

**It can be disappointing as you organize an event or activity and the turnout is less than you hoped. But here are ten tips to turn your disappointment into a feeling of satisfaction as you meet your turn-out goals. This is not an all-inclusive list, but it should help.**



## Tips for Turnout

**1. Plan the action or event with a core group of other supporters.**

By including others in the planning, you will have a core group committed to the outcome. Each cadre member has their own set of relationships and turnout ultimately comes down to not letting down your friends. So turnout increases as more help plan.

*For Instance: When planning how to contact voters, talk one-on-one with key members of your school or community about helping plan the campaign. Be selective in asking people who have are respected by others within the different sub-groups that exist. Sit down together, discuss the intended outcome, provide resources from the campaign, and mutually set goals and plan the activities.*

**2. Set a goal and let folks know about it.**

Setting a goal helps others understand what it takes to succeed and their part in achieving it. The goal should be an actual number of people needed for the action or event to be successful. The number should relate to the actual outcome intended by bringing people together.

*For instance: In order to win this election, we need to contact 500 voters in our area. Each pair of walkers can contact about 40 households during the walk. Our goal is to turn out 14 volunteers!*

**3. Remember the math of turnout.**

People are busy. People get sick. People forget. People write down the wrong location. And some people just tell you yes to get you off their back. So you need to know the “math” of turnout. To get one person to say yes to a volunteer request, you should plan on talking one-on-one with 5 people. Half the people who RSVP to show up for a volunteer activity will actually show up, so get twice as many RSVPs as you need.

*For instance: Your turnout goal is 10 people so you will need to talk 50 people because 20 will say yes and 10 will actually show up.*

**4. Divide the turnout goals and lists.**

Create a list of all potential volunteers and work with your core team. Divide them among the group and set up a reporting system to track results. Otherwise this work is not manageable.

*For instance: If there are five people on our core group and your goal is 10 volunteers, have each person be responsible for asking 20 people, getting 4 RSVPs which will turn out 2.*

**5. Start with your closest friends and supporters.**

Each of the core team members should start by asking those they know well who are most likely to say yes. The early success gets the ball rolling. If you have a list of ten to contact and get your best friend to say yes, you can publicize this as you ask a mutual acquaintance.

*For instance: Jill, we are going out Saturday to walk for Prop. 204. Mary is coming with me. Will you join us? It will be fun.*

6. **Keep the core planning team on task** by having positive, constructive conversations about progress. Do this several times and jointly trouble-shoot as you go along.  
*For instance: Make a point to stop by and have a brief conversation with each core planning team member – Hi, how are the turnout conversations going? Any luck so far? I have talked to three of my ten so far. What are you hearing?*
  
7. **Assign others to be responsible for components of the event.** If others have specific responsibilities they will attend and they will invest in the event’s success. The more people who are participating that have such a responsibility, the stronger your core of volunteers.  
*For instance: Assign someone to bring the water. Assign another person to bring the ice. Assign another person to bring clipboards, etc.*
  
8. **Make it fun!** Be creative and make it exciting, too. Your imagination is the key here. If that is not your strength, be sure to have someone else who makes things fun and exciting on your core planning team.  
*For instance: Have a theme. Perhaps you are walking for an Irish candidate. Have all the volunteers wear green and go out to an Irish pub after the event.*
  
9. **Publicize who is coming and your RSVPs to everyone.**  
As the list of volunteers grows, publish it in emails, on bulletin boards, and through word of mouth. Create a sense that this is “the thing to do.” Think of the snowball rolling down hill as you build momentum.  
*For instance: On a bulletin board, draw a thermometer and begin filling in names in red to show the temperature rising. Start by listing the names of your core team so from the start, you have some temperature to show.*
  
10. **Reminders**  
Keep an accurate and complete list of volunteers who have committed to show up and remind them several times using multiple methods of communication. Be sure they have a written summary of the time, date, and address.  
*For instance: Send them a thank-you email with the logistics as soon as they volunteer. Send a second email the day before the event. Be sure to remind them in passing when you see them.*

**Special Note**

Emails do not turn-out volunteers.

The best way to get people to actually say yes and show up for your activity is to ask them one-on-one. Emails can serve as reminders for those who RSVP, recognize those who say yes, publicize the activity to everyone you are asking, create a buzz, hype the fun people will have, and make it sound important and vital, but they will not produce turnout.

