

2009



PRECINCT COORDINATOR HANDBOOK

TheVoicesOfAmerica.org

Note: The information provided is deemed accurate to the best of our knowledge, but should be confirmed with your local Board of Election. For reference purposes we use the State of Ohio.

PRECINCT COORDINATOR

- The Precinct coordinator is a representative of the people at the most basic level. This person is a communication link between elected officials and citizens.
- You are the first line of contact with residents of your precinct. You may deal with current issues and/or candidate information while talking with residents of your precinct.
- Your role is to encourage community involvement at a grassroots level by providing information and an opportunity for participation in the political process.

VOTER LISTS

1. The voter list is a computer printout of all registered voters in the precinct. Each precinct will have a copy of this list. You will be provided with one of two types of lists:
 - Walking list is a list of voters arranged in a sequence of addresses that should allow you to walk a precinct in a strategic manner. You should have a firm grasp of all that is included on your walking list.
 - Alphabetical list is a list of voters in alphabetical order by last name.
2. The lists will not show non-registered residents, people who have moved into the precinct since the list was compiled or commercial establishments. Individuals who were registered and have moved from the precinct or died may appear on lists for up to four years. Count on others in the precinct to help keep you informed.
 - These lists are confidential and should not be shared with anyone except fellow committee precinct persons.
 - Make the most of these lists. They are valuable tools. These lists are key to knowing the voters in your precinct and recruiting precinct workers.

ORGANIZING MATERIALS AND RECORD KEEPING

- It is very important that you be organized before the volunteers arrive. People have a limited amount of time and should not be asked to come and stand around while literature is counted, etc.
- Before beginning the literature distribution, you should assemble the following materials:
 - Volunteer Registration Form; accurately register the assigned areas. Have volunteers return unused portions of literature and verify completion of literature drop.
 - Bundle Literature: the amount needed will depend on the type of distribution planned. More literature is needed for a house to house drop than for a canvas.

EDUCATING THE VOTER

You can be of service to your community with voter education in the following ways:

1. Distribute a voter fact sheet throughout the precinct. This could be done one month prior to the close of registration before the primary and general elections each year. This fact sheet should include:
 - the precinct where voter resides
 - voting location
 - election dates
 - office holder information
 - registration information
 - schedules of public meetings
2. Volunteer to give talks and/or presentations to civic associations, schools, and church groups. This information can help stimulate political participation.
3. Attend public meetings where neighborhood issues first surface.

INCREASING PARTICIPATION AND AWARENESS AMONG VOTERS

Although we do not expect everyone to be involved as we are in politics, many are not involved for three reasons:

- They are unaware of the channels presently open to them (clubs, organizations, etc.)
- They have not been asked.
- They are cynical about politics and politicians.

Possible solutions include:

- Encourage people in your precinct to participate in existing political clubs and organizations.
- Assist in organizing a political club in your area.
- Organize a candidates' night in your area.

WAYS TO REACH OUT TO VOTERS

1. Act as a resource whom voters in your precinct can contact for assistance.
2. Resources you could collect and have available for voters include:
 - Voter registration forms
 - List of elected officials
 - Tax credit information
 - Calendar of events
 - Local contact numbers for public services
 - List of public meetings

3. Notify voters of the meeting by:
 - Placing a notice in the neighborhood newspaper.
 - Distributing a flyer to all homes in the precinct a week to ten days before the meeting.

SUGGESTIONS for MAKING GROUP PRESENTATIONS

Not everyone enjoys speaking in front of a group, but this is often the best way to meet a number of voters in a relatively short period of time. If you prepare some basic information and talk about things you are familiar with, the experience can be a rewarding one. These few tips are designed to assist you in planning your program:

- Speak for only a brief period of time (about 15 minutes). Allow time for questions and answers.
- Speak from personal experience. Do not try to be an authority on every aspect of politics. Talk about your personal involvement and why you enjoy working in politics on the grassroots level.
- Be sure of all the information you give. Check the facts. Always make an effort to find the answers to questions you could not answer and follow up with the questioner.
- Offer to provide a service at the end of your presentation. It might be voter registration or merely offering to leave some literature for the audience to look through.
- Do not get involved in a debate or political shouting match. If a member of the audience wants to argue, be as polite as possible and steer the conversation in another direction. If necessary, offer to meet with that person at a later time to discuss particular problems.

GETTING OUT THE VOTE

- Getting out the vote can be as simple or as complicated as you make it.
- Your information as a precinct coordinator will prove invaluable in getting out the vote.
- Remember every vote is important. Often an election is decided on a very few votes, and the extra effort that is required with getting the vote out strategy can very well put in a favorable candidate or decide an important initiative.