

## Use Election Energy to Engage New People

The election is over, and a new Congress will take office in January. The work to shape their legislative agenda begins now. One of the absolute keys to doing that is engaging new people. Outreach is a vital component of our mission to end poverty. To survive, movements must learn, adapt, and grow. That cannot happen alone. New people bring new power, new energy, and new perspectives. Sam Daley-Harris knew this when he started RESULTS in 1980 – regular outreach was one of the “agreements” new volunteers signed up to do.

Fortunately, this is the ideal time to be engaging new people. We’ve just come off an historic election. More people were engaged in this midterm contest than in decades. Millions of people paid attention for the first time, volunteered for the first time, and voted for the first time. And many of them are hungry for more. Fortunately, you are poised to provide the civic sustenance they are looking for.

Below is a guide to help you mobilize new people into action with RESULTS for the rest of this year.

### Finding People

So where are all these potential volunteers we keep talking about? They’re all around you. Want to find out? Get a pen and paper and start writing down names. Any people you can think of. Think of the friends you have, the people you work with, the groups and communities you belong to. Write down their names. List people you’ve asked before, list people who you think will never say yes, and list people who just pop in your head. You may not contact everyone on your list but the act of writing it down will spark your imagination and you will think of people you would not have thought of otherwise.

Hopefully, if you were involved in the election, you already have a few people in mind. If not, think of people you’ve spoken with in the last few months about the election. Which ones might be willing to talk to you about advocacy? Are you active on Facebook or Twitter? Whom among your friends and followers could you contact about getting involved with RESULTS?

Also, RESULTS has launched a new campaign to recruit new people for you. Using [VolunteerMatch](#), we’ve created ads for all our local RESULTS groups. If someone in your area responds, we will send them information about RESULTS, ask them to join an orientation call, and then connect them to you.

### Reaching Out

Once you have a list of people to contact, there are various ways to reach out to them. From your list, reach out to each person to ask them if they would be willing to talk to you about RESULTS. Share our new post-election video with them (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bEhTh1RX78g>), then set up a time to talk. Consider the following:

- **Meet with them one-on-one** (best strategy). There is no substitute for an in-person conversation. Investing the time and energy to speak to someone about their interests, their concerns, and their goals sends a message that you value them and want them to be a part of this important work.
- **Call and talk to them over the phone or video chat** (next best strategy). While meeting in-person is best, sometimes we don’t have the time or means to do that. The goal is to have a

conversation and speaking to the person in real time. If you cannot meet in person, speaking over the phone or video chat will accomplish that.

- **Personally, invite them to your next RESULTS meeting** (good strategy). If you don't have the time to meet or call one-on-one, invite the new volunteer to your next local RESULTS meeting. Make it a personal invitation and be sure to dedicate time at the beginning of the meeting to welcome new people, ask them questions, and make them feel comfortable.

Once you're together, use our [Election 2018 Laser Talk](#) as a guide to get the conversation started. Be sure share your story of RESULTS – how you got involved, what you've done, what you get out of it, the challenges you feel. And ask questions. *What are your plans now that the election is over? Have you ever considered doing advocacy? What concerns do you have about it?* Finally, instead of simply inviting them to a meeting or to join your group, ask them to be part of something meaningful. *We're getting together to do next week to [write letters about protecting SNAP OR meet with our new member of Congress to talk about affordable housing]. Would you like to be part of that?*

### Following Up

In RESULTS organizing, a lot of energy is spent on contacting people and getting people to meetings. That's great, but without good follow-up, those efforts won't bear fruit. As Heather Booth, civil rights activist and community organizing pioneer, said at the 2018 RESULTS International Conference, "Ninety percent of organizing is follow-up." Most new volunteers are lost after the first contact or meeting. But you can take steps to avoid that.

1. Within one day of your conversation (either one-on-one or at a meeting), send the person a hand-written note thanking them for their interest in RESULTS. Tell them you look forward to seeing them again at the next local meeting.
2. In a few days, send an e-mail or text inviting them to review the RESULTS New Advocate Welcome series: [https://www.results.org/about/raise\\_your\\_voice](https://www.results.org/about/raise_your_voice). If they have already done the series, send them to our Action Center (<https://www.results.org/take-action/action-center>) and urge them to take an action.
3. Wait a week and then call the person to ask what they thought of the Welcome Series or taking the action. Ask how they felt about it and ask if they have any questions you can answer. Remind them of your next RESULTS group meeting (give them the date and time).
4. Call the person the day before your local RESULTS meeting as a reminder.
5. If the meeting is their first one, carve out time at the beginning to welcome any new people and set an agenda that welcomes them into the discussion.

For additional tips on how to make the most of new leads, read the second page of our [VolunteerMatch Outreach Guide](#).

**Make it hard to say no.** One of the easiest ways to get people hooked on RESULTS, is to attend a local lobby meeting with a member of Congress or staff. Have someone in your group work to set up meetings with your incoming representative or senators before the holidays and be sure to invite new people to attend.

## Post-Election Meeting Sample Agenda

Below is a sample meeting agenda for your group before the election. The agenda should take about 60 minutes. Adapt the elements to fit your style and timeframe.

### Welcome and acknowledge people for being there.

- Welcome everyone to the meeting and thank them for taking time to get together.
- Welcome new people, ask them what brought them to the meeting, have someone give a brief history of the group's work with RESULTS, ask if they have any [questions about RESULTS](#).
- Review agenda for the meeting.

### Celebrate recent success

- Ask group members to share any recent activities and successes.

### Issues & Action – Candidate Engagement

1. Take a few minutes for everyone to read the Post-Election Action Sheet (above) and ask if anyone has questions.
2. Review the people just elected to Congress in your area and ask people to volunteer to take the lead on setting up meetings with them in November and December.
3. Designate a person in the group to contact Meredith Dodson to set up a lobby prep call ([mdodson@results.org](mailto:mdodson@results.org)) once a meeting gets set.

### Issues & Action – Community Engagement

1. Review your groups 2018 goals about outreach
2. Have each person list out the people they plan to contact about getting involved with RESULTS. Set a date by when each person will have contacted people on their lists.
3. Discuss how you will welcome new people into the group. How will you make them feel included? What actions/activities will help them feel most inspired?
4. Together, write down your plan for welcoming new people so everyone is on the same page.

### Set date and time for next meeting and close the meeting

## Monthly Action Network Message

*Please have your Action Network Manager send this message to your local action network this month.*

Now that the election is over, we have a chance to expand our movement and show new people how powerful "year-round" advocacy can be. Write a letter to the editor urging others to get involved and make their voices heard.

Submit your letter to the editor using our online LTE action now: <https://www.results.org/take-action/action-center?vvsrc=%2fcampaigns%2f61559%2frespond>.