Civic Houses Party!ji

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1. **What is the Civic House Party Series?**

Warm Cookies of the Revolution is a Denver area non-profit that creates fun, community-based programs that engage residents in civic activities. Suburb Futures advances equity and sustainability within U.S. suburbs. Together we are hosting the Aurora Civic House Party Series to help residents of Aurora host their own civic parties and engage their communities in civic action.

Civic and home are not often thought of together, but the home is an essential space for community and civic life where meaningful conversations and gatherings that build and bridge community can take place.

To encourage residents to host their civic parties, we provide party stipends and planning support for party hosts to envision and host their civic parties. These parties can occur at homes, religious spaces, block parties, community spaces, etc.

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2. What do you mean by “civics”?

When we say “civic gatherings,” we mean engagement with our communities in a way that generates knowledge about the city, how it works, and our roles within it, civics encompasses knowledge about government, policies, and the rights and responsibilities of everyday people living there. But civics can also be fun, asking questions such as what's important to us? Why? How can we make things better and more connected?

3. What makes a gathering or party a civic one?

Civics can be intimidating for everyday residents, but when we combine civics with home, it becomes more accessible and clear that this is part of everyday life. Civics can be informal and relaxed in a way that works across differences and bridges communities. People can practice civics in many ways that advocate for their rights in a place where they feel safe, like in a home or church, whereas going to a protest or city hall can feel intimidating.

Civic house parties are hosted by everyday residents of Aurora (newcomers, citizens, non-citizens, all residents). Hosts can gather in any way they feel called, such as through a church potluck, a youth sports meet-up, a women's circle, a casual meet and greet/meal, a

sizeable issue-focused meeting, celebrations of all kinds, BUT to make it a “civic gathering” hosts will want to inform or facilitate interactions that build knowledge about Aurora and how to be a part of its decision-making. They will want to create a call to action.

4. Who can attend these civic gatherings/house parties?

These events are open to all Aurora residents. Anyone interested in learning more about civic engagement is welcome to attend.

5. What does the training and support look like?

Party hosts will receive funding ($500-$1,200, depending on the size and scope) and support and training to create their unique civic gathering. We will hold a civic engagement orientation with members/hosts before the parties and give an overview of civic engagement. We will cover local government, voting rights, the electoral process, civic duties and responsibilities, advocacy, and community organizing.

6. How should the money that hosts receive be spent?

Warm Cookies of the Revolution has a culture of serving cookies at every gathering. The cookies are sourced from local shops, which promotes local businesses. That's the only requirement, but community members can host the parties in a culturally appropriate way. Whatever foods and drinks the multicultural communities enjoy, they are welcome to purchase, cook, and serve those. The funds can not be used to purchase alcohol.

1. What is the impact this project is trying to achieve?

At the core of this project, we intend to make civics accessible to all people of Aurora in the most fun way. We want to reach out to as many households and communities who would not have the privilege to engage in civic duty due to time and money constraints.

2. Where can parties be hosted beyond family homes?

Parties can be hosted at local churches, mosques, parks, school classrooms, adult daycare facilities, and any other convenient place as agreed upon by the host.

3. How many attendees should a party have?

The parties can have as many people as possible, with a minimum of 10 people per party.

4. What makes a successful party?

A successful party is fun-filled, has brought old friends together, or has introduced new friendships. It creates a casual awareness of our power to change our city through our collective diverse thoughts and conversations, which are heard at these parties. Community members speak as they eat and agree on small steps they can take, like writing letters to legislators, attending a city council meeting, directing friends and other community members to city resources, registering to vote, creating advocacy around essential issues at the local and national levels, and more.

5. Are these parties political?

No. Though these parties may engage in topics that may spur debate, these parties are not meant to be campaigns for any specific political party or agenda. The civic parties are meant to build connections, engage in healthy discussions, and find fun and meaningful ways for neighbors to steward their city together.

6. Where did the idea for this project come from?

In 2023, Warm Cookies of the Revolution and Suburb Futures hosted over 100 conversations with Aurora residents. We learned what residents love about Aurora and what issues matter most. We also learned that many residents desire more fun opportunities to engage with Aurora’s

intercultural communities and to celebrate a shared connection to Aurora.

Likewise, some of our members have not had a chance to participate in civic engagement opportunities. We realized there was a great need for this project to serve our members and the community at large by supporting residents in hosting their own civic parties at home and/or within their preferred community spaces and around the issues that matter most to them.

7. **Why focus on Aurora and the suburbs?**

Aurora has a population of over 400,000 residents, twenty percent of which are foreign-born. Given the rapidly changing demographics of Aurora, it is important to create more opportunities for the city's governance to be shaped by its residents. However, few residents can attend and participate in formal civic activities, such as city council meetings. That's why it's crucial to engage Aurora residents where they are, which does not often include public spaces in a suburb like Aurora. The project seeks to foster a culture of civic engagement, including within the most common spaces within Aurora, the home.

8. **Are we working with all communities or specifically marginalized communities?**

We intend to work with all populations in Aurora. We realize many people are struggling to make ends meet, and civics is pushed to the back burner. We want to meet people at their homes, churches, and parks to give them access to civic engagement in a fun and accommodating way.

9. **How long is each house party session?**

The parties can go from 2-4+ hours, depending on the level of participation and the attendees and host availability.

10. Do I need to register in advance to host a house party?

Yes, you can sign-up here and contact Jane@warmcookiesoftherevolution.org for more info.

11. Can hosts charge attendance fees for parties they host?

No. Attendance is free. These house parties are funded to ensure accessibility for all community members.

12. Are these events family-friendly?

Yes, these events are designed to be inclusive and family-friendly. Consider options for activities to engage children and support parents in engaging, i.e. childcare.

13. What is the role of the host?

Hosts facilitate discussions, provide a welcoming environment, and help connect participants with resources. Hosts will receive party planning support from the Warm Cookies of the Revolution team.

14. How can I stay involved after attending a house party?

We encourage ongoing participation through local civic activities, joining community groups, and staying informed about local government and issues.

Who can I contact for more information?

For more information, please contact:

Email: jane@warmcookiesoftherevolution.org.

Tel: 720 453 8324

Our team is happy to answer any questions you may have!