



PRECINCT TEAM MANUAL:

*Becoming an Effective
Libertarian Grassroots Leader*

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Letter from Precinct Team Coordinator

Dear Grassroots Activist:

Congratulations! You have become part of a vital team that will be promoting the Libertarian Party as well as building a strong local effort for upcoming elections. On behalf of the Libertarian Party of Washington State, it is our pleasure to welcome you and explain your duties as a precinct captain or “grassroots activist”.

Enclosed you will find the basic information about getting started in successfully launching a grassroots effort that is the most beneficial to our overall election strategy. Please bear in mind that this handbook was designed as a resource for County Libertarian Parties. We encourage the county chair to use this guide as the basis of county-wide precinct training. Your county officers should provide you with most of the information about the county, district, and statewide political scene. **Your focus is your precinct.**

Remember, your tasks are a work in progress which can be shared with others and spread out over a significant period of time. Don’t overwhelm yourself or micromanage; we’re here to help and so are many others.

I look forward to meeting all of you at a Libertarian Party of Washington State regional or county meeting or other social event. To the political newcomers, I say welcome, congratulations and thank you. To those of you with years of experience and knowledge, thank you for evolving with the changing political climate and technological advances which have made continued retraining an integral part of political involvement.

As always, do not hesitate to contact party officials and staff directly with any questions, comments, or criticisms. It is our duty to communicate with you efficiently and meet your needs.

Sincerely,

Steven M. Nielson
Former Chairman
Libertarian Party of Washington State (LPWA)
Region 1 Alternate Delegate to the National LP

Note to Beginners

The LPWA knows that in many cases *you may be the only volunteer in your precinct*. We will try to help you by encouraging volunteers to also help in precincts other than their own, but in many cases such help may not be available. Other difficulties may arise in the first couple of years as you are building your precinct team, and you may not have the time to do all of the things that we will explain in the manual such as collecting ballots on Election Day, calling everyone in your precinct, or anything else. ***Just do what you can and be on the lookout for other Libertarians in your precinct*** that might be interested in helping.

If you do nothing else, we recommend that you at least do a literature drop, and knock on the doors of everyone that lives closest to you. Then, hopefully you will find at least one person to help you in the next election. Building a precinct team from scratch can take time, so ***don't worry*** if you feel you are not doing everything in the manual. Also, don't bite off more than you can chew. *This is a long term effort (two-year plan)*, and we don't want anyone getting burnout and quitting after one election.

Also, you can look at this as a progression. Assuming you start as the sole precinct volunteer, your first election cycle action should be to drop off a libertarian flyer at every house, along with a “*dear neighbor*” letter with your contact information on it. Your goal should be to ***find at least one other person in the precinct*** that volunteers to join your precinct team and to help you during the next election cycle. In most cases, 10 to 100 people vote for libertarian candidates regularly in any given precinct. You just have to find them and motivate them to help a little bit.

For the second election cycle, you should start with a voter ID drive a month or two before the primaries, and then do a literature drop a month or two before the general election. ***Start compiling a list*** of who is Libertarian, Independent, or supports other parties. This voter ID list is going to be a *very important part of your precinct walking strategy* as well as your Get-Out-The-Vote (GOTV) effort.

By the third election cycle, hopefully you will have a full precinct team of 5 or more volunteers. You should at this point be able to do everything this booklet suggests: 2 precinct walks, a precinct event, a GOTV Phone Bank canvass, putting up yard signs, and a full precinct plan including goals.

Also remember that with each election cycle a voter sees a Libertarian Party yard sign in their neighborhood or picks up a Libertarian Party flyer on their doorstep, ***the Libertarian Party grows in legitimacy***. After three election cycles of building a precinct team, *voters will start taking you and the Libertarian Party a lot more seriously*.

How to Use This Handbook

This guide is designed as a primer to instruct political novices - and longtime activists - on the elements of a strong grassroots organizing campaign. The materials contained herein were compiled to communicate a realistic vision and approach for organizing effectively and efficiently at the precinct level.

Never underestimate the power of the precinct worker! It is the grassroots volunteer, actively participating in the party at the precinct level, who will build the party into a force to be reckoned with. The precinct is the most important voting and organizational unit within the Libertarian Party or any political party for that matter.

There are different ways to accomplish the recommended tasks at hand. This handbook covers techniques proven most effective in most precincts. We urge you to consult your local Libertarian leaders and the State Libertarian Party for additional ideas for difficult precincts.

As a final note, keep in mind that though we are a small party, ***our potential for growth is great.***

Choosing to become a Precinct Captain is the number one, most important way to take our party to the next level, where we can compete with the Republicans and Democrats on an equal level. Also, *don't get so worried about details* that you become paralyzed from doing anything. If you are not into planning, just call up the state or county party to acquire a bunch of flyers and/or door hangers, and leave them at your neighbors' doorsteps. *It can be as easy or complicated as you wish.*

It is also important to note that because our party is still relatively small it is very important to pool our resources. The Libertarian Party rarely has big primary fights, nor will be have a precinct volunteer for every candidate running for office in every precinct. Instead, we may have one precinct volunteer per precinct. *This volunteer will be essentially working for all the candidates in his precinct.*

Have patience with yourself, your fellow volunteers, and your party leadership - ***remember, we can only accomplish our greater goals by working together.*** Thank you for making the commitment to educate yourself on how to become an effective precinct leader. We'll see you on the campaign trail.

Getting Started

Build Your Precinct Captain Portfolio. The *most important resource* you are going to have is your portfolio, or 'Captain Binder'. Purchase a 1" 3-ring binder to keep your records and log your activities. This will be your inspiration, your reminder, and the story of your efforts as a grassroots activist. The portfolio should be built as follows:

- a. **Page 1: Write Your "Why"**
 - i. Every time you open your portfolio you will be reminded of WHY you are doing what you are doing. It should be the on the forefront of your mind. You should talk about it to others, tell them your passion for action. It is where you draw your inner inspiration, that fire that drives you. Use the attached form to write your WHY and place it in page 1.
- b. **Page 2: Identify your SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats/Risks)**
 - i. Described in more detail in section 3, below, this analysis will allow you to identify internal and external factors that you can use or overcome to be successful
- c. **Page 3: Print your Precinct Map**
 - i. Instructions are provided herein on how to find your map. Print it. Take notes on it. Identify locations of known Libertarians and friendly properties and businesses. Identify high-visibility targets for signs. This is your Libertarian Treasure Map! The treasures are the votes on Election Day!
- d. **Page 4: Current Elected Officials**
 - i. Identify all current elected officials, from the President to the School Board. Who are they? Where do they live? When is their term expired? Are they Libertarian or are they friendly to Libertarians?
 - ii. This will help you recruit candidates and identify needs for the election timeline
- e. **Page 5: Election Timeline**
 - i. Keep a current Election Timeline for the future two years. This will help answer questions for recruiting voters and candidates, as well as planning for resources.
- f. **List of known Libertarians & Precinct Volunteers**
 - i. Identify your team. Assign titles and job functions. Identify their strengths / talents. Build and know your team in order to grow your team.
 - ii. *Include contacts in neighboring precincts, county leadership, and state leadership*
- g. **The remainder of the portfolio** will be your precinct walking lists, voter registration, demographics, etc. This will be the active segment where you take notes, chase ballots, trend voting habits, who has moved in/out, etc. Over time this will be the history of your precinct and will be key in predicting election outcomes for the Libertarian Party.
 - i. *There will be training available on effective portfolio management, canvassing, and general Grassroots Libertarian Leadership*

Chapter 1 - Precinct Organization Overview

Your Roles as a Precinct Captain

Congratulations on being a Precinct Captain!

What is a Precinct Captain? A Precinct Captain plays several roles as the representative of the Libertarian Party (LP) in a specific voting precinct. Your primary roles are in the following areas:

- *Communication;*
- *Education;*
- *Appreciation; and*
- *Motivation.*

Communication: Precinct Captains improve the flow of communication up from the precinct to the LP and local candidates and back down from the LP and local candidates to the precinct. The LP wants concerned citizens to have a more direct manner for being heard on local, state, and national issues. Communications can be by door-to-door canvassing, distributing flyers, telephone calls, "*dear neighbor*" letters, attending or hosting social events, meeting with local business leaders, putting up yard signs, or simply by talking to your family, friends, and neighbors when you see them.

Education: Help inform your neighbors about the Libertarian Party. Let them know that we are regular people that live in the same neighborhood as them and that we share many of the same values. We are just people that believe that government has grown far too big, and that someone needs to be working to bring government back down to the right size. You will also be informing the Libertarians in your precinct about local legislators, existing campaigns, the Libertarian Party of Washington (LPWA) leadership, volunteer opportunities, and, most importantly, how their voices can be heard!

Appreciation: Volunteers and Libertarians should be thanked for sharing their ideas or information and for volunteering to help the LP or local candidates.

Motivation: Finally, the most important goals are to help motivate your Libertarian neighbors to get and stay involved, to motivate neighbors to register Libertarian, and to **get out the vote!**

Your Responsibilities as a Precinct Captain

The following is a list of possible activities you should focus on (*not necessarily in this order*). Feel free to check off those that you have completed!

- Organize your precinct*** by blocks or zones.
- Canvas your precinct*** to identify all favorable voters.
- Distribute literature*** and information about Libertarian candidates, Libertarian positions, election procedures, and election laws.
- Identify and register all Libertarians*** in your precinct
- Conduct precinct meetings***, social events, candidate forums
- Recruit*** and train volunteers.
- Chase Libertarian ballots*** on Election Day.
- Serve as the Libertarian Party's year round liaison*** in your neighborhood, between the party leadership and the Libertarian party members, supporters and voters in your precinct

Your position as a Libertarian Precinct Captain is an extremely important one. In many respects, you are the Libertarian Party within your precinct. You can play a pivotal role in selecting and electing Libertarian candidates for a wide variety of offices, ranging from United States Congress to State Representative to County Commissioner to School Board. You are the first and probably the most important link in the chain which makes up our representative form of government.

As a Precinct Captain, you have made a commitment to make a difference. You will share the joy of victory and the agony of defeat. Most importantly, you will share the final sense of accomplishment that comes with helping to elect good public officials and with helping to make government work effectively.

Some Minimum Expectations for Precinct Captains

1. Support Your County Party. County party leaders receive constant updates on the goals and strategies of our elected officials and state party. Most county parties hold regular meetings to relay communications and enjoy the company of local Libertarians. Attend your county party meetings. *If your county party has not yet been established, you will be pivotal in that process.*

2. Canvass Your Precinct, Twice. Depending on the makeup of your precinct, you will be asked to organize a precinct walk or Phone bank in your area. This doesn't mean ***you*** have to knock every door yourself, it means you should recruit volunteers, plan the logistics and obtain appropriate materials (voter lists, literature, etc.) from your county party officers and staff.

Although each precinct is different, in most cases one of your canvasses will be to “ID” voters and one of them will be for GOTV purposes.

3. Register Libertarians. Most Precinct Captains can simply bring voter registration cards with them as they precinct walk, and hand the cards over to voters that sound agreeable to the Libertarian Message. Additionally, it would be great if Precinct Captains also volunteer to assist their county parties in accomplishing this goal at county fairs, community events, etc.

4. Collect Voter Data. Most of your duties associated with being a Precinct Captain revolve around contacting voters in your neighborhood about upcoming elections. Therefore, the first goal of a Precinct Captain of the Libertarian Party (LP) will be to identify Libertarians and persuadable voters in their precincts. A Precinct captain focuses their energy and resources on these people.

5. Increase Education About and Visibility of the Libertarian Party. The Libertarian Party is a third Party and has a very small base of voters at present. The LP has a great deal of work to do in the areas of educating voters and making our party more visible. Highly Loyal Republicans and Democrats are usually not persuadable; however, many Rs and Ds *disagree with their party on many issues*, but they think there is no other choice. They *want* to vote Libertarian, but they don't want to “waste their vote” on a third party. Keep track of voters like this, they are persuadable.

Glossary of Modern Political Vocabulary

The following terms are important concepts and vocabulary in the realm of political campaigns. While each term has volumes of associated theory and strategy attached to them, we've tried to simplify and present them to you in how they relate to a grassroots activist.

Throughout the manual we've *italicized* glossary terms so you can flip back through these pages if you forget a concept or two.

Base Precincts:

Base Precincts generally carry a *Libertarian Performance* percentage of 65% or higher. I don't think we have any of these yet, but I encourage you to work towards making your precinct the first. The Libertarian Party will only achieve victory by winning one precinct at a time through persistent effort by grassroots volunteers like you. Perhaps a more useful indicator of strong Libertarian precincts is to find the top ten to fifty precincts in the county where we get the greatest percentage of votes.

Base Voter:

A *Base Voter* is a voter that is likely to support the entire Libertarian Ticket. The best way to measure this is by measuring straight party votes for Libertarians. This is a very important issue for Libertarians

because until we have straight ticket vote amounts nearing that of the Reps and Dems, it will be very hard to elect anyone on the Libertarian ticket.

Election Cycle:

The *Election Cycle* consists of the two years between U.S. Congressional elections in the beginning of November. Other than city and special elections, all elections for governmental representation takes place on the first Tuesday after the first Monday of November of every even year. Because of this, the political calendar is based on this cycle, which is commonly called the *Election Cycle*.

GOTV:

GOTV is an abbreviation for “Get out the Vote.” *GOTV* includes all aspects of boosting turnout, including absentee voting, rides to the polls, early voting efforts and Election Day canvasses, automated calls and mail programs. All precinct leaders are asked to participate in, or recruit replacements for, *GOTV* activities in their precincts (usually by canvassing).

Libertarian Performance:

Libertarian Performance is the average percentage in a precinct achieved by Libertarian candidates for office in previous general election years. High Libertarian, low persuasion areas can be considered solid Libertarian enclaves. Conversely, Low Libertarian, low persuasion areas can be considered solid Rep/Dem bastions. *Libertarian Performance* is not a fixed prediction of what a candidate can expect to garner from an area. It is simply a historical average. The vote one can expect to achieve from an area is more directly tied to persuasion and *GOTV* programs. Moderate performance and higher persuasion areas are ripe for conversion.

Message:

A political campaign has three goals in voter contact: defining the candidate, defining the opposition, and defining crucial issues to voters and why a candidate is best prepared to deliver on those issues. These three goals combined are known as a campaign’s *Message*. In today’s sound bite society, a brief and strong *Message* is often the key to a winning campaign.

Phone bank:

A *Phone bank* is a form of *Voter contact* by telephone. *Phone banking* is most commonly used for *Voter identification* and *GOTV*, and less frequently for persuasion. *Phone bank* lists are usually divided by precinct. *Phone banks* can be done from individual’s homes or from a central location with several phone lines (for many reasons a central location is the most reliable and efficient method for *Phone banking* and should be the method preferred by counties and precincts).

Precinct canvass:

A *Precinct canvass* is **In-person Voter contact by precinct**. A precinct can be canvassed either by phone, or by precinct walking depending on the makeup of the precinct and the desired effect of the canvass. Canvasses can be used for volunteer recruitment, voter ID, voter registration, or simply distributing literature on households’ doorsteps.

Persuadable voter:

Persuadable voters are commonly referred to as “ticket splitters” or “swing voters.” They are voters who are likely to vote for candidates of all parties. Registered Independents are commonly *Persuadable voters*. *Persuadable voters* are much more open to the policies of an individual candidate, rather than the global policies of a particular party. *Persuadables* may also include moderates from either the Democrats or Republicans and disillusioned voters. Knowing who is and is not persuadable helps you to not waste time getting into heated debates with those who are very unlikely to change their opinions.

Targeting:

Targeting refers to an analysis of how a campaign can best allocate resources to maximize Libertarian turnout and persuasion. *Targeting* estimates are drawn from voting trends from past elections -- a reliable predictor for how precincts will perform in future elections. Depending on the past performance of a precinct, campaigns then make decisions on which voters and methods are the best with which to communicate.

Visibility:

Visibility is the public appearance of a candidate in his/her district. This can be accomplished through in-person visits by the candidate, volunteer canvassing or through distributing yard signs. Yard sign *Visibility* is a passive form of *Voter contact*, therefore less effective than other means. Having said this, not putting up any yard or street signs implies that you are not a serious candidate, so many who have not personally met you will not vote for you thinking that you are not a serious candidate and are unlikely to win.

Voter contact:

Voter contact is any form of communication from a campaign to a voter, including: advertising, phone calls, public appearances by a candidate, news stories, and *Precinct canvassing*. Your goal should be to contact each Libertarian in your precinct several times because those who are contacted several times are more likely to go to the polls and vote. You should also attempt to contact all the non-Libs at least once as well to educate them about Libertarianism and to provide them with a neighborhood contact should they have any questions about us.

Voter identification:

Voter identification is a reliable method of determining how to allocate campaign resources effectively - commonly referred to as “ID’s.” A voter ID is a method of determining whether a voter supports a particular political party or candidate. Depending on a voter’s level of support, campaigns can then determine what resources to dedicate to a particular level. For instance, if a voter supports your political party or candidate you can remove them from your persuasive mailing list and use the money you saved to send another piece of mail to an undecided voter (while keeping your supporter on the list of people you definitely want to get to the polls). The concept behind ID’s is to know who your voters are, where they are at, what they think, and how best to communicate to them.

Voter file:

The *Voter file* is a centralized list of information about voters maintained by the Libertarian Party of Washington

Introduction by the Precinct Team Coordinator

This Handbook is organized into 3 parts: part one is planning, part two is canvassing, part three is post-election. And then there are appendixes with various helpful samples.

This guide is intended to be comprehensive and thorough. Some people love the planning and research end of things, some don't. If you are not a big planner skim over this section and just do enough research to find a map of your precinct and **know how your precinct tends to vote.**

"My precinct is about 55% Republican, 45% Democrat with anywhere from 10 to 30 votes for Libertarians in a race where 3 or 4 parties have a candidate running - Republican, Democrat, Libertarian, and Green. There are 2,000 to 2,500 registered voters in my precinct.

Demographically it is largely white professional middle class, with a sprinkling of Hispanic, Black, and Asian." **This is really all you need to know about your precinct to get started.**

Part two is a very detailed guide to precinct canvassing. We try to cover everything you need to know to canvass. We have chapters on precinct walking, phone banking, events, and Get-Out – The-Vote.

Part three is about all the things you need to do ***after the election.*** Many people overlook this part and acquire bad reputations for doing so. This part of the manual will remind you to do some of these things such as taking down yard and street signs, *writing thank you notes*, etc. It also reminds you to have a post-election precinct meeting to talk over how things went, how things could be improved next time, and what the schedule is for the next election cycle.

The last part is a number of appendixes that include many sample forms letters, and scripts that you can use in your work, so that you don't have to invent anything from scratch. They are included to make your life as a volunteer as easy as possible and to give you an idea of the kind of things we are talking about.

Chapter 2 - Research

(Use the checkbox in each category to indicate the research you have completed)

You may find it helpful to keep a small folder or binder with all of your precinct information.

Geography []

The first thing you need to know is what precinct you live in. There are two ways to do this. This first way is to simply look on your Voter Registration Certificate; your voting precinct should be somewhere on the card. The next way to find your voting precinct is to look it up on the internet. Go to <https://weiapplets.sos.wa.gov/MyVote/#/login>, and enter your information. Then, just click on 'My Voter Registration Information'. You will also be able to see your

voting history, your elected officials, and other voting resources. **Share this link with your community.**

Once you find out what precinct you belong to, the next thing you need to do is to find a map of your precinct. The best way to do this is to go online to and follow the directions in the preceding paragraph, and copy the name and number of your precinct into a google search. It will result in a PDF map of your precinct from your county elections office. Though, note that not all of the streets are labeled on this map. You may want to walk or drive around your neighborhood and fill in the blanks, or you can probably find the missing street names on Google maps. If you want a highly detailed map and cost isn't an issue, you can go to the elections department office and get a precinct map from them that usually cost \$1-\$2 per map.

Now that you have a map of your precinct and you may want to walk or drive around the neighborhood getting to know your territory. Also as elections happen you may want to take notes on **good locations for yard and street signs**, especially on major streets in and around your neighborhood. Also, you can make a list of houses that have yard signs up for various candidates and political parties. Chances are if they have a yard sign up for a candidate of some other political party, then they will not be persuadable. Most importantly, anyone who has a sign up for a libertarian candidate or the Libertarian Party in general or even a Ron Paul sign, ***you are going to want to talk to them and try to recruit them into your Precinct Team.***

Past Elections []

After you start to get an idea about the boundaries and geography of your precinct, then next thing you are going to want to figure out is how your neighbors vote. To do this, you will need to go to your County Elections Website ([link on your MyVote Registration Details](#)), and then find a link for "Election Results". Then you are going to want to start looking through past election results. You are going to want to search the Election Totals that **list votes by the precinct**. Now get a general feel for how people vote. Find an election that is not too high or low on the ticket, that has as many parties running as possible, minus an independent because they tend to throw off your number a bit. Then write down how many vote for the candidates of each party. Likely, you will have 10 to 100 people who vote libertarian in your precinct. ***Probably your most important goal is to find these people, make sure they vote, see if they will allow you to put a yard sign in their yard, and try to recruit them for your precinct team.***

Another important thing to remember, when you are looking at these numbers is that generally only 50% of eligible voters register to vote and only about 50% of registered voters actually show up to vote in any give election. ***That means only 25% of eligible voters actually vote*** leaving 75% of them that don't vote. Many of this 75% who don't vote are sick of politics as usual and may be ***very receptive to the Libertarian Message***. So remember, ***there are more people who don't vote, than who do vote.*** If we only get a quarter to a half of these to vote **Libertarian, we will actually start to win elections against the Republicans and Democrats.**

Demographics []

The next thing you are going to want to figure out is the *demographics in your precinct*. Is it urban, suburban, rural, or mixed? Economically is it low, middle, or upper class? Racially is it mostly Black, White, Hispanic, Asian, something else, or mixed? Age wise, are they families with children, older retired people, young unmarried singles? Are there any apartments, retirement/assisted Living homes, condos, etc? www.moveto.com is a good tool for general demographics information, to start.

My precinct is a suburban neighborhood of mostly white, middle class professionals. They live in pretty nice homes that go for between \$150k and \$400k. Most are families with children, though some are retired or the children have gone to college or moved out. About a quarter of the precinct consists of some pretty nice apartments probably for young professionals that cannot afford the down payment for a house yet.

That is all you need to know to start out. As you start to get to know the people in your neighborhood better during your precinct walks, you will better be able to describe your precinct to others. The most important thing to remember is that the people in your precinct are going to be similar to you. People tend to move to places where others are most similar to themselves. So don't be surprised when as you meet people during your precinct walks, that you meet people that share so many of the same interests as you. In fact, this is one of the best perks of becoming a grassroots leader.

Current Elected Officials []

The next thing you will want to figure out, if you don't already know, ***who are the politicians that represent me in government.*** What party do they belong to? How long have they been in office? What are their positions on the issues? The more you know the better, but if all you know is that they are a conservative or moderate Republican or a liberal or moderate Democrat, then that is just fine as well.

Most importantly, acquire or make a list of these officials with general descriptions of them, ***so that when someone asks you a question about them, you can answer it.***

Chapter 3 - Analysis

SWOT ANALYSIS

SWOT is a strategic planning method based on the acronym that stands for ***Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats***. This is a standard business term that describes the practice to developing a framework for building a strategy. Generally the practice is to perform a SWOT analysis, which describes an organization's internal abilities as well as its external environment. Then with this knowledge in hand, the strategy the organization needs to adopt will be easier to discern if not outright obvious.

SWOT is divided into two categories: internal and external factors. Strengths and weaknesses are included in the internal factors category, and opportunities and threats are included in the external factors category. Internal factors deal with the strengths and weaknesses of the team and do not deal with external factors of the precinct. This is done because all the external factors are dealt with under the opportunities and threats sections. Internal factors include the strengths of all of the team members and weaknesses generally are the skills and abilities the team needs, but lacks. External factors include a high or low amount of persuadable voters, a strong or weak Rep or Dem presence in the precinct, gated neighborhoods, retirement communities, etc.

Strengths: At the beginning of your team building the strengths will be you own strengths. Maybe you have time, but not money, or vice versa. Maybe you are a people person, maybe you are good at designing flyers, or you are good at researching things on the internet. Maybe you are good at persuading people to become Libertarians or good at entertaining people. And maybe you are just good at smoking brisket or you make a fantastic margarita. ***Whatever your strengths are, it is important that you are consciously aware of them*** so that you focus on doing the things you are good at. You can always find other people to do the things that you are not so good at, which we will talk about next.

Weaknesses: These are generally the absence of certain strengths. Maybe you are not a people person, or you are good at planning things but not doing them. ***One big weakness would be that you are a one person team, and you need to find more people to help***. Maybe you live in a small apartment, and you don't have a nice house for entertaining guests.

Opportunities: These tend to be environmental and demographic factors in your precinct. They often become obvious after doing the research in the last chapter. High opportunity areas would be those with a large amount of independent and swing voters. An opportunity could be Rs or Ds **mad at their own party** for not sticking to their own principles. Registered voters that don't vote can also be opportunities or college students that need to be motivated to vote. One example of an opportunity is that 50 people in your precinct voted Libertarian last election. This

is an opportunity because these are 50 yards you will likely be allowed to put yard signs in and of these 50 voters, likely at least one or two will be willing to join your precinct team.

Threats: These are external factors making it more difficult to accomplish your ultimate goal of getting more votes than any other political party in your precinct. Some examples include: *maybe there is a gated neighborhood you do not have access to, or you live in a rural neighborhood where you have to drive from house to house because they are spaced so far apart.* Other threats for Libertarians include: Social Conservative Republicans, Aggressive Militarists, Union members, strong straight ticket voting, etc. One of the biggest threats to Libertarians is a ***neighborhood that is mostly employed by the government***, or is employed by an industry or corporations that gets large government subsidies.

When you put all of these factors on paper, you will begin to see the beginning of a plan. Also, you will need to use this information to ***set reasonable short term and long term goals***. If you are in a high threat and low opportunity area, then you will need to set more modest goals. Furthermore if your precinct team consists of only you, your goals will focus more on finding other Libertarians willing to help in the short-term, and put any goals to increase Libertarian vote numbers and percentages in the long-term category.

Calendar/Timeline

Another important thing to consider in your precinct analysis is the *election cycle*. The strategy you devise is going to depend on the political calendar in your county. Important things to know are *election timelines* which are cyclical. In Washington, our federal, state, and county representatives are elected in November every even year. So, the *election cycle* is the two years that span from the day after an election to the day of the next election. The political calendar is based on this legal fact.

So when we begin to makes plans for the next election, it is important that we keep the *election cycle* in mind so that we don't block walk at inappropriate times and that instead we use that time for either ***planning for the next election, canvassing for advocacy of our issues of choice, or just relax*** until a few months before primaries.

The *election cycle* begins technically the day after the election; however, for practical purposes this time is generally used to take down street and yards signs, to thank those that selflessly gave of their precious time to help the cause, and to evaluate what we did well, and to discuss what we can do better in the next election. Also after all this, ***most people want to take a break for a while*** to re-gather their strength for the next cycle. So in all practicality, the *election cycle* will begin say a month or two after an election, say January of every odd year.

The first thing you will want to do is to ***make a plan for the next election cycle***, with particular attention to the schedule. The first stage is the planning and primary phase. For example:

February through May is the “*Convention*” phase. This is when you will **officially choose your candidates** and new members will often come in and join the party through the convention and primary process.

May through August is the “*Primary Election*” phase. Because of Washington State’s blanket primary laws, Libertarians **must treat the Primary Election as if it is our only election** – our General Election.

You need to make as much voter contact as possible. One of the most important things you can do is get as many libertarian yard signs and street sign put up in your precinct as possible. Putting up a yard sign is a persuasion tactic called “**involvement**”. Getting people involved even a little gives them ownership and a sense of duty so you can count on getting their vote, and maybe they’ll convince a few of their friends and neighbors as well.

This is the biggest “Get-Out-The-Vote” (GOTV) phase. Since we have early voting nowadays, the voting lasts several weeks instead of just one day. In Washington State, half the voters vote in early voting and half vote/mail ballots the actual Election Day. **The more Libertarians you can get to vote early, the less stress you and the candidate will have on Election Day.**

Outreach and voter ID efforts, by precinct walking, volunteer phone banking, or social media outreach, can help you find new members to attend events in your area, such as precinct socials, coffee house meetings or BBQs in the neighborhood. *Maybe you can even get one or more candidates to show up at this event. It is primary season after all.*

During **September to October** it is the busiest time for *general election campaign activities*. The most important period of time in the cycle for campaigning is the last *45 days* before the election; however voter outreach can be done at any time after the candidates have formally announced they are running for office. If you are a new precinct volunteer, you can focus on planning activities that you determine will work best for your own neighborhood.

The last phase is the “*post-election*” or “*clean up*” phase. From after the election in November, through January is the best time to do your post-election review and plan for the next election cycle. In this phase you take down and store the yard and street signs, you write thank you notes to all volunteers, you have a lessons learned/debriefing meeting, and you make plans on when to have the first meeting of the next election cycle.

That sums up the general idea of how you need to plan each election cycle. Elsewhere in this manual you will find specifics about how to plan and prepare for all of the things I mentioned in the proceeding paragraphs. Below, I will also provide a list of important dates to remember that will help guide you election cycle schedule. It is always good to have this list on your computer for yourself and to print out for other volunteers who may need this information.

Chapter 4 - Strategy

After you analyze your precinct, your team, and your political environment, you will then be ready to put together a strategy. The best way to do this is to ***create reasonable and measurable goals***. You should set goals that are ambitious, but also achievable and realistic.

Know Your Precinct

The Players

One of the first things a Precinct Captain must do is find out who else might have already started organizing the precinct. Who are the other important politically active people in your precinct? How are the political campaigns involved? Do you live near an elected official, a candidate, or a Community Leader? *People with social networks can be a valuable asset.*

The Lists

Finding out who your neighbors are, how many of them voted, and to which ~~Party they're affiliated~~ is a matter of public record (WA no longer requires voter registration by party, making your job a bit more complicated. *Good records keeping by Precinct Captains solves this problem*). The Party has lists of voter information which are needed to see who's not worth talking to, who's most likely to help you out, and who's going to need extra motivation to vote.

Note: *Precinct Lists are for political activities only – you cannot use them for personal or business purposes.*

Organization of the Precinct Itself

As a Precinct Captain, *you should build your own organization*. You need Block Captains in each block, neighborhood, and condominium or apartment complex to contact their neighbors with campaign messages and literature and to let you know areas of need, such as absentee ballots, voter registration forms, etc. You also need volunteers to assist in mailings, to do door-to-door canvassing and literature distribution, to participate in phone banks, to deliver and set-up yard signs, and to provide ballot pickups on Election Day.

Recruit and Train Volunteers

The more people involved in a campaign, the more likely the campaign is to be successful. In addition, involving as many of your neighbors as possible in your precinct organization makes your task easier. If possible, recruit a volunteer in every neighborhood.

It is important that Precinct Captains train their Block Captains and other volunteers on how to canvass door-to-door, register voters, handle precinct lists and other information gathered, and perform Election Day duties. They, in turn, can train others as the volunteer force grows.

Recruit a Team to be Reckoned With!

- Always have a short recruiting pitch ready (*Write it down and practice it*)
- Contact young people at high schools and colleges to help
- Meet with local business owners (*keep a list of friendly businesses*)
- Contact senior citizens
- Keep your message flexible

Canvassing Purpose

Precinct Captains should try to find and register all unregistered “potential Libertarians.”

There always are “potential Libertarians” who have never registered or are new to the area and have not yet registered under their new address. In order to maximize the number of Libertarians eligible to vote, all “potential Libertarians” **MUST register**. This is a relatively simple task that shows excellent results on Election Day. A good way to find out if a voter is a potential Libertarian is by giving them the political quiz from the International Society for Individual Liberty (ISIL) or isidewith.com.

Precinct Captains should try to find and identify registered voters who lean Libertarian. By carrying out various voter identification programs, the Precinct Organization Administrator will be able to locate and identify voters who favor Libertarian ideals. These are the voters who are most likely to join the Libertarian Party. By reregistering these voters, a precinct will grow in both numbers and volunteers.

Precinct Captains should try to recruit more Libertarian volunteers to work as Block Captains, Canvassers, or Phone Bankers. Through precinct identification canvasses, a Precinct Captain should be able to locate Libertarians who are the most likely to volunteer for the Party, a candidate, or a cause. ***Many Libertarians have the desire but are reluctant to volunteer because they have not been asked.*** By contacting these Libertarians first, not only will a precinct gain valuable volunteers, but also motivate less active Libertarians to vote (e.g. those that have only voted once or twice out of the last 4 elections).

Equipment Needed For Successful Canvassing

- Precinct map and a precinct list
- Brochures or handouts
- Registration forms and a knowledge of the registration process
- Absentee ballot application forms
- Candidate lists
- Report forms to turn in to the Party
- Instructions with Do's and Don'ts

Cell phones can be very useful but aren't required.

BE PREPARED: Typical Canvassing Questions

- How do I find out if I am registered to vote? <https://weiapplets.sos.wa.gov/MyVote/#/login>
- How and where do I register to vote? (*same as above*)
- Where do I vote? (*Ballots are mailed 18 days prior to election. Drop off or stamp and mail your ballot*)
- When is the primary? What do I have to do to vote in the primary?
- When is the General election? May anyone vote?
- What is my precinct number? (*Use the myvote applet to determine this*)
- What does the Libertarian Party stand for? (*You may be able to furnish the voter with literature available from your county party or county chairman.*)
- Who are the candidates and what are their backgrounds? (*any additional information regarding a candidate should be directed to the candidate or to the candidate's organization.*)
- Where do I get bumper stickers, buttons, and campaign literature?
- Are there any Libertarian clubs around here? How do I join?
- Who are the county chairman, vice chairman, treasurer, and secretary?
- Who is in charge of my precinct?
- What can I do to help the Party?

DO'S

- Do be friendly. This person is your neighbor regardless of his or her political affiliation.
- Do be succinct and a good listener.
- Do be knowledgeable and prepared to answer basic questions. If you do not know the answer, *admit it and promise to get the information as soon as possible*.
- Do confine your conversation to general Party principles and **not specific issues**.
- Do focus on the future. Discuss where our community is and where we would like it to be.
- Do get the voter's correct legal name, phone number, and email address.
- Do leave a copy of appropriate campaign material or literature.
- Do leave the name and phone number of the Precinct Captain.
- Do follow through. Call the person back in a timely fashion or give the information to the Precinct Captain.
- Do refer all media and press inquiries to the LPWA Chair.

DON'TS

- Do not canvas alone, always go in pairs. This is for your safety!
- Do not wear clothing that may be considered offensive. Take off sunglasses before speaking to anyone.
- Do not go **into** the house or apartment.
- Do not argue or debate. It's a waste of your valuable time.

- Do not begin with “*Are you a Republican, a Democrat, or a Libertarian?*” Instead you should ask something like this: “Do you favor one Political Party over another?”
- *Do not make derogatory remarks* about any individual, candidate or officeholder, or group.
- *Do not raise controversial issues.*
- Do not make statements which cannot be proven.

Chapter 5 - Preparation for the Primary and General Election

Pre-Primary Election

A Precinct Captain should focus on the following activities before the Primary Election:

- Develop a better knowledge about your Precinct and neighborhood than anybody else.
- Recruit and train *as many volunteers as possible* to organize your Precinct.
- Establish extensive neighbor to neighbor rapport.
- *Continuously look for opportunities* to register new Libertarian voters.

Post-Primary Election

After the Primary Election, the voter database will be updated. ***Special attention should be paid to updating the following information:***

- Voter turnout in the Primary Election
- Phone numbers and email addresses
- Voters that voted by absentee ballot

In addition, Precinct Captains should:

- Contact new residents who lean Libertarian but did not register for the Primary and ***remind them to register for the General Election.***
- Distribute information sheets on absentee voting to all Libertarians and other voters who lean Libertarian.
- Cooperate with candidates or other Party volunteers who may contact you for assistance.
- Contact voters who have previously indicated a need for absentee ballots and ensure that they have filled out the application and have received the absentee ballot.

June (*Primary election*) – October (*General Election*)

- Ensure that all potential Libertarians in your precinct are registered to vote.***
The last day to register to vote, change party affiliation or change your address for the General Election is _____ if you do so in person. If by mail, the voter registration form must be postmarked by _____

- Ask the appropriate party leader to download the latest, updated voter database information for your precinct.** Provide an updated precinct list and precinct map for each Block Captain or precinct volunteer. Literature should be sent or handed out to anyone who sounds interested.
- Encourage all Libertarian voters in your precinct to vote as soon as ballots arrive.** Strategically, this allows you to focus on a smaller pool of voters up to and on Election Day.
- Decide how many volunteers you need**, including phone bankers (callers), babysitters, and drivers and begin to recruit them from your volunteer pool.
- Recruit and train poll watchers** for the Primary and General Election and give their names to County Headquarters. Specific duties should be assigned and **training for Election Day should be conducted.**
- Hold at least one precinct meeting** to make certain all your volunteers are trained and know the Election Day procedures.

Chapter 6 - GET OUT THE VOTE

August (Primary) or November (General) – 1st week

- Final G.O.T.V. (Get- Out-The-Vote) effort.** The last weekend before the Primary and General ballots are mailed you and your precinct organization should help distribute candidate brochures and sample ballots door-to-door to all previously identified Libertarians that have not already voted.
- Chase the ballots.** Make calls and keep track of who has voted. If Libertarians have not voted, offer to help them with their ballot. Offer to collect ballots for mass ballot drops at election boxes in your area. Get as many ballots turned in as possible.
- Keep track of all ballots returned** to provide early results to the county and state party (and campaigns)

Timeline: Last 72 hrs.

To win the election we need an effective majority of votes on Election Day, or 50% of the votes cast **plus 1**. To help ensure victory, Precinct Captains should:

- Plan to call 100% and go door-to-door (door knocks) reaching roughly 75% of the favorable households within the last 72 hours before Election Day.
- On Election Day, 50% of targeted households should receive calls, and 25% should receive door knocks. Allocating your resources, time and volunteers, wisely is the key to carrying out a successful GOTV operation.

History has shown that the more times a voter is contacted, the more likely he/she is to vote on Election Day. These are called ‘voter touches’

In order to effectively allocate resources for targeting households for phone calls and door knocks, a Precinct Captain must acquire the list of voters who have already voted from the County Board of Elections because ***these voters should not be contacted again as they have already voted.***

Voters that have voted in 4 out of the last 4 elections are more likely to vote in your current election than voters who have only voted once or twice out of 4 previous elections (i.e., “lazy” voters). Therefore as the election approaches, ***Precinct Captains should use more resources to target voters who vote less often to ensure that they vote on Election Day.***

Volunteer Shift Planner – How many do you need?

A Precinct Captain must determine how many volunteers are needed to make all necessary phone calls and door knocks. In the above scenario, 1000 households must be called and 750 door knocks must be made in the final 72 hours. A volunteer should be able to accomplish an average of 35 calls or 20 door knocks per hour in a 2-3 hour shift.

Election Day Coordination

The Libertarian Party of Washington, coordinating with candidate campaigns, may have a system which includes:

- ***Phone banks for Voter reminder calls.*** ➔ “Please remember to postmark or drop your ballot no later than today.”
- ***Phone banks to take incoming calls from Voters with questions*** ➔ “Where do I vote?” or “Who do I vote for?”
- ***Information about schedules and locations*** of candidates during the day and after the polls close.
- ***A transportation system for those who are not able to cast their ballot.***
- ***A help line for any problems*** that may occur at your precinct while the voting is taking place.
- ***A group of volunteers ready to deliver campaign materials*** to any precinct, for any reason, at any time.
- ***Last minute precinct walkers***
- ***Information on Libertarian Poll Workers*** (who, when, and where)

Precinct Captains should have full instructions from the candidate’s headquarters and the County Chairman. *It is extremely important that all Precinct Captains know exactly what their responsibilities are and what is needed to carry out those tasks.* Well before Election Day,

Precinct Captains ***must contact the appropriate Chairman or campaign staffer*** in order to return all information gathered from your precinct canvasses.

A few days before the election, Precinct Captains and neighborhood volunteers should have contacted the favorable voters to determine whether they need a ride to the polls, babysitting services, absentee ballot assistance, etc.

Election Day Follow-up

On Election Day, each favorable voter who has not yet voted should be called again using a script similar to this one:

PRECINCT VOLUNTEER: “Hello Mrs. Smith. I’m a Libertarian volunteer from your neighborhood. I’m calling to remind Libertarians of the importance of voting today. Have you voted yet?”

VOTER: “Yes or No”

PRECINCT VOLUNTEER: “Thank You for voting” or “You still have time. You can drop your ballot at (ballot drop location). If you’d like, I can have someone pick up your ballot and take it to the drop-box on your behalf.”

After the call, be sure that the caller ***documents the outcome of the conversation*** on their Call List. If the person has voted, they can be taken off the list completely, if not, they will be called again at a later time.

Chapter 7- POST-ELECTION DAY

Remember to ***thank all the volunteers both verbally and in writing***. Make sure that your volunteers are **invited to victory celebrations** and give their names to the candidates who should also thank the volunteers.

Critique your precinct organization and election activities. Consult the volunteers for their input and suggestions. What did you do well? What might be improved upon next time?

Even though the election is over, the Precinct Captain continues to participate in Party activities. Your input is very important. ***Keep in touch with the volunteers and voters in the precinct - you and the Libertarian Party will need them in the future.***

Important Dates to Remember

- Election Code in Washington prescribes dates for “Convention Parties” to hold their Precinct, County and District Conventions
- Last day to register to vote (by mail) for Primary Election _____
- Last day to register to vote (by mail) for General Election _____
- Local Libertarian recurring Party Business Meetings: _____
- Last day to register to vote (in person) for General Election: _____
- Early Voting: *Early Voting begins: “18” days before election day (usually)*
- Primary Election Day: _____
- General Election Day : November, the 2nd Tuesday

Why am I an Active Libertarian?

Name: _____

Precinct: _____

Why did I join the Libertarian Party?

What are my top 3 personal political goals?

- _1. _____
-
- _2. _____
-
- _3. _____
-

What do I want to change by being an active Libertarian?

What 3 actions can I take to guarantee progress toward my goals?

- _1. _____
-
- _2. _____
-
- _3. _____
-

I pledge to remind myself of the importance of my actions and to reach my established goals:

X _____ date: _____

Precinct SWOT Analysis Worksheet

Name: _____

Precinct: _____

Strengths

Weaknesses

Opportunities

Threats / Risks

VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM

NAME _____

PRECINCT (If Known) _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____

PHONE: (H) _____ (W) _____ CELL _____

FAX _____ EMAIL _____

I am willing to help with:

- | | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|
| (<input type="checkbox"/>) | Walking My Neighborhood Precinct | (<input type="checkbox"/>) | Data Entry |
| (<input type="checkbox"/>) | Computer assistance | (<input type="checkbox"/>) | Driving |
| (<input type="checkbox"/>) | Babysitting | (<input type="checkbox"/>) | Telephoning |
| (<input type="checkbox"/>) | Voter Registration | (<input type="checkbox"/>) | Door-To-Door |
| (<input type="checkbox"/>) | Mailings | (<input type="checkbox"/>) | Special Events |
| (<input type="checkbox"/>) | Research | (<input type="checkbox"/>) | Writing |
| (<input type="checkbox"/>) | Youth Activities | (<input type="checkbox"/>) | Art Work |
| (<input type="checkbox"/>) | Special Talent | | |

I prefer to work:

- | | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| (<input type="checkbox"/>) | Wherever Needed | (<input type="checkbox"/>) | At Home |
| (<input type="checkbox"/>) | At Campaign Headquarters | (<input type="checkbox"/>) | In My Own Precinct |

I am available on the following days and times (list days of the week and preferred hours or specific dates):

MONDAY, from until
TUESDAY, from until
WEDNESDAY, from until
THURSDAY, from until
FRIDAY, from until
SATURDAY, from until
SUNDAY, from until

- () I am not available on Election Day.
() I am available on Election Day to:
() Distribute literature at the polls () Telephone () Drive () Baby-sit () Contact voters door-to-door

Thank you for any help you can offer. Together we will achieve victory on Election Day!

CANVASS SCRIPT

Hi, I'm _____ and I'm a volunteer with the Libertarian Party in our neighborhood.
May I talk with (name of registered voter on precinct walking list)?

Hi (name of registered voter on precinct walking list), may I ask you some questions regarding
the upcoming **Primary / General** Election?

If no, **respectfully thank them and leave/end call.** If yes, start survey:

1. Have you or anyone in the household considered voting in the **Primary / General** Election?

Yes No Undecided

If no, respectfully thank them and leave/end call. If yes, continue survey:

2. Do you plan to vote mostly Democratic, Republican, Green, or Libertarian?

Democratic Party Republican Party Libertarian Party Green Party Undecided

*If Not Voting or if Rep/Dem/ Other, respectfully thank them and leave/end call.
Otherwise, continue survey:*

3. Does anyone living here need to register to vote?

Yes No # of Cards

4. Would you be interested in displaying a yard sign on your property?

Yes No Candidate?

5. Would you like a Libertarian Preferred Candidate Sheet? Yes / No (circle yes if you left the sheet with them)

When ending the survey, thank them for their time.

CURRENT ELECTED OFFICIALS LIST
(To be researched and completed by the Precinct Captain)

National Representatives

President:

Senators:

US House:

State Representatives

Governor

L. Governor

State others: Attorney General, Treasurer, Railroad Commissioners, etc.

State Senator

State House Rep.

Local Representatives

County Judge (part of commissioners)

County Commissioner, dist. ?

County Clerk

Justice of the Peace