

WHY DO WE CANVASS?

Personal contact with potential voters is still the most effective means of getting out the vote. Since elections are won or lost in WI by 1%, every vote matters and every conversation has an impact. Talking with people is much more encouraging than being on social media.

- Canvassers listen to their neighbors, connect on important issues, remind them of elections, help them make voting plans, and leave no votes on the table.
- Besides voting, this is the most important step you can take to elect a new state and federal government.
- Even good voters sometimes skip spring or midterm elections, and we need everyone to go to the polls.

NAT has been canvassing on the Northside and Maple Bluff since 2008. We have hundreds of supporters and mobilized over 200 volunteers in recent elections. As we get closer to elections, we approach our work in two phases - talking with potentially persuadable voters and then mobilizing Democratic voters to get to the polls. This year will be crucial to get out every Democratic voter and this is the way to do it.

We need your help! We know canvassing can be scary, but we hope you will join us this year and give it a try. We will train you well and send you out with a buddy if you wish.

CONCERNS WE HEAR FROM NEW CANVASSERS

- **I am nervous about talking to people. I'm not very articulate and I don't handle conflict well.** As with any activity, it takes practice to get comfortable. We will help you with training, information, and a buddy system. Canvassing is about listening, connecting with voters, and a bit of talking about issues you really care about. Conflict is rare, and the advantage of being outside the door is that you can politely end the conversation and walk away.
- **Whom do we talk to?** Each phase of canvassing has a goal, and we get help from the Democratic Party of Wisconsin to target specific voters at each stage of the process. We might talk to persuadable voters (those who often vote Democratic but not always), inconsistent Democratic voters, and likely Democratic voters. Each canvass gathers information that helps us narrow our lists and effectively target our next effort. We don't go to voters that are known to be leaning or strong Republican voters.

QUESTIONS WE HEAR FROM CANVASSERS

- **So many people aren't home or don't answer the door.** This is normal so we cover each turf multiple times, talking with people we missed earlier. Every voter we talk to helps our effort.
- **My neighborhood is full of Democrats! Why don't we knock every door?** Our focus is strategic to get out the vote among people who will likely vote Democratic or might sit out an election without our efforts. We don't spend time talking to consistent, strong Dem voters, and we don't have to—they'll vote with us anyway. The more canvassers we have, the more voters we can contact.
- **Why don't we try to convince people to vote our way? Why are we only reaching out to people who agree with us? We can count on Madison to vote Democratic, so why canvass?** Persuasion is important, depending on which potential voters we're talking to. Early on, we contact people to listen about what issues are important to them. We have information we can share about Democrats' ideas for solving problems that everyone faces. Later, we focus on getting out our voters. We canvass Madison because that's where the Democrats are! When Dem turnout is down, as it was in 2016, we can lose close elections.
- **I'm so disillusioned with politics and I still find it scary/time-consuming/discouraging to canvass.** It will get easier! Just do it! The antidote to being disillusioned or frozen in the headlights is action. Encourage just one more vote and you've doubled your personal power! This is a way **you** can help change the direction of our state and nation.

<https://natmadison.org> Email to nat@natmadison.org Facebook @MadisonNAT

Canvassing Tips, Do's and Don'ts for Developing the Skills

- Be friendly, emphasize you are a neighbor, try to find a connection (gardens, Packers sign...)
- Listen, acknowledge, and relate to the voters/find your shared values
- Use your own words when talking with voters, but ask all the questions and hit all the points
- Usually only 20-30% of people will be home or answer the door. This is normal—if everyone were home, canvassing would take a lot longer!
- Remember that each conversation should only last about 2-5 minutes or you won't finish
- Record answers neatly or use the app - this informs our future canvassing
- Don't leave literature in mailboxes or where it might blow away
- Don't enter people's homes. Use your own judgment.
- If a person supports Republicans, say thank you for your time and have a nice day.
- Always say thank you for their time and thank them for being a voter!!

What If ... ? Often when you are out canvassing you have questions of how to handle some situations, so what if...

1. What if there is a No Soliciting sign?

- Canvassing is protected free speech and is not selling something. But use your own judgment on whether to go ahead and knock.
- If there is a sign that says No Soliciting, Political Canvassing etc then respect their wishes and mark Inaccessible on your sheet.

2. What if you can't find the address?

- Mark Inaccessible if you cannot find the address, there is a locked gate or you cannot even get to the door to knock.
- Do not mark Inaccessible if it is a locked apartment building as someone else might try another time. Just mark Not Home.

3. What if the person on your list doesn't live there but someone else is willing to talk?

- Mark the person on your list as Moved or Deceased. This helps update the database.
- If the new person seems interested, tell them about NAT and encourage them to get involved. Leave a NAT blue card. You can also provide information about registering to vote at their new address.

4. What if one person at that address is on your list and another one is not?

- Often this happens with spouses. A good response is just to say...
"This happens sometimes. Our lists are generated based on voting status and history so you may just have slightly different voting patterns or perhaps one of you was already surveyed recently. I'm happy to take down the replies for both of you."

5. What if one person is home and wants to respond for another person that isn't home.

- Only record responses for the people that you actually talk to rather than taking someone else's word for their views. Mark the other person as Not Home.

NAT welcomes your help! Please give canvassing a try.

**We'd be happy to talk further with you to answer any other questions you may have.
Please call Lisa at 215-3321 or Sue at 608-217-6022.**

<https://natmadison.org> Email to nat@natmadison.org Facebook @MadisonNAT