



# **DFA House Parties**

**Movies, Training, Fundraising and Fun**



## How to Host a DFA House Party

Several times a year DFA sponsors nationwide house parties in order to build local communities and galvanize national action on important issues. There are several different types of DFA House Parties:

- **National Movie Nights** help educate your community about important issues. Past movies include: Sicko, Iraq for Sale, The War Tapes, and Uncounted..
- **DFA Night School** is our free interactive online campaign training program. DFA will be holding Night School house parties throughout the year. Visit [www.democracyforamerica.com/nightschool](http://www.democracyforamerica.com/nightschool) for more info.
- **DFA Trust Parties** build DFA's grassroots fundraising base by encouraging people to become DFA Trust members.

### Simple Steps to a Successful House Party

1. **Determine the Goal of Your Party.** The first step to holding a successful house party is to be clear about the party's goals. This will help ensure the rest of your house party plan stays focused. Remember, a house party can accomplish one or more of the following:
  - Build your local DFA community
  - Educate local activists on important issues
  - Train local activists in winning campaign strategies and tactics
  - Raise Money for DFA or your local group

**Always set a quantifiable goal for any House Party**  
**Example: 25 people in attendance or \$350 in contributions**

2. **Pick a Location.** The location should be a place that encourages familiarity and even a sense of intimacy with the host. It should be somewhere easy to access and free to the organizer. The best location for most house parties is a home or apartment. It should fit your crowd goal in a way that allows attendees to mix comfortably. Since mixing and socializing is a part of your agenda, you will have to figure where people can and cannot go. Part of your agenda will also involve addressing the whole crowd, so attendees will need to be able to gather so that everyone can hear the speaker.
3. **Register the Party Online at DFA's Website:** [www.dfalink.com](http://www.dfalink.com) This allows you to email and track invitations and promote your party online and to the wider DFA community.
4. **Build the Crowd.** Most successful house party events attract 10 to 30 people. You can build your crowd by:
  - Establishing a "host committee" where each member of the committee takes responsibility for inviting a certain number of people. Be sure every member commits to a specific task, such as inviting five to 10 friends.
  - Emailing your local DFA group and other members of your social network.
  - Email is not enough. Make a list of your friends and family and start making follow up calls.
  - Putting a notice in the local newspaper or calendar. Ask someone on your host committee to help design the notice. This will get them more invested in the party and it will take one task off your shoulders.
5. **Plan Your Party.** Work out a rough schedule for the party beforehand. See below for a possible timetable. Simple refreshments are fine. People don't come for fancy food, but to socialize and take part in the national action.
6. **Make Reminder Phone Calls.** One week before your party, call everybody that you invited. This will remind those who've said yes and serve as an extra push to those who haven't responded.

## Time to Party!

Staff a table by the front door and have your guests sign in. Put return envelopes and a basket out for contributions. Have extra pens and name tags handy. Display DFA and candidate materials.

Other tips:

- Ask everyone to introduce themselves and share their “story” about why they’re interested in this campaign and why it matters in their lives. This is the key to creating a sense of intimacy and building community. Remember that the personal story should be short – just a few minutes each. The best way to set the tone is to make sure that the hosts start with their own brief stories. People will follow the example.
- Report your results. Collect any contributions and the sign-in sheet and mail them to DFA in Burlington.

### Sample DFA Party Agenda

<b>6:30 PM</b>	Staff a table near the front door. Sign in guests, provide name tags, and DFA materials.
<b>7:00 PM</b>	Welcome; Guests introduce themselves, and briefly explains why they’ve come.
<b>7:30 PM</b>	Watch DVD provided by DFA or listen to DFA Night School Training
<b>8:10 PM</b>	Host or surrogate makes pitch for money and support.
<b>8:30 PM</b>	Host closes the event by thanking everybody.

### Making a House Party Fundraising Pitch

See the section on fundraising in the manual for more about making a money pitch. A house party pitch is a little different than a one-on-one pitch, but the fundamentals are the same.

Begin the pitch by making the case for giving. Party hosts are usually the best persons to do this and can simply talk about why they are contributing to DFA and describe the difference gifts will make. If a national house party day is raising money for a specific purpose (A DFA List candidate, put a television ad on the air, etc.), let your guests know.

Hosts who are uncomfortable asking for money should find a surrogate, such as an elected official or local grass roots leader active in DFA. Whoever does the job needs to do three things:

- 1) **State a goal and give the context.** “Tonight I’m asking the people at this house party to help me raise \$500 to support DFA’s grassroots campaign to support . . . “
- 2) **Request an action.** Tell people you want them to make a donation tonight. Give a specific amount – “If each one of us here tonight gives \$25 we can easily make our goal of \$500.” Also mention any matching schemes (anyone who gives \$100 will receive a coffee mug, or hosts who raise \$500 will receive a signed book from Howard Dean, etc.) Multiple requests (give money, volunteer time, host your own party, etc.), are okay, but keep the list short and specific.
- 3) **Tell people how to act.** Do you want someone to write a check? Tell them who to make it out to and where to put it – your hands, a basket in the hall, wherever. Want people to volunteer”? Show them the sign up sheet or give them a card. Make your requests clear and concrete and close the formal program by thanking everyone for coming. This gives people time to act on your request by writing checks, signing up to volunteer, or do whatever else you have asked.