

Montgomery County Democratic Party

THIS IS WHAT DEMOCRACY LOOKS LIKE:

A Precinct Official's

Quick Guide

To the 2018 Election

August 2018

Welcome to the historic 2018 election campaign!

This “once-in-a-generation” election will be historic because ...

- Democrats will take back control of the U.S. Congress, stopping Trump and his Administration in their tracks and restoring our values and priorities!
- Maryland Democrats will win the governorship, elevating our state as a model for the nation!
- Montgomery voters will elect a county executive and council in an election that draws on public campaign financing for the first time, sees four open council seats due to term limits, and features the largest cast of candidates in memory!

As a Precinct official, you are an integral part of the success of the Democratic Party this year. ***We need you to energize our voters, drive up turnout, and enable Democratic wins across the county and Maryland!***

So, welcome aboard! Roll up your sleeves! Let’s get to work!

ELECTION NUTS & BOLTS

Maryland voters can vote by mail (often referred to as absentee balloting), vote early, or vote at their polling place on Election Day.

Vote by Mail

Montgomery voters may vote by mail, also called absentee balloting. No reason is needed!
Follow instructions at:
<https://www.Montgomerycountymd.gov/Elections/Absentee/AbsenteeApplication.html>

Early Voting

Thursday, October 25, to Thursday, November 1, 10:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.

There are 11 early voting centers in Montgomery County:

<https://www.Montgomerycountymd.gov/Elections/EarlyVoting/2015EarlyVotingfor2016/EarlyVotingSitesfor2018.html>

Election Day

Tuesday, November 6, 7:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Planning Your Time and Effort:

There are 20 weekends between the June primary election and the November general election. ***Plan now for the number of weekends when you will canvass during each period and mark you calendar!***

DEMOCRATIC PARTY STRATEGY

We will see a “BLUE WAVE” in Maryland this year, similar to the one that washed over Virginia in 2017. Our strategy is to increase Montgomery County Democratic voter turnout in the 2018 general election by 65,000 voters compared to 2014. To do this we will increase turnout among Democrats from 45% to 60% -- a 15 percentage point increase in turnout – to return our Democratic voter turnout to the levels we used to enjoy during mid-terms in 2006 and earlier and also strengthen the involvement of Democratic voters with our Party.

The Maryland Democratic Party, the Montgomery County Democratic Party, Democratic Clubs, the Precinct Organization, and Grassroots Resistance groups are working together to achieve this critical goal. All have agreed to the 15-percentage point goal and to a common strategy that focuses on energizing and turning out “soft Democrats’ (those who voted in previous general elections but not in 2014) and new Democratic voters (those who voted for the first time in 2016 or have registered since).

We have tremendous momentum already. The Montgomery County Democratic Party has been participating for a year in the state party’s three waves of voter contact which has already resulted in thousands of doors knocked and conversations with Democrats. The third wave, in cooperation with the state coordinated campaign, will focus on connecting with Democratic voters and GOTV for the November general election.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PRECINCT OFFICIALS

Every precinct must commit to this strategy and get to work. Here’s what you can do:

1. Organize your precinct:
 - Know your precinct and assemble resources.
 - Write your precinct plan.
 - Build, train, and manage your precinct team.
 - Connect with your voters through canvasses, phone banks, and events.
 - Energize Democrats to vote for our candidates in the primary and general elections.
 - Staff precinct tables on primary and general election days: promoting Democratic party visibility and candidates; growing our volunteer numbers.
2. Support the MCDCC and the Maryland Democratic Party through the Coordinated Campaign that pools the resources of Democratic candidates and coordinates the election effort.
3. Participate in Montgomery County Democratic Party activities: Attend Montgomery County Democratic Central Committee meetings (second Tuesday of each month). Join your local district caucus and help plan and attend meetings and special events

KNOW YOUR PRECINCT

Geography:

Know your boundaries and neighborhoods. You can look up the geographic footprint of your precinct at the following (the first may take a minute for the precinct boundaries to load):

- https://data.montgomerycountymd.gov/Elections/Precinct-arcgis_rest_services_elections_polling_pl/qg7h-kbw9
- <https://mcdcc.org/precinct-map/>

Determine what type of precinct you live in and decide how to manage it.

- Low Density – precincts with lot sizes of more than a half-acre and rural areas. Walking these areas may not be easy. They should be walked/canvassed where possible. Alternatives include phone calls to connect with voters, events, or mailings.
- Medium Density – precincts with lot sizes of less than a half-acre. Walking these areas is feasible. Build as large a precinct team as possible, so each neighborhood leader is responsible for 50-75 houses.
- High Density - apartment complexes or residential living for seniors. The number of neighborhood leaders needed will be 1 for each 100 apartments which is approximately 150 voters. These areas are best canvassed by door-to-door. You might need permission to enter these buildings. If you don't have access, try phone, email, or mail.

Once you have determined your precinct type, divide it into workable subdivisions. This can be based on major dividing streets, neighborhood boundaries, housing type (apartments vs. houses), or demographics. Also, the “turf cutter” in VAN can automatically “cut” turfs for you. Use these to create walking lists with maps, names, and addresses.

Voting History:

Learning about the voting history of your precinct using these resources:

- Understanding voter trends in your precinct can help you understand voter behavior, establish precincts goals, and help measure the success of your efforts over time. You can find voter turnout data at the Maryland State Board of Elections website. We have done most of the work for you by aggregating Democratic voter turnout data, by precinct, for the 2012, 2014, and 2014 general elections. Those data can be found at: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B_bkFej9IS8GTIVtZ1NDcTEyem8
- The Voter Action Network (VAN)—updated monthly—will give you the most accurate information about current voters. The first step is to gain access to the VAN from the MCDCC, the tool we use to track voters and, ultimately, Get Out The Vote (GOTV) for General Elections. Training is important to effectively use this tool. The MCDCC provides in-person training. Sign up for VAN access or support at: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd6AIxi8oVHwXSKt8lbsjSITB0NRyxH72ep_sO3f1f90JyCVQ/viewform?c=0&w=1

12-STEPS FOR WRITING YOUR PRECINCT PLAN

Once you know your precinct and your voters, write a formal precinct plan and build a precinct team. This will help you think through your goals and strategies and make sure you have the people in place to get the job done. Here are the key points to keep in mind as you write your plan. We have included a two-page sample precinct plan at the end of this guide.

1. **Plan:** Write it down. Plan what you will do to put the pieces in place that will get you to a well-run, effective precinct operation.
2. **Goals:** [Find](#) the 2014 general election Democratic voter turnout for your precinct and make a goal of increasing it by 15 percentage points in 2018. If you had a 50% turnout in 2014, you'd want a 65% turnout in 2018.
3. **Target Groups:** From now to the June primary, the MCDCC is targeting "drop-off Democrats" and "new Democrats." After the primary, the Coordinated Campaign will determine voter targets.
4. **Precinct Team:** Don't canvass your precinct alone. Turning out voters is a team sport! Recruit friends, neighbors and family members to be volunteers. Contact "super Democrats," those who regularly vote in primary elections, to recruit volunteers to join your team.
5. **Neighborhood Leaders:** Give your volunteers titles to motivate them. They can be called Neighborhood Leaders, Turf Captains, Jedi Knights- whatever you think will work!
6. **Host a Canvass or Phone Bank:** Knocking doors and phone banking are the best ways to connect with the voters we want to turn out.
 - a. **Select a date:** A three-hour period on a weekend works for a concentrated effort. Some canvassers may wish to complete a turf over the course of a week.
 - b. **Pick a launch site:** The launch site can be in a home or neighborhood center.
 - c. **Communicate:** Contact your precinct team to let them know about the canvass.
 - d. **Advertise:** Let the MCDCC know about the canvass so it can be advertised via Facebook and communicated to Grassroots groups who can steer members to your event.
 - e. **Lists:** Generate your walk/phone lists in VAN or *ask the MCDCC to cut them for you.*
7. **Events:** Hold events to encourage people in your precinct to get to know one another and connect with the party. Try a happy hour, coffee and tea, picnic, potluck or barbecue, or a "meet and greet" of forum with Democratic candidates.
8. **Fun:** Make canvassing and events fun. Provide wine and cheese to canvassers after an afternoon of door knocking. Host SuperDems over pizza at the local pub or pizza parlor.
9. **Food helps:** HINT: Food (and beverage) are key to building a movement or organization!
10. **Partnerships:** Partner with other precincts or Democratic clubs for your events. For example, hold a joint picnic with adjacent precincts.
11. **Community:** Staff tables at events in or near your precinct, participate in parades, do a voter registration drive.
12. **Media:** Communicate via a Google Group, precinct newsletter, or Facebook page.

Let's get going and re-energize and activate our party!

TALKING TO VOTERS AND COLLECTING DATA

Now that you have your team assembled and access to good data on Democratic voters in your precinct, it's time to get out on the streets.

Step 1 – Define your list of Democratic Voters

You and your team will be talking with Democratic voters within your precinct in the ultimate effort to increase turnout among party members and aid candidates in their bid for election. Break your voters down into three distinct categories and all of this information is in VAN.

- “3 of 3” – The very first group of Democratic voters that you will want to talk to are “super-Democrats.” These are Democratic voters who have voted in the last three Democratic primaries (2012, 2014, 2016). They will be your base of support to find activists to aid you in your precinct operation.
- “Drop-off Democrats” – The second group you’ll want to contact are irregularly voting Democrats. We want you to focus on those who voted in the 2010 or 2012 general elections but skipped the 2014 general election. Candidates tend to focus on “super Democrats” whom they know will vote, so we need you to engage these “soft Democrats” and turn them out so we can win Gubernatorial elections. For 2018, this group of Democratic voters is the focus of most of your effort as a Precinct Official between now and the primary on June 26. Assume no one else will contact these voters. *It’s your job.*
- New Voters. We also want you to focus on Democrats who voted for the first time in the 2016 Presidential general election or are new voters who have registered since then. It is a high priority to reach out to newly registered Democrats. On the second Monday of every month, VAN is updated with new voters who registered within the preceding month. Create and print a “new voter” list using VAN. Canvass the new voter list and input data back into VAN. This personal touch from you, in addition to mail from the Party, will go a long way to building sustained relationships between you, the Party, and new Democrats.

Step 2 – Creating and Printing Your Lists (VAN access required)

Now that you have your targeted voters and the data you want to collect, you will use VAN to create your lists, adding your “walk script” and questions to your walk list. Once that information is finalized, you can determine how many people from your team will help tackle the list of voters. Based on your team members and number of voters, you can then “cut turf” in VAN, which allows you to assign certain houses to team members. At this point you will print your lists, distribute them to your team members, and begin your walk. *Please note: VAN training is necessary for Step 3, where you or your Data Director will receive full training on how to create and print lists. **Alternatively, MCDCC staff may be available to cut turfs for you. Contact the MCDCC office if you need help.***

Step 3 – Walking and Knocking

Door-to-Door canvassing is the preferred method of voter contact. Research over the last two decades has shown that you can increase voter turnout from 10% to 15% with a single visit at a voter's door to ask for their vote. This effect can be amplified with multiple visits, so your focus on door knocking is key to your precinct team's success. Of course, there will be rural areas where door knocking may be close to impossible, and, in that case, phone contact will be the key.

You will need to find a good strategy on how to get through your entire list. Depending on the size of the precinct, you may have hundreds of doors to knock. Splitting that up between your team members – and completing the walk over multiple days – will make the task much easier. The more you can break up a walking list, the less you will need to do at any one time.

Step 4 – Data Entry (VAN access required)

You've finished your lists, handed out your contact info to voters, and recorded data, so now what? At this point, you're ready to get into VAN and submit all your data. Entering these data into a centralized database will allow you to run reports to see your progress, as well as aid campaigns and the Party in decision making when it comes to future voter contact. VAN also allows you to note any background or special issues and interests of voters that come up in your conversations that can be used for follow-up (e.g., for notifying voters of events or activities that may be of interest to them in the future). Our voter contacts then can become an "ongoing" conversation over time to build and strengthen our connections. *Please note: A VAN training is necessary for Step 5, where you or your Data Director will receive full training on how to create and print lists. Also, you can return the turf to the MCDCC for data entry.*

MAKING ELECTION DAY A SUCCESS

COUNTDOWN TO THE ELECTION

30 Days Before Primary

- Recruit volunteers, including those who speak language(s) of people most populous in Precinct, where possible
- Schedule volunteers
- Ask a neighbor or 2 or 3 for their copy of their Sample Ballot so that you have 2-3 available for visitors to your table!

Days Before Primary

- Confirm volunteers to staff
- Prepare your materials - see packing list below
- Review FAQ - see below
- Check the weather
- Pack your materials - see packing list below
- Great ready to have fun!
- Recruit for general election!
- Build your general election team this summer!

On Election Day

1. Organize cheerful volunteers to cover your polling place **all day** (6:30a for set-up until after 8p, when the polls close). Advise your volunteers to bring food and drinks. Volunteers should wear “Blue Wave” colors to help voters identify them at the Democratic table.
2. Provide all volunteers with Voter Protection instructions: Instruct them to call the MCDCC office to answer questions about voting and receive reports of irregularities at: (301) 946-1000. We can help route questions to the Board of Elections.
3. Introduce yourself to the two Chief Election Judges - one Democratic and one Republican - as a proactive rapport in case there are questions or needs later.
4. Identify where the Voter Turnout Numbers will be posted by the Election Judges, which you will need to report later in the day.
5. Set up your table outside of the electioneering boundary, which is at least 100 feet from the entrance and exit - see below for electioneering.

DO's & DON'T's AT THE POLLING PLACE

- DO remember that you represent the Democratic Party
- DO be friendly and always courteous and respectful
- DO capture name, email, mobile phone and address of volunteers - and thank them!
- You can speak to the media, but just remember you are representing the Democratic Party and you are not promoting any specific candidates (at least prior to the Primary elections). They may ask your impressions of turnout or about the enthusiasm of voters you meet. Be honest and genuine and let them know that you are a volunteer yourself.
- DON'T endorse or recommend one Democratic candidate over another - we are the face of the entire Democratic Party
- DON'T accept donations at polls
 - Direct people to Montgomery County Democratic Party's website to make a donation online (<https://mcdcc.org/>) or mail it to MCDCC, 3720 Farragut Ave # 303, Kensington, MD 20895
- DON'T share endorsement materials, e.g., the Apple Ballot
- DON'T take additional campaign materials from one candidate over another in same race
- DON'T share school board as it's nonpartisan
- DON'T be alone at the table - bring a friend, neighbor, etc.

Please note: electioneering is prohibited in the polling place and between 25 and 100 feet of the entrance and exit to the polling place ("No Electioneering Zone"). The Election Judges will denote the boundary. No electioneering, political activity, or posting or distributing of campaign materials may take place within the "No Electioneering Zone."

You may not wear or display any political material or express political opinions while you are in the polling place.

"Electioneering" includes wearing clothing that supports or opposes a candidate, ballot issue, or political party. The ban on electioneering does not apply to political messages on clothing, buttons, badges, or the like worn by a voter who is on his or her way into the polling place or inside the polling place to vote. Voters are allowed to wear clothing, buttons, or the like with a political message but are not allowed to linger in the polling place or within the "No Electioneering Zone."

More at

http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/Elections/Resources/Files/pdfs/EJTraining2018/Montgomery_Chapter%204%20People%20in%20the%20Polling%20Place_APPROVED_EP_03_02_18%5B4107%5D.pdf.

Schedule for the day:

6:30 am. Arrive at the polling place by 6:30a to set up the Democratic table.

- Don't forget chairs!
- Display the your copy of the Sample Ballot prominently.
- Make the table as eye-catching as possible and make it available to all Democratic candidates via the binder from Bag Day
- Take paperweights or rocks to hold down the literature when the wind starts blowing.
- Have a clipboard at the table to gather contacts for future precinct activities and the general election GOTV, and sign up future volunteers.
- Keep the table neat
- Your supply kit should also include plastic sheets and an umbrella, in case it rains, scotch tape or masking tape, pens for your Volunteer Sign-up Sheet, and snacks and drinks for your volunteers.
- You should also have a Watcher's Certificate from the Democratic Party that permits you to go into the voting area.

7:00-9:00 am Morning rush hours. This and the afternoon rush are the most critical periods of the day.

- To ensure full coverage in high turnout Precincts, you may need two people.
- If your Precinct has changed polling places, you may want to send a volunteer to the old polling place to redirect lost voters or post a sign there. Check the Montgomery County Democratic Party's Precinct Organization Resources at <https://mcdcc.org/precinct-organization/> and click on "Precinct Resources" or directly at https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1-5Hg0sFI9kTGqiwnrcgd9vNEQ_j7leKo
- Be sure that all entrances to the polls are covered by volunteers. Try to be the first person to speak with the voter. Your table may be close to the entry, but you want to make contact before the voter becomes annoyed with all the eager workers.
- Let the voters walk toward you, do not run toward them!
- Speaking with the Democrats is important, but if they do not want to be bothered when going in, try to engage them afterwards.

11:00 am First turnout vote count posted by Election Judges. Check the count and report it to the Party via mobile webform at mcdcc.org/electionreport

- If you cannot access the webform, send a text including Your Name, Early Voting Site, Democratic Count, Republican Count, and Unaffiliated Count to **240-801-5767**. This will be reported in to a central tracking document.

4:00 pm Second turnout vote count posted. Check the count and report it to the Party via mobile webform at mcdcc.org/electionreport

- If you cannot access the webform, send a text including Your Name, Early Voting Site, Democratic Count, Republican Count, and Unaffiliated Count to **240-801-5767**. This will be reported in to a central tracking document.

4:30-7:30p Evening rush hours

8:00p Polls close. People waiting in line at 8:00 P.M. will be allowed to vote.

After 8:00p Please clean your polling place by removing everything that you brought

As soon as possible after 8p. Your last act of the day is to report the closing numbers. Check the count and report it to the Party via mobile webform at

mcdcc.org/electionreport

- If you cannot access the webform, send a text including Your Name, Early Voting Site, Democratic Count, Republican Count, and Unaffiliated Count to **240-801-5767**. This will be reported in to a central tracking document.
- It is the candidates' responsibility to remove any campaign signs.

PACKING LIST

- Sample Ballot: please bring your own sample ballot - and maybe 2-3 from your neighbors in the same precinct for voters to view at the table
- Bag Day materials
- Table
- Chairs
- Food and drink
- Sample Ballot
- Democratic Party Volunteer Sign in sheet
- 5 pens
- Masking Tape
- Make your own ""Volunteer Here to Get Involved With Our Democracy"" sign welcoming people to the Democratic Party
- Clipboard
- Candy, cookies, granola bars, and/or coffee
- Rocks or heavy item to hold down materials
- Consider packing
 - Umbrella for sun or rain
 - Layer your clothing for weather
 - Back up charger for your mobile phone and for volunteers and visitors!
 - Create a "selfie station" for taking "I Voted" pictures to post on social media with hashtag #BlueWave and #PrecinctPower
 - Canopy or tent to go over table to create more visibility and protection from the elements
 - Balloons are good!

SAMPLE PRECINCT PLAN
Precinct 13-059 (Voting Place: Stephen Knolls School)
Voter Engagement Plan
March 2018

GOAL

Precinct 13-059 seeks to increase Democratic voter turnout in the 2018 general elections by fifteen percentage points over the Democratic voter turnout achieved in the 2014 general election.

In the 2014 general election, we had a 51% Democratic voter turnout. For 2018, we seek a 66% turnout. Democratic turnout in our precinct in the 2016 general election for president was 79%.

2017 ACTIONS

In cooperation with two neighboring precincts, we held a three-precinct picnic on July 15. The picnic attracted about 80-90 people, including about 15 from our precinct.

To get the word out about the picnic, we recruited six volunteers to assist the three precinct officials in canvassing. We were able to knock about 300 doors over week-long period, talking to or leaving flyers for about 500 of our precinct's 1,000+ Democrats.

In the fall, we participated in the Maryland Democratic Party's "Summer of Resistance and Renewal" canvassing, targeting soft Democrats and independents.

2018 ACTIONS

Step one: Contact volunteers to serve as "neighborhood leaders." Recruit friends, neighbors, and volunteers. As needed, also contact "Super Dems" in the precinct for additional volunteers. Hold a "Happy Hour" for volunteers on Monday, March 12.

Step two: Focusing on "drop off Democrats" (those who voted in 2010 or 2012 general elections but not the 2014 general) and "new Democrats" (those who voted for the first time in 2016 or have registered since), canvass the precinct between March and the June primary.

Step three: Develop a plan for connecting with drop-off Democrats who live in the apartment buildings on Georgia Avenue, if we are not able to contact them in Step Two.

Step four: Canvass the precinct again in Fall 2018, focusing on targets determined by the Coordinated Campaign and/or the Maryland Democratic Party. These may be conducted on the weekends in September or October when the D18 Caucus holds its days of action.

Step five: Contact all Democratic voters who have registered since 11/9/16 by mail, phone, or door knocking.

SAMPLE PRECINCT PLAN
Montgomery County Democratic Party
Legislative District 18
Precinct 13-059 (Voting Place: Stephen Knolls School)
Voter Data (from VAN)
 March 2018

Registered Voters

Party	Number
TOTAL	1,655
Democrat	1,053
Republican	225
Green. Libertarian, Other	22
Unaffiliated	355

Notes:

Includes good and bad voting and mailing addresses.

Includes "do not call, mail, or email."

Excludes deceased and "do not walk."

Voter Turnout

Democratic Turnout	Percent
2012 Presidential – actual	80.6%
2016 Presidential – actual	78.9%
2014 Gubernatorial – actual	50.6%
2018 Gubernatorial – goal (50.6 +15 pts.)	65.6%

Voters

General Elections	Number
2018 Target Turnout (.656*1053 Dems)	690
2014 Voted	441
Additional voters needed	259

Targets

Super Democrats (for volunteers)	112
Voted 2010 or 2012 but not 2014	282
First time voters in 2016	121
Registered since 11/9/16	40
TOTAL TARGET UNIVERSE	443

CANVASS DO'S & DON'TS

Face-to-face conversations are the most effective way to ensure that the Democratic Party engages with our voters. Here are a few key principles to keep in mind:

1. **Be polite and professional:** You are an ambassador of the Party, and, as such, you and your team need to comport yourselves with dignity and respect for your neighbors
2. **Introduce Yourself:** Let the voter know you are a member of the local “Neighborhood Team of the Montgomery Democratic Party” and a neighbor of theirs
3. **Provide information:** Tell voters how to contact you as the local party leader and invite voters to a local club meeting, special event, or even your own precinct house party
4. **Collect data:** Ask for cell or best phone number and email address. Note that we use email to send periodic updates that will keep them informed about news and events..

Do's	Dont's
Finish your packet. Knock on all the doors on your walk list. It's a bonus if you talk to passersby while you're out.	Don't be rude to anyone. Remember, you represent the Democratic Party. Don't speak negatively of other points of view or people.
Smile and have fun! Voters will respond to your enthusiasm and your energy.	Don't go inside a house. Safety first. If you're invited into a home, politely decline.
Have a real conversation. Often when we canvass before an election we're advised not to linger or talk too long to any one voter. Take as much time as you need today to have a real conversation if the voter is engaged.	Don't give people an 'out.' Steer clear from using language like, “Do you have a minute to talk?” or “Are you busy?” as these phrases make it easy for someone to tell you 'no' and shut down the conversation.
Write legibly. Remember, someone will need to read your writing in order to enter all of the data you're collecting!	Don't put literature in the mailbox. Leave lit in the door or under the mat.

