



OPERATION POLITICALLY HOMELESS · FIELD GUIDE

The OPH Host Guide

Everything you need to run a successful OPH booth — from booking the venue to the conversation at the chart to the follow-up that turns a great afternoon into new members. Built on twenty years of field practice; updated for the QR era.

A 25-minute read

1 What OPH is

Operation Politically Homeless is the Advocates' signature outreach format, running since the late 1980s. The whole operation: invite a passerby to take the **World's Smallest Political Quiz** — ten statements, Agree / Maybe / Disagree — score it in seconds, and have them place a colored dot where they land on the **Diamond Chart**. Then you have the easiest political conversation available anywhere, because it's about *their* result, not your pitch.

Four properties do all the work, and every recommendation in this guide exists to protect them: the **spectacle** of a board filling with dots; the **speed** of a two-minute, no-signup quiz; the **ah-ha moment** of someone discovering their views have a name; and the **conversation** that starts itself. Lose any one and it stops being OPH.

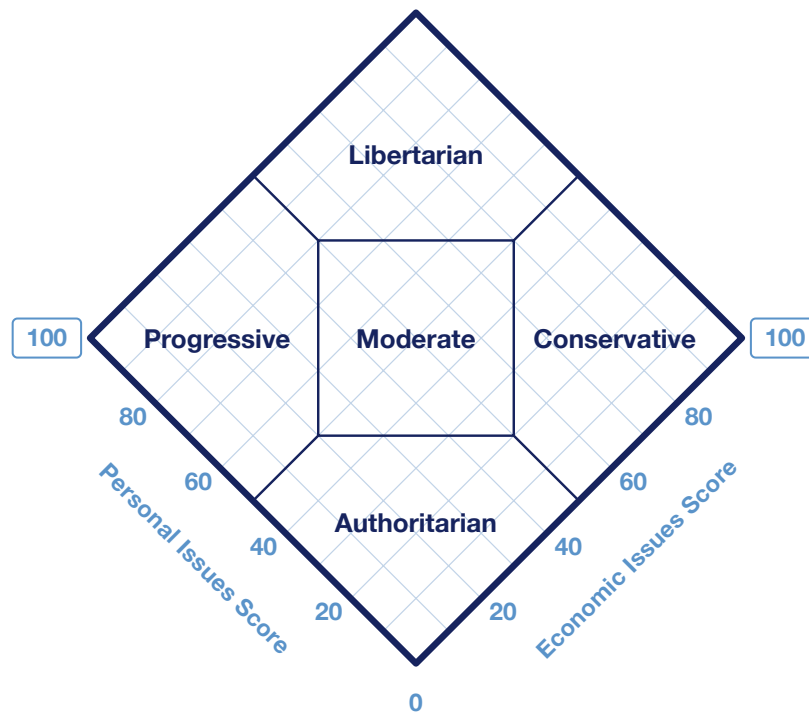
"The visible board with the dots draws people in. Once one person is standing there, everyone wants to know what the crowd is looking at."

— Organizer who has run OPH 20+ times, 2026 survey

2

Reading the Diamond Chart

The chart is David Nolan's 1969 insight, rotated into a diamond: politics isn't one left–right line but **two axes** — how much freedom you favor on *personal* questions, and how much on *economic* ones. Five regions fall out, and each is a respectable answer, not a grade:



The Diamond Chart — the Nolan Chart in the Advocates' rotated form. This is the board your dots live on.

Hosts should be able to say what each region *means* in one neutral sentence — section 7 gives you the exact lines. What matters here: the diamond gives almost everyone a more precise home than the label they walked up with, and that precision — not persuasion — is the product.

3

Choose your format

Classic paper

Cards, golf pencils, sticky dots, the physical chart. Zero connectivity required, works in wind, rain, and basements. Paper is the proven core of OPH — nothing in this guide retires it.

Hybrid paper + QR — the recommended default

Everything above, plus a printed QR stand: *"No pen? Take it on your phone."* Phone-takers see their result on screen and still place a physical dot on the board — announce the region, hand them the sticker. The digital side quietly fixes OPH's oldest weakness: what happens after they walk away (section 8). Plan for the venue, not the ideal — fairs and fairgrounds have terrible signal, and your paper kit is the offline mode. Never build an event that dies with the Wi-Fi.

Classroom & live-audience mode

QR on the projector, aggregate chart filling live, strict anonymity rules. This format has its own playbook — see the **Student & Campus Guide**, which covers the integrity rules that make it work.

4 Advance logistics

Where OPH works

Anywhere with foot traffic and a mood of browsing: county and state fairs, street festivals, farmers markets, gun shows, home shows, campus quads, pride festivals, political conventions (yours and other people's), and parades' staging areas. The common thread is people with ten unhurried minutes. Book early — fair vendor spaces sell out months ahead — and ask about nonprofit or community-group rates before paying commercial ones.

Volunteers

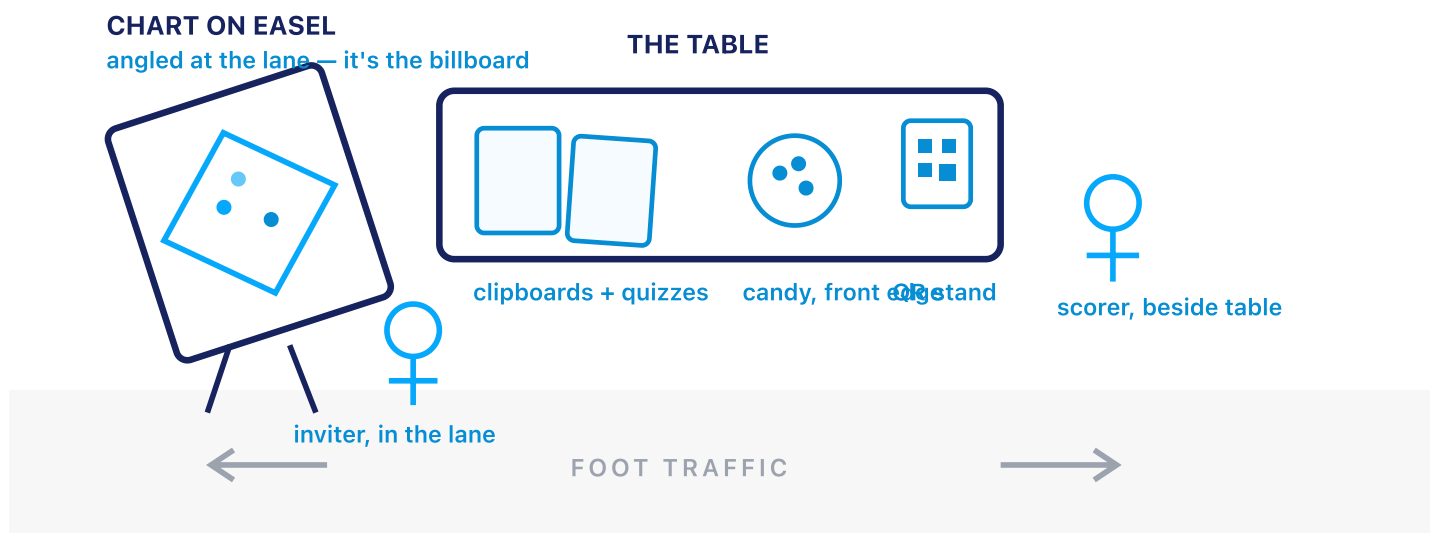
Two per shift is the comfortable minimum: one inviting, one scoring and talking results. Three lets you handle a rush without losing the conversation that's already happening. Recruit with the truth — shifts are two hours, the format does the talking, and introverts are genuinely good at this. Brief every volunteer on two things before their first shift: the invitation lines (section 6) and the prime directive (section 7).

Media, modernized

The old manuals devoted appendices to press lists and fax timing. Today: one good photo of a full board, posted by your group and tagged to the event, outperforms a press release — and if local media are at the event anyway, a filling OPH board is exactly the kind of visual they're hunting for. Designate one person as the spokesperson, keep the message to "we help people find where they actually stand," and never let an interview pull your only scorer off the booth.

5 Setting up the booth

The booth has one job: make the chart visible and the quiz reachable. Set the chart on an easel **beside** the table, angled at the foot traffic, never flat behind you — the board is the billboard. Keep the table front clear for clipboards, put the candy where a hand can reach it without commitment, and stand *beside* the table, not behind it.



The booth, from above. The chart faces the lane, the inviter works in the lane, and nobody hides behind the table.

Seed the board before you open. Have your whole crew take the Quiz and place their dots first thing — an empty chart is shy, and a board with eight dots already asks the question for you.

Working the booth

The invitation

"Want to see where you land on the political map? Ten questions, two minutes."

"Most people don't land where they expect — it's the World's Smallest Political Quiz."

Cheerful, question-shaped, about them. No philosophy, no party, no pitch — the quiz is the product and curiosity is the engine. If someone waves you off, smile and wish them a good day; the next person is watching how you take a no.

Questions about the questions

When someone asks what a statement means, help them read it, give the standard clarification once, and then let *them* decide. "Maybe" is a legitimate answer, not a failure to commit. Never argue someone toward an answer — a nudged quiz is a worthless result, and they can feel it.

Keeping the line moving

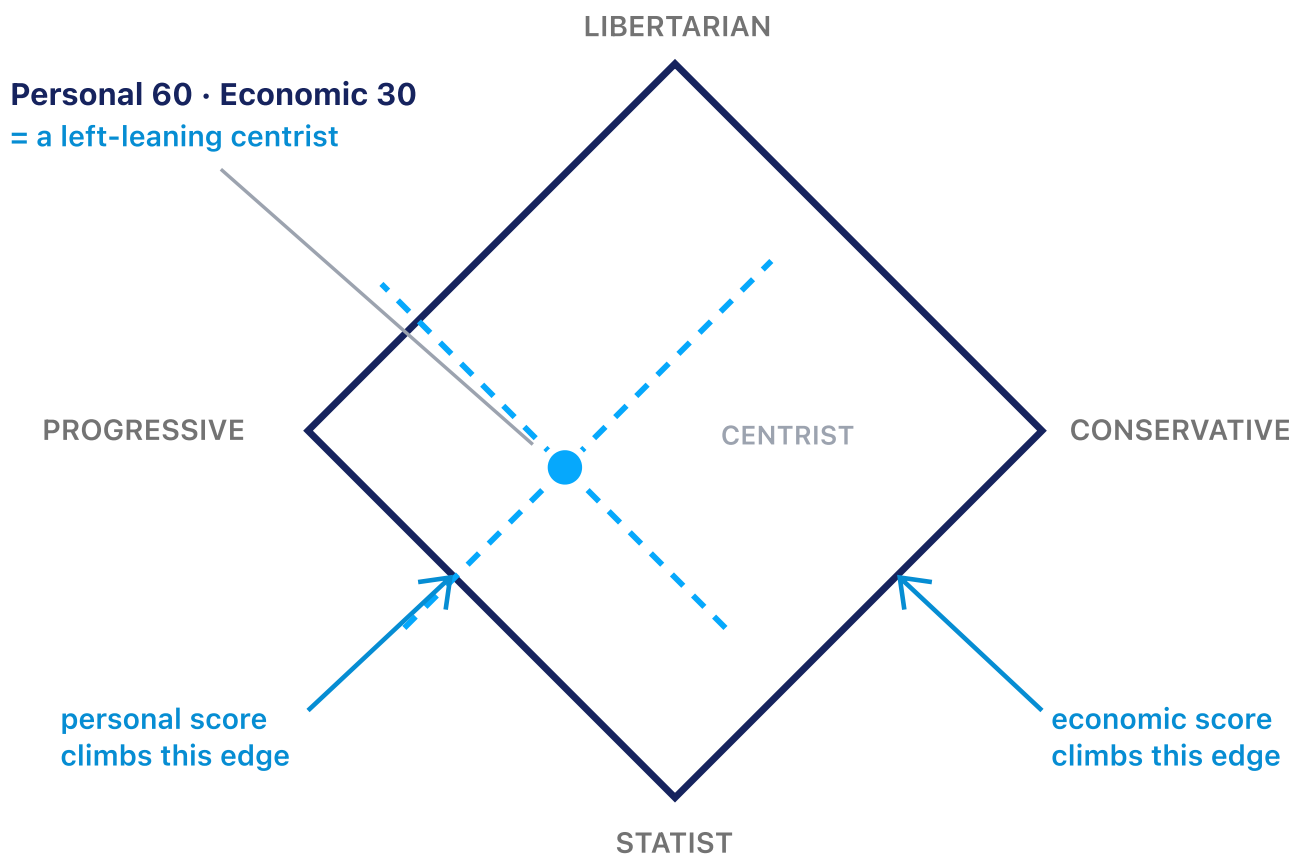
The booth's rhythm is: invite → hand off → score → dot → one good question → next. If a wonderful conversation is running long while people wait, hand the talker your card or the QR — "I want to finish this thought, and I also don't want you to miss your chance — scan this and we'll pick it up" — and turn to the next clipboard. If someone already took the Quiz at this event, they don't take it again; invite them to bring a friend instead, which they often do.

The debater

Someone will arrive wanting to win an argument at your table. Don't play. One honest exchange, then: *"That's exactly the kind of question the Quiz is for — where do you think you'd land?"* Either they take it (now it's about their result, not your stamina) or they don't (and you turn, warmly, to the next person). The crowd remembers who stayed pleasant.

7 Scoring & the dot moment

Each axis — personal issues and economic issues — scores 20 points per Agree, 10 per Maybe, 0 per Disagree: two scores from 0 to 100. Personal score climbs the upper-left edge, economic score climbs the upper-right, and where they cross is the dot.



One worked example: three Agrees and three Maybes on personal (60), one Agree and one Maybe on economic (30). Two scores, one dot.

Hand over the sticker and **let them place their own dot** — the small public act is half the magic. Then one neutral sentence and a question, by region:

Libertarian

"You favor freedom on both personal and economic questions. Did you expect that?"

Progressive / Liberal

"Personal freedom high, economic freedom lower — government as economic referee. Sound right?"

Conservative

"Economic freedom high, personal freedom lower — tradition matters. Fair description?"

Statist / Big government

"You trust government to act on both fronts. Genuinely — thanks for taking it."

Centrist

"Case-by-case on everything — you're in the middle with most of the country."

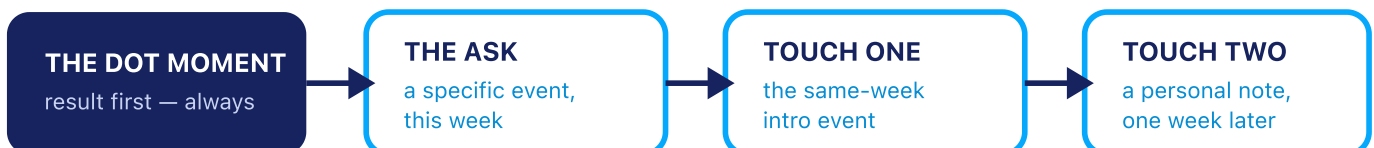
THE PRIME DIRECTIVE

OPH is a **mirror, not a debate**. You show people where they stand — never where they should. Don't argue with a result, don't "correct" answers, don't win a booth debate while the crowd quietly leaves. Thank everyone, whatever their region. A statist who had a pleasant two minutes is a better outcome than a bystander who watched you argue with one.

8

Capture & follow-up — where OPH lives or dies

The blunt finding from surveying today's OPH hosts: **about half of all OPH interactions end with nothing captured**. A great conversation, a dot on the board, and no way to ever reach that person again. The fix is a sequence, not a signup sheet:



Every arrow is where paper OPH historically leaked. The hybrid QR closes the first two automatically.

The two-touch pipeline, codified from the most effective OPH operation in the 2026 survey.

Results first, then the ask

Never gate a result behind an email. Show them where they landed, let the ah-ha happen, *then* make an offer that names a real event and a real day:

"If you want to see what your result means — and argue with it — that's exactly what we're doing Thursday at 7. Want the invite?"

Let the hybrid do the bookkeeping

Phone-takers who opt in are captured correctly the first time — no midnight handwriting forensics, no lost clipboard page. Your host link also gives you what paper never could: a completion count, a results breakdown for the event, and attribution — proof of what *your* booth produced. Set a capture goal before the event (a good booth converts roughly one in five completions into a real contact) and track three numbers: completions, captures, and how many showed up Thursday.

9 Multi-day events

A weekend fair is a different animal from a two-hour table, and volunteer stamina is the binding constraint — survey hosts named staffing multi-day fairs as their hardest operational problem. What works:

Two-hour shifts, hard stop. Inviting is performance; nobody performs well in hour four. Schedule more people for shorter windows.

A shift lead per day who owns setup, teardown, the cash-free candy resupply, and the kit inventory — so volunteers only ever have one job.

Leave the board up. The accumulating dots are your best day-two advertising. Photograph it at every close of day.

Rotate the roles — inviter is the tiring job; swap it every 30–40 minutes inside a shift.

Restock math: a busy fair booth runs 40–80 completions a day. Count quizzes, dots, and pencils the night before, not the morning of.

10 Troubleshooting

SITUATION	THE MOVE
Nobody's stopping	Seed more dots, move the easel closer to the lane, and put a volunteer <i>in</i> the lane with a clipboard. An inviter beats a banner.
Someone wants to debate, loudly	One honest exchange, then the redirect: "Where do you think you'd land?" If they won't take the Quiz, disengage warmly and turn to the next person. Never trade the crowd for one argument.
A rush hits and you're alone	Stop scoring one-by-one: hand out clipboards to everyone, score in batches at the board, and announce regions as you place dots — the batch becomes its own spectacle.
The result upsets someone	"It's ten questions — it's a snapshot, not a verdict. Which answer felt wrong?" Let them retake it if they want. The Quiz is theirs, not yours.
Someone already took it and wants a second dot	One dot per person per event — offer the share link instead: "Send it to someone who'd argue with your result."
No signal for the QR	You planned for this: paper is the offline mode. Collect opt-ins on the paper sheet and enter them the same night, not next week.
Local media appears	Your designated spokesperson steps away from the booth to talk; everyone else keeps the line moving. Message: "We help people find where they actually stand." Offer the reporter the Quiz — they usually take it.
Rain, wind, chaos	Laminated chart, taped legs, dots in a zip bag, quizzes in a box lid. The kit survives weather that cancels lesser booths.

11 Integrity & honest numbers

Report real counts — completions, captures, attendance — even when they're small. The habit of honest numbers is worth more than any single event report.

Publish aggregates responsibly. If you share your event's breakdown, share it as percentages *of a stated completion count*. If a dataset was flooded or joke-heavy, discard it, don't spin it.

Respect the result. No editing dots, no "adjusting" a score, no re-scoring someone toward the answer you wanted. The Quiz's forty-year reputation is the asset; every booth borrows it.

Privacy is part of the pitch. Opt-in means opt-in: contact info collected at OPH is for the follow-up you described, not for every list your group runs.

12

The master checklist

TWO WEEKS OUT

- ☐ Venue booked; nonprofit rate asked for; load-in rules known
- ☐ Volunteer shifts filled (2 per shift, 2-hour hard stop) + shift lead per day
- ☐ Follow-up event scheduled for the same week — this is the booth's ask
- ☐ Kit inventoried: chart, easel, quizzes, pencils, dots, clipboards, tape, laminate
- ☐ QR stand printed; host link tested on two phones; paper opt-in sheet as backup

DAY OF

- ☐ Chart on easel beside the table, angled at the lane
- ☐ Board seeded with the crew's own dots
- ☐ Candy at the front edge; clipboards loaded; pencils counted
- ☐ Every volunteer briefed: invitation lines + the prime directive
- ☐ Everyone knows the ask: results first, then the Thursday invite
- ☐ Spokesperson designated in case media appears

WITHIN 48 HOURS

- ☐ Numbers logged: completions, captures, breakdown by region
- ☐ Paper opt-ins entered the same night
- ☐ Board photo saved and shared (faces with consent only)
- ☐ Volunteers and venue contact thanked
- ☐ Touch one ready: same-week event prepped for guests
- ☐ Touch two scheduled: personal notes, one week out

Adapted from the *Operation Politically Homeless Manual*, Fifth Edition, by Scott A. Kjar (Advocates for Self-Government, 2006), updated with findings from the 2026 OPH audience survey. Operation Politically Homeless, OPH, the World's Smallest Political Quiz, and the Diamond Chart are trademarks of the Advocates for Self-Government. In the manual tradition: permission to reprint or duplicate this guide is hereby given, provided attribution is included. And remember — *OPH is fun*.