

# Votebuilder 101 Quick Reference Guide


## Topics:

1. What is Votebuilder?
2. What is a Precinct?
3. Log in with ActionID
4. My Voters vs. My Campaign
5. Quick Lookup
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## 1. What is Votebuilder?



Votebuilder or VAN is the Democratic Party's voter database that is used by local committees and campaigns to recruit volunteers, identify our voters and get them out to vote on election day. Votebuilder is the name of the tool. VAN (Voter Activation Network) is the name of the company that supports the tool. In 2010, VAN merged with NGP Software to form NGP VAN. NGP is a different tool that is used by campaigns to track and report fundraising as well as send out blast emails to large numbers of people. Each state manages its own implementation of Votebuilder. Access is limited to your local committee or campaign district.

<b>What data is included?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Voting History</li><li>● Demographics</li><li>● Contact Information</li><li>● Likely Party Affiliation</li><li>● Survey Results Collected by Volunteers</li></ul>	<b>Where does the data come from?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● State Certified Election Results</li><li>● National Change of Address Registry</li><li>● Social Security Dept. of Deceased List</li><li>● USPS Verified Address</li><li>● Consumer Databases</li></ul>
<b>How is Votebuilder used?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Recruit volunteers</li><li>● Identify undecided and supporting voters</li><li>● Persuade undecided voters</li><li>● Ensure our voters vote (GOTV)</li></ul>	<b>What is VoteBuilder? (Video)</b> <a href="https://youtu.be/GsgBZs8NyGw">https://youtu.be/GsgBZs8NyGw</a> 

## 2. What is a Precinct?

Votebuilder is essentially based on precincts. A precinct or voting district is the smallest unit used to conduct elections. Various elected office districts are made up of a specific set of precincts. Each address within a precinct is assigned to a specific polling station where its residents go to vote. Sometimes more than one precinct will use the same polling station.

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### 3. Log in with ActionID



ActionID is a single sign-on credential based on your email address rather than a username. It allows you to login to multiple user accounts, which is helpful if you have more than one user account but only want to remember one password.

1. To get set up with an account in Votebuilder contact your local Democratic committee chair or a local Democratic campaign staffer.
2. Navigate to [votebuilder.com](http://votebuilder.com).
3. You should see two ways to login. Log in with ActionID or VAN ID.
4. If you have not set up an ActionID, click the Create ActionID tab.
5. Enter your Email Address, First Name, and Last Name. Create a password that is at least 8 characters long. When finished, click Create.
6. Check your email to make sure you received a confirmation email.
7. You will have the option to change your password or edit your profile.
8. The first time you login in with ActionID, it will ask you to enter your standard username and password as well.
9. Once you have logged in using your ActionID, you will be able to navigate to any of your other linked user accounts without having to log in again (upper right corner).

**TIP:** To increase or decrease the size of text, hold down the Ctrl key and press + (plus) or - (minus) keys.

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### 4. My Voters vs. My Campaign

A blue rectangular button with the text "My Voters" in white.A blue rectangular button with the text "My Campaign" in white.

Once you log in to Votebuilder, notice there are two main tabs: My Voters and My Campaign. My Voters contains current registered voters and My Campaign contains past volunteers. It's hard to distinguish between the two tabs and it is common to mix them up. Whenever you run into a problem using Votebuilder, your first troubleshooting step should be to check to make sure you are using the correct tab. My Voters is a permanent record of registered voters in a specific district based on the most recent certified results from the state board of elections. My Voters also includes an overlay of information collected by volunteers during phone banking and door knocking to identify each voter's preference. It is a database owned by the Democratic Party. My Campaign is a temporary record of volunteers in a specific campaign. **NOTE:** My Voters can only include registered voters in a given district. My Campaign can include anyone who wants to help, including friends or family from different districts or young people who are not yet registered to vote.

**TIP:** Your first troubleshooting step should always be to check to make sure you are in the correct tab.

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### 5. Quick Lookup



Quick Lookup is used to look up one person's profile to find contact information, schedule them into an event, update their information etc. This feature is available in both My Voters and My Campaign. From the Votebuilder Main Menu, do the following:

1. Make sure you are in the correct tab, My Voters or My Campaign.
2. Click Quick Look Up.

3. Enter the information you have (You must have at least last name) and click Search.
4. Scroll down to see results. Note there may be multiple pages.
5. Click the name of the person you are looking for.
6. Click the > links to expand and view information.

**TIP:** Search by county and/or phone number (if you have it) to narrow common names.

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## 6. Create a New List



You can create a list to recruit volunteers or contact voters. To recruit volunteers, create a list of strong Democrats in a single precinct do the following:

1. From the Main Menu, in the Lists section, click Create A New List.
2. Click > Locations > County > [select your county]
3. Click Precinct to open a list of all precincts with check boxes.
4. Click the checkbox of the precinct you want. Scroll down and click Save.
5. Click > Likely Party and select Strong Democrats  
On the right notice a summary of your search criteria so far.
6. Click Preview My Results to see the number that will appear in your list.  
You can select other parameters to narrow or expand your list.
7. Click Run Search when you are ready. You will see a summary of your list.
8. To edit your list, click Edit Search and select Edit Existing Search to update your criteria.
9. To save your list, click Save List As and follow the on screen instructions.
10. To map the results, click the Map button.

**NOTE:** Some functions to map, print or publish will not appear if your list is too big. Try to pull lists with 2500 records or less.

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## 7. Edit a List (Narrow/Expand)



Once you've created a list you may want to refine your search by adding or removing people with certain traits or tags. For example:

- You may want to focus on people who are Strong Democrats to call and recruit volunteers. Use Likely Party > Strong Democrats.
  - You may want to include only people who have no voter identification or have an Unknown Likely Party ID so you can improve your GOTV list. Use Likely Party > Unknown.
  - You may want to include only people who are likely Democratic but inactive registered voters to focus on getting more of them out to vote. Use Likely Party > Leaning Democrats and/or Voter Status > Registered Inactive.
1. From the Main Menu, in the Lists section, click Go to My List.
  2. Select the Edit Search drop down and make your selection.
  3. Make changes to refine your list based on new criteria.

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## 8. Print/Download a List



Print means print a list to a PDF file, which can be downloaded and printed for use at a phone bank or door-to-door canvassing. To print and download any list, do the following:

1. From the Main Menu, in the Lists section, click Go to My List.
2. Select the Print button from the top banner.
3. Select the Report Format, Contacted How and any other parameters and click Next.
4. Click the My PDF Files link.
5. Click the checkbox(s) or Download File to download your list as a PDF file.

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## 9. Input Results in Grid View



It is very important to input the results from any phone bank or door to door canvass. To input results from a list of voters who have no voter ID, do the following:

1. From the Main Menu, in the Load Data section, click Grid View.
2. Select Use My List or input the list number at the bottom of your list pages.
3. Select a Script format, Canvasser, Contacted How and any other parameters and click Next. Grid View should display the people in the same order as your list.
4. Input only the results of people who were contacted and click Mark Remaining Not Home in the lower left corner.
5. Click Next in the upper right and repeat steps 4-5 until you reach the end of your list.

NOTE: The next time you create a list, the search criteria will include the results you have added above.

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## 10. More Resources

- What is VoteBuilder? (Video)  
<https://youtu.be/GsgBZs8NyGw>
- [Votebuilder 201 Quick Reference Guide](#)
- VAN Support Center - documentation, videos  
<https://van.support.ngpvan.com/#documentation>
- Virginia Votebuilder Site - training guides, videos and data  
<http://votebuilder.vademocrats.org/>
- Votebuilder Manual - Vermont Democratic Party 2015  
<http://www.vtdemocrats.org/sites/vtdems/files/pictures/VANual%20v15.1.pdf>