

Organizing Guide: Host a Postcard Party

Strategic Value: Working America members have been hosting postcard parties for years now and they work! There are two distinct kinds of postcard parties (though they are equally fun).

- 1) Writing to elected officials: Participants write short messages to their elected officials about issues that matter to them. **This is a creative, easy way to make your voices heard. This type of postcard party is strategic when there are a few different issues you are working on, and you have a little bit of time before a vote.**
- 2) Writing to members of your community: Participants write short messages to other folks in the community urging them to take a specific action on an issue, like making a call, getting involved in the group, or voting in an upcoming election. **Our experience shows that when people receive personal handwritten postcards from people they can identify with, they are more likely to take action on the issue. This type of postcard party is strategic when you working on reaching out to new folks or encouraging people to vote.**

Here's how it works:

1. **Invite** family, friends, neighbors, co-workers and others to your home, a local coffee shop, out for happy hour or to another gathering place.
2. **Start off with a conversation** about the issues and what's at stake. Jot down some questions beforehand to get the conversation moving.
3. **Write your postcards.** Aim to write five to ten postcards each. The messages should be short and sweet. Two to five sentences should suffice. **Make sure you have enough materials on hand before the postcard party.** A list of essential items is listed below.
4. **Collect** the postcards at the end of the event and encourage participants to host their own postcard parties. Don't forget to thank all your participants before they go.
5. **Mail** the postcards. You want to be strategic about timing here. If you are encouraging folks to contact their elected officials, you want the postcards to reach them before any crucial votes so that their action can make a difference.

Essential to collect before the postcard party:

- **Postcards.** You can buy blank postcards or use holiday cards. You can also create your own out of card stock. Make sure you have plenty on hand. Plan on having 10 cards per person.

- **Lists.** You can create one yourself if you have access to a list or you can contact a Working America organizer who can send one your way. You can also ask your participants to bring names and addresses of at least 10 people that would benefit from receiving a personal handwritten message on the issue.
- **Writing instruments.** Pens and pencils are easy to come by. You can also get creative by bringing markers, stickers, and other items to decorate your postcards.
- **Sample postcard messages.** These should be handed out to your participants as you ask them to start writing. This will help get the pens moving and the creative energy flowing.

Sample Postcard Messages

To your elected official:

Dear Sen. Smith,

I am a single mom with two young children. I am also a small business owner. Because of Medicaid expansion, last year was the first year of my adult like that I had insurance. My family cannot afford to lose that coverage. I am urging to vote against the American Health Care Act for moms like me.

Thanks,
Kim McMurray
123 Main St.
Springfield, Ill. 97477
773-883-0464

To your neighbor:

Dear Sarah,

I am a single mom with two young children. I am also a small business owner. Because of Medicaid expansion, last year was the first year of my adult like that I had insurance. My family cannot afford to lose that coverage.

I know I am not alone in this and I need your help to get Sen. Smith to listen. I am urging to call Sen. Smith and ask her to vote against the American Health Care Act for moms like me. Her number is (202)340-2943,

Please let me know if you would like to get further involved in our campaign.

Thanks,
Kim McMurray
123 Main St.
Springfield, Ill. 97477
773-883-0464

After the meeting: Organize!

- Send thank-you messages and updates to attendees. Get in the habit of communicating with participants regularly. That way, when the next party or action is called for, you'll already be one step ahead.
- Continue to build. Actively recruit more people into the group. Remember, there is strength in numbers.
- Create a social media group so that participants can exchange ideas.