

Critical Resistance Tips for House Party Fundraisers

House parties can be really great fundraising settings if the goal of generating resources doesn't get lost in the mix. Here are some tips to help make your fundraiser a success. Don't forget: CR can help support you with any or all of these steps!

GOALS

We always hope that house parties designed to raise money and resources for CR will achieve a few different goals:

- Help CR generate the resources it needs to keep our work going strong
- Expose a broader set of people to Critical Resistance and get them excited about our work
- Be fun, interesting settings in which old friends can meet up and new people can connect with each other

PRE-PARTY PLANNING

Pick a host or hosts

The best hosts for a fundraiser house party are people that are invested in CR and our success in some way—members, donors, close allies, etc.—and that is connected to people that aren't already involved with CR or that are interested in building their relationship with CR. The host should be comfortable and enthusiastic about connecting people to CR and encouraging them to donate.

The host agrees to:

- find a place to hold the party
- picks a strategic date and time for the party
- provide food (snacks, etc.) and drinks and other party basics
- create a guest list of people that would be interested in learning more about CR and would be open to donating
- make the pitch/ask

Guest List

The host(s) should decide who to invite to the party. CR staff members can also help provide names for people to invite if a host would like supplemental names of invitees. While CR can support by circulating the invitation to the supplemental names, the host should be the main person inviting people, especially their guest list. Basic rule of thumb says that you should invite about three times as many people as you would like to attend, so a host should think broadly about who to invite. If you want to encourage the people you invite to bring others with them, don't forget to let them know that.

Invitations

CR has invitations on file that we have used for previous house parties. *If you want CR to create/design an invitation for your party, just ask!* Hosts should also feel free to design something particular to their party that will really resonate with the group of people they have invited. CR usually recommends that a combination of print invitations and electronic invitations be used depending on who is being invited to the party. Here are some basic elements that are always good to include in invitations:

- Tell people it's a fundraiser for Critical Resistance! It's helpful for people to anticipate being asked to donate and to come prepared to make a donation. You don't want to take anyone off guard.

- Make it clear how people can make a donation even if they can't attend the party—CR can provide remit cards for hard copy invitations and for electronic invitations, you can include a link to the donate page on CR's website: donatenow.networkforgood.org/criticalresistance
- Make sure all the basic information is clear: date, time, place (and include a map if it's not a super obvious place to find)
- It's helpful to know how many people to expect, so asking people to RSVP is often useful, too.

The most important thing about inviting people to a house party fundraiser is to do follow up. If there are people you'd really like to attend, don't forget to follow up with a call to let them know you'd really like to see them there. Just because it's a fundraiser doesn't mean that people won't be happy to know that you'd like them to come. Don't be shy to follow up!

DAY OF THE PARTY TIPS

While all the usual things that apply to a good party also apply to a good house party fundraiser (it's obvious where the party is, someone is there to welcome people, etc.), there are also a few things that can help make the fundraising part of the party go smoothly:

- Make it easy to learn about CR—have some materials available about CR's work; have people on hand that are comfortable answering questions about the organization; have visuals or a slide show on display (*CR has this stuff and can make it available for you*).
- Plan to have a dedicated time for the group to hear about CR and to do the pitch. Do some thinking ahead of time about the timing—usually an hour or so into a house party is when the most people are there. Even though it can seem disruptive to stop for the pitch when the party is at its height, don't forget that *this is why people are there*. You have invited them to come to a fundraiser. You want to do the pitch when the most people are at the party.
- Make a plan for sharing contact information and donations with CR.

THE PITCH: The host(s) should be the people to get everyone's attention and ask them to gather around (if there's more than one host, get everyone involved in this part of the party in some way). If the host is a member of CR, they should talk about the work, why they're involved in the organization and why they think people should contribute. *If the host is not a member, they can work with CR to develop talking points about CR and its current work, how they know CR, why they value CR, and why they think people should contribute.* If a CR member is at the party, they may want to turn things over to someone from CR for a short presentation about the organization (this should be someone that is prepared specifically to give a presentation for this specific party).

The host(s) should make the pitch. This is really important. While CR can support hosts in preparing to do the pitch and can be on hand to do a presentation about the organization, you have made the invitation to come to the party and people need to hear from *you* about why you're asking them to support CR. **The host(s) should make a donation.** It's hard to ask people to write a check when you're not doing it yourself. Check out CR's "Pitch Advice" document for more ideas to help your pitch go well. Don't be afraid to ask for help if want support getting ready to make a pitch.

CR is really grateful for the effort, energy, and resources people put into hosting house party fundraisers. If there is anything we can do to help your party be as successful as possible, don't hesitate to ask!