



**ORGANIZING
FOR AMERICA**
PLEDGE PROJECT

PLEDGE PROJECT CANVASS TRAINING MATERIALS FOR HOST

WHAT IS A CANVASS?

A canvass is an organized effort to talk with community members face-to-face about the issues that matter to them.

Canvassing efforts can target specific groups of people or they can attempt to talk with as many people as possible.

WHY DO WE CANVASS?

Canvassing in local neighborhoods (both at the doors and in high traffic areas) is the most effective way to talk with community members about the issues that matter to them. Our success in the Obama campaign depended upon our ability to share our message through face-to-face discussions with voters.

In order to realize the change that we all fought so hard for, we must continue to reach out to our neighbors and involve them in our movement.

Your Pledge Project canvass will be our first major Organizing for America action. Across the country we will collect tens of thousands of signatures in support of President Obama's plan to transform our economy by investing in health care, education and energy. With these signatures, we will demonstrate the urgent need for leadership in Washington around these important issues.

The Pledge Project Canvass is also an important way to share our organizing plan with people across the country. Throughout the year, we will be mobilizing in support of clean energy, health care reform and education and we want our neighbors to join us.

WHERE DO WE CANVASS?

The goal of our "Pledge Project Canvass" is to obtain as many signatures as possible. Therefore, we want to target areas that are dense with people and allow us to easily talk to them all.

Today we will be canvassing at both public locations and going door-to-door in neighborhoods.

Our public locations should be areas where people pass by regularly. Good canvass spots include grocery stores, sporting events, public transport stops, fast food restaurants, parks, college campuses, etc. It's important to have several back up places in case the location is unsuccessful or the canvasser is asked to move.

Our door-to-door canvassing should focus on dense neighborhoods that are easily walkable. Since we are hitting all doors, we'll want to choose neighborhoods where the houses are relatively close together and we can hit as many doors as possible.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE HOST?

The host's role is to organize a successful canvass. You should follow the steps for preparing a canvass listed below, including selecting a location, recruiting volunteers and preparing materials. You also will provide guidance and support as the day goes on and should give volunteers your phone number in case issues arise. If there are any issues that you do not know how to handle call Organizing For America at 1-866-495-2004.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO MAKE YOUR PLEDGE PROJECT CANVASS A SUCCESS?

Here's a short list of what you will need to make your neighborhood canvass work:

- A central location in your walk area for people to meet before and after their walk
- A list of high-traffic locations to target
- Hard surface for writing (clipboards or cardboard or folders)
- Maps of the larger area, the neighborhood and the specific streets each door-to-door canvasser is walking
- Pledge Project Pledge
- Scripts
- Information and Resources on the issues
- Pen/Paper
- Tally Sheets to record results at end of walk
- Training video
- A trainer to orient people to the job, explain materials, answer questions after the video, etc.

STEPS FOR PREPARING FOR YOUR PLEDGE PROJECT CANVASS

1. Secure a staging location and create an event on MyBarackObama.com.

Once you know how many people you need to recruit to meet your goal, then determine where your "staging location" will be. That is, where people will gather before and after the canvass. This can be a private home, park, school, or any other location that will accommodate your group and allow for a brief training. When you create your event on MyBO, be sure to choose the specific event type: "Pledge Project Canvass".

2. Build a team to help you. If none exists, you can create a volunteer team to help prepare for and run your canvass.

Suggested Roles:

- Canvass coordinator - Coordinates splitting up neighborhoods, identifying high-traffic locations, and makes maps, as well as helping to prepare, distribute and re-collect canvass materials.
- Volunteer Recruitment coordinator - Responsible for reaching out to volunteers, confirming volunteer canvass sign-ups, and managing volunteer registration on canvass day.

- Resources coordinator - Find and secure staging ground; a place to meet before and after the canvass. This person may need to consider parking needs, restrooms, etc. This person also helps to get donations of food and water to sustain canvassers.
- Trainer - Your best canvasser. Someone who can explain why this neighborhood and these people we're contacting matter. Someone who can set and communicate a clear goal that will motivate and focus volunteers. Someone who can introduce the training video and answer the questions that follow it.
- Resources coordinator - Find and secure staging ground; a place to meet before and after the canvass. This person may need to consider parking needs, restrooms, etc. This person also helps to get donations of food and water to sustain canvassers.
- Trainer - Your best canvasser. Someone who can explain why this neighborhood and these people we're contacting matter. Someone who can set and communicate a clear goal that will motivate and focus volunteers. Someone who can introduce the training video and answer the questions that follow it.

3. Work hard to recruit as many volunteers as you can. Use MyBO and email listserves, make phone calls and tap into your own networks to find volunteers.

4. Choose canvass locations strategically. You want to canvass in walkable neighborhoods or you want to choose additional high-traffic locations (grocery stores, sporting events, public transport stops, fast food restaurants, parks, college campuses, etc.)

5. Make maps. All volunteer canvassers should have a map of the "turf," or part of the neighborhood, they will be walking that day. Be sure to photocopy enough maps for everyone to have one and delegate out an appropriate amount of streets for each person.

6. Get scripts and supporting materials. The script will help guide your conversation about the "Pledge Project."

7. Reminder Calls. Be sure to make reminder calls to volunteer canvassers in the days leading up to the canvass. Turn out will increase dramatically if you ask them for a firm commitment. Be sure that all attendees are confirmed, reconfirmed and reconfirmed again.

8. Prepare sign-in sheets and set up a tight sign-in system. Capture as much contact information as possible. A sample sign in sheet is included here.

9. Put up signs that help direct people to the right space for the right activity. You may even set up stations, one for check in when they arrive, one for training, one for collecting materials, one for finding a canvass partner.

10. Prepare your volunteers. Make sure all volunteer canvassers have a clear understanding of why we are canvassing, who specifically they will be talking with, where they are walking in their communities and what their responsibilities will be. Make sure that canvassers have all of these materials with them:

- Maps of the neighborhood and larger area
- Hard surface for writing (clipboards or cardboard or folders)
- Pledge Project Pledge
- Scripts
- Information and Resources on the issues
- Pen/Paper
- Tally Sheets to record results at end of walk
- Contact number for host if they encounter any issues

* **Provide guidance and support.** You should give volunteers your phone number to call in case any issues arise. It is your role as host to provide guidance and support as the day goes on. If there are any issues you do not know how to handle: call Organizing For America at 1-866-495-2004.

SAMPLE AGENDA FOR A PLEDGE PROJECT CANVASS

- Welcome and Introduction (10 min)
 - If possible, have each person introduce themselves by name.
 - Have two people share their personal stories, addressing what is at stake for them personally. Stories should give a human side to our organizing work and remind us of the real impact of the economic crisis.
 - Explain our action. Give context to the pledge and our larger organizing efforts. Let people know that we are getting out in front of Washington and asking our elected officials to lead the charge on energy, education and health care this year. Explain that the “Pledge Project” is just the beginning for us; we will be working all year to mobilize people to take action and further President Obama’s plans.
 - Set expectations. Share goal for the number of signatures we are trying to collect and display that goal on butcher paper for all to see. Tell people that they will not collect hundreds of signatures today but remind them that they are part of a huge effort with thousands of volunteers across the country doing the same thing.
- Show Training Video (7 min)
- Q & A from video (5 min)
- Role Play with a partner (3 min)
 - Practice your pitch in pairs. What are you going to say when you really do approach someone?
- Explain logistics. Address how people should organize in groups, give any necessary transportation details and pass out materials. (3 min)
- Go out and collect signatures. Work to reach your set goal of signatures. (3 hours)

- Check on your team during the action. As the event host, it's your job to keep your team motivated. Collect cell phone numbers and text updates about your group's success! Example: Alex got his first signature, Caroline's out of pens because she's had so many signups.
- Debrief (15 min)
 - Meet back at the staging location at an assigned time.
 - Tally up. Gather information on the number of pledges collected and the number of doors knocked on. Present information on the group's collective efforts.
 - Evaluate action. Ask those who did well what made the difference. Ask those who struggled what the challenges were that we need to prepare better for next time.
 - Celebrate. If possible, organize a potluck or an optional social gathering afterwards. Talk about your success together.

WHAT TO DO AFTER YOUR CANVASS

- Enter your data! If possible, we want you to enter all of our data in our simple online system at <http://mybarackobama.com/pledgedata>. If you are unable to enter the data online, you can fax it to us at (202) 350-6058 or mail it to us at:
Democratic National Committee
Attn: Organizing for America
430 South Capitol St. SE
Washington, DC 20003
- Complete our canvass evaluation.
- Send a personal email thanking everyone who attended the canvass.
- Stay connected with your fellow volunteers and get ready for the next action!