

SWING LEFT COLLEGE PROGRAMS

Hard Ask Guide

What is a Hard Ask?

A specific way of asking for things that increases the likelihood of getting a “yes.” Hard asks are critical to every aspect of organizing, including volunteer recruitment, collecting pledges to vote through Reach, registering voters online, and building teams. These asks help us convey how important our actions are to winning this November.

Characteristics of a Hard Ask

- **Deliberate:** Your ask has a clear purpose
- **Confident:** Make eye contact, use a strong voice, and use direct language
- **Specific:** Include a specific request with day, time, and place
- **Non-Apologetic:** You’re not asking for favors -- you’re giving people an opportunity to be part of a movement!

Hard Ask Rules

- Successful asks always recognize the **self-interest** of the person being asked
 - Why would this person benefit from getting involved?
- Never just make the ask -- **give context**
 - Explain why your ask is important and urgent.
- A successful ask **limits the possibility of “no”**
 - Make sure you’re not using language that makes it easy for the person to brush off. Ask a question that forces them to make a choice between options rather than giving a simple yes/no.
- **Don’t give up!** If the first ask doesn’t work, keep moving through the things that need to be done until you find a match for them.

Keys to a Hard Ask

- Know your audience
- Pick an effective attitude
- Build urgency
- Use strong language
- Ask for something specific
- Ask and then stop talking to let them answer
- Be persistent

Examples of a Hard Ask

"The election is only a few weeks away and we need help phone banking to make sure students know how important voting is. Does this Saturday or Sunday work better for you?"

"We'll be writing letters on Friday over Zoom and still need volunteers so that we can reach as many people as possible before they need to be sent out. Would the 12pm shift or 4pm shift work better with your schedule?"

"Thanks for helping us "Reach" more college students today during our virtual event! We couldn't have hit our goal without you. Can I sign you up for the same time next week or does Tuesday work better?"

Examples of a Soft Ask

Soft asks provide an easy opportunity for your target to say "no." Try not to use phrases like these:

"Hey, do you have a minute to talk?"

"Would you want to help out sometime?"

"Could you come write letters this weekend?"

"Would you mind filling this out?"