

Module 1



Mobilization: Have a House Party

Gather a group of five to 30 people, make them aware of the need, and start some of them taking action.

Your house party will be a way to bring together like-minded individuals, raise awareness, and build your own army of citizens working together to reclaim our elections. The synergy, hope and support created in such a group will be inspiring. Create your own epicenter where real progress in election reform will be achieved!

Guide for House Party Hosts/Facilitators

Goals for the Meeting:

The purpose of your house party will be to assemble a handful of people and mobilize them. This involves education/motivation tools and a commitment to action.

Before the Meeting:

- Invite guests. Try and invite people with different party affiliations.
- Print a Citizen's Tool Kit for each guest: <http://www.blackboxvoting.org/toolkit.pdf>
(TIP: The Citizen's Tool Kit has a section at the end of each module where you can add your own actions if you need to customize for your group.)
- Select educational/motivational tool (see below) and set up any audio visual aids or equipment
- Set up enough chairs for every attendee to be able to sit. Arrange the chairs in a semi-circle, if possible, so that everyone can see the speaker and each other.

- Prepare refreshments for attendees.
- Have name tags, pens, and materials packets available as attendees arrive.
- Optional: Have available a basket or bowl for donations (seeded with a \$5 bill and a few \$1 bills) to help cover the costs for refreshments and copying of the Citizen's Tool Kit to be handed out.
- Optional: Have books or documentary DVDs available for sale, as gifts, or door prizes. New ones are coming out all the time. If you need recommendations, just ask.
- As attendees arrive, welcome them, offer them refreshments (if they arrive on time), seat them, and introduce them to the meeting facilitator (if that is not the host). If possible, have one person assigned to admit late-comers: give them name tags and a copy of the Citizen's Tool Kit, and assure they have a place to sit.
- Steer clear of discussions about stolen elections, candidates and/or political parties. The key is to keep the tone of the meeting “non-partisan” and open to all views and ideas regarding election reform.

Part I of House Party – Education/Motivation component

Do a slide presentation, make a short speech, or show a film. Following this, discuss the kinds of actions your guests can get involved in to oversee your next election.

Education/Motivation tools:

- **Slide presentation:** All you need is a digital projector, the presentation file that goes with this Citizen's Tool Kit (<http://www.blackboxvoting.org/toolkit-presentation.pdf>), and a blank white wall. You can also capture ideas from this presentation and make your own. Use the text in the presentation slides or make up your own speech.
- **Short Speech:** See Citizen's Tool Kit **Module 3** for speechmaking tips. Remember that the mind can only absorb what the rear end can endure. Keep it short, include humor, bring visual aids if possible. While developing the speech, stay focused on its purpose: Educate, motivate, activate.
- **Films:** There are several outstanding films you can use to motivate your guests. All that's required is a DVD of the film, a television screen and comfortable places to sit. New ones are coming out all the time. If you need recommendations, just ask.

Part II of House Party – Mobilization component

Introduction actions to oversee next election:

- Give each of your guests a copy of the Citizen's Tool Kit to Take Back Elections. Tell you guests that the object is for each to choose an action – any action – and commit to doing it, either individually or as a group project.
- One of the best ways to exercise oversight is to go get more evidence. If you have an election coming up, you may want to focus on the "Hard Core Evidence" modules

(Modules 4-11). Each involves adopting a portion of the election. Don't try to take them all on. Just select what you can reasonably achieve.

- It's up to you to make the case for election reform. Get the kinds of evidence that can't be explained away or spun: Video, audio recordings, photographs, (see Module 12, Be the Media); Public records (See Module 11, Public Records and Freedom of Information Documents) and Laws/Regulations (See Module 15, Accountability checkup, Laws & Regulations).
- Encourage your guests to sign up for the National Hand Count Registry (See Module 17: Count the Votes Yourself.) You can sign up for the National Hand Count Registry on the home page at [BlackBoxVoting.org](http://www.blackboxvoting.org) or at this direct link: <http://www.bbvforums.org/cgi-bin/forums/board-profile.cgi?action=register>

Goals for Attendees:

- Review the Citizen's Tool Kit and commit to one of the actions.
- Consider hosting a house party to expand the pool of citizens.
- Circulate the Citizen's Tool Kit to friends, neighbors, and work colleagues
- Sign up for the National Hand Count Registry

Meeting Agenda

1. Welcome (by the host)

- Call the meeting to order, welcome everyone, thank them for coming, and do your best to set an upbeat tone.
- Introduce yourself and briefly describe why you called this meeting.
- Mention the refreshments.
- Ask each person to say their name (if people don't know each other).
- Introduce the facilitator (if other than you).

2. Welcome and Agenda Review (by the facilitator):

- The facilitator should thank the host, introduce herself a bit more (particularly any connections to the host or to the group).
- Quickly describe the 2 areas you plan to talk about so attendees know what to expect: (1) Overview of elections problems (2) What attendees can do.
- Set the tone for people to *act*: "Instead of complaining that nothing can be done (which we all sometimes do), the Citizen's Tool Kit is a way for us to do something by mobilizing our friends and having a real impact on taking back our elections. Working together we can frame the discussion and hold voting machine vendors and public officials accountable."

3. Education about the issue

- Slide show, brief speech or film

4. Mobilization

- Distribute Citizen's Tool Kits.
- Discuss actions
- Have people choose whether they'd prefer to take action as individuals or as a group
- Ask if anyone in the group tends to lead, mentor or organize
- Those who like to work individually can meet and discuss action areas and each choose their own.
- Those who like to work as a group can decide whether to form their own small group or collaborate with other guests to form an action group.

5. Questions/Comments:

- Briefly answer questions. For any question you cannot easily answer, refer the questioners to the One-on-One section at www.BlackBoxVoting.org or to a local election reform group if possible.
- Avoid getting into a long debate about the issues — instead focus on what we can do by mobilizing into action. Postpone questions/issues that need long discussion until after you complete the “what-you-can-do” part of the program.
- If attendees say they don't believe the Citizen's Tool Kit materials and presentation are appropriate for the people they know, ask what modules interest them most. See if there are any actions that they feel would appeal to their circle of influence.

6. Final Discussion:

- Set the next meeting date for any citizens who want to take action as a group
- If it seems like people are willing to stay longer and if they seem to want to talk more about election reform issues, address any unanswered questions or open the floor for discussion.

7. Wrap-Up

- Thank everyone for coming and for their help. Say that you will stay and discuss issues with people individually afterwards if they want.

Collaboration and appreciation: Black Box Voting wishes to thank **Abbe DeLozier** of **Vote Rescue** (Austin, TX) for the House Party idea applied to election reform, and **Peace Action** and **Democracy for America** for ideas and setting an example of using house parties to bring citizens together.

Your Own Additions to the House Party Module

You can share your ideas by sending to crew@blackboxvoting.org



What worked well?

What new ideas did you come up with?

Was there anything that didn't work very well?
