

Signature Gathering Guide

WHAT IS SIGNATURE GATHERING?

Signature gathering is the process of gathering signatures from registered voters on official forms in order to get a candidate or an initiative on a ballot.

WHY USE SIGNATURE GATHERING?

This is often the only process for candidates or issues to get on a ballot. It is also one of the best ways to identify and grow your list of supporters. It is an opportunity for voters to take direct action.

HOW TO GATHER SIGNATURES?

Step 1: Find Events to Gather Signatures?

Think about where you usually learn about events. A few places to get started in your search:

- Community bulletin boards
- Local magazines and newspapers
- Event calendars of local venues
- Event calendars of states, towns, and city and county government
- Event calendars of local organizations and community groups like the VFW, religious groups, or community associations
- Social media calendars (Facebook, Eventbrite, etc.)
- Google searches for events like
 - » Political rallies
 - » Presentations
 - » Farmers markets
 - » Fairs and festivals
 - » Block parties
 - » Art walks

Step 2: Consider Specifics

- What type of event is it? Loud events, late-night events that revolve around alcohol, or big events in small, crowded venues aren't ideal for petitioning. Better elements include:
 - » Events that are open to the public in larger spaces, or have a ticket line out front that you can walk along.
 - » Heavily populated events with a lot of foot traffic will boost your chances of finding supporters.
 - » Events that invite people to table



Step 3: Finalize List

- Share the list of event opportunities with your team
- Prepare for events

Step 4: Recruit volunteers

- Find friends, family, supporters to join you

Step 5: Prepare materials - typical materials include

- Issue Information
- Signature papers
- Pens
- Clipboards
- Water
- Snacks
- Weather related items - sunglasses, sunscreen, umbrella, gloves, hats, hand warmers
- Comfortable footwear
- Sign in sheets
- Script/talking point

Step 6: Train volunteers

- Train a week to 10 days out
- Provide a refresher at the beginning of the event
 - » Include how to engage people
 - » Role play
 - » Prepare people to answer questions

Step 7: Day of the signature gathering event

- Arrive at the designated location early
- Make sure materials for canvassing are ready
- Gather your team and make a game plan for how to start engaging folks.
- Begin recruitment at the event by ensuring the team is ready to start conversations with people who are walking by

- Use a hook to get people's attention
 - » Arrive early to your space to set up your area, use interesting materials, bright colors, and swag
 - » Lay out your collateral on your table so that it is accessible, make sure to have clipboards, pens, and a few signature gathering sheets out and available
 - » Grab your clipboard and pen, and start conversations with people who are walking by.
- Capture people's information if they are interested in volunteering and getting involved themselves
- Debrief with volunteers at the end

Step 8: Follow up

- Follow up with potential volunteers
- Gather signature pages and share with head organizer or enter in a database

