



FAQs

Phone Banking & NGP VAN's OpenVPB

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General Phone Banking Questions

Q: Will voters I call be turned off by the fact that I am calling from outside their district?

A: Voters are often called from out-of-district/state volunteers and it rarely comes up. You don't need to tell voters where you are calling from, but if they ask, be honest. Let them know you are calling into their district because the race is critical to the 2020 election. Let them know that their vote is important to you and to a lot of people outside of their district. If you are unfamiliar with a particular Super State, review the [Super State page](#) and if applicable, the candidate's own campaign website.

Q: How long does it take to phone bank?

A: You can phone bank for as long as you like, but it's always good to set aside a chunk of time that works for you. As a general rule, you'll average about 30 calls an hour, with about 5-10 conversations an hour; in other cases, you'll get wrong numbers and some people may even hang up on you. You may see around a 10% success rate. Don't get discouraged! Phone banking is most effective when we have real, honest conversations about why we're supporting our candidate and capture the information we need from voters.

Q: What if I talk to someone else at the phone number who is not the voter indicated?

A: Only record data for the voter listed in the VPB. If they are not available, click the pink button indicating that you could not reach the voter.

Q: Do I have to stick to the script?

A: Yes. Please follow the script. It was prepared using language and a structure that campaign staff knows to be most effective. Before you begin, take a moment to read the script out loud and practice a few times. That will help it feel a little more natural and comfortable.

Q: If I get voicemail, should I leave a message?

A: No. Your time is better spent contacting the next voter.

Q: I seem to have lots of wrong numbers. Is there something wrong with my list?

A: Probably not. There may be a lot of wrong numbers, and that's okay. Voter files are not always current, so with every number you call you are helping to refine the list.

Q: I'm getting complaints about being called multiple times. Should I stop calling?

A: No way! Voters will receive a lot of calls from other advocacy organizations like Swing Left, directly from the campaign, etc. You are not going to dissuade them from voting with your call. On the contrary, we know that it takes multiple contacts to get lower propensity voters to show up and vote. Be friendly and go through the script and if they don't want to talk just thank them for their time and move on to the next call.

Q: The voter I'm talking with has a specific question that would be best handled directly by the campaign (for example, the voter would like a ride to the polls, would like to volunteer, or has an issue-specific question). How can I put the voter in touch with the campaign?

A: If it's an issue-specific question, shoot us an email at team@swingleft.org and we can work on getting an answer through our relationship with each campaign. If the voter wants to connect with the local campaign to ask for a ride to the polls or find out about volunteering, suggest that they reach out to the campaign directly using the email address on the campaign website.

Q: I'd like to stop calling for the day.

A: Thank you for volunteering! Instead of clicking "Save & Next," just click the "Stop Making Calls" button at the bottom of the script once you have completed your last call.

OpenVPB Technical Questions

Q: Does my number show? Should I block Caller ID?

A: To participate in the virtual phone bank, you can use your cell phone, home phone, or Google Voice (<https://voice.google.com>). With Google Voice, you can create a new number that you can use just for phone banking for free. You can download the Google Voice app wherever you get your apps. You can also block caller ID (*67), but this may cause more voters to ignore the call.

If you'd like to use Google Voice, review the steps outlined in this [guide to setting up Google Voice](#) or [Google's help for using Google Voice on your phone](#) and [other videos](#) on using Google Voice on your phone. Google Voice has some features you'll want to review. For example, you can adjust settings in the app to ensure that any calls returned by voters will not ring through to your phone. In addition, Google Voice routes your call through their system which might make your phone look like it is dialing a different number from the one you typed in. If you want more than one Google Voice number, you will need to set up multiple Google accounts.

Q: How do I see who to call?

A: Once you log in to the VPB, you will see your first call pop up. On the left side of the screen, you'll find some basic information about the voter, and in the center of the screen you'll see their name, phone number, and the script to use.

Q: Where can I find a script for Virtual Phone Banking?

A: After you log in, you'll see the script in the center of the screen and information on the left. Take a moment to read the script out loud. Look for the sections where you will need to enter information based on your conversation with the voter. This information is very important, so make sure you review it first, and input that data!

Q: How do I save my answers?

A: The system has prompts that are easy to follow. If you were unable to contact the voter, you'll click on the "I couldn't reach [Voter Name]" button at the top of the script, select why you were unable to contact them, and then press the "Save & Next Call" button. When you connect with a voter, you will complete the field embedded in the script. At the bottom of the page, it will prompt you to "Save & Next Call."

Q: The script has an error. What should I do?

A: Thank you so much for letting us know—good catch! Please send us an email at team@swingleft.org with a screenshot or picture of the error and any information identifying where you saw it (candidate you're calling for, date you made the call).

Q: I am trying to login to OpenVPB but keep getting an error message. Help!

A: First, if you haven't phone banked with a VPB before, the first step is to click on "Create Action ID" and follow the prompts from there. For best results, we recommend doing this on a laptop, desktop, or tablet (rather than a smartphone), and enabling two-factor authentication. If you have just created an Action ID and are attempting to log on for the first time, make sure you have verified your identity by checking your email and following the instructions provided. If you have verified your email and are receiving an error message, please note that Safari is not a supported browser for OpenVPB. You may also wish to double check that your email address and password have been entered correctly. Finally, in many instances, [clearing your cache/browsing data and cookies](#) will address the issue.

Q: I have phone banked before, and forgot my password. Now I'm having trouble resetting my Action ID password for OpenVPB. Can you help?

A: If you are trying to login to OpenVPB and you're experiencing difficulty with password reset, first check your junk or spam folder for the reset link. Please note that Action ID passwords must have an upper case letter, a lower case letter, a number or special character, and be more than eight characters long. Also consider whether you may have used a different email address or misspelled your email address when you initially registered. If you think either of these scenarios are possible, please create a new Action ID on OpenVPB.

Q: I keep getting an invalid password message. What should I do?

A: First, double check that you don't have caps lock on. As you enter your password, note that when you created your Action ID password, it had to have an uppercase letter, a lower case letter, a number or special character, and be more than eight characters long. If neither of these tips help, try resetting your password by clicking the "Forgot password?" link under the login fields. Then click the reset password link in the email OpenVPB sends you. It might take a few minutes to receive your password reset link. Don't forget to check your spam/junk folder if you don't see the email at first.

Q. None of this is working for me. Any other recommendations?

A: You can contact NGP VAN, the firm that created OpenVPB, Monday through Friday, 9am to 6pm ET at 202-686-9330.