



HOW TO REGISTER DEMOCRATS

Voter Registration 101 Training Manual

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1. INTRO & THANK YOU & WHY WE DO THIS

Good morning, heroes of the Resistance! Welcome to Field Team 6!

Our mission is: register Democrats. Save the world. Thank you for putting in the work that turns passion into results. Your being here is a beautiful thing. We could not appreciate it more.

It was the proudest work of our lives to help lead our army of volunteers in Southern California to register over 6,000 Democratic voters in the lead-up to the 2018 midterms. Since then, we have expanded nationally to become Field Team 6. And we're working in 20 locations across 9 battleground states. If you haven't been a part of this army before, WELCOME! You are now!

In the three years since the Trumpocalypse, have you postcarded? Text banked? Phone banked? Knocked on doors? Registered voters? Donated? If you've done any of these things... **Thank you for saving the world** in the 2018 midterm elections.

To win a Democratic majority in the House, we needed 23 seats nationally. WE WON 40. And now that we've saved the world... it's time to do it again in 2020.

After the Blue Wave midterms, we formed Field Team 6 in order to keep doing the absolutely vital work of in-person voter registration across the country... in the super effective way that only we do it. By registering Democrats in targeted districts and states where we need them most, we aim to grow our House majority, flip the Senate, and take the White House in 2020. (More on our strategy [HERE](#).)

What we do is "hot spot" voter registration. We don't knock on doors. We go to a place with good foot traffic, but we do not set up a table. Instead, we walk around with a clipboard and a smile, talking to everyone we can. We basically "let the canvass come to us," having great conversations and making connections as we register Democrats. Which brings us to... how to register Democrats! Here are some best practices.

2. BEST PRACTICES

We're all taught when we're kids, "Don't talk to strangers." But as adults, it turns out that's exactly *how you change the world*. It really is that simple.

There are two challenges here. The first is how to get people to talk to someone holding a clipboard. The second is how to ID people as Democrats, or even Democrat-friendly. Because registering Democrats is what we are out here to do. Here's how to dramatically increase your odds of starting a conversation, and how to identify fellow progressives:

- Open, relaxed body language. If you're smiling and people sense you're having a good time, they respond to that. No hiding behind a clipboard!
- Wear a liberal-looking t-shirt! This really does give you a liberal force field that wards off non-Democrats. Which is a timesaver! Remember, we are sifting through the people who don't care in order to empower the ones who do.
- Make eye contact, so that people kind of have to break your heart to just walk on by.
- Walk backwards with people, or walk alongside people to lengthen the window of interaction with them. If they're going somewhere, tell them you can register them while you walk!
- Talk to people walking by first, then when they're gone, approach anyone who's sitting nearby.
- Use a snappy conversation-starter that is also a good strong ID'ing question! Our favorite is "Excuse me miss/sir, can you help me save the world from Trump?" In one short sentence, you're creating a high-stakes narrative with them as the hero. And it's actually not an exaggeration at all. We find a line like this makes a gigantic difference in getting people's attention and attracting the people we need to be registering. And it's very important to throw something in there that ID's them as on our side, since our goal is not to register Republicans.
- Another variation: "Hello miss/sir, can I register you as a Democrat to vote by mail?" Softer, yet still direct.
- Combine them! "Excuse me sir, can you help me save the world from Trump? I'm registering Democrats to vote by mail!"
- Other variations: "Good morning! Can you help me save health care?" "Can you help me save women's rights?" "Can you help me save the environment?"
- Experiment with your own! You may find something better!

Avoid saying "Are you registered to vote?" It sounds dry and time-consuming, and it's easy to ignore. Better to say "Can I register you to vote by mail today?" It's more proactive. But if they're interested and you have not yet ID'd them as our friend, ALWAYS throw in some ID'ing comment like "Great, it's so important to beat Trump." Give them one last chance to say "Oh no, I adore Trump," so you can then say "Oh cool, have a great day."

Other great reasons to register (or re-register) someone:

- They'd like to vote by mail. (Find out if this is available in your state [HERE](#).)
- They've moved since they last registered.
- They'd like to change parties.
- They're not quite *sure* they're registered, or that they're registered to vote by mail.

ALWAYS push voting by mail (in states where it's available)! It is an election winner on its own, because it drives up voting rates significantly, especially

among low-propensity voters. If someone is already registered, say “Can I register you to vote by mail?” Then register them the same way you normally would, and make sure to check the box saying they’d like to vote by mail.

Once someone expresses interest in registering, we recommend you fill out the form for them, unless they insist. We usually say “Do you mind if I fill it out for you? I’m very fast!” They’re usually fine with that. When we fill it out, it is faster — we don’t skip any necessary fields — and it’s always more legible than when they do it.

3. THE FORM ITSELF

This part is extremely important. Filling out this form correctly is absolutely crucial. **(Below are the instructions for the California form - find your own state voting form, and step-by-step instructions on how to fill it out, here:**

AZ – [CA](#) – CO – [FL](#) – IA – GA – ME – MI – NC – PA – TX – WI

(Please forgive us as we build this out—we’ll have all these links up as soon as possible. Until then, check out our pre-recorded training videos for each state at www.fieldteam6.org.)

FIRST — make sure the person is a citizen. If their citizenship is in question in ANY way, do NOT register them. It can derail their naturalization process, which is the last thing we want to do.

Second — check the box that says they are either 18 or over... OR 16 or 17 and want to pre-register. That means that as soon as they turn 18, they will automatically be registered. This is a wonderful thing to do!

Get their first name, then middle name if they have one, then last name.

Home address — this is where they physically live. This can be a women’s shelter or a homeless shelter.

Reading over to the right, ALWAYS ask if there’s an apartment number. Many will forget to tell you if you don’t ask.

Below that, city, zip code and county.

Number 7 — if someone is experiencing homelessness, you can put down the cross-streets where they stay. No matter what voting center that voter goes to, they’ll be able to cast a provisional ballot.

Numbers 8 and 9 you can skip, unless the person has a different mailing address than physical address.

Date of birth — mandatory.

US state or foreign country of birth — is always confusing to people. I usually just say “Were you born in California?” Most people say yes. If they were born in another state or a foreign country, put that down.

Below that, you need either the person’s CA driver’s license / ID Card Number OR the last 4 numbers of their social security — NOT both.

Ideally, try to get their CA driver’s license / ID Card #, but if they don’t have that, you can get the last four of their social security #. If they don’t have a license AND don’t remember their social, DO continue to fill out the rest of the form. The registrar will reach out to them and try to get that info later.

Next, email and phone number. These say “optional,” but we treat them like they’re not. If the registrar needs any more information or has any questions about the form, they need that info to be able to reach out to the voter. And we also need this info for outreach! Studies show it takes an average of 7 contacts to actually get a new voter to go to the polls.

And then we have the most important question of all: What is your political party preference?

Hopefully we’ve ID’d the person well enough from the very beginning that they are a Democrat. We’ve said “Can you help us save the world from Trump?”, we’ve worn a liberal-looking t-shirt, we might even have a “We Register Democrats” sticker on our clipboards...

...but let’s say we ask this question and get a blank stare. At this point in the form, we are not legally allowed to pressure anyone to be a Democrat. Nor would we want to. We don’t want to trick anyone into being a Democrat.

We ARE allowed to tell them facts. So we start with the basics. First we say, “The Democratic Party is the one major party fighting Trump and the Republicans.” We say “President Barack Obama was the head of the Democratic Party, and Trump is the head of the Republican Party.” And then we tell them some facts about the Democratic Party. Democrats are fighting to expand health care instead of taking it away. The Democrats are the only party that is fighting for civil rights, women’s rights, gay rights, and immigrant rights. Democrats are for protecting the environment, making college more affordable, and expanding voting rights.

Many people hear all these good ideas and say “Democrat.” If they say they’re an independent, make sure they check the isolated box all the way on the right that says “No, I do not want to choose a political party preference.” Make sure they do

NOT check the “American Independent” party. That is a far right party, to the right of the Tea Party, founded by segregationist George Wallace.

If they choose “Green” or “Peace and Freedom” or no party preference, continue filling out the form as we’d normally do.

If, despite everything, they choose Republican, DO give them the form. Stay respectful and positive — but hand them the form and let them know they just have to sign it, date it, and put it in the mail. It’s up to them now. And that is fulfilling our legal obligation. (Same goes for “Libertarian.”)

Assuming they don’t choose Republican or Libertarian... continue! Next, ask “Would you like to vote by mail? It’s very convenient.” If someone says they like to go to the polls? “You still can! You can bring your filled-out ballot to ANY polling place — skip the line — and drop it off.” Tell them this is just like having an insurance policy, so that if you get sick or have a work thing on Election Day, you still get to vote!

After that, you can skip #17. (That’s because whatever information they put on the form now supersedes all info the registrar had for that voter.)

All you need now is their signature AND date. Make sure to get the date too, right next to their signature in the same box.

NOTE ABOUT FELONS: If the person is off parole, they can re-register to vote. (They can be on probation. They must just be **off parole**.)

Now that you’ve registered them:

- ...give them a sticker in return for saving the world.
- ...tear off their receipt and give it to them, letting them know that in 2 weeks, they can type the serial number into either one of the websites on the receipt and confirm that they’re registered.
- ...and give them 1 to 3 sentences of basic education if you can! Let them know November 3, 2020 will be the **most important election of our lives**. Tell them **we need to vote for the Democrat in office (or the nominated Democratic candidate after the primary) so we can defeat Trump and the Republicans!** And mention that candidate’s name as many times as possible.

Because we don’t just register voters. We also let them know how to best use their vote!

Name recognition is a huge part of the battle, so getting the Dem candidate’s name out there as much as possible, and having conversations about that candidate, is a giant service.

4. ANY QUESTIONS?

What if I talk to a Republican?

It'll be fine! We talk to Republicans all the time, because we are in swing states or swing districts, where we should be... If their response is "I'm actually a Republican," or "No way, I LOOOOVE Trump!" — we just say "That's cool! Have a great day!" We are always super positive and respectful... and if we can somehow get a laugh out of a Republican, even better. We are part of the solution to all the demonization going on right now. We are *rehumanizing* the situation, one conversation at a time.

What if a Republican wants to register?

We are legally obligated to give anyone who wants to register a form. We are NOT legally obligated to help them fill it out... nor should we. Our time is precious and we need to spend it registering Democrats. That said, we are always incredibly respectful of everyone, and relentlessly positive. We want someone overhearing an interaction with a Republican to think "Wow, Democrats are actually cool people."

Don't you need a table to register voters?

You do not! In fact, we are the anti-table organization. Nobody approaches tables. And that's why we walk around with a clipboard and a smile, following the foot traffic, and talking to everyone we can. This method is about 10 times more effective!

Can we go into buildings?

Nope! Generally, we stay outside buildings and try not to crowd doorways or block traffic.

Will we get kicked out of our hot spots?

Almost never. If someone asks you to fill out a form to be there, go ahead and do that. If you do get kicked out for any reason, you can just leave and let us know what happened. No need to fight it. If we need to fight it, we can do that later through our lawyers. The fact is that voter registration is constitutionally protected activity in any public space. That includes any sidewalk, the outdoor area at any courthouse, any DMV, public library, etc. Community colleges, while not explicitly protected, are almost always friendly places where we've had good experiences.

I don't see a page on your site for a state I'm interested in. How do I find out more?

Contact us! Send an email to info@fieldteam6.org. We are expanding all the time - and you can help!

Any more questions or comments? Please contact us at info@fieldteam6.org!
We're here for you! It's the honor of our lifetime to be in this fight alongside you.
ONWARD!

HELPFUL LINKS

SITE: www.fieldteam6.org

EVENTS: <https://www.mobilize.us/ft6/>

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER SIGN-UP: http://eepurl.com/ggI_kj

TRAINING: <https://www.fieldteam6.org/train>

STORE: <https://fieldteam6.threadless.com>

DONATE: <https://secure.actblue.com/donate/ft6-phase2>

5. ROUSING SEND-OFF!

Before you go out, let's set some expectations:

First of all, just being out there in a high-traffic area and talking to people for 2-3 hours about our candidate and the upcoming election is a huge service. So, if you have an off day, or it's your first time, and you register zero people this time... that's OKAY. You've still done something super helpful that needs doing!

If you register 1-2 people, you've just doubled or tripled your personal voting power. And that is actually the rate the Democratic Party asks for from its paid people.

If you get 3-4 people, that is super solid. And if you get 5 or more, you are a monster!

As with any skill, the more you do this, the better you get. Keep coming back, and you'll see yourself get better each time. GOOD LUCK out there — let's leave this district a little bluer than we found it!

Oh, and by the way...

CONGRATULATIONS!

**You are now fully qualified to train volunteers to register Democrats.
Which means you know everything you need to grab a friend or ten
and host your own voter drives!**

To get more information,
sign up for voter drives,
or lead your own,
visit www.fieldteam6.org!