

# Party for a Cause!

Your guide to hosting a  
Successful Planned  
Parenthood House Party



Planned Parenthood of  
Western Pennsylvania

Planned Parenthood of Western Pennsylvania (PPWP) has been providing high quality, affordable reproductive health care for more than 90 years in western Pennsylvania.

## **Mission**

Planned Parenthood of Western Pennsylvania's mission is to provide high-quality reproductive health care services, comprehensive sexuality education and strategic advocacy.

Planned Parenthood of Western Pennsylvania believes in the fundamental right of individuals to manage their fertility and their sexual and reproductive health without regard to income, marital status, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender expression, age, national origin, or residence. We believe that sexual and reproductive self-determination must be voluntary and preserve the individual's right to privacy. We believe that respect and value for diversity in all aspects of our organization are essential to our well-being and that of our clients.

We accomplish this through:



**Services** - High quality, affordable reproductive health services in settings that protect the dignity, privacy, and rights of each individual.



**Education & Prevention** - Medically accurate, age appropriate, comprehensive sex education that furthers understanding of human sexuality and promotes healthy behavior.



**Advocacy** - Actively protecting the fundamental right to self-determination, and the right to decide freely if and when to have a child.

Planned Parenthood of the Western Pennsylvania is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. We rely heavily on support from donors who help people determine their own destinies. PPWP operates health centers in Bridgeville, downtown Pittsburgh, Greensburg, Johnstown, Moon Township, and Somerset.

# Party for a Cause!

## Your guide to a successful Planned Parenthood House Party

**Website:** [www.ppwp.org](http://www.ppwp.org)  
**Phone:** 412-258-9531  
**Contact:** Tiffany Jimenez, Vice President of Development  
**Email:** [tjimenez@ppwp.org](mailto:tjimenez@ppwp.org)

You're interested in hosting a house party - all you have to do is follow this simple kit and, in a few weeks from now, you'll have a great event that will help advance PPWP's mission to provide, promote, and protect access to sexual and reproductive health care.

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*Dear Friend,*

*Thank you for volunteering to host a house party for Planned Parenthood of Western Pennsylvania (PPWP)! We are very grateful that you have generously offered, not only your space, but the power of your relationships to help us spread the word about the importance of our clinical, education, and advocacy services in our communities.*

*What a gift! Your house party will help us reach our annual fundraising goals in addition to educating potential donors, advocates, and volunteers about our good work for the current and future patients of Planned Parenthood.*

*As you well know, what we do as PPWP supporters during the year has an amazing impact on the health of our communities. We are incredibly lucky to have dedicated and committed PPWP partners like you, who understand and value the importance of creating learning opportunities for community members, increasing awareness about our work in the western Pennsylvania, and growing our network of involved donors.*

*Now that you've begun to plan your own Planned Parenthood House Party, you have become an integral part of our team. We hope your house party will help educate your guests so that they leave the event with a list of ways they can be involved and are energized to support PPWP – through their time, resources, networks, or donations. We created this guide to help you organize your house party and outline the resources needed for a successful event.*

*While we do want you to focus on choice, education, advocacy, and our medical services, don't forget to have FUN! Thank you for your time, energy, and passion. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at any point in the process, we are here to support you as needed.*



With Gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sydney Etheredge".

Sydney Etheredge  
President & CEO



# Planning Your Party

## Goals and Roles

A successful house party typically has about 25+ guests in attendance to learn about our clinical, education, and advocacy services. Hosts should tailor an invite list keeping in mind that we will likely ask guests to become more involved with PPWP by donating, volunteering or becoming an advocate in their community. Ideally, most invitees know the host; when that's not the case, they should have a strong relationship with PPWP—i.e., a history of generous giving or involvement.

## Who Does What?

We generally ask hosts to provide food and drink, and to handle the invitation and RSVP process. PPWP will help behind-the-scenes, providing sample invitation language, coordinating the program and speakers, gathering relevant materials to have on hand during the party, handling thank-yous and follow-up, and assisting with guest list creation as needed.

We appreciate all that you will do as a host, and we are here to support you and your event!

## **Party Host (YOU!) We ask that you:**

- Provide your home or another location for the party – keep the space of your home or location in mind when determining the ideal number of guests for your party.
- Choose a date for your party.
- Determine if you need a co-host for your party and recruit them to help out.

- Choose a theme or program focus.
- Organize and manage your guest list – determine who you will invite and create a tracking sheet for your use with contact information.
- Make and send out invitations to your guests - PPWP would like to review your invitation before sending. *(See sample invite on page 12.)*
- Make follow-up calls to invitees – this is an important step as many people won't call you to RSVP but come because of your personal call!
- Keep an RSVP list and communicate final numbers to PPWP Development team.
- Provide food and drinks for your guests - some people choose to have alcohol, but that is up to you.
- Manage logistics for the party – will you need a laptop, projector, screen, DVD player, or other equipment for the event?
- Work with a PPWP development staff person to create a program for the evening.
- Share the contact information for your guests with us after the party, so we can ensure that we follow up with your guests as needed and accurately record gifts.

**PPWP (US!) What you can expect from us – we will:**

- Help with attendee list creation - ideally your guests will know you, but we can provide a suggested list of invitees as well.
- Assist with designing the invitation.
- Provide materials for the event - name tags, sign in sheets, informational materials, donation envelopes, swag, etc.

- Assist with creating a program for the evening - who will speak, what is our “ask” for support, and schedule of activities.
- Invite PPWP staff and leadership to attend - if possible.
- Follow up with specific attendees that let you or us know they would like more information.
- Send thank you notes to all attendees after the party.

## Timeline and Checklist

### 5+ WEEKS BEFORE THE EVENT

- HOUSE PARTY HOST:** Set the date with a member of PPWP development staff designated to helping with your event. If applicable, reserve the caterer.
- HOUSE PARTY HOST:** Draw up your invitation list with your PPWP development staff member. (The rule of thumb is to mail to two times the number of guests you wish to attend. For example: if you would like 25-35 guests, you should mail 50-70 invitations.)
  - HOUSE PARTY HOST:** Create your personal invite list and review donor lists provided by PPWP to supplement your list if needed.
  - PPWP:** Provide donor lists to come up with good invite list in partnership with house party host, and provide final list of invitees and their contact information to host.
- HOUSE PARTY HOST:** Draft your invitation and email and/or print copies. (*See sample invite on page 12*).
- HOUSE PARTY HOST:** Decide whether you’d like to email or print your invitations.

Online sites such as paperlesspost.com, evite.com and punchbowl.com make email invitations easy, and fedex.com/office, papersource.com and zazzle.com make great printed invitations. (If you’d like to print invites, it’s best to use bright envelopes so that they will stand out in the mailbox!)

- PPWP:** Provide sample invitation language. Review final copy of host's invite before it is emailed or printed.

#### 4 WEEKS BEFORE THE EVENT

- HOUSE PARTY HOST:** Mail out invitations.
- HOUSE PARTY HOST:** Consider asking a few friends/ family to help hand-address the envelopes; hand addressing makes the invite look much more personal, and thus increases the likelihood that it will be opened! Once addressed, mail invitations. (Please check to make sure you use adequate postage.)
- PPWP:** If there is a time crunch, see if volunteers are available to help hand-address the envelopes. (In that case, please arrange a time to drop off printed invitations with designated PPWP staff.)
- HOUSE PARTY HOST:** With PPWP development staff member, choose a person to do the ask, and map out a draft program.

#### 2 WEEKS BEFORE THE EVENT

- HOUSE PARTY HOST:** Call everyone who has not RSVP'd and ask if they're coming. This is a very important step, as many people will likely not RSVP, or will decide to come based on a personal call. *(See sample script on page 13.)*
- HOUSE PARTY HOST:** Maintain a spreadsheet of invitees to track RSVPs, with a column indicating "yes," "no," or "no reply."

#### 1 WEEK BEFORE THE EVENT

- HOUSE PARTY HOST:** Send the RSVP list to PPWP the day after RSVPs are due.
- HOUSE PARTY HOST:** Finalize the program with PPWP development staff member. Prepare and practice your welcome.

## THE WEEK OF THE EVENT

- HOUSE PARTY HOST:** Update PPWP regarding last-minute changes to guest list.
- PPWP:** Prepare name tags, confirm all speakers are set, distribute speaking points, and gather event materials (including, sign-in sheets, donation envelopes, swag etc.) for the event.

## THE WEEK AFTER THE EVENT

- HOUSE PARTY HOST:** Talk with PPWP development staff member to determine any necessary follow up with individual guests.
- PPWP:** Send out thank-you cards to all attendees.

## Sample Agenda and Tips for a Successful Event

**Timing:** House parties are most successful when scheduled for a two-hour time slot. Popular times are weekday nights from 6pm to 8pm or Sunday afternoons from 12pm to 2pm, 2pm to 4pm, or 4pm to 6pm. You should follow your instincts on what timing works best among your circle of guests or within your community.

**Co-Hosting:** You might consider co-hosting an event to help relieve the pressure of doing everything yourself. More 'hosts' will increase the diversity of your guest list and reach, will help spread out the number of tasks you are assigned, and will decrease your financial obligations. If this is a strategy you'd like to pursue, please select and coordinate with your co-host.

**Party Purpose:** The most important thing to remember is that your house party should feel comfortable and fun for you and your guests. You might want the focus of the evening to be on fundraising – making a specific ask for support - or it could also be focused on 'friendraising' - bringing people closer to the mission of the organization. Your PPWP development staff contact can help you determine what event is best for you.



**Program Themes:** There are many options for your house party program but here are a few ideas to get you started. Please work with your PPWP development staff contact to decide on a program that will be interesting and exciting for your audience.

- **Health Services** – Overview of our mission and general and reproductive health care services and update on current related topics.
- **PPWP Education Services** – Learn about PPWP's Peer Education Program, Community Education, Hazelwood Drop In Center
- **Advocacy** – Join Planned Parenthood Action Network and get alerts on dangerous legislation, information about upcoming events and rallies, and everything else you need to stand with Planned Parenthood in the fight for reproductive freedom.
- **General Introduction of PPWP and our work in all three areas above** – health services, education, and advocacy

### **Agenda:**

- With a 2 hour event timeline, most time will be spent mingling, with only 30-45 minutes for an official speaking program.
- The first 30-45 minutes are for the arrival of guests and conversation. As guests arrive, they get sign in and receive a name tag.
- The program generally has four parts:
  1. **Welcome by house party host or co-hosts - 5 minutes**  
Introduction Ideas: Have guests introduce themselves and say why they decided to attend; Why are we here?; Why you are hosting this party?; What does it mean to support reproductive health and rights?

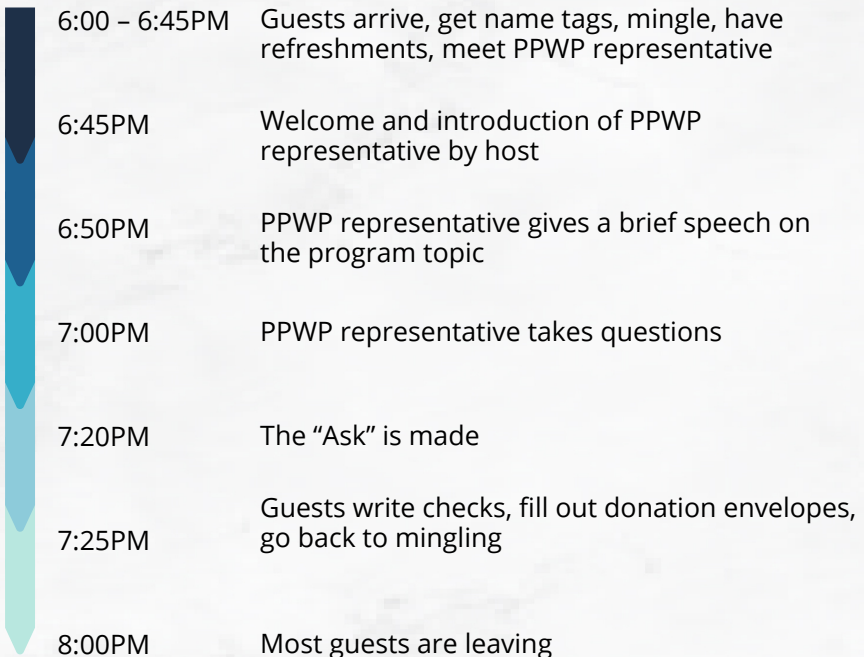
**2. PPWP overview, update, or program presentation by PPWP representative** (Sydney Etheredge or local executive staff member) - **10 minutes**

**3. Questions and Answers - 15-20 minutes**

**4. The Ask** - Given by the host, a representative of PPWP, or a guest - **5 minutes**. *The “Ask” is a donation of time or money to PPWP. (See sample script on page 14).*

- The formal program is then over and guests go back to mingling.

**Timeline:** Here’s a sample timeline for a house party where the invitation requests that people arrive at 6 pm:



# Accepting Contributions on Behalf of PPWP

## Guidelines and Procedures

The goals of hosting a PPWP House Party is to raise money and increase awareness of the importance of getting involved with sexual health in our communities. Please follow the guidelines below when your guests express interest in donating to Planned Parenthood of Western Pennsylvania.

- We welcome contributions of all sizes but can only accept cash, checks or credit cards (AmEx/Discover/Visa/MC). We will provide donation envelopes to collect this information.
- Please make sure all checks are made out to Planned Parenthood of Western Pennsylvania and that the donor completes the information on the donation envelope.
- If you or a guest would like to discuss real estate gifts, bequests, annuities, or any other type of planned charitable giving to PPWP, please contact us at 412-258-9531.
- Contributions to Planned Parenthood of Western Pennsylvania are tax deductible for federal income tax purposes.
- PPWP will send a gift receipt to each donor if they provide their name and mailing information along with the gift.
- Please mail all contributions to the following address:  
**Planned Parenthood of Western Pennsylvania**  
**933 Liberty Avenue, Pittsburgh PA 15222**
- Call us at 412-258-9531 or email at [development@ppwp.org](mailto:development@ppwp.org) if you have any questions.



# Appendix



## Other Useful Examples and Documents

### Guest List Ideas

#### *Who to invite?*

House parties should primarily focus on invitations to people who are likely to be supportive of our mission, or who already know PPWP and have supported us financially at some point in the recent past. We hope these parties will help us engage more fully with diverse networks of people in our community.

If you do select a theme to unite those in the room around a shared network, it is okay to augment the invite list with people you know who don't fall into that network. After all, this is your party, so this is one of the best chances you'll have to cultivate people you know.

**Please keep in mind as you develop your list, though, that the main purpose of house parties is to bring together a group of donor prospects who are able and likely to make a significant gift to PPWP in the future. Not every single invitee need fit this description—but the vast majority should.**

Here are some ideas of social circles to consider as you think about an invite list:

**Pull out lists you've made in the past:** The invitation list to your last party. People you frequently connect with at PPWP events. Your holiday card list. The program from your last reunion. Your contacts, at work and at home. Your personal contact list.

**Social acquaintances:** Old friends you only see occasionally, friends from college/school, your old professors or teachers, friends from your old job, or people with whom you used to volunteer.

**Neighbors:** Next door, upstairs, downstairs, down the hall. People on the block who you always run into when you go jogging, or with whom you walk the dog, or who you run into at the grocery store. Your co-op board. Your tenants association. Your babysitter. Your child-care collective. Your carpool. The parents of your children's friends.



**From church, temple or mosque:** Your clergy person, minister, priest, rabbi, imam. Church activists. Regular attendees. Friends who may be not-so-regular attendees.

**From work or volunteering:** People who do the same work you do. Other people in the office, your partner. Your clients, your supervisor, Old partners, Old clients. Your old supervisor, people who used to work in the office but recently left, colleagues from community work, volunteering, or from charity work.

**Members of:** Your neighborhood association, your political club, your community group, your book club, your professional association, the PTA, or your local school board.

**People you've met at recreational events:** Members of your gym. Your housemates from ski weekends, beach trips, camping trips. People with whom you sing, shop, garden, or vacation.

**Professionals you know personally:** Your lawyer, dentist, doctor, pharmacist, broker, etc.

### **Sample Invitation Text**

Below is a sample invitation. Feel free to use it as is, or change it as you see fit. Before printing invitations, please share a final copy with your PPWP development staff member for approval.

You are invited to an intimate conversation about Planned Parenthood and the current status of reproductive health in the country.

Join hosts (host/s names), for a glass of wine and a chance to learn more about how Planned Parenthood is providing and advocating for quality reproductive health care.

You will have the chance to meet and hear from Sydney Etheredge, the new President and CEO of Planned Parenthood of Western Pennsylvania.

**Location**

123 Main Street  
Anytown, State 00000

**Date & Time**

June 1, 2022, 5:00-7:00 PM

**RSVP**

412-000-0000 or host@email.com

**Follow Up Phone Call Script**

Two weeks before your house party, it would be nice to call everyone on your invitation list who has not RSVP'd to confirm their attendance. Only a small number of the people you invite will RSVP before they get a phone call; many more will likely come if you give them a call.

The following is a suggested script for the call:

"Hi, this is [your name]. I'm following up on an invitation I recently sent you to come learn about Planned Parenthood's future at an event that I'm hosting at [location] on [date of event]. I hope you can join us -- will you be able to come?"

[IF THEY'RE COMING] "Great, I'll see you then."

[IF THEY'RE NOT SURE] "I hope you can come. This will be a great opportunity to hear what Planned Parenthood is making possible in our community, and once you do, I think you'll be excited to support them."

[IF THEY CAN'T COME] "I'm sorry you can't attend. Is there any information on Planned Parenthood of Western Pennsylvania that I can provide you with?"

[IF THEY SEEM INTERESTED IN MORE INFORMATION] "Sure, I'd be happy to send you more information on \_\_\_\_\_. [IF THEY'RE ENGAGED IN THE CONVERSATION] Would you be interested in meeting with myself and a PPWP staff member?"

[IF THEY ARE NOT INTERESTED IN MORE INFORMATION] "Well, thanks for your time today, and thanks for your support of Planned Parenthood. Take care."

## The 'Ask' Tips and Talking Points

The 'Ask' is usually given by the host, a representative of PPWP, or a guest, and should not take longer than five minutes. We want house parties to not only raise awareness of our work but also to focus on fundraising! Here are some useful tips for making the 'Ask' and potential talking points:

- The "Ask" is a donation of time or money to PPWP.
- Ask folks to consider making a gift that is significant to them.
- Speak from the heart about why you support Planned Parenthood and why it is one of your top philanthropic priorities.
- Make sure everyone is asked to get involved in supporting PPWP in some way and encourage them to talk to their friends about supporting PPWP. Beyond a monetary donation, emphasize additional ways to get engaged with PPWP through leadership or volunteering. Share staff contact information with guests for follow up or additional questions.
- Did you know that over 80% of Americans don't have an up to date will? Suggesting that your guests create or update their wills is an important reminder for us all, and you can ask them to consider including their favorite causes as well as loved ones in their provisions! Including PPWP in your will is a fabulous and simple way to ensure that all the people and causes we care about are taken care of.
- Your staff liaison can work with you to provide good, current talking points about our work that will energize your guests and make it clear why you are passionate about PPWP!
- Please don't hesitate to reach out to us for coaching on doing the 'ask' or help with phrasing.

*Thank You!*



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Planned Parenthood of  
Western Pennsylvania