



# DSA Tabling Guide

## Intro to Tabling

Tabling is absolutely, positively the best way to reach people outside of our own circles and recruit new working class members in the real world! Essentially, you set up a table in a public spot, put out some literature and swag, and talk to people who walk by. The best place to table is in well-trafficked areas (more below). Tabling is also a great way for new chapter members to become more comfortable discussing democratic socialism and answering questions. It can seem daunting at first, but once you've seen more experienced chapter members in action and gotten used to it, it's easy and actually fun!

### Simple Do's and Don'ts:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>DO</b> plan ahead and schedule time to follow up with all sign ups</li><li>● <b>DO</b> check that you or your partner has all the needed supplies before heading out</li><li>● <b>DO</b> put a bunch of the things on the table that people can look through</li><li>● <b>DO</b> go out of your way to get people to stop — wave, say hi, hand them literature</li><li>● <b>DO</b> connect with them on a personal level — tell them about yourself, ask them about themselves</li><li>● <b>DO</b> ask them if they have any questions...and then answer them</li><li>● <b>DO</b> pack up and leave if someone will not leave you alone</li><li>● <b>DO</b> make sure that you are actively recruiting when at the table - saying hi, drawing people over, handing something out, etc.</li><li>● <b>DO</b> invite people to events or meetings.</li><li>● <b>DO</b> anything in your power to get people to sign up on paper or digitally</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>DON'T</b> collect a bunch of info and let it sit in the back of someone's car for weeks</li><li>● <b>DON'T</b> freak out if you forget something — it's probably not a big deal and if it is, just pack it up, grab it, and get back out there</li><li>● <b>DON'T</b> let the table become a disorganized mess</li><li>● <b>DON'T</b> sit back and wait for people to come to you</li><li>● <b>DON'T</b> continue to try to get someone to stop if they're not interested (this can very easily become harassment)</li><li>● <b>DON'T</b> hand out your contact information to everyone you meet</li><li>● <b>DON'T</b> make up the answer to a question you don't know — send them to the website or ask them to sign up</li><li>● <b>DON'T</b> waste your time on people who are only interested in fighting</li><li>● <b>Do Not Under Any Circumstances</b> engage with someone who is filming you if you don't know them. Ignore them!</li></ul> |
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- **DO** bring snacks and have fun! Tabling should be an activity that makes your members want to do more with DSA

- Make sure that political disagreements with antagonists **DON'T** turn into shouting matches.
- And **NEVER** prioritize tabling over your wellbeing

## Tabling Supplies

### Table, Chairs

- First, you need a table. Each chapter should own at least one folding table for events like chapter meetings and tabling opportunities. They're generally under \$60. Also, buy and bring camping chairs if you can or have them!

### Canopy

- A canopy is helpful if there's a chance of rain or intense sun.

### Literature

- Have a few different handouts on different colored paper if possible. There are zines available to print from DSA here <https://dsausa.us/dsazines>.
- In fact, DSA has an entire Design Guide with invaluable resources available to chapters. You can find that here <https://design.dsausa.org/>.
- If there is a local issue of importance at the moment, make literature about that!

### Sign-up sheet

- Best practice: Make a digital interest form or sign up sheet in Action Network and make a QR code that people can use to easily pull it up on their phone while on the move. If you have access to a tablet or two, you could also have the sign up sheet open on a tablet for people to use. Encourage them to fill it out right away, before moving on.
  - [This is an alright QR code generator](#)
- Always have a printed sign up sheet just in case: Label it at the top, and have columns with plenty of space for name, phone number, and email.
  - Sign yourself up at the top; nobody likes to be the sucker to sign up first.
- ALWAYS have something ready with paper and pens to draw people in
  - You can ask them to scan a QR code that leads people to sign an Action Network petition on their phones related to whatever your current chapter work is. For example, DSA chapters did this during the Strike Ready campaign to have folks sign the Strike Ready pledge.

### Pens and pencils

- Easy to forget.

### Clipboards

- In case multiple people want to sign-up at once, or someone can't bend over to write on a table.

## Merch

- Buttons, bumper stickers, and anything else you can give away for donations. Make sure you get people signed up as members.

## People

- Have at least two people at all times. Tabling is a great opportunity for more engaged members to build relationships with newer members. Plus, a hostile interrogator or tricky question can overwhelm someone on their own. Most importantly, it's more fun with more people.
- Consider the entire length of time you're tabling and divide up into shifts for people to take
- Make sure two hot-headed arguers don't table together.

## A sign or banner

- It can be as simple as something on a piece of poster board, but you want to make sure people walking by know who you are and what issues you're working on.
- You can make a simple and good looking banner by projecting the design you want onto some fabric on a wall and painting it in with acrylic paint
- Many chapters have designed and union printed a banner with their chapter logo to use for tabling efforts in the community. We recommend you do the same! It'll give you some credibility.

## Where to Table

- Choose the right spot: high traffic areas where you could talk to a lot of people quickly.
- Some chapters have had success canvassing farmers markets, sporting events, public parks, concerts, or festivals.
- If you have a good relationship with a local business where you hold DSA events, ask if you can table there on a busy day.
- College campuses are also great places to table, however many of our YDSA chapters have their campuses locked down.
  - If you are not in touch with your local YDSA chapter, get in contact with them here: <https://y.dsausa.org/get-involved/chapters/>
  - If you do not have a local YDSA chapter, reach out to your Field Organizer about how to help nearby students start one.
- Know your rights when it comes to tabling in public places - these vary based on your state. You can reach out to [compliance@dsausa.org](mailto:compliance@dsausa.org) if you have questions on your legal rights and compliance with local ordinances.

## Donation Tin

- Always have a place to collect cash in case of donations.

## After Tabling

- It is best to plan who will do the following tasks and when BEFORE you table, as part of your overall plan. That makes it more likely to actually happen.
- Add sign-in sheet data to Action Network or ask another trusted member to

- Follow up with each signee for a 1:1 to share more with them about DSA and the current work your chapter is doing
  - Make sure to set them up with next steps to get involved!
- Report back to your chapter treasurer about donations