



## Top Ten Tips to Mobilize Young Voters

- 1) **Keep young voters on your call and walk lists:** A contact at the door can increase turnout among young voters by 8-10 percentage points; a live phone call can increase turnout by 3-5 points. (Green, Gerber) The longer and chattier the script, the better. (Nickerson)
- 2) **Utilize volunteers to mobilize fellow young voters:** Volunteers are a cost-effective and efficient way to mobilize young voters. Recruit volunteers, give them training, ambitious goals, and lots of responsibility, and they can do great work. But also make sure staff is spending time to train and coordinate them.
- 3) **Talk about issues in ways relevant to young adults:** Health care, education, job creation, Iraq, the environment, and taxes are all key issues for young voters, but make the issues relevant. For example, talk about health care access for young adults – not prescription drugs and Medicare.
- 4) **Candidates should mingle and chat with young voters at events:** Go to college campuses, attend happy hours or picnics, and talk to these voters about issues that matter. Don't give a stump speech - listen to and answer questions, and engage in a conversation.
- 5) **Do voter registration:** Registering new voters is the best way to build a list of turnout targets and potential volunteers. When deciding if registration is a strategic use of funds, remember this: once registered, young adults are very likely to vote: in 2004, 81 percent of *registered* 18-29 year olds voted. (U.S. Census Bureau) Of course, remember to collect emails and cell phones so you can follow-up with volunteer opportunities, voter education, and GOTV reminders.
- 6) **Maximize the crowd:** Big crowds of young supporters are a goldmine, but you have to work it. Target your speech by talking about relevant issues; open up a Q&A and have a good conversation; encourage everyone to whip out their cell phones and text "Vote" to your campaign's short-code; make sure volunteers are roaming the audience registering voters and signing up volunteers; ask the audience to take an action to support a hot issue or hit the streets to register voters. The more energy and engagement you give, the more you'll get.
- 7) **Allocate Resources:** Young voters can be mobilized efficiently, but don't expect it to be free. Allocate staff time and a budget to run a top-notch effort. For example, two or three staff can run a state campaign; one or a half a person's time can do a significant amount on the district level.
- 8) **Get updated lists of young voters<sup>1</sup>:** A few tactics can help your campaign build a better list of young voters: buy a brokered voter file from a youth registration campaign; get the updated voter files from the county clerk late in the election cycle to catch new registrants; register voters; designate precinct captains to update movers' information and identify supporters; or hold a volunteer phone bank to update voters' contact information.
- 9) **Use new technology strategically:** New technologies – social networking sites, text messaging, etc. – can help a campaign keep in touch with young voters with updates, volunteer opportunities, events, and more. However, remember that new technologies are a good campaign supplement, but not a substitute for old-fashioned peer-to-peer organizing and candidate outreach.
- 10) **Save your money:** Don't use robocalls or direct mail alone for GOTV. Direct mail works well for registration, and robocalls can supplement door-knocking or direct mail. But the best advice is to utilize volunteer or live phone banks – the more personal the contact, the greater the impact.

For more tips and sample campaigns plans, see YVS's handbooks *Winning Young Voters* and *Young Voter Mobilization Tactics I and II*, available at [www.youngvoterstrategies.org](http://www.youngvoterstrategies.org). Also check out our opinion polling, demographic research, and latest news.

<sup>1</sup> See YVS Tip Sheet "How to Build and Maintain a Good Young Voter Target List: Part I – Building a List of Young Supporters" for more information.