**SwingLeft**

# COLLEGE

**PROGRAMS**

## Host Guide

# Virtual Relational Organizing Events

### *How to organize events centered around relational organizing utilizing Reach, the grassroots canvassing tool*

Relational organizing is simply the practice of leaning on the people you already know—your friends, family, peers, social media connections—to mobilize and build sustainable collective power. With the COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing, this person to person communication is more important than ever. By working together (virtually) with other volunteers we can identify members of our networks who are likely to volunteer to transform our future by winning the Super States.

The Swing Left College Program uses Reach to help folks keep track of the conversations and interactions they have with voters. You can learn more about why we use this tool and how to get set up in our **Reach guide**.

## Right Now

- ❏ **Post your event on Mobilize.** If you need help, reach out to college@swingleft.org.
- ❏ **Recruit folks to join your event.** If you're a group leader, invite your group. If not, invite friends, family, your social media networks, and anyone else who is supportive.
- ❏ **Review the complete checklist below** so you know what's coming.

## 5 Days Before the Event

- ❏ **Download Reach and review our Reach guide** if you've never used the tool before. Make sure to join our campaign by using the invite code in our guide. You can request a personal invite code to display at the beginning of the event so attendees can easily download the app and join our Swing Left College Reach campaign.

- ❏ **Review the sample agenda** below and customize it for your event. Share your version with anyone helping out during your event.
- ❏ **Connect with your group members to customize the agenda and prepare slides (if desired).** Make a copy of the **Sample Slides for Virtual Relational Organizing** Events and adapt if you'd like.

## 3 Days Before the Event

- ❏ **Confirm everyone who has RSVP'd for your event and remind them to come prepared. This includes:**
  - ❏ Having a charged phone and laptop ready to use
  - ❏ Access to wifi
  - ❏ Knowledge that they'll be texting/calling people during the event
- ❏ **Figure out streaming logistics** if you are pairing your Reach event with a watch party of some sort (a debate, movie, show, etc.) make sure that you test out your screen sharing/streaming capabilities ahead of the event. For example, Zoom does not allow hosts to screen share and stream from major platforms like Netflix but Google Meet does. Youtube and major news networks usually stream the debate live through their websites, so look around for your streaming source ahead of the event.
- ❏ **Keep promoting the event with your network!**

## 1 Day Before the Event

- ❏ **Confirm and remind your attendees again about how to get ready for the event.**

## The Day After the Event (or Immediately after the Event)

- ❏ **Send a thank you and follow-up email or text** to all attendees after the event to remind them about using Reach as a regular organizing practice.
- ❏ **Email template (feel free to customize)**

  Hi,

  Thanks for joining our (name of event)! I want to encourage you to continue to use and update Reach as you hear back from folks who you contacted during our event. Reach works the best when the information we enter is as complete and accurate as possible. That means tagging every person with their school and updating the survey responses as you receive them. This will allow us to keep track of students who still need to register to vote or who are interested in volunteering, so we can reach out to them later and make sure they're all set.

  We also encourage you to add anyone who is interested in volunteering to our Reach campaign so that they can keep track of the conversations they are having with family and friends. This movement only grows when we widen the net and invite others to join us. Learn how to do this in the **Reach Guide**.

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to us at this address. Thank you again for helping us continue this fight!
{{Your Name}}

## Common Volunteer Support Issues

- **The volunteer is not able to download Reach**
  - Everyone should be able to download Reach from their app store. It's a blue Icon with a white rectangle on it. If they are having trouble, they can also use Reach from their desktop by going to app.reach.vote or using your personalized invite code/link. If they are still unable to access Reach, ask them to use our sample script to contact their networks through text or phone and then log them in Reach later. Contact us at college@swingleft.org and we can try to troubleshoot.
- **The volunteer doesn't see their school (or the school of someone they're Reaching)**
  - Request a tag for your school here. Note that this won't be done immediately, so the volunteer should continue Reaching people and then make sure to go back and tag all of the people they Reached with the correct school once it has been added.

## Virtual Hosting Tips

Virtual events are just as effective as in-person events, but you might need to adjust a few aspects of your relational organizing party. Here are some ideas for how:

- ❏ **Be inclusive and connect with volunteers even though you are online.** Some volunteers can be more hesitant to speak up online. As you begin the virtual party, welcome volunteers and, depending on the size of your group, consider having everyone introduce themselves *briefly*.
- ❏ **Delegate tasks to other people so you aren't the only person talking.** Give people roles so that you're not the only one doing all the talking. If you have experienced party hosts at your event, they can help you present the agenda or launch the icebreaker.
- ❏ **Be positive and constructive.** Keep the tone upbeat—this is an exciting and participatory event!
- ❏ **Get creative with making the virtual event fun.** Here are ideas on how to engage others even while you are virtual:
  - ❏ Incorporate a "watch party" into your event: schedule it on the evening of a debate or find a documentary, movie, or show that people are excited to watch.
  - ❏ You might consider playing some soft music in the background while people are working.
  - ❏ If your audio/video conferencing allows break-out rooms, you can use them to give volunteers a chance to meet in small groups and get to know each.
  - ❏ You could take "commercial" breaks every {X} minutes (or during actual commercial breaks) to discuss volunteer impressions or other information. You

could prepare trivia about the state you are organizing for, or ask another volunteer to help you research important issues in the state to present during breaks (you can start with the information on our Super State pages).

❏ Encourage the natural chatting that occurs at in-person events even though you are online.

## Detailed Sample Agenda for Hosts

### Pre-Event Tech Check + Gathering (~10 minutes before the event)

- If you're holding a watch party + Reach event, start streaming and screen sharing before the event begins to test it out. Ask one of your group members to hop on early to see if they can see/hear everything playing from your screen.
- As people join, welcome them and let them know the time you'll start the event. If your audio/video conference option offers chat, ask people to introduce themselves on the chat as they are joining.

### Introductions (don't skip this - it's a great way to build community)

*Resources and Materials: Sample Slides for a Virtual Relational Organizing Event*

- Start by introducing yourself (and group, if applicable) and your motivation for hosting the event. Then briefly review the agenda. You can share slides to walk through each agenda item if that works for you or just do it verbally!
- Go around the "virtual room" and ask everyone to briefly introduce themselves. As they are introducing themselves, write down who showed up so you can report it later.

### Swing Left 2020 Strategy Overview (Optional)

*Resources and Materials: Swing Left's 2020 Super State Strategy, Swing Left's Super State pages*

- If your volunteers are new to Swing Left, you can take a few minutes to help them understand why they are doing this work by describing the Swing Left Super State Strategy.
- This is also a chance to discuss your group's efforts this year and why you are doing this work.

### Relational Organizing Training

*Resources and Materials: Reach Guide, Reach Script, Sample Slides for a Virtual Relational Organizing Event*

Talk through what relational organizing is, why it works, and why it's important. We're teaching about relational organizing in general (it's a great skill for our volunteers to have), but in the

meeting we'll focus on using Reach to have conversations with voters about their registration status, voting in general, and volunteering.

**What is Relational Organizing?**

- Relational organizing is simply the practice of leaning on the people you already know—your friends, family, and peers— to mobilize and build sustainable collective power.

**Why Relational Organizing Works**

- The theory is simple: Organizing is about relationships. Reaching out to someone you already know—someone who trusts you—is much more effective than having a conversation with a stranger. This isn't new, but we know that it works. In fact, research shows that it's at least twice as effective as more traditional engagement methods.
  - *Increased reach* – In today's political climate, the messenger can matter just as much as (if not more than) the message itself. We can't ask someone to get involved or take action (like calling an elected official or registering to vote) if we can't get in touch with them. That's one reason this strategy is so effective—a potential volunteer or voter is more likely to pick up a call or answer a text from someone they know than from someone they don't.
  - *Increased effectiveness* – We know that social pressure can be an effective tool for getting someone to take action—and few people can exert more pressure than a friend or family member. Asking your friend to volunteer with you is going to be more effective than if a stranger had asked them. And because there's already a relationship established, you don't have to spend valuable time trying to develop trust and build a new relationship from scratch.

**Why Relational Organizing is Important (Youth Organizing Specific)**

- Talking to people in our own networks is one of the most effective methods for increasing contact and turnout rates for both voters and volunteers.
- Today we are organizing a specific community - young people. And because of that, we need to use strategies to fit our needs and challenges. One challenge is that young people may not be contacted by campaigns.
  - According to a January survey of registered voters under 35 by the Alliance for Youth Action, "80 percent of young voters report being extremely likely to vote in November, but 67 percent report never having talked to a campaign representative on the phone. Nearly half say they haven't received an email from a campaign."
- Young people are overwhelmingly progressive, and when we turn out to vote, we can change the outcome of elections. This is especially true in 2020 with the multitude of barriers to voting we are facing.

**Who Should Volunteers Contact During Your Event?**

- First, discuss who volunteers should prioritize speaking to. Prioritize folks who **go to your school** or **people you know who would take action to contact voters** in Super States if asked.
- Explain that it is okay to reach out to people who you see posting about things but that you don't have regular contact with. For example, someone who likes all of your posts but you don't talk to regularly. That can feel scary but having that shared value will make it easier. Plus the worst thing that happens is they don't respond or they say no. In the words of Elizabeth Warren, "you don't get what you don't ask for!" Think about these things:
    - Who is a likely voter?
    - Who is vocal about social justice and/or voting on social media or shares/likes your posts?
    - Who might need to check their registration status because they moved recently?
    - Who would appreciate a reminder about voting or registering?
    - Who is excited about contacting voters or volunteering?
    - Whose instagram post would you like or comment on?
    - Who did you go to high school with?
    - Who do you say hi to on campus or in class?
    - What issues might impact the lives of your friends, family, co-workers, or classmates?

## Reach Training

**Initial Walk-through and Training**

**Note: You may want to send volunteers this [Reach Guide](#) before or during the event so they can refer to it throughout.**

- Display your personalized invite code on the screen and give volunteers a moment to join our campaign if they have not already.
- Ask volunteers to find the contact import button under "My Reach" > "Network". They should **select one or two contacts (full names are best) to upload to Reach right now** so they can use a profile as practice as you go through the rest of the training. They will upload the majority of their contacts once you're done with the initial training.
- Explain how they will use Reach to log the conversations they are about to have
    - The [script](#) and survey questions lead volunteers through a conversation with voters that hits on critical pieces of information:
        - Voter registration status
        - Do they plan to vote for dems up and down the ballot?

- - Will they commit to reminding three friends to vote by/on election day? *Note: see the FAQ section of our [Reach Guide](#) to learn more about Vote Tripling.*
    - Are they interested in volunteering?
  - It's important that they log the voter's answers accurately and completely by pressing the correct survey response button. If they didn't ask a certain question or they didn't get a response, leave it blank.
- Encourage volunteers to go through as many questions as possible with each voter.
- Reach prompts volunteers to add contact information for each person. If the volunteer has uploaded their contacts and matched them to the voter file, a lot of this should be filled in already. It's especially important that the **phone number** and **school information** is correct and up to date.
- Show volunteers how they will contact voters through the tool. For anyone who they added to their list through the contact upload and voter file match, they can text or message the person using the "message" icon on the top left side of the voter information screen. This will allow them to send a message to the person directly from their phone's messaging app or another platform of their choice. They can continue the conversation from there and log responses in Reach.

**Contact Import + Voter File Matching**

- Once the training has been completed, ask volunteers to go back to the "contact import" screen. They should go through the rest of their contacts and **select who they want to upload to Reach**. Remind them of the conversation you had earlier about who they should consider talking to today.
- Volunteers should **upload their contacts** and **review the voter file matches** that Reach provides. Anyone who was in their phone contacts and matched to a name in the voter file will show up on this list. They should choose to add as many contacts as they want to add to Reach based on this information.

## Outreach

- If your Reach event has a watch party component, this is the time to start streaming. Tell volunteers that they can put questions and comments in the chat as they get started and encourage a lively chat box for increased engagement.
- If your Reach event doesn't have a watch party component, you might want to play some music and encourage folks to use the chat or unmute if they have questions or comments. Folks can discuss any strategies they are using or responses they are getting in real time.

## Closing

- About 5 minutes before the end of your event, do a quick closing. Ask if anyone would like to share how their outreach went in the chat or by unmuting themselves.
- Briefly **remind volunteers what to do after the event.**
  - Keep Reaching! Responses will trickle in from the folks they contacted after the event, so they should keep those conversations going and log them in Reach.
  - Encourage them to join another Reach event or to do this again with friends
  - Add any information about your group's upcoming events or efforts
- Thank everyone for coming!

# Relational Organizing Event Resources

- **Reach Guide**

- **Reach Script**

- **Sample Virtual Relational Organizing Event Slides**

- **Reach Knowledge Base**