

Relational Voter Organizing

PART 1

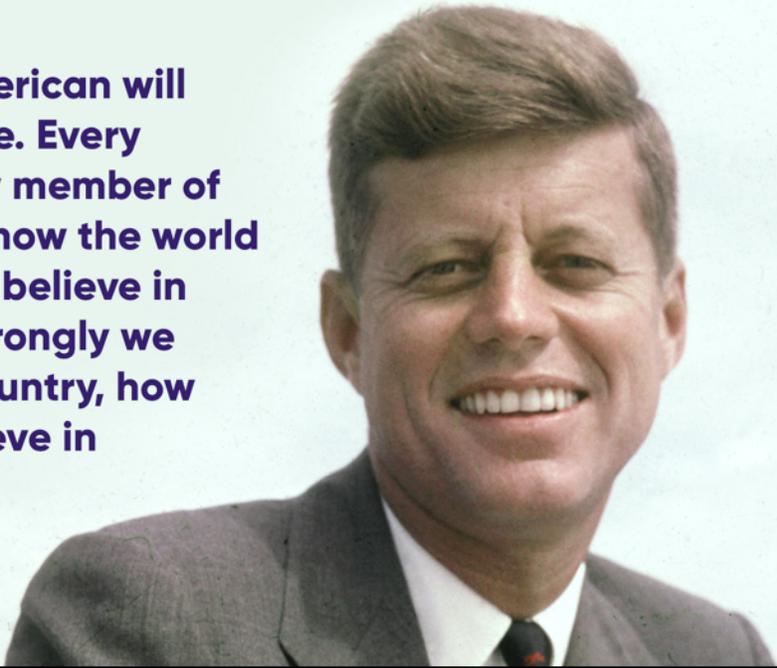


OFA

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"I hope every American will turn out and vote. Every American—every member of his family. And show the world how strongly we believe in freedom, how strongly we believe in our country, how strongly we believe in democracy."

JOHN F. KENNEDY



NOTES: fade out title of "Relational voter organizing part one" as video of JFK begins to play

@0:08 - 0:49 (if possible, overlay the bold text below in large font on-top of video as JFK says the words)

Video fades to black with "we believe in democracy" overlay lingering on the screen for an extra few beats

"In these tense and anxious weeks, I know that **every American citizen wants to know what he can do for his country**. Not everyone can serve in our armed forces or serve in our government, but **there is one thing you can do**. There is one way you can indicate your devotion to freedom. There is one way in which we can show how strongly we believe in our democracy. Next **Tuesday, November 6th is election day**. I hope every American will **turn out and vote**. Every American—every member of his family. And **show the world** how strongly we believe in freedom, how strongly we believe in our country, how strongly **we believe in democracy**."



Montage of images of people voting, at the polls, “I voted” stickers, etc.

PLAY audio of John Lewis @0:12 – 1:00 (*David: is it overdoing it by playing two videos / audios in a row?*) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h5i_qelqm5U

NOTES: “Senator John Lewis (Georgia)” pverlayed ontop of montage

“In a democracy, the right to vote is the most powerful, non-violent tool we have. Many people marched and protested for the right to vote. Some gave a little blood and others lost their lives. Some of you have heard me say that the right to vote is precious, almost sacred. In my hearts of hearts, I believe we should make it simple and convenient for all of our citizens to be part of the democratic process. It should not matter whether you’re black or white, latino, Asian American, or native American—we should be able to participate in the democratic process.”

NARRATOR The right to vote is one of the most fundamental and central rights in any democracy, but even today, there are still those trying to deny that very right to millions of their fellow Americans.

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Disenfranchisement

OFA

NOTES: Brennan Center “Voting restrictions in America” MAP. Can we have each state fills in one at a time?

Overlay assaults on voting rights, one at a time

Voter disenfranchisement

Voter suppression

Voter intimidation

NARRATOR: In many states across the country, there are active and open efforts trying to prevent eligible citizens from voting. From creating barriers to registration, to constraining early voting, to closing polling places in predominantly minority communities. From politically motivated purges of voter rolls to spreading false claims of widespread in-person voter fraud.

But the United States doesn't just have a voting rights problem, it also has a voter turnout problem.

Disenfranchisement Suppression

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U.S. trails most developed countries in voter turnout.

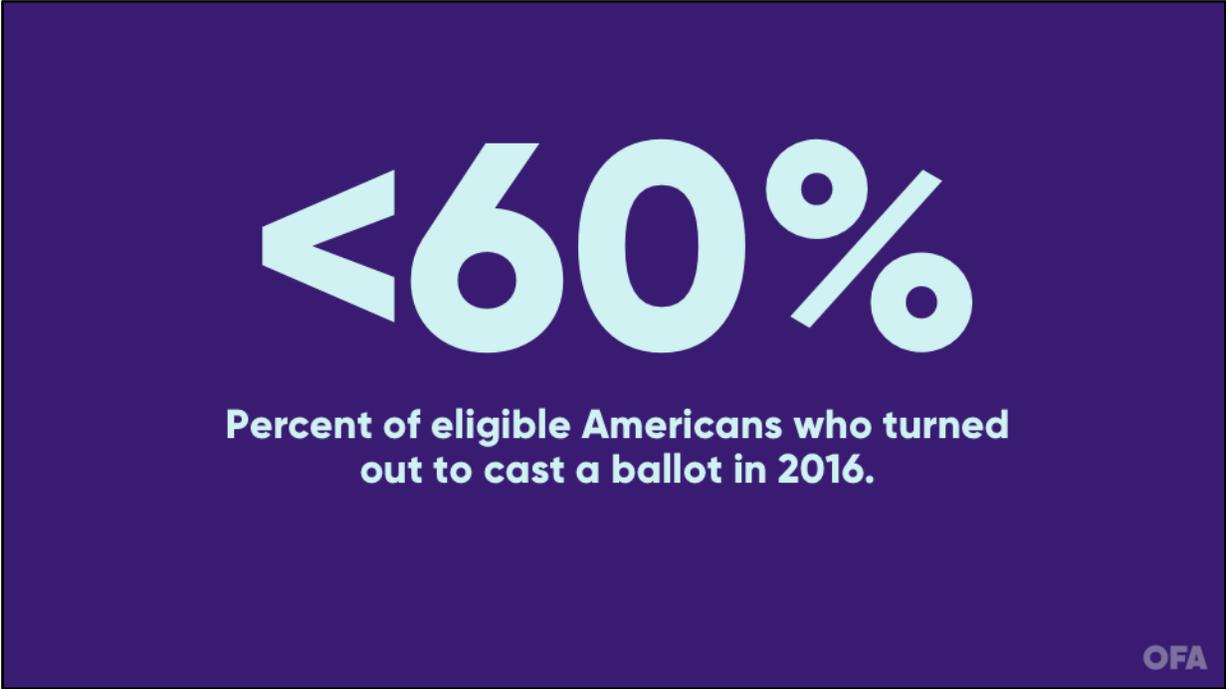
PEW RESEARCH CENTER
MAY 2018

OFA

NOTES: David, curious is you think we need a transition slide between voter suppression and turnout rate topics, like a slide with a dark background that says the last line from the previous slide “the United States doesn’t just have a voting rights problem, it also has a voter turnout problem.”

Audio of Obama @2:17 - 2:24: “Even if we eliminated every restriction on voting, we would still have one of the lowest voting rates among free peoples.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0q8uT2JATJw>



<60%

Percent of eligible Americans who turned out to cast a ballot in 2016.

OFA

NOTES: David, is there a way to recreate this chart that's more consistent with the rest of the slides and easier for the viewer to digest?

NARRATOR: Even though nearly 70% of Americans say that high voter turnout in presidential elections is very important, in the last presidential election **in 2016, less than 60% of eligible Americans turned out to cast a ballot**. That places America at 26th among 32 developed countries. ([source](#))



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37%

Percent of eligible Americans who turned out to cast a ballot in 2014.

OFA

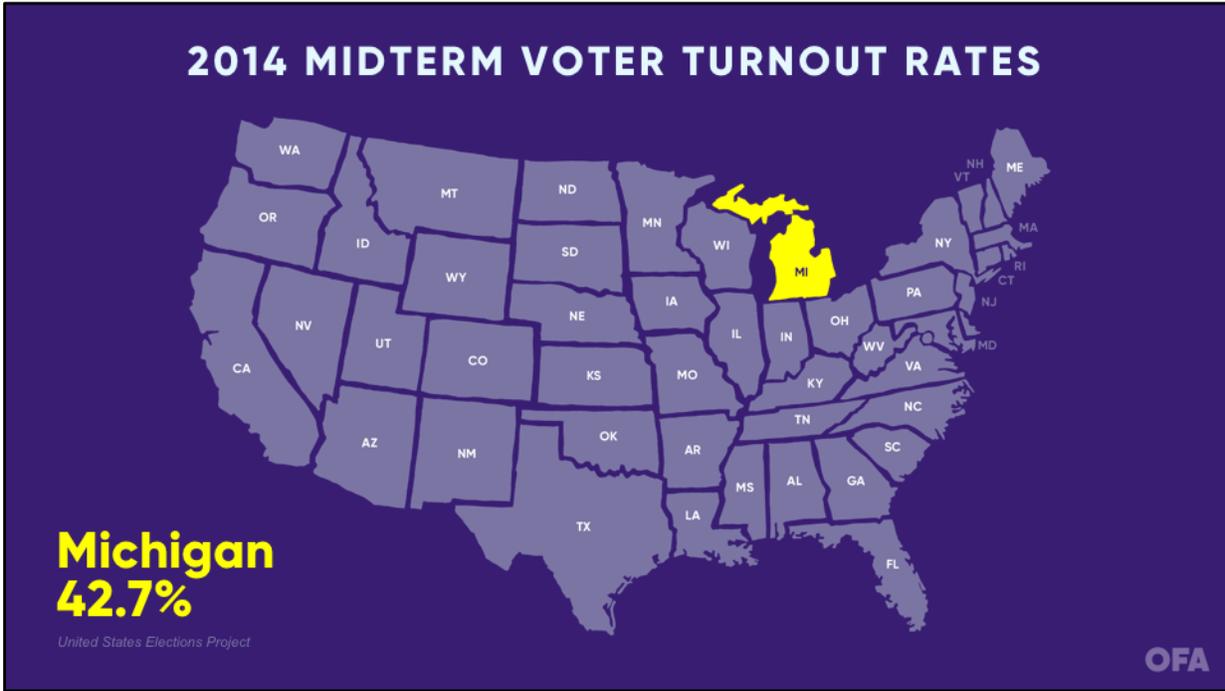
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NOTES: Pop-up should move through 3-4 states (NV, MI, FL, CA) and “In 2014, only 37% of eligible Americans turned out to vote”

NARRATOR: And voter turnout in midterm elections is historically even worse. **In 2014, more than 37% of Americans who were eligible to vote decided not to.** ([source](#)) The people who aren’t turning out for elections have just as much influence on the outcome as those who do.



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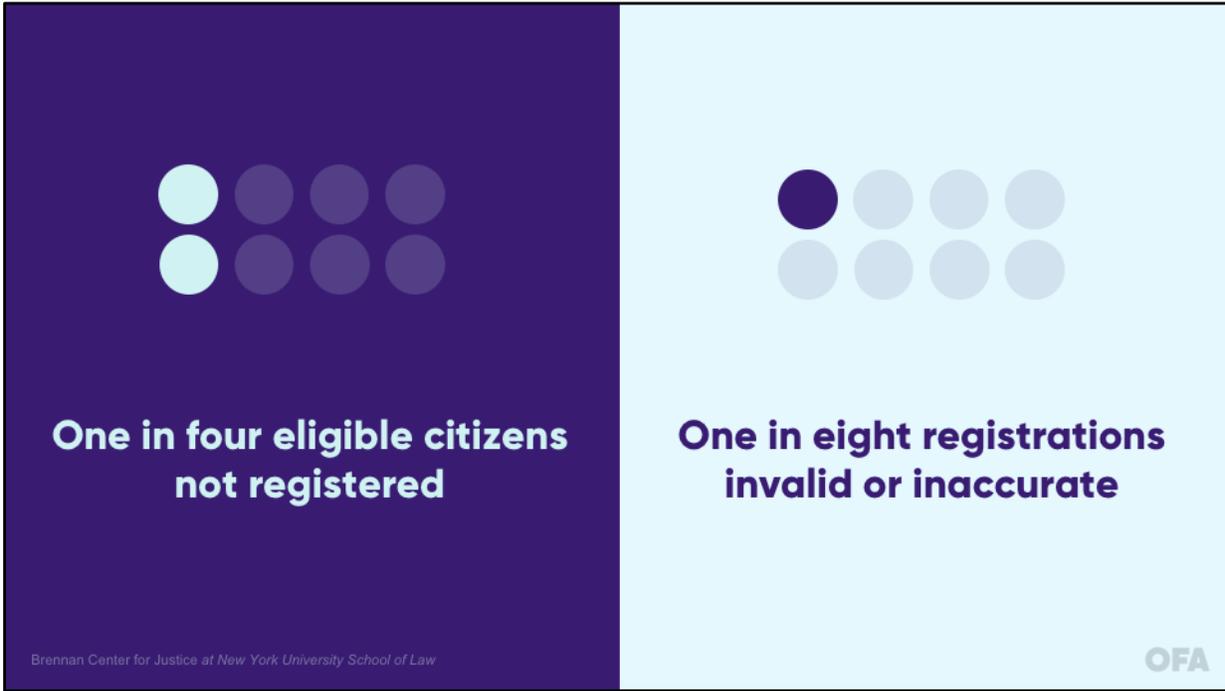


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OFA



NARRATOR: In most elections, turnout is a consequence of how many people are actually registered to vote. And while some states have automatic or same-day voter registration, nationwide, 1 in 4 citizens aren't even registered to vote. And of those that are, nearly 1 in 8 registrations end up being invalid or inaccurate.

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Candidate	Votes	Pct.
Conor Lamb (D)	113,813	49.8%
Rick Saccone (R)	113,186	49.6%
Other (I)	1,379	0.6%

100.0% of precincts reporting

NOTES: News clips montage / collage -- higher voter turnout, close races (folder [here](#))

NARRATOR: In an election cycle where races across the country are being decided by the slimmest of margins, we can't leave *any* votes on the table this year—especially those of the people we know.



A Single Vote Has Flipped Control Of Virginia's House Of Delegates

OFA

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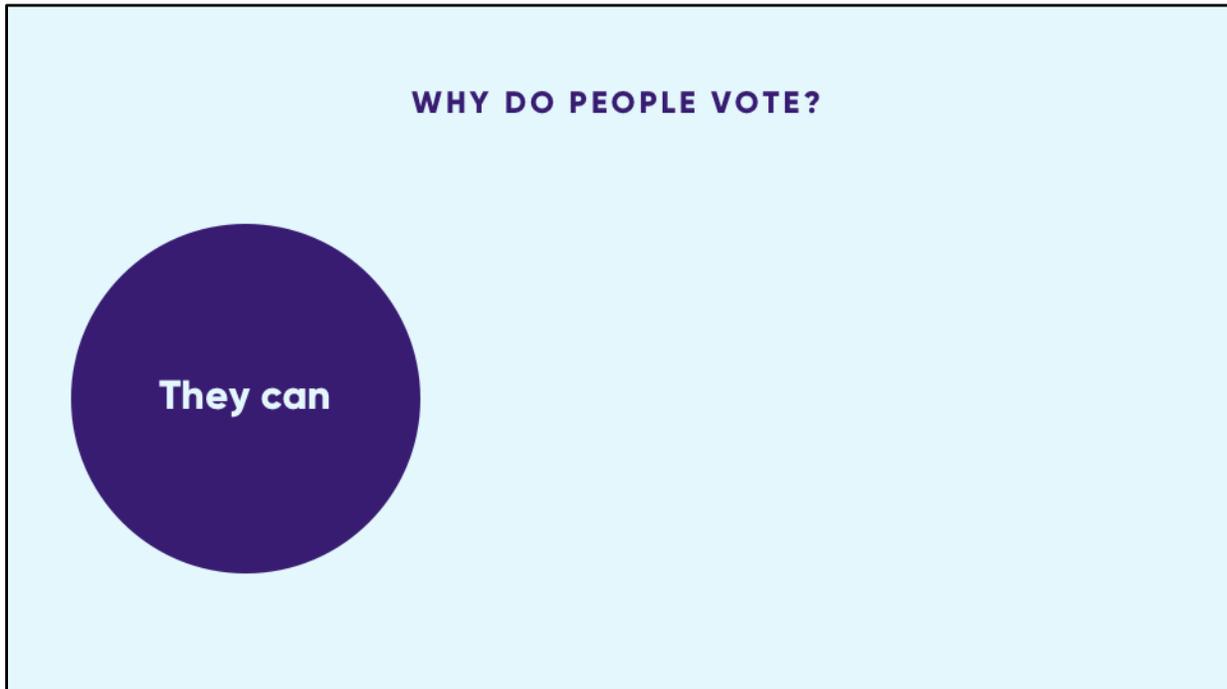
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ONE POSSIBLE SOLUTION:

Expand the Electorate

OFA

NARRATOR: So with historically low voter turnout, low registration, and slim margins, what can we, as concerned citizens and organizers, do to make a difference *before* November? One way to address the challenge is to expand the electorate. With voter enthusiasm running high across the country—more people are paying attention, more people are engaged, and more people are frustrated by what they see from their elected officials.



NOTES: bullets should appear one at a time, with the last emphasized

NARRATOR: To briefly recap, we know that there are a lot of reasons why someone might not vote, but there are three main reasons why people *do*: (1) Because they can (i.e., they're eligible to vote, they know how, they have the time, and they have a way to get to their polling location), (2) because they want to (i.e., they're interested in elections, they care about the issues, they feel like voting is important as a civic duty and that they can impact the political system), and (3)—the one we'll be focusing on—because they are asked to. But asking works a whole lot better if the person being asked knows the person doing the asking.

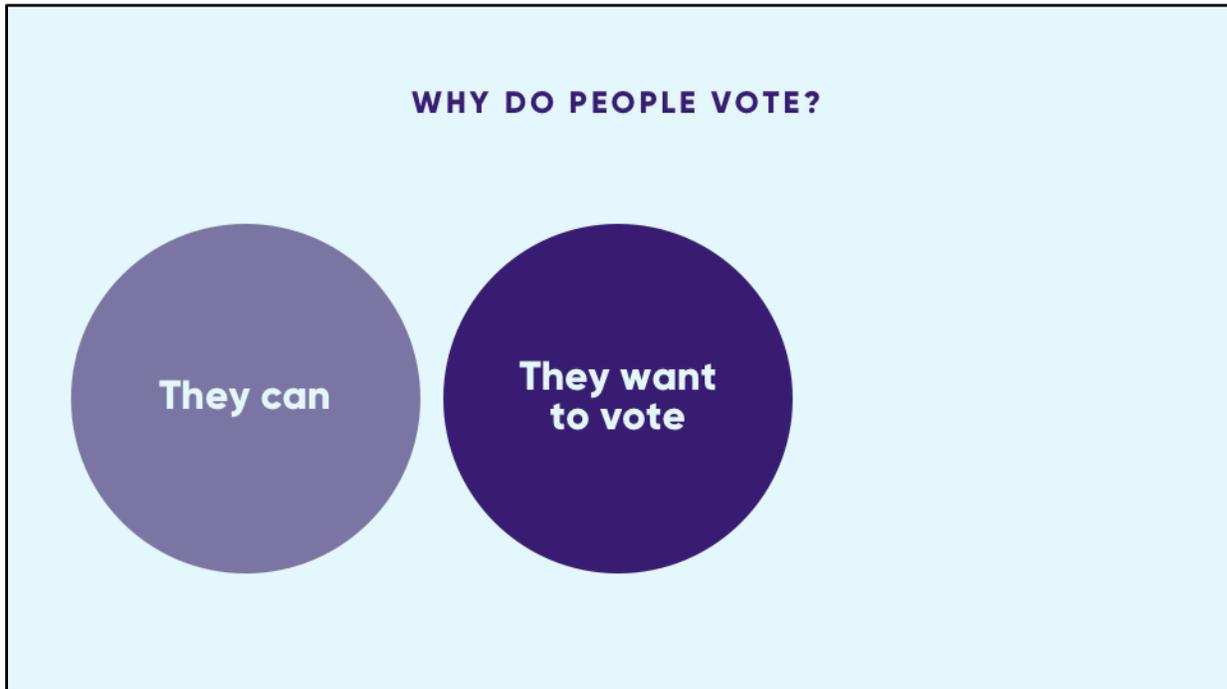
Why people vote

Because they can

Because they want to

Because they are asked to

Source: Analyst Institute



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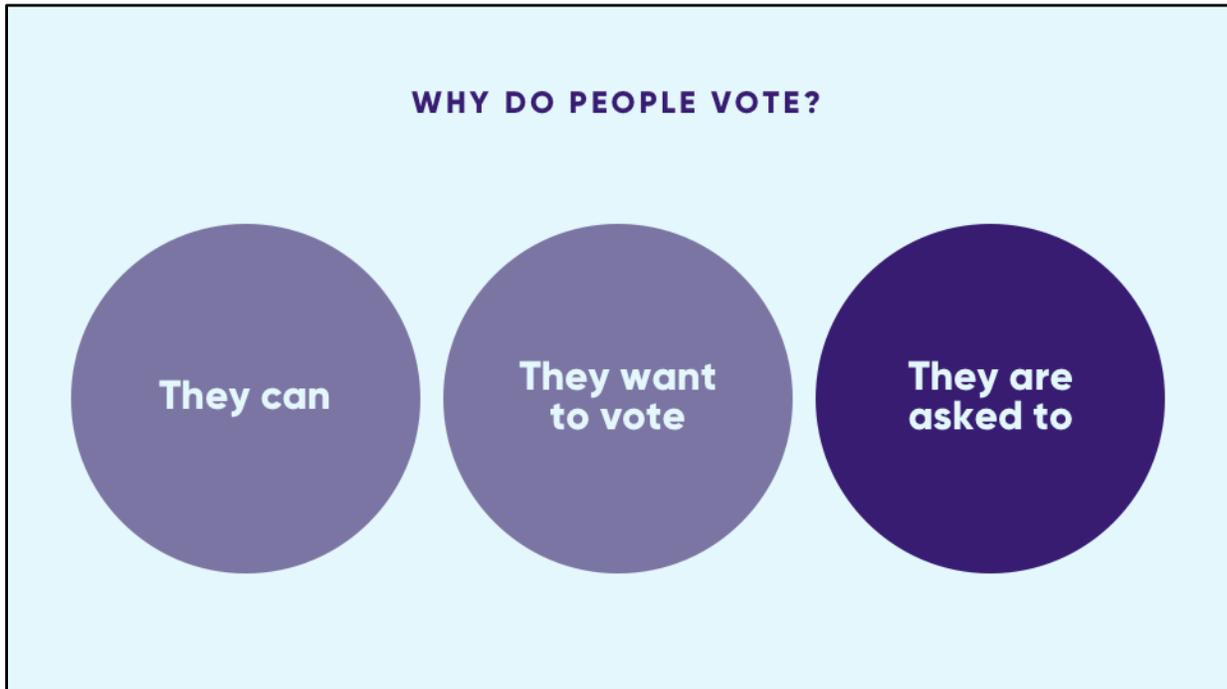
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Because they can

Because they want to

Because they are asked to

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HOW?

Relational Organizing

OFA

NOTES: Map of OFA's priority districts and states filling in one at a time. Would love if network links could start spider-ing out from central nodes in places like Minneapolis, Chicago, Denver, Seattle, L.A., NYC, etc

NARRATOR: In order to expand the electorate where it matters most, where it will have the most impact this November, we need a strategy. The good news is that there's an effective approach that can help, that anyone can do, no matter where they live. It's called relational organizing. But before we dive into the how, let's take a step back to understand what it is, why it works, and why we're using it.



NOTES: IMAGE MONTAGE: Famous organizing pics (abolitionists, suffragettes, unions, civil rights, cesar chavez / dolores huerta, Obama campaign, black lives matter, women’s march, etc.) (see drive folder for more photos)

NARRATOR: We know that real, lasting change requires more than righteous anger—it requires a program, and it requires ordinary people coming together to fight for the issues that matter to them. Organizing has a long history in this country—as long as the country itself. From political parties to trade unions to issue advocacy/social justice groups, millions of Americans have stepped up to take on the big fights for basic fairness, equal rights, and expanding opportunity to everyone. And through it all, much of hard-fought progress that was achieved, was accomplished through organizing. But what is organizing?

**Organizing is about relationships—
forming partnerships, building coalitions,
developing networks—and using those
relationships to bring people together
around a common goal or cause.**

OFA

*Image: Organizing 101. Show snowflake model being built one node and link at a time
(alt: decentralized version in [network models](#))*

NARRATOR: The theory is simple: Organizing is about relationships—forming partnerships, building coalitions, developing networks—and using those relationships to bring people together around a common goal or cause. It’s about building a sustaining collective power to create change, through petitions, letter writing campaigns, legislative office visits, marches, protests, and town halls. And it can span over multiple years.

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**Volunteers and organizers use their own
social networks to effect desired outcomes.**

OFA

NOTES: Relational organizing in large font; definition in smaller font either below or next to

NARRATOR: Relational organizing happens when activists use **their own pre-existing relationships with friends and family members to effect desired outcomes**. Relational organizing around elections is more focused. It's centered around activating and mobilizing the relationships you already have—with your friends, your family, your neighbors. And it's honed in on specific important moment: election day.

Relational organizing:

Volunteers and organizers use their own social networks—their pre-existing relationships with friends and family—to effect desired outcomes.

Source: The Analyst Institute

Trust.

OFA

NARRATOR: At the core of any relationship is one thing: Trust. And trust requires time and experience. The good news is that with relational organizing, you've already done the heavy lifting of putting in the time, developing the relationships—the hard part's done.

It may sound simple, obvious even. Of course reaching out to someone you know—who trusts you—is going to be more effective than reaching out to a stranger. This isn't new, but we know that it works.

Why does it work?

OFA

Why it works (*bullets should appear one at a time*)

NARRATOR: We can't ask someone to commit, register, or prepare to vote if we can't get in touch with them. In today's political climate, the messenger can matter just as much as (if not more than) the message itself. That's one reason this strategy is so effective—a potential volunteer or voter is more likely pick up a call from someone they know than from someone they don't.

Why it works: A trusted messenger means...

We reach more people

A more effective conversation

A TRUSTED MESSENGER MEANS...

We reach more people

OFA

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More effective conversations**

OFA

Why it works (*bullets should appear one at a time*)

NARRATOR: We know that social pressure can be an effective tool for getting someone to take an action—and few people can exert more pressure than a friend or family member. Asking your aunt or sister-in-law to come canvass or phone-bank with you next Thursday is more effective than if a stranger asks them to take the same action. And because the ask comes from someone they trust, instead of spending valuable time trying to develop a relationship in order to make an ask, you can take advantage of an existing relationship to get that person to register, vote, volunteer, or whatever you need them to do.

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A TRUSTED MESSENGER MEANS...

**We reach more people
More effective conversations
Personalized messages**

OFA

Why it works (*bullets should appear one at a time*)

NARRATOR: Another added value to relational organizing is that because you know the people you're reaching out to, you can personalize what you say so that it aligns with the issues or values that you both care about, and you can follow up to make sure they've registered to vote or RSVP'd for that next canvassing event.

A TRUSTED MESSENGER MEANS...

We reach more people
More effective conversations
Personalized messages
Greater accountability

OFA

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Research shows that contact from a friend is 2x as effective as contact from a stranger at increasing a voter's likelihood to turnout.

OFA

NARRATOR: Research has made it clear that, when contacted by friends and family, people who otherwise would not do so can be moved to vote. Research shows that talking with those in your network resulted in an average 5.9% increase in turnout. That means that if we can just use the relationships we have right now, *before* November, we can meaningfully expand the electorate.

This approach does not take the place of traditional voter contact methods like canvassing and phone-banking, but it is highly effective when used in combination with those tactics.

OFA

NARRATOR: It's important to note, however, that this approach—relational organizing—doesn't take the place of methods like door-to-door canvassing, high-traffic canvassing, or phone banking—but, it's an effective tool when used in combination with those traditional voter contact methods.

The Big Picture

OFA

NARRATOR: One of the best ways to bring your community together and build a stronger democracy is to volunteer on a local campaign. Those campaigns typically understand who they are prioritizing, which values and issues to emphasize, and where help is needed the most. But for people who don't live in areas with active campaigns, or who can't knock doors because of mobility issues, this kind of personalized organizing can be a really effective way for volunteers to make an impact this year. But it should be viewed as a piece of a larger system, and together each tactic reinforces one another as we work to elect representatives who align with our values.

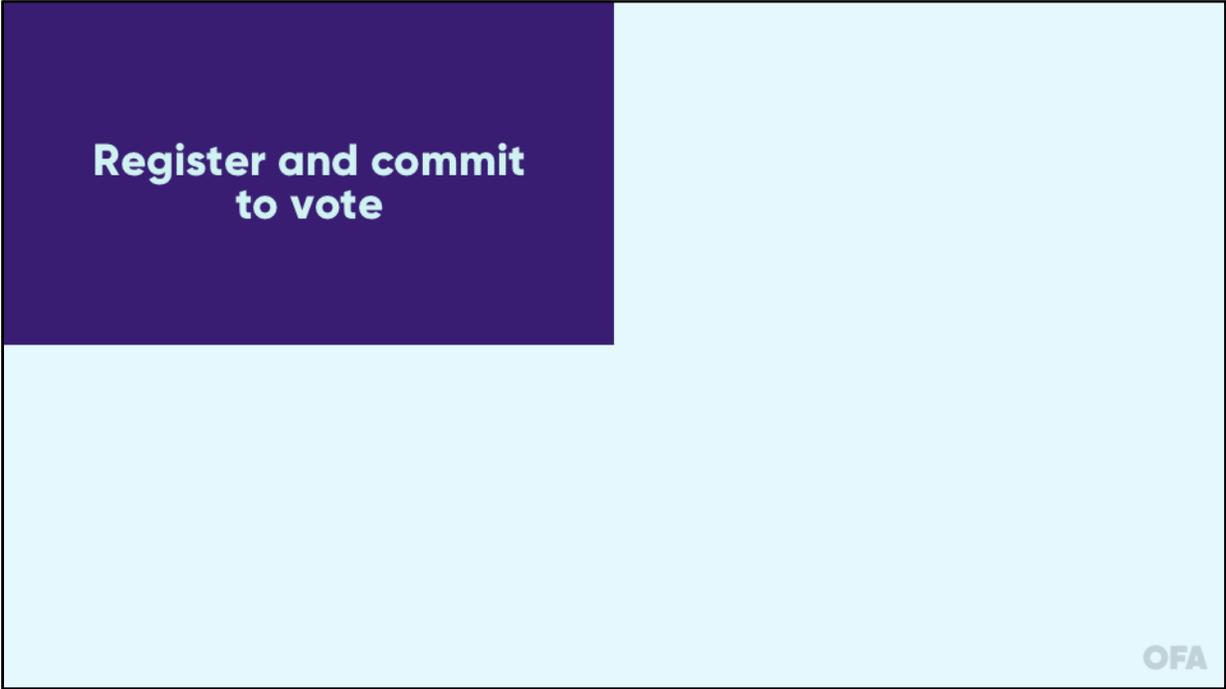
The big picture

Register and commit to vote

Volunteer with a local campaign

Lean on your networks (relational organizing)

Support campaigns, causes, & organizations you believe in



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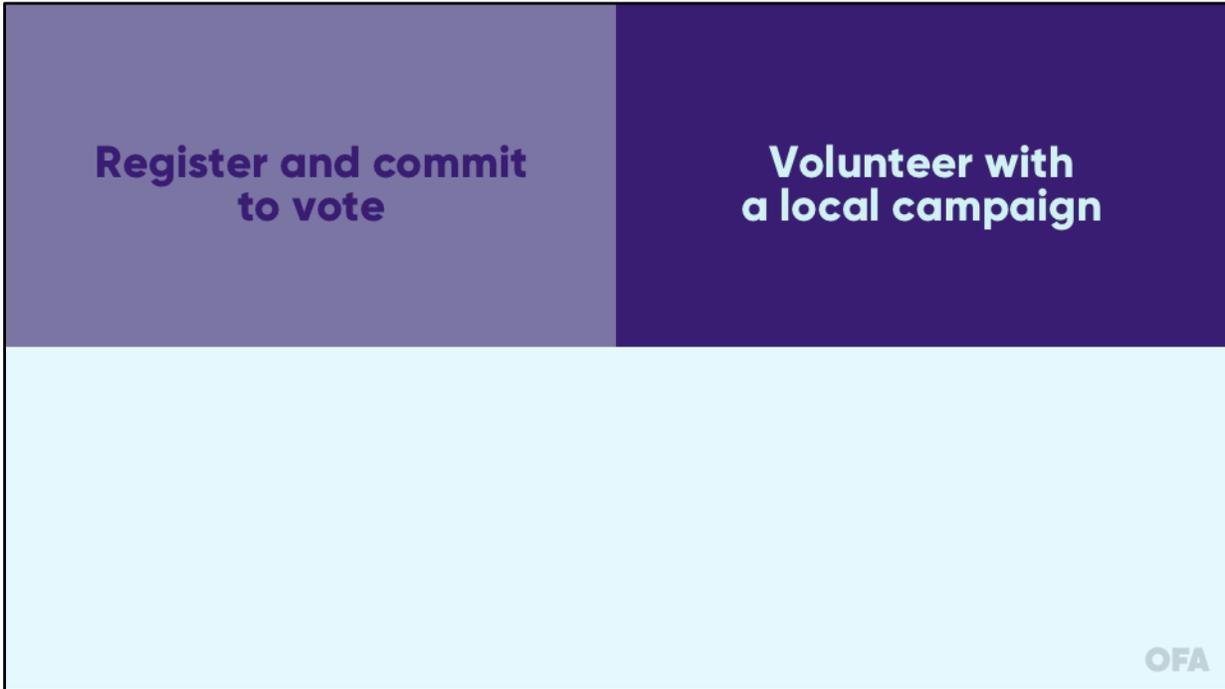
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Lean on your networks (relational organizing)

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Expand the Electorate

OFA

NOTES: I couldn't find a better photo that conveys both high-stakes and the need to expand the electorate, but maybe you can

NARRATOR: The stakes in this year's elections are extremely high—not just for the issues we care about, and not just for holding our elected officials accountable, but for the very soul of our democracy. We can't afford to leave *any* votes on the table this year. We can't just rely on the folks who are already committed and already vote on a regular basis—we need to expand the electorate.

Don't leave any votes on the table

OFA

NARRATOR: With historically low voter turnout in midterms, we have a real opportunity to make an impact where it's needed most. The people we know—the people who trust us, who share our values, who will listen to us when we say their voice matters. We need to turn allies and supporters into voters. And we can do it by simply leaning on our own networks, with the right people in the right places.

Who should you prioritize?

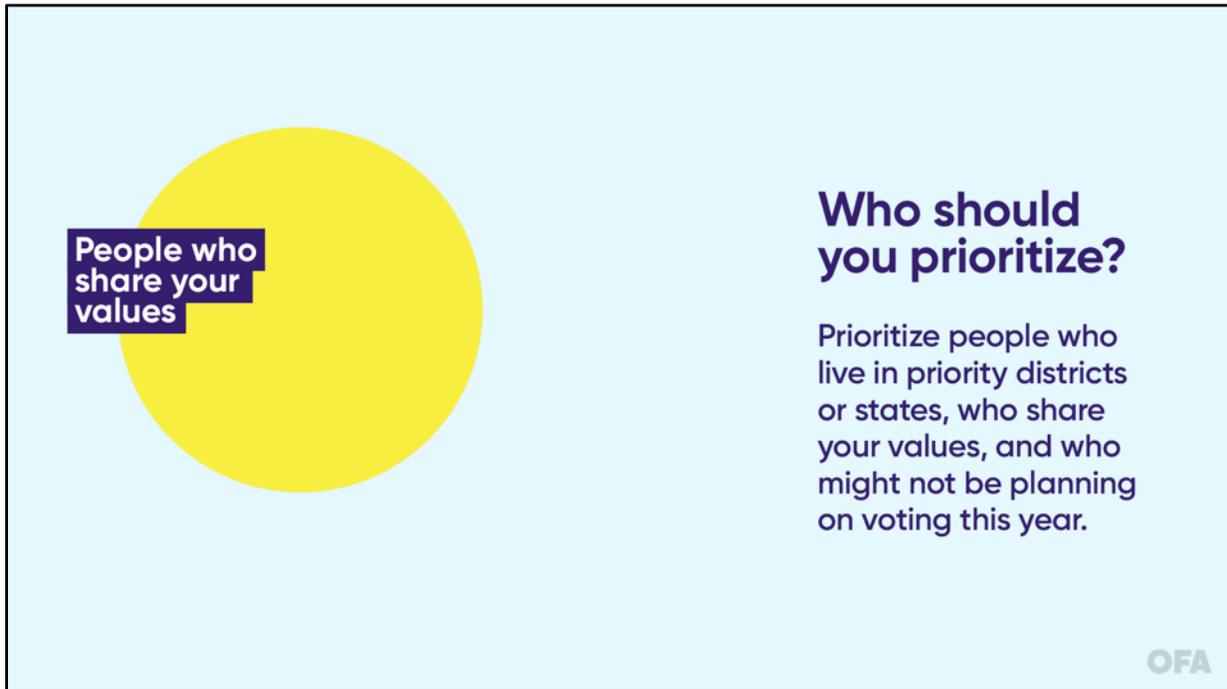
Prioritize people who live in priority districts or states, who share your values, and who might not be planning on voting this year.

OFA

What's Next? Part II: A how to (*venn diagram circles should appear one at a time*)

NARRATOR: For some of you, talking to your friends & family about voting seems pretty self-explanatory—maybe you think you've already reached out to everyone you can think of and you want something more impactful to do. But in most cases, there are people in your network that you've overlooked—people who live in or near priority districts and states that may still need to hear from you in order to cast their vote this year. Stick with us for the next training and we'll make sure sure you have everything you need to activate the right people, in the right places.

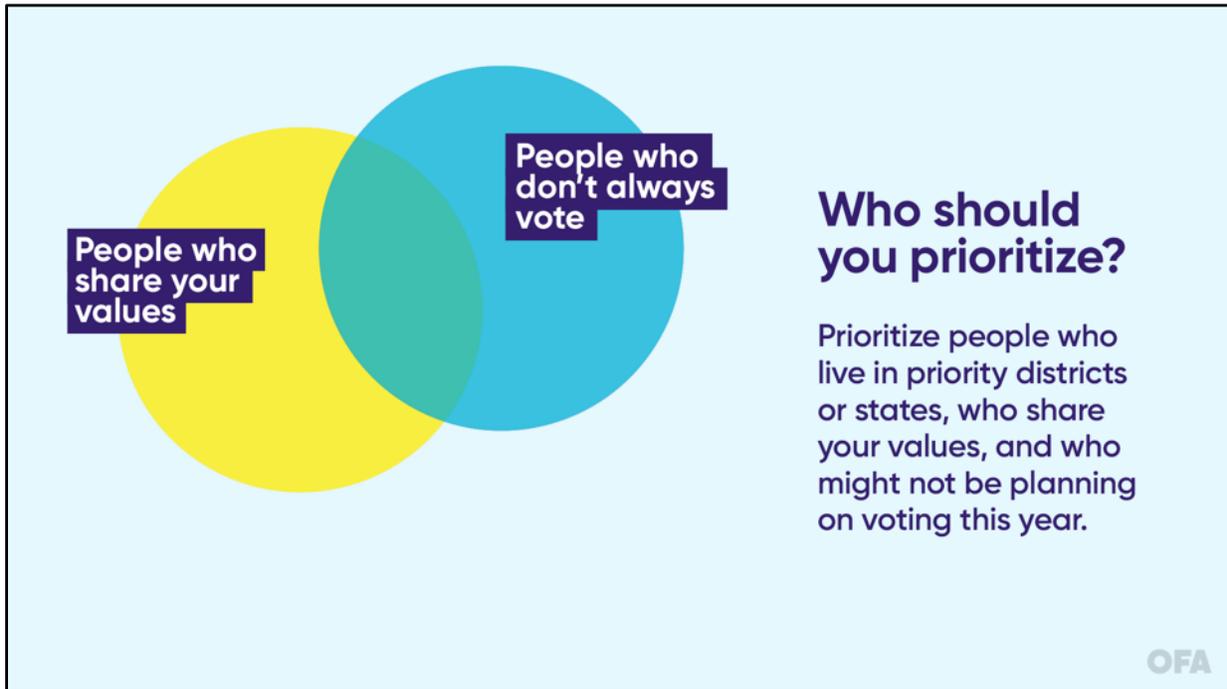
For others, we also know that talking to your friends and family about politics can seem awkward, complicated, or even intimidating. But if you plan ahead and know your strategy, we know you'll be successful. In the next module, we'll dive into exactly how you can prioritize who to reach out to and what to say, including an easy activity that you and your friends can do called Friend-Mapping.



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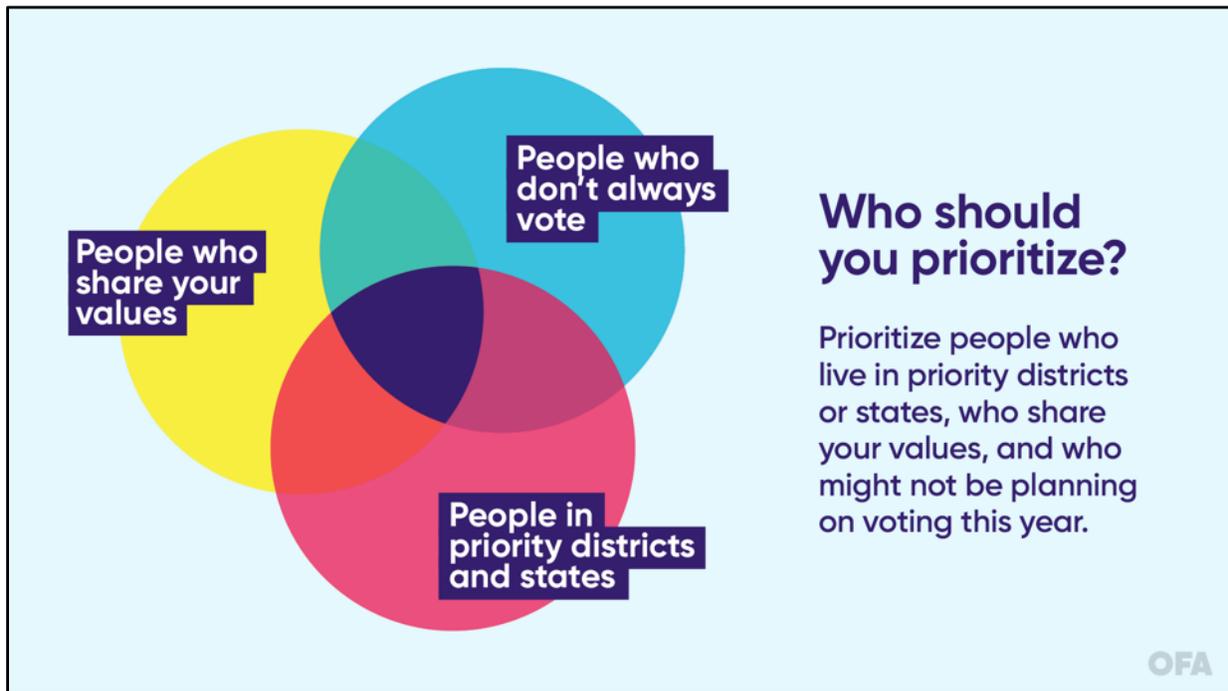
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What's Next? Part II: A how to (*venn diagram circles should appear one at a time*)

NARRATOR: For some of you, talking to your friends & family about voting seems pretty self-explanatory—maybe you think you’ve already reached out to everyone you can think of and you want something more impactful to do. But in most cases, there are people in your network that you’ve overlooked—people who live in or near priority districts and states that may still need to hear from you in order to cast their vote this year. Stick with us for the next training and we’ll make sure sure you have everything you need to activate the right people, in the right places.

For others, we also know that talking to your friends and family about politics can seem awkward, complicated, or even intimidating. But if you plan ahead and know your strategy, we know you’ll be successful. In the next module, we’ll dive into exactly how you can prioritize who to reach out to and what to say, including an easy activity that you and your friends can do called Friend-Mapping.

Watch Part 2

OFA

NOTES: [Closing slide] Overlay “what’s next? Part two: a how to” on top of MLK video (1:36 – 2:04)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8FKUQI-zU58>

Audio / video of MLK:

“Each of you assembled here today, decided that you were going to see that 10 other people are registered... just see what a power you can be. Then after getting people registered, there is another, even greater, responsibility. And that is to go out and vote...”