

REGISTRATION

First Big Step Toward Victory

*This is a
How-to-do-it
Booklet on
Conducting
Registration Drives*

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WHY REGISTRATION IS VITAL

There are more Democrats than Republicans in America, but we lose many elections because millions of Democrats don't go to the polls on election day.

In the Presidential election year of 1956, 39.6% of the country's potential voters did *not* vote. In the Congressional election year of 1958, it is even more startling to note that 56.3% of the country's potential voters did *not* vote.

Each year approximately nine million young people reach voting age—5.4% of the population. Each year around thirty-three million people move—19.8% of the population. All of this proves registration is a never ending task.

Registration laws and regulations vary widely from state to state and locality to locality. This little booklet cannot cover all situations, but it does give a simple plan of action for organizing a local registration campaign.

There still are many areas where registration is not required by law. Even in these areas, a voter canvass is essential. The same techniques of organization apply and much the same information is desirable. The purpose of a voter canvass is the same as a registration drive—obtaining the information necessary to get out the Democratic vote on election day.

1956
Potential Voters

Actual Voters

1958
Potential Voters

Actual Voters

HOW TO ORGANIZE A REGISTRATION CANVASS

1. Recruit Volunteer Workers

Aim for a large number of workers—the more you have, the better and faster the canvass will be.

Try to get people from ALL groups in your community—housewives, school teachers, professionals, factory and white collar workers, retired folk, college students on vacation, shut-ins.

Offer volunteers the kind of work they like and can do best—Those who like to work with people can ring doorbells. Shut-ins or busy housewives who cannot get out may do telephoning from home; those who like office work can help with your office records.

Don't be discouraged if only a few workers volunteer. Their enthusiasm will soon encourage others to join!

2. Establish Priority Areas for Your Democratic Registration Drive

Get the voting breakdown for each precinct or other voting district in your area from your County Election Clerk for the last General Election—if possible, for the last several elections.

Establish your priority areas on the basis of the following points: 1) those precincts with the highest ratio of Democratic votes; 2) those precincts where we won or lost by a small number of votes; 3) those precincts where volunteer canvassers are most readily available.

Get precinct maps which show street boundaries of each precinct. Mark the precincts in order of priority and assign canvassers.

3. Here Are the Goals of the Registration Drive

To compile an up-to-date card file list of the names and addresses of all people who vote Democratic. This may include Independents.

To see that these people are registered. (In some areas, the canvasser may be sworn in as a deputy registrar and may register people anywhere, at any time, during the drive. In others, the canvasser must see that unregistered people go to a central place to register at a stated time.)

To record all needed information about these people; e.g., whether they need transportation to register or vote or need an absentee ballot, etc. (See details on Sample Voters Card below.)

NOTE: These records are used by poll watchers and get-out-the-vote committees on Election Day. In some areas, names and addresses of Republicans are kept on different colored cards NOT to provide them with voter's service but to have complete records and be able to estimate the strength of the opposition.

These records can also be used to collect dollars from every Democrat during the Dollars for Democrats Drive each Fall.

4. Materials Needed to Compile a Card File Voters List

3 x 5 cards, printed or mimeographed like the sample below. Adapt this sample to your needs. Order enough cards to have a duplicate set for every voter. One set should be kept permanently in headquarters. The other may be divided up by precincts to help precinct leaders or workers keep track of their precincts and to use for poll-watching and get-out-the-vote work on Election Day.

NOTE: Canvassers may record directly on cards, but this is more difficult than using the street list or notebooks and later transferring the information to cards.

Sample Voter Card

Precinct.....

Name..... Voted in Election :

Address..... Phone..... (date).....

Registered? Yes No Dem. Rep. Ind. (date).....

Absentee Voter?..... Where?.....

Any other voters at this address?.... (Make separate cards)

Children turning 21 in time to be eligible?.....
(Make separate card)

Transportation needed?..... Baby-sitter?.....

Will voter do volunteer work?.....
(Check details on reverse side)

Name of Canvasser:..... Date:.....

(Note to Canvasser: Use reverse side for comments)

(Reverse side)

Volunteered to do: Contribution: \$.....

Canvassing..... Canvasser's Comments:

Telephoning.....

Office Work.....

Drive Car.....

Baby-Sit.....

Other.....

Street list forms or notebooks for the canvasser to use to record information as he interviews voters.

STREET LIST—DEMOCRATIC REGISTRATION DRIVE

Ward 8 Precinct 73

Canvasser's Name: JEAN WALES

Date: June 1960

Address	Name of Eligible Voter	Reg.	Non-Reg.	Telephone Number	Remarks
124 Main	John Doe	D R I	D R I		
124 Main	John Doe, Jr.	D R I	D R I		In military service; needs absentee form
126 Main	Mary Smith	D R I	D R I		
128 Main	William Brown	D R I	D R I		Just moved to town; will be eligible in time to vote
130 Main	Betty Green	D R I	D R I		
125 Main	Peter White	D R I	D R I		Leans Republican
127 Main		D R I	D R I		No one home; will call back
129 Main	David Black	D R I	D R I		

NOTE: Addresses, names, remarks and other information gathered would be written in by hand

5. Work First on Existing Party Records (if Available)

Review card file or other records on Democratic voters kept by party organization from previous canvasses. Bring these records up to date by:

Telephoning to see whether these voters still live at the same place and are still registered. If moved, find out where. See that those who need to re-register, do so. Ask if there are any new voters in the household since last canvass. Add all new information to old cards.

Add Democratic voters to this card file list from official registration rolls or primary voting lists. (Usually names may be obtained for a nominal sum or may be copied from the rolls.) These voters may also be checked by telephone for information needed for your card files.

6. Prepare Data on Voters for Your Canvassers

Have office volunteers fill in a card, street list or notebook, whichever is to be used, with as much information as you have on all voters who must be interviewed in person. Sources of these names include:

- (1) Your telephone check of party and public records.
- (2) City Directory and Telephone Books.



- (3) Special telephone directories arranged by the address of the subscriber rather than by name. Many local telephone companies have these. They may be purchased and torn apart for use by several volunteers at one time; or they may be borrowed or rented.
- (4) Union and other organization's membership lists.
- (5) Lists of newly naturalized citizens from Federal Court.
- (6) School census, birth records, graduation lists, drivers' license records for those turning 21.
- (7) Tax and Recorder of Deeds lists for newcomers to the area.

NOTE: Even if you have very little information to give your canvassers at first (or if you don't have any previous records of voters from the party organization), don't worry. You can start from scratch to build a list using the above sources of names. Telephone canvassers can start work with only telephone numbers. House-to-house canvassers can start out with nothing—they just ring every doorbell in the area.

7. Other Ways to Reach Democratic Registrants

Station volunteers at factory gates at closing time to hand out leaflets listing registration requirements. If possible, have buses or fleets of cars to take factory workers to the registration place.

Do the same at community centers (shopping areas, commuter stations) at busy hours.

Remember the shut-ins at hospitals, nursing homes and private dwellings. Get volunteers to take them to the registration place or, if permitted, bring registration forms to them.

Have a registration booth set up at your County Fair; hand out flyers announcing this service at the gate.

Don't overlook people who live in trailer camps.

Never ASSUME a Democrat Is Registered!

During a recent election, a gubernatorial candidate learned that lesson. As he was driving through his home county, he saw five people sitting on a porch. They called to him, "We're for you—you're in—don't worry." He was pleased until his wife stopped and asked, "How many of you are registered?" Only *one* out of the five was registered to vote!!!



8. Assign Specific Areas to Your Volunteer Canvassers

Where possible, assign canvassers to their own neighborhood.

Give canvassers the cards (or lists) of the voters in their assigned areas. Where names are not known, provide the addresses or streets they are to canvass.

In the course of canvassing, the workers will add information to the cards or lists. Tell them to:

- (1) Print all information legibly, especially any new names or changes in names.*
- (2) Prepare special notations of any needed follow-up questions to be answered, materials to be sent.*
- (3) Maintain their cards or lists in such good order that someone else could take over if needed.*

Tell canvassers to turn in completed cards or lists regularly. Urge them not to wait until the entire list is completed.

When canvassing is completed, the information received should be checked against the list of registrations where such lists are available.

9. Train Your Registration Drive Canvassers

The Precinct Workers Training Program of the Democratic National Committee is providing a corps of instructors in more than half the states who are prepared to put on Precinct Worker Training Sessions. Make use of these people if any are available in your area.

Make sure your Registration Drive canvassers are familiar with registration laws and regulations. Brief them on who may register, how, when, where. Give each canvasser a copy (or summary) of the laws and regulations. Write the Democratic National Committee for the latest edition of YOU CAN VOTE—SUMMARIES OF STATE REGISTRATION AND VOTING LAWS. Using your state summary in this booklet, you can mimeograph a sufficient number of copies for your canvassers.

Instruct your canvassers that if, while canvassing, they come across questions they cannot answer, they must get accurate information from the Registration Drive headquarters and call back.

Give your canvassers a supply of materials to distribute: cards summarizing registration requirements, a small mimeographed map indicating where voters can register and where their polling place is located, and leaflets describing the local Democratic group. If your state permits transfer of registration (for persons who move within

the state or within the county) by mail, supply your canvassers with the required form to give to voters.

Those canvassing by telephone can offer to mail information to voters.

Warn canvassers NOT to argue! If the person who answers the door or telephone does not want to be disturbed or is otherwise antagonistic, canvassers should not be argumentative or persistent.

If no one is at home, urge canvasser to make out a card with address only and return at another time. Or, if telephoning, canvasser should be urged to call back.

To give new house-to-house canvassers confidence, start them out in pairs.

To boost all canvassers' morale, have several post-canvass get-togethers during the course of the drive so they can talk over their experiences, give each other advice.

10. Take an Interest in Non-Partisan Registration Drives

Various non-partisan organizations such as the American Heritage Foundation, labor organizations, Chambers of Commerce, veterans and fraternal groups and women's clubs will be conducting registration drives.

Cooperate and make sure DEMOCRATS participate so the Democratic Party may receive its share of the benefits of these non-partisan drives.

CANVASSERS CHECK-LIST

Once the registration drive is organized and under way, YOU, the individual canvasser or Party worker, must carry the load and be the Democratic Party's Ambassador to the precinct's voters.

YOU GIVE: *Information* about registration and elections

Help in getting the new voter to the Registrar, to find a baby-sitter if needed, or transportation.

A Warm Welcome to newcomers in the community

YOU GET: *Facts* about the people you call on—their names correctly spelled; their addresses and phone numbers; the number of voters in the family; their political party or preference; the last time they voted in a primary or general election; any special political interests they have; any special help they may need in order to qualify and vote.

YOU RECORD THESE FACTS AND SEE THAT THEY REACH CENTRAL HEAD-QUARTERS.

WHEN do you do your canvassing? You can go out right after supper on weekdays and continue until 9:30 p.m. You can go during the day on weekends. *Don't* make calls Sunday mornings. *Don't* make calls during normal meal times. If you don't mind exposure, go calling in bad weather.

People are likely to be home and they will admire your fortitude and loyalty to the Democratic Party.

WHERE do you do your canvassing? Everywhere in your assigned district. But it's good to decide in advance just which streets or buildings you will be visiting each time you go out.

PUBLICITY

1. Publicity Is Essential Because:

- . . . it helps recruit volunteer workers;
- . . . it reminds voters about registration—even the ones not canvassed;
- . . . it prepares voters for canvasser's visit or telephone call.

2. Publicity Hints:

Send out releases. Announce the drive. Follow up with a release on the names of the chairmen and area chairmen.

Run an ad—Either a small display ad or an ad in the personal column telling where to call for registration information or to volunteer for canvassing.

Try for a picture of a canvasser making a call with a caption explaining what information the canvasser is after and stressing the briefness of the call and the great importance of the call to the person being called upon.

SUGGESTED REMARKS FOR CANVASSERS

Opening:

"Hello, I'm _____. I'm a neighbor of yours. I'm doing a survey on voter registration for the Democratic Party, and I dropped by to see whether you are registered to vote in the coming election. What about others of voting age in your household?"

If They Are Already Registered:

"Would you mind telling me whether you registered as a Democrat or as a Republican? What about the others in your household?"

If They Are Not Yet Registered:

"Would you mind telling me whether you are a Democrat? What about the others in your household?"

If You Find Republicans:

Make a polite exit with: "Even though our politics differ, I'm certain you agree with me on the importance of registering. Good-bye."

If You Find Democrats:

Tell about registration: "This card, prepared by our County Democratic Committee, tells about registration requirements. Would you take a moment to look at it? You want to be sure you are still registered. (Or, you want to be sure you know how to register.)"



Verify who lives at this address: "Our records show this is the home of Mr. _____. Is that correct? Can you give me the full names of any other Democratic voters who live here—anyone who will be turning 21 by election day? Anyone returning from military service?"

Check on Absentee Ballot requirements: "Is there anyone in your household who needs an absentee ballot? Anyone in the armed services who needs one? (Follow up according to your state law.)

Offer transportation: "We would be glad to have someone take you to register. When would be the best time? Will you need a baby-sitter?"

Tell about Democratic activities: "You might be interested in having this leaflet. It tells about our Democratic activities. For instance, we need more workers for this registration canvass. Could you help? Thank you. You'll be hearing from us. Good-bye."

NOTE: These suggested remarks may be adapted for a telephone canvass.

CHECK-LIST FOR CANVASSING

- BE Friendly**—There's nothing like friendliness to win a friend, a voter.
- BE Helpful**—Help the people you meet in any way you can. If they are not yet eligible to vote, find out for them how soon they can register and become voting residents.
- BE a Good Source of Information**—Have all necessary information about registration dates and places, Election Day and polling place, and candidates and issues, right at your fingertips. If there are things you can't remember, carry along a fact sheet to remind you.
- BE a Good Citizen**—Getting people to take seriously their obligations as citizens is an important job. Take it seriously. Be ready to talk about the importance of registering and taking part in elections. You need never apologize for asking people to register.
- BE Courteous and Considerate**—Some of the people you call on may be discourteous to you. It's an important part of your job to remain good humored and polite at such times.
- BE a Good Representative of Your Party**—For a few minutes that you visit someone's home while canvassing, you represent for them the Democratic Party—its leaders, its great history, its 50 million members. It's a big responsibility. Be at your best—the way you dress, the way you talk, the way you treat your

hosts. If you are offered a financial contribution for the Democratic Party, be sure that you are prepared either with a receipt blank or the means of accepting it, or have adequate information as to where this contribution should be sent.

BE Efficient—It's easy to spend a whole evening calling on two or three families. Or you can see ten people in the same length of time.



SO, REMEMBER—

The Democratic Party is the Party of all the people. When you go out to work for increased Democratic registration, **YOU** are the Democratic Party.

You are the Democratic Party's Soldier, helping to fight the battle against the special interests of the select few.

You are the Democratic Party's Missionary, seeking to convert independent voters to the Democratic way of thinking, presenting with simplicity and clarity the Democratic philosophy.

You are the Democratic Party's Ambassador, since the Democratic Party will be judged by you—what you say and what you do.

So, Mr. — Mrs. — Miss — Democrat, don't forget **YOU** are the Democratic Party. Registration is the first step to victory—its success depends upon **YOUR** success.