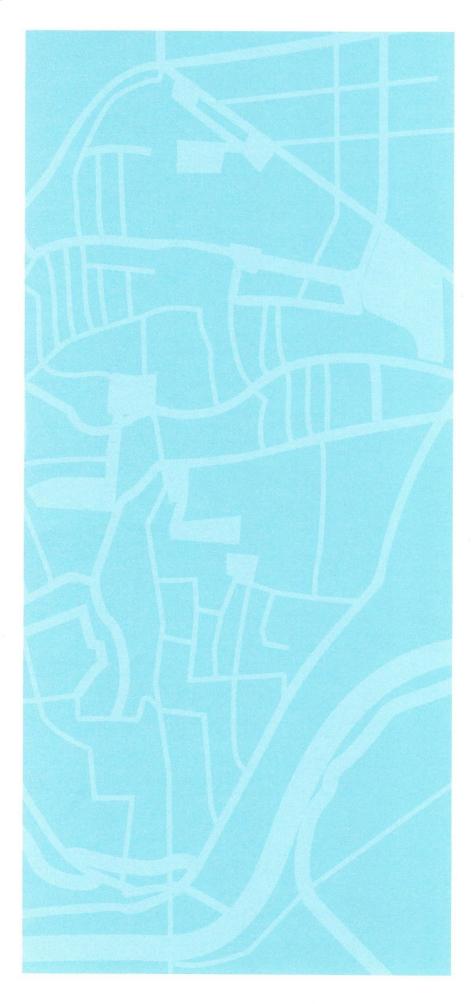
# PRECINCT PROJECT





#### A Quick Word about Terminology

In our national conversation about taking ownership of our parties, terms may differ in your area. The below terms, however, will give you a general framework to operate within.

#### Central Committee (CC)

the party committee that governs a party at the local, county and state level. Sometimes also called the party committee or the party board. Such committees will usually have elected officers such as a chair and a treasurer.

#### Precinct Committeeman (PC)

The actual title may vary from alderman to precinct captain to ward captain to neighborhood coordinator. For our use, we can apply the term to anyone who serves a party at any level, but beginning at the grassroots level. Precinct committeemen are powerful because they, unlike registered voters of a party, are authorized to vote for a party's officers.



## Imagine a national movement of local conservative leaders and activists dedicated to limited government and free market principles.

Imagine a national network of informed citizens working to see our country returned to her foundation of small government: not only passionate about being involved, but equipped with the tools to be as effective as possible.

It's not that hard to imagine an army of tens of thousands of citizens who actually govern their parties to their own requirements and satisfaction... if you know where to get started.

Imagine belonging to a party that satisfies your requirements in both the candidates selected and its criticism of other parties or candidates.

Imagine a party strong enough to hold out for legislative action that does not betray your core principles.

Our parties are governed the same way that our country is governed: **by the people**. The grassroots elects representatives who govern and represent our parties at the precinct, local, county, state, and national levels.

If you are one of those "by the people," then you have a strong voice in party governance.

The current tragedy is the fact that nationwide, half or more of the hundreds of thousands of voting seats that govern our parties are empty. Unoccupied. Vacant.

Knowing this, it's no surprise that we frequently find party officials criticizing politicians popularly elected in our primaries, and politicians who seldom stand up for core values in legislative sessions and caucuses.

The remedy, of course, is to fill those empty seats that vote to govern our parties with people that share our ideology. In state after state where this has been tried, states have found themselves with parties being governed by more suitable servants.

The Madison Project works to integrate the ideals of freedom into real world success by building a network of people grounded in conservative ideals. We then help them implement these ideals into all areas of society. This brief guide will give you a starting point, as a concerned, active, and knowledgeable citizen, to become involved in the process. For more resources, go to www. PrecinctProject.us and www.MadisonProject.com. Knowledge is power and we believe that advancing liberty depends on engaging citizens just like you.

Our hope is that you will take what we offer and implement it in your community and your state. We believe that effective activism is the key to change in our republic.



### Part One: Why Become a Precinct Committeeman?



#### The short answer: to directly govern a party to your own satisfaction.

You may have had the experience of electing a qualified candidate in your primary, only to discover to your horror that your party officials refused to endorse or support your candidate. These party officials can be replaced (and have been in many instances) if you are simply present to help govern your party, select its leaders, and then hold them accountable.

Perhaps you have heard of legislative leaders in Congress who do not demonstrate enough courage or commitment to core party principles and bargain away essential values in legislative negotiations. Perhaps you are dissatisfied with the quality of candidates your current party officials have endorsed to run for office. Perhaps you know of party corruption within the ranks of your local, county, or state party.

The remedy for all the shortcomings outlined above is to contribute to the governance of your local party and be present to vote on your party's policies and officers. And, as of right now, there are probably plenty of vacant slots, because most political parties in America are hollow shells of their former selves.

Why are the parties not conservative enough? Simple. There are not enough conservatives participating within the party as precinct committeemen.

The office of precinct committeeman has been called "the most powerful political office in the world" because the PC is the structured political officeholder closest to the registered voter. A registered voter has no vote in internal party policy; a precinct committeeman does.



A PC elects district, county, state party officers, party members and in most states, delegates to Presidential conventions. PCs sent to the Party's Presidential Nominating Convention vote on what policies the party platform will advocate in the next two years.

PCs also interact with their elected party officials to influence legislation.

However, as important as precinct chairs are, half or more of the voting seats governing your party may currently be empty. Many new precinct committeemen simply walk into their county meeting, ask to get involved, and leave the same evening seated with a vote. A few even leave their initial meeting as a district chair or even as the new county chair!

If we do not make a concerted effort to take over our parties, then we can certainly expect to keep getting what we presently have in the way of party governance.

But how much time does it take? Like many activities, you can get acquainted with and participate in the process by devoting only 2-3 hours per month. (You can certainly contribute more if you wish!)

A better way to ask the question is: how many hours of effort a month is my country worth?

Once you become a precinct committeeman, you become a genuine party official.

#### Information to Train the Trainers

#### Who should I recruit to become a PC?

Anyone who has an energetic and/or strong opinion and realizes that the party of his/her choice is not serving our conservative principles, either locally or nationally.

#### What objections will I need to be prepared to overcome?

Principally, there are two objections to folks becoming precinct chairs:

- 1. I don't have enough time!
- 2. I don't want to participate in the mud pit of party politics!

When those two objections arise, you need to remind people: a few hours a month to save our country is worth it. And if party politics is a mud pit, it's because good people like them are not engaged in the process.

#### How to Become a Precinct Committeeman

As a PC, you can devote as much or as little time to other PC tasks such as helping to get out the vote (GOTV) on election day (for more on Precinct Work, GOTV and other practical tasks a precinct chair can engage in, please go to <a href="https://www.PrecinctProject.us">www.PrecinctProject.us</a>) and informing the voters in your precinct about the best candidates, how best to vote on initiatives, etc.

**Politics matters.** Look at the outcome of the 2008 and 2012 presidential elections. Consider where the Republican Party is today. To be able to vote for the party leadership, a registered voter must be a PC. It's that simple.

#### Step-by-step Instructions for Finding Your Local Party Legislative District Organization

Your primary goals will be finding out the location of your party legislative district organization meetings and then contacting the chairman of that organization to let him/her know you want to become a precinct committeeman as soon as possible.



A simple Google search using the terms: [name of party] party county chairman of [name of your county] [name of your state] should do the trick. If that does not work, then "start at the top and drill down." Go to your party's national web site, find your state office, and from there your local offices. **Every state is unique, so websites will vary**. Persevere in locating your county, your congressional district and

legislative district. Then start calling and e-mailing the elected party leaders near you and tell them that if your precinct chair is vacant, you would like to volunteer as an interim, appointed precinct committeeman as soon as possible and that you eventually want to become an elected precinct committeeman when the primary season rolls around.

Most local parties have a good website with tools for voters to find their legislative district. Some contain a good summary defining the precinct committeeman office and what a precinct committeeman can accomplish on behalf of one's self and the party. Generally, voters can become precinct committeemen in one of two ways and these procedures are set in the state election statutes and state party committee bylaws. In most states, the two ways one can become a precinct committeeman are:

- 1. Election on the primary ballot (same primary ballot with US Congressmen and Senators, for example)
- Selection by caucus which requires you appear physically at a scheduled meeting
- 3. In many states, you can be appointed Acting PC by your local party chairman, typically with a ratifying vote by the local committee



Needless to say, both of these are time-sensitive and you have to calendar these items and meet the required schedule in both cases. The next election or caucus may be up to four years away. That's not good news for getting involved now. Fortunately, a vacancy appointment mechanism exists in most counties and we usually suggest activists take advantage of that NOW. Also, even in the unlikely event that all the positions are currently filled, one can volunteer to attend the meetings and "learn the ropes" until the opportunity to become a voting member of the local party committee occurs.

## Practical Advice for Precinct Committeemen

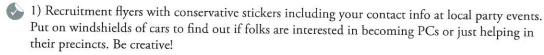
After you become a Precinct Committeeman, you need to create a precinct committeeman caucus for your committee.

*How?* Any way you can. Example: Obtain a PC phone list and cold call all the PCs. Every locale is different. Learning everything you can about the current structure of the party is essential. Read and study the bylaws (read and study the bylaws!)!

Why? To recruit more folks that share your ideology to become PCs. The more of you there are, the more impactful your work will be inside the party structure.



#### **Essential Tools for any Precinct Chair**



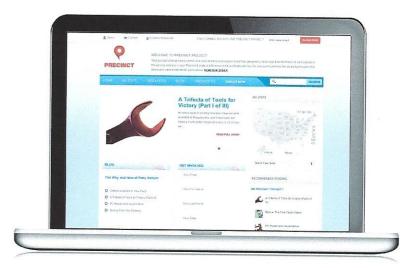
2) Voter registration forms. You want to constantly grow your base: more voters, more folks to turn out on Election Day. Look for events hosted by groups who line up with your ideology and ask if you can set up a voter registration booth or walk the crowd with a clipboard to register voters.

3) Any necessary paperwork required by your party.

**Search Engines Are Your Friends** Before you do anything, find out if it has already been done. Example: Robert's Rules of Order are often used at party meetings. Providing a tutorial for new members will ease the learning process. There are many video tutorials about how to conduct a meeting per Robert's Rules of Order already on YouTube. Instead of creating your own, compile the best few for an easy-to-share guide.

#### **Bottom Line Goals**

Grow your coalition or network and make it effective. You don't want to just occupy space. You want to change things! Learn how to register more voters and get more of them to the polls for your candidate.



For more specific tools, go to PrecinctProject.us.

#### **Part Two: Now What?**

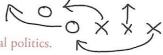


Now that you've become a precinct chair and recruited others to become precinct chairs, now what? Great question!

The GOP is filled with vacant or inactive precinct chairs. You do not want to go down that path.

You want to have a plan, a legitimate game plan, that starts as all plans do: at the beginning. Your #1 goal is to change the actual dynamics of the party's structure from the ground up.





You want to win elections
and that takes place on the ground, in the trenches of electoral politics.

You have to start by putting goals on paper: which election do you want to engage in? What will you need? How many volunteers? How many doors will you need to hit (hint: you won't need to hit all of them to win)?

A few suggestions on where to begin:

- Look up online the election results for your county and precinct. Make sure you look at multiple election cycles (2008, 2010, 2012 for example) but also various levels of elections (municipal, primaries, general elections). Why? You want to establish a baseline number of the votes you will need to win.
- An off year (i.e., not Presidential) election primary gives you the lowest turnout numbers in a precinct. A Presidential general election will give you the highest. And frankly, this second number should always be your goal number to hit or even exceed.
- Somewhere in between those two numbers is the goal number you are shooting for as you begin your endeavor. You can find all this information with a simple Google search to start with and if that doesn't provide the information, either your Secretary of State's or county board of election's website should have the facts you seek.

#### Do not leave this step until you have a firm goal number!



Once you have established your goal number of votes you need to win, map it out. Literally. Every state has district maps. Every county election board has precinct maps. Obtain the maps needed, laminate them and then using dry erase markers, begin marking them up as to which homes you want to leave literature.

Create a pattern. This pattern will take place over a period of months. Here you are hitting all levels of voters: high intensity Republicans, low intensity Republicans and all levels of Independents.

#### Potential Goals for Canvassing:

- · Identify voter preferencesand issues that are important to them. Store that data (take notes) to use for a Get Out The Vote plan.
- Deliver a persuasive message (utilize literature for this)
- · Establish visibility

Which ones do you want to spend the most time with? Oftentimes, in a primary scenario, it's the high intensity Republicans (for our purposes). You aren't simply dropping literature on their doors and moving on. You are having a conversation. You want a two-way communication . Real canvassing allows voters to express concerns and discuss issues. Door-to-door work has the highest impact and leaves the greatest and longest lasting impression on voters.

The next best is live phone banking, but whenever you can, door-to-door contact should be your default method of contacting voters. It will aid your cause to carry a supply of your favorite pamphlet or book that goes into more depth on the issues that are core to conservative principles for those persons who show real interest.



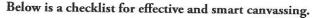
The real importance of the Precinct Strategy is that a PC, as a member of the community, comes back year after year, and is able to invest time in voters that campaigns cannot.

Why collect pertinent data from persons canvassed? For future GOTV efforts. The more you capture, the more efficient and effective your GOTV efforts will be.

The more you accomplish in canvassing and collecting data in the months leading up to an election, the easier your job will be during the last 72 hours prior to the election.

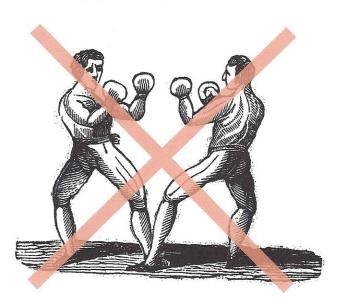
Prepare a script prior to going door to door. Practice in front of a mirror. Keep to the script presenting it with a pleasant countenance and voice inflection. Canvassing scripts should be supplemented with a palm card or piece of literature which identifies your candidate or cause.

Quick Tip: You can't explain the candidate's position on an issue if you don't know it- make sure you know where the candidate stands on a wide range of topics. You will find this information on the candidate's website.



- Work in pairs it's safer and still efficient.
- Determine the optimal time of day to visit the targeted area.
- Be prepared with your script and be comfortable. Be well-dressed and neat.
- Be safe. Do not approach a home that makes you feel uncomfortable.
- Have a good supply of literature and a few yard signs. Do not put anything on or in the mailbox. It is illegal to do so.
- Be polite and greet voters with a smile.
- · Be confident and make good eye contact.

When speaking to voters listen to feedback and make note of the response. If you encounter questions that you can't answer (or a belligerent voter) direct them to the website for more information. Always be polite - explain the candidate's position. DO NOT ARGUE.





When you meet people, create a bond with them - make a quick note of things around their property that you can identify with and use those to relate to them. For example, bumper stickers, specialized license plates, or children's toys. These things can also indicate the voter's connection with certain issues that may draw them toward your candidate. Be careful not to take up too much of their time. Use your common sense and common courtesy to realize when it is time to move on to the next house.





#### SAMPLE: Door-to-Doorand Live Phone BankingScript

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_\_; I'm one of your neighbors. I'm volunteering to pass out campaign literature to help [candidate] in his/her campaign for [office sought]. (Hand them the literature piece).

I'd like to ask you a few questions. It will only take 3 minutes of your time. (Have a minimum of 5 questions to ask the voter and record each answer that will later "pollinate" that voter's profile.)

Did you know that [Candidate first name] is an advocate of limited government who we can trust to make the right decisions in [capitol city/ county/etc.]. He'll/She'll work to cut wasteful spending and balance the budget without raising taxes.

If you'd like more information, you can visit the website listed on the literature. Can we count on your vote on [election date]? Thank you for your time. End with: "Thank you for your vote for [candidate]".

Get Out The Vote (GOTV) Calls: This is a last push during the last 72 hours preceding an election to motivate and remind supporters to vote.

If you have done your homework in the preceding months, you are going to know which voters to turn out and what message to communicate to them (think Message, Motivate, Mobilize-the 3 "Ms" of politics).

The focus of GOTV is to encourage voters who are likely to cast a ballot for the candidate you are supporting to VOTE. Phone calls are a popular way to implement a GOTV drive but any personal contact generates a better turn out on Election Day.

#### SAMPLE: Get Out the Vote (GOTV) Script

Hi. My name is [name] and I'm a volunteer with [campaign].

• Today is Election Day.

Will you be voting for [candidate]? [If YES, thank them, encourage them to vote and move on to your next call]

- Your polling location is [location]. The polls are open until 7 pm tonight.
- This election will be close. We need your vote. Can we count on you?
- Do you need a ride to the polls? (If they accept, confirm their name, address and phone number, and then call it into HQ)
- Thank you for your time.

[If Answering Machine, leave message]

Hi. My name is [name] and I'm a volunteer with [campaign]. Today is Election Day! This election will be close and we are counting on your vote. Your polling location is [location]. The polls are open until 7 pm. [candidate] has the best vision for our country and would appreciate your support. If you need a ride or if you need your absentee ballot to be picked-up, please call us at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.



## Part Three: Effectively Reaching Your Community



Once you have established a goal or purpose and strategically planned how to accomplish it, you need to reach out to the community. Purposely research and contact other like-minded groups to let them know about your organization. Use their networks to your full advantage.



Find good allies. You will be surprised by how few there will be. It will be a question of quantity over quality. Always go with the latter.

Be visible within your community and be accessible. Reaching your community requires involvement and credibility - by building your networks, you learn more about your community and the people that live there. Conduct meetings in local restaurants and coffee shops where others will notice your presence and can easily participate. By increasing your recognition in your community, you will increase your influence and motivate others to join you. Making your group easily accessible to others who seek direction or assistance is a great way to build a solid reputation.

## The Importance of Accountability in a Republic

A brief word on accountability. It is immensely important to be informed about your elected officials and their actions while in office. Yet holding our leaders accountable is a significant component of the government process that is sorely lacking in modern politics. We will be told by party operatives and their friends in the media that when we seek to hold elected officials accountable we are "creating circular firing squads" or "the party will fight when the time is right". These and many more excuses and accusations are used to keep grassroots activists from being involved in the process.

A large part of accountability is having a solid understanding of your position by doing thorough research on the issues. Much of the research can be done online and is easily accessible. Great resources for information on issues and elected officials at the national level are: the Madison Project's blog; Erick Erickson and Red State; the Club for Growth and Heritage Action for America (their legislative scorecard is the best and most accurate one in Washington, DC).

#### Hints on How to Effectively Network:

- Be friendly with anyone and everyone at an event don't just sit there!
- Keep a good record of names and contact information. Stay in contact with those you meet.
- · Follow up with people who contact you.
- Always thank someone who has been helpful or gracious with a note or a call.
- Build relationships with other community leaders and activists.
- Get the word out: In marketing your issues, there are several inexpensive ways to begin – blog, write letters to the editor, contact the appropriate elected official or representative, and/or look into local ballot initiatives and petitions.
- Budgeting and raising money for the group can be easier than you think: hold a fundraising event, call people in your network, and even send out letters to the community to communicate your issue and ask them for support. This is another way that the initial database is an integral part of your effectiveness.



Get to know your legislators and officials: Who are they? Be knowledgeable about each and every level of government: municipal government, county officials, state legislators, other state officials, and national elected officials. Many people who do not know who their elected officials are.



What are your elected officials' backgrounds? Again, pay attention to the resources available on elected officials' or candidates' websites, official government websites and those of organizations like Project Vote Smart.



What does he/she stand for? Look at current issues and note how he/she stood verbally as well as to how he/she actually voted. Research the platform your elected official ran on. Find out his/her specific stances through written legislation or issues he/she pushed. Be certain you know exactly where you stand on the issues and what you are looking for in order to determine how a candidate may represent you.

Keep tabs on your local governing bodies. An effective way to monitor your local school boards, city councils and county commission is to attend their meetings. You will be amazed by how influential you can be by showing up at county commission, school board and city council meetings. When you do attend meetings, take notes and ask questions. When the meeting concludes, send your notes out to your network. This is a very effective way to get the attention of officials who may not realize that their constituents are paying attention to what they are doing.







You can effectively contact your elected officials by calling, emailing, writing, or making an appointment to visit with them at their offices. They live in your neighborhoods and communities and are far more accessible than you might realize. Make sure to be polite and respectful and allow them to do their job in representing you. Do not be shy about discussing your efforts to keep your elected officials accountable with your friends and family to get them interested and to encourage them to be involved as well. Holding your elected leaders accountable is very important and being informed is an essential quality to develop as an activist.

Also keep in mind that you can effectively contact national legislators in D.C. through their local office or by using the email contact system on their official House or Senate website. Remember, most things passed by your elected officials do affect you on some level, so it is vital that you understand what is taking place on all levels of government.

During election season, you can contact the Board of Elections to learn who is running and for what office. During the legislative session, take advantage of legislators' websites and the information they provide. Oftentimes, this is a great way to learn more about them and contact them effectively.

Some situations may lead you to need more in-depth information about government actions. It is important for you to know that information is always available to you and you have rights to access much of the information you need.

· C X O 10 · M. m. There are numerous online resources for researching government activity. Some good places to start are: Your state's official website - information about the state legislative system, as well as links to different departments can be found here. State election information can be found through your state's Board of Elections. Most counties also have a Board of Elections, where you will find information about local elections. Information on national, state and local elections can also be found at www.votesmart.org . A resource for state and local government transparency is www.sunshinereview .org. Information about state laws and transparency can also be found at www.citizenaccess.org. United States' House and Senate information is available at www.house.gov and www.senate.gov. A great source for statewide information on campaign contributions is www.opensecrets.org.

If we are going to win, we have to engage in the process in practical ways. We cannot

sit there and complain that, "No matter what I do, nothing changes in politics" even as we do nothing. We must engage and when we go, we have to have a game plan for victory.

Passion and energy matter. They are the twin engines that drive action. Direction, however, is just as critical. It is our hope that with this manual, your passion and energy will find direction and that direction will change the course of this nation.

