VOTE FORWARD

Host a Letter Writing Event with Vote Forward!

Thank you for hosting a letter writing event! Writing letters to voters is one of the most effective tactics to increase voter turnout and strengthen our democracy, and bringing people in your community together to write letters as a group is a great way to multiply your impact. This guide contains everything you need to host your own letter writing event. If you have questions, review our letter writing **instructions** and **FAQs**; after that, you can email **host@votefwd.org** for more support.

Before your letter writing event

We recommend getting started with planning and preparation at least seven days before your event to be as successful as possible.

Choose your location

The first step to hosting your event is to choose a date, time, and location. You should consider what works best for the volunteers you plan to invite to your letter writing event.

Decide whether you plan to host your letter writing event virtually or in person. If you host virtually, set up your event and create a link on a virtual platform such as WebEx, Google Meet, Skype, or Zoom (you will need a Zoom pro account to host meetings longer than 40 minutes). If you host in person, follow our **COVID-19 guidance** for volunteers to keep your volunteers and community safe. You can host a letter writing event almost anywhere, as long as there is enough space for your volunteers and something to write on. Locations to consider include public places like libraries or coffee shops, outdoor locations like parks, or in your home.

Create an invitation for your event

Once you have confirmed a date and time for your event, use a platform such as **Mobilize**, Facebook events, Evite, SignUp Genius, or Eventbrite to set up an invitation for your event. This will allow you to keep track of your volunteers and easily communicate with them to provide updates and reminders about your event.

Include **instructions** for how to prepare for your event in the description. If you are hosting your event virtually, volunteers will need to create their own accounts at **votefwd.org** and download and print their letter templates before the event.

Recruit volunteers

Now you should ask people to sign up for your event! Invite your friends, family, neighbors, colleagues, and anyone you know who would be interested in increasing voter turnout and strengthening our democracy in a fun and easy way to join you.

Another way to recruit volunteers is to share your invitation on social media using these **sample graphics**, or posting or handing out flyers in high traffic areas in your community like your local coffee shop, grocery store, or park. You can also consider partnering with a local group that you're a member of such as your religious congregation, social groups like book clubs or sports teams, or political and civic engagement groups.

A great way to engage your attendees even more is to ask them to help plan the event. It can make hosting the event easier for you, and people are more likely to follow through when they are part of the planning process! You could ask them to help with volunteer recruitment or training, promotional materials for email and social media, or, for in-person parties, help purchasing snacks or letter writing materials to share with attendees.

Print letter templates and gather supplies

Before your event, you need to print your letter template and gather the supplies. The best process for this depends on if you are hosting virtually or in-person.

For in-person parties, volunteers should create a Vote Forward account and download and print their letters, or hosts can download and print letters for the attendees. If you are downloading and printing letters for your attendees, multiply the number of people you expect to attend your event by 20 to determine the total number of voters you should "adopt" through your Vote Forward account, then download and print your letters. Each attendee will also need 20 business-sized envelopes, 20 stamps, and blue pens. You can prepare these materials for your event or ask your attendees to bring them.

For virtual parties, each attendee will need to download and print their own letters. You should include these **instructions** in your event description on Mobilize or whatever other platform you use to invite people to your event. It can take up to 48 hours for volunteers to be approved on Vote Forward, so you should email, call, or text your volunteers at least two days before your event to remind them to create their accounts and double check that they know how to download and print their letters.

Confirm volunteers

The day before or on the day of your event, you should remind everyone to attend and how to join your event! The platform you used to create your invitation may send an automated reminder, but a personalized check-in from you can increase the number of people who follow through and write letters with you.

During your letter writing event

We recommend making a copy of these **sample slides** to edit and use during your event.

Welcome your volunteers

Greet each person as they arrive and welcome them. Take note of who joins your event so that you can thank and follow up with them later; at in-person parties, use this **sign-in sheet**.

Do your best to be inclusive and connect with guests, whether you are virtual or in-person. At in-person parties, introduce people to each other and ask questions to get to know your attendees. At virtual parties, give everyone the chance to briefly introduce themselves, or use breakout rooms for small group conversations.

Train volunteers to write letters

Next, demonstrate the letter writing process! You can use the **sample slides** and letter writing **instructions** to help prepare your training and walk your attendees through the process.

Help your volunteers avoid some common errors:
- Each letter is personalized for each voter—they should look at the name and address at the bottom of the letter to make sure they are writing to the correct voter. We recommend waiting to seal the envelopes until the end and checking that they are correct.
- Volunteers don't need to use their own return address—they can write their name and Vote Forward.
- Personal messages must be nonpartisan—volunteers should not mention specific parties or candidates. Positive, heartfelt messages work best. Give volunteers time to write their messages on scratch paper or share their messages with the group.

Write letters together

Now, it's time to write letters together! You can get creative with making your letter writing event fun:
- Volunteers can chat and enjoy each other's company while writing letters. Use breakout rooms during virtual parties for small group discussions
- Listen to music or invite a speaker to your event

- Host a watch event for a movie, tv show, documentary, or events like award shows, political debates, or sporting events
- Choose a theme for your event, such as a holiday, and use costumes and decorations for your theme
- Challenge your attendees to a trivia competition
- Pick a fun venue like a playground if your volunteers have young children or a beer garden

Be available for questions in case your volunteers need help, and remind them to check that their letters are addressed to the correct voter before sealing and stamping their envelopes.

Thank volunteers for coming
At the end of your event, take the time to do a short closing. If you downloaded and printed the letter templates, collect the finished letters and verify that all of the letters are accounted for. If your volunteers downloaded and printed their own letter templates, remind them to mark their letters as "Prepared" on their Vote Forward dashboard, store their letters in a safe place, and set a reminder for the mail date.

Thank your volunteers for joining your event and remind them how their letters will make a real impact. Invite everyone to attend your next letter writing event and ask them to sign up before they leave!

After your letter writing event

Store your letters until the mail date
After your letters are completed, go back to your Vote Forward dashboard and mark them as "Prepared." Add the mail date to your calendar or set a reminder, and store your letters in a safe and memorable place until the mail date. If your volunteers downloaded and printed their own letter templates, remind them to do the same.

Send a follow-up email to attendees
Send an email or text message to everyone who joined your event to thank them again for coming, remind them what to do with their letters if they downloaded and printed their own, and invite them to your next letter writing event. You can also contact anyone who didn't attend to say you missed seeing them at your event and invite them to your next one.

Celebrate your impact on social media
Show everyone how fun letter writing parties can be! Share photos or anecdotes from your event on social media and tag or mention **@votefwd** so that we can amplify your posts.

Send a reminder before the mail date
Before the mail date, remind all of your volunteers who downloaded and printed their own letter templates to get ready to put their letters in the mail or bring them to the post office on the correct day! This is another great opportunity to thank them for volunteering and share photos to celebrate your impact.

After your letters are in the mail, you or your volunteers should mark your letters as 'Sent' on your Vote Forward dashboard.

And that's it! You successfully hosted your letter writing event. Thank you for being part of increasing voter turnout and strengthening democracy with us—we couldn't do this without dedicated volunteer leaders like you!
Resources
- Letter writing **instructions** and **sign-up page**
- **Set up your event on Mobilize**
- **Sample slides**
- **Sign in sheet**
- **Sample promotional graphics**