



How To Have A House Meeting

Want to tell your family, friends, and neighbors about the benefits of the Affordable Care Act? It's time to throw a house meeting! And we're here to help – consider us your resource, sound boarding, and helpers.

If you're not already in touch with us, please contact Samantha at (202) 481-8219 or samantha.galing@drsforamerica.org to get updates on what is happening in your area, who the Doctors for America members are in your area, etc.

What Is A House Meeting?:

A house meeting is a foundational organizing meeting. It is one of the quintessential organizing tools. It is a meeting where you invite your personal network to come learn about an issue and what they can do to help. Putting together a house meeting is a key organizing skill – and once you've done 1, you can do 1,000! And don't worry, we are here to help you every step of the way.

Does It Have To Be At A House?:

Absolutely not! A house meeting is a type of organizing meeting, not necessarily specifically a meeting at a house. While having it at your house is often the easiest and most personal, a house meeting can also take place at a coffee shop, in a library, etc.

Step-By-Step:

Below is a sample step-by-step process for planning and executing your house meeting:

- 1) If desired, buddy-up with another DFA member to co-host meeting
 - 2) Determine where you want to have your house meeting
 - 3) Determine what activity (movie, etc.), if any, you want at your meeting
 - 4) If not at your house, research other locations – find out about any restrictions, costs, etc.
 - 5) Set the date and time of your house meeting
 - 6) If need be, get trained on how to give an education presentation
 - 7) Send out the invites
 - 8) Make sure you have all the necessary materials (one-pagers, etc.)
 - 9) Make RSVP reminder calls
 - 10) If not at your house, call and re-confirm the location
 - 11) Make another round of RSVP calls
 - 12) Set-up / stage your house meeting location
 - 13) Hold the house meeting
 - 14) Enter all the data from the house meeting (how many attended, who attended and their contact info, any declarations of support, etc.)
 - 15) Make follow-up calls to each of the attendees
 - 16) Plug-in the attendees as appropriate
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Who Should I Invite?:

The simplest way to create your invite list is to go through your contact list on your phone, email account, Facebook, etc. Each connection you have in your immediate area – family, friends, coworkers, neighbors, etc. – should be invited. We can also provide you with a list of DFA members in your area. Don't worry about inviting too many people. Less than half of those you invite will say yes, and only about half of those who say yes will actually show up on the day of.

Invites:

Generally, multiple layers of invites often work best. You can send an email to those you have email addresses for, print a flier for your neighbors, post an event on Facebook, and then follow-up with phone calls. You can designate someone to help you with the invite process. However, since you are inviting your personal network, you will likely find that the invite process is easy and doesn't take as much time as you imagined.

Attendance Goal:

You should aim to have 20 people actually attend. Remember to keep in mind that less than half of those you invite will say yes, and only about half of those yeses will actually attend.

What Do I Need?:

The needs for a house meeting are quite basic and boil down to what you want to have (the options are endless). Aside from the necessary One Million Campaign materials, an invite of some sort (can be just a typed email) and some food (you can have attendees bring food to share with everyone) are really all you need.

Build Off Other Events:

An easy way to structure a house meeting is to build off other events. If you already have a monthly poker game, book club meeting, knitting club meeting, etc., you add the house meeting onto that event.

Get Creative & Fun:

Be creative and fun in planning your house meeting. People are more likely to attend an event that they think will be fun and interesting. Make it a potluck dinner, wine tasting, BBQ, debate watch party, movie party, etc. The options are endless!

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Sample Agenda:

A possible agenda for your house meeting is as follows:

6:30pm – Guests arrive and grab food

6:45pm – Welcome (story of self, us, and now) and introductions

7:00pm – Background on DFA and the One Million Campaign

7:15pm – Presentation on the ACA

7:30pm – Q&A

7:45pm – The ask / what attendees can do

8:00pm – Fun activity or action item (watch a candidate debate, watch a documentary on health reform, write LTEs, etc.)

The Ask:

It is absolutely critical that you always make an action ask of the attendees. Potential asks include:

- Sign the Declaration of Support
 - Share a story about how the ACA has helped a patient
 - Be an educator / give an ACA presentation
 - Host a house meeting
 - Join your state team
 - Make a contribution to DFA
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Sample Timeline:

Below is a potential timeline for pre- and post- house meeting:

5-10 days before meeting – Start sending out invites

2-3 days before meeting – Make reminder calls to RSVPs

Day of meeting – Make another round of reminder calls to RSVPs

1-2 days after meeting – Make follow-up calls to attendees (get feedback on what they thought of the meeting, follow-up on the commitments they made, get them engaged in your state team, ask if they can host a house meeting, etc.)



Event Box:

Below is a list of some items you will need for your house meeting:

- Sign-in sheet (optional – for collecting contact info from all attendees for follow-up purposes)
- Declarations of Support
- One-pager on the One Million Campaign
- One-pager on DFA
- One-pagers on the ACA (with extra copies so attendees can take a stack with them to handout)
- ACA presentation (on a flip chart or printed copies of slides if PowerPoint not possible)
- Presentation talking points, script, and FAQ
- Contribution forms
- Camera (for taking pictures of your meeting)
- One Million Campaign signs (optional – for staging the area where the meeting will happen)
- Directional signs (optional – in case finding the meeting location will be difficult)
- Food and drinks

Meeting Set-Up:

While you can set-up / stage your meeting location however you best see fit, here are a few tips that may be helpful:

- Put up directional signs so attendees know where to park, what room to go to, etc.
- Set up a greeter / sign-in table near an entrance so you can greet attendees as they enter, take their coats, point out the restrooms and food, and collect their contact info
- Have one-pagers available at the sign-in table and throughout the room
- Put up One Million Campaign signs around the room
- Make sure you have enough places for people to sit and arrange chairs in such a way that everyone will be able to see the presentation
- Lay out the food and drinks in an easily accessible area where it won't create a log jam and also won't be a distraction during the presentation

Resources:

Don't worry, we will provide you with help and assistance throughout your entire planning process. Some of what we can assist you with includes:

- All PowerPoints, fliers, and other forms
- Invite flier template and call script
- How to set-up an event on our webpage and on Facebook
- Posting your meeting on our webpage
- Send out an email blast to DFA members in your area
- Suggestions on places to hold a house meeting
- Coaching and training materials on how to have an effective one-on-one invite conversation
- Coaching and training on doing an ACA presentation
- Coaching and training materials on making an effective and successful ask
- Coaching on the overall planning and execution of your meeting