



NRA-ILA

· 11250 Waples Mill Road · Fairfax, Virginia 22030 · 800-392-8683

Organizing Volunteers - Coordinating Activists For Political Campaigns

Although a campaign truly appreciates every individual who comes to the campaign headquarters to volunteer their time to do whatever is necessary to help elect a pro-gun candidate to office, imagine how much more you could accomplish if you and a dozen others volunteer to help out!

If you're thinking, "Isn't volunteer recruitment the job of the campaign?," the answer is "yes." Unfortunately, not every campaign has enough volunteers to accomplish this task. Similarly, often a campaign lacks enough time to actively recruit a sufficient number of volunteers. They count on individuals in the community to help with this effort. *They count on you.*

First and foremost, you will probably be better qualified than anyone on the campaign staff to recruit and organize hunters, gun owners, and firearm collectors in your district into an organized team of political volunteers. In fact, you should work to establish yourself as the liaison between the pro-gun candidate's campaign and the gun owning community.

Be sure to introduce yourself to the campaign staff (especially to the volunteer coordinator), and let the staff know that you can offer valuable volunteer support from within the gun owning community. Here are some tips on how to get gun owners involved in the campaign process.

Utilize the Natural Resources in the Gun Owning Community

As your goal is to elect a pro-gun lawmaker to office, you should concentrate your efforts on recruiting volunteers whose primary concern is protecting and preserving their Second Amendment rights. In most cases this means gun owners. The logical question which follows here is, "Where do I find gun owners?" The answers to this question can provide you with numerous volunteers that you may have otherwise overlooked.

Clearly, the places where gun owners congregate are **gun shops, ranges, gun clubs, and gun shows**. Be sure that you concentrate your volunteer recruitment efforts on these areas to attract as much support as possible. Speak with gun shop owners, show promoters, range personnel, and club officers, and encourage them to get involved, and help promote your volunteer program. Draft a simple, one-page flyer which notes you are looking for political volunteers to work toward electing pro-gun candidates to office (be sure to list the candidate's name and the office he's seeking on the flyer), and distribute and post these flyers at all local shows, clubs, ranges, and shops. Set up a table at these places to recruit volunteer support as well.

Maximize the Individual Resources, Experiences, and Interests of Your Volunteers

Bear in mind that all volunteers have different experiences, interests, resources, and time constraints which you must take into consideration in order to get the maximum output from your volunteer team. One rule of thumb to follow is "*you'll never know what someone is willing to do or contribute unless you ask.*" Don't be afraid to ask the volunteers to undertake an assignment even if you have a hunch the

answer may be "no." You may often be pleasantly surprised and stumble across a star performer whom you may have otherwise overlooked because you failed to task him. Remember, just because someone cannot or will not perform a specific task doesn't mean that they are unwilling to participate. By keeping each person's individual circumstances in mind, you will be able to better utilize each volunteer.

Resources

Don't overlook the resources your volunteer corps may have to offer, e.g., perhaps one of the volunteers owns a business with multi-phone line capacity and is willing to allow you to use these phones for phone banking activities. Also, gun clubs in the district may be willing to give you their membership lists so you can personally contact these individuals to find out if they are registered to vote or interested in helping out with your election activities. Lastly, realize that most, if not all, of the persons interested in volunteering probably have full-time jobs, and therefore, you must consider and be able to manage yet another resource—their time! (Keep in mind there are various state and federal laws governing the contribution of resources to campaigns, e.g., in a federal race, corporate contributions are prohibited. Be sure to check all relevant requirements to ensure the contribution of these resources is legal.)

Find out how much time each individual volunteer is willing to give -- two hours a week, weeknights only, every Saturday, etc. Then, find out what the best time is to reach them -- during the day or after the dinner hour, and then be sure to stick to that schedule.

Experience

Many of the people you may come across who are willing to volunteer may have vast political experience, while others may have none. For those individuals who have previous campaign experience, be sure to delegate tasks equivalent to their skill and experience levels. For those who may be working on a campaign for the first time, try to ensure that they are comfortable with their assignments, and give them more responsibilities as they become more familiar with the process.

Interests

It only makes sense that happy workers are productive workers, so whenever possible, try to provide volunteers with jobs which they will enjoy. For example, an individual interested in the financial aspects of a campaign may relish concentrating on fund-raising activities, while someone who works on the telephone all day may not enjoy placing outbound calls during a phone bank.

Election Activities Volunteer Information Form

A quick and easy way to identify and record the resources, experiences, time constraints and interests each of your volunteers has to offer is to have every volunteer complete an Election Activities Volunteer Information Form (a sample form is shown below). The information you collect from your volunteers will be easier to manage and maintain if you enter them into a computer database. The computer database will allow you to sort your list in a number of different ways, e.g., by zip code, phone number, interests, city, etc. Remember, even if you don't own a computer, one of your volunteers may. Task that volunteer with maintaining the database.

SPECIAL NOTE: *In deference to the privacy concerns of your fellow gun owners, please do not release this information to any individual or organization not directly connected with your campaign efforts unless specifically authorized by the individual to do so.*

Keep in mind that you must always have specific activities prepared for the volunteers to do. If you need additional guidance, contact the campaign's volunteer coordinator. A sure way to lose your volunteers is to have them offer their time only to find out when they show up to work that there is nothing for them to do!

PROJECT ACTIVITY: RECRUITING AND ORGANIZING VOLUNTEERS

Time Line:

Start recruiting fellow volunteers 3 or 4 months before an election.

Description of Activities:

Recruitment of gun owners or other individuals to help with campaign activities. The candidate's campaign staff will be responsible for preparing and outlining activities to accomplish. While gun owners must be willing to perform many different duties to aid the candidate in winning the election, the campaign should remember that gun owning volunteers will do best in contacting fellow gun owners. The goal should be to use volunteers to reach EVERY pro-gun voter in the district and get them to the polls.

Activity Check List:

- o Appoint one volunteer to be the liaison with the candidate's campaign.
- o Have each volunteer complete a Volunteer Information Form, and appoint one volunteer to keep track of these volunteers in a computer database.
- o Keep a list of all volunteers names, address, telephone numbers, times available, special skills, who they know, and how much time they are available to work.
- o Create a single sheet flyer to distribute asking for volunteers and explaining the needs of the campaign.
- o Contact gun clubs and attend their meetings to recruit volunteers. Pass out Election Volunteer Information Forms and collect them before you leave.
- o Have specific activities for the volunteers to do. The campaign volunteer coordinator for the campaign will gladly assign your group a project.
- o Contact the NRA Institute for Legislative Action and inquire about any assistance they may be able to provide.

ELECTION ACTIVITIES VOLUNTEER INFORMATION FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone Numbers:

Day: _____ Eve: _____

Fax: _____

Do you have a computer?

YES NO

Do you have a modem?

YES NO

Are you registered to vote?

YES NO

Party affiliation:

Democrat Republican Independent Other

Congressional district or representative: _____

State representative/assembly district: _____

State senator/district: _____

Have you worked on a candidate`s campaign before?

YES NO

If yes, name of candidate and office sought: _____

What activities did you participate in? _____

Are you active in your local political party?

YES NO

How much time can you donate to the campaign?

Weekends only Weekdays Weeknights

Please list any special skills, resources, talents or interests you have and would like to offer the campaign: _____

Find this item at: <http://www.nraila.org/ActionCenter/GrassRootsActivism.aspx?ID=1>