



7 Reasons Why Relational Organizing Works

A note from Lindsay Ford, our Associate Director:

Before I started working with The Voter Network, I worked mostly on political campaigns. Statewide, local, federal. Some wins, some losses. Some really gratifying experiences, but also a handful that left me disappointed. It's an open-secret that candidates and campaigns direct most of their resources at people who are regular voters. When you have limited money, it's hard to justify spending it on someone who might not even go to the polls. But then we've created a really crappy loop, where nonvoters don't hear from candidates, even though they're the people who need the information the most. I got involved with the Voter to Voter project to try and solve this. Here are 7 reasons I think it's one of the best, most impactful, and coolest ways you can make a difference in this next election:

The research is on our side.

Your social circle has a lot of influence. If your friends are digging a particular workout/podcast/vacation spot, chances are you're more likely to be into those same things, or at least willing to try them. The same is true for voting. Research shows that voter turnout increases by more than 10% when voters are encouraged by their friends. To put that in context: That's five times more effective than phone banking and canvassing.

The best messenger is . . . you!

Wait, what did you say, Lindsay? Phone banking doesn't work?! Well, it does work, but only on people who already vote. With an engaged voter you are trying to influence someone's established behavior (to vote for a particular candidate maybe), not convince them to adopt a new one. Doing new stuff is hard. But sooo much easier if someone you trust has your back. We talk a lot in political organizing about the "trusted messenger," which is just a fancy term for YOU.

Using data to maximize your time.

The biggest predictor of whether people vote or not is whether somebody reaches out to them, and the biggest predictor of whether somebody reaches out to you is whether you voted before. Whether you vote is public data (but not who you vote for of course). And that data-based targeting is effective. And expensive. And not easily accessible. Which is why we built the Voter to Voter tool. We want you to have that same, powerful data campaigns have, so you can find the people in your own networks who aren't regularly voting. The fact that we give it away for free is not just awesome, it's unprecedented.

Efficient and easy.

Not quite as easy as tagging your friends on Facebook - but that doesn't work to get people out to vote! Participating in Voter to Voter does work, and is likely the most effective thing you can do before November in the least amount of time. Probably just a few hours total. Remember, we just want you to lighten the load for some of your friends. And hopefully you've chosen people you kind of like talking to! We'll send you all the election info you need. We're on call if you have burning questions about voting, and we'll even send you scripts you can use.

You can cut through the noise.

You're not average. If you're reading this I'd probably call you a political nerd, and maybe you even like all this hubbub that comes with election season. Regular voters do not. They're annoyed, confused, and their brains are sapped by all the other BS life has thrown at them. It's your job to make it easy on them. Tell them exactly where to find info on candidates and help them make the (surprisingly tough) decision about when and where to vote. Person to person contact is really the thing that you can't buy. It's the thing that you have to organize. And it's the thing that makes the biggest difference.

Really, really (really) effective.

Remember in the first point, where I mentioned that peer-to-peer organizing could help increase turnout by 10%? Our Voter to Voter Ambassadors have blown that out of the water since we launched this project in 2018. That year we saw 82% turnout among the voters we talked to, compared to 56% statewide. In 2020 it was 91% compared to 71%. You all are stunning.