

## What is a House Meeting?

An in-person gathering of 8-12 people, usually lasting 60-90 minutes, with the purpose of building or deepening public relationships, establishing a common vision, and generating a commitment to act together.

## Why do House Meetings to Advance a Campaign?

- To build trust and relationships among the campaign team.
- To establish a common understanding of the issue at stake in the campaign.
- To identify new leaders who can help contribute to and lead your campaign.
- To maximize commitments for action steps that will advance the campaign.

## What Reaction Do We Want from a Campaign House Meeting?

- Commitments to volunteer for specific campaign activities (canvassing, phone banks, attending a public action, etc.)
- Commitments to host another house meeting engaging more potential volunteers.

## Whom to Invite to a Campaign House Meeting?

- People who care about the school and education in the community: parents, teachers, staff, neighbors, community leaders, etc.
- People who have diverse constituencies.

## Planning Your House Meeting

**3 weeks out:** Create an invitation list of at least 2-3 times the number of people you'd like to attend (invite 25 people to get an attendance of 10-12).

**2 weeks out:** Send a written or e-mail invitation for the house meeting, and then follow up with a personal phone call confirming receipt and asking for commitments.

**1 week out:** Make personal phone calls and emails firming up commitments. Meet with campaign staff to go over the agenda for your house meeting.

**Day before:** Make personal phone calls or send personal emails reminding people of the house meeting and expressing how important it is to you that they attend. Rehearse the stories you want to tell that will serve as models for the group.

## House Meeting Facilitation Tips

- Set clear guidelines for the time limits on each rounds question (usually 2 minutes), and ask for permission at the beginning to cut people off when time is up.
- Don't let anyone dominate the conversation (including yourself)
- Make sure everyone has a chance to speak.
- Get people to tell stories, not just voice complaints, opinions, or abstract issues. Sometimes this might require interrupting to ask people to tell a specific story.
- Keep the energy high.

## General Format of a Campaign House Meeting:

1. **Introduction and Context:** “Thank you for coming to this house meeting to learn how we can work together to make a big impact on an important issue in our community -- \_\_\_\_\_ . This meeting is part of a campaign to engage hundreds of volunteers across our region to make sure that our campaign is successful. You are all amazing people, and I’m excited that we are all in the same room so that you can get to know each other more deeply. We’ll start off by introducing ourselves and hearing why this issue is so important to each of us. We’ll then discuss the policy and politics of the campaign, and we will close by asking for commitments for specific activities that each of us can do to make sure this campaign is a success.”
2. **Rounds Question 1:** The purpose of this question is for each person to introduce him/herself more fully in a way that builds relationships, and also grounds them in the mindset of getting involved politically. Example: “Share a brief story about the first time you got involved in politics.” (Host models a well-crafted 2 minute story, and asks each member to keep their story to two minutes).
3. **Rounds Question 2:** The purpose of this question is to get each person to reflect on and share why the issue at stake in the campaign is personally important to them. Example: “Thinking about your own experience or that of people in your family or community, why is (early childhood education) important to you? If you were sitting down with the policy-maker who had power to make this change, what story would you tell that explains why it is so important that this change be made?”
4. **Presentation on Campaign Policy and Politics**
5. **Overview of next steps and why they are important to winning the campaign.**
6. **Commitments:** “We’ve heard a lot of compelling stories this evening about why this issue is so important for our community. If we are going to win this campaign, we need hundreds of volunteers working consistently and persistently in campaign activities. Our way of engaging more volunteers is to host more house meetings like this. Please consider hosting your own house meeting to recruit volunteers from your own network. Our team will help support you in organizing and facilitating that meeting. And please sign up for at least one of the campaign activities we’ve described. I’ve passed around a commitment card. Please take 1 minute to fill it out. We will then go around the room and announce our commitments.
7. **Celebration of Commitments, Closing, and Thank You**

## After Your House Meeting

- Send thank you cards or emails to attendees.
- Follow up with those who agree to host house meetings, and offer to walk them through the planning process.
- Follow up with those who committed to volunteer to remind them of their commitments.
- Keep people updated on the progress of the campaign and new volunteer opportunities as they come up.