



IMMIGRANT LEGAL ADVOCACY PROJECT

# House Party Toolkit

*July 2023*

Dear Supporter,

We want to personally thank you for your interest in hosting a house party for ILAP. A house party is a fun way to introduce people to the organization, engage them in the issues immigrants in Maine are facing, and build a network of support for our mission. House parties can serve as a fundraiser and a “friend”-raiser and can be as formal or informal as you’d like. The concept behind them is simple:

- Invite your friends, colleagues, family members, and other contacts to your party.
- Let them know the event is to raise awareness about and money for ILAP.
- Ask your guests to join you in getting involved with ILAP.

In this guide, we’ve included everything you’ll need to plan a successful house party. Our staff will work with you on all facets including setting a date and goal, scheduling an ILAP representative to speak (depending on availability and location), and sending thank you notes after the party. It’s people like you that will help our organization raise its visibility and assure that we continue to make an impact!

If you have any questions, don’t hesitate to reach out to Beatriz Harley, ILAP’s Development Associate, at [bharley@ilapmaine.org](mailto:bharley@ilapmaine.org). Bea is available to support you on all facets of the house party and will be your primary contact moving forward.

Thank you again for your partnership and we look forward to throwing a successful house party with you!

Sincerely,



Sue Roche  
Executive Director



Alicia Curtis  
Board President

## STEPS FOR THROWING A SUCCESSFUL HOUSE PARTY

### 1. Create a plan:

Decide on a location and how many people to invite. How many people can sit comfortably in your house or apartment? Is there a community space that might better suit the event?

Set a time and date. We recommend the party be 1.5-2 hours long, after 5pm on weeknights or during the late afternoon on weekends. But you know best when would be most convenient for your guests to attend! Bea will help find a date that best fits into the larger organizational calendar and works for you.

Get help. Consider asking a friend or two to serve as a co-host or to help with a specific task like food preparation or greeting guests. They could also help share the costs associated with the event.

### 2. Decide on details:

Put together a guest list. Include family, friends, co-workers, and people from organizations you belong to, such as places of worship or community groups. Remember to identify more people because not everyone will be able to make it.

Decide on the focus of your party. Which issues or aspects of ILAP's work do you want to highlight? Would you like a speaker or to show a short video? Bea can help you with this process and schedule a Board or staff member to speak at your event depending on availability and location.

Determine the fundraising goal. People will be motivated to donate if they are working towards a clear fundraising goal and it's easy to donate. Bea can help you identify a realistic goal and will provide materials that outline how to donate online or by cash/check.

### 3. Send invitations:

Send guest invitations. Once you have finalized your guest list, send out your invitations via mail, email, or social media. We have provided a sample invite in this toolkit. Ideally these invitations will go out 4-6 weeks before the event, so please plan accordingly.

Collect materials. Bea will send you sign-in sheets, donation envelopes, and other ILAP materials for your party. Please allow three weeks for delivery of these materials.

Follow-up directly. Two weeks before the event, reach out to any guests who have not yet RSVP'd so that you can finalize the guest list. Send a reminder to confirmed guests one week before the event to get them excited.

#### **4. Prepare your location:**

Make sure you have enough seating and tables. You want to have enough seating for everyone and tables for sign-in sheets, materials, and food. If you are planning to utilize technology, set it up and test it ahead of time.

Purchase food and drinks. Select food that's easy to prepare and eat while mingling, like cheese and crackers, crudité, or a fruit plate. It's up to you if you would like to offer alcohol but be sure there are beverage options for all guests.

On the day of the party, make sure the location is visibly marked. This is especially important if you live in an apartment complex.

#### **5. Throw your party!**

Set up your space. Put out sign-in sheets and other materials from ILAP, as well as food and drink for your guests. You will need to send your sign-in sheets to Bea after the event, so make sure that they are conveniently located by the entrance.

Review your RSVP list. Double check that you are prepared for the number of guests who have RSVP'd. If some of your guests may not know each other, consider providing name tags (Bea can help with this if needed).

Follow the agenda. Keep track of time to make sure that you get through all planned activities for the event. We have attached a sample agenda and talking points for you to use. When possible, ILAP Board or staff members can be on hand to assist you with this.

#### **6. Follow up and say thanks:**

Tell us how it went. Tell Bea about the event, provide any feedback, and get instructions on how to send in your sign-in sheets, donations, and photos.

Thank your guests. Bea will send a thank you note to all guests, as well as acknowledge anyone who chooses to donate. In addition, you can also share your gratitude with everyone who attended. We have included sample language for a thank you in this toolkit.

## WEEK-BY-WEEK CHECKLIST

### Four-Six Weeks Before

- Ø Decide on the location, time, and date of your house party.
- Ø Determine the format and fundraising goal.
- Ø Put together the guest list and send invitations.

### Two Weeks Before

- Ø Follow up with anyone who has not responded and finalize guest list.
- Ø Plan your menu and create a shopping list or catering order.

### One Week Before

- Ø Send a reminder email to guests.
- Ø Confirm that materials have arrived from ILAP.

### The Week Of

- Ø Pick up food, drinks, utensils, and any other supplies you may need.
- Ø Review the agenda for the event (with any co-hosts) and prepare your talking points.

### The Day Of (Or the Day Before)

- Ø Set up the space and test any technology.
- Ø Finish any food or drink preparation.
- Ø Put up signage or a balloon to clearly mark your home.

### During the Event

- Ø Greet all guests and make sure everyone signs in on the sheets provided.
- Ø Encourage guests to amplify the event on social media.
- Ø Thank them for coming.

### The Day After

- Ø Thank your guests.
- Ø Send sign-in sheets, donations, and photos to Bea.

**Remember that ILAP will support you through all facets of the house party to guarantee a smooth, easy, and fun gathering. Thank you again for your support!**

## **SAMPLE INVITATION**

*You can modify this language for whichever platform you decide to use to send your invitations, such as Eventbrite, Paperless Post, or Facebook. Tweak it to include the specific details of your party, such as whether guests should expect a meal or just snacks, or if you are requesting specific attire.*

## **YOU'RE INVITED! House party in support of the Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project**

Dear [Name],

Please join me for a party to raise awareness and support of ILAP. For 30 years, ILAP has advanced justice and equity for immigrants and their families through direct legal services, community legal education, and systemic advocacy. These families are the future of Maine, so let's get together and stand with them.

When: [Date and time]

Where: [Address, directions, and parking information]

Light refreshments will be served. Dress is casual!

Please RSVP by [Date]. If you're unable to make it but would like to show your support, you can donate online at [www.ilapmaine.org/donate](http://www.ilapmaine.org/donate).

Hope to see you there!

[Your Name]

## **SAMPLE AGENDA**

- 5:30            Guests begin arriving, get food or drinks, and mingle
- 6:15-6:20     Host(s) welcome guests, thank them for coming, and explain their involvement with ILAP
- 6:20-6:30     Board or staff member discusses ILAP's current goals, objectives, and programs (depending on availability and location)
- 6:30-6:35     Q&A
- 6:35-6:40     Host(s) thank guests for attending and ask them to join in supporting ILAP
- 6:45            Party resumes
- 7:30            Guests depart

## **SAMPLE TALKING POINTS**

“Thank you all for being here and taking time out of your evening to learn more about ILAP and how to support Maine’s immigrant communities.”

[Open with a personal story about your connection to ILAP, focusing on one or two topics that are most important to you.]

[Share a statistic to drive home your points] “In 2022, ILAP reached more than 4,700 people through their direct legal services and community legal education and benefited thousands more through their systemic advocacy efforts.”

[Consider showing a short video from ILAP’s website [www.ilapmaine.org/impact](http://www.ilapmaine.org/impact).]

“We have an extraordinary opportunity to advance justice and make Maine a welcoming place for everyone, regardless of where they were born or how much money they have. Let’s show our commitment today. Please consider making a donation at whatever level you feel comfortable, either online at [www.ilapmaine.org/donate](http://www.ilapmaine.org/donate) or using a donation envelope [hold one up]. And thank you again on behalf of myself and ILAP.”



## **SAMPLE THANK YOU EMAIL**

*Personalize this template by adding a memory or take-away from the party. Be sure to provide guests with several options for supporting ILAP moving forward.*

### **Thank you for your support of the Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project!**

Dear [Name],

Thank you for attending my house party in support of ILAP. Because of your generous support, we were able to raise a total of \$[Amount].

By making a gift to ILAP, you joined our community of supporters who believe that every Mainer should have access to the immigration legal services they need to find safety from violence and persecution, keep their families together, and fully participate in their communities with dignity. A few of you have asked me how you can stay involved, so here are a few suggestions:

- Sign up to receive ILAP's *Golden Door* monthly email newsletter at [signup.ilapmaine.org](https://signup.ilapmaine.org).
- Follow ILAP on Facebook (@ILAPMaine), Twitter (@ILAPmaine), and Instagram (@ilapmaine).
- Amplify and respond to calls to action – ILAP relies on its network of supporters to push for justice and equity for immigrants in Maine and across the country!
- Consider becoming a monthly donor at <https://my.ilapmaine.org/donate> to sustain ILAP's work year-round.
- Host your own house party! Contact Bea at [bharley@ilapmaine.org](mailto:bharley@ilapmaine.org) to learn more.

Thanks again for your support of ILAP and Maine's immigrant communities.

Sincerely,  
[Your Name]

## BACKGROUND ON THE IMMIGRANT LEGAL ADVOCACY PROJECT

ILAP advances justice for low-income immigrants through direct legal services, community legal education, and systemic advocacy. It has a vision for Maine as a place where systems are rooted in justice and where everyone belongs and thrives.

Whether through an in-depth one-time consultation or full legal representation in complex multi-year cases, ILAP ensures that immigrant community members receive expert legal guidance and fair treatment under the law. And where laws and policies are unjust, ILAP works to change them.

The organization directly engages more than 4,000 people in all sixteen counties in Maine each year and, over the last three decades, has helped tens of thousands of people find safety from violence and persecution, keep their families together, and advance towards economic security. Former clients are now neighbors, parents, business owners, community leaders, and elected officials creating a brighter future for the state. Examples of this work include:

- A Congolese woman leaves an abusive relationship, secures her own legal status, and starts a business to support her family.
- A teenager from Honduras gets a special legal status for young people, graduates high school with honors, and attends college.
- A family fleeing Afghanistan is granted asylum and puts down permanent roots in their new home in Maine.

The organization is in a moment of exciting transformation and is piloting or expanding programs that will reach more people, deepen community connections, and strengthen advocacy efforts. Top priorities for the next three years include:

- Bolstering its core work to meet growing need over the long-term while remaining flexible to be ready for whatever comes next.
- Expanding a new model for providing quality *pro se* asylum assistance on a large scale using a first-in-the-nation workshop series.
- Sustainably expanding legal representation and assistance for vulnerable immigrant youth so no child or young person in Maine needs to face the immigration system alone.
- Increasing access to immigration legal services in rural areas, with a focus on trafficking, labor exploitation, and safeguarding due process rights.
- Deepening local, state, and federal advocacy and policy work rooted in racial justice and community priorities, including through impact litigation.

More information is available on our website at [www.ilapmaine.org](http://www.ilapmaine.org).