

Canvassing Tips & Strategies

Please check that a neighborhood has not been canvassed before going door to door and report back to us any time that you canvass. Let us know the location so we can add it to the map and do our best to prevent volunteers from knocking on people's doors or going into businesses multiple times! We don't want to be annoying and turn people off from our efforts. We also would like to know any pertinent information you gather like input from impacted individuals, locations that people express concerns about being a target of ICE raids, interest level, and general demographics.

Safety:

- Only canvass door to door if you or someone with you is familiar with the neighborhood/apartment building. Unfortunately, this is a polarizing topic, and people can be irrational in the current political climate. Some neighborhoods are safer than others, and some neighborhoods simply may not be open to canvassing.
- Introduce yourselves as concerned citizens/neighbors/community members looking to inform others of ways to protect immigrants in their community and ask if they are interested in helping immigrants in their communities. If the response is negative or hostile, thank them for their time and leave without attempting further conversation. Stay safe and walk away.
- Never give your full name or where you live. You can say something like, "I live just a few streets over" or "I'm just a concerned neighbor wanting to help spread helpful information.". Even people who seem friendly may have ulterior motives.
- Connect interested people to We Keep Us Safe via our website or interest form instead of giving them your personal information. If they prefer to give you their email address, go ahead and write it down and send it to WKUS so we can reach out to them through our official email address.
- Never go canvass by yourself, always in pairs at the minimum.
- Do not ask people for their information. These are difficult and scary times so it is natural for people to doubt our intentions! It's important to build trust when we are trying to get community buy in.

Materials to Bring:

For tabling:

- A 4ft folding table
- A storage box is helpful but whatever you have to carry things
- Folders for your handouts and kits

- Binder clips are helpful for handouts when it's windy
- Any flyers that are appropriate and the QR code for our interest form either on your phone for people to scan or a single printed sheet for people to scan while they are there. Please reach out to us with questions about what materials to bring because some materials are more appropriate for targeted versus privileged communities! It's a good idea to include information on local resources like food banks and clothing drives.
- Bring plenty of whistle kits! It can be hard to be certain exactly how successful each location is going to be. You can always have people take more than one if they want to give kits to friends/family!
- Water/drinks and food for people to take, especially in impacted areas. Also items like hand warmers when the weather is cold. We are building community!

For canvassing on foot:

- It's helpful if each person can have a canvas/grocery/tote bag they can use to carry resource kits.
- Please reach out to us with any questions regarding what materials you should bring. Some of the zines and flyers are more appropriate for non-impacted communities.
- Whistle kits recommended materials can be found [here](#) and include:
 - Sandwich bag/ziploc bag
 - Whistle
 - [We Keep Us Safe Zine](#) (print, then [fold](#))
 - [Resource QR Code Quarter Sheets](#) (2 pages—print double-sided, then cut)
 - [Red Card](#)
 - [How to ID ICE handout](#) by Aurora Unidios (print double sided then cut into quarters)
- To preserve whistles/materials, it's helpful to have an alternate resource to put on people's doorsteps (if they don't open the door).
 - Option 1: Resource Kit WITHOUT a whistle
 - Attach to people's doors with a rubber band
 - Option 2: Handout—tape to people's doors
 - [Combined We Keep Us Safe/IPT "How to Report ICE" Handout](#) (print both pages, double-sided)
 - The handout does not include our sign-up form URL on the front. Small precaution against bad actors.
- For canvassers who are not Spanish speakers, it could be helpful to have key canvassing phrases in English and Spanish (either on your phone, or printed/on a clipboard):

- “We have information about how to defend/protect ourselves against ICE.”
 - “Tenemos información sobre cómo defendernos contra ICE.”
- “When you hear the whistle, it means ICE could be nearby. If you are at higher risk, go inside your house. Do not open the door.”
 - “Cuando escuche el silbato, significa que ICE podría estar cerca. Si corre mayor riesgo, entre a su casa. No abra la puerta.”

Where to Canvass:

- Door-to-door
 - You know your neighborhood best and not every neighborhood is accepting of people knocking on doors. Prioritize helping everyone feel safe and building goodwill with residents. In heavily impacted communities, door-to-door may not be appropriate because people are fearful in these times.
 - Do not go door to door in an area that no one in your canvassing group is connected to. This is for safety and community building and is especially true in impacted communities. People are extra suspicious and untrusting right now, and we do not want to burn bridges or have any of you get hurt. We know you have good intentions, but it is possible to cause harm to impacted communities if approached incorrectly.
- Soccer fields
 - We had great success with two back-to-back soccer games.
 - Could ask a coach or parent if you can set up a table near the entrance.
 - That way, you can catch people as they enter/exit the fields—less intrusive on families who are trying to watch their loved ones play.
 - A group of 2-3 could be at the table for the start of each game, then 1 person stays at the table while everyone else heads into the neighborhood or nearby businesses to canvass.
 - Heading into winter, we could try indoor soccer complexes.
- Laundromats
- Parks
- Could try visiting apartment complexes, either door-to-door or focusing on common areas/entrances.
- Outside a library with their consent
- If you see a Little Free Library, leave resources there
- Set up a table or stand outside businesses and other public places.

Tips & Strategies:

- It's ideal to attend a relevant training beforehand. We don't expect you to take all the trainings! However, they will help you be more effective in canvassing and aid you in conversations and questions that people may have. Please be honest when you don't know the answer to questions and refer people to the website. Check out our [training calendar](#).
- Never give legal advice unless you are a lawyer. It is great to let people know their rights, but we don't want to accidentally cause harm with incorrect information.
- If someone is open, talk to people about their experiences and how they would like the community to respond to ICE without asking for personal information. This is especially important in communities that we do not live in. We cannot take an approach that does not include the people who live in the community. We are here to build connections and support each other.
- Ask if there are any events or locations that they are concerned about ICE targeting.
- Make sure at least one volunteer is present who fluently speaks the same language as the community you are reaching out to. For other volunteers in the group that do not speak the language, we have some advice below. If the language is not Spanish, please defer to the volunteer that speaks the language for helpful phrases!
- If you speak limited Spanish, it's helpful to arrange the materials in the resource kit baggies a certain way:
 - Spanish side of materials facing out of the baggie so it's clearly seen and can be pointed to.
 - If you're struggling to communicate about the resources, showing folks the information is in both English & Spanish is really helpful.
- Some folks thought we were charging money for the resource kits.
 - If folks seem interested in the information/resources, but are slightly wary when you try to hand the bag to them, you can clarify "**It's free.**" ("**Es gratis.**")
- If folks are not interested in taking the resources, focus on ensuring they're comfortable—we don't want people to feel we're pushing resources on them. Thank them for their time, and move on.
- If people are really interested in the materials, you can ask if they want additional kits to hand out. Point out the website and explain they can request materials there.
 - "**How many more would you like?**" ("**Cuantos más quieres?**")
 - If it's someone walking their dog or someone who's talking to you on their doorstep, you can ask if they want more kits for family members/friends.

- If it's someone who is running a table/concession stand/businesses/etc., you can ask them if they would like more kits to hand out at their table/business.
 - Ex: A woman who had a table set up to sell concessions at the soccer game was very open to handing out more kits.