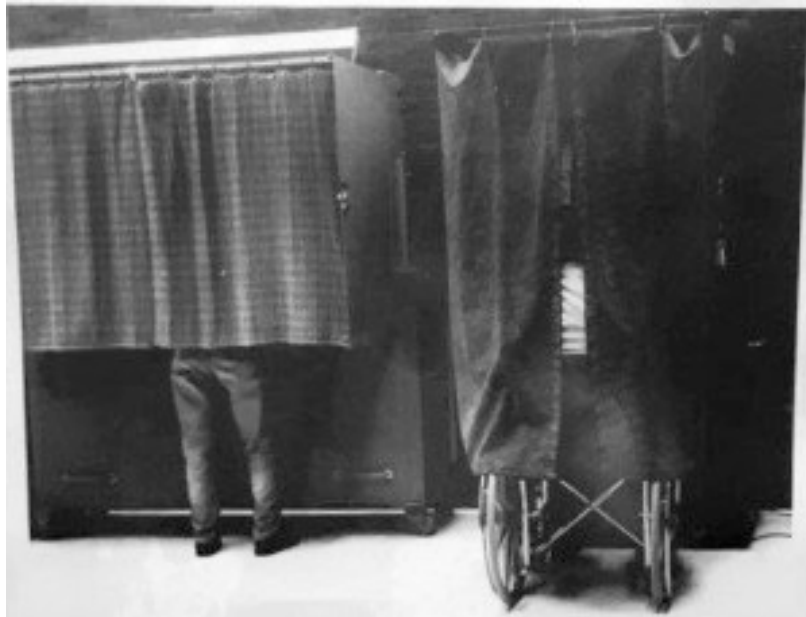




## **Get Out The Vote (GOTV) 2018 Guide**

Prepared by the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL)

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**"With Rights Come Responsibilities!"**

Since 2016, we have seen policy issues important to the disability community receive significant attention from politicians seeking election. From presidential candidates all the way down to local officials, it is important to make sure that candidates know that people with disabilities not only vote, but that we are passionate about seeing policies and legislation created around issues that are important to us. In 2016, one in six eligible voters during this election had a disability, and more than 25 percent of the eligible electorate either had a disability or have a family member with a disability, according to [Disability, Voter Turnout, and Voting Difficulties in the 2012 Elections](#) (PDF) . It is essential that we mobilize this significant voting force to head to the polls. The Missouri Disability Vote Project claims that phone banking is "the single most effective tactic" in encouraging voters with disabilities to turn up at the polls on Election Day. You can participate in this important voting tactic by making a list of your own contacts and making GOTV phone calls of your own!

## GOTV Phone Calls

With the election close at hand, it is necessary not only to inform our family, friends, and acquaintances about the importance of this election and the issues that matter to Americans with disabilities, but to encourage these contacts to show up at the polls on Election Day. One of the most effective ways to do this is to make GOTV phone calls. Making these calls can be broken down into four simple steps.

1. **Make a list of your personal contacts.** This can include family, friends, coworkers, church members, class members, recreational club members, or any other acquaintance whose phone number you have. Get creative and brainstorm a list of everybody you can contact about getting out the vote in and for the disability community.
2. **Pick up the phone and give them a call!**
3. **Ask them if they plan on voting** in the upcoming election.
4. **Inform them about the disability policy issues** that are important to you and your community in this upcoming election.

With the election so close at hand, when is the right time to make these calls? According to the Missouri Disability Vote Project, GOTV phone calls should start no sooner than three weeks before the election, and they should continue up to and through Election Day. These rounds of calling, or "sweeps," should happen a few times so that you can make calls to all registered voters and try to reach as many people as possible, as you will not reach everybody on the first call. Here is a handy schedule to help you plan your GOTV phone calls:

### 3 weeks before Election Day (Oct 18)

- **Round 1: GOTV Phone Calls:** first contact to all list members

### 2 weeks before Election Day (Oct 25)

- **Round 2: GOTV Phone Calls:** second round of calls to people not reached during first round

### Weekend before Election Day (Nov 5)

- **Round 3: GOTV Phone Calls:** reminder call to all individuals who indicated that they are planning to vote

## GOTV Texting

In recent years, sending text messages has been more frequently utilized as a GOTV practice. Setting up a text bank is another option that should be used in addition to phone banking. Recent studies have shown that [sending GOTV texts has a measurable impact on voter turnout while having a lower cost-per-vote than many other GOTV methods](#). Beyond that, text banking is an accessible option for those volunteers with disabilities who may not be able to or comfortable with talking to voters on the phone and, like phone banking, text banking can be done either at a central location, such as a Center for Independent Living, or in the volunteer's own home. Furthermore, some voters may engage more readily through text depending on their own comfort with the phone and their preferred communication methods.

The steps to texting voters are very similar to the steps for phoning voters: make a list of contacts, text them, ask them if they're planning to vote, and engage them briefly on disability policy issues. Make sure to lay out a schedule or incorporate texting into your schedule for phone banking if you're planning on doing both.



### Phone and Text Banking Best Practices

- According to the Missouri Disability Vote Project, the best times of day to make your GOTV phone calls are in the early- to mid-evening, or on weekend afternoons, as this is when people are most likely to be at home and answering phone calls.
- Here are some tips and best practices provided during a 2016 Rev Up National Organizing Call by Carol Westlake, Executive Director of the Tennessee Disability Coalition, which has been leading an active and successful GOTV disability campaign since 2002.
  - **Make GOTV personal.** Contact people with whom you have a familiar relationship, as you are more likely to be able to convince them to vote than you would a stranger.
  - **Make it easy.** Make sure that you are knowledgeable about voting processes and information in your state, as you may need to provide this information to your callers so that they, in turn, can go out and vote. Here is some information you should find out prior to making your calls.
    - Does your state have voter ID laws that require certain types of identification at the polls? [Find out your state's requirements](#).
    - Does your state allow early voting, and where and when does it start? Contact your Board of Elections, or refer to this [early voting calendar](#).
    - Does your state allow absentee ballot voting for disabled voters, and how can these voters obtain an absentee ballot? The National Conference of State Legislatures has more information about [absentee and early voting](#).
    - How can a voter find the location and hours of their polling place? Visit or direct individuals to your state Board of Election's website to find out about local polling locations and hours, or visit [Rock the Vote](#) to find election information in your state.

- **Time your calls correctly.** Follow the GOTV schedule provided above to make sure that your calls are at a time when people are both available and thinking about the election.
- **Help them figure out a plan.** If you can, help them figure out what information they need to take to the polls (such as voter identification) and brainstorm with logistics, if possible.
  - Does your area have accessible transportation options on voting day? If so, pass this information on to voters who may need it.
  - Once early voting has begun: when someone says that they will vote, ask them when they are planning on going to the polls. Helping the person pin down a time increases the likelihood that they will vote.
- **Tips for Effective Messaging and Calling:** while it is exciting to engage with somebody who "gets it," it is important to make sure that you are focused on making as many calls as possible. Because of this, it is best to try to keep the call brief.
  - The best messaging will be brief and to the point, as you want to capture the individual's attention and link voting to the disability issues that matter to you.
    - An example message provided by the Missouri Disability Vote Project is "If you care about protecting your rights under the ADA, vote on November 6."
  - Try to set a goal for the amount of calls that you make per hour. A good starting target is **six calls per hour.**
- **Tips for Effective Text Banking:** although phone and text banking have similar goals, there's slightly different etiquette between these two practices.
  - Create a small instructional guide for your volunteers to help them keep important texting etiquette and messaging in mind, answer frequently asked questions, and to give them templates that they can customize for their texting.
  - Like phone banking, the best messaging will be brief and to the point. Long, wordy texts are unlikely to engage the person you're contacting. Keep your texts brief, with clear questions or "asks," and good grammar and punctuation.
  - Don't put too much information in one text. Ask only one question a time, and keep texts to around 160 characters. According to CallHub.io, [texting campaigns get about a 10 to 30 percent response rate](#). If a voter replies, you can engage them in conversation and ask more questions, such as if they need a ride to the polls, as well as direct them to resources.
  - Volunteers shouldn't text too many people at once. If they are sending too many texts at once, they may miss replies or make errors.



many creative ways to do this:

- a. Encourage people to pledge to vote, and if you have the resources, enter those who pledge into a raffle or offer a small incentive.
  - b. Encourage voters to take a selfie with their “I voted” stickers on Election Day and post the picture on their social media. This is an effective way to harness social pressure to show people that voting is not only necessary, but can be fun.
  - c. Utilize hashtags. On ElectionDay, popular hashtags might include something like #ElectionDay or #Election2018; for the disability community, the hashtags #REVUP (for the American Association of People with Disabilities’ REV UP campaign), #DisabilityVote, and [#CripTheVote](#) (a non-partisan campaign to encourage people with disabilities to vote) are popular.
2. **Provide important election information:** Social media can be a great way to inform your community on basic election information. You can provide resources on registering to vote or checking registration, inform them when voter registration deadlines are approaching or when early voting begins, and direct them to sites that will help them find their polling place or sample ballot. On Election Day, send out information for important voting hotlines, like the Election Protection Coalition.
  3. **“Take Over” Social Media on Important Days Around Voting:** Plan content for important voting-related days, such as National Voter Registration Day or Election Day. You can write out your content beforehand and on some social media, you can even pre-schedule it so that it will post when you’re ready! This can be a great way to share facts or trivia, stories, or infographics related to voting.
  4. **Keep Your Posts Concise and Clean:** Keep social media content short and to the point and optimize your posts for the platform they’re using. For example, Tweets should be one to two sentences, while Facebook posts can be slightly longer, but don’t go too overboard! People don’t want to read long, wordy posts. Proofread your posts for any spelling and grammar mistakes and to ensure that they’re readable.
  5. **Utilize Social Media Toolkits:** Many organizations that work on voting already have information and toolkits available to help other organizations post compelling and clean content to their social media feeds.
    - a. [The American Association of People with Disabilities](#) REV UP (Register, Educate, Vote! Use your Power) campaign has toolkits for National Disability Voter Registration Week and related to REV UP’s coalition-building work. Here you can find graphics, sample posts, and other useful toolkits.
    - b. [National Voter Registration Day](#) is a national holiday held on the fourth Tuesday of September every year. NVRD encourages organizations big and small to become partners and has toolkits available for partners’ use. NVRD will also mail materials to their partners based on those organizations’ National Voter Registration Day events.
    - c. [Rock the Vote](#) has several graphics available for use, as well as voting rights resources for advocates and organizations.