

How to Host a Petitioning or Tabling Event

WHAT:

Petitioning - Collecting voter signatures in order to make a formal request of a government agency, organization, business or individual.

Tabling - Reserving a table at events like fairs, farmers markets, block parties and more in order to create a display for members of the public to see and to complete an action like signing a petition.

WHY:

1. Gather necessary signatures in order to get an issue or candidate on a ballot. Typically, the government determines the required number of signatures in order to appear on the ballot.
2. Gather signatures from members of the public in order to influence decision makers regarding a particular issue. Usually the more signatures gathered, the more likely the decision makers will be swayed.
3. Gather volunteers to start spreading awareness about your issue or candidate in your community.
4. Collect as many phone numbers and emails of supporters as possible to include them in current and future campaigns and actions.



HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY TABLE:

- Engage folks as they approach your table
- Offer them a button, sticker or information about your issue.
- Engage them in conversation, trying to make a connection around an issue.
- Be prepared to ask the members of the public to take an action (sign a petition, join the campaign, attend a future event/action, etc.).

HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY PETITION:

- Find places with long lines.
- Stand near places where a lot of people seem to be congregated such as at the exit or the bathrooms.
- Wear comfortable shoes and clothing that identifies you.

STEPS:

- **Choose a location** - Reach out to places or events that are open to the public and get a lot of foot traffic. Some great (and typically free) spots include:
 - » Public areas (the Post Office, Library, public college campuses, downtown intersections, etc.)

- » Private places with permission (concert venues, grocery stores, local shopping centers, college campuses, etc.)
- » Popular community events (farmers markets, protests, rallies, etc.)
- » Confirm location a week out
- **Recruit volunteers** - Find friends, family, supporters to join you
- **Prepare Materials** - typical materials include:
 - » Issue Information
 - » Petition Pages
 - » Stickers, buttons, postcards, swag to give away
 - » Pens
 - » Clipboards
 - » Phone to take photos
 - » Folding table/chairs
 - » Water
 - » Snacks
 - » Weather related items - sunglasses, sunscreen, umbrella, gloves, hats, handwarmers
 - » Comfortable footwear
 - » Sign in sheets
 - » Signs/banners to advertise table
 - » Script/talking point
- **Train volunteers**
 - » Train a week to 10 days out
 - » Provide a refresher at the beginning of the event
- **Day of -**
 - » Arrive early to your space to set up your area.
 - » Lay out your collateral on your table
 - » Gather your team and make a game plan for how to start engaging folks.
 - » Grab your clipboard and pen, and start conversations with people who are walking by.
 - » Use a hook at get people's attention
- **Be prepared to answer questions.** Some common ones are:
 - » What is the name of your organization? What is its mission?



- » What are you working on right now?
- » How can they help? (by signing the petition, agreeing to volunteer, etc.)
- » Getting the signature: Put the clipboard in their hand and ask them to sign the petition

WHAT TO SAY

Be willing to answer questions. Show interest in the conversation that you've started, and be enthusiastic.

Ask if they want to get involved. Make sure your petition sheet includes a place where folks can check off the box indicating if they'd like to volunteer. Let them know about your upcoming event, or point them towards ways that they can get involved.

Sharing your own personal reasons for supporting your issue area and volunteering it is always a good idea!

FOLLOW-UP STEPS

Follow up with potential volunteers. Make sure to keep a copy of your sign in sheets for yourself and follow up with those who want to get involved within 48 hours. Call, text, or email them an invitation to your next petitioning event.

Enter your completed sheets into a database or excel sheet.

