



Precinct Committee Person Guide

Welcome

The Indiana Democratic Party brings together the political aspirations of a large and diverse group of people who share a set of core values. Democrats are the people you see in your community: at work, at church, at the store, and even at the ballpark. We come from all walks of life, but our shared beliefs and values help shape a strong state and nation where every citizen has the opportunity to succeed.

Today, federal, state, and local races still find Democrats routinely outspent by Republicans and their special interest collaborators. Ultimately, no amount of money will replace the effectiveness of neighbor-to-neighbor campaigning and direct voter contact. Democrats win when we focus our efforts on active and effective grassroots campaigns. You are joining with thousands of other Democratic Party Officials across America in this effort.

Thank you for your service to the Indiana Democratic Party. We couldn't do this important work without you.

Precinct Committee Person Role & Responsibilities

Precincts are the foundation of the Indiana Democratic Party and the key to political victory.

This section provides a basis for precinct organization: you'll find materials, definitions, responsibilities, goals, tips, and other information to help county chairs, precinct officers, and precinct workers understand the nature and structure of precinct work.

What is a Precinct Committee Person?

A Precinct Committee Person (PC) serves as the main communication source between the Indiana Democratic Party and current and future Democrats in their precinct. A PC regularly engages with the voters within their precinct to understand their assets and needs to better serve those communities by electing Democrats up and down the ballot. The outcome of an election can come down to a handful of votes in a single precinct. A Vice-Precinct Committee Person helps support the Precinct Committee Person with their duties. These two roles can be

elected or appointed and must be gender balanced.

Precinct Committee Person Duties

A Precinct Committee Person's duties as laid out in State Party Rules include:

- Attend County Party meetings and provide updates about your precinct if requested.
- Recommend Democratic candidates to the County Chair.
- Provide poll worker recommendations for their Election Day voting location and other positions to support local elections.
- Obtain MiniVAN list numbers and/or walk packets to conduct regular voter contact in the precinct. Please check with your County Party Chair to determine how often you should be contacting voters in your area.
- Encourage strong participation from other members in precinct and County Party events.
- Attend county or district trainings to learn new tactics and best practices to bring information back to the county and/or precinct volunteers.
- Expand volunteer engagement from all areas of the precinct. Try to involve newcomers in the area.
- Work with the County Party to arrange special voter registration events or door-to-door registration in the precinct.
- Be a visibly proud Indiana Democrat - display yard signs, window signs, campaign buttons, bumper stickers, etc.
- Transmit all records of the office to the successor within ten (10) days of vacating office.

Precinct Committee People who are ready to take the next step are encouraged to take on these duties as well:

- Plan a calendar of precinct campaign activities and assign specific responsibilities to the Precinct Committee Person and Vice Precinct Committee Person.
- Get to know your Democratic and Independent neighbors by:
 - Hosting a house party and inviting your neighbors to talk about politics and issues concerning your precinct.
- Canvassing the precinct using the walking list or call list provided by your county party organization.

- Oversee improvement of voter lists: adding/updating phone numbers and addresses, marking voters as deceased, noting those who have moved so they can be contacted in their new location, etc. Update VAN with those data changes through your County Party.
- Oversee coordinated campaign activities (if present) as they are carried out in the precinct. This includes arranging the distribution of literature and campaign materials throughout the precinct.
- Work with the County Party to plan the precinct's role in the GOTV program: recruiting volunteers, creating walk or phone lists, obtaining other canvassing materials, etc.
- Support fundraising opportunities for the County and State Party if possible.
- Carry out duties assigned to him or her by the County Executive Committee.

Voter Engagement

NOTE: This section will primarily focus on Field activities, but Data is closely connected. VoteBuilder, also known as VAN, is where we house our voter file. VAN allows you to target voters and therefore, execute a successful field plan. The IDP VANual is where we cover VAN's features and how to use them. Please contact your county chair on how to access your voter contact lists.

Field focuses on the person-to-person interactions we engage in to communicate our message to voters, often referred to as direct voter contact. TV, digital, and ads are all great ways you can communicate with voters, but none are as effective as having a real conversation with a voter and building a relationship with them. This relationship-building is also known as organizing. It is important that you are using targeted lists to talk to voters.

You may do two types of field engagement in your district.

Persuasion Conversations are used to move people closer to voting for Democratic candidates. We start to talk to persuadable voters earlier on in the campaign cycle.

Mobilization Conversations are used to ensure people turn out and vote. Many of these people are Democrats but may need a reminder to vote or help build their vote plan. Mobilization conversations help drive high Democratic turnout. We start to mobilize voters before early voting and Election Day.

While talking to voters is the primary goal of a field program, *how* you talk to them is what determines a successful conversation.

Here are some tips to have a productive and engaging conversation with a voter while you are out in the field.

- **Introduce yourself.** No matter how you're communicating, start by saying your name and what organization you are with. The person you are talking to likely wasn't expecting you, so you want to make sure they know who you are and the organization you are representing.
- **Make sure you are talking to the correct voter.** It's easy to get excited and wrapped up in your script, but the data you collect from a great conversation isn't very helpful if you are talking to the wrong person. Clarify that you are speaking to the right person first.
- **SMILE!** This sounds very basic, but smile while you're talking, even if it's over the phone. The voter can easily read your tone and expression, so smiling is an easy way to convey your interest and enthusiasm.
- **Be yourself!** Nerves can start to creep in when you're talking to somebody you don't know or using a new script. Remember that the goal of the conversation is to build a connection with this voter, so try to stay calm and just be yourself.
- **Practice your script first.** While staying on message is important, you also don't want to sound like a robot reading the script word for word. Practice the script beforehand and try making little tweaks to make it your own (for example, changing the greeting to fit how you would greet them.) The key to an effective conversation is hitting the talking points AND keeping it conversational. The voter might not remember everything you said to them, but they will remember how you made them feel.
- **Listen!** A great conversation requires at least 2 active participants, so make sure you're giving the voter plenty of opportunity to answer your questions, talk about the issues that are important to them, and ask questions of their own.
- **Don't be afraid to pivot!** Conversations about politics and issues can quickly spiral out of control. While you want to listen to the voter, don't be afraid to pivot the conversation back to the script and your talking points if needed.

For example, *"I hate all of the negative political ads that have been running lately, too.*

That's one of the reasons I'm out here knocking on doors with the Posey County Democrats because we believe that having real conversations with real voters, like yourself, is the best way to reach solutions for the problems facing our community, like good jobs and broadband access."

- **Try to keep your conversations around 5 minutes.** While these conversations are extremely valuable, nobody wants to be stuck on the phone or at a door for half an hour. If you feel the conversation is going too long, politely interrupt and tell them that you have other voters to get to, but that you'd love to finish this conversation another time. Flag their name and contact information so you can follow up when you have more time. If they are willing to talk to you at length about Democratic issues or candidates, they might be a great person to get more involved in your County Party.

GOTV

Some voters choose to vote early, while some prefer to vote on Election Day. Others request an absentee (ABS- Mail) ballot but forget to return it. In order to ensure all of our Democratic supporters vote, we must have an effective GOTV program. The final four days, including Election Day, are when 100% of our efforts are focused on ensuring that every likely supporter (who hasn't already voted) makes their plan to vote.

This involves reaching as many voters as possible through knocking doors, phone banking, and texting all day, those last 4 days until the polls close on Election Night. During the GOTV period, we are focused exclusively on those Democrats and others who have been identified as likely Democratic supporters. We do NOT want to encourage votes for Republicans.

GOTV is a period of time when we involve hundreds of new and returning volunteers, operate from many locations at once, and coordinate in new ways to ensure we are covering as much ground as possible. Every involved member of the County Party is needed to reach the finish line.