section on "Lists."

How To Talk To Voters

While talking to voters is the primary goal of a field program, *how* you talk to them is what determines a successful conversation.

Here are some tips to have a productive and engaging conversation with a voter while you are out in the field.

Field & Data

- **Introduce yourself.** No matter how you're communicating, start by saying your name and what County Party you are with. You are reaching out to the voter and they likely weren't expecting you, so you want to make sure they know who you are and the organization you are representing.
- **Make sure you are talking to the correct voter.** It's easy to get excited and wrapped up in your script, but a great conversation isn't very helpful to your field campaign if you are talking to the wrong person. Clarify that you are speaking to the right person first.
- **SMILE!** This sounds very basic, but smile while you're talking, even if it's over the phone. The voter can easily read your tone and expression, so smiling is an easy way to convey your interest and enthusiasm.
- **Be yourself!** Nerves can start to creep in when you're talking to somebody you don't know or using a new script. Remember that the goal of the conversation is to build a connection with this voter, so try to stay calm and just be yourself.

While staying on message is important, you also don't want to sound like a robot reading

the script word for word. Practice the script beforehand and try making little tweaks to make it your own (for example, changing the greeting to fit how you would greet them.) The key to an effective conversation is hitting the talking points AND keeping it conversational. The voter might not remember everything you said to them, but they will remember how you made them feel.

- **Listen!** A great conversation requires at least 2 active participants, so make sure you're giving the voter plenty of opportunity to answer your questions, talk about the issues that are important to them, and ask questions of their own.
- **Don't be afraid to pivot!** Conversations about politics and issues can quickly spiral out of control. While you want to listen to the voter, don't be afraid to pivot the conversation back to the script and your talking points if needed.

For example, *"I hate all of the negative political ads that have been running lately too.*

That's one of the reasons I'm out here knocking doors with the Posey County Democrats because we believe that having real conversations with real voters, like yourself, is the best way to reach solutions for the problems facing our community, like good jobs and broadband access."

Field & Data

- **Try to keep your conversations around 5 minutes.** While these conversations are extremely valuable, nobody wants to be stuck on the phone or at a door for half an hour. If you feel the conversation is going too long, politely interrupt and tell them that you have other voters to get to, but that you'd love to finish this conversation another time. Flag their name and contact information so you can follow-up when you have more time.
- Is very specific.
 - Try to get a hard commitment for specific shifts or events.
 - For example, replace: *"Can you make 10 AM work?"* with *"Does 10 AM or 1 PM work better for you?"*
- Is urgent and gives context.
 - Elections are won by small margins, so we need every vote we can get to make that possible. That could come down to a conversation a volunteer has with a voter in their neighborhood, so make it clear that we need their help to get us to victory.

Literature

Campaign or County Party literature is a superb asset to carry with you while you are out on the doors. Literature is a pamphlet or card that you give to the voter that has your talking points, candidate info, election information, or anything else prominently related to the purpose of conversation. There is a lot of creative freedom when it comes to the graphics and design of your literature, but there are 2 important things to keep in mind.

- Compliance
 - State law requires disclaimers (that is, "paid for by X" language) on communications. Failure to include a disclaimer on communications can result in serious fines. Further, a mailed communication of more than 100 pieces of substantially similar pieces of mail that includes an Indiana absentee ballot application is required to set forth, in a clear and conspicuous manner, the name and mailing address of the person who mailed the communication. [Please consult with Indiana's Campaign Finance Manual to make sure you are complying with state law.](#)
 - If you intend to use the image or likeness of a federal candidate (that is, a candidate running for U.S. President, U.S. Vice President, U.S. Senate, or U.S. House), please consult with the state party or the Democratic staff at the Indiana Election Division to ensure compliance with federal and state law.

Field & Data

- Union Bug
 - As a political party that stands with labor unions, it is important that your literature is printed at a local, union printer with the appropriate union bug.

If you have any questions about literature, reach out to the State Party.

Voter Registration

Voter Registration is the perfect, year-round organizing activity to keep your volunteers engaged. You don't need a candidate or an election to execute a successful voter registration event.

Here are some helpful tips to run a voter registration event!

Voter Registration Requirements in Indiana

- To register to vote in Indiana, a person must:
 - Be 18-years old not later than the date of the November general or municipal election or, if applicable, a special election.
 - It is possible for a 17-year old to register to vote as long as the person turns 18 on or before the date of the November election. If registered before the primary, an "underage" voter CAN vote in the primary on federal, state, local, and party offices but if a public question is on the ballot, the question will not be on the 17-year old's primary ballot.
 - Be a resident of their precinct for at least 30-days before the date of the election.
 - Not currently imprisoned following conviction of a crime.
 - Be a U.S. citizen.
- People with felony convictions CAN register to vote in Indiana, even if the person is on probation, parole, home detention, or enrolled in a community corrections program. Further, a person in jail that has not yet been sentenced may register to vote. However, Indiana law does not allow a person who is currently imprisoned following conviction of a crime to register to vote.
- A voter does not need to provide proof of identity when registering to vote, as the individual is signing under the penalties of perjury if the information is true, accurate, and complete. However, some first-time voters where their registration form is MAILED into county officials will be asked to provide proof of residency, which can be an Indiana ID but also be a bank statement, voter registration card, paycheck stub, et

Field & Data

- A voter must provide the nine-digit credential number found on their Indiana driver's license or Indiana ID card or Indiana learner's permit; if a person does not have an Indiana credential, then the voter can provide the last four digits of their Social Security number; if the voter does not have an SSN, then the voter marks the "none" box or writes in the word "none" and a voter ID number will be assigned to the person.
 - NOTE: Indiana law requires a person to have an Indiana credential number to use the online voter registration portal at indianavoters.com. This is necessary because the credential number is used to pull the voter's signature from the BMV record into the electronic registration database. If you are using the online website at your event and a person does not have an Indiana credential, offer them a paper registration form! The voter can include the last four of their Social Security number, for example.
- A voter must sign their paper voter registration form, unless the voter is a person with disabilities. Another individual (except for the person's union representative or employer) may assist the voter with signing their name. If you assist a person with signing their name, please be sure to complete the affidavit of assistance found on the state and federal voter registration form.
- You must mail or hand deliver completed voter registration forms to your county clerk's office no later than noon (local prevailing time), ten (10) days after taking custody of the voter registration form. The ten-day clock begins the moment the voter hands-over their paper registration form to another individual, even if the form is turned over to a second person to turn in!
 - County party activists are encouraged to use the federal voter registration form. If you use the Indiana voter registration form (VRG-7 or VRG-11) and take custody of it to turn in, then you must complete the receipt found in the top right corner of the form to hand to the voter AND complete the affidavit found in the lower right corner of the form. There is no receipt requirement on the federal form, though state law requires federal AND state voter registration forms to be turned into the county voter registration official not later than noon, ten days after taking custody of the form.

Indiana's Photo ID Law

- To vote on Election Day or during in-person absentee or "early" voting, an individual must have a valid photo ID issued by the state or federal government that is current or expired since the last federal general election (Nov 3rd 2020). The name on the photo ID must conform (not be exact!) to their voter's registration.

Field & Data

- There is no requirement in state law that the address on a person's driver's license match their registration record. In fact, a valid passport meets the four criteria in state law to serve as an acceptable ID for voting purposes and it does not include an address.
- State University IDs are acceptable if the ID displays a photo, the voter's name that conforms with their voter registration information, and includes an expiration date.
- Private university IDs cannot be used for photo ID purposes, as a private university does not meet the "state-issued" standard that a public university can.
- Some military and tribal IDs may be exempt from the expiration date. More information can be found <https://www.in.gov/sos/elections/voter-information/photo-id-law/>

Encouraging Someone to Register

- Tell them it is quick and easy!
- Your voice matters! Elected officials have to answer to your thoughts and requests when you vote.
- Elections have consequences. No matter whether you vote or not, those elected officials are still making policies that will affect your everyday life. So why not have a say in who those elected officials are.
- Your vote counts! Races are won by a small margin of votes all the time.

Best Practices

- ALWAYS use the Federal Voter Registration Form.
- Highlight the important fields for the voter to fill out, except for the voter's signature line. Doing so can make it difficult for registration officials to get a clear scan of the voter's signature, which is used for signature comparison purposes.
- Make sure the voter puts down their phone number or email address, so the clerk can contact them if there are any issues with their registration.
- Look over the form before they walk away.

Field & Data

- Again, return the completed form to your county voter registration office not later than noon, ten (10) days after taking custody of another person's registration form.
- Explain to the voter that they will receive a voter registration card in the mail within the next few weeks. The voter can also check indianavoters.com for more information about their registration.
- Don't give up! Every piece of data helps Democrats.
If they are willing to talk to you at length about Democratic issues or candidates, they might be a great person to get more involved in your County Party.

To access strong scripts for Canvassing, Phone Banking, or Text Banking, check out the resources we have on Progress Wiki.

The Hard Ask

The Hard Ask is key to conversations with volunteers and voters. The Hard Ask is a structured tool by which County Party Leaders communicate campaign priorities to activists, volunteers, stakeholders, and community leaders in order to effectively grow the organization.

When Can I Use the Hard Ask?

- Have a 1:1 meeting with you
- Host a phonebank or canvass
- Attend a phonebank or canvass
- Host a house party
- Attend a house party
- Help run your County Party office
- Help with data entry
- Provide supporter housing for an organizer
- Take on new roles in the County Party

Field & Data

The Hard Ask...

- Uses strong language.
 - Instead of “yes/no” questions, ask “either/or” questions.
 - For example, *“We’re hosting a phone bank this weekend and have several shifts throughout the day! Can we count on you to join us on Saturday or Sunday?”*

Debunking Voter Registration Myths

- MYTH: “I’ve heard that I can’t register to vote because I’ve been convicted of a crime and spent time in prison.”
FACT: You can register to vote as soon as you are released from incarceration, even if on probation, parole, or home detention or enrolled in community corrections programs.
- MYTH: “I am currently homeless so I cannot register to vote because I don’t have a permanent address.”
FACT: It is recommended that a person experiencing homelessness use the address where they generally reside, even if it’s a street corner or park as their residence. Some shelters may allow a person to use their address for purposes of receiving mail; however, this should be included on the “mailing address” line of the form.
- MYTH: “I know you need a new registration if I move to another state but I just moved across town so I don’t need to update my registration.”
FACT: Even if you move WITHIN the same county, you should re-register to update your new address. The state’s fail-safe law may not permit you to go to your old polling place to vote one last time, depending when and where the person moved. This is especially true if you leave your county or state.
- MYTH: “If I don’t register to vote, I won’t have to serve jury duty.”
FACT: Registering to vote makes you no more likely to get called for jury duty than having a state ID or Indiana driver’s license or paying state taxes.

[If you have any questions about accessing voter registration targeting data, please submit the form linked here.](#)

Field & Data

Voter Registration Application

Before completing this form, review the General, Application, and State specific instructions.

Are you a citizen of the United States of America? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Will you be 18 years old on or before election day? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <i>If you checked "No" in response to either of these questions, do not complete form.</i> <small>(Please see state-specific instructions for rules regarding eligibility to register prior to age 18.)</small>		This space for office use only.		
1	<input type="checkbox"/> Mr. <input type="checkbox"/> Miss <input type="checkbox"/> Mrs. <input type="checkbox"/> Ms.	Last Name	First Name	Middle Name(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Jr. <input type="checkbox"/> II <input type="checkbox"/> Sr. <input type="checkbox"/> IV
2	Home Address		Apt. or Lot #	City/Town State Zip Code
3	Address Where You Get Your Mail If Different From Above		City/Town	State Zip Code
4	Date of Birth Month Day Year	5 Telephone Number (optional)	6 ID Number* (See item 6 in the instructions for your state)	
7	Choice of Party <small>(See item 7 in the instructions for your state)</small>	8 Race or Ethnic Group <small>(See item 8 in the instructions for your state)</small>		
9	I have reviewed my state's instructions and I swear/affirm that: <input type="checkbox"/> I am a United States citizen <input type="checkbox"/> I meet the eligibility requirements of my state and subscribe to any oath required. <input type="checkbox"/> The information I have provided is true to the best of my knowledge under penalty of perjury. If I have provided false information, I may be fined, imprisoned, or (if not a U.S. citizen) deported from or refused entry to the United States.		Please sign full name (or put mark) A Date: _____ Month Day Year	

If you are registering to vote for the first time, please refer to the application instructions for information on submitting copies of valid identification documents with this form.

Please fill out the sections below if they apply to you.

If this applicant is for a change of name, what was your name before you changed it?

A	<input type="checkbox"/> Mr. <input type="checkbox"/> Miss <input type="checkbox"/> Mrs. <input type="checkbox"/> Ms.	Last Name	First Name	Middle Name(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Jr. <input type="checkbox"/> II <input type="checkbox"/> Sr. <input type="checkbox"/> IV
B	Street (or route and box number)		Apt. or Lot #	City/Town/County State Zip Code

Field & Data

Tabling

Setting up tables at community events is an excellent way to increase party visibility and reach new voters.

Check local community events calendars, farmer's markets, festivals, and parades for opportunities to set up a booth or table.

When you secure a table space, here is a list of things to bring.

- Table if one isn't provided
- Tent or canopy to provide shade
- County Party branded or solid blue tablecloth
- Volunteer sign-up sheets
- Voter registration forms
- County Party swag, like buttons, pens, stickers, etc
- County Party literature
- Candy

House Parties

In the political world, house parties don't quite carry the same meaning that they may have in your college days. House parties are small gatherings of Democrats, usually over food and refreshments, to socialize and organize. They are usually hosted by a well-known member of your County Party.

House parties can strengthen existing relationships, but allow new ones to form within the County Party.

House parties are also a great opportunity to make your field pitch and recruit volunteers.

Field & Data

Canvassing

Canvassing is the most impactful method of direct voter contact. Canvassing, also known as “knocking doors,” is walking through a neighborhood with a targeted list and script to have direct conversations with voters at their front doors.

The proof is in the numbers.

- Voters reached by yard signs are <1% more likely to vote for our candidates.
- When reached by phone, they are 3-4% more likely to vote for our candidates.
- When reached by a door knock, they are 7-10% more likely to vote for our candidates.



Here are some tips to ensure your volunteers get the most out of their canvassing experience.

- Make sure your volunteers have everything they need. Literature packets, clipboard, pens, walk lists/MiniVan, tote bags, and water are all essential to a successful canvass.
- If a volunteer has never canvassed before, try buddying them with another volunteer to make them feel more comfortable.
- Encourage them to practice their script before knocking their first door. Convey the importance of staying on message, but let them know that it’s okay to adjust small parts to make it more conversational.
- If your volunteer has a smartphone, ask if they can download MiniVan and track their data that way. This will make it easier for them to find their next door AND make data entry easier on you.
- If possible, give your volunteers some County Party swag so that they can be easily identified as a Democrat at the door.

Field & Data

- Make sure your volunteers know that it is **ILLEGAL** to put literature in a mailbox. Encourage them to leave under a doormat or rolled up in a door handle.
- Let your volunteers know that it is okay to take breaks. Prime canvassing season is usually during the summer, so let them know to drink plenty of water.
- Debrief with them. Check-in after their shift. Ask what went well and what didn't go well. This will help you know you should keep doing and where you may have opportunities to improve your program.

Phone Banking

While Phone Banking isn't as effective as canvassing, it is still a great way to reach voters. Phone Banks can either be created through Virtual Phone Banks or printed call lists. If you are interested in setting up a phone bank, check out the VANual to learn more.

Here are some tips to help your phone bank volunteers.

- Make sure the phone banker has access to a phone or strong reception. County Parties often invest in burner phones to ensure their volunteers are prepared.
- If your volunteer is using a Virtual Phone Bank, make sure they have access to a computer and strong internet.
- Provide an easy to read legend to help your volunteers understand what all of the response options mean.
- Be honest with your volunteers. It is normal to get a lot of "Not Home" or "Disconnected" or "Wrong Number" calls. Encourage them to remain positive and emphasize how valuable their work is to the County Party's goals.
- Encourage breaks. Phone banking can be draining at times, so providing opportunities to stretch, go to the bathroom, or grab a snack is important.
- Similar to canvassing, you will want to debrief with the volunteer. Unfortunately, voters can be more hostile over the phone, so the risk of a negative experience is a little higher. If they did have a tough call, let them talk to you about it and again emphasize how grateful you are to have them a part of the County Party Volunteer Team.

Field & Data

Texting

Similar to what was mentioned in the Volunteer Recruitment, Services like Spoke and Hustle also be used to execute a text campaign to reach voters. The best texts are short, sweet, and include opt-out language, like “Reply ‘STOP’ to Unsubscribe.”

While texting is a great way to reach several voters in a short amount of time, there are currently a few obstacles when it comes to texting voters. There may be some changes to political texting regulations in the near future, so check back here in the coming months as more news becomes available.

Events

When you are creating your events, we strongly recommend using Mobilize. Mobilize connects mission-driven organizations and supporters to make the world more just, inclusive, and democratic. It’s a great tool to track your events and event sign-ups. Mobilize also offers VAN integration, which makes it a lot easier to track and maintain your related data.

The Indiana Democratic Party offers 2 options when it comes to Mobilize.

1. County Party Sub-Group
 - If a County Party decides to have a sub group, that means that they will have their own Mobilize page under the State Party umbrella. The County Party will be responsible for creating and tracking their own events within Mobilize.
2. IDP adds your County Party Event
 - The State Party also has a statewide Mobilize dashboard. If your County Party doesn’t have the skillset or capacity to maintain their own Mobilize page, the State Party can create and track your events for you. The Digital Strategist will set weekly reminders and deadlines to collect event requests. [To submit your event request, please follow this link.](#)

Within Mobilize, you can easily schedule supporters for events, update event statuses, and send mass communications to past or future attendees.

On Progress Wiki, we have access to several Mobilize training materials if needed.

Field & Data

Data Entry

To learn more about data entry, please visit IDP's VANual on Progress Wiki for more information.

GOTV

Some voters, rather than voting early, choose to vote on Election Day. Others request an ABS-Mail ballot but neglect to return it. In order to ensure they all vote, we must have an effective GOTV program.

The final four days, including Election Day, are when 100% of our efforts are focused on ensuring that every likely supporter (who hasn't already voted) gets to the polls on Election Day. This involves reaching as many voters as possible through knocking doors, phone banking, and texting all-day those last 4 days until the polls close on Election Night.

During the GOTV period, we are focused exclusively on those Democrats and others who have been identified as likely Democratic supporters. We do NOT want to encourage votes for Republicans.

GOTV is a period of time when we involve hundreds of new and returning volunteers, operate from many locations at once, and coordinate in new ways to ensure we are covering as much ground as possible. Every involved member of the County Party is needed to reach the finish line.

Voter Protection

Voter protection starts with ensuring your County Party is fulfilling its obligations to supporting local election administration, including:

- **Nominating an individual to serve as the Democratic Party member to the county election board.** This person cannot be a candidate, elected official, or a chair or treasurer of a candidate's committee. Once nominated, the clerk must appoint the individual to serve. The Democratic member of the county election board serves at the pleasure of the county chair. See IC 3-6-5, generally, for more details. (Lake, Porter, and Tippecanoe Counties have a slightly different structure found in IC 3-6-5.2, IC 3-6-5.4, and IC 3-6-5.6, respectively.)
- **Nominating absentee voter boards, Election Day poll workers, absentee ballot counters, and other important bi-partisan election support needs.** State law requires the county election board to notify the Chair how many absentee voter boards used to support absentee-by-mail, "early" voting, and travel board are needed before each election; how many Election Day poll worker positions are to be filled; how many absentee counter teams the board needs to count absentee ballots at the central location (and couriers, if paper lists are delivered to Election Day voting sites); how many remake teams and provisional ballot counter teams are needed for post-Election Day work. The Chair has the right under state law to nominate qualified individuals to these roles, and the county election board must appoint them, if the person is otherwise qualified to serve in these roles. The election process relies upon and requires bi-partisan support, and the county chair has a responsibility to recruit and nominate individuals to these positions. If the chair fails to nominate persons to these roles by the deadline, then the county election board may fill the open positions.
- **Identifying watchers to be on-site at "early" voting and Election Day locations.** State law permits qualified individuals to be the party's watcher at these locations; however, the county (or state) chair must issue written credentials to the individuals. A watcher is not permitted to interfere with the process and instead observes and reports issues back to the county party to resolve.

In most counties, the County Clerk is the chief voter registration official for the county. In a few instances, the county has a bi-partisan Board of Registration. In those limited circumstances, the County Chair appoints a registered voter of the county to serve as the Democratic member of the Voter Registration Board. (As of this handbook's revision date, only Allen, LaPorte, Madison, Marion, St. Joseph, Vanderburgh, and Vigo counties have a separate Board of Registration.)

Voter Protection

The Indiana Election Division is a bi-partisan agency with Democratic and Republican staff, led by two co-directors. The Division publishes a number of resources to assist local election officials, which are posted to the "Election Administrators Portal" at in.gov/sos/elections. Please reach out to the Democratic staff at IED if you have questions about state voter registration or election laws. (For federal election support, visit the Federal Election Commission website at fec.gov.)