



Polling and Targeting

What is political polling?

- Pollsters help identify what exactly about a candidate and her vision resonates with voters and how to distill it into the most effective burst of information possible.
- Pollsters also help identify which demographic/geographic blocs are most important for the campaign to communicate with (either to persuade or to turnout)
- Polling can be used to decide if a candidate should run, to convince donors to spend more money, or for national organizations to decide where they should best spend their money

Questions to consider before you poll

- Can your campaign afford it? Many campaigns do not poll; polling should take up no more than 10% of your campaign budget and will cost at the very least \$15k.
- When will the candidates be known, what are the stories you are looking to tell, and when can you start communicating?

Polling methodology

- Polls can run from 5 minutes (tracking polls to see who is winning) to 20 minutes (messaging polls to figure out the above)
- Good polls make sure to survey a representative electorate, have unbiased questions, and take several days to field.
- Bad polls may survey an unrepresentative portion of the electorate, use inferior technology, or have unfair question wording.
- Telephone surveys must dial an appropriate number of cell phones, and bilingual dialing should be used in areas with significant portions of Spanish-speaking adults

What you'll know after you poll

- Documents from the pollster (toplines, crosstabs, memos) that explain the data and what it means for the campaign, including:
 - A realistic assessment of the race and the candidate's path to victory
 - A defined messaging and targeting strategy, aka what to say & to whom to say it



For those who can't poll

- Look at past election results to determine potential strongholds and persuadable areas
- Look to national public polling on salient issues
- Look to other campaigns and organizations in the area who have poll-tested messaging and strategies