



## **BORDER ACTION NETWORK/ACCIÓN FRONTERIZA**

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### **House Party Kit**

Thank you for hosting a house party! A house party is a fast, easy and fun way to raise money and educate people on behalf of Border Action Network.

House parties are widely used and excellent way for people who care about human rights to achieve a number of goals:

- Raise funds from current and new supporters to strengthen Border Action's campaigns for a just and safe border communities and human dignity.
- Raise awareness within a social community of Border Action and its mission and activities.
- Promote new friendships, networking and support among people allied to help Border Action.
- To combine fun and activism in one event.

House parties are easy to organize and don't require a long lead time, they're a lot of fun since you get to invite a lot of friends over, and they're excellent ways to sign up new long-term members of an organization that you want to support. Research shows that people who donate money at a house party have higher long-term renewal rates and donate more over time than people who simply respond to a direct-mail solicitation. Your personal contact and friendship with the people who attend your party makes all the difference.

This document will walk you through the steps on planning a successful house party. If you have any questions after reading this guide call Randall at (520) 623-4944.

#### **Step 1: Set a Fundraising Goal**

Its important to set a goal before you start planning. The average house party should raise \$2000 in Tucson. Most people are afraid to ask for large amounts of money or get stuck because they think "all my friends are just regular people trying to get by—they can't give a big contribution." Ask for what you need. Announce at your party that your goal is \$2000 (or whatever your goal is you set). If you don't ask for the money, you won't receive.

To raise \$2000 from 19 people you would need:

1 contribution @ \$250=\$250

3 contributions @ \$150=\$450

7 contributions @ \$100=\$700

8 contributions @ \$75 = \$600

To make your goal easier to attain, follow-up with guests who do not RSVP and ask them over the phone to make a contribution.

#### **Step 2: Prepare an Invitation List**

Your guest list...think big. You generally need to invite three to four times as many people as you want to attend. A house party can have any number of people but generally works best when there are at least ten guests and not more than thirty. Figure out how many people the house can comfortably fit.

Start with your friends and family. But don't forget neighbors and people from your church, synagogue, social clubs, or work. There should be one person from the organization such as a board member, volunteer, or staff for every five to eight guests, so include them in the numbers. Contact Randall at Border Action (520.623.4944 or [randall@borderaction.org](mailto:randall@borderaction.org)) to let him know how many people are needed to represent the organization.

### **Step 3: Prepare and Send the Invitation**

Send paper invitations to your guests, so include them in the extra time and thought into the event.

Use Border Action's or design your own invitations. Border Action has beautiful cards you can use as invitations. Contact Randall Smith at [randall@borderaction.org](mailto:randall@borderaction.org) or (520) 623-4944 for more information about the cards. Your invitation should include:

- What the house party is for
- The date and time of the event
- Name and contact info (phone and email) of the host
- A request that people bring their checkbook

The reply card should include:

- RSVP deadline
- Name and contact information of the guest
- How to contribute if the guest is unable to attend: "I can't come, but here's my contribution of \$\_\_\_\_"
- Return envelope (SASE works best)

### **Step 4 Follow-up calls**

You will have a substantially larger turn-out for your event – and raise substantially more money – if you make follow up calls to guests. Starting at least one week before the party, the host should telephone everyone who has not RSVPed. If guests are unable to attend, the follow-up call is a great opportunity to ask for a donation.

Tips for follow up calls.

- Get to the point early on in the conversation. Let your friend know that you are calling about the fundraising event, so you do not find yourself getting into a long chat.
- Ask directly if they are coming to the party.
- If they can't come, ask if they will send a contribution. It is best if you ask for a specific amount of money – for example. "I'm sorry you won't be able to attend. Can you make a contribution of \$75 to support this important work?"
- After you ask for the contribution, be silent and wait for the answer. This simple step is very important – resist the temptation to say anything more until they have responded.
- Thank your friend for their time and/or pledge.
- Keep a record of all commitments.

Email reminders out the work day before the party. Persistence is the key. Don't be shy about talking to, inviting and reminding people about your party frequently. The only way that people will want to get involved is through personal contact with you and others who are attending.

## **Step 5 Put together the Party Agenda, Prepare your Pitch and Party!**

Before your party, it's important to put together your program for the evening...after all, this is a party—with a purpose! The first half hour should be an informal time for guests to arrive, mingle, snack and to check out the Border Action brochures.

The program part of the party should start no more than one hour into the party so you don't lose momentum and guests.

The program should start with the host introducing the speaker from Border Action. The Border Action staff or board member will talk briefly (less than 5 minutes) about Border Action's history and campaign to document and prevent human right violations in immigrant and border communities.

The host should make the pitch for money and the pitch for guests to host additional house parties. It is much harder to say no to a friend than to a staff member. You should practice your ask before the house party. You can say something like this:

*“Our immigration and border policy is a planned failure. Everyday hundreds of border residents have their human and civil rights violated by a border patrol agents who act as an occupying army. Since 1994 over three thousand people who were coming to this country to look for work or to join their loved ones here in this country died in our desert. This year we are on track to set a new record of increasing deaths.*

*I would like to introduce XXXX from Border Action Network. (Say a little about the person: who they are, what their role is with the organization. The person should speak for about five minutes about the organization and why it is important).*

*As you can see, this is incredibly important work. This is why I have given my own money to Border Action. Border Action is the one of the leading immigrant rights organizations in the country. Their work in Arizona has made changes in local and national policies and improved the lives of thousands of low-income immigrants and border residents.*

*My goal is to raise \$2000 at this party towards their goal to bring human rights to the Arizona border. I have given \$\_\_\_\_\_ to this goal. Please join me and take out your check books and give big. This is a time when history is being made in our hometown and we need to give all we can to support the work of Border Action.”*

Immediately after the pitch, pass pens and donation materials (envelopes, contribution slips) around to everyone and give them a few minutes to write their checks. After people have had time to write their checks, it is best to have someone actually walk around with the collection basket to collect the checks, rather than passing the basket or leaving it on the table.

Food and drink: Refreshments can be plain or fancy – it is up to you to serve whatever you are comfortable with and fits within your budget. If time allows, you can solicit restaurants or grocery stores (Trader Joes and Food City work well) to donate food or drink. If you spend money on refreshments please give the total to Border Action and so that we can track it is an in-kind donation. Thank you!

**Step 6: Wrap Up**

Congratulations – your party was a success! You’re not done yet, though. The following day call any people who RSVPed and didn’t attend and ask them to make a contribution. Within a week of the house party, the host should send a thank-you note to everyone who made a contribution to your cause and tell them how much money was raised. They will also receive a thank you from Border Action, but a personal touch from you will be appreciated.

## House Party Work Plan

What	Who will do this part?	When will it happen (Week 1-4)	Date Completed
<b>1. Make a plan</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choose date, time and location of party</li> </ul>		1	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make fundraising goal, work plan and budget</li> </ul>		1	
<b>2. Prepare invitation list</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brainstorm possible attendees</li> </ul>		1	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Track down addresses/phone #s and emails</li> </ul>		1,2	
<b>3. Prepare and send invitations and materials</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare paper invitations/reply cards</li> </ul>		2	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mail invitations</li> </ul>		2	
<b>4. Make follow-up calls</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make calls to confirm attendees, ask non-attendees to make a donation</li> </ul>		3,4	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send email two business days before the party</li> </ul>		5	
<b>5. Prepare the party plan, pitch and party.</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare program and pitch</li> </ul>		4	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gather materials needed for party</li> </ul>		5	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buy and prepare food and refreshments</li> </ul>		5	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold the party</li> </ul>		5	
<b>6. Send thank you notes and evaluate the event.</b>		Within 2 weeks of the event.	