

Dallas  
County  
Republican  
Party



DallasGOP.org

# Precinct Chair Handbook

## 2016-2018 Term

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## From the Editor

“In order to take back our country, we must first take back our county.”

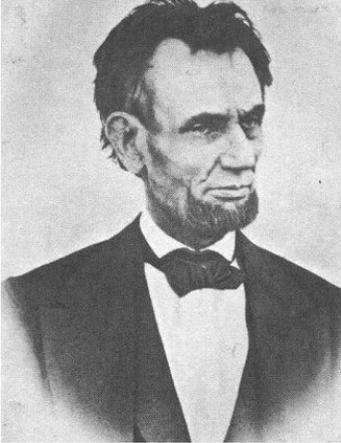
Former Dallas County Republican Party Chairman, Mark Montgomery

I can only imagine the reward of seeing a return to the conservative values and ideals of the thousands of Republicans that make Dallas County home. As a long time grassroots, wearing out my shoes, pouring out my heart, activist, I want that reward. And I am willing to work to reach that goal for my community, for my children. This guide is not original, but I am so thankful for the wonderful Precinct Chairs that brought it to my attention. There were not authors nor a date provided in the original copy that I received, so to the anonymous contributors that came before me, a wellspring of thanks. Your experience and vision goes on. I simply revised and updated it for 2016. My hope, I suspect much like the original writers, is for Republicans across Dallas have a useful tool to maximize the Republican vote in their neighborhood. Today, join me in honoring the work of our predecessors with our own technology enhanced GOTV efforts.

Charging RIGHT into the left!

*Tina Aviles*

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## INTRODUCTION

*“The whole state must be so well organized that every Whig can be brought to the polls. So divide the country into small districts and appoint in each a committee. Make a perfect list of the voters and ascertain with certainty for whom they will vote. Keep a constant watch on the doubtful voters and have them talked to by those in whom they have the most confidence. On Election Day see that every Whig is brought to the polls.”*

-Abraham Lincoln, Letter to a friend, 1840

The basics of precinct organization are the same today as they were when Abraham Lincoln wrote this letter 176 years ago. The advent of new technology and modern media have changed the conduction of campaigns, but the means of achieving victory at the polls remains, at its core, the same; Republican activists talking to their neighbors of the importance of supporting candidates who advocate core Republican principles.

Your job is straightforward: **find voters who support our candidates, make sure they are registered to vote, and make sure they vote.** Whether you are now a Precinct Chair or wish to become one, or simply want to help organize your precinct, this manual is for you to use throughout the year.

The Dallas County Republican Party (DCRP) will support the Precinct Chairs throughout their term in office by providing the timelines, tools, and training needed to win.

### **The Ideal Precinct**

The Ideal Precinct has active organization, headed by the Precinct Chair. The Precinct Chair and Block Captains cover every street and work closely together to find Republicans and others who have conservative leanings. The Precinct Chair keeps Block Captains informed, organizes opportunities for them to get together, and invites Republican candidates into the precinct to meet with voters and to provide support from the precinct's organization. Elected Officials are kept apprised of the precinct's concerns and respond to the Precinct Chair's inquiries. The precinct organization meets frequently to socialize, plan, and carry out Party-building activities. At election time they work hard and passionately to get out the vote for Republican candidates.

## THE BASICS

### Your Objective:

**Maximize Republican votes for every race on the ballot in your Precinct.**

### Your Goal:

- Identify qualified voters who will support our candidates.
- Identify swing voters and what it will take to persuade them to vote Republican.
- Make sure qualified Republican supporters are registered.
- Make sure qualified Republican supporters vote.
- Be available to staff your Precinct Polling Place as needed.

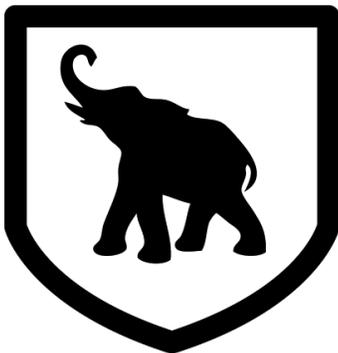
**VOTE GOAL for Precinct # \_\_\_\_\_: \_\_\_\_\_**

The Dallas Victory Chairman, the Honorable Bill Metzger, will provide this goal for your specific precinct.



### Your Role:

- Organize and lead your precinct to accomplish the above objective and goals.
- Ensure person-to-person, i.e., grassroots, contact within your precinct.



As the **Republican Precinct Chair**, you are the political leader of your neighborhood for Republicans. As your organization's link to the DCRP, you should stay familiar with its strategies and be able to share them with your volunteers. You should learn the dynamics and voting history of your precinct and know what it takes to maximize the Republican vote.

## Calendar of Privileges and Duties of the Precinct Chair

The term of office for Precinct Chairs: May 2016 - May 2018

### Continuous Activity

- **Identify Political Affiliation of new residents.** A specific “New Movers” script is available through the new Advantage2016 Mobile Voter Connect program.
- **Register Voters.** A high priority must be greeting new residents to your neighborhood and making sure everyone likely to support Republican candidates is registered to vote.
- **Recruit activists and election workers.**
- **Attend Executive Committee meetings.** You are a voting member of the DCRP’s Executive Committee. Attending meetings will keep you informed and help you build relationships with other Republican leaders. Your presence counts towards a quorum enabling official business to be conducted (the Election Code prohibits proxy voting.) Meetings are usually scheduled for the 3rd Monday of the month.
- **Attend training meetings.** DCRP has arranged an extensive list of training opportunities for August and September of 2016. Join the [dallasgop.org](http://dallasgop.org) email list to stay informed.
- **Lead your Precinct Organization.** Stay in touch with your volunteers
- **Inform your constituents** of candidate needs, Republican party and Republican club events, and other opportunities for involvement.



### May through September 2016

- **Organize your Precinct** (pages 7-8)
- **Canvass the Precinct: Voter ID** (pages 9-12)
- **Energize Republicans: Get them together** (page 14)
- **Attend State Convention June 12-14**, particularly if you were elected a Delegate at your Senate District convention in April.
- **Attend National Convention July 18-21**, registration is limited, but many media outlets will carry live coverage.

### October through November 8th, 2016 - PEAK CAMPAIGN SEASON

- **Complete canvassing**
- **Lead DCRP Victory 2016 campaign and GOTV efforts in your precinct.** (DCRP and Dallas Victory 2016 will provide instructions and materials.)
- **Be available on Election Day, November 8th** to serve as a judge or clerk for your precinct’s polling place. Contact the Elections Administrator at DCRP.

## 2017

- **Further develop your precinct organization**
- **Continue to canvass new residents**
- **Prepare for the 2018 Gubernatorial Election.**

### December 2017 through April 2018 - Primary Season

- **GOTV for the March [DATE], 2018 Primary Election** (and **April Runoff** if applicable.) Note: Neither the Election Code nor RPT Rules prohibit a Precinct Chair from endorsing or working for a contested Primary candidate, but some Precinct Chairs prefer to stay neutral during the Primary Season.
- **Work the Polls.** This will give you the opportunity to meet your constituents personally.
- **Participate in Convention activity**, including Precinct Convention on Primary night (March [DATE], 2018), Senate District Convention (March [DATE], 2018), and State Convention in June (date TBD). (See Appendix [APP. #] for general information. DCRP will distribute instructions and materials for Precinct Conventions before the 20th.)

## **GET ORGANIZED**

### **Familiarize yourself with the precinct.**

Refer to the map of your precinct provided by DCRP. Travel around your precinct and learn its boundaries and characteristics. Knowing your precinct will help you in dividing responsibilities among Block Captains, planning precinct activities, identifying meeting places, determining methods for canvassing and distributing literature, etc.

### **Organize the precinct.**

As a Precinct Chair, DCRP makes several tools available to aid you as you serve.

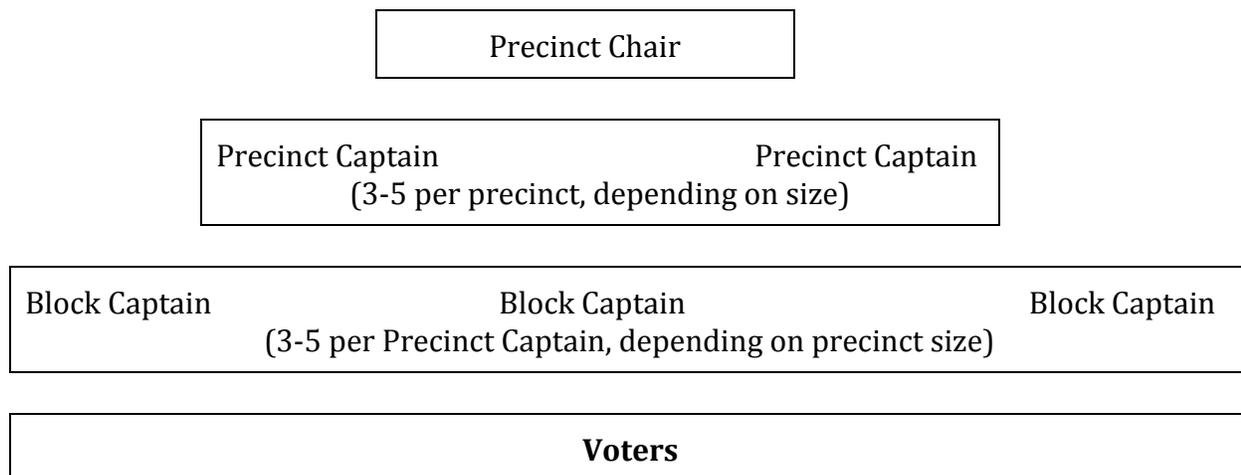
1. Map of your precinct available online at [DallasCountyVotes.org](http://DallasCountyVotes.org) and by written request to DCRP Headquarters.
2. Registered voters list for your precinct is available with GOP Data Center access.
3. Canvass sheets (“walk lists” or “call lists”) listing voters in street order, OR canvass cards. Provided through the use of Advantage2016 Mobile Voter Contact program.
4. Sample scripts and talking points for responding to questions.
5. All forms of voter registration applications. All Precinct Chairs are encouraged to be Dallas County Deputy Voter Registrars. Details available at [DallasCountyVotes.org](http://DallasCountyVotes.org)
6. Volunteer Interest forms should be used to identify Block Captains and shared with DCRP.
7. Yard signs, bumper stickers, and campaign literature as available during peak campaign season.
8. DCRP official business cards are available for a nominal fee.

The precinct is the smallest political unit of registered voters. Even so, the typical precinct contains too many voters for one person to work it alone. Recruit volunteers to assist you with canvassing and later with distributing literature.

Begin recruiting a precinct organization by contacting Republicans in your neighborhood that you know, or people with strong Republican voting records. Continue to build the organization over time as you and your team work the precinct. Ideally, you will recruit a Block Captain who lives in or near the particular block he is assigned to canvass. However, you may certainly use volunteers from outside the precinct if you have family or friends who wish to help. Do not be reluctant to ask people to help you. That is your job; to ask them to help, to make them feel welcome and important, and to tell them how to do their job. People will only help if they are asked, and the #1 reason people don't volunteer is because they are never asked to.

DCRP may have e-mail addresses for Republican activists in your precinct or contact information for a local Republican Club. Check with headquarters for this information if it would be useful to you in beginning to build your organization.

Below is a suggested organizational chart:



***Note:** The above is one method of organization. Adjust it to accommodate the nature of your precinct. For example, the Precinct Captain level may be unnecessary if your precinct is very small, or you may need a larger number of Precinct or Block Captains.*

Meet as necessary with your precinct organization to ensure each volunteer knows his assigned block or area, knows how to perform his duties, and has the necessary tools - particularly the canvass list or cards for the block or area he is assigned. With the Advantage16 Mobile Voter Contact Program and GOP Data Center access, you are able to compile their results and keep a master file. Check in with your team regularly until they have completed their lists and have **personally visited** and spoken with someone at each household. Keep your organization inspired, knowledgeable, and accountable. If any fails to perform, work to find him support or appoint a successor or replacement.

For any canvassing you assign to be done after Labor Day 2016, we suggest giving volunteers two weeks to complete their work and a clear deadline for completing it. Be sure all canvassing is done in time to register new voters so they can vote by November 8th. Voter Registration forms must be received at the Elections Department by Monday, October 6th

## **CANVASS THE PRECINCT: VOTER ID**

Your objective is to maximize the Republican vote. You'll be more effective in increasing Republican turnout if you start identifying Republicans through canvassing now.

### **Why Canvassing is important**

Canvassing is the most accurate method of identifying a person's political leaning. An effective and efficient GOTV effort is dependent on canvassing having been completed. We can turn Republicans out to vote only if we know *who* to turn out.



The Precinct Chair and his organization use canvassing to identify Republicans and like-minded supporters within the precinct. Therefore it is often called “**voter identification**” or “**voter ID.**”

Using Advantage2016 Mobile Voter Contact, your precinct canvass information is shared directly with DCRP and will allow the party to build a real grassroots membership and funding base, as well as an accurate database for communications.

### **Canvassing Methods**

Traditional methods include door-to-door contact (which is best, where permissible) and telephoning. Correspondence, e-mail, and websites are proving to be more effective in some areas, especially as gated communities.

### **Canvassing in high-density complexes**

Rules may disallow knocking on doors in facilities such as apartment buildings. In this case, try organizing an on-site gathering for resident Republicans. If possible, reserve the facility's event room for a coffee or reception. Post notices in appropriate places, such as the community bulletin boards and laundry rooms. Publicize the event in the community's newsletter. Try to find Republicans who have lived in the facility for a long time and may have resident's phone numbers and e-mail addresses for communications. Begin recruiting floor or wing captains from initial participants and build your network.

## **INTRODUCTION TO BLOCK CAPTAINS/BLOCK WORKERS**

### **Canvassing is the critical duty of the Block Captain or Block Worker.**

It is the privilege of the Block Worker to personally meet and know the voters in his area. Visit in person if possible. Go house-to-house and have a short, friendly visit with each voter. Don't argue issues or candidates. You'll lose more votes by saying too much than by saying too little. BE SAFE: Block Workers should travel in pairs. They may work together or keep an eye on each other by working opposite sides of the same street or "leap-frogging" around each other while going house-to-house.

### **Purpose of Block Workers:**

1. To identify voters supporting Republican Candidates;
2. To make sure all voters supporting Republican Candidates are registered to vote;
3. To distribute campaign material;
4. To locate Republican voters needing early voting or ballot-by-mail applications;
5. To identify yard sign locations; and
6. To remind GOP supporters of the importance of voting and of **voting the whole ballot.**

### **Materials and Supplies to take:**

1. Prepared walk list for assigned area, in order by street address.
2. Map for Block Workers especially if they do not live in the area.
3. Instruction sheet with script.
4. Voter registration cards.
5. Times and locations for Early Voting and Election Day.
6. Ballot-by-mail applications.
7. Campaign materials, including bumper stickers.

### **How to Canvass:**

1. Make contact and have a short, friendly conversation with each voter. If the names on your canvass list are not the correct current resident, get the correct name and phone number if possible. If there is no name for a certain address, it means no one at that household is registered. Please contact the residents at that address and add their information to your list.
2. Every survey will have an issue identifier question. This is a very important piece of information.
3. When you talk to a Republican supporter or swing voter, gather phone numbers and e-mail addresses, special interests, and concerns.
4. When you meet a Republican activist:

- a. Record his e-mail address and phone number(s) and relay to DCRP to begin sending Party communications.
  - b. Record his interest in specific volunteer activities and/or working the polls, and relay to DCRP if applicable (use Volunteer Interest form if appropriate.)
  - c. Record his willingness to display yard signs.
  - d. Inform him of Republican Club meetings and upcoming DCRP events.
5. Identify all unregistered Republican supporters and **get them registered**.
  6. Note those needing to vote early by mail so applications can be quickly sent or delivered.

One approach is illustrated in the sample script below. Adapt it to suit yourself. Make it natural and easy. Give the other person a chance to talk.

### **SAMPLE CANVASSING SCRIPT**

**“Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I’m taking a Neighborhood survey.**

**“If you had to choose, what would you say is the number one issue facing Texas today?”**

*Record response.*

**“Do you plan to re-elect Republican Representative Kenny Marchant?”**

*Record response.*

If NO, thank the survey-taker for their time and say goodbye.

If Republican supporter, continue:

**“Is your voters registration up to date with this address? / What about the other members of your household?”**

If no, give voter registration forms or make note for Precinct Chair to register the voters. If you are a Deputy Voter Registrar, collect the voter registration card before you leave.

**NEVER mention registration to a person who is not interested in supporting Republican candidates.**

**“Are you interested in becoming more involved in the Republican Party?”**

If yes, explore particular interests in volunteering, working the polls, displaying yard signs, joining a Republican club, etc.)

**“May I record your e-mail address so Dallas County GOP can send you important information during this important campaign cycle?”**

*Record information.*

Thank them very much for their time, and move on. Try not to take more than five minutes at any residence.

**When the Canvass is completed:**

- Return any extra information gathered to the Precinct Captain or Chair if using paper walk lists..
- Voter registration cards secured by a Deputy Voter Registrar must be returned to the County Voter Registrar within five days of receipt.

**Canvassing Tips**

- Determine optimal time of day and week to visit. Late afternoon and early evening are often the best times for canvassing in residential areas, but this depends on you area.
- Consider working the precinct with another Republican. Knock on doors together, work opposite sides of the street, or “leap-frog” around each other as you work the street.
- Be prepared with a script.
- Be prepared to take notes during or immediately after each visit.
- Keep in mind you are representing the Republican party in your appearance and behavior.
- Listen. Don’t argue. You are not trying to convert anyone at this point, but do be ready to persuade by being up on your facts. Be prepared to encourage disenchanted Republicans. If someone asks a question you can’t answer, say “I don’t know, but I’ll find out and get back to you.”
- Smile and be pleasant.

## **FOLLOW-UP WORK OF THE PRECINCT CHAIR**

### **Register Voters.**

A high priority. If during canvassing you or one of your Block Workers has left applications with certain residents, follow up yourself to be sure the voters have delivered or mailed them. Remember that you may not receive another person's completed Voter Registration application unless you are a Deputy Voter Registrar. We recommend every Precinct Chair become a Deputy Voter Registrar so you can personally register new Precinct voters. *Note:* be sure you follow up with young people and get them registered when they turn 17 and 10 months old.

### **Keep Voter Lists current.**

DCRP relies on each Precinct Chair to identify Republicans in his precinct. Using Advantage2016 is critical to the success of your work! Remember to record data into the program if you use paper lists.

### **Connect Voters with applicable DCRP Leadership Councils.**

Republican activists who wish to help cultivate Republicans from among specific groups should contact Brian Flores, [bflores@texasgop.org](mailto:bflores@texasgop.org), 214-369-9555 for current leaders.

### **Voter Questions.**

Make sure you follow through to provide help or information that was not available during initial conversation.

### **Undecided Voters.**

Keep in touch with undecided voters. Provide literature on GOP candidates. A personal note from the Precinct Chair about our candidates with a sheet comparing the candidates' stances on issues will be helpful to undecided voters.



### **Willing Election Workers**

If a voter has expressed interest in election work, help him make connection with DCRP's Elections Administrator. Jeremy Bradford, [elections@dallasgop.org](mailto:elections@dallasgop.org) 214-369-9555

### **New Residents**

Welcome new residents to the neighborhood. Introduce yourself as their Republican Precinct Chair. That should start a conversation that you can pursue to determine their political leaning. If they lean Republican, offer to register them to vote at their new location. Periodically drive or walk the precinct's New Movers list available in Advantage2016. Contact the new owners, welcome them, and update the voter lists.

## **ENERGIZE THE PRECINCT**

Beyond door-to-door canvassing, the precinct chair must be energize his/her precinct organization, and the precinct's Republicans in general. Below are some suggestions for keeping the precincts active.

### **Hold Meet-and-greets.**

Hold coffees, receptions, or yard or block parties for Republicans. Bringing Republicans together gets them excited, promotes accountability among the grassroots to get our candidates elected, and may produce new volunteers. Pay attention to neighborhood block parties, National Night Out events, and local festivities candidates can attend. If possible, arrange for a Republican official or candidate to attend your events. This is a good opportunity to invite undecided and swing voters.

Event invitations should be sent out about two weeks in advance. Turnout will be higher if you follow up by phone on your invitations. Be clear about your intentions with the event. Inform invitees if the event will be a fundraiser for a candidate.

Prepare a sign-in sheet with spaces for name, phone numbers, and e-mail address. (If a candidate is attending he may want this information as well.) Provide name tags, Volunteer Interest forms, campaign materials, and a basket for donations if appropriate. You may need to ask the first question to get things moving and facilitate discussion.

When possible, encourage young people to become involved; they are the future of our party. The Dallas County Young Republicans ([www.dcyr.com](http://www.dcyr.com)) has an active organization.

Have fun.

### **Make an e-mail distribution list of addresses collected from Precinct Republicans.**

E-mail your constituents regarding upcoming Party events, candidate information, etc.

## GET OUT THE VOTE (GOTV)

In due course, DCRP's Victory Chair will communicate instructions for our 2016 GOTV campaign. This effort will begin around October.

Expect GOTV activities to include at least one literature drop and contacting every voter in your precinct who has been identified as a Republican supporter and urge them to **vote a straight Republican ticket!**

Here is one way to organize GOTV efforts in your precinct as follows:

### **Precinct Chairmen:**

1. Plan GOTV walks beginning before Early Voting opens - October 24, 2016.
2. Coordinate with the campaign office of candidates for your precinct to maximize all GOTV efforts and arrange for yard sign delivery.

### **Block Workers:**

During the first days that Early Voting is open, each favorable Republican voter should receive this call:

#### **BLOCK WORKER:**

"Hello, Ms. Smith. This is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am a volunteer for (*candidate's name or county Republican Party.*) I am calling to remind you that Early Voting for the general election is open from October \_\_ to October \_\_. The closest Early Voting location is \_\_\_\_\_. Please remember to vote straight Republican, as it is the easiest way to support all our Republican candidates."

Note: Remember to keep your ears open for people willing to help at the polls on election day and communicate this to DCRP headquarters.

By Saturday morning, November 5, obtain a list of people in your precinct who voted early and scratch those names from your GOTV contact list. Early Voting listings should be available from DCRP, or from your precinct's Election Judge (this information is included in supplies he will pick up after 2:00 PM that Saturday), and from the Dallas County Elections Department. [www.DallasCountyVotes.org](http://www.DallasCountyVotes.org)

During the three nights prior to Election Day (from 5:30 PM to 9:00 PM) each favorable Republican voter who did not vote early should receive this call:

**BLOCK WORKER:**

“Hello, Mrs. Smith. This is \_\_\_\_\_. I am calling to remind you to vote in the general election on Tuesday. I want to let you know that your polling place is \_\_\_\_\_.”

**VOTER:** “Thank you.”

**BLOCK WORKER:** “Will you need a ride to the polls?”

**VOTER:** “Yes” or “no.”

**BLOCK WORKER:** “If you need a ride, we’ll be glad to have someone call you and make arrangements.”

Note: There may be other telephone calls being made from the various candidates’ campaign organizations. Do not let this interfere with your GOTV effort. If possible, prepare a list of those Republicans who require transportation, and schedule this work.

On Election Day, each favorable voter should be called again. Below is a sample conversation:

**BLOCK WORKER:** “Mrs. Smith, have you been able to get to the polls yet today? We’re calling to see if anyone in your household needs assistance in getting to the polls.”

If they have not voted yet, remind them that the polls close at 7:00 PM. If they say they have voted, thank them and hang up.

Your telephone callers should call each voter as often as time allows. Each person already having voted should be stricken from the list. Since you will be calling several times on Election Day, it is best not to say for whom you are calling. The calls should be documented as follows:

First Call “1st” Call made during the three nights preceding Election Day.

Second Call “2nd” First call made on Election Day.

Third Call “3rd” Second call made on Election Day.

Voted “V” Voter has voted and should not be called again.

Remember: When you are getting out the vote on Election Day, GOTV is the most important aspect of your campaign, If you do not deliver your candidates’ votes to the polls, then all the media, walking, and canvassing will have been in vain. Finally, **THANK YOUR WORKERS!** Be sure to thank your workers in writing. Everyone appreciates a handwritten note and it will leave a good impression you can rely upon next election cycle. Invite them to victory celebrations.