



Doorbelling, sometimes called canvassing, or doorknocking, refers to going door-to-door in a neighborhood to talk about issues important to community members.

Overview:

Doorbelling is a tactic used by a group to organize around an issue important to your group or organization. Doorbelling is commonly done by candidate or issue campaigns because it is the most effective way to connect with community members about an issue, turn people out to vote, and make sure voters and community members have all the information they need. Door to door is generally done in urban neighborhoods where it is easy to walk between doors, and paired with phone banking for more rural neighborhoods where reaching someone by phone will be more efficient.

Goal/Objectives:

The goal of canvassing is to form a connection with someone about your issue and ultimately persuade them to take action. Taking action can be anything from signing a petition, voting for a candidate, volunteering, pledging to vote at all, or donating money to your cause. Canvassing is an extremely effective method to achieve all these actions because you are able to have a personal conversation with that person at their door and be receptive to their questions and concerns. This “human” element often gets lost if you are just handing out flyers, sending mail, or even talking with someone over the phone. These face-to-face conversations can be the most difficult but rewarding conversations to engage in as a volunteer.

Time Required: 2-4 hours

Tips and tricks to doorbelling:

- **Knowledge is key:** Use the information given to you regarding which houses to visit, who you are talking with, and any other relevant information.
- **Introduce and Identify:** Start by introducing yourself, identifying yourself as a volunteer, and letting them know who/what you are volunteering for

- **Ask don't tell:** Ask a question and actively LISTEN to the answer. Use the answer to help guide the conversation
- **Use your story not the script:** Your script provides a great reference but instead of reading off the script, try using your personal story and connect with them on the issue. Check out the Grassroots 101 on storytelling if you need a refresher!
- **Leave Literature or information in their hands:** if you are trying to give them literature or information, make sure to get it in their hands instead of waiting for them to ask. If they aren't home, leave it at their doorstep or tucked in their door.
- **Finish Strong:** end the conversation with a good hard ask and get a commitment to vote, take action, etc.
- **Data or it didn't happen:** Every piece of data helps the campaign or issue you are working on, whether it's how a voter plans to vote to whether the house is now vacant. If it's not written down, it didn't happen.
- **Take a big step back after you knock or ring the doorbell:** you can always step forward again as they open the door and you start to talk, but the goal is not to intimidate them before they open the door
- **Do not leave literature or information in mailboxes:** this is illegal. Instead, tuck in under a doormat, or in door if they are not home and you want to leave something for them.
- **Play the volunteer card:** It's okay to not know every answer and every issue when you are out doorbelling. Never lie – just say you don't know and offer to follow up with the information they've asked for. Make sure to get a phone number or email!
- **Be Comfortable and Safe!** Be aware of surroundings; don't go to the house with someone screaming bloody murder inside. If there's a locked fence, rattle the gate to scope any dogs inside. If a house makes you uncomfortable – skip it. And never, ever go inside a house!
- **Only go to the houses on your script and try to finish your turf:** Your list will give you the relevant information about each person you are visiting and exclude any homes that you don't need to visit. Stick to this list and try to get through your turf to the best of your abilities!
- **Bless and release:** Don't get drug into long conversations and arguments. If someone doesn't agree with you or wants to keep you at their doorstep for half an hour, politely excuse yourself and move on or offer to have someone follow up with more information later.
- **Be prepared:** Prepare for the weather, prepare to be comfortable walking around for several hours, and mentally prepare yourself to have some tough conversations!

What to expect at a doorbell day:

Most everything you need for a successful doorbell day should be provided to you the day of:

Literature and information, a script, a list of where you are going and who are talking with, a method for recording information and data, buddies to doorbell with, and a training and time to practice! **Want to go above and beyond?** Bring 3 friends with you, ask the organizers if you can show up early and help out with anything, or just use this guide and workshop!

Questions? Contact rein@wecprotects.org or oskar@latinocommunityfund.org. Produced by [Latino Community Fund](#) and [Washington Conservation Voters](#).