



# Local Organizer Toolkit

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# The Secret

The secret to organizing is that if you choose the right cause at the right moment, things will organize themselves. Simply by letting friends and acquaintances know that you are thinking of doing something about the 2010 election (and asking them if they are) you'll spark conversations which lead to small gatherings which turn into a team of people doing things, which turns into a mini-movement, which attracts new friends you don't even know yet. The prize: You might swing an election or two, which might tip the balance of power, which might determine a public policy --a matter of life or death. You'll make new friends too. Behold the magic.

# The Checklist

**Everyone's 12 Week Plan will look different. Here are key components to build around when mapping out your next 12 weeks:**

- Holding meet-ups
- Recruiting friends and volunteers
- Registering voters (optional)
- Traveling to swing districts (optional)
- Creating local voter guides
- Getting Out The Vote

*Which of these activities do you want to participate in?*

# Brainstorm: Your Team

## *Create Your Fantasy Election Team*

No man (or woman) is an island. And you can't do this work all by yourself! Think about your hood or town. Go through your phone and Facebook. Who do you want on your roster? What does each bring to the table? Get excited.

Name	Skills/Assets/Networks/Time
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

*Keep brainstorming –you know a lot more people than you think!*

# Getting Started

Begin with passive organizing. Start writing status updates on Facebook and see who replies. Strike up conversations when you're out or talking to friends.

Call 3-5 people on the list above and start conversations with them. Are they thinking of doing anything for the election? This is what you're thinking of doing. Do they know anyone else who might want to do something? These are low-stakes conversations. Ask "If I were to pull something together over coffee, would you be interested?"

75%-80% of people will say no for all sorts of reasons. Ignore the 75%-80%. All you need is one interested person, and you're ready to call a local gathering.

Set up an event on [www.defendthedream.org](http://www.defendthedream.org), preferably for the weekends of August 21-22 or August 28-29. The event is over a meal, coffee or drinks. Eating and drinking together is the most important part of organizing!

Spread the word and watch people you least expected come out of the woodwork. Some people you expected will also flake. That's par for the course.

Read over this guide. Jump on a national conference call. Let us know you're doing this – we're thrilled. We'll support you through the process.

Remember, nothing you're doing is rocket science. Making a local voter guide. Talking to people. Possibly taking a road trip. You can do this in your sleep.

Have one little meeting –even if it's 2-3 people- and you're off and running. Two people can make a voter guide that gets attention in a mid-sized city. Even one person can! Your job is to start the ball rolling –the team will come.

# 12-Week Plan Overview

Beginning in mid-August, we'll have just 12 weeks until the midterm elections. There's a lot at stake. You can do entire 12 Week plan, or pick from a menu the options that work best for you. The All Hands On Deck team is available to support you and walk you through it every step of the way! [Ondeck2010@gmail.com](mailto:Ondeck2010@gmail.com)

## Phase 1: Organize

*And we're off! Weeks 1-3 are your time to develop your local plan, get your team together, spread the word, do the research, and gear up for the home stretch to victory. [Sign up](#) to participate.*

### WEEK 1

#### Get Organized. Tell Your Friends. (August 14-15)

- **PRIORITY:** Create a local strategy session event online at [www.defendthedream.org](http://www.defendthedream.org). We'll give you tools and one-on-one support.
- **PLAN:** Download the 12 Week Plan and look it over. Think through your own 12 Week Plan as an individual. What can you realistically commit?
- **RECRUIT:** Go through your phone and Facebook and invite folks to your first strategy session. Have one-on-one conversations with friends you want to do this with.
- **RESEARCH:** Registration and Early Vote Deadlines and target races in your state or nearby.
- **CONNECT:** Call in to a 12 Week Plan local organizer conference call.
- **FACEBOOK:** Add "Defend the Dream" Status update and profile picture.
- **QUESTIONS?** The All Hands On Deck crew is just an email away: [ondeck2010@gmail.com](mailto:ondeck2010@gmail.com).

### WEEK 2

#### Local Strategy Sessions (August 21-22)

- **MEET-UP:** Organize your first local strategy session with 2-10 people.
- **PLAN:** Use the 12 Week Plan Toolkit to customize your local plan as a team.
- **RECRUIT:** Plan the next strategy session, send out contact info, list event on [www.defendthedream.org](http://www.defendthedream.org).
- **RESEARCH:** Check out [theballot.org](http://theballot.org) and begin to research your own Local Voter Guide that you can share with friends and voters in your area. Just like a newspaper –you'll endorse *your* picks for 2010. Where can you get advice? (Local political junkies, online information, etc.)
- **CONNECT:** Link up with ally voter groups in your area. We can help.
- **REGISTRATION: (Optional):** Planning a registration drive? Make sure you know the laws in your state first. College move-in is usually in this time. It's a great way to register students.

- **TEAM:** One-on-one conversations with each member of your team about what they want to do and their schedule and time. Clarify roles and working groups so each person can focus, not waste time. Set-up your team google document and google group and don't abuse them!
- **DOCUMENT:** Tell us what you're planning –and send photos! [Ondeck2010@gmail.com](mailto:Ondeck2010@gmail.com).



## **Local Strategy Sessions, Part Two (August 28-29)**

- **PRIORITY:** Recruit more people and get more buy-in for your local plan and voter guide.
- **MEET-UP:** Organize your next strategy session. Post it online.
- **RECRUIT:** Email and Facebook everyone you know asking people to join and come to the next strategy session.
- **CONNECT:** Need help? The All Hands On Deck crew is just an email away: [ondeck2010@gmail.com](mailto:ondeck2010@gmail.com).
- **CATCH-UP:** On anything from previous two weeks.
- **ROAD TRIP (optional):** Plan your road trip to a swing district!



## **Labor Day (September 4-6)**

**RELAX:** Relax, Enjoy, and Rest Up!

# Phase 2: Dive In!

*Weeks 5-7 are the key time to create your voter guide, begin your swing state trips if you're planning to do them, get your feet wet as a team and recruit, recruit, recruit. Starting late? It's okay! There's plenty of time to catch up fast.*

## WEEK 5

### Create Your Local Voter Guide (September 7-12)

- **VOTER GUIDE:** Do a first draft of your voter guide this week, even if it's incomplete. Starting to write will improve your research process.
- **RECRUIT:** Also a great week to recruit new people, break bread, orient volunteers, go over the rest of the plan.
- **REGISTER (optional):** Make sure you know the law in your state before registering voters.

## WEEK 6

### Recruit + Finish Guide + Road Trips (September 13-19)

- **TEAM:** One-on-one conversations with each member of your team to make sure they're happy, in a good role, and being maximized.
- **TEAM:** Do you need to do a volunteer training or planning session? Now's a good time to hold it.
- **VOTER GUIDE:** Research and write Voter Guide.
- **RECRUIT:** Recruit at festivals and public places.
- **QUESTIONS?** The All Hands On Deck crew is just an email away: [ondeck2010@gmail.com](mailto:ondeck2010@gmail.com).

## WEEK 7

### Voter Registration Overdrive (September 20-26)

- **VOTER GUIDE:** Your voter guide process should wrap up ideally in advance of early voting (varies by state) Explore whether you want to print guides, cost, etc.
- **REGISTRATION (optional):** Kick voter registration efforts into high gear. Deadlines in most states are right around the corner. We'll help point you to the places where your registration help is needed most—from quarter campus move-in days to concerts, farmers markets, street fairs.
- **EARLY VOTE (optional):** Plan your Early Vote kick-off rally and media event (some states)
- **ROAD TRIP:** Two important national conferences this week: Facing Race in Chicago and Coffee Party in Louisville, both in key Senate swing states!

# Phase 3: GOTV!

*All systems go.*



## Registration Deadline + One Nation + Early Vote (September 27-October 3)

- **ONE NATION:** Progressives across the country are joining as [One Nation](#) on 10-2-10. [Sign up to attend](#) the One Nation march in Washington, D.C. on October 2. Bus trips in a 12 hour radius will have on-bus vote trainings.
- **MEET-UP:** Can't make it to Washington? Throw one of hundreds of house parties to celebrate how far we've come. Gear up for the coming battles.
- **REGISTER (optional):** Last Chance to Register Week. It's the last chance to register this week in many states! Pitch in on National Voter Registration Day, September 28! Organize or attend a voter registration event.
- **EARLY VOTE (optional):** Early vote begins in Ohio and other states.
- **VOTER GUIDE:** Voter guide release parties and rallies begin in early vote states!
- **ROAD TRIP (optional):** Organize or attend a road trip to a nearby swing district.



## 10-10-10 Day of Action + Early Vote (October 4-10)

- **10-10-10:** Sign up to organize a volunteer recruitment event surrounding [10-10-10](#), the day we join together to tell our leaders: "We're getting to work—what about you?" Less than a month out from the elections, it will be a critical time to send the message that we need real clean energy solutions.
- **GOTV / TRICK OR VOTE:** Begin planning in detail for Trick or Vote and your 86 Hour Plan for GOTV if you haven't already.
- **ROAD TRIP (optional):** Get on the bus! Sign up to ship out to a nearby swing state, where you can help push progressive candidates over the top to victory. Whether you have a day or a week, All Hands On Deck can help you figure out where to go, how to get there, and who to connect with to make sure you're presence makes a real impact.
- **FACEBOOK:** Add "I Voted Early" Profile picture.



## GOTV Prep (October 11-17)

- **MEET-UP:** Have a Team Meeting to plan and prep for GOTV. Invite new volunteers!
- **TEAM:** One-on-ones with each team member. Go over roles and schedule through Election Day.
- **PLAN:** Take election day off to Get Out The Vote (ideally two days and plan a road trip, if you're not in a key district)
- **ROAD TRIP (optional):** Organize or attend a road trip to a nearby swing district.

## WEEK 11

### GOTV Prep (October 18-24)

- **VOTER GUIDE:** Throw Voter Guide release party if you haven't already.
- **GOTV:** Schedule volunteer GOTV shifts.
- **PLAN:** Take Election Day off to Get Out The Vote.
- **TEAM:** One-on-ones with each team member. Go over roles and schedule through Election Day.
- **ROAD TRIP (optional):** Sign up if you can organize or attend a road trip to a nearby swing district.
- **FACEBOOK:** Add "Trick Or Vote" Status Update and Profile picture.

## WEEK 12

### Trick or Vote (October 25 – November 2)

- **86-HOUR PLAN:** Starting Saturday at noon, your life is about the election!
- **ROADTRIP (optional):** If you can take off Saturday - Tuesday to go to a swing state.
- **SATURDAY:** Training, and giving assignments and turf to volunteers, especially new ones.
- **SUNDAY:** Trick or Vote Canvass in Costume — sign up to [Trick or Vote](#), canvassing in costume on Halloween (Sunday), take part in final GOTV efforts before the polls close, and throw a victory party to celebrate all that you've accomplished over 12 weeks!
- **MONDAY:** Phone, doors with target universe and on campuses. Pass out voter guides everywhere!
- **TUESDAY 6am:** Election Day: Pass out voter guides at the polls. Phone bank and text target universe.
- **TUESDAY NIGHT CELEBRATION:** After the polls close, crash a local victory party as a team!
- **WEDNESDAY:** Stolen election? Recount? Be ready to advocate!
- **DOCUMENT:** Have your whole team send in your photos and post-election debriefs!
- **FACEBOOK:** Add "I Voted" Status Update and Profile picture.

## WEEK 13

**BONUS WEEK:** Get your team together to celebrate, debrief and talk next steps!  
(Wed Nov 3, Thurs Nov 4. Weekend of Nov 6-7 or 13-14. Whenever is good for your team)

## WEEK 14

Begin a 12 Week Plan of Relaxation, Rest and Rejuvenation —You deserve it!

# 12 Week Plan Worksheet

## 1. State Deadlines:

The voter registration deadline is \_\_\_\_\_.

Early voting in my state begins \_\_\_\_\_ and ends \_\_\_\_\_.

*Now you have the deadlines. Fill them in on your calendar worksheet below!*

## 2. Local Events:

What local festivals or other public events where you can set up shop talking to members of your community about the election. You might have to do some Googling.

**Event**

**Date**

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# August

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28 Defend the Dream Kickoff!
29	30	31	Notes:			

# September

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28 National Day of Voter Registration	29	30	Notes:	

# October

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 One Nation March on Washington
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10 National Day of Energy Action	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31 Trick or Vote	Notes:					

# November

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 Election Day!	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	Notes:			

# Making a Voter Guide

A voter guide is usually a quick 1-2 page review of what is on your local ballot – candidates and ballot issues, from the U.S. Senate down to county clerk.

You can start drafting it *right now*.

**Step 1:** Open up a new document and write down in 5 minutes 2 sentences on any of the candidates or issues you know of and what you think of them. Make sure to use lots of big words like: “idiot,” “scumbag,” and “corporate lap dancer.” Just kidding. The point is to get your juices flowing and get on paper anything you already know (or think you know) about who’s running.

**Step 2:** Find out what is actually on the ballot by looking on your city or county website. Paste that list into your document. In most towns and counties, this should take 15 minutes. Some cities and states have late primaries, or bad data systems, so it could take a bit longer.

**Step 3:** Start Googling and filling in blanks. Spend 1-2 hours. In two hours, you can have an extremely rough draft of your voter guide. Then you just have to refine it and double check to make sure it’s right.

Once your voter guide is made and posted on [www.TheBallot.org](http://www.TheBallot.org), your goal is to spread it like crazy over Facebook, Twitter, email, and via local websites. If you can scrape a few hundred dollars together, you can probably print 5,000-10,000 copies. Your goal is to get them out **everywhere**.

Obviously, you can spend a lot longer on this process. Ideally, your group forms a voter guide committee that divides up the research and takes formal votes on endorsements. If you have a LOT of time and capacity, you might send candidate questionnaires and interview candidates. But many times questionnaires are overrated. Bad candidates usually won’t fill them out, and you’re wasting your own time and the time of good candidates by making them fill out questions they have already answered publically or which it may not be strategic for them to answer. Interacting with candidates is generally good, especially if you can make a big difference in helping elect them (in which case, you could organize an event for them) and/or if you’re planning to work with them to move an agenda once elected. Otherwise, don’t bother.

People LOVE homemade local voter guides. Keep them short, punchy and visually appealing, if possible. Try to match up the order with the actual ballot so it’s easier to use. It is the one piece of literature a voter will receive this election season that they actually appreciate. Emphasize its homemade-ness. And you’ll keep ‘em coming back for more.

# Planning a Road Trip

A political road trip is a fun and easy way to make an enormous impact for a campaign or a cause that matters most to you.

**Step 1:** Pick your targets. Go to this map [[www.defendthedream.org/trips](http://www.defendthedream.org/trips)] and click on your state to check out hot races nearby. Click on neighboring states as well. Heck, click on states where you have friends and family you might like to visit. Focus on close races, candidates you love, and places you want to explore. Post your desire to take a trip on our rideboard [<http://www.12weekplan.org/trips/plan.php>].

**Step 2:** Recruit, recruit, recruit! If you have a café where progressives gather, put a sign up. If you're in college, tell everyone in your classes. Grab your friends, grab your family, and tell them you're taking an exciting trip to save the world from those crazy people on Fox News. You're all going to be super-heroes. Tell your friends that the ONLY way they will get to hang with you between now and November 2 is on a political road trip. It works.

**Step 3:** Get road-ready. You'll need to contact the campaign (they'll be ecstatic!), get the address, get contact phone numbers for the volunteer coordinator, and your driving directions pulled together. Be prepared to become a very empowered agent of Democracy.

**Step 4:** Pack! You'll need sunscreen, snacks, bottles of water, maps, and a bag with enough room to hold campaign lit. We also recommend bringing your own clipboard, just in case. And don't forget to print out the most glowing endorsements of your candidate you can find on-line. This will make for excellent reading in the car while you're driving off to save the day.

Once you've completed your first road trip, your goal is to keep building your group. Your main challenge is going to be that people will think they won't be good at it. They'll say, "What if a voter asks me a question and I don't know the answer?" Reassure them that there are campaign websites for that. *Your* job is to make positive, face-to-face contact with voters. *Your* job is to make sure that every progressive out there knows there is a make-it-or-break-it election coming up and that they'd better VOTE on November 2.

There is an added benefit, too. You will make amazing friends. Just think: YOU are the kind of person who sees an opportunity to change the world and YOU are actually cool enough to get in the car and go do something about it. There are other people out there who are just like you. *Those* are the people you should be hanging out with. Find them, recruit them, mobilize them. You will not regret it.