



CAMPAIGNING DURING CORONAVIRUS

Resource Guide from the NDP

GUIDE + NDP OFFICE NOTE: The Nebraska Democratic Party (NDP) will update this document on a regular basis. Please see our staff list if you need to get in touch with us. Our offices are closed to the public unless you are picking up materials from staff.

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Introduction

First, thank you to our friends at The Management Institute, Tuesday Company, M&R Lab, Power Labs, Progressphiles listserv, epolitics.com, ASDC, DNC, Missouri Democratic Party, other Democratic state parties and committees, for providing some of the content that we repurposed for this guide.

In light of the coronavirus epidemic and the Nebraska Democratic Party's recommendations to cancel in-person gatherings, postpone all in-person campaigning, and adopt remote/virtual environments, we want to provide our candidates, local Democratic parties and allied activist organizations with recommendations on how to continue campaigning and staying in touch with supporters during the coronavirus.

NDP Contacts

Jane Kleeb, Chair, jane@nebraskademocrats.org, 402-705-3622

Jim Rogers, Executive Director, jim@nebraskademocrats.org, 402-706-8019

Kevin O'Hanlon, Communications Director, kevin@nebraskademocrats.org, 402-326-5733

Precious McKesson, Constituency Director, precious@nebraskademocrats.org, 402-434-2180

Ron Rivera, Field and Data Director, ronr@nebraskademocrats.org, 402-686-9094

Gina Frank, Block Captain Director, gina@nebraskademocrats.org, 402-434-2180

Must Haves During This Time

NDP Email List: The NDP stays in touch with our candidates with a listserve. If you are not getting these emails, [*please contact NDP Communications Director Kevin O'Hanlon*](#). Kevin is the one to make sure your name is on the NDP Candidate page on our website and the person you contact to schedule a campaign email to our list.

VAN Account + Candidate MOU: If you have not signed the Candidate Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) yet, [*please contact NDP Data Director Ron Rivera*](#). He will get you set up with a VAN account. When Jane Kleeb became Chair, she opened up

the VAN for free to all candidates. There is also an enhanced version you can purchase. You need a VAN account to conduct virtual phone banking and texting.

Nebraska Vendors: You will need help now more than ever with knowing who can create and design mail pieces, yard signs and all the other pieces of your campaign. The [NDP has a list of vendors we work with](#) and we can add others you suggest!

Analyst Institute Account: You can request a free login to this invaluable resource. They conduct research into best practices on critical campaign activities like Vote By Mail, social mail pressure and more. <https://analystinstitute.org/>

National Democratic Training Account: You and your campaign team can watch various videos and go through online training. They are holding various online trainings now around how to conduct campaigning without in person contact. <https://trainsdemocrats.org/>

Canva Account: Getting quick social media posts up and out is critical right now. Canva is a tool with even a free account level that you can design professional graphics. <https://www.canva.com/>

Subscribe to Podcasts: Getting news during this time and how to talk about the virus is critical. We suggest [Pod Save America](#) and [NPR's various political podcasts](#).

Articles + Organizing Resources

- BCom put out a great overview on [digital organizing in these times](#).
- A good primer from a group of activists, organizers, technologists and communicators: [How might a pandemic affect US society and politics in 2020?](#)
- Epolitics has a list of other articles and is [updating other resource guides they find](#).
- Organizing strategies while social distancing: [7 Strategies](#)
- Organizing in a pandemic: [downloadable plan](#) in English and Spanish

- Community building during the coronavirus: [plan from Indivisible](#)
- Organizing while corona: [full guide](#) on messaging and organizing strategies
- Event organizing during the coronavirus: [how to guide](#) on running virtual events
- Coronavirus resource kit: [collective google doc](#) of resources and tips
- Coronavirus tech handbook: [guide for tech](#) operators
- How Might a Pandemic Affect Politics and Our Communities: [article on impacts](#) on voting habits, immigration, healthcare and more
- Coronavirus Messaging: guide on [how to talk about the Coronavirus](#) on the campaign trail
- National COVID-19 Response Advocacy Asks: [great tool for candidates](#) to see what groups are saying should be included in state and federal response bills

Health Resources

- [UNMC Resource Center](#)
- [CDC Fact Sheet](#)
- [Nebraska Health and Human Services resource page](#)
- [World Health Organization Coronavirus Video](#)
- [CDC Guidance on Handwashing](#)
- [CDC Travel Guidance](#)
- [National Governors Association's resource page links to specific official state actions and activities](#)

Online Training Seminars

We will keep adding to the trainings we hear about--various groups are starting to create trainings for candidates. We will also forward trainings as we hear about them to the candidate listserv. If you are not on the listserv, [please email Kevin O'Hanlon](#) to be added.

Digital Organizing 101 Training

- <https://events.democrats.org/event/262710/>
- Various dates March 19-24
- Sponsored by the DNC

Coronavirus Webinars for Campaigns

- March 21st and March 23rd. Register for the webinars and share the events on Facebook here: <https://facebook.com/bcomsolutions/events>
- Access slides here:
<https://www.beautiful.ai/player/-M2aYOzqhuZN8lkq7qUj/Digital-Campaigns-Crisis>
- Sponsored by BCom Solutions (a local company that can assist you with everything digital including fundraising, email, graphics, etc) Contact Brent Comstock, 402-414-1909 or brent@bcomonline.com.

How to Use NDP Resources (Vote By Mail, Texting, Virtual Phone Banks)

- March 24, 6-7:30 p.m.
- Sponsored by the Nebraska Democratic Party (NDP)
- Email ronr@nebraskademocrats.org for the call information
- We ask that you have your VAN up on the laptop since we will be using that during the training.

Train The Trainer (T3) Series

In addition to the quick training sessions above, the Nebraska Democratic Party, together with the DNC and ASDC Best Practices Institute, are excited to announce the launch of our 2020 Train the Trainer (T3) Webinar Training Program!

T3 is a free six-week, twelve-part webinar course, covering several aspects of grassroots campaigning. This program seeks to expand the skills of progressive activists and volunteers, by ensuring that comprehensive training is free and accessible

for Democrats all over the country. Register for T3 today, and help us take our country back in 2020!

Participants must complete all twelve sessions in order to receive certification. All training sessions will include a skills test to track retention and participation. Trainings will be recorded and made available following each session via a weekly wrap-up email, delivered on Fridays.

- [CLICK HERE](#) to submit your registration for the 2020 T3 Training Program! Registration will close at 10:59 p.m. CT, on Sunday, April 5.

Fundraising

The two resources most campaigns use is ActBlue to process donations and NGP VAN to help create call sheets and other fundraising functions. Both organizations have resource documents and training materials.

Democratic Digital Fundraising Contacts:

- Actblue - support@actblue.com
- NGP VAN - support@ngpvan.com

General Tips:

Fundraising experts in the nonprofit and political world are [predicting fundraising is going to take a hit during the coronavirus](#), and will be [especially hard on those that rely on events](#).

During this time when we are recommending cancelling all in-person gatherings, there are still ways to fundraise during coronavirus.

Try [video conference fundraisers](#) to replace in person fundraisers, and [connect with your top funders and ensure their 2020 commitment](#).

Simple postcard and thank you notes also will go a long way during this time--sending handwritten notes to your supporters is a great way for you to stay in touch.

Other Ideas:

- Virtual fundraisers utilizing video conferencing.

- Old-fashioned mailing things out.
- Increase your call time.
- Supplemental email and other tactics, such as text fundraising and digital appeals, but don't use email subject lines and other messaging in fundraising appeals that are alarmist.
- 1:1 donor meetings or small group gatherings with video conferencing.
- Engage your supporter base with [online surveys that ask respondents on what they want and need during this time](#) and what kind of policies they'd like to see to combat coronavirus or on other topics as well.

General Planning and Processes:

Use this time to get your plans in place for the fall...

- Think long-term and set up for late summer and fall, write those plans down and assign staff or volunteers.
- Insist on having "act of God" contingency clauses in all your event related contracts to provide a safeguard against later cancellation.
- Review all signed contracts to determine if you're within the date range for full or partial refunds.
- Familiarize yourself with the refunds process for any currently scheduled events.
- Communicate, communicate, communicate, especially when cancelling an event, including talking points regarding factors considered in the decision to cancel.

Example Contingency Language for Future Fundraisers:

- The safety of our guests, the event staff, and the speaker are our top concern. We don't know what the future holds for public gatherings due to the Coronavirus pandemic, but we will continue to monitor the situation and follow the advice of medical professionals to determine our next steps. In the meantime, we hope that you will Save the Date (if you are choosing one) and help with our fundraising by purchasing tickets at [link] or making a general donation to our

efforts (insert link).

Communications + Polling

Remember, you are a leader. Hold yourself and your team to a high standard by helping others by putting out information and educating the public with information about the pandemic, and by fighting misinformation that you see about Coronavirus.

- Use messaging that moves away from a panic response and toward a caring response and frame our goals as protecting others.
- Use crisis communications tactics and develop a [crisis communications checklist](#).
- Civiqs is tracking [public polling](#) on the virus and other key issues.
- Daily Kos commissioned a [public poll with Civiqs](#) on the virus and political leader's handling of the public health crisis.

Organizing When You Can Not Be In-Person

Here are some ways you can keep organizing even though you can not be in-person with voters, volunteers and your team.

The NDP will be hosting phone and text banks to help us get more people to submit their Vote By Mail Applications and to return their ballots. Please contact Ron Rivera if your campaign or county party wants to assist us with these great volunteer activities.

Online Meeting Tools: Google Hangouts, Zoom, Facebook Live and Uberconference are the most popular tools to conduct online meetings. Here are links to various other tools, take a look and see which one you are most comfortable in using.

- [Zoom](#)
- [Google Hangouts](#)
- [Facebook Live](#)
- [Uberconference](#)
- [GoToWebinar](#)

- [WebEx](#)
- [FreeConferenceCall.com](#)
- [MaestroConference](#)

Push Online Voter Registration and Vote By Mail: Now more than ever, people will be focused on voting at home. We can't lose time getting voters registered for the primary and general elections of 2020. We must push online voter registration and getting more people signed up for Vote By Mail.

- Promote heavily the online voter registration [via the SOS website](#). People can double check they are registered on this website and change their address or change their party affiliation.
- **Know the facts around voter registration and Vote By Mail.** The NDP has a Vote Center where we link to forms and answer questions on deadlines, Independents, formerly incarcerated Nebraskans and more: <https://nebraskademocrats.org/voting-center/>
 - These are the counties that are sending Vote By Mail applications to ALL voters: Cass, Douglas, Lancaster, Sarpy
 - Counties that conduct ALL Vote By Mail (you don't have to apply, they automatically send ballot): Boone, Cedar, Cherry, Clay, Dawes, Dixon, Garden, Knox, Merrick, Morrill, Stanton
- Voters who are registered can then request to Vote By Mail.
 - They can fill out the form on the Nebraska Secretary of State (NE SOS) website (they need to print and mail to their county election office or take a picture and email it that office) <https://sos.nebraska.gov/elections/early-voting>.
 - The NDP is also sending out VBM Applications to anyone who fills out our google form. Our form is a little easier than the NE SOS one, so we encourage you to push this link: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe2dRo8Rlau6cWHoNyBmtC57YEy1c0zx-G4yNk9jkmvw85DQ/viewform>

Virtual Volunteer Meetups and Phone Banking: Invite people to a virtual phonebank, text bank, letter writing party, or general organizing meeting by using Google Hangouts, Zoom, or other webinar technology to run them.

We have seen campaigns have all their volunteers log into a Google Hangout while they do their phone banking so they can feel a sense of solidarity (it also keeps people accountable) and your staff can answer their questions as they come up. You can give them a quick campaign update and then do some useful volunteering. The best meetings will start with an emotional campaign update from an organizer, staffer, or the candidate. After introducing, train them with the skill they'll be using and then have them do it right there on the call or webinar, bring everyone back together for a debrief, and then have them commit to the next step. Take a page out of the remote work playbook and gather everyone at the same day and time for a video conference to organize together. Platforms like Zoom allow for "breakout rooms" so that volunteers can meet each other, or use Facebook Live for the easiest low-lift solution.

Phone Calls: Old-fashioned phone calls are a tactic that can be used right now! Personal outreach matters in a disconnected time so call your whole list and do it over and over again. The VAN has a tool for this also, so reach out to NDP staff member Ron Rirvera if you do not know how to use this tool.

Virtual Townhalls: Use Facebook Live for your next town hall. Use your phone camera or your computer keyboard to respond to questions from the safety and comfort of your home, while you're cooking (Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez) or riding in a car (Senator Cory Booker). Making the townhalls fun, informative and letting people get to know you more as a person are all perfect campaign building actions.

Online Content/Updating Websites and Facebook Pages: Now is the time to lean into issue plans you have written and to ask for user-generated content! Ask your volunteers to give feedback on your issue platforms. Ask volunteers to make videos explaining issues important to them. Now is the time to get creative and ask people to contribute to your content on your website and Facebook page.

Texting: Using texting tools like **Hustle or ThruText** helps you reach a lot of people in a short amount of time. Texting is better if it is done peer-to-peer and by people the voters know (see below)--but, texting is still a good way to get thru an entire list of people you need to contact, for example, to remind them to get their Vote By Mail Application sent in so they can vote from home. The NDP has texting tools available. Contact Ron Rivera, we have special pricing for these tools.

Relational Organizing: Relational contact (i.e. a voter contact by someone they know rather than a stranger) has been shown to be one of the most effective methods of increasing voter turnout and volunteer engagement. Look at using digital tools like Team by Tuesday, Hustle, ThruText, OutVote, Outreach Circle, and others allow for digital direct voter contact. We know that supporters talking to their friends is 20x more impactful than cold outreach. Whether your strategy calls for friend-to-friend, friend-to-peer, or even peer-to-peer outreach, it is now easier than ever to meet people where they are: online. Have organizers use peer-to-peer text and phone banking to activate your list in their area and recruit relational organizing volunteers. Each volunteer is then responsible for reaching out to 10-20 of their friends/families about your campaign every 1-2 months. Their ask to their friends could be to support your candidacy or cause, volunteer, donate, vote, or something else.

- An example of vote tripling from the Missouri Democratic Party is here: [MDP's Vote Tripling Program](#).
- OutreachCircle is a supporter management, relational organizing and affinity texting platform that makes it easy for volunteers, activists and donors to support their favorite cause, campaign or organization. They have various levels of paid services.
 - [OutreachCircle 2 Page Overview](#)
 - [8 Minute Product Demo](#)

Get Those Likes: Train organizers and volunteers to focus on growing the social media audiences on social channels with people living in key areas. Start with follow/followback blitzes, posting tons of content (5-10x per day), commenting on dozens of relevant posts, and DMing new followers with your petition or voter registration form. Have organizers identify 10-20 key influencers originally from target areas, and encourage them to speak out for your campaign or issue. Then, organizers can grow their partnerships with local chapters of key allied orgs via social media interaction and planned joint activities such as Twitter chats. Organizations can sometimes be uncomfortable with this ceding of control, but it's worked out better than most organizations' local social media channels every time we've done it. [Also consider pitching social media share squads among your supporters.](#)

Speaker Series: Organize an "exclusive" (or not exclusive!) speaker series where, once or every so often (however often you want) volunteers can call in/join a webinar.

Consider pairing experts with speakers from impacted communities. Give super volunteers a role introducing or asking questions. Invite reporters who might be interested in doing a profile. Or, do it publicly as a series of Facebook Live events or even pre-recorded videos, released once a day for a week or two. With tools like Zoom you can have side by side speakers.

Pitch Stories to the Media: Newspapers, TV stations, radio stations and blogs all still need content during this time. Encourage volunteers to submit letters to the editor or op-eds to their local paper. Encouraging people to tweet at their local media outlet to cover your issue. Call your local reporters and set up virtual briefings on your issue with a local organizer and a local expert or influential voice. Pitch an editorial board. Just realize they need you also! So pitch a story and it will probably be covered.

Promote the Online Census: Here is a simple post you can put up on Facebook to keep pushing your supporters to be engaged in our larger democracy.

- It has never been easier to fill out your Census, whether online. Go to my2020census.gov and you can complete your census right now.

Working Remotely + Securing Your Communications

Because of the lack of in-person confidential meetings that may occur and the increased email and online traffic we'll see, **we highly recommend now is the time to complete the [DNC security checklist](#).**

- You can also use encrypted communication like Signal, Wickr, or WhatsApp.

Help your staff get set up to work from home. The Management Center has some great articles up to help:

- [DNC's tips for working remotely](#)
- [Five Tips on working remotely](#)
- [Coronavirus Could Force Teams to Work Remotely](#) (we particularly like the section on normalizing new work environments)

- [6 Tips For Managing Remote Employees: How To Maintain Productivity And Engagement](#)
- [These 5 Tech Companies Are Providing Free Remote Working Tools During The Coronavirus Outbreak](#)