



# How to Host a Watch Party

## June 2019 Organizer's Toolkit

We are seeing a rash of abortion bans and restrictions sweeping the country, all with one goal in mind — to bring a direct challenge to *Roe v. Wade* to the Supreme Court, and make abortion inaccessible in this country. This is an attack on ALL of us. With access to abortion and reproductive health care at risk across the country while support for those very rights is at an all-time high, anyone who wants to lead the United States must address how they will protect — and expand — access to abortion and other reproductive health care. It is time for us to build our own grassroots power and fight back.

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This month, **We Decide: Planned Parenthood Action Fund 2020 Election Membership Forum** will be held on **Saturday, June 22nd**, followed closely by the **first Democratic Primary debates on June 26th and 27th**. Organizing local watch parties during these events is our opportunity to start to build local teams of advocates – and it's important to start early. As a passionate advocate for reproductive rights, you are the key to our national organizing strategy. Hosting a watch party this month will be an opportunity for you to connect the attacks on sexual and reproductive health to the presidential election, to recruit a local team of sexual and reproductive health advocates, and to get other advocates in your community ready to fight back.

**To do this, use the guide below to host a debate watch party and to:**

1. **Connect** with advocates in your community and hear from presidential candidates.
2. **Amplify** your voice, your passion, and your story.
3. **Collect** commitments from people in your community to take action.
4. **Plan** your team's next steps in the fight to protect access to sexual and reproductive healthcare.

If this seems like a lot, don't fret: we've got you covered! Below is everything you need to know to plan an awesome watch party and help build momentum to win this fight.

## I. Register Your Event on the Action Councils Hub

The Action Councils Hub is a tool to manage events, groups, and volunteers to empower people like you to easily find and create events and groups (that is, Action Councils) in your community. Find a local Action Council or create a new one [here](#). If you need help with this, see the [Volunteer](#)

Need help? Email us at [defenders@ppfa.org](mailto:defenders@ppfa.org).

## II. Recruiting Basics

When you're thinking about recruiting people for your event, the first thing to do is think about **your audiences** and what **channels of communication** you will use for each audience. Different audiences will respond on different channels of communication, so it's important to figure out who you want to recruit and then where to reach them!

## III. Identify People to Recruit

To start, think about people who might have some kind of self-interest in the work you're doing. People will join your events and group because they have a personal connection to the subject matter you are focused on or have a connection to someone who is already a part of your event or group. Two groups of people to think about are:

1. **People with whom you have personal relationships:** Think of friends, family, classmates, or close coworkers. Your friend who's always rocking the Planned Parenthood shirt, your aunt who constantly posts about how much she hates the Trump administration, your co-worker who volunteers for progressive causes. These people already like you and care about the things you do, so they'll be great to have at your event or on your team!
2. **People in places interested supporters might be:** These aren't people you know personally, but people that might be likely to support the work you're doing in some way. People in local community groups, social media groups, or at rallies, protests, and community events are all good to connect with.

To help get organized, make a list of people in the first group that you could personally ask to join. Then make another list of potential events, local community groups, and online spaces such as Facebook groups that you could go to for recruiting people you don't know personally. Assign contact due dates and write them next to the names and events so that you stay accountable to yourself.

When you're recruiting for events like watch parties, you'll likely want more people, but the exact number will depend on the venue size. However big you want the attendance at your event to be, make sure to set yourself a recruitment goal that is both ambitious and attainable.

Keep in mind that even recruiting a few people will mean talking to a LOT more people than you want to attend since only some will say yes and even fewer will follow through. This is probably the most frustrating part of recruitment. *We have found that generally, 30%-50% of the people who RSVP will actually attend, so plan ahead and make sure to get at least 2 or 3 times the number of people you want to attend to RSVP.*

If you want your event to be larger, you may want to recruit a group of people to be on your 'Host Committee'. They will be responsible for recruiting a specific number of attendees to the event. In

your promotional materials and at the event you should celebrate and thank the Host Committee members.

When creating your list of people to reach out to, it is important to be intentional about being inclusive. Unless we make the intentional effort to include people with different identities based on age, gender, or race, or ethnicity, we are at risk of self-segregating.

## IV. Channels of Communication

Once you've got a list of people you want to recruit, it's time to reach out! You will want to add your event to the Planned Parenthood Action Fund online events tool here, and use your link to collect RSVPs: <http://act.plannedparenthoodaction.org>. [See the step by step instructions here on how to do that.](#)

For your personal contacts, you should talk to them as you normally do. If you usually call them, give them a call. If they don't answer phone calls and love to text, send them a text. If you normally Snapchat them or DM them, go for it!

For people you don't know yet, but you think might be interested, go to the places you know they will be. Utilize all the digital tools such as Facebook groups and listservs, making sure anyone interested in joining knows how to RSVP to your online event registration page.

## V. Reminding RSVPs

Once you've got people committed to join you, make sure to remind them in the days leading up to the event or team meeting! In addition to emailing them, you should make sure to make confirmation calls and send reminder text messages.

### 2-3 Days Out: Make Confirmation Calls

- **Emailing a reminder isn't enough!** Be sure to make calls to confirm attendance to your event or team meeting in the days leading up to it. Make a plan with them to get to the event ("do you know which train to take?" "We're just off exit 26, next to the gas station.")
- **Here is a sample script you can use:** "Hi [Attendee]! This is [Organizer's Name], I'm a volunteer with Planned Parenthood Action Fund. I'm just calling to confirm your attendance at our Watch Party. We're going to have a great group of passionate advocates on Saturday."
  - If yes: "Great! We'll be at [date, time location]. Do you know how you'll get here?" [Make a plan]. "
  - If no: "Sorry to hear that! We're going to be holding a number of similar activities over the next few months with other local advocates. Can we keep in touch about ways to help fight back against attacks on sexual and reproductive health?"

### Day Before and Day Of: Text Message Reminders

- On the day before, send a text message with all the event's logistics (time, location, organizer contact) and ask them to confirm that they can make it. Then send a day-of reminder on the same thread letting them know you're excited to see them!

This may seem like a lot of confirmation messages, but these reminders are the most important thing you can do to make sure people show up at your events!

## VI. Event Agenda

This is YOUR event, and we want you to personalize the experience in a way that suits you and your group. For planning purposes, the **We Decide: Planned Parenthood Action Fund 2020 Election Membership Forum** on Saturday, June 22 is scheduled to start at 11:00am ET and to run through 5:00pm ET, and the debates are scheduled for June 26 and 27 at 8:00pm ET on NBC and will be livestreamed. Host a watch party for the event that works best for your schedule – or for multiple events if you’re ambitious. *Given the length of the forum you should schedule your forum watch party for a time that overlaps with the forum and works with your schedule and time zone.* We recommend you set the start time of your event for 30 minutes before the debate is scheduled to start. Below is a sample agenda you can build off of:

**:00-:05** - Attendees trickle in thirty minutes before the event starts; mark attendees as “attended” through your event on <http://act.plannedparenthoodaction.org> and use this [sign in](#) form to ask your attendees to become Planned Parenthood Action Fund Members, so you can all keep working together to protect reproductive health & rights. *After your event, send your sign-in form to [defenders@ppfa.org](mailto:defenders@ppfa.org) to ensure attendees receive future updates.*

**:05-:10** - Organizer introduces themselves and shares their story about why they are involved.

**:10-:20** - Attendee introductions & Icebreaker (“what brought you here?”)<sup>1</sup>

**:20-30** - Introduction to Action Council.

- Action Councils aim to make it easier for Action Fund members like you to lead work in their communities to support Planned Parenthood organizations.
- Action Councils are our volunteer force. They are groups of 3-20 Planned Parenthood Action Fund members that have ownership over their goals and campaigns.
- Action Councils work in coordination with Planned Parenthood Action Fund staff and engage at local, state, and federal levels to win meaningful change and protect our rights.
- This is deep and meaningful work, and it can take a lot of energy. But working with other people you know and trust can help you stay motivated and accountable, and eliminate burnout.

**:30-2:30** - Debate or Forum begins / Social media guidance explained/distributed to help attendees amplify pro-reproductive health messages.

**2:30-2:45** - Open space for attendee reactions.

**2:45-3:00** - Ask attendees to join your Action Council or to create one together and discuss next steps. It’s not always easy to ask someone to join your team or event! It can even feel a little awkward. But remember that you’re giving the people you invite an opportunity to participate in meaningful work that connects with their values and goals. That’s really exciting for them!

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<sup>1</sup> \*Everyone may not want to answer this question. That’s okay. We’re creating a safe space in which people can share as much or as little as they’d like. If there is a lot of opting-out, consider an unrelated icebreaker (“what’s your TV guilty pleasure?”)

When recruiting people to join your Action Council, it is important to spend time getting to know people personally before asking them to join you through some action-provoking questions. One question you can ask is:

**I'm personally taking action on [issue you're working on] because [share why you are working on it]. What motivates you personally about this issue?**

Why ask this: Understanding someone's personal motivation around the issues you are working on is a good way to understand what might engage them. Sharing your own personal story can be a way to help model that, and make them more open to sharing too.

**If it seems like there might be a good fit, then you can say something like:**

"Well, as you know I'm working on building out a local Planned Parenthood Action Council. We're bringing together a group of folks to *[mention whatever project or campaign you are interested in working on]*. I know that you're looking for *[a community taking action on X issue; putting your skills in Y to good use]* and I really think that this team could be a place for you to do that with a group of great people. What do you think?"

Don't worry if you can't get every single person you communicate with to join your team. If you can find the people that want to be part of your community, in the long-run that'll make your event or team stronger and more fun for everyone involved.

### **Social Media Guidance For Event**

1. Tag your posts using #WeDecide on social media
2. Share how the candidate's policies/plans will affect you or your loved ones
3. Don't forget to tag the candidates on social media platforms!

## **VII. Follow Up**

These watch parties should serve as a kickoff for future advocacy and serve as the basis for forming community and starting a local volunteer group (Action Council) of dedicated Action Fund members. After the event, you should:

4. [Register your Action Council](#), and send a follow-up email to all attendees thanking them for coming and asking them to join the group.
  - o *How to create a new Action Council:*
    - If there is no group found near you, you will have the option to create your own Action Council using the "Create a Group" functionality.
    - Follow the instructions on the form and choose a name, location and short description and submit your information.
    - Note that in your group description you can add relevant external links as well - for example if there is a Facebook group or other resources you want all members to have access to.
    - A staff person will review your request to create a new Action Council—once

- you have approval you will receive a notification and be able to start organizing discussions and events with your group (see instructions below).
- *How to invite people to join your Action Council:*
    - Once you've created or joined your Action Council, you can invite people to join by clicking on the "Invite a Friend" link on your Action Council's page.
    - You'll be prompted to enter your contact's name and email address. Once you fill that in, press the "Send" button to send them the invite link. It's a good idea to let them know (via text, phone, or in-person) that they should be expecting the invitation link. If they don't get it, tell them to try looking in their spam folder as well.
    - You can also send attendees a link to your group and ask them to join through the link.
5. **Recruit Co-Leaders:** Ask attendees who expressed particular interest in being involved in a leadership role in future advocacy efforts to have a "one-on-one" meeting with you. Check out this [toolkit](#) for ideas on how to conduct the meeting, and what kinds of things you can ask advocates to do.
  6. **Follow Up with People Who Couldn't Attend:** Write brief follow-up posts and emails on all channels (email, social media, etc.) you originally used to promote the event to talk about the event's success and future plans in order to capture advocates who weren't able to join in person.
  7. **Report Out on Your Event:** Email photos and a brief report back to [actioncouncils@ppfa.org](mailto:actioncouncils@ppfa.org). Make sure to include your sign-in list in your email.

## VIII. Recruitment Checklist

<i>Lead</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Time Frame</i>
		Establish a date and time for your event.	Day 1
		If your event or meeting is taking place near a Planned Parenthood organization office, reach out to the Public Affairs staff to let them know	Day 1
		Add your event to the Planned Parenthood Action Fund online events tool	Day 1
		Make a list of people with whom you have personal relationships with that you can recruit	Day 1
		Make a list of places interested supporters you don't know personally might be (upcoming events, local community groups, Facebook groups)	Day 1
		Begin reaching out to your contacts and other communities and recruiting them	Day 1
		Consider forming an Organizing Committee or Host Committee for your event to ramp up recruitment (if time allows)	Day 2
		Send out your meeting or event information to your RSVPs via email and other channels as needed (social media, text, etc.)	3-5 Days Out
		Send a 2nd reminder email to your RSVPs	2-3 Days Out
		Make multiple rounds of confirmation calls to RSVPs to remind them to come	1-2 Days Out

		Send a final reminder email to your RSVPs	Day Before
		Send a reminder text to your RSVPs	Day Before
		Send a final reminder text to your RSVPs	Day Of

## IX. Additional Resources

1. [Toolkit: How to Recruit People to Your Event or Group](#)
2. [Volunteer Guide: How to use the Action Councils Hub](#)
3. [Toolkit: How to Build Your Action Council](#)