



PRECINCT CHAIRMAN'S HANDBOOK

Revised: April 2009

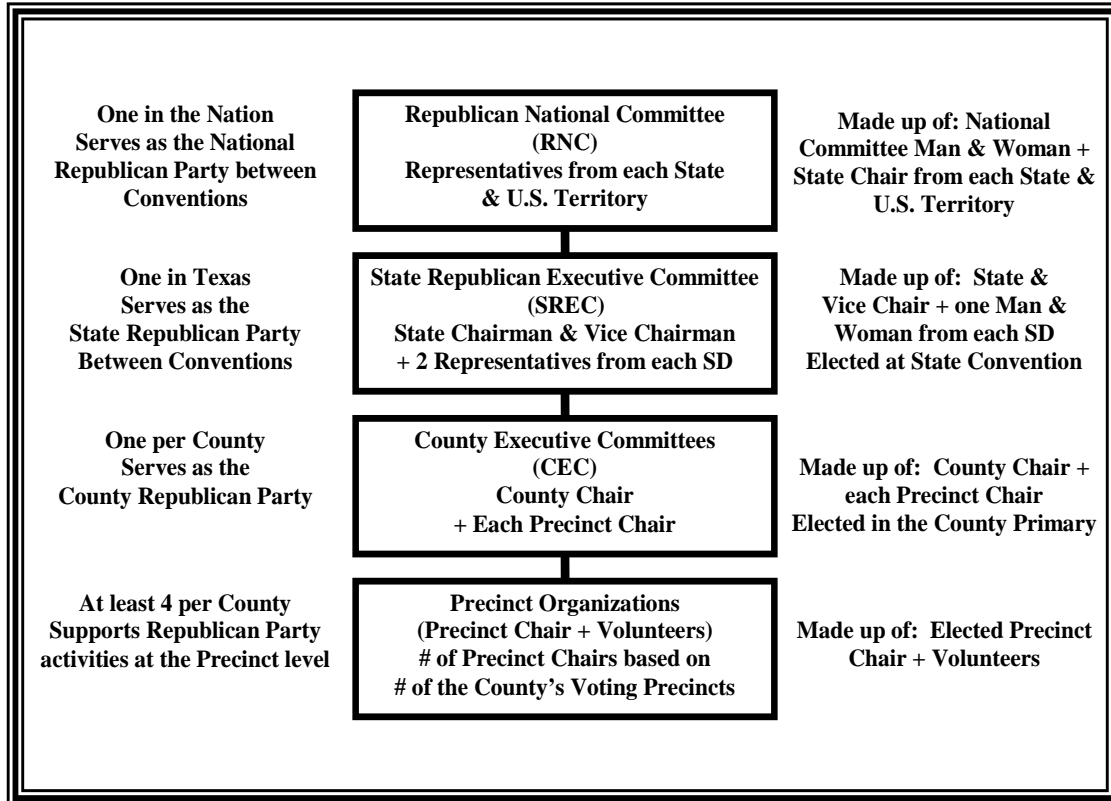
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Party Basics:	
The Republican Party Structure	3
Documents Governing Our Party	5
Texas Election Cycle	6
Republican Convention Process	7
Role of the Precinct Chairman	8
Becoming, Resigning and Transitioning	10
County Executive Committee (CEC)	11
Statutory Requirements	12
Organizing your Precinct	13
Precinct Organization Chart	13
Recruiting Volunteers	14
Canvassing Voters	14
Sample Canvass Sheet	15
Maintaining Records	16
Utilizing the Data	17
Getting Out The Vote (GOTV)	18
Block Walking	18
Phone Banking	19
Thank your Volunteers	21
Voting Requirements	22
Resources for the Precinct Chairman	23
Tools of the Precinct Chairman	24
Glossary of Political Terms	25

THE REPUBLICAN PARTY STRUCTURE



NATIONAL PARTY ORGANIZATION:

Republican National Committee (RNC)

The RNC is composed of all state party chairmen plus one committeeman and one committeewoman from each state and U.S. territory. Officers are elected by the RNC. Texas Republicans elect their RNC committeeman and committeewoman at the state conventions held in presidential election years.

National Committeeman

National Committeewoman

STATE PARTY ORGANIZATION:

State Republican Executive Committee (SREC)

The SREC is composed of the State Chairman, Vice Chairman, and one man and one woman from each of the 31 state senatorial districts (SDs). Delegates elect this committee at the state convention held in June of even-numbered years. All convention delegates elect the State Chairman and a State Vice-Chairman. Each SD elects a Committeeman and Committeewoman to represent their respective district, which is then ratified by the convention. Officers are either elected or appointed, according to SREC bylaws. SREC members help organize and oversee Party activities in their respective SDs.

State Chairman

State Vice Chairman

SREC Committeeman & Committeewoman from each SD

COUNTY PARTY ORGANIZATION:

County Executive Committee (CEC)

The County Chairman and Precinct Chairmen are elected by popular vote at the primary election held in March of each even-numbered year. Together, they comprise the County Executive Committee. Republican primary election voters in the county vote on the County Chairman. Voters residing in each of the counties voting precincts elect their respective Precinct Chairmen. Officers are either elected or appointed, according to CEC bylaws.

County Chairman

Precinct Chairmen

PRECINCT ORGANIZATION:

Precinct Chairman and Volunteers

The only elected official in the precinct is the Precinct Chairman. The Precinct Chairman obtains Volunteers and organizes them in the way most fitting to the precinct. The precinct is the smallest unit of our Party; however, it is one of the most essential units. It is here, at the grassroots level, that voters are identified and turned out on Election Day.

Precinct Chairman

Volunteers

AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS

Auxiliary organizations work in cooperation with the formal Party organization to bring specific groups of citizens into the Republican Party. They often serve as an intermediary step in getting people to assume leadership positions with County Executive Committees or with campaigns. Auxiliaries complement and add to the strength of the Party organization. For a list of current official RPT auxiliaries, visit www.texasgop.org (go to “About RPT, Leadership Directory”).

DOCUMENTS GOVERNING OUR PARTY

U.S. CONSTITUTION

The U.S. Constitution is the supreme law of the United States. It is the foundation and source of the legal authority underlying the existence of the United States of America and the Federal Government of the United States. The text can be found at www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution.html.

NATIONAL REPUBLICAN PARTY PLATFORM

The National Republican Party has a statement of basic beliefs that outline its political philosophy, which is adopted at each national convention. The platform in effect at any given time will be dated as of the last national convention year. Access the current platform at www.gop.com/2008Platform

TEXAS ELECTION CODE

The Texas Election Code is the set of laws passed by the State Legislature governing Texas elections, voting systems, candidates and political parties. The Election Code may be accessed online at www.capitol.state.tx.us (go to “Statutes”, “Election Code”). Hard copies of the Code may be purchased through Hart Intercivic: P.O. Box 80649, Austin, TX 78708. (888) 223-HART. electionsupplies@hartic.com. www.hartintercivic.com.

REPUBLICAN PARTY OF TEXAS PLATFORM

The Republican Party of Texas has a statement of basic beliefs that outline its political philosophy, which is adopted at each state convention. The platform in effect at any given time will be dated as of June of the last state convention year. Additionally, the State Republican Executive Committee often passes resolutions that speak to current issues. The current RPT Platform and resolutions passed by the SREC may be accessed at www.texasgop.org (go to “GOP Resources”).

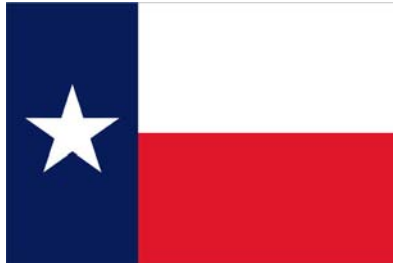
REPUBLICAN PARTY OF TEXAS RULES

Per the Texas Election Code, the RPT has adopted rules to govern the conduct of precinct, county/senatorial district, and state meetings and conventions. These rules continue in effect unless changed at a state convention. The rules in effect at any given time will be dated as of June of the last state convention year. It is important to note that the RPT Rules do not, and cannot, conflict with the Texas Election Code. RPT Rules may be accessed at www.texasgop.org (go to “GOP Resources”).

STATE PARTY BYLAWS & COUNTY PARTY BYLAWS

The State Republican Executive Committee has adopted bylaws which direct the conduct of the State Party. Copies of the bylaws are distributed to each SREC Member.

County executive committees also have the option of adopting bylaws to direct the conduct of their county party. Bylaws should address the special needs found in the individual county. Bylaws usually cover items such as frequency of county executive committee meetings, who may convene a meeting, duties of officers, the number of precinct chairs necessary to constitute a quorum for conducting non-election code business, and the establishment of permanent and special committees. As the Republican Party grows, it is beneficial to have a clear outline for conducting party business.



TEXAS ELECTION CYCLE

Year 1 (odd-numbered year)

January: Presidential Inauguration

January - May: Legislative Session

December: Candidate Filing for Primary Election

Year 2 (even-numbered year)

March: Primary Election, Precinct & SD/County Conventions

June: State Convention

November: General Election (Gubernatorial)

Year 3 (odd-numbered year)

January: Gubernatorial Inauguration

January - May: Legislative Session

December: Candidate Filing for Primary Election

Year 4 (even-numbered year)

March: Primary Election, Precinct & SD/County Conventions

June: State Convention

August/September: National Convention

November: General Election (Presidential)

REPUBLICAN CONVENTIONS

RPT Rules governing conventions may be found at www.texasgop.org (go to “GOP Resources”)

PRECINCT CONVENTIONS

Start between 7:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. on Primary Election Night. The specific starting time within each county is to be set by the county executive committee. Conventions are usually held at the precinct polling location. Purpose: to elect delegates and alternates to the county/senatorial district convention and propose resolutions for the county/senatorial district convention to consider.

The Precinct Chair (or in their absence, any registered Republican voter from the precinct) may convene the convention. Eligible attendees are those who voted in the Republican Primary (early or on Election Day) and reside in that precinct. Minutes of the proceedings (forms are provided to the County Chairman by RPT to distribute to Precinct Chairmen) must be returned to the County Chairman within three days or mailed within 2 days.

COUNTY / SENATORIAL DISTRICT CONVENTIONS

Held the third Saturday after the Primary Election. The time and location is to be set by the county executive committee. Purpose: to elect delegates and alternates to the state convention and propose resolutions for the state convention to consider.

A county convention is held when the county is completely within one senatorial district. A senatorial district convention is held when the county is divided between two or more senatorial districts. The incumbent County Chairman (which may be different than the one elected in the primary election) is the temporary county convention chairman. The temporary senatorial district convention chairman is to be elected by the precinct chairs within that county’s senatorial district. Delegates are those elected from their precinct convention. Minutes of the proceedings (forms are provided to the temporary county and SD convention chairmen by RPT) must be mailed to RPT within 5 days.

STATE CONVENTION

Held in June of even-numbered years, following a Primary Election. The specific date, time and location are to be set by the State Republican Executive Committee. Purpose: to elect one man and one woman from each senate district to serve on the State Republican Executive Committee, elect a State Chairman and Vice-Chairman, and pass the State Party platform.

In presidential election years, the state convention also elects one man and one woman to serve on the Republican National Committee, elects delegates and alternates to the national convention, and elects representatives to the Electoral College.

NATIONAL CONVENTION

Held in August or September of presidential election years. The specific date, time and location are to be set by the Republican National Committee. Purpose: to nominate candidates for President and Vice President of the United States and pass a national party platform.

ROLE OF THE PRECINCT CHAIRMAN

As Precinct Chairman, your #1 goal is to maximize the Republican vote in your precinct. You do this by:

- **Identifying Voters.** Get to know each voter in your precinct. Be the first to welcome new neighbors and let them know you are their *Republican* Precinct Chairman- this can be a good way to start a conversation which can determine their political leanings. Learn who are your consistent Republican voters are so you can count on their support. Learn who is a “swing voter” or who does not usually vote, so that you might persuade them to vote Republican. Also know who the Democrats are, so that you can make relationships and have conversations which might switch their views, or so that you can leave them alone when it comes to Republican Party politics. You can request lists of voters from your local elections office to help you with this process. Identifying voters and recording this information is also called “canvassing”.
- **Registering Voters.** Always be ready to register a Republican to vote by becoming a Deputy Voter Registrar (DVR). DVRs take a simple oath from the county Voter Registrar and are then allowed to accept a completed voter registration application card from a new voter and take it to the Voter Registrar.
- **Informing Voters.** You need to be the political leader in your neighborhood. Keep in touch with Republicans in your area to let them know of current political events and issues, upcoming elections, and opportunities for involvement with the local party, clubs or candidates. Distribute campaign literature, bumper stickers and yard signs to decorate your precinct.
- **Turning Out Voters.** All the prior steps mentioned lead up to this one. Once you have identified your voters, registered them to vote, and kept them politically informed, it’s time to make all of that count- get them to the polls to vote Republican! The most common activities that remind voters to go vote are walking door-to-door (“block walking”) and making phone calls (“phone banking”). Assist those needing to vote early by mail. Offer to accompany neighbors to their polling place or drive people that need a ride. Efforts to turn out voters are often referred to as “Get-Out-The-Vote” efforts or “GOTV”.

As Precinct Chairman, you also sit on the County Executive Committee. The County Executive Committee is made up of the County Chairman and all the Precinct Chairmen in the county. As the representative of your precinct, you should make every effort to attend each meeting. Your presence counts towards a quorum enabling official business to be conducted. On those occasions you are not able to attend, you should have someone there who will collect any handouts and take notes for you. However, such a substitute (even a family member) is prohibited from voting as your proxy on statutory business (Texas Election Code Sec. 171.026).

As Precinct Chairman, you have responsibilities in your local elections. In addition to maximizing the Republican vote, ways to be involved include:

- **Primary Election - Campaigning.** There is nothing in the Election Code or RPT Rules prohibiting a Precinct Chair from getting involved in contested primary races. However, you should become knowledgeable about your local situation before publicly taking sides in a contested primary race. Contested races sometimes create hard feelings or damage relationships. Becoming involved in a campaign may include going door-to-door (“block

walking”), making phone calls (“phone banking”) or handing out campaign material for a candidate.

- Primary Election - Working at the Polls. In primary elections, County Chairmen (with approval of the County Executive Committee) appoint Election Judges for each precinct in the county, and the Election Judges appoint clerks to assist them. Some County Chairmen require that their Precinct Chairs fill these positions as it can be difficult to recruit all the volunteers it takes to setup, run, and tear down the polling places on Election Day. Working the polls is also a great way to ensure ballot integrity for our Party and to get to know voters in your area. Note, however, that duties involved in closing the polls, completing the paperwork, and delivering the ballot box to the central counting station sometimes will conflict with the Precinct Chairman’s duty to run the precinct convention (see “Convention Activity” below). This should be considered by the County Executive Committee when making arrangements for Election Day.
- General Election - Campaigning. Precinct Chairs should be eager to assist Republican candidates in whatever way possible. Becoming involved in a campaign may include going door-to-door (“block walking”), making phone calls (“phone banking”) or handing out campaign material for a candidate. It is particularly important for Precinct Chairs to be involved in these efforts as you know your precinct better than anyone.
- General Election - Working at the Polls. In every precinct where our Republican candidate for Governor in a gubernatorial election wins, we are eligible to have a Republican Election Judge in the following general election. Precincts where our candidate for Governor came in second are entitled to have a Republican as Alternate Judge. Your serving as Judge or Alternate Judge is very important to our Party’s ballot integrity and reduces the need to recruit ballot integrity volunteers. This is further incentive to get-out-the-vote! Names for Election Judges must be submitted by the County Chairman to the Commissioner’s Court the summer preceding the general election; remind them to submit your name!

As Precinct Chairman, you have responsibilities in the convention process. These include:

- Precinct Convention. The Election Code designates the Precinct Chairman as temporary chair of the precinct convention (Sec. 174.025). If the Precinct Chair is unable to serve in this capacity, another eligible convention participant may take on the role (Secs. 174.024 and 174.025(b)). Instruction packets on running your precinct convention are provided by RPT prior to the convention. Also see Election Code Chapter 174, Subchapter B.
- SD/County Convention. Precinct Chairmen are encouraged to not only attend their senatorial district/county convention (you must be elected at your precinct convention), but to volunteer to serve on one of the temporary convention committees (contact your County Chairman who makes these appointments).
- State Convention. As grassroots leaders, Precinct Chairmen should try to get elected as delegates to the state convention at their senatorial district/county convention. If you are interested in serving on a temporary convention committee, contact your SREC member who makes recommendations to the state chairman for appointments.

BECOMING A PRECINCT CHAIRMAN

Qualifications to be a Precinct Chairman:

- 1) be a qualified voter in that county (Sec. 161.005)
- 2) be a resident of the precinct (Sec. 171.023)
- 3) not be a county, state, or federal public officeholder or candidate for such office (same), and
- 4) in a general election year, be affiliated with the Republican Party through voting in the Republican primary election or runoff or by oath of affiliation (Sec. 162.001 – 162.012)

Methods for becoming a Precinct Chairman: (Sec.171.022)

Election for two-year term. Candidates for Precinct Chairman run for office in the primary election each even-numbered year. A one-page notarized application must be submitted to the County Chairman within a one-month filing period. Individuals may also run as write-in candidates (Sec. 171.0231). If only one candidate's name is to be placed on the ballot, there will be no election and that person will be elected to office (Sec. 171.0221). If there is more than one candidate, the winner is determined by majority vote of those voting in the Republican primary election.

Appointment to fill vacancy. Any eligible person may be appointed to fill a Precinct Chairman vacancy at any time. Appointment is by majority vote of the County Executive Committee present at a properly called meeting with a quorum, unless otherwise stipulated by the Election Code (171.024-5).

RESIGNING THE OFFICE OF PRECINCT CHAIRMAN

We hope you will serve out your full term as Precinct Chairman. However, some situations make it necessary to leave early:

- *Change of residence.* A Precinct Chair must be a registered voter in that county and a resident of that precinct. Changing either of these creates an automatic vacancy.
- *Loss of voting rights.* Examples would be death or final conviction of a felony.
- *Becoming a candidate or officeholder.* Filing to run for a county, state, or federal office or being appointed to such position means a person may no longer serve as Precinct Chairman (Sec. 161.005). This provision does not apply to service in non-partisan offices (e.g. school board, city council, etc.).

In all cases, please provide a written resignation letter, signed and dated, to your County Chairman, Executive Committee Secretary, County Clerk, RPT Headquarters and the Secretary of State's Office. There is no provision in the Election Code for forced removal from this office.

MAKING THE TRANSITION

If you must resign, make every effort to replace the office so there will not be a vacancy. Once the office has been replaced, please provide the following information to your County Chairman, Executive Committee Secretary, County Clerk, RPT Headquarters and the Secretary of State's Office:

- Your written resignation letter, signed and dated
- A copy of the minutes where the new Precinct Chairman was appointed
- Contact information for the new Precinct Chairman (including name, mailing address, email, phone and fax, if applicable)

Every effort you can make to train and prepare your replacement will be greatly appreciated.

COUNTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (CEC)

The Election Code establishes County Executive Committees to run local political parties. The County Executive Committee consists of the County Chair, Precinct Chairs, and officers appointed by the County Chairman. The Election Code permits only County Chairmen and Precinct Chairmen to vote on election code business. Officers may or may not be Precinct Chairs.

General statements concerning the operation of a County Executive Committee are difficult to formulate due to the extreme differences between counties in population, demographics, and party strength. However, a few words of advice are common to all.

Every county Party should adopt and follow written bylaws to govern its organization and procedures. A copy of model bylaws is included in this manual. Variations should be considered in order to adjust details to meet local needs.

The key to an effective County Executive Committee is the committee system. Not every county Party will need a committee for every purpose; however, committees that organize, fill Precinct Chairman vacancies, recruit and assist candidates, and provide funding for Party operations are essential.

Committees should perform most of the study and deliberation involved in their area of responsibility and make recommendations for approval by the County Executive Committee. Each committee should meet at least once between meetings of the County Executive Committee, and the chairman of each committee should present a report of the activities of his/her committee to the Executive Committee. Questions by Executive Committee members should be addressed to the chairman of the respective committee. A well-functioning committee system should result in relatively short and effective meetings of the County Executive Committee.

Accountability should be maintained. Non-attending or non-contributing members of a committee should be replaced. Ineffective committee chairmen should be counseled by the County Chairman and, if necessary, replaced. Responsibilities should be clearly defined, understood, and followed if the committee system is to function properly.

The County Executive Committee should meet quarterly at a minimum. Meetings should include a report from the County Chairman; reports from committee chairmen; brief reports from representatives of Republican clubs; remarks by any Republican officials or candidates in attendance; adoption of any action or appointments as required by the bylaws; and any new business items.

A social hour before or after the Executive Committee meeting is often an enjoyable and constructive event, facilitating informal discussion of business and the establishment of good working relationships among Party volunteers.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS OF THE CEC

Executive committee members are to spend most of their time promoting the Republican Party and working to elect Republican candidates to office. However, the Election Code does mandate certain other responsibilities.

Overseeing Primary Election

The county executive committee is to oversee conduct of the primary election and primary runoff election (Sec. 172.111(b)). A primary elections administrator and staff may be hired and paid with state government funds. The county executive committee is to approve polling places for consolidate precincts (43.003), voting systems to be used (123.001(b)), primary election judges (Sec. 32.006). It is also in charge of preparing the ballot (172.081 et. seq.)

Conducting Conventions

Every two years, executive committee members are to set the time for their precinct conventions and time and location for their county/senatorial district conventions (Secs. 174.022 & 174.063). Incumbent Precinct Chairmen call to order the Precinct Convention (174.025).

Filling Vacancies on the County Executive Committee

Any time there is a vacancy in the office of County Chairman or Precinct Chairman, it is the responsibility of the executive committee to appoint someone to fill the vacancy. Appointment is by majority vote of executive committee members attending a properly called meeting at which a quorum is present. The person appointed serves until the end of the executive committee's term. (Sec. 171.024-5).

Making a replacement nomination

Following a primary election, it sometimes happens that a nominee of the Republican Party dies, becomes incapacitated, or is ruled ineligible to serve. Depending on the circumstances, it may be the duty of the county executive committee to appoint a replacement nominee. Members eligible to make the replacement nomination are determined by the type of district affected. (Section 145.036)

Office extending into two or more counties -- the County Chairman and Precinct Chairmen of each county, or part of the county, covered by the race

Office covering only one entire county -- the County Chairman and all Precinct Chairmen

Office covering a portion of one county -- the Precinct Chairmen in that part of the county

Making a special election nomination

Following a primary election, it sometimes happens that an incumbent officeholder, whose office is not to be on the ballot that year, leaves office (voluntarily or involuntarily). Depending on the circumstances, it may be the duty of the county executive committee to appoint a Republican nominee to run in the November special election. Members eligible to make a special election nomination are the same as in the section above for making a replacement nomination. (Sec. 202.006)

ORGANIZING YOUR PRECINCT

Recruit volunteers to help you work your precinct.

The precinct is the smallest political unit of registered voters. Many elections in the past have been won or lost by less than one vote per precinct. However, most elections can be won with effective precinct work – it is a proven fact! In order for your work to be most effective, you must have a strong organization within your precinct.

Most precincts contain too many voters to organize a whole precinct by yourself. You will likely need several volunteers to assist. The goals of your volunteers are the same as yours – canvassing voters, registering voters, getting-out-the vote, etc. All the information gained from these activities should be reported back up the chain to the Precinct Chairman, so you can maintain data for your entire precinct.

PRECINCT ORGANIZATION CHART

Below is a suggested Precinct Organization Chart. This method of organization has proved ideal in many precincts, but as Precinct Chairman, you know your precinct best. You may tailor this chart to fit your precinct's geography, needs, and availability of volunteers. You may also have volunteers who do not commit to the position of Block Worker or Precinct Captain, but help as they are available.

Precinct Chairman

You are the central manager of the entire precinct.

Neighborhood Captains (3-5 per Precinct)

Break your precinct down into its major sub-divisions or neighborhoods. Choose your most capable volunteers to serve as Neighborhood Captains and manage each of these divisions. Neighborhood Captains report directly to the Precinct Chairman.

Block Captains (3-5 per sub-division or neighborhood)

Break your sub-divisions and neighborhoods down into blocks. Assign (or have your Neighborhood Captains assign) Block Captains to one or a few blocks each. Block Captains report directly to their Neighborhood Captain.

Voters

Voters are the target of each member of the precinct organization. Reach voters in order to get to know them, register them to vote if they are not already, inform them about candidates and issues, get them out to vote, or help volunteer!

RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS

The most logical place to start recruiting volunteers is with those closest to you – family, friends and close neighbors. Then spread your net a little wider to your church, community and service clubs, PTA, exercise class, retirees and students. (Often times, high school and college Government/Political Science teachers are willing to give their students extra credit for volunteering with a political party.)

You will be surprised at the number of people who want to help, but they just don't know how to get started. That is your job; to ask them to help, to make them feel welcome and important, and to teach them how to do their job. **The #1 reason people don't volunteer is because no one ever asked them.**

As you will read in the next section, identifying and canvassing the voters in your precinct will help you learn who will vote Republican. But it is also a great way to learn who you can recruit to be part of your precinct team. Find out who you can count on to go door-to-door, make phone calls, distribute yard signs, put bumper stickers on their vehicle, or contribute money to the county party.

CANVASSING THE VOTERS

Identifying voters and recording that information is called “canvassing”. Whenever you meet someone in your neighborhood, be sure to keep notes about their political affiliation and interests. You can also organize “block walks” or “phone banks” in your precinct to gather this information (these efforts are covered under “GOTV” but can be adapted for identifying voters). Using a canvass sheet is a great way to keep temporary notes until you are able to enter that information into a computer system. Two important places to enter this data on the computer are Voter Vault and your own electronic spreadsheet. Here is a sample script for you and your precinct workers to use when meeting people:

- a. “Good morning/afternoon/evening, my name is _____. We’re taking a survey in our neighborhood. Do you have a few moments to help me complete my information? Do you plan to vote for (*Republican Candidate*) for Governor?”
- b. If the person answers “no”, thank them politely and leave.
- c. If the answer is “yes”, ask if they are registered to vote. If not, give them a voter registration card.
- d. 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.
- e. Complete the information on your canvass sheet or card.
- f. When finished, thank them and move on. Do not take more than 5 minutes at a residence.
- g. Keep going back until you have contacted every family in your area.

You will also use canvass sheets when block walking and phone banking for GOTV (discussed later in this handbook). Canvass sheets should be customized for those needs. But here is a sample canvass sheet for initial meetings with people in your precincts (or to record information you already know about people):

SAMPLE CANVASS SHEET

Date canvass completed: _____ Pct. _____

Area covered within precinct: _____
 (sub-division, neighborhood or particular block(s))

Volunteer's Name: _____

Block Worker's Name: _____

Precinct Captain's name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

(with sample data)

ADDRESS	HOUSEHOLD	RESIDENTS FIRST NAMES	R	D	I	U	Reg?	Vol?	Yard	Stick	Comments
1234 Oak St.	Jones	Joe (husband)	x				Y		x		prop. tax issues
1234 Oak St.		Susan (wife)		x			Y		x		veteran
1234 Oak St.		Susie (daughter)				x		walk			student , age 15
1242 Oak St.	Smith	Bill (single)	x				N			x	gave reg. card
526 Reed Rd.	Wilson	Betty (widowed)	x				Y	phones			disabled / pro-life

R = Republican D = Democrat I = Independent U= Undecided (or "Swing")
 Reg? = Are they registered to vote? Vol? = Are they willing to volunteer?

In accordance with the Precinct Organization Chart suggested earlier in this manual, Block Captains should provide copies of their canvass sheets to their Neighborhood Captains, and Neighborhood Captains should provide copies of their canvass sheets and their Block Captains' canvass sheets to the Precinct Chairman- so that all the information ends up in one place where it can be organized and maintained.

MAINTAINING RECORDS

The Precinct Chairman is responsible for maintaining an up-to-date permanent record of information on voters in the precinct.

Voter Vault

The first place you want to enter voter information is in Voter Vault, the Master Texas Voter File. Voter Vault is a product of the Republican National Committee, but is administered by one person in each state. You may contact the Texas Voter Vault Director at RPT HQ and request access to the voter file for your precinct, and instructions on how to log-in. Voter Vault training sessions are available upon request. Questions at any time can be directed to the Texas Voter Vault Director or to the Voter Vault Help Desk at 206-284-3456.

Electronic Spreadsheets

The easiest way to keep track of your precinct's registered voters is to maintain a computerized database. Microsoft Excel© is an excellent program for creating and maintaining data in a spreadsheet. Excel provides the spreadsheet template, and you simply create fields (columns or rows) and enter the data by clicking on a box ("cell") and typing as normal. You can create fields that match your canvass sheets exactly. You can also combine data collected from canvassing and data available in Voter Vault if you like. Here is a sample spreadsheet:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	ST. #	ST. NAME	AGE	VOTE	OCC.	VOTE BY MAIL	YARD SIGN	BUMP. STICK.	VOL	COMMENTS
Jones	Julia	1003	Oak St.	48	RPV	secretary	N	N	Y	Y	phonebank
Jones	Randy	1003	Oak St.	52	--	plumber	N	N	N		
Smith	Cecilia	4828	Cedar St.	19	--	student	Y			N	out of town
Smith	Mary	4828	Cedar St.	43	RPV	CPA	N	Y	Y	Y	mailings
Smith	Tom	4828	Cedar St.	44	RPV	banker	N	Y	Y	N	donates \$
Telez	Margaret	1116	Elm St.	65	RPV	retired	Y	Y	N	N	
Telez	Xavier	1116	Elm St.	67	RPV	retired	Y	Y	N	Y	distribute lit.
Thomas	Bill	1276	Elm St.	40	DPV	lawyer					
Thomas	Deborah	1276	Elm St.	38	DPV	teacher					

Entering your information in a program like this will enable the data to be easily sorted by any column depending on particular needs. For example:

- sorting on Column F will produce a list of all Republican primary voters (RPV) which can be used for inviting them to events and for GOTV efforts.
- sorting on Column J will produce a list of those willing to put bumper stickers on their vehicle so that stickers may be distributed.
- sorting on Column C and then D will produce a list of houses that can be walked in numerical order by street.

Maintaining a column such as G ("OCC") on the occupations of voters will enable you to better know those in your precinct, how much time and at what time of day or night they may be able to volunteer for projects, and learn about which campaigns may be of special interest to them (e.g. a lawyer is likely to be very interested in judicial candidates and candidates for Attorney General).

Reserve a column such as L (“Comments”) to enter miscellaneous information that will help you better know your voters.

Columns can also be easily added at any time in an Excel spreadsheet to include additional data as needs arise to benefit the county party and local campaigns. Rows may also be deleted at any time if information on a particular person will no longer be needed (e.g. if someone moves away).

It is also imperative that you backup any and all of your data files on your computer. Anyone can experience data loss, and chances are good at some point, you will. It is easy to accidentally delete a file; encounter a quirk in a program that results in a “fatal” software error; or you could even fall victim to a hard drive crash and lose everything. Losing all of your data could definitely cause major problems especially if it takes place days or weeks before the election, but by backing up your data, these major problems simply become minor annoyances. There are numerous ways to backup data, but the easiest is by using a CD burner to create a back up disk, or an external hard drive or memory stick. Once you have a way of backing up your data, schedule a regular time (daily, weekly, or monthly) to protect all of your important files.

It takes considerable time to assemble a good database. Therefore, it is vital to turn these computer files over to your successor or to the County Chairman when leaving office.

UTILIZING THE DATA

Once you have collected and saved your data- use it! Be sure to let campaigns know what households want yard signs, bumper stickers or campaign literature (or offer to pick it up and distribute it for them). Follow up with anyone who requested a voter registration card or needed extra time to fill it out. Put those to work who said they would be willing to volunteer- whether as a block worker, precinct captain, phone banker, etc. Inform the county party if you find any possible donors. Keep in touch with “undecided” voters who you might be able to persuade to vote Republican. All the information you have canvassed is incredibly valuable to Republican campaigns in your county and in the state.

GOTV **“Get-Out-The-Vote”**

GOTV efforts happen right before and during the Early Voting period and especially during the 72-hour count-down period before and on Election Day. The two most common GOTV efforts are block walking and phone banking.

BLOCK WALKING

Block walking is the most effective form of volunteer voter contact. It can take up several hours of your day, but gives voters the opportunity to connect with you face-to-face and ask questions. Voters are often times impressed that you took the time to come visit them in person.

Block walking involves organizing a group, or several groups, to walk door-to-door and remind Republican voters to vote (don't remind Democrats to vote!). Block walks usually happen right before and during the early voting period, during the 72-hour count-down period before Election Day, and on Election Day before the polls close. (Block walking can also be useful for canvassing voters, as mentioned earlier in this handbook).

Many times local campaigns or county parties will arrange block walks and just ask you to recruit volunteers and be a part of it. However, there is no reason you cannot take the initiative to host one on your own. This is a perfect example where the Precinct Organization Chart, (see “Organizing Your Precinct” section) can be of great help. If you can divide up your precinct into neighborhoods, and then blocks, with volunteers to cover each section, you've got your ground covered. You may join up with other precincts if you like, especially if there are targeted races which cover a few precincts.

Arrange one central location and a time for everyone to meet before and after the walk. You can arrange shifts if you like- two hour increments are usually appropriate. Assign walk leaders (preferably Precinct Captains or other experience participants who know your precinct well) to lead each group. You will need to put together a walk packet for each walk leader. Walk packets should be provided on a clip board with pen and need to include:

- **List of targeted Republican addresses and maps to those houses**
(The easiest way to do this is through Voter Vault which has the ability to pull an organized list with maps for you, according to those you have flagged as Republicans. The other option is to do this individually via your canvass records. Organize the addresses into the appropriate blocks and perhaps print maps yourself from online sources such as MapQuest, Yahoo! Maps or Google Maps.)
- **Canvass sheet to record any new information you find out about these voters**
(You can use the model provided earlier in this handbook and customize it for a block walk, or Voter Vault can create canvass sheets specifically for the walk sheets you pull). Include Name and Phone Number. Were they home or did you leave literature at their door? Have the people voted yet? Will they vote for your candidate? Include a space for additional comments.).

Have cars available to drive each group to their walk locations. Consider providing water, coffee and snacks before and after the walk.

Literature with polling locations and times is an excellent item to distribute to voters when walking. Many times local campaigns or your local election office will have items like these. Otherwise consider creating some yourself (you can get polling locations and times from your County Chairman or local elections office). Only distribute these items by hand to the voter or leave it at their doorstep; never put it in their mailbox- this is illegal.

Here is a sample script for your walkers to use when speaking to voters at the door:

Walk Volunteer:	“Hello, Mr./Ms. _____. My name is _____, and I am a volunteer for (<i>candidate’s name or county party</i>). I am stopping by to remind you to vote in the _____ election on (<i>dates and times</i>). Your polling location is _____.” (Hand them literature.)
Voter:	“Thank you.”
Walk Volunteer:	“Will you need a ride to the polls?” (see Note below)
Voter:	“Yes” or “No”.
Walk Volunteer:	“If you need a ride, we’ll be glad to have someone call you and make arrangements.”
Voter:	“Thank you.”
Walk Volunteer:	“Thank you for your support and have a great day.”

NOTE: Communicate with the local party or local campaigns about possibilities for rides to the polls before offering this.

Be prepared to answer basic questions about the candidate(s) or issues you are supporting, or being a Republican in general. If voters ask questions you cannot answer, direct them to particular campaigns or to the county party or local election office.

The Precinct Chairman (or the organization in charge of the block walk) should receive all the canvass sheets filled out during the walk. Reviewing this data can inform you who you can stop visiting (wrong addresses, those who have already voted, or those who will not be supporting your candidate) or who to visit again during your next block walk (anyone who was not home or who has not voted yet). You may also learn other information like who may be interested in helping your cause in other ways than voting (they may ask for a yard sign or to walk with you next time).

PHONE BANKING

Studies have repeatedly shown that having an informed, motivated volunteer talking with fellow voters over the phone is very effective for reaching many voters in a short amount of time. It’s great for those who don’t want to walk or don’t feel comfortable on the computer, and they can come and go on their own time.

Phone banking involves having a group of volunteers scheduled to arrive at a particular place where phones are set up (either hard lines or mobile phones) and call lists and phone scripts are available. Many times local campaigns or county parties will arrange these and just ask you to recruit volunteers and be a part of it. However, there is no reason you cannot take the initiative to host one on your own (as mentioned earlier in this handbook, phone banking can be a great way for you to canvass voters). This will take a few people from your precinct team to prepare and at least one to oversee the activity and be available to answer questions. You may join up with other precincts if you like, especially if there are targeted races which cover a few precincts.

Possible phone bank locations are county party headquarters, campaign headquarters, or local (non-corporate) businesses. Try to use a place that has easy access and parking for volunteers. Avoid having volunteers making calls from home if possible.

Depending on the space you are using, hard lines may be accessible. Mobile phones can often be borrowed from local campaigns.

The best place to pull call lists is from Voter Vault or from your own canvassing records. You only want to pull names and phone numbers of those voters that have been identified as Republican voters. Divide the call list up among your volunteers. Create canvassing sheets (using model provided earlier in this handbook, or Voter Vault Voter Vault can create canvass sheets specifically for the call lists you pull) for them to record the results of each call. (Include Name and Phone Number. Did they answer or did you reach a voicemail box? Have the people voted yet? Will they vote for your candidate? Include a space for additional comments.).

Below is a sample phone script for your volunteers to use. Customize this to the election or campaign to which you are referring, and to whether you are calling during Early Voting or the 72-hour period.

Phone Volunteer:	“Hello, Mr./Ms. _____. My name is _____, and I am a volunteer for (<u><i>candidate’s name or county party</i></u>). I am calling to remind you to vote in the _____ election on (<i>dates and times</i>). Your polling location is _____.” (See Note below)
Voter:	“Thank you.”
Phone Volunteer:	“Will you need a ride to the polls?” (see Note below)
Voter:	“Yes” or “No”.
Phone Volunteer:	“If you need a ride, we’ll be glad to have someone call you and make arrangements.”
Voter:	“Thank you.”
Phone Volunteer:	“Thank you for your support and have a great day.”

NOTE: You can obtain polling locations from your county chairman or local elections office. Communicate with the local party or local campaigns about possibilities for rides to the polls before offering this.

Be prepared to answer basic questions about the candidate(s) or issues you are supporting, or being a Republican in general. If voters ask questions you cannot answer, direct them to particular campaigns or to the county party or local election office.

The Precinct Chairman (or the organization in charge of the phone bank) should receive all the canvass sheets filled out during the phone bank. Reviewing this data can inform you who you can stop making phone calls to (wrong phone numbers, those who have already voted, or those who will not be supporting your candidate) or who to call again during your next phone bank session (anyone you did not reach or who has not voted yet). You may also learn other information like who may be interested in helping your cause in other ways than voting (they may ask for a yard sign or to come make calls with you next time).

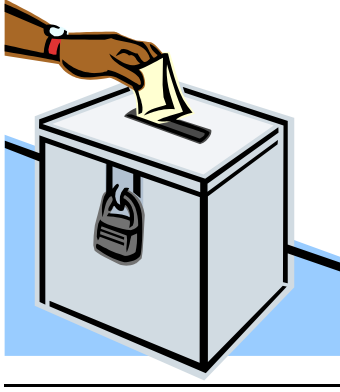
Early Voting vs. 72-Hours

The main difference between communicating with voters during the Early Voting period and the 72-hour period is urgency. During the Early Voting period, voters usually have one to two weeks to get to any of the nearby polling locations. During the 72-hour period, voters only have one day and one location left where they can make their voice heard. Remember to incorporate this into any scripts you use for your block walkers or phone bankers.

THANK YOUR VOLUNTEERS!!!

Be sure to thank your volunteers in person or in writing for their sacrifice of time and resources. Invite them to victory celebrations that campaigns may be putting on, or host one yourself. Without volunteers, the work cannot get done. We hope that volunteers will continue to be involved in future efforts.





VOTING REQUIREMENTS

Keep this information in mind or on hand when encouraging voter registration.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR VOTING (Texas Election Code Section 13.001-13.002):

1. You must be a citizen of the United States.
2. You must be at least 18 years of age on the day of the election.
3. You must be a resident of the county.
4. You must not be a convicted felon (unless the sentence is complete).
5. You must not be declared mentally incapacitated by a court of law.
6. You must be registered to vote.

HOW TO REGISTER TO VOTE (Texas Election Code Section 13.001-13.002):

1. Complete a voter registration application available at any government office and mail or present it in person to your county Voter Registrar's office.
2. Complete a voter registration application and give it to a Deputy Voter Registrar to deliver to your county Voter Registrar's office.
3. A person may register to vote at any time, but the application must be received by the Voter Registrar at least 30 days before an election in order to vote in that election.
4. A person may register to vote at 17 years and 10 months of age, but may not vote until age 18.

HOW TO VOTE EARLY BY MAIL (Texas Election Code Section 84.001-84.002):

1. Send a request for a mail-in ballot to your county Early Voting Clerk by mail.
2. The application must be in writing and signed by the applicant. It must have the name of the applicant, the address at which the applicant is registered to vote, the address to which the ballot is to be mailed, for which election the application is being made, and the reason for needing to vote by mail (out of town during entire voting period, over age 65, disabled, or sick). Using an official form is not required.
3. Upon approval, a ballot will be mailed to you with instructions on how to mail the completed ballot back.

RESOURCES FOR THE PRECINCT CHAIRMAN

Do not hesitate to utilize the many resources that are available to you!

County Party Staff and Officers

If your county party has a headquarters staff, they will be the best resource to answer questions about local issues. If your county executive committee has elected officers, they may be good resources for specific inquiries like attaining copies of minutes (Secretary), questions about funds (Treasurer) or legal questions (General Counsel).

Republican Party of Texas Staff

If you have questions regarding statewide issues, RPT staff is available during regular business hours, Monday through Friday. RPT Headquarters is located at 900 Congress, Suite 300 in Austin, Texas, 78701 and the phone number is 512-477-9821. RPT is available to hold Campaign, Grassroots/Activist, Communications and Voter Vault trainings in your area upon request.

www.texasgop.org

The RPT website hosts a wealth of information on party news and activities, as well as contact information for elected officials and party leadership organizations. Other resources include RPT Rules, RPT Platform, the Party Structure and the Convention Process. Visiting and directing others to our website is a great way to stay informed.

Voter Vault

Voter Vault is a system designed by the Republican National committee and updated by the RPT to assist grassroots leaders and candidates in contacting voters. The system allows you to access information on registered voters in your area and also to identify voters you have met by Party and issue affiliations. You can request access forms from RPT Headquarters. See more information under “Maintaining Records” section.

State Republican Executive Committee (SREC)

Each state senate district is represented by one man and one woman who oversee the Party organization in that area. They are volunteers who can assist your county party in many ways with personal, hands-on attention. Their contact information is available at www.texasgop.org under “Leadership”.

Texas Legislative Council (TLC) – District Maps

TLC serves the Texas Legislature and legislative agencies, but also serves as an information resource for state agencies and the citizens of Texas. You may view and print election district maps from their website, www.tlc.state.tx.us, or contact them at (512) 463-1155 to order detailed maps of your precinct.

Local County Election Office – Local Precinct Maps and Voter Lists

Your local county election office can provide you with detailed maps of your precinct and the most recent list of registered voters for your county.

Also see “Governing Documents” section.

TOOLS OF THE PRECINCT CHAIRMAN

These items are good to have on hand throughout the year:

Republican Platform. All good Republicans should know what they believe. Copies of the Republican State Party platform are available at www.texasgop.org (under “GOP Resources”).

Democrat Platform. All good Republicans know what they **don’t** believe. Copies of the Democrat State Party platform are available at www.txdemocrats.org (at date of publish, under “Issues”).

Precinct Convention attendance list. Voters who attend their precinct convention are a prime source for volunteer recruitment.

Voter Registration Cards and Change of Address Cards. Always be ready to register a Republican to vote by becoming a Deputy Voter Registrar (DVR). DVRs take a simple oath from the county Voter Registrar and are then allowed to accept a completed voter registration application card from a new voter and take it to the Voter Registrar.

Historical General Election Results by Precinct. This can be found on the Secretary of State’s website at www.sos.state.tx.us/elections (search “Election Results”) or through your local elections office. By keeping track of this data over several election cycles, it can be determined if the precinct is improving for Republicans, declining in strength, or staying the same.

These items are particularly important during the election season:

Canvassing Sheets. Use these to keep notes when you meet new people or walk your neighborhood. A sample canvass sheet is found in this handbook.

Sample Ballot. Get acquainted early with the races on your ballot. It will surprise you how many people do not know the offices for which they can vote.

Poll Locations list. Voters frequently do not know where they can go vote (and it is common for locations to change). Contact your County Chairman or local elections office for this list.

Candidate contact list. This list should include each candidate’s name and the contact information for their campaign office. This will be useful for you and also to direct people in your precinct who have questions or are interesting in certain issues. They may also want to volunteer for the campaign.

Applications for Ballot by Mail. You will encounter people who say they will support Republican candidates but will be away on Election Day and during the early voting period. Also, anyone who is 65 years of age or older on Election Day is eligible for early voting by mail. By providing these people with a mail-in application, you will gain a vote that likely would not otherwise be cast. You can get these from your local elections office.

GLOSSARY OF POLITICAL TERMS

These are terms either used in this handbook, or that you may hear used by campaigns or other field workers.

BALLOT INTEGRITY – Ballot integrity efforts are those which ensure that proper voting rules and procedures are maintained at polling places, in order to prevent fraudulent voting. Ballot integrity committees are often put together at the state and local levels, and send volunteers to monitor polling places.

BENCHMARK POLL – Conducted early in a campaign to establish name identification, determine areas of demographic strength (and weakness) and identify key issues to be emphasized throughout the effort. This is usually the largest poll of the campaign and will also have the first “ballot test.”

BLOCKWALK – Form of voter contact where supporters are organized and go door-to-door in precincts to visit with voters, collect information about their beliefs and advocate for a candidate or political party. This is considered one of the most effective forms of voter contact when done using informed, enthusiastic volunteers. Some campaigns may hire paid walkers in order to cover more ground, but this should be done only when volunteer resources are not sufficient.

BRUSHFIRE POLL – Conducted in the middle of a campaign to determine progress in establishing name identification and any movement in the ballot test. It is also an opportunity to spot check any new issues that may have arisen.

CAMPAIGN MANAGER – Campaign managers are appointed by political candidates to manage their campaigns. The campaign manager has responsibility for the smooth functioning of the candidate’s campaign, leaving the candidate free to run for election, instead of seeing to the details of his/her campaign. Specific responsibilities include: keeping the campaign on track and on plan; management of finances; recruiting volunteers; productions and distribution of campaign literature and ads; scheduling appearances and events; fundraising; and providing the candidate with pertinent information on issues.

CAMPAIGN PLAN – The most important document a campaign creates detailing the strategy, structure, message, budget and timeline. It is the roadmap to victory and keeps the campaign accountable and on track.

CAUCUS – For our Party’s purposes, a caucus is a convention meeting. At the State Convention, delegates caucus by Senatorial District to elect the permanent members of the different convention committees; to elect a State Committeeman and State Committeewoman; and to recommend a man and a woman for State Chairman and State Vice Chairman. In presidential years, delegates also caucus by Congressional District to elect delegates to the National Convention and Presidential Electors, and to nominate a National Committeeman and a National Committeewoman.

COLLATERAL – A term used to describe campaign materials such as push cards, door hangers, signs, bumper stickers, etc. that support the candidate.

COUNTY ELECTION BOARD – A County Election Board is established in each county for the General Election for state and county officers, a Special Election for an officer regularly elected at the General Election, and any other election ordered by a county authority held at county expense. The Board consists of the County Clerk as Chair, County Judge, Voter Registrar, Sheriff, and County Chair of each political party required to nominate candidates by Primary Election. The Election Board appoints the members of the Signature Verification Committee from a list submitted by the County Chairs of the parties holding Primary Elections and approves the procurement of election supplies necessary to conduct elections.

COUNTY ELECTIONS COMMISSION – The County Elections Commission consists of the County Judge as Chair; the County Clerk as Vice Chair; the County Tax-Assessor-Collector as Secretary; and the County Chair of each political party that made nominations by Primary Elections for the last General Election for state and county officers. The Commission is tasked with administering the election. If a county chooses to employ an Elections Administrator, that person is appointed by the Elections Commission.

ELECTION JUDGE, GENERAL ELECTION – At the recommendation of the County Chairman, a voter of the precinct carried by that party’s candidate for Governor in the last general election is appointed by the County Commissioners’ Court to serve for a one or two year term as Election Judge of that precinct. The Election Judge conducts the election within the precinct, selects the election clerk, and maintains the sanctity of the ballot. Because of the high responsibility of the Election Judge, he/she is accorded the powers of a State District Judge while conducting the election.

ELECTION JUDGE, PRIMARY ELECTION – The County Chairman, with approval of the County Executive Committee, appoints the Primary Election Judge for each precinct. The Election Judge of the Primary Election has all the powers and duties of the General Election Judge.

GENERAL ELECTION – General elections are held in even-numbered years for county, state, and federal offices. The elections are held on the first Tuesday following the first Monday in November. Nominees for these positions are chosen the previous spring in Party primaries.

GET-OUT-THE-VOTE (GOTV) – Describes campaign activities during early voting and the final 72-hours of a campaign that focus on turning out all identified supporters through mail, phones, blockwalking, etc.

GRASSROOTS – This is a common term used especially in Republican politics to refer to local party leaders and activists. These leaders are the building blocks of the Party.

GROSS RATING POINT (GRP) - Gross Rating Points measure the total volume of delivery of your message to your target audience. It represents the percentage of the target audience reached by an advertisement.

GUBERNATORIAL – This word means of or relating to a governor. A “gubernatorial election” is the election where the Governor is elected.

MICROTARGETING - MicroTargeting is a new tool for candidates and campaigns that allows them to reach voters with tailored messaging using a combination of consumer data, advanced marketing techniques and traditional political targeting.

NOMINEE – A nominee is the candidate selected by voters in a Republican or Democrat party primary election to seek election in the general election. In Texas, a nominee must receive a majority of votes cast the primary election.

PLATFORM – Platforms are statements of grassroots sentiment and historic party principles. Platforms are adopted at State and National Conventions. At the State Convention, the permanent Platform Committee is charged with recommending the Party Platform to the full Convention for debate, amendment, and ultimate adoption by the delegates.

PRIMARY ELECTION – Primary elections in Texas are organized and conducted by the Republican and Democrat Parties, and are financed by the State of Texas. Texas holds its primaries the second Tuesday in March in even-numbered years. Primary elections determine each party’s nominee for county, state, and national General Elections. A majority of the vote is required to win a Primary election. If no majority is obtained, a primary run-off is held between the two candidates receiving the most votes.

O.R.V.S. – “Optimal Republican Voting Strength”. This is a formula based on past election results to predict how a district will perform for Republican candidates in upcoming elections.

OVERVOTE – A ballot showing the selection of more candidates or choices than are allowed in a given race or referendum.

PHONE BANK – An organized phone center where volunteers gather to make calls to potential voters to identify their political beliefs, advocate for a candidate or party or turn out the vote. Phone banks can be done by a paid vendor or by supporters from home, but they are most effective when done using informed, enthusiastic volunteers at a central location and supervised by the campaign.

PRECINCT (PCT) – The voting precinct is the smallest political subdivision within a county. A secondary use of the word “precinct” refers to the divisions of a county from which the County Commissioners, Justices of the Peace and Constables are elected.

REPUBLICAN – Texas has no voter registration by party preference. A person affiliates with the Republican Party most often by voting in a Republican Primary Election. Voter registration cards are stamped at the Primary Election site to designate in which party’s primary the voter participated. Affiliation may also be accomplished by taking the oath designated in Election Code section 162.007.

SWING VOTER – A voter who does not commit to voting for one Party, but is swayed by different candidates and issues. Each Party works to have these voters “swing” in their direction during elections

TRACKING POLL – These are conducted near the end of the campaign. They will measure the ballot test and determine if the money being spent on media and campaign activities is working and getting the desired effect.

UNDERVOTE – A ballot that has been cast but shows no legally valid selection in a given race or referendum.

UNIVERSE – The group of voters that you are targeting for various mail or grassroots activities when pulling a list from the voter file.

VOLUNTEER DEPUTY VOTER REGISTRAR – A Volunteer Deputy Voter Registrar is a person officially authorized to register people to vote and to deliver signed applications to the County Voter Registration office. A Volunteer Deputy Registrar may never have been convicted of a felony and may work only in the county and only for the year in which he or she is sworn.

72-HOUR TASK FORCE – A program created after Bush vs. Gore, aimed at increasing voter contact during the final 72-hours of the campaign to turn out Republican voters. The term is used in Texas to describe the massive GOTV mobilization of our identified supporters during the two weeks of early voting in addition to the final 72-hours. An effective 72-hour program should be the most intense period of the campaign for grassroots activities and should continue right up until the polls close on Election Day.