

How to Organize a Virtual Postcard Writing Party

Background

Handwritten postcards are a great way to have your voting message stand out. And it's effective! A test conducted in 2018 showed that postcards are as effective as door-to-door canvassing in getting people to show up to the polls. Postcard writing parties are a fun way to gather online with other advocates for children – all from the safety and comfort of their homes!

Who Are You Writing?

Depending on your voter engagement plans, you may be writing to:

- People who are newly registered to vote
- People who are registered to vote but don't vote very often (called low-propensity voters)
- People who vote often (super voters) with encouragement to vote by mail

Your SCAN staff contact will supply attendees with a list of voters to write to and postcards. Coordinate with your SCAN staff contact on how they want to manage the mailing of the cards.

How Long Should the Virtual Postcard Writing Party Last?

An in-person postcard writing party is typically between two and three hours. Keeping people online for that long could prove challenging, so plan for an event that is approximately 90 minutes long. If people don't complete all of their postcards within that time, provide them with a deadline to complete them on their own.

Why This Sample Letter?

[The sample postcard copy](#) we've drafted leverages best practices found from experience in the field. Because we have limited room with the postcards, we are emphasizing that whether they are registered to vote is public information, which increases the feeling of accountability. We are also underscoring their identity as a voter. Voting is seen as a social good and those who vote as engaging in their civic duty.

An Agenda for the Party

The agenda for your postcard writing party is pretty straightforward. Here is a sample training agenda:

1. Welcome with a fun ice breaker to start. Thank everyone for coming.
2. Talk through who you are writing to and what your objective is. For example, if you are writing to low-propensity voters, explain that you are writing them to encourage them to vote.
3. Start writing!

At the end of the evening, remind people to complete any unfinished postcards by the deadline and the process for mailing the cards. Thank attendees for giving their time.

How to Keep Volunteers Engaged

During an in-person postcard writing party, people chat while they write and have snacks throughout the event. Keeping people engaged during a virtual postcard writing event is a bit more challenging, but it can be done! Here are a few ideas:

- **Encourage conversation:** While people are writing, encourage them to chat amongst each other. If this is a group of people who know each other already, the conversation will likely flow naturally. If these are people who don't know each other very well, consider having some conversation starters at the ready.
- **Share a poll:** Many online meeting tools have interactive options, such as polls. A couple of times during the postcard writing party, share a poll that people can respond to in between calls. The poll can be about the volunteers' own voting plans or something not related to the elections at all. Just be sure to craft poll questions that everyone can answer.
- **Have a contest:** Reward the person who writes the most postcards a special prize. It can be a SCAN swag item or perhaps a gift card to a local coffee spot. This can be an ongoing contest that kicks off at your postcard writing parties and continues until you mail the cards. Be sure to tell people about the contest in the beginning of the party so people feel extra motivated to write postcards after the event is over.