

The How-To Guide for Social Events & House Parties

*Studies show that people are **20x** more likely to listen to someone they know rather than campaign cold calls.* House parties and social gatherings are a fantastic and intimate way to encourage engagement, discussion, and action in your communities. Not only are they effective, but they are fun too! Plan an event that your guests will remember and be a catalyst during this energetic campaign season.

Events Checklist:

- ☐ **Create a Theme & Action** that will be fun and engaging.
- ☐ **Choose a Date & Time** that will reach your target audience.
- ☐ **Find a location/venue** that will accommodate your type of event.
- ☐ **Set a Budget** and decide who will be paying for drinks, food, supplies, etc
- ☐ **Create a graphic** (for posting) with event details.
- ☐ **Create a digital invitation** such as Facebook Events, [Evite](#), [Eventbrite](#)
- ☐ **Post your event** and post often because some people may not see it right away.
- ☐ **Send personal invitations** via text or private messenger
- ☐ **Create an agenda** for who is speaking, who to introduce, who to thank. Be sure to set a time limit for any speakers if needed.
- ☐ **Items to bring:**
 - ☐ Sign-In Sheets ([find a blank download here](#)), Nametags, pens & markers
- ☐ **Optional additional items** such as WFKH swag, Democrat Swag, postcards, fact sheet handouts, business cards, voter registration cards, action items, decorations, props, favors, giveaway prizes, photo spots
- ☐ **Take pics and videos** of the event to post on social media.
- ☐ **Consider going LIVE** in your state Women for Harris-Walz group during your event for a few minutes.
- ☐ **Thank the location** and be sure to tidy up before you leave.
- ☐ **Post a Recap** with pictures, videos and/or reels. Be sure to thank those that attended and tag them in posts.

See below for a breakdown of each.

1. Start with a Theme

Themes for your social get together are a fun and creative way to get your people to attend. A few ideas are happy hours, ice cream socials, potluck, coffee, tea parties, BBQ, beach sweeps, or even a book club. Decide what's best for **your** group of friends. Your event doesn't have to be too structured— give your guest time to mingle.

It's also good to focus on some key issues and have a theme to focus your discussions.

2. Choose An Action

Always good to include a Call to Action or ask during the event. Bonus points if it coordinates with your discussion theme!

- Have them sign up to volunteer on our website at womenforharris.org
- Invite your guest to join [REACH](https://reach.harris.walz2024.com) (a campaign organizing tool to support neighborhood organizing everywhere)
- Give action opportunities & have them register at events.democrats.org
- Put in your zip code and find mobilization events near you at mobilize.us

3. Picking a Date & Time

Most people are free on weekends and have time after work. Keep this in mind when planning. It is also helpful to have different times for events so that you can reach different members of your community throughout the election season.

4. Choose a Location

Each month try to pick a different location in your county/city so you can engage various areas and give different people a chance to join in on the fun. If you are going to a specific venue, like a bar or restaurant, make sure you speak with the manager to confirm and call back 2 days before to reconfirm. Share RSVP number and details with them *in advance*. It is also good to scout out nearby 2nd option if it's an outdoor event so in case of inclement weather you have a game plan. ***TIP:** *Ask some local democratic leaders where they have held events in the past.*

While variation is important to getting the most people engaged, keeping momentum going in *your* community is also valuable. Do what is right for you and your people!

5. Cost

We are a grassroots non-profit organization. **Women for Harris-Walz will not help you pay for your event, and you are responsible for communicating that with your guests.** For example, at a happy hour or dinner event it should be understood that everyone pays for their own drinks or meals. You also don't want to be responsible for their actions should they drink too much.

If you and your team of community leaders want to pay for the event, make sure all team members are on board with the budget. We had a fun event at a pizza place where the manager let us use a private dining room at no charge. Our little team pitched in and paid for a few pizzas/appetizers for guests as a thank you to the manager. You could possibly get business sponsors, if you have time to organize, but it's okay to leave it simple. **Generally, aim for your events to be low-cost or completely free.**

6. Create a Invitation

If you're more on the artistic side, **Canva** is a great online tool for creating simple, fun graphics. Be sure to include the date, time, location, and theme. **You can also create a Facebook Event** for your group. These usually get great engagement with guests responding and excited to attend. **Lastly, you can use Evite or Eventbrite** to make free digital invitations that keep track of RSVPs and send out event reminders. **Regardless of which option you choose, be sure to send these early to encourage many to participate! Post, Post, Post!**

7. Make your Invite List

Of course, invite your WFBH ladies in your group! Think of your Democratic Party members, people who were active with Dems but may have taken a break, walked away, a like minded friend or neighbor, a leader of a community group. You can reach out to your indivisible groups, drinking liberally, liberal ladies groups etc. Make a point to attend a few of their events, get to know them and they will most likely attend your events. We have to **build a coalition through relationships** with members of our communities / state and meet people where they are. Sending a **personal invite** to your fun event can mean a lot to them and may make them feel welcome and valued!

The Power of the Personal Invite

We got THE MOST responses from personal invitations through private messages and text. We personally invited candidates, Dem women leaders, young people that we knew and also people that may have fallen away from being active with the Dem party. Think big: local leaders and representatives are always looking for ways to engage their voting base..

You may think it's a big ask but you will be surprised what a personal message/text from you can do. Think about sending it twice! You may not hear back, then there they are showing up to your event!

During campaign season, your guest candidate may have several events that day. Check in with them to get their availability and adjust your itinerary if needed.

8. Decorations, Photo Spots, Props and Favors

Decorations, props, and favors are optional but can be fun. Attendees do love a photo spot if you can create one! For example, the heart glasses for a Barbie-themed event were a hit and attendees loved taking pictures at our simple pink balloon arch. **Share the photos on social media and be sure to tag Women for Harris-Walz. We are on all platforms.**

9. Prepare a Simple Agenda

Write out an agenda for your event with your planning team. Make sure everyone gets it so you know how the event will flow and be flexible. A good format to follow is:

- Introductions & Why you are here
- Discussion and freetime to mingle (consider prepping some discussion questions and print them out on tables for guests depending on the size of your gathering)
 - *For prompts visit the Women for Harris-Walz website's Resource page and scroll to the Summer of Action Toolkits.*
- End with a Call-to-Action with action! Whether it's registering people to vote or having them sign up for an event, every action counts.

For introductions, a few things to consider:

Introduce yourself first, followed by a brief description of WFKH and the work we do. Have another leader in your group present the key issues or discussion theme of the night. ****Be sure to briefly introduce anyone notable. Make sure everyone on your planning team researches/Googles the speaker's bio just so they are familiar with the speaker's accomplishments. If you choose a candidate, representative, or leader of the coalition to speak, set time guidelines for your speakers such as 3-5 minutes with them *in advance*.**



Items to Bring:

- Have guests sign-in with name, email and social media handles. You can find a WFKH printable version [here](#).
 - *Encourage people to sign in, even if you already have their info, for accurate attendance numbers.*
- Have name tags available with pens, markers and stickers if available.
- It is also great to have your WFBH business cards to give out, voter registration cards, postcards and other Dem info.

During the Event:

- Take lots of photos and videos and consider going LIVE in your state Women for Harris-Walz group for a few minutes. People love to watch LIVE events!
- Share the photos on social media and be sure to tag Women for Harris-Walz. We are on all platforms.

End of Event and After:

- When your event is over make sure your areas are clear and cleaned up.
- Thank the location host and send our thank you's to your attendees, speakers and event establishment.
- Debrief your guests to check in how they are feeling! We want them to leave feeling energized and engaged!
- Discuss how the event went with your team and any lessons learned to help plan the next event.

Post a Recap: Post pic, videos, reels within a couple of days after your event with a thank you message. Your whole team can make individual posts as well so many will see the fun and it will encourage others to attend the next event! Remember to tag us!

Final Thoughts: Remember to have fun! There is such positivity when you are with like-minded people. Start building community now so that people feel more welcome to get involved. We need each other more than ever right now to help save democracy!