The Voter Engagement Tactics (VET) Guide

We hope you find this guide useful when sitting down with your group to plan your voter engagement work. While we hope you do read the guide in its entirety, we know that the guide is quite detailed, and some groups may already know some of the information contained within. Feel free to use the table of contents below to jump to specific sections of the guide.

Section 1 - Introduction

Over the years, Indivisible groups have learned first-hand the power of engaging voters with a local message. As the Indivisible movement has grown, so has our collection of resources to help you engage voters locally. We have more ways than ever to help you connect with voters, find out what they care about, get them the info they need, and get them motivated to vote.

Indivisible groups know that engaging voters regularly as part of our work in our communities is crucial to making the change we want to see happen a reality. If you're one of those groups who wants to do more with voters on the local level, then this guide is for you! There are thousands of mighty Indivisible groups across the country doing the hard work of making this country a better place. But we cannot do it on our own. Involvement from everyone in every community is important if we're going to elect leaders who will stand up for us and enact laws that will be inclusive of all and bring about progress. The best way to do that is to build community power by talking to the other voters in our area.

That's where the Voter Engagement Tactics Guide, aka the VET Guide, comes in! The VET Guide is designed to be a helpful tool in planning your work of engaging voters locally about issues and elections that matter. With this guide, you'll be able to

- Conceptualize the goal you want to set
- Create a realistic strategy to accomplish your goal
- Learn how and when to use the valuable tools and resources Indivisible has at your disposal as part of your tactics to get the work done
- See your desired outcome become a reality for you and your community

With so much at stake with each new year, we want to give all Indivisible groups and the voters they engage with the tools they need to make lasting change happen.

Let's jump in!

A Note on voter engagement and coordination

> Because Indivisible generally operates on the independent expenditure side of political activity, **all paid voter contact tools provided by Indivisible National can only be used by groups working on the independent expenditure side.** Thus you may not use these tools for any coordinated activities. For more information, check out our Coordination and Expenditures explainer.

Groups across the country may choose to coordinate directly with political campaigns or political parties. However, any groups who decide to coordinate will be limited to only using publicly available tools.

As noted above, you may not coordinate with campaigns, parties, or candidates while utilizing Indivisible tools. Generally, a group will be considered coordinated with a campaign or political party in a given election if they have:

1. Been exposed to nonpublic strategic info about a campaign or political party's electoral plans or activities; and
2. Used that nonpublic strategic info to plan the group's own electoral activity.

Check out our Coordination and Federal Election Law explainer for more information about coordination activities.

Section 2 - Goals, strategies, and tactics

Why We Engage Voters

Before we jump into setting our goal, planning our strategies, choosing our tactics, and achieving our desired outcome - the key building blocks to every successful voter engagement campaign - let's take a moment to talk about why it's so important to engage voters in the first place. Engaging voters and building relationships with them

allows us to lay the seeds to build a strong coalition of people in our communities that's necessary for lasting change. Strong, intentional, and consistent voter engagement will:

- Help you identify like-minded voters in your community
- Drive new and *more* voters to the polls, year after year
- Allow you to connect with and get to know people in your community more personally, allowing them to identify you as community advocates while building lasting relationships
- Help you grow your group and expand your influence on the local level
- Help ensure that the work you do is more inclusive of what is needed locally.

Strong voter engagement will provide voters with information regarding voting in their area and allow us to prove ourselves as a trusted source to provide correct, fact-based information. When done well, voter engagement can build a stronger network on the ground that is better able to respond when action is needed to get the positive results we want to see for ourselves and our neighbors.

That is why voter engagement is so critical to the work that we do. With that in mind, let's start by talking about our desired outcomes, our goals, the strategies we can use, and the tactics at our disposal to put our strategy into action.

As you move through the following sections, feel free to make a copy of this worksheet to help you start visualizing your voter engagement plan as you read through the guide.

Desired outcomes, strategies, tactics, and goals

The first step to creating the change you want to see is establishing the desired outcome you want to achieve. Once you have your desired outcome, you can plan your strategy, choose your tactics, and set your metric goal. To help us with this, let's affirm some shared definitions and take them step-by-step.

- Our outcome is what we want to achieve in our own words. It's our hard-set Northstar that no matter what happens, will remain constant in our work. It may be helpful to think about your outcome as the solution to a problem you're trying to solve.
- Our strategy is the plan we will enact to achieve that outcome.
- Our tactics are the individual actions we will take within that strategy. They are what we will do to win.
- Our goal is the numeric value we must achieve to make our outcome possible. For all of the math and data people out there, think of your goal as the metrics of your plan. Our goal will be dynamic while staying true to our outcome.

Real-World Example

As we move through this section, we'll use an example scenario to help you visualize the steps you'll take to build your own plan. In this example, we'll focus on younger voters.

Younger voters are an evergreen demographic that campaigns and organizations are always working to reach out to. We'll utilize this example through each step of the process. We'll imagine what an increase in younger voter turnout looks like in our own words to describe our desired outcome, plan our strategy and choose our tactics to engage younger voters and get them ready to vote. Finally, we'll use this planning to confirm the numerical goal that will guide us in achieving our desired outcome.

Establishing Your Desired Outcome

As we mentioned before, when we are thinking about the desired outcome we want to achieve, it's helpful to frame it as what problem we are trying to solve. You want to be as specific as possible when setting your outcome. Make sure it is ambitious yet achievable. If the problem has been low turnout among younger voters, then what we want to see is more younger voters showing up at the polls on or before election day. Our desired outcome is to see a noticeable increase in younger voter turnout in the next election.

Another way of phrasing this question is: What does success look like? What will you consider a success when you wake up the day after the election? We often want to make change that we can't do on our own or even in one cycle. So think about what is reasonable for your group to do now to create the change you want to see in the long run.

What will change if we solve the problem?

Achieving your desired outcome will be something that will bring lasting, positive change to your entire community that you can build off of to achieve even bigger goals. Remember that achieving your goal now does not need to be that you "won", it can be one of many well-planned steps that you make toward a bigger goal. If you achieve a strong turnout from younger voters and win, you can reconnect with younger voters post-election and show them how their turnout had an impact that led to a win. That can lead to them being more engaged in future elections through continued voter engagement.

Why hasn't the problem been solved before now?

To hit your goal and achieve your desired outcome, it's important to do your research and understand the problem. What is the history behind this problem? How has it impacted people locally? Has anyone tried solving the problem before? If possible, check in with those behind past attempts to see what you can learn from their efforts, and maybe even work together. To continue using our example of low turnout among young voters, this might look like researching what issues and candidates have been on past ballots. This could help you better understand why young voters have or haven't turned out to vote before.

What will it take to solve the problem?

What will you need to make achieving your outcome a reality? Time? Money? People? Experience? Do you have access to and enough of those resources? If not, can you get access to them? Take some time to think about how attainable your outcome is and whether you have what is needed to achieve it. Again using our example, to reach those younger voters, are the right resources available to you?

Now that we've set our outcome, let's talk about planning our strategy, choosing our tactics, and setting our goal.

Planning Your Strategy and Choosing Your Tactics

We've determined our outcome, now let's plan our strategy. Your strategy needs to include every aspect of your plan that you'll use to hit your goal and achieve your outcome.

The answers to the questions you ask yourself while determining your desired outcome will be the foundation for your strategy. Before we get into developing a strategy, let's review the different tactics and tools you can use as a part of your strategy. From our example, to achieve our desired outcome of increasing younger voter turnout, our strategy will be to engage voters in every way possible, using the tactics at our disposal. Those tactics are

- **Direct Voter Contact** - voter engagement methods that allow you to talk to the voter directly, collect real-time responses, and answer their questions. They are:

  - Phonebanking
  - Door-to-door canvassing
  - Relational Organizing
  - Voter Registration and Vote By Mail signup
  - Tabling

- **Indirect Voter Contact** - voter engagement methods that do not allow for direct contact with voters, but do allow you to share important info with them. Consider these methods one-way communication. They are:

  - Postcard programs
  - Silent lit drops

We'll get into these tactics more in a bit, but keep them in mind while answering these questions when planning your strategy:

- **What does a good strategy look like? A good strategy is directly related to the outcome you are trying to achieve.** For example, if the problem is low voter turnout among younger voters, then part of a good strategy to reach those voters

should be voter engagement on college campuses and targeting other locations and means of communication that will reach those specific voters. A good strategy considers all of the resources you'll need and implements them wisely, and makes sure you have enough of them or access to get more of them.

- **What is involved in planning your strategy? Strategizing is the most creative part of the entire process.** "What can we do about the problem?" This is the time to think outside of the box, to research and test new ideas. What's changed since the last election? What new methods, strategies, or tactics have you heard of done elsewhere that you would like to make a part of your strategy? For instance, younger voters are overwhelmingly in support of reproductive freedom for all. Making sure to include that reproductive freedom is on the ballot - whether directly or indirectly - in your messaging may help you connect with more younger voters.
- **Is a strategy set in stone once you decide on it? Your strategy is consistent, but how you get there is always evolving.** "Is your plan adaptable as you learn new things about the problem?" Your strategy should be designed so that it does not hinge on one piece or one step being successful. Your strategy should be flexible enough that as you learn new things as time goes on, your strategy can be updated to meet the needs of the changing circumstances. While your outcome and goal should always be clear, your plan to get there should be flexible. In other words, you should always have a plan B, C, and D ready to go.
- **What should a good strategy focus on? A good strategy is focused on your outcome at all times.** While the strategy itself may need to be adapted over time, the outcome your strategy is trying to achieve should not. Stay focused. Whether you need to adapt as you progress or can keep the plan exactly as it is from the outset, your original desired outcome should be your Northstar at all times. If increasing voter turnout among younger voters is your desired outcome, the outcome should not change just because younger voters are going back to college right before an election. Set up phone banks, or send postcards with info on how to sign up for vote by mail. They are still reachable.

Setting Your Goal

Now that we've established our desired outcome and started planning our strategy, we can work on setting our goal. Remember that earlier we said our outcome is what we want to achieve in our own words. Here, our goal is the numeric value we need to hit to achieve our outcome. The main question when setting our goal is to think about what you can do as a group. What can you and your group realistically do to make your desired outcome real? Some questions to ask when evaluating your group's capabilities:

- How many group members do you think will participate?
- How experienced are your members with voter engagement?
    - How much training do you think they'll need to feel comfortable talking to voters?

- What type of voter engagement are your volunteers interested in?
- What new areas of voter engagement do you also want them to lean into?

For our example, after taking into consideration what your group can do and the tools and tactics at your disposal, you decide that your goal will be to achieve a 20% increase in younger voter turnout. However, we should also keep in mind that goals can change, and that is often reflective of how difficult or easy it is to implement your strategy. If your goal is a 20% increase in younger voter turnout, you may learn midway that you need to increase that 25%. Or you may only need to see a 15% percent increase. No matter what, your desired outcome, your North Star, has not changed. However, to reach our North Star (to see a noticeable increase in younger voter turnout), your goal might need to change.

To help you with setting your goal, try to figure out how many younger voters will need to cast a ballot to see an increase in younger voter turnout. Figuring out the exact number of younger voters you'll need to achieve your desired outcome of increasing younger voter turnout will be key to setting your goal. Next, you'll want to look at the universe, or the total number of voters you're specifically interested in targeting, to see how many potential voters there are to reach. From there, you can start to set numeric goals specific to your tactics. If one of your tactics is registering new voters, your goal might be to register 1,000 new young voters. Maybe another of your tactics is canvassing, and your goal might be to knock on 2,500 doors of voters ages 18 to 24. When setting your goal, think of quantitative and/or qualitative measurements.

At the end of the day, make sure your goal is ambitious yet attainable and reflective of the hard work that is present in your strategy.

Now, let's go into detail about the tactics you'll use to implement your strategy.

Section 3 - Messaging Tactics and Effective Timeframes

Before we start talking to voters, first we have to decide what we will say to them and when. What do we want them to walk away knowing when our conversation ends? Voters might have a lot of questions when we talk to them. While we might not be able to answer all of their questions, we can anticipate many of them based on experience. Why and when are we engaging them? What is at stake? What issues matter to them and why? How does voting (or not voting) affect them in the present? How will it affect them in the long run? Why is one candidate better than the other? How will a party's agenda help them? When thinking about messaging, we have to choose a messaging tactic that will answer the questions they have, and we have to use the right messaging tactic at the right time to do so.

When it comes to the time of year that you're reaching out to voters, different messaging tactics are best used and most effective during specific timeframes. There are different messaging tactics we use to reach out to voters to engage them. Below we've listed the most common, as well as when you want to focus on them. As you develop your strategy, you should identify what messaging tactics you will be deploying, when, and what messages will help you achieve your North Star.

Setting Your Goal

Voter Registration - Can and should happen anytime

Voter Registration is the first step to creating an active, engaged voter. In many states across the country, voter registration is often deliberately confusing and one of the first lines of attack when conservative legislators want to limit the voices and votes of voters in their state, when they fear they will lose elections otherwise. Becoming a trusted source to register voters will build the foundation for an informed, empowered voting base in your area. Voter registration can be done at any time but is best done **30 to 60 days before your state's voter registration deadline**. Use that time to register voters, talk to them about what's at stake, and how they can make a plan to vote.

What do we say when we are registering voters? **"Are you registered to vote at your current address?"** is the phrase we want to use when registering voters. "Current" gets them to stop and think about what you are asking them and really consider their voter registration status. For first-time voters, that means registering right away. For established voters, it means checking their voter registration status. Not updating their registration could stop their vote from being counted or them being removed from the voter rolls in some states. For first-time voters, talking to them is a great chance to share your story about why you vote and how voting has affected your life. We've all had someone tell us that voting doesn't affect them. Show them how it does. Share your story.

When you're registering new voters or helping established voters update their status, it's also a great chance to talk to them about signing up for Vote By Mail if it is available in their state. Vote By Mail has been proven to be a safe, secure, and easy way for many to vote who cannot make it to early voting or election day voting.

For more on voter registration, be sure to check out the [Indivisible Voter Registration Guide](#).

Issue ID - Can and should happen anytime, but early in an election cycle

Issue ID focused voter engagement concentrates on learning what voters care about most and what affects them in their day-to-day lives. Identifying the issues that are on voters' minds can help you deepen relationships with them on important topics, allowing you to better understand voters, and see where voters may want to help take action on these issues in the future. Having real conversations around salient issues is one of the

best ways to make your presence known in your community. You'll get the pulse on what people care about, and knowing how they feel will help you plan your next conversation with them. Issue ID during election cycles can help you identify where candidates or parties may be in alignment with the voters you're talking to and help you connect with the voters about why they should be supporting a particular candidate or party platform.

Ballot Measures and Referendums - Can and should happen anytime

Groups may engage voters around supporting or opposing a ballot initiative, amendment, measure, or bill at the local, state, or federal level that directly impacts voters in real, tangible ways. Think of all of the hard work groups did around supporting abortion amendments in states across the country after the Supreme Court overturned *Roe*. Not to mention that Indivisible groups in states across the country have mobilized many times to protect or pass laws and rights that people rely on, everything from Obamacare to abortion rights. But pushing awareness around ballot measures and issues that are salient in your state can happen outside of election seasons, too. For instance, engaging voters to sign petitions to officially put an initiative on the ballot for the next election can happen during a non-election year.

Voter engagement efforts around ballot measures and referendums usually happen in two phases, where you're talking to voters in each phase:

- Getting a ballot initiative qualified to appear on the ballot. This includes signature gathering from enough eligible voters for the ballot measure to be reviewed by the state's approving body to appear on the ballot.
- Engaging voters after the ballot initiative has been confirmed to appear on the upcoming ballot. During this phase, we'll thank voters for their help in getting the initiative on the ballot for the upcoming election, and get their commitment that they will vote, and vote in favor of the initiative.

Sometimes you may be engaging voters and asking them to vote *against* a harmful initiative that will appear on the ballot. In these situations, we are helping to educate the voter on the issue if they are not already aware of it, and sharing with them what voting for or against the initiative would mean for them.

> **Please Note:** *Advocacy work surrounding ballot measures and referendums may not be allowed in your state due to some state voter data compliance laws. Before you use our tools for ballot measure work, please reach out to your Organizer or a member of the Tech Team for questions on this type of voter engagement in your state.*

Primaries - Early phase of an election cycle

Primary elections are often overlooked but should be a key period of activity when engaging voters. Primary elections can be the difference between the candidate who

truly supports you and your community making it to the general election or pushing the less progressive candidate to the left by building strong support for the more progressive candidate. A strong primary election period strategy can significantly improve voter turnout in both the primary and general elections, building momentum for success in November, and growing your groups and those who support your candidate. You should talk to voters about the differences between the candidates, why voting in primaries is important, and use your GOTV best practices to increase turnout during the primary. (Read on for more about GOTV below.)

Persuasion - Focused on before GOTV in election cycles

Persuasion entails moving undecided, or swing voters, to support our particular party, candidate, or issue. Undecided and swing voters need that extra push and will make the difference in a close election. Swing voters are valuable to both sides and are likely to be targeted by both parties. Make sure they are hearing the benefits of the candidate we support or our concerns about their opponent. We're trying to *build* support for our candidates that might not have existed before, and that takes time. During election years, persuasion messaging is usually done about two months before a primary, and over the summer and early fall during the general election season. But persuasion can happen - especially for salient issues - at any time to build support ahead of an election, not just during election years.

Candidate Support - Focused on throughout election cycles

Candidate support focused voter engagement allows us to identify the level of support for particular candidates who currently represent or are running to represent voters in your area, and whether the candidate can count on the voter's support at the polls come election day. Candidate support helps us build a base of voters throughout an election cycle so we know who we need to talk to and encourage to get out and vote in the days before an election during the GOTV period. This type of engagement allows us to connect candidates to the issues and what's at stake so voters have a better understanding of who is running and why they should support a progressive candidate.

GOTV Period - Focused on directly before election day in election cycles

GOTV (Get Out The Vote) is go time! GOTV happens the last four to six weeks before a general or primary election and is solely focused on making sure voters have a plan to vote in the upcoming election and on getting them to turn out at the polls. Encouraging them to vote as soon as possible if they have not already voted early or by mail. Sharing basic info with voters - when, where, and how to vote - is ideal to share during GOTV, and can be very useful for voters during a primary election in your state as well.

Political researchers have been looking for the best GOTV message for over a decade, and there is very clear guidance on how to write the best GOTV message. The best GOTV messages should have the following characteristics.

- Focus on the details of the election. We're sharing when, where, and how to vote, not information about candidates or their positions.
- Thank people for doing their civic duty.
  - "Thanks for being a reliable voter over the years, even through the pandemic! Will you commit to voting again this year on or before November 5th?"
- Holding them accountable and helping them stay committed to voting and giving them that final push of encouragement. We do that by applying light social pressure. Some examples are:
  - Thanking the voter
  - **Light Social Pressure** - Social Pressure messaging has shown to be the most effective and most recommended messaging type when engaging voters during the GOTV period.
    - "We'll be checking in with voters after the election to see how their voting experience went. Can we count on you to vote in this year's election on November 5th?"
    - "Who you vote for is private and is not shared with anyone, but whether you vote is public record. Would you like to hear about the early voting dates in your area?"
- A useful supplemental tactic is plan-making. Research has shown that this can be effective when combined with light social pressure.
  - "You have options for when and how you can vote. Can we help you make a plan right now?"
  - "Your options to cast your vote in this year's election are safe and secure. Would you like to hear about how you can vote from your home with Vote By Mail?"

Messaging will be key when it comes to writing your scripts for your voter engagement. Take a look at our [VAN Script Library](#) for some example script templates and tips on messaging.

Section 4 - Methods of Voter Engagement Tactics

The voter engagement methods, the tactics we use to put our strategy into action, will be key to the work that we do and to the success of our desired outcome. Let's take a look at the tactics Indivisible has to offer to your group to help you make those important connections with voters.

- **Direct Voter Engagement with VAN** for phone banking via OpenVPB and canvassing via MiniVAN.
- **Relational Organizing with Empower** is a powerful new app-based tool offered by Indivisible to help you connect with your contacts using proven Relational Organizing methods.

- **Voter Registration with BallotReady** is a voter registration tool that you can use to help voters get registered, stay registered, and get helpful reminders and info about voting.
- **Indirect Voter Engagement with VAN** via postcarding programs and silent lit drops.

When we're able to make that connection with voters in real-time, we're able to begin relationships that we can then build on with every interaction we have with the voters thereafter. Strong voter engagement programs focus on two-way conversations, with targeted efforts and intentional relationship building.

As a movement, we think it's important to engage directly with voters, having hard conversations as the main component of your strategy. If you want to use indirect tactics, we encourage you to think about how you'll directly build community with voters by using direct voter engagement tactics as well.

Keep in mind that while these tools are available for you and your group to run your own programs, Indivisible will continue to offer National-led voter engagement opportunities, like our peer-to-peer (P2P) texting program, our Neighbor2Neighbor (N2N) program, as well as Indivisible National funded postcard programs, all for key races at critical moments in the election cycle. Keep your eyes on your weekly group leader emails and reach out to your Organizer for more info on those programs and their availability.

You can find out more about each voter engagement method below.

Type: Direct Voter Engagement

Tool: VAN

What can I use it for?

You can use VAN to make phone calls to voters via OpenVPB. Phone conversations allow for quality relationship building with voters without too much pressure. We can also use VAN to knock on their doors while canvassing via MiniVAN, to engage voters face-to-face in real time. Canvassing is still the most effective way to engage voters and drive turnout. Having quality conversations at the doors and on the phone will lay the groundwork for building a consistent, reliable voter base in your neighborhoods.

The best part about using these VAN tools is that there is no data entry! These tools are completely digital. That means you can focus on talking to voters and having meaningful conversations, and not have to worry about entering data after a long day of walking or talking. This also means that we can see the work you've done instantly reflected in the system - how many doors you've knocked, how many dials you've made, and how many conversations you've had with voters. And that information is there in VAN year in and year out for you to build upon when talking to voters in the future. Each conversation is there, so you can continue engaging every voter you come into contact with.

Ready to start using VAN? [Sign up here](#)!

Check out the [VAN Script Library](#) for inspiration when writing your scripts!

Please Note: *due to compliance laws, any lit shared with voters by way of a MiniVAN canvass will need to be approved by Indivisible before use to ensure the lit is compliant with the type of outreach being conducted and is compliant with all state and federal laws.*

Type: Relational Organizing

Tool: [Empower](#)

What can I use it for?

Relational Organizing helps groups and volunteers leverage the power of their relationships with their contacts as trusted messengers. Empower builds real power and a movement that is sustainable beyond the next election. You're not just reaching voters, you're reaching your friends and family who need to hear from *you*.

All Indivisible groups will work with a coaching specialist from the Empower team who will build a relationship with you and your group. The Empower specialists' goal is to meet your unique needs and provide direct support as you navigate all aspects of your organizing program. Through regular one-on-one coaching sessions and guidance on best practices, getting started and writing your organizing plan doesn't have to be done alone. By building partnerships and navigating hurdles along the way, your coaching specialist is invested in your success and is here to help.

With the Empower app, you can track all of the conversations you have with your contacts - including the questions you've asked them and the actions they've agreed to take, and you can scale the size of your program up or down at a pace that is right for you and your group. You have access to your data 24/7 and it stays with you always.

Ready to start using Empower? [Sign up here](#)!

Type: Voter Registration

Tool: [BallotReady](#)

What can I use it for?

BallotReady is an online voter registration tool that allows voters to register online in states where it is available, or print out the directions and voter registration form in states where it is not. BallotReady helps already registered voters ensure that their registration is up to date or shows them how to update it. BallotReady provides other valuable resources for voters as well, such as directions for requesting a vote by mail ballot and helping to make a plan to vote. Voters can even sign up for helpful voter notifications via text or email, like reminders for deadlines, and when, where, and how to vote.

You'll also have access to the voters who register with your BallotReady link. You can follow up with those voters to make sure they have a plan to vote and have all the info they need when going to the polls (or the drop box).

Ready to start using BallotReady? [Sign up here](#)!

Type: Indirect Voter Engagement

Tool: [Indivisible's Postcard Program](#)

What can I use it for?

Postcard programs are a good way to share important info with voters about upcoming elections without receiving a response from the voter. Informing them about early voting, voter registration and vote-by-mail sign-up deadlines, short candidate support messaging, and short messaging on ballot initiatives are all ways to share info with voters via postcards. However, as a best practice, postcards are most effective when using them to share a light social pressure messaging. Check out our [Postcard Program Script Library](#) to learn more about light social pressure messaging and other messaging types.

Postcard programs are a great way for new group members to become familiar with what you do, the types of messaging that connect with and resonate with voters, and how we frame the work that we do. It's the perfect introductory action for new group members to take before they move on to other, more direct voter engagement tactics like door-to-door canvassing or phone banking. It's also a great way for group members and volunteers with limited mobility or accessibility concerns to participate in group actions in a fun way, and for group members with limited time to contribute to the group's impact at the local level. Postcards should not be the only tactic you employ to reach out to voters though. They should be in addition to more direct tactics, like canvassing and phone banking.

Ready to start using Indivisble's Postcard Program? [Sign up here](#)!

Check out the [Postcard Program Script Library](#) for inspiration when writing your scripts!

Please Note: *that this postcard program is group-led, and funding for materials such as postcards and stamps is group-funded. However, Indivisible does offer programs to help cover costs for group-led requests. These include the [Distributed Fundraising Program](#) and the [GROW Grant Program](#). Learn more by clicking the links to understand if your postcard program is eligible for coverage via these programs.*

Type: Indirect Voter Engagement

Tool: [Silent Lit Drop via VAN](#)

What can I use it for?

Silent Lit Drop is all in the name. No talking to voters is involved, but you are leaving them valuable information at their door. This could be anything from when, where, and how to vote, to candidate report cards, to the info they need to help them decide how to vote on a ballot initiative.

Ready to start using Silent Lit Drip via VAN? [Sign up here](#)!

Please Note: *that this postcard program is group-led, and funding for materials such as postcards and stamps is group-funded. However, Indivisible does offer programs to help cover costs for group-led requests. These include the [Distributed Fundraising Program](#) and the [GROW Grant Program](#). Learn more by clicking the links to understand if your postcard program is eligible for coverage via these programs.*

Section 5 - Volunteer Recruitment and Group Growth

In this section we'll cover volunteer recruitment and group growth, and how to use them successfully in the voter engagement work that you do. While the focus of voter engagement is to build relationships with voters and get them to the polls, it may seem natural to take that extra step and invite voters to take action with us. But there are times when volunteer recruitment and group growth will be more effective than other times. We'll walk through when it's most effective and how to do it successfully.

When to incorporate Volunteer Recruitment into your strategy

You can and should incorporate volunteer recruitment whenever you are talking to a voter who is on our side and excited about the work! Volunteer recruitment can be a valuable engagement tool when talking to voters. But doing it at the right time is key to its success. You want to incorporate volunteer recruitment at the right moments when talking to voters, when a volunteer ask will be a natural part of the conversation and keep the engagement flowing. In section 3 we talked about the different types of messaging variations for voter engagement and when they are best used to engage voters. Volunteer recruitment follows a similar method.

Every conversation is different and flows differently from voter to voter. With that in mind, we don't want to pass up an opportunity to welcome a new volunteer or group member if it comes up organically in a conversation. Take that opportunity to tell them all about what you and your Indivisible group are doing at the local level!

Best Practices for Volunteer Recruitment

Volunteer recruitment is more successful when done thoughtfully. Here are a couple of guidelines to follow when implementing volunteer recruitment into your work.

Always have at least one to three events to invite them to already planned

Inviting voters to volunteer with you and getting a 'yes' is great, but if you have nothing to invite them to when making the initial ask, the voter is likely to decline future invites if there's nothing to attend. Having at least one to three events planned before adding recruitment into your messaging will go a long way to signing a voter up for an event.

Give them options of types of events so it's easier to say yes

When adding volunteer recruitment into your messaging, having a variety of events for voters to participate in will increase the likelihood of them saying yes to volunteering. A phone bank one day, a canvass another, and voter registration the next day gives voters options on how to jump in and get involved. A variety of events leads to more interest and makes it almost impossible for the voter to say no. Someone who may not like talking on the phone may love the walking and talking that in-person canvassing offers. A voter registration event is perfect for those fearless individuals who have no trouble talking to someone they don't know.

And if you can, take it one step further: Repeat events also aid in recruiting new volunteers and group members. A fan of canvassing will be more likely to volunteer and keep volunteering if they know they can come back to do something they enjoy doing over and over.

No upcoming events?

Invite them to subscribe to your email list so that they stay up to date with what your group is planning and can join you when they're ready.

When done well, volunteer recruitment can lead to a more engaged voter base at the local level and new members joining your group and getting involved in something they care about. Many voters are looking for a home for the type of work they would like to do to make change happen in their local, state, and federal government. Your Indivisible group can be their home. Indivisible has many great resources for helping you grow your group as you engage voters and make that volunteer recruitment ask.

The Recruitment Starter Pack is a great place to start! For a whole library's worth of resources on how to grow your group, visit the How To Grow Your Group resource page on the Indivisible Group Support Hub. It has many other great resources, like the Group Growth Social Media Guide to help you grow your group online, How To Build Inclusive Groups, and much more.

Section 6 - Next Steps and Tracking Your Progress

We've done so much so far! We've determined our desired outcome, set our goal, planned our strategy, confirmed our messaging, and chosen our tactics. With all of that hard work done, we need to make sure that as we move forward throughout the year, we're able to track our work and see in real time the progress we're making in achieving our outcome. Regular check-ins and debriefs will help you stay on track and will help you identify when to make key strategic decisions moving forward.

Who should be involved?

You should think about having regular check-ins and debriefs with key group decision-makers, any group members who participate in executing engagement events, your Indivisible Organizer, and your Indivisible Data Team contact. All of these individuals will be able to give you valuable insight into your strategy and help you plan next steps. Some individuals may not need to be a part of every check-in and debrief, but keeping them a part of the regular communication thread will help identify issues, problem-solve, and point out positive achievements along the way.

This is also a great opportunity for more group growth, specifically leadership development for group members who have shown initiative or in whom you see a leadership quality. Have a group member who is passionate about canvassing? Ask them to help you plan your canvassing strategy! Have a group member who can get anyone to

register to vote? Involve them in planning your voter registration goals and sharing input on the best VR hotspots.

When should you plan check-ins and debriefs?

Check-ins should be planned at key times during each quarter that your voter engagement plan will be active, and for each type of messaging you plan to engage voters on throughout the year. A check-in at the launch of your voter engagement program is ideal to make sure that everyone is on the same page as far as executing the strategy. Another check-in around the halfway mark will help ensure that everything is running smoothly and allow for communication around course correction if necessary.

A full debrief for each messaging type is encouraged at the end of each program to assess the outcomes of the group's use of each type. Some questions to answer while performing debriefs are:

- What went well with this messaging type?
    - How can you continue the positive use of this messaging type moving forward?
- What are some areas of improvement you could make when using this messaging type?
    - How do you implement those improvements in the future?
- What was missing while using this messaging type this quarter?
    - What was not needed to make this messaging type more effective this quarter?

These questions, as well as any others that your group finds important to ask, should be a part of the debrief for each messaging type used during your voter engagement plan.

Preparing for next year

Once you and your group have had your debriefs on the work you've completed for the year, and have had time to reflect on the findings of the debrief, it's time to start preparing for the next year.

The important thing here is to make sure that each year informs the next. This year can help you course correct for next year, identify opportunities for improvement in your strategy, and brainstorm new ways to plan events and engage voters. Always being in the learning mindset is important to adaptability when it comes to voter engagement.

Section 7 - Best Practices

We've shared some great best practices that we hope you'll incorporate into your voter engagement work this year and every year. Let's review the best practices we've outlined

in the guide and others we've discussed over the years, and collect them here for you to have handy as you begin mapping out your plan with your group.

Preparing

- Share the love (and the work)! Work with other local groups in your area and/or Congressional District to make a plan that works for all of you. The more groups and members you have talking with voters, the more impact you'll have overall. Group coordination is especially important when it comes to work that supports the same candidate, or supports or opposes the same ballot initiative.
- Compliance laws for the use of the public voter file vary from state to state. Be sure you know your state's laws before you begin planning your voter engagement. Need help? We're here! Please reach out to your Organizer or a member of the Tech Team for help in understanding your state's compliance laws.

Planning Your Voter Engagement

- Remember, direct voter engagement is about live voter interactions that focus on intentional messaging and building relationships with voters.
- Remember to focus on talking to the right voters at the right time. You don't need to talk to super voters and supporters when doing persuasion work, we already know that they will vote for our candidate. During persuasion conversations, we want to focus on those voters who need to hear from us about why our candidate will make a difference for them. Similarly, we don't do persuasion conversations during GOTV. Our goal is to get our supporters to the polls during GOTV!
- While using all of the tools that Indivisible offers to groups is great, consider which tools will work best for your group and your area. Using all of them is *not* required.
- Some years will likely see more periods of higher use of certain messaging types and tools, depending on your desired outcome. Not everyone's plans will look the same, and that's okay!
- Tracking your progress and scheduling regular check-ins and debriefs will be key to your success this year and preparing for next year.

GOTV

Groups have asked about this, and you can be a wonderful support to those in your community in other ways that don't necessarily involve using the tools and tactics we've talked about so far. However, you will still help you build relationships with voters. Many of them happen during GOTV season.

- Rides to the polls are a great way to help some of the most disenfranchised voters in the process. Not everyone has reliable transportation or consistent public transportation options. This can be the difference between them making it to the polls or not making it all.

- Voter Protection - Do you have a legal background? This may be something that you or members of your group can help with. Many areas across the country have organizations dedicated to helping voters protect their right to vote and have their voices heard on election day. Consider working with one of these organizations in your area during GOTV to utilize your skills.
- Poll Workers - We know all too well how important poll workers are, and the role they play in helping us have safe, fair elections. Poll workers during early voting periods and on election day are essential roles that many communities need filling.

> **Please Note:** Be sure to check your local and state laws around voting and voter protections before engaging in activities around voting and polling places. For that reason, you should consider partnering with an organization or group that does this work regularly before engaging in these activities.

Section 8 - Conclusion

That's it! Thank you for taking the time to read through the Voter Engagement Tactics Guide! We hope you found it to be a useful starting point for planning your next voter engagement program with your group. We know that not every answer is contained within this guide, so we hope you'll reach out to us if you still have questions as you move through your planning process.

We're here to help! Please reach out to your Indivisible Organizer or the Indivisible Support Team inbox with any questions you may have. We want to help make this as valuable and fun of a learning process as possible for you. Together, we can help you plan a voter engagement program that will be successful and bring about real change in your community. Don't forget to visit the Indivisible Group Support Hub for so many more resources that are available to you and your group!

One last thing, be sure to make a copy of this worksheet to help you and your group start planning your voter engagement work! Happy planning!