

# A Guide to Hosting House Parties

## WHAT:

A house party is a party or gathering held to support a cause as well as to share information and encourage others to the issue or organization working on an issue. (House parties are also utilized by candidates running for office to organize and build their campaigns.)

## WHY:

House parties are an effective way to gain supporters because people hear about the issue from people they know and trust. Attendees are able to learn by listening to information, being able to ask questions, and sharing their thoughts and opinions with each other. House parties provide education for a cause in a fun, comfortable and safe setting.

## HOW TO HOST:

- 1. Set the date and time for the house party**
  - » Plan for a time that would work well for the largest number of people
  - » The event should be about an hour and a half long
- 2. Find and secure a location.** Ideally, the place should be quiet, private and free. Some possible locations include:
  - » Your house
  - » Local restaurant or coffee shop
  - » Community center or library function or community room
- 3. Find others to be a co-host**
  - » Could be another supporter, a friend, a partner, a neighbor, a group
  - » Split the duties
  - » Both people should invite people in their network, growing attendance
- 4. Figure out who to invite to the party** based on what makes the most sense for you and for the campaign. Who do you need to support the cause? Who is in your network?
- 5. Invite people to the house party** through a variety of methods about three weeks in advance. Make sure the invitation is a personal ask. Some ways to invite people include:
  - » Face-to-face conversations
  - » Phone calls
  - » Emails



- » Mailed invitations
  - » Consider using more than one method such as starting with an email and then following up with personal calls to anyone who hasn't responded.
6. If you are working with a campaign, **the campaign should also invite people to the party.**
7. **Get materials for the event in order.** Those materials might include:
- » Sign in sheet to track who attends, could be electronic based off of the RSVP list
  - » Informational flyers to give attendees information
  - » Pledge cards to capture new supporters and how they are going to support the campaign
  - » Other fun collateral such as fans, stickers, clothing, etc.
  - » Food and beverages are a nice touch, if possible, to create a fun atmosphere
8. **Confirm your guests** by calling and texting them to remind them about the event. In that contact, make sure that they know where and when the party will take place and that you are looking forward to having them join you.
9. **Host the party**
- » Greet attendees and ask them to sign in
  - » Have a presentation or other creative way to educate about the campaign and how they can support it. Interactive activities work well as do videos and post video discussions.
  - » Ask attendees to support the campaign (this could be volunteering, donating or both)
  - » Answer any questions or concerns
  - » Take photos!
  - » Thank people for coming
10. **Follow up with attendees**
- » Thank them personally for coming and for any pledges of support
  - » Invite them to the next event



## SAMPLE AGENDA:

**5:00 PM** - Host sets up food, beverages, chairs and materials

**6:00 PM** - Guests arrive and sign in, grab food, and mingle

**6:25 PM** - Give five minute warning for presentation

**6:30 PM** - Program begins. Hosts introduce themselves and why they are hosting the house party. They present information about the cause.

**7:00 PM** - Q&A about the cause

**7:05 PM** - Introduce the way that they could support the cause and pass around pledge cards (or something else that fits that theme of the house party)

**7:10 PM** - Q&A about ways to support

**7:20 PM** - Group photo, thank attendees and invite to the next event

**7:30 PM** - Formal wrap up; guests may stay longer to socialize or ask questions

**8:00 PM** - Event wraps. If working with a campaign, debrief on how the events went and who attended, and whether any potential leaders or volunteers were identified

*Thank you Voters First WI for source material used in this adapted guide.*

## SAMPLE EMAIL

[NAME],

I am writing to invite you to join me for an event at my home [OR OTHER LOCATION] to talk about \_\_\_\_\_. [Include one sentence about the current situation in terms of cause.] That's why I am so glad to support the focus of the house party.

Join me at [DATE, TIME] for a fun, casual gathering where we'll talk about cause and learn how we can act to support the cause.

RSVP HERE. [LINK]

WHAT: House Party

WHEN: [DATE/TIME]

WHERE: [Location]

**One sentence to describe the candidate/cause. One sentence to describe what is needed from attendees. One sentence about the event, what will happen, whether there is food or child care available.**

Join us for the house party, and learn more! If you need accommodation to participate please reach out and let me know.

[YOUR NAME]

