



Libertarian Party of Indiana

Quick Guide

How to Canvass for Voters

What is canvassing? “to go through (a district) or go to (persons) in order to solicit orders or political support or to determine opinions or sentiments <canvass voters>” – Merriam Webster’s Dictionary

Who and Where of Canvassing: A Libertarian precinct organizer or township captain in their home districts.

Walking door to door is the most effective way to reach voters when campaigning on an issue or as a candidate. It has the highest impact on voters for the least cost. Speaking face to face connects Libertarians with their neighborhood, and puts a human face on an abstract ideal. It also helps to identify and clarify your neighbors on a 1 to 5 scale:

1. Libertarian Party members completely committed to a cause. A base voter.
2. Almost always votes Libertarian, but not an active Party member.
3. A resident that does not frequently vote. Possible vote IF they show up to polls. A swing voter.
4. An active member of another party that would consider voting Libertarian if their team is not in the race.
5. A die hard member of another party, and would not consider voting for the LP. An opposition voter.

Most houses in a precinct will fall under #3 or #4. As one canvasses a precinct, workers will be surprised by the amount of interest shown in the Libertarian Party.

For candidates or when canvassing to mobilize on an issue, the message of your canvass will serve one of three purposes:

1. Voter ID – Finding out who likes the LP, and who does not. It grades household residents on the #1-5 scale.
2. Persuading #3 and #4s to vote for you.
3. Get Out The Vote Efforts – On the third pass of an area, you use all the positive notes you’ve made to make sure those #1s through #4s actually get to the polls to vote for you!

For precinct organizers, the goal of the canvass worker is to be the main contact in the neighborhood for that person.

- Does the neighbor have questions about the party or philosophy?
- Why should they choose your candidate over the R or D? Aren’t the Libertarians a wasted vote?
- The neighbor now knows they aren’t alone in their disillusionment of the R’s and D’s.
- They are impressed that the LP is organized enough to send someone to their home.

Copyright by the Libertarian Party of Indiana - 2009.

Written By Chris Spangle. Reproducible with the permission of the LPIN or author.

156 E. Market Street, Suite 405, Indianapolis, IN 46206 (317) 920-1994 lpinhq@lpin.org

Paid for by the Libertarian Party of Indiana, Not authorized by any candidate or candidate’s committee.

- They are impressed that the LP is asking what issues matter to them.
- They are grateful when someone offers to help them register to vote.
- Some will be excited that someone is finally explaining to them how to get involved in the political process or Libertarian Party.

The canvassing worker becomes a human contact instead of an abstract party email or website.

What you'll need:

1. Precinct Map (Get from County Chairman or County Clerk)
2. Walking list of voters and their party registration. (Get from County Chairman or County Clerk. Candidates can get detailed information from a service called Aristotle. For contact info, speak to LPIN HQ.)
3. Pencils and Pens to mark on walking list. (Make notes of resident's receptiveness or response.)
4. Literature to leave behind
5. Talking Points or Script to keep on message
6. Voter Registration Forms (Take them to county clerk ASAP!)
7. LPIN Membership Cards
8. LPIN Volunteer Cards
9. LPIN Sign Up Sheet
10. A clip board for each person
11. Water
12. A Bag to carry all this stuff!

Other Tips:

1. Always work in pairs or teams. A male and female team work best. Residents are usually hesitant to open the door for men only. Have one team work on one home, and the other team work next door. Then leap frog. A mix of ages is a plus as well.
2. Wear something comfortable, but appropriate. Business casual usually nets the best results.
3. Know what to say! Prepare a script or talking points ahead of time. If you look as if you are unsure of your beliefs, you may have blown your one first impression with that voter. After the first house or two, you'll have the script memorized.
4. Work in the evening, but before dark.
5. Skip houses that make you uncomfortable, or that have "No Soliciting" signs.
6. NEVER touch a mailbox. It is ok to leave information in the paper box, but it is a crime to put materials in a mailbox. If materials are low (and in the LP they always are) just leave materials with the people that are #1 through #4. If there is no response, mark it down, and return during your next canvass.
7. Look for bumper stickers, yard signs, flags, decals and other signs that a voter may or may not sympathize with your cause. While this may give you a good picture of what to expect, do not jump to conclusions.
8. Limit your time at a house to 2 minutes or less. If you are having a PRODUCTIVE chat with someone, feel free to answer all their questions. If you are having an argument, STOP! There is

Copyright by the Libertarian Party of Indiana - 2009.

Written By Chris Spangle. Reproducible with the permission of the LPIN or author.

156 E. Market Street, Suite 405, Indianapolis, IN 46206 (317) 920-1994 lpinhq@lpin.org

Paid for by the Libertarian Party of Indiana, Not authorized by any candidate or candidate's committee.

absolutely nothing that will be accomplished by having an argument with someone. Politely say you'll have to agree to disagree and head to the next house.

9. ***The first door is the hardest!*** After you move through two or three houses, the anxiety of door knocking WILL subside. If you are REALLY afraid, role play with your teammate before hitting the streets.
10. Keep detailed notes! Keeping track of the conversation with a house hold resident is the entire point of canvassing. Before heading out to canvass, discuss the mission and information needed with your County Party or Candidate.
11. If you do not have an answer for something, be honest. Say "I don't know." Find the answer, and respond via phone or in person within 24 hours.
12. Never go into a house.
13. Find the issue that is most important to that voter or resident, and share the libertarian vision on that issue with them.
14. Bring dog treats. This will help break some ice with the homeowner, or keep a dog off your trail!
15. Always stand a little back from the door. It's intimidating if your nose is on the glass. If they have a storm door, knock and let the storm door shut.
16. Keep your cell phone on silent. While you are in front of a potential voter, nothing is more important than that voter for those 2 minutes.

Maybe the two most important points:

17. "God gave you two ears and one mouth." Listen more than you talk. Be brief and to the point.
18. Always be polite, and say "Thank You" more than once! A candidate or an entire party organization is counting on you to garner at least one more vote.