

Host a House Party

Make It Fun

Being a Democrat is fun! Provide a social lively atmosphere with food and drink. Also, have some bumper stickers, buttons, prizes and yard signs to give to your guests. Have a loose agenda (1-2 speakers) and music. Food, drink and fun are always a hit!

Getting The Word Out

You can get a list of voters in your precinct from your county party. Hand deliver or mailing invitations. Include the date, time, location and RSVP information. Feel free to invite neighbors who aren't voters as well. Part of the purpose of a house party is to expand the base in your precinct -- so new people are welcome!

Get RSVPs

Be sure to get RSVPs! On flyers and invites announcing events, be sure to RSVP information. That way, you'll know how many people will be attending to best plan for space, food, and materials.

Invite Local Politicians to Come and Speak

Politicians love opportunities to reach more voters. Contact local politicians and candidates and invite them to the house party. The more local, the better. Also try to get people from community organizations, including non-profits to attend and mingle.

Circulate A Sign-In Sheet

Be sure to have a sign-in sheet for people to fill out with contact information. Ask for their first name, last name, address, phone number and email. This will help you build e-mail and phone bank lists as well as recruit volunteers.

* Don't forget to double-check the sign in sheets (for completeness and legibility) before guests leave. Make sure each guest filled in their name, phone, email and zip code legibly. Just in case someone scribbled their name or forgot to include their zip code, you can ask them to correct it before they go.



Follow Up

After the event, contact all the people who signed in. Ask for advice on how to improve the next house party and how to reach more people. Tell everyone to BRING ONE PERSON to get more people involved at the next event. Build a list-serve or phonetree to notify people of future events and opportunities to volunteer. Stay in contact even if you don't have an event coming up. Creating a Facebook or Google group can help with this. Remember, you are building long lasting relationships.

Keep us Informed

Keep the county party informed about your event including the attendance. This will help them when planning things in your area. Take pictures of the party (with permission, of course) and show everyone how great it is to be a Democrat!

Making sure people show up

Unfortunately, a lot of people say they will come to a party, but for whatever reason they flake out. Here are some tips to make sure that your RSVPs show up to the party!

Confirming attendees:

1. One or two days before your event, call each person who RSVP'd and let them know you're really looking forward to seeing them. They will feel more invested and if they think about flaking out on the day of the event, they will think again -- since they just told you they are coming.
2. Send out a reminder email, text message or direct/personal message on social media to each of the guests.
3. When you've confirmed a guest is coming, ask them to bring an item to the party. It should be something small and easy like extra pens, a clipboard, popcorn, etc. Asking them to actively contribute to the party's success increases their investment and improves the likelihood they will actually show up.
4. When guests confirm they are coming, ask if they are bringing any friends and encourage them to invite folks to join them.
5. Make sure guests know how to get to the event location via whatever mode of transit they will be taking. During your confirmation call, you can help them walk through a plan of how they will get there, and troubleshoot any transportation issues they may have. You can also include a link to a Google map/directions when you send your email reminders.



6. Ask at least a couple of people to come early to help you set up and greet guests. This is a great way to increase your RSVP's investment in coming to the event, since they know you're counting on their help. It is also really nice to have a few extra hands when everyone arrives!

Sample Agenda

It's important to have a plan for what will happen at your party, so you can estimate how much time each piece will take and guide your guests seamlessly through the activities. This sample agenda is meant as a guide for you as the host to organize the event.

- Sign in and welcome guests. Provide nametags. Encourage mingling.
- Ask guests to briefly introduce themselves to the group.
- Review the plan for the evening; introduce any VIPs or speakers you've invited
- Have a small and easy activity for participants to do. It can be something as simple as brainstorming the next event, small group discussion about the upcoming election or something else entirely. Make sure you explain the directions and have them written.
- Have time to just talk to one another. Mingling goes far in developing relationships.
- Thank everyone for attending and invite them to reach out to you in the future.



Checklist

Thank you for all of your amazing work. You can download a PDF of this checklist to ensure that you have the support you need to plan, execute and follow up on your event!

Two Months Before

- Select the date for your party
- Inform your county party of the event
- Create a guest list
- Create a budget and menu
- Determine what your theme might be, ex: potluck, tea, etc.
- Create a goal

Four - Six Weeks Before

- Send invitations
- Begin tracking RSVPs
- Finalize menu
- Map out party logistics (i.e. if showing DVD, will everyone be able to see? Where will you stand to present?)

One Week Before

- Review RSVPs and call everyone you haven't heard from
- Confirm menu
- Purchase beverages and supplies
- Assign "volunteers" to welcome and check in guests, restock beverages, replenish food, etc.

Three Days Before

- Make reminder calls to everyone who plans to attend
- Confirm your volunteers
- Select music
- Decorate

Day Of Your Event

- Prepare beverages and food
- Ask volunteers to arrive 1-2 hours before event to help with preparations and last-minute details
- Setup sign-in table with pens, sign-in sheets and nametags
- Set out materials ie: bumper stickers, newsletter, yard signs, etc
- Greet guests, take their coats and help them sign in
- Set aside a basket or plate to collect donations
- Have fun!!



After the Event

___ If asking for donations, make sure they get to the appropriate candidate or party staff member.

___ Send thank you notes or e-mails to all your guests.

___ Send an e-mail or call those invited who were not able to attend your event and update them on the party.

