

# BUILDING BRIDGES FOR AMERICA



# How to Canvass



# An app and a conversation

DIRECTLY TALKING TO VOTERS AND ASKING THEM TO VOTE IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO WIN A CAMPAIGN. PERIOD. A ONE-ON-ONE CONVERSATION IS STILL MANY TIMES MORE POWERFUL THAN ANY MODERN TOOL. TECHNOLOGY DOES HELP TO RECORD DATA THAT HELPS CAMPAIGNS ORGANIZE AND WIN.

WHEN YOU VOLUNTEER FOR A CAMPAIGN, DIRECTLY CONTACTING VOTERS MEANS:

1. YOU WILL USE AN APP ON YOUR PHONE.
2. YOU WILL HAVE A CONVERSATION WITH A VOTER.
3. YOU WILL RECORD DATA FROM THAT CONVERSATION INTO THE APP.

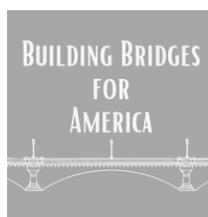


## The App

The campaign will tell you which app they are using for the phone bank. Below are instructions for one of the most common apps, MiniVAN from NGP VAN. First you get your Action ID. Then you log into MiniVAN.

## Create your Action ID

1. Go to this website <https://accounts.ngpvan.com>
2. Already have an account? Log in to make sure your info is up to date. If you need to create an account, click Create an Action ID Account
3. Enter your email address, password, and phone number
4. You will receive a confirmation email to confirm your Action ID number.



## The App

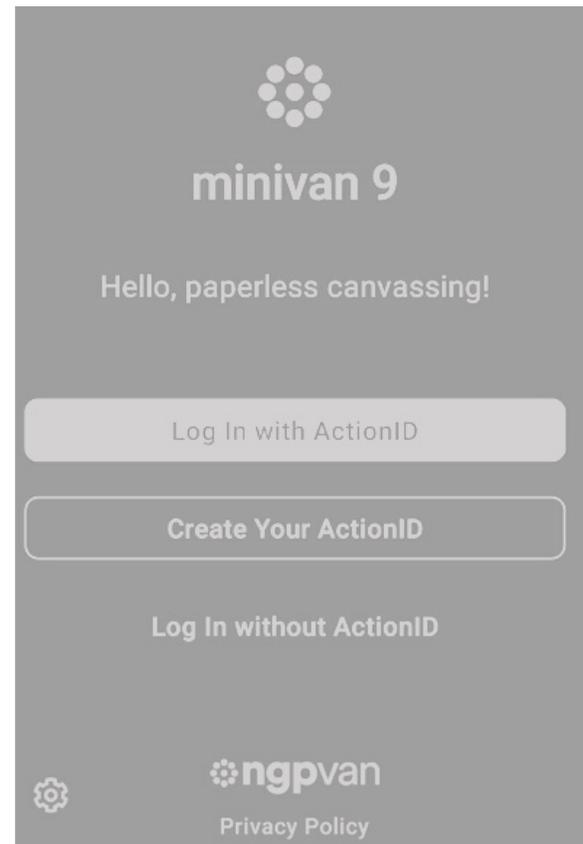
### Download MiniVAN on your phone

On your phone, go to the iTunes or Google Play to search and download MiniVAN.



### Get your list of addresses on MiniVAN

1. Login with your Action ID.
2. Enter the List Number provided by the campaign. This list is a list of addresses that are near each other that the campaign has mapped out for you.
3. You can view your list of addresses in a map view or in a list view.
4. Before you head out, fully charge your cell phone. MiniVAN will use a lot of battery power.



## The App

### Practice the script and app

Watch the introductory video on the app to get familiar with MiniVAN.

The campaign will provide a script of the questions you should ask each voter.

Navigate through the map and list view. And select a person to view the script of questions.

Spend time memorizing the script. You will enter data into the app after each conversation. It is best to not enter data while you are talking with the person. Also practice because you are not a robot, take time to find your own words and story. 



Go step-by-step through articulating what is important to you in *Unlock Your Political Power* [www.buildingbridgesforamerica.com/on-demand-courses](http://www.buildingbridgesforamerica.com/on-demand-courses)

## The Conversation

### Approaching a door

1. Be visibly part of a campaign so your purpose for being there is clear. Wear a volunteer badge or campaign button or shirt. And smile and be friendly.
2. Canvassing is not soliciting. You can approach a door that says No Soliciting. Though do heed signs that say No Trespassing.
3. Rattle a gate before entering to check for a dog.
4. If you feel unsafe for any reason, trust your instincts. Mark the house under I Could Not Reach as inaccessible.
5. It is always best and more fun to knock doors with a friend. Have the person who is going to talk stand on the handle side of the door.
6. Knock on the door and ring the doorbell at the same time so you only disturb them once. Then take three steps back and wait.

## The Conversation

### When there is no answer

1. Follow campaign instructions on whether to leave a handout or sticky note on the door.
2. Walk away from the house to a public space between houses to record the data.
3. Choose the "I Couldn't Reach" button and select the reason. Not Home is the most common response you will use when canvassing.

I Couldn't Reach This Contact  
Select a reason why this person could not be contacted

Not Home

Refused

Inaccessible

Deceased

Moved

Spanish

Other Language

Cancel



# The Conversation

## When they answer the door

1. Take a breath. Smile. Say hello and introduce yourself. Be courteous and upbeat.
2. Verify their name. Ask the questions per the script. And remember their answers to record afterward.
3. If the app shows more than one voter in the household, ask if you may speak to the other people in the household who are eligible to vote.
4. Thank them for their time and ask them to vote. Follow campaign instructions for leaving a handout.
5. Walk away from the house to a public space between homes and record your data.

Are you planning to vote for Joe Biden for President and the rest of the Democratic candidates this year?

Choose an option ▼

Will you volunteer to help democrats up and down the ballot in 2020?

Choose an option ▼



# Best Practices

## When the voter is a supporter

- Confirm you have reached the correct voter.
- Thank them for their support and welcome them to the team.
- Share specifically how you became a volunteer. Invite them to volunteer as well.
- Ask them to make a plan to vote. Encourage them to invite three other people to vote with them.

## When you talk to a person not on your list

- When walking a neighborhood you may happen to talk with someone not on your list. Ask for their name. Have the conversation like they are on the list. And then look them up in MiniVAN and record their responses.



# Best Practices

## When the person is NOT a supporter

- Verify that you have reached the correct voter.
- Be kind and stay strong in your values. Simply smile and thank them for their time and leave their property. Do not waste time by engaging people who will not vote for your candidate.
- When someone is rude or mean toward you it can hurt. Reach out to a fellow volunteer or friend to share what happened and how it felt. Don't bottle it up, address when it hurts and get the support.
- Add a note in MiniVAN about what happened to prepare future volunteers who may be assigned that door.



# Best Practices

## When the person refuses

- When the person specifically asks to be removed from the list, let them know you can opt them out and they will be permanently removed from contact lists. Verify who you are talking to. This is critical, relatives or friends of the voter cannot opt them out.
- Once confirmed, under the I Couldn't Reach button mark them as Refused.

## "How do you know my name?"

- VAN uses publicly accessible state voter files which include a name and address.

## When the data is incorrect

- Verify the address and the name.
- Apologize for the mix up.
- Under I Couldn't Reach, select Moved.

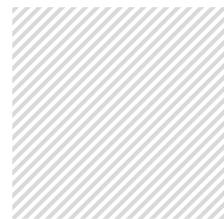


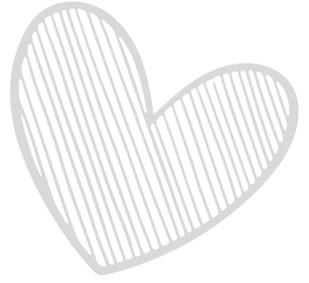
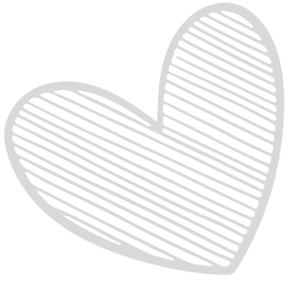
# Best Practices

## When the person is unsure

- Show them respect and value who they are by saying you understand that it is difficult decision. Ask them to share how they are feeling.
- Focus on listening and ask follow up questions to get them beyond talking points and thinking and feeling for themselves. Be open and curious.
- Look for connections. Open up to share why the election is important to you and how the candidate in office will effect your life or your loved one's life.
- If they ask specific questions of the candidate, it is okay to say you do not know. Then say "let's look that up" and guide them to the candidate's website. This is an opportunity to show them how they can learn more about the candidate.
- When you feel you have made a connection, thank them for sharing and welcome them to continue to learn more about the candidate.

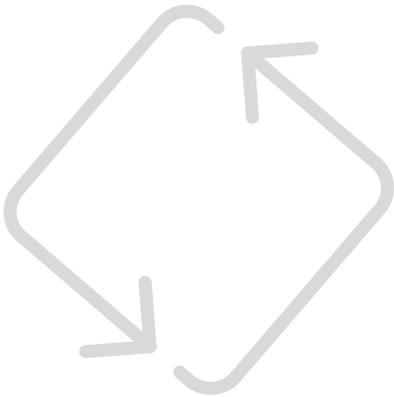
Learn how to speak to be understood by people who do not care or do not agree. Watch and use the step-by-step workbook Conversations that Break Through [www.buildingbridgesforamerica.com/on-demand-courses](http://www.buildingbridgesforamerica.com/on-demand-courses)





**Maya Angelou**

"PEOPLE WILL FORGET WHAT YOU SAID.  
PEOPLE WILL FORGET WHAT YOU DID.  
BUT PEOPLE WILL NEVER FORGET HOW  
YOU MADE THEM FEEL."



**Pete Buttigieg**

"HOW PEOPLE FEEL ABOUT YOU  
IS LARGELY DRIVEN  
BY HOW YOU MAKE THEM FEEL  
ABOUT THEMSELVES."

# Best Practices

Watch the Canvassing 101 video

See door knocking in action!



<https://youtu.be/2LfJgp227Kc>



# THE BEST WAY TO CONNECT AND BE HEARD IS FIRST TO ACTIVELY LISTEN.

AN EFFECTIVE ORGANIZER'S GREATEST SKILL IS TO LISTEN. TO BE HEARD AND UNDERSTOOD FIRST YOU NEED TO OPEN THE DOOR OF UNDERSTANDING. PRACTICE THESE BASIC HABITS AND SKILLS TO SHOW YOU ARE LISTENING AND WATCH AS THE CONVERSATIONS YOU HAVE GROW DEEPER.

## **AVOID DISTRACTION**

Set your intention to listening.  
No daydreaming or multi-tasking.  
Remove things that might keep you from paying attention.

## **DO NOT INTERRUPT**

Allow the other person to finish what they are saying.

## **REFLECT, PARAPHRASE OR CLARIFY**

Repeat back what you have heard  
“It sounds to me like you are saying...”

## **USE DOOR OPENERS**

Keep them engaged and talking  
“Tell me more”  
“That’s interesting”

## **PAY ATTENTION**

Do not use this time to prepare for a rebuttal. Ignore the divides and listen for the connections.

## **DO NOT ARGUE**

“I can tell you are very upset/frustrated”  
“I know that it has been hard for you to change gears”



## **REFLECT AMBIVALENCE**

“So, on the one hand you want \_\_\_ and on the other you don’t think you can \_\_\_\_\_”

## **LOOK FOR COMMON GROUND**

“Where do you think we could find common ground?”  
“We agree on this, what else do we agree on?”

## **EXPRESS YOUR ATTENTION**

Words and phrases like “Oh”, “I see”, “uh huh” and “hmm” show that you are listening.

## **CREATE DISSONANCE**

“Tell me (describe to me) what your feeling are on \_\_\_\_\_”  
“Can you tell me what is keeping you from supporting \_\_\_?”

## **SHOW EMPATHY FOR THEIR FEELINGS**

“I am hearing you say that you are frustrated because \_\_\_\_\_”

## **WRAP UP**

“Thank you for talking with me.”  
“I appreciate your opinion and understand your concerns.”



# Make the ask

- A person is more likely to do something when they are personally asked to do it.
- Asking is showing that you respect their participation.
- Do not assume their answer, make them say it.
- Phrase the question so they give a response.

"CAN I COUNT ON YOU TO VOTE FOR PAUL ON NOVEMBER 8TH?"

"WE NEED VOLUNTEERS TO MAKE CALLS LIKE I AM DOING SO PAUL CAN REACH OUT TO MORE VOTERS. CAN I SHOW YOU HOW TO SIGN UP FOR A SHIFT?"



# Next Steps

Volunteer with a campaign or your local party and get practice having these conversations.

Further build your skills and confidence to talk with voters by completing our Power Series courses. Learn to have effective conversations with people you know, and with voters who do not agree or do not care. Be prepared to make the hard ask to invite others to volunteer and donate. And get the tools you need to counter disinformation.

## WEBSITE

<https://www.buildingbridgesforamerica.com/training>

**BB** BUILDING BRIDGES FOR AMERICA

THE **POWER** SERIES

Build your political power one conversation at a time.

Unlock Your Political Power Workbook

Conversations that Break Through Workbook

Making the Hard Ask

Pop the Disinformation Bubble

COURSES & WORKBOOKS

# BUILDING BRIDGES FOR AMERICA LEADERSHIP TEAM



## JENNY OKAMOTO

Director Leadership Development, Building Bridges for America

## CAZ MARGENAU

Director Leadership Development, Building Bridges for America

## TERRY MUMFORD

Associate, Leadership Development, Building Bridges for America

