

What is a Meet-and-Greet... and why you should host one!



A meet-and-greet is an excellent way for Precinct Committeemen and our local candidates to build rapport with voters, exchange ideas, build trust, and fundraise. These events can also be used to bring voters together with elected officials currently in office or to discuss a pressing community issue or challenge. They are typically planned to last 1-2 hours and occur in a place that encourages people to talk and get to know one another.

A note on Finance Compliance

Events for County-wide, State-wide, and Federal campaigns/candidates are governed by a different set of financial rules and campaign laws for both the candidates and hosts. This guide is NOT intended to provide information about those. Contact these types of candidates directly. Use this guide for small campaigns, such as those for school board, city/municipal races, or legislative district initiatives. Fundraising related to initiatives (vs candidates) may require the creation of a Political Committee (see [PACs at SOS](#)).

1. Planning the Event at a High Level

- **Identify the Purpose:** Is the event for fundraising for a candidate, voter education, something else?
- **Select a Venue:** A supporter's home, community room, park, restaurant banquet room, etc.
- **Choose the Date & Time:** Pick a date that works for the host and candidate, and is likely to attract a good turnout, such as a weekend evening. Allow time to plan & promote the event (1-5 weeks).
- **Decide on the Duration:** Plan for the event to last 1.5 to 3 hours. This provides ample time for interaction without being too long for guests or the host.
- **Anticipate Number of Guests:** For promoting a candidate with local neighbors, invite 2x the number of people you want. Generally you want 20 people, so plan to invite 40.

2. Organizing a Team and Planning the Details

Ask a few friends or fellow PCs to help with planning and assist with activities on the day of the event. If doing this for a candidate, invite them to be part of the planning process. Discuss the high level plan from above and work through the following details with your volunteers. Write down the plans and who is taking which task(s):

- **Determine the Setup:** How will the host area (living room, yard, etc.) be arranged for a comfortable gathering? Will you use existing seating? Perhaps there is a need to borrow or rent additional chairs or tables? Consider a sign-in sheet or guest book on a small table or spot guests cannot miss; it will be used to send Thank-Yous! If hosting a raffle or a donation box, include forms for information required by law for the candidate/committee.
- **Choose Refreshments:** Consider simple light snacks (cookies, crackers, cheese tray) with simple beverages (water, juice, tea/coffee). These will suffice for most meet & greets. Coolers should be filled and iced 2+hours before the event. Considering your refreshment choices, what types of paper goods and utensils will be needed? Which volunteers can make or supply any of these?
- **Plan the Agenda/Entertainment:** Consider soft background music, a gift basket raffle, an information board, business card bowl for drawing, etc. Also consider a portable speaker and microphone if the guest(s) of honor will make a speech or if you have a Q&A planned, especially when the space you're using is large, outdoors, and/or if the guest count will be 20+ people.
- **Assign Tasks & Roles:** Allocate tasks to specific volunteers, sharing tasks as appropriate: invitations/flyers, handling RSVPs (receive calls, track names, send reminders), location set-up, refreshments, welcoming guests, donations, location clean-up.

Hosting a Meet & Greet (continued)

3. Creating Invitations and Promoting the Event

- Create Invitations:
 - Design Ideas: Text should be easy to read and include all essential details: date, time, location*, purpose of the event, and RSVP information. Graphics add interest and are used to draw attention. Consider adding a headshot of the candidate.
 - Digital Invitations: Simple invitations sent via email or social media for those who are online. Also consider free services such as: evite.com, Facebook Events, Nextdoor.com (often you can set these up to send reminders to those who RSVP'd).
 - Printed Invitations: Design or purchase simple invitations that can be hand-delivered or mailed. Consider inviting neighbors from your precinct walklist.
**Instead of publicizing a private residential address on flyers/invitations, you can say "To be held at a private residence near"... then list the cross-streets and add a note: "RSVP for the exact address".*
- Promote the event:
 - Personal Outreach: Visit, call, or text neighbors, friends, and community members who might be interested in donating to / learning more about the candidate. Encourage volunteers to do the same. This direct personal touch makes a significant difference in turnout and engagement.
 - Door-to-Door: Consider going door-to-door to your neighbors and personally inviting them with a small flier or paper invitation.
 - Community Bulletin Boards: Utilize bulletin boards in local community centers or churches as appropriate to post flyers about the event.
 - Social media: Publish the flier to friends and local groups.

4. Leading & Setting up the Event

- Status Checks: Check with all the volunteers to confirm their action items are progressing. Does anyone need help? Also someone should send reminders to those who have RSVP'd.
- Event-Eve: Major setups, such as furniture moving, should happen the night before if possible.
- Day-of: Volunteers should plan to arrive early enough to help setup tables, chairs, paper goods, and other logistics.

5. During the Event

- Welcoming Remarks: Have the host or a key volunteer kick off the event with a brief introduction of the candidate or main speaker.
- Guest Interactions: Allow the candidate or speaker to give their introduction speech. Connect the candidate's visions and goals (or initiative/issue) with the attendees by offering time for them to address questions. This can be done in the group forum or informally throughout the event.
- Fundraising: If fundraising is a goal, gently remind guests how they can contribute, offering simple methods like cash/check or mobile payment. The candidate or host should make a point of doing this and volunteers can also gently nudge their friends and others.

6. Cleaning up and Follow-up

- Clean-up: Volunteers should help to clean up, restore all things to their proper places, and leave the host area at least the same (if not better) than before the event.
- Thank You Notes: Determine who will send Thank You Notes. Provide that person with the sign-in form so that emails or cards of appreciation can be sent to attendees and volunteers.