STATES WIN
FORMERLY SISTER DISTRICT

Fundraising Blitzes for States Win Candidates Guide

Purpose

The purpose of this guide is to share with other chapters the approach and lessons learned by the DC Metro Area Chapter in planning and running fundraising "blitzes."

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States Win blitzes were pioneered by the Davis/Yolo County California Chapter and adopted first on a large-scale by the Greater Chicago Chapter before being taken up by the DC Metro Area Chapter in 2022. Their purpose is to efficiently concentrate fundraising efforts over three days to harvest as much money as possible at one time. They do not and should not substitute for or rule-out other modes of fundraising.

This guide is based principally but not exclusively on the DC Metro Area Chapter's experience in conducting fundraising blitzes in 2022 and 2023. Its two blitzes in 2022 raised $7,000 and $8,000 respectively (with the MA/RI Chapter participating in the second blitz and raising an additional $2,500), while in 2023 its two blitzes raised almost $12,000 and over $9,000 again for two candidates.

The DC Metro Area Chapter's experience in both years suggests that the key to a successful blitz resides in contributions from, as well as personal solicitations to others by, Steering Committee members. The distribution of the sources of contributions to the chapter's two 2023 blitzes was as follows:

- Steering committee -- May: 28%; July: 36%
- Personal solicitations – May: 58%; July: 56%
- Blitz donations – May: 14%; July: 8%.

Although funds raised from the Chapter's mailing list were modest, the very structure and limited time of a blitz can prove important in providing an incentive for contributions made as the result of personal solicitations.

Process

What's required to plan and implement a blitz?

Set a date and duration suitable for your chapter.

The DC Metro Area Chapter's blitzes have been held over three-day periods starting at midnight Sunday and extending to midnight Wednesday. The Portland and Sacramento chapters held a successful 8:00 a.m. Tuesday to 8:00 a.m. Wednesday blitz in 2023, but the blitz donation button went "live" starting the prior Sunday. It's also clear that holding a blitz as soon as possible after SW Headquarters endorses a candidate helps maximize raising funds early in the campaign when they're most needed.

Establish an ActBlue account.

Set up a specific ActBlue link for the blitz to enable tracking of donors—their names, email addresses, and the amount of their donations—during the blitz.

Invite other chapters to participate.

The initiating chapter should consider inviting other chapters, which are supporting the same candidate for whom the blitz is held, to participate in the blitz. For planning purposes, invitations to other chapters to participate should go out at least two weeks before the blitz, preferably earlier. (To assist with early planning and coordination, Headquarters may provide an early heads-up about candidates for those chapters backing the same to-be-announced candidates.) Having chapters join together allows matching dollars to be pooled (see below) to create a single large fund whose results can be claimed and allocated among the individual chapters for record-keeping and analytical purposes. It can be especially helpful for a chapter to team up for its first blitz. Chapters should rely on the lead chapter for the preparation of boilerplate messages and graphics that are sent during the blitz.

If teamed with another chapter or chapters, the blitz can be run as a friendly competition. This can lend it a different hook from other solicitations and be an enjoyable way to catch people's attention. The Portland+ and Sacramento chapters used this model and compared results on three metrics: total funds raised, total number of unique donors, and total number of donations of $100 or more.

Raise matching funds.

It's clear that personal solicitations for matching dollars by members of a chapter's Steering Committee are key to the success of any blitz.

The purpose of matching dollars is to provide an incentive to those who may donate during a blitz. Steering Committee members, following the principles of "friend-raising," start personally soliciting dollar-for-dollar matching pledges from friends and family members one to two weeks before a blitz is scheduled to begin. Focus should be placed on those individuals who have made significant donations in the past as well as others who are thought to be able to make similarly significant donations but have not yet done so. (Before the DC/VA/MD Chapter's May 2023 blitz, its fundraising subcommittee emailed about 20 potential donors for matching funds.) Donors who agree to provide matching funds are asked to donate them ahead of the blitz using the chapter's dedicated ActBlue link (see above) rather than provide only a pledge. Strictly speaking, therefore, donations made during the blitz are matched ahead of time. Collected in that way,

matching funds go to the candidate regardless of the amounts raised during the blitz. (Samples of personal email solicitations for matching funds appear in Appendices B and C.)

Other ways of proceeding: The Chicago Chapter has raised early matching dollars that it applies to a variety of fundraising efforts during each campaign. It asks for pledges rather than having "match donors" contribute ahead of time. The Portland+ and Sacramento chapters solicited match pledges specifically for their 2023 blitz but asked those donors to donate after the blitz closed. (Both chapters reached their full pledged amount; they didn't pool their matches inasmuch as their candidates were not identical.)

In the past, the DC/VA/MD Chapter included an ActBlue link to the States Win's profile of the candidate, but that approach proved problematic because, rather than pledging and donating through the dedicated blitz link, some donors contributed directly to the candidate through the candidate's link. That made it impossible for the Chapter to learn the source and amount of some contributions it had successfully solicited. With its own dedicated ActBlue link, the Chapter now receives credit from the campaign for its work while compiling a full record of contributors' identities and contributions. In addition to raising funds for a candidate, the Chapter aims to convert at least some of its donors into activists as well. A dedicated ActBlue link achieves all of these aims if it stands alone in all solicitations.

Send blitz emails to the chapter's mailing list.

The DC/VA/MD Chapter sends out emails to those for whom it has email addresses. An email announcing the blitz goes out four days before the start and is repeated one day before the start. During the blitz, two emails a day are sent during each of the first two days of the blitz, and a single email on the last day of the blitz. Then, a day or two after the blitz concludes, an email goes to all Chapter members announcing the blitz's results and thanking contributors. (Sample emails are provided in the Appendix E.) Where possible, chapters should consider sending out text messages as well and publicizing the blitz on all social media accounts the chapter maintains.

Send out personal email solicitations during the blitz.

The chapter's fundraising co-chairs send out group emails to friends and family members who did not contribute matching dollars. Other steering committee members are encouraged to do so as well. These emails can include the initial blitz communication from the chapter and should be sent as the blitz begins. It's also useful to send a special, individual email to potentially large contributors who have not contributed during the first 48 hours of the blitz. Such personal messages can also go to those who have contributed in the past. (Examples of these personal solicitation emails appear in Appendix D.)

Send out thank-you emails.

As donations are received, the treasurer of the DC/VA/MD Chapter sends out email thank-you's. Fundraising co-chairs send out thank-you's to those who have contributed as a result of their personal solicitations. And at the conclusion of the blitz, a message

goes out to everyone on the chapter's entire mailing list announcing the blitz's results and thanking everyone for their participation.

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Appendix A - Example of Blitz Timeline	
4 weeks out from start of blitz	Establish fundraising goal, set a date and duration for the blitz, and create an ActBlue link. Invite other chapters to participate
2 weeks out from start of blitz	Solicit matching funds
1 week out from start of blitz	Send reminder about matching funds
4 days out from start of blitz	Announce blitz start date and matching funds
1 day out from start of blitz	Send reminder of start of blitz
First 2 days of blitz	Send two messages per day
Final day of blitz	Send reminder of blitz and funds needed to make goal
1-2 days after blitz	Send email to all Chapter members announcing blitz results and thanking contributors

Appendix B – Example of personal solicitation for matching dollars

Hi _____,

I hope this email finds you enjoying this beautiful spring weather.

I am working again this year with the States Win and writing to ask for your help with our fundraising efforts.

Most of us have no local or state candidates to support this year, but there are a handful of states where state legislatures will be decided. Virginia is one of those. You can help the Democrats re-capture the Virginia House of Delegates by supporting Democrat Josh Cole, one of the candidates backed by the States Win.

There is a real risk that the 2023 election could give Republicans total control of the Commonwealth. If that happens, we will likely see efforts to restrict voting, roll back women's reproductive rights and the rights of the LGBTQ community, expand access to firearms, and place restrictions on what teachers can teach in public schools.

We support the States Win because we think it is the most cost-effective way for us to be politically engaged. States Win focuses exclusively on state legislative races where campaign budgets are relatively small and turnout limited, so the dollars and votes we generate really count. Our staff hand-picks those candidates who can win, and whose victory can help keep a legislative body blue or flip it from red to blue.

I am helping to organize a 72-hour fundraising blitz starting on May 22 to support Josh Cole, running in a newly created Virginia House District. I am writing to you and a handful of our friends to help us raise funds that will match one-to-one the donations we will solicit during the blitz. We hope that with so few elections taking place in 2023, you will be especially generous. Our goal is to raise $5,000 in matching dollars and an additional $5,000 during the blitz. We would appreciate your donating before May 20. To donate, please click on:
https://secure.actblue.com/donate/sd034-va-cole-dcva?refcode=blitz-may2023

Thank you!

/S/
Member, Steering Committee, DC/MD/VA Chapter
Co-Chair, Fundraising Committee

Appendix C – Example of group solicitation email at start of the blitz

Dear Friends and Family,

Most of us have no local or state candidates to support this year, but there are a handful of states where state legislatures will be decided. Virginia is one of those. You can help the Democrats re-capture the Virginia House of Delegates by supporting Democrat Josh Cole, one of the candidates backed by the States Win.

The raft of state legislation effectively banning abortion has brought home to us all just how important state legislatures are.

There is a real risk that the 2023 election could give Republicans total control of the Commonwealth of Virginia. If that happens, we will likely see efforts to restrict voting, roll back women's reproductive rights and the rights of the LGBTQ community, expand access to firearms, and place restrictions on what teachers can teach in public schools.

We support the States Win because we think it is the most cost-effective way for us to be politically engaged. States Win focuses exclusively on state legislative races where campaign budgets are relatively small and turnout limited, so the dollars and votes we generate really count. Our staff hand-picks those candidates who can win, and whose victories can help keep a legislative body blue or flip it from red to blue.

Last year our efforts helped to flip the Pennsylvania House from red to blue. We seek to do the same in Virginia.

I have helped organize a 72-hour fundraising blitz (see announcement below) starting at midnight tonight to support Josh Cole, running in a newly created Virginia House District. Some generous donors have created a pool of $5,000 to match all donations. Your contribution will be matched one-to-one. So, if you donate $50, our candidate receives $100

To donate, please click on:
https://secure.actblue.com/donate/sd034-va-cole-dcva?refcode=blitz-may2023

Thank you!

/S/
Member, Steering Committee, DC/MD/VA Chapter
Co-Chair, Fundraising Committee

Appendix D – Example of personal solicitation during the blitz

Hi _____,

We are midway through our 72-hour blitz for our Virginia Senate candidate, and we have raised less than $1,000 from the blitz itself. We still have $4,000 available in matching funds. Last May we raised $12,000 for our House of Delegates candidate thanks in part to your generous donation. I hope you'll see fit to do the same for our Senate candidate.

Here is the link to
contribute: https://secure.actblue.com/donate/sd034-va-aird-dcva?refcode=blitz-jul2023

Thanks!

/S/

Appendix E – Examples of emails sent before and during the blitz to chapter mailing list

SISTER DISTRICT PROJECT
DC/VA/MD



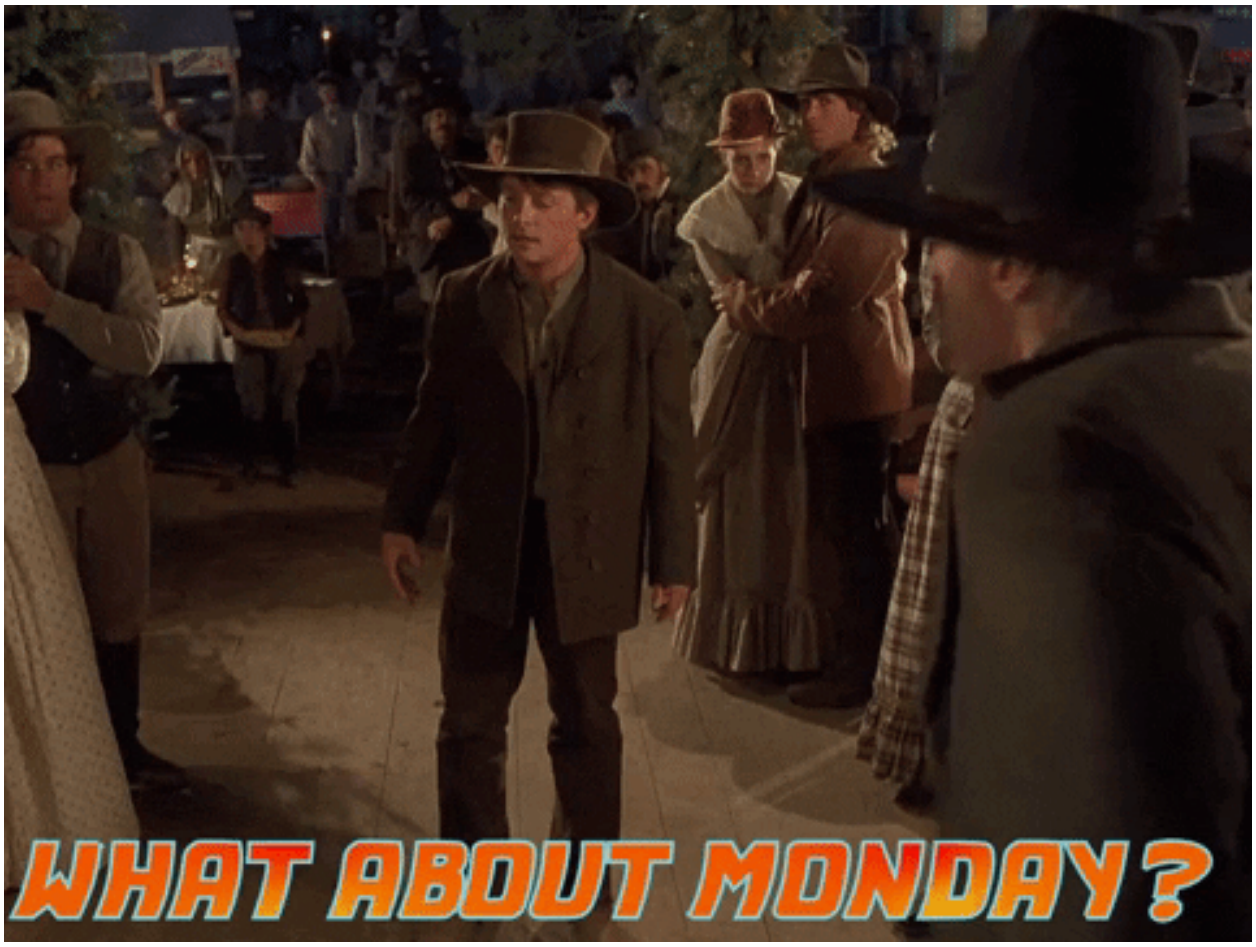
IT'S GO TIME!

Our fundraising blitz for Joshua Cole starts Monday, May 22 at 12:01 AM!
⏰

We are thrilled to be supporting Joshua Cole again! In 2021, Democrats lost the majority in the House of Delegates by a difference of 733 votes in the three closest districts.

Now, we have a chance to flip it back to blue by picking up just three seats — and Joshua's district is critical to making that happen.

We are starting a fundraising 💸 BLITZ that will allow Joshua to move closer 📈 to flipping the House of Delegates **BLUE**.



Can't wait until Monday? We get it! You can donate here.

MAKE YOUR DONATION NOW!

Your States Win DC/VA/MD Leaders
Sarah, Karen, Jennie, Alan, Jim, Kara, Emma, Mary and Jeff

SISTER DISTRICT PROJECT
DC/VA/MD



Did you know that in 2019, Delegate Cole became both the youngest person and the first Black person elected to represent the Fredericksburg region in Virginia's historic General Assembly? States Win was proud to support him!

NOW WE NEED TO SEND JOSHUA COLE BACK TO THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES!
Our fundraising blitz 💸 starts TONIGHT @ 12:01 AM!
⏰

Can't wait until tomorrow? You can donate NOW.

MAKE YOUR DONATION NOW!

Your States Win DC/VA/MD Leaders
Sarah, Karen, Jennie, Alan, Jim, Kara, Emma, Mary and Jeff

SISTER DISTRICT PROJECT DC/VA/MD

THE BLITZ IS HERE!

We have a chance to flip the Virginia House of Delegates back to blue by picking up just three seats — and Joshua Cole's district is critical to making that happen.

We have started a FUNDRAISING BLITZ 🏈 to get Joshua the critical funds 💹 he needs to flip the House of Delegates **BLUE**



Did you know that beyond politics, the Honorable Joshua Cole is a husband and father dedicated to making the Fredericksburg area better for working-class citizens, parents, and the next generation, as well as attracting more businesses to the community that pay their workers well. Joshua is also a Pastor and an avid Star Wars and Marvel fan!

THIS IS WHO WE NEED REPRESENTING VIRGINIA - AND YOU CAN HELP MAKE THAT HAPPEN!

MAKE YOUR DONATION NOW!

Your States Win DC/VA/MD Leaders
Sarah, Karen, Jennie, Alan, Jim, Kara, Emma, Mary and Jeff

SISTER DISTRICT PROJECT
DC/VA/MD



WE HAVE A MATCH!

Our generous donors have agreed to provide matching funds,

!! up to $5,000 !!

doubling your donation to Joshua Cole dollar-for-dollar!

$25 ▶ $50

$50 ▶ $100

$250 ▶ $500

DOUBLE YOUR DONATION NOW!

The more funds we raise now, the more time Joshua and his campaign staff can spend connecting directly with voters!



Did you know that the typical cost for a local ad buy is $1500? Local ad buys allow candidates to share their views on critical issues like housing, public education, and protecting reproductive freedoms. See where Joshua stands on those issues on his candidate page and double your donation!