



# **COLORADO RENEWABLE ENERGY INITIATIVE**

## **HOUSE PARTY HANDBOOK**

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# HOW TO PLAN A HOUSE PARTY

## INTRODUCTION

The “Colorado Renewable Energy Initiative” is a ballot measure that will appear on Colorado’s November 2, 2004 ballot. The measure is sponsored by Coloradans for Clean Energy, a non-partisan coalition of citizens, state and local elected officials, educators, community, business and labor leaders, farmers and ranchers from throughout Colorado. .

The Co-Chairs of Coloradans for Clean Energy are Congressman Mark Udall (D) and Representative Lola Spradley (R) (Speaker of the Colorado House).

If approved by the voters in November 2004, the Colorado Renewable Energy Initiative will be the first statewide ballot measure requiring the use of renewable energy and increase our use of renewable energy resources, such as wind and solar, to 10% by 2015.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

You can help the campaign to win passage of the Colorado Renewable Energy Initiative by agreeing to host a House Party to build grassroots support and raise money. House parties are critical components of our grassroots outreach and fundraising efforts.

As a host, your goal is to raise \$1,000 by inviting 40 people to your home to learn more about the initiative and campaign to win its passage. Raising \$1,000 is really not that difficult – it’s just 40 people coming to your home and donating \$25 each, or 20 people donating \$50. Also, there is no reason why you can’t team up with a friend to co-host a party, reducing your workload somewhat and providing an opportunity to exceed the \$1,000 goal.

Our target is **450 house parties by October 15<sup>th</sup>**. In addition to helping raise money for the campaign, house parties will encourage public involvement in the issue, expand public awareness and reach out to local organizations and groups.

This handbook will provide the know-how and technical assistance you need to make your party a success.

Remember, you do not have to be an expert to host a party. All that is needed is a desire to promote the use of renewable energy and passage of the Colorado Renewable Energy Initiative.

## HOW TO ORGANIZE A HOUSE PARTY

- **Let the campaign know you plan to host a house party.** Call the campaign at (303) 573-5121 or email us at [stephanie@RenewableEnergyYES.com](mailto:stephanie@RenewableEnergyYES.com). We will ensure you get updated information and answer any questions you might have and schedule a speaker if needed.
- **Decide if you are going to host a house party or a virtual house party.** A virtual house party is the “un-event event” of the election season. Instead of asking your friends to take time out of their busy schedules to come to your party you are inviting them to get involved online. If you decide to host a virtual house party contact us and we will give you your own personal URL so we know when contributions come from your “event”. The invitations, follow up calls, and briefing materials are still a must and will primarily happen online.
- **Decide if you are going to host the house party alone or if you will be sharing responsibilities with a co-host.** As host you will be the primary organizer and key motivator of the event. If you have a co-host (or multiple co-hosts), delegate some responsibility and tasks to them. There is no reason to be overwhelmed by the planning and execution of this event. In fact, in addition to this handbook, the campaign is ready to help should you have any questions or concerns. We want you to succeed, so we will be with you every step of the way.
- **Decide on your audience and location.** Everything about the event, including the location, date and time, should be planned with the audience in mind. Your audience could include family, friends, neighbors, members of your religious congregation, faith based groups or other community groups of which you are a member. Locations can include your house, the house of a co-host, a local meeting hall – any venue, as long as there is no cost.
- **Schedule the event at a convenient time and set the event schedule.** Your event should be scheduled for a two-hour time slot. Essentially, you will allow 30 to 45 minutes for people to arrive, say hello to friends or get acquainted with new folks, and have some refreshments. The presentation and question and answer segments should be no more than 30 to 45 minutes. Most events are held on weeknights from 6-8 pm or from 7:00 to 9:00 pm. Try to avoid times during which other community events might be scheduled.
- **Set a budget.** Expenses should be kept to a minimum, but may include costs to copy campaign literature, food, refreshments, invitations and postage for the invitations and follow-up or thank-you letters. Of course, you can reduce your expenses by doing much of the inviting and follow-up via the telephone or email. You may even want to consider using the online party-planning site of Evite. The campaign cannot reimburse you for any expenses incurred and, as such, these should be considered as part of your contribution to the campaign.
- **Send out invitations and make follow-up calls.** Invitations should be mailed or emailed no less than four weeks prior to the date of the event. Follow-up calls should be started and completed five to seven days after the invitation has been sent. Two weeks before the event, send a reminder to all those who have committed to attend, and to the rest of your invitation list, since some who initially said they could not make it may now be able to. Five days prior to the event make one last round of reminder calls to all those who have committed to attend.

## **SAMPLE TIMELINE**

### **Four Weeks Before The Event**

- Let the campaign know you plan to host an event. Call the campaign at (303) 573-5121 or email us at [stephanie@RenewableEnergyYES.com](mailto:stephanie@RenewableEnergyYES.com).
- Appoint an organizer and planning team if necessary
- Finalize date and location
- Determine a target audience
- Assemble your invitation list (if your attendance target is 40 people, then you should invite at least 80 people) and mail or email invitations. We recommend using Evite ([www.evite.com](http://www.evite.com))
- Draft your invitation (see sample)
- Plan budget
- Send out invitations

### **Two Weeks Before Event**

- Call everyone who has not RSVP'd to verify that they will attend
- Prepare any on-site handouts and information packets (download information from [RenewableEnergyYes.com](http://RenewableEnergyYes.com))
- Decide who will do the introduction and fundraising pitch
- Ask a friend to serve as a "door person" – this person will let people in, check them off the RSVP list and, in many cases, take checks from people
- Plan the menu

### **One Week Before Event**

- Prepare and practice introduction and fundraising pitch
- Purchase and prepare food and drink items
- Remind the door person of the time you need him or her to arrive
- Finish any remaining RSVP calls
- Copy or download and assemble handouts and information packets
- Call the campaign for the most up-to-date information about polls, other events and activities

### **Day of Event**

- Practice the introduction and pitch again
- Prepare food and drink items
- Have fun!

### **At the Event**

- Welcome people
- Introduce people to other guests
- Make presentation and ask for money and volunteers
- Collect checks
- Thank everybody who attended

### **After Event**

- Send thank-you note to all participants
- Send all checks to Coloradans for Clean Energy at 1536 Wynkoop Street, Suite B100, Denver, Colorado 80202.

## GETTING PEOPLE TO ATTEND

### Forming an Invitation List

It is in the best interest of coalition building and networking to reach out to other groups in your community. Invite such groups to co-host the event, help plan it, and/or send participants. If your goal is 40 attendees, be prepared to invite at least 80 people. While this is not an excessive number of invitations in the world of event planning, it may seem so to you. If so, then this is the perfect reason to recruit a co-host who will be responsible for half the list and other tasks.

Here are suggested individuals you might consider inviting:

**Family and Friends:** children, aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends of all.

**Social Acquaintances:** Friends seen on occasion, college/school teachers; associates from charitable, community or political organizations; parents of your children's friends.

**Neighbors:** Next door, upstairs, downstairs, the whole block! People who you always run into when jogging walking the dog or while grocery shopping. Other possibilities include your block association, landlord, baby-sitter, car pool, or riders in your car pool.

**Church or Temple:** Clergy person; Minister; Rabbi; church leaders; regular and occasional attendees.

**Labor Union:** Union leaders; activists; shop steward; business agent; co-workers.

**Work:** Partners, co-workers, current and previous clients.

**Community or Recreational Activities:** Members of your bowling league or other sports related group; hobby-related groups; acquaintances from the gym or a night class.

**Professionals:** Attorney; Doctor; Dentist; pharmacist; dry cleaner.

**Lists from Prior Events:** Invitations to prior parties; holiday card list; your personal and professional contact lists.

**Others:** The PTA; political clubs; community organizations; environmental groups; social justice groups. Consider other interesting people you've met, but may not know well, who are active in the community.

## SAMPLE LETTER OF INVITATION

Below, please find a sample letter of invitation. Feel free to use it as is, or change it as you see fit. If you are sending this via U.S. mail, please include an RSVP card and return envelope so people can more easily respond. This also enables individuals to send a check if they cannot attend. Email is, of course, very simple as well as free. Evite ([www.evite.com](http://www.evite.com)) may also be utilized. Evite not only keeps track of who has responded, but allows others to see who has been invited, who will be attending and so forth.

Dear Friend,

Coloradans for Clean Energy has qualified the Colorado Renewable Energy Initiative for the November 2<sup>nd</sup> ballot. When the initiative wins voter approval, it will increase the use of renewable energy, such as wind and solar, to at least 10% by 2015. I have decided to volunteer with the campaign and would like to invite you to my home at (time) on (date) for a very special briefing on this important initiative.

The Co-Chairs of Coloradans for Clean Energy are Congressman Mark Udall and Lola Spradley, Speaker of the Colorado House. Congressman Udall and Speaker Spradley have been tireless supporters of the environment and fully believe passing this initiative is in the best interest of Colorado and the environment.

Please join us in our home at (time) on (date) for this briefing. We are fully supportive of the Colorado Renewable Energy Initiative and hope you will come to learn about this important measure – and then join us in supporting it.

Refreshments and light snacks will be served. If you would like to bring a friend, please do so. Please bring your checkbook. While there will be no obligation to give, I am hopeful that once you hear about this important initiative you will want to join me in writing a check for \$100, \$50 or even \$25.

An RSVP card is enclosed for your response – or to return with a check if you cannot attend. You may, of course, call me to RSVP as well.

Sincerely,  
*Your name*

**SAMPLE LETTER INVITATION**  
**VIRTUAL HOUSE PARTY**

Dear Friend:

I was going to invite you to a small fundraising event in my home in support of the Colorado Renewable Energy Initiative that will appear on the November 2<sup>nd</sup> ballot. But then I realized just how busy we all are so I decided to do an “un-event event.”

That’s right, a virtual event, which allows you to get involved in supporting this important initiative despite your busy and committed schedule.

When approved by the voters, the Colorado Renewable Energy Initiative will require Colorado’s utilities to get a minimum of 10% of their energy from renewable resources such as wind and solar.

The Co-Chairs of the campaign committee, Coloradans for Clean Energy, are Congressman Mark Udall and Lola Spradley, Speaker of the Colorado House. Congressman Udall and Speaker Spradley have been tireless supporters and fully believe passing this initiative is in the best interest of Colorado and the environment.

As a volunteer for the campaign my goal is to raise \$\_\_\_\_\_. I’m hopeful you will join me in making a minimum \$\_\_\_ contribution to the campaign and move me that much closer to my goal.

Please join me at my Virtual House Party by visiting [www.RenewableEnergyYES.com/personal](http://www.RenewableEnergyYES.com/personal) to get more information about the initiative and make a contribution.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to call me at \_\_\_\_\_.

In the meantime, I’ll look for notification of your contribution and support.

Sincerely,  
*Your name*

## **FOLLOW-UP PHONE CALLS**

At least two weeks before your house party, please call everyone on your invitation list who has not RSVP'd to confirm his or her attendance or to secure a contribution. Only a small number of the people you invite will RSVP before they get a phone call. Many more will come if you call them. Prior experience has shown that if you mail at least 80 invitations, and follow up with calls to everyone, you will have 40 attendees. The following is a suggested script for the calls. You may also refer people to our website at [www.amend3strikes.org](http://www.amend3strikes.org).

**What to Say:** “Hi, this is (your name) and I am volunteering for Coloradans for Clean Energy. I wanted to make sure you got the invitation to my fundraiser for Coloradans for Clean Energy. The purpose of the event is to help win passage of Colorado Renewable Energy Initiative, which will appear on the November 2<sup>nd</sup> ballot. The initiative will increase the use of renewable energy, such as wind and solar, to at least 10% by 2015. The event is at my home on (date and location). 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 – the campaign to win passage of this important ballot measure is going to be very difficult. The other side has already started to attack the initiative and is generating fear and misinformation, so it's critical that we have the resources to get the facts to voters. I think you'll want to hear what's happening in the campaign, and I believe you will be impressed.

**If They Can't Come:** I am sorry you can't come – the campaign to win passage of this important ballot measure is going to be very difficult. The other side has already started to attack the initiative and is generating fear and misinformation, so it's critical we have the resources to get the facts to the voters. Would you write a check and send it to me, so I can forward it to the campaign? Or, you can give online at [www.RenewableEnergyYes.com](http://www.RenewableEnergyYes.com).



## **SUGGESTED AGENDA**

Allow 30 to 45 minutes for the arrival of guests and conversation. As guests arrive, they should sign in, enabling you to capture their name and current address, and ensure that all receive a prompt thank-you note or appropriate follow-up.

The next phase of your event has three parts:

1. Introductions by the host(s). (1 to 5 minutes)
2. Campaign and issue discussion, progress report and questions and answers. The host leads this discussion or a person trained by Coloradans for Clean Energy. (15 to 30 minutes)
3. The Pitch and Close. The “pitch” asks people to get involved and lets them know how they can help. The “close” is asking attendees to make contributions that night. After the pitch and close, the official program is over, allowing guests to mingle or leave at their discretion. (5 minutes)

When the program has concluded, guests will mingle and oftentimes ask more questions of you or the person giving the campaign update.

## **INFORMATION NEEDED FOR DONATIONS**

Collecting checks is of great importance. After the pitch, you should distribute volunteer cards, donor cards or remittance envelopes so that your guests can write checks. **Please make sure that a check is requested of everyone before they leave.** Under state law, the campaign is required to report the following information about each individual contributor:

- Name
- Home address
- Home phone
- Email (optional)
- Employer
- Occupation

Checks should be made payable to Coloradans for Clean Energy. The Colorado Secretary of State has assigned us the ID number 20045627143. Donations to Coloradans for Clean Energy are not tax-deductible.

Contributions can also be made online at [www.RenewableEnergyYES.com](http://www.RenewableEnergyYES.com). You can also download forms from our website to collect the information required of people making contributions.

After the event, remember to mail all checks payable to Coloradans for Clean Energy at 1536 Wynkoop Street, Suite B100, Denver Colorado, 80202.

## **REFRESHMENTS**

Refreshments served at your house party need not strain your budget. Remember, people do not come for the food – they attend because you have asked them, because they are interested in the campaign, and they respect the fact that you have gotten involved. Here are some suggestions for refreshments:

1. Cheese and crackers, wine and soda
2. Coffee and cake
3. Vegetables and dip, guacamole and chips, fresh fruit, soda and beer
4. Sweet rolls, tea and coffee
5. Tea and cookies

If you prepare the refreshments yourself, you can budget \$1-2 per person and offer any of the above menus. Coffee and cake can cost as little as fifty cents per person. The bottom line is: you do not have to spend a great deal of money on refreshments to have a house party that will really help the campaign.

## **STAYING IN TOUCH AND GETTING THE TOOLS YOU NEED**

If you need any assistance, support or materials, or to report your progress and success, please call Stephanie at (303) 573-5121, or email her at [stephanie@RenewableEnergyYES.com](mailto:stephanie@RenewableEnergyYES.com).

For your information and use, we have attached the following items, which can also be downloaded from our website:

- Question & Answer sheet
- Fact Sheet
- Contribution form
- Informative newspaper articles

## HOUSE PARTY SIGN-UP FORM

**YES!** I will help the effort to pass the Colorado Renewable Energy Initiative. I will host a house party to help spread the word and raise funds for the campaign.

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Name	Home Phone	Work Phone
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Address	City, State, Zip	Email Address
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I will host a House Party on the following date: \_\_\_\_\_

I have some questions, please call me at: \_\_\_\_\_

The House Party Handbook is available on our website. Please go to [www.RenewableEnergyYes.com](http://www.RenewableEnergyYes.com) and click on HOUSE PARTY to download the House Party Handbook. If you have any questions or need additional information, please call the campaign at (303) 573-5121.

Please complete this form and return by fax to (303) 623-0762

or

Coloradans for Clean Energy  
1536 Wynkoop Street, Suite B100  
Denver, Colorado 80202