

# HOUSE PARTY FUNDRAISER GUIDE

Host a house party fundraiser and help us bring our mission to life right in your living room – an easy, fun way to introduce your friends to a cause you care about. Your gathering creates powerful connections, amplifies our impact, and turns a simple night in into real change.

WINNEBAGO AREA  
**LITERACY  
COUNCIL**



# INTRODUCTION



## A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Hello Friend!

We're so excited you're thinking about hosting a house party to support the Winnebago Area Literacy Council. This toolkit is here to make it easy, fun, and meaningful. Your gathering helps share the power of literacy—building confidence, strengthening community, and opening doors to brighter futures.

Hosting a house party is one of my favorite ways to connect with people. It's personal, it's joyful, and it reminds us why we do this work—because literacy opens doors to brighter futures. Whether it's coffee and good conversation or a themed night with games, your party helps break down barriers to literacy by raising awareness and building support. The funds you raise go directly toward providing free tutoring, English language classes, and essential learning materials for adults and families who need them most. Thank you for being part of this movement. I can't wait to hear about the amazing energy you create!

As a saying from my childhood in Myanmar reminds us: *"Dust forms anthills and raindrops fill a pot,"* small efforts add up to big results—every contribution matters when we work together.

Thank you for opening your heart and home. Together, we're creating spaces for learning, connection, and lasting change—one gathering at a time!

With appreciation,  
Chu May Paing, PhD



# ABOUT WALC



The Winnebago Area Literacy Council (WALC) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that has been actively serving the community since 1989. WALC provides free adult literacy services to the community including English Language Learning, one-to-one tutoring, and job readiness support.

Every week, WALC serves over 150 learners through the following free learner-centered programs: English Language Learning at WALC's Learning Center, Women & Children English Class, Workplace Literacy English Class, Road to Work Vocational Services Program, One-to-One Tutoring, and Paving Education Pathways English Class.

## VISION

Through programming, community outreach and partnerships, the Winnebago Area Literacy Council ensures every person has the literacy skills needed to thrive.



## MISSION

The Winnebago Area Literacy Council strengthens communities by eliminating literacy barriers through learner-centered programs, advocacy, and career development support.

# OVERVIEW



## WHAT IS A HOUSE PARTY?

A house party can put the fun in fundraising! Invite your friends, family, neighbors, or co-workers to come together for a celebration in support of the Winnebago Area Literacy Council. As a champion of our work, this is your chance to share with your village why you are a passionate believer in our mission and ask them to join you in supporting WALC.

There are no rules as to what your house party should look like, only that you make an appeal at some point in the event, so get creative in your planning! WALC can support you in the planning process, but all of the big choices are up to you.

This guide will walk you through the process and help you determine if hosting a 'fun'draiser is something you would be interested in doing.

## HOST'S ROLE

As the House Party host, you are the key player and guide for the entire process.

- Identify the date & time of the party
- Provide or secure a location
- Create a guest list & invite them
- Determine any theme or specific features
- Manage the planning process

## WALC'S ROLE

At WALC, we want your event to be a success and are here to support you throughout the entire process.

- Provide a staff member to speak briefly at event
- Offer organization flyers to have at event
- Assist with brainstorming themes & activities
- Give host program specific statistics to match ask



# STEP BY STEP GUIDE



## STEP 1

Once you understand the concept of a house party fundraiser and decided that you are interested in hosting one – follow our timeline and begin planning!

## STEP 2

Reach out to WALC for support! We are invested with you and can help with brainstorming and in providing a staff member to speak at your event

## STEP 3

Starting to bring your vision to life. Be sure to send out invitations to guests early, then plan the vibes, pick the bites, style the space, and set a goal that inspires giving.

## STEP 4

Host your house party, share the purpose and WALC's mission with your attendees, and enjoy the impact!

Visualize your event's theme, guest count, and ideal venue. From casual barbecues to elegant gatherings, the options are endless. Tailor your choice to fit your circle's interests, venue, date, and weather. Whether formal or causal, the decision is yours. Choosing the right date is crucial, consider competing events and guests availability and the various holidays, aiming for minimal conflicts. Seek insights from WALC staff for valuable input. Cast a wide net when inviting attendees, including friends, family, neighbors, coworkers, acquaintances and others if you are comfortable with that. Assess your comfort level with hosting at home or finding another site, with strategic planning and enthusiasm, your event is bound to succeed.



# TIMELINE



## 6-8 WEEKS OUT

01

Select your date, time, and identify a location. Once you have your essential details set, contact WALC to further brainstorm. You will also want to put together a guest list, sending out invitations as soon as possible. Finally, set your fundraising goal for the night and consider offering to match your guests donations to further the impact.

## 3-5 WEEKS OUT

02

Start to finalize your details! Decide on food and beverage that you will serve, book/order any catering if you plan to use. Determine how you are willing to take donations, consider any music or activity, and follow up with your guest list for RSVPs.

## 1-2 WEEKS OUT

03

Complete all your final preparations – shop for any needed items or confirm with any caterers, update attendees on any details. Check in with WALC and finalize your event run of show.

## DAY OF

04

Set up and prepare your space with any decorations, WALC information, and refreshments. And then it is party time! Warmly welcome your guests, make the ask, mingle, and enjoy the party.

## 1-3 DAYS AFTER

05

Clean up and return any rentals, send personalized thank you notes to your guests, share how much you were able to raise to show their impact. Share your insights and feedback with WALC, as well as any event photos. And most important – celebrate yourself!

# SAMPLE RUN OF SHOW



House Party Fundraisers can range in length and format, these are part of the decisions you can make as the host. We recommend an event that is at least 2 hours long, starting and ending the party with socializing time, with your ask cushioned in the middle.

## DOORS OPEN <sup>45 MINS</sup>

Welcome your guests as they begin arriving. Give everyone a brief overview of the evening and any features for them to note – like where to find a bite!



## THE ASK <sup>20 MINS</sup>

After about 45 minutes of open socializing time, bring all of your guests together. Give opening remarks of welcome and gratitude. If you have a WALC staff member present, introduce them to speak about the mission and programming. Give your personal connection to the mission, tell your guests why they are here, and make the ask. After you make the ask, wait for a moment for your guests to respond, don't feel pressured to fill any silence right away. Answer any questions your guests might have, let them know if you will be matching their donations, share the best way for them to give, and thank everyone who supported.

## MINGLE MORE & ENJOY THE REST OF THE PARTY!

# FAQS



## **WHAT KIND OF PARTY SHOULD I HOST?**

That is totally up to you! 'Fun'draisers can range from casual backyard barbeques, to swankier cocktail or dinner parties. Some people may choose a theme or activity, others may just have space for guests to socialize with one another. Be creative, and do what feels authentic to you, WALC is happy to support no matter the function!

## **I DON'T KNOW WALC'S WORK INSIDE & OUT. COULD I STILL HOST?**

Yes! You do not need to know everything about WALC or our work, if you believe in our mission and want to support what we do, you are the perfect candidate to host a house party. A WALC staff member can attend your event to share more specific program information, and provide you with any statistics or anecdotes you need ahead of time.

## **HOW SHOULD MY GUESTS AND I MAKE OUR DONATIONS?**

There are a few options here, based on what makes you most comfortable. The easiest option is if people donate via checks made out to the 'Winnebago Area Literacy Council.' Cash donations could also be accepted, but you'll want to be sure to track who donated and what amount, so you can ensure you thank them. If you would like to provide a credit card option, we have both QR codes to a donation link, or Square technology that can swipe a card. There would be a processing fee associated with both credit card options.

## **WILL WALC HELP TO COVER FOOD AND EVENT COSTS?**

Choosing to host a house party to support WALC is very generous, and a part of your gift to WALC. WALC staff are available to talk through event details and support you in the planning process, but the organization is unable to financially contribute to the event. The event does not need to be a major expense, offering light refreshments and bites can be enough or a reason to invite guests over!

# 'FUN'DRAISE FOR WALC



**CONTACT US TO GET STARTED TODAY**



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