



SCREENINGS HANDBOOK

FOR *STEALING AMERICA: VOTE BY VOTE*

The following guide is arranged in three parts:

A. General points to cover for any screening

B. Small screenings

C. Larger/Community screenings

GENERAL POINTS TO COVER FOR ANY SCREENING

1. Inviting people to see the film

- Family and close friends
- Neighbors and colleagues
- Members of the larger community

2. Deciding where to hold your event:

- How many people do you expect?
- Possible places
 - In a home, a community center, in a church or temple, at a local theater or public school auditorium, on a college campus (dorms, classrooms, etc), at a library
 - anywhere that you can set up a TV and DVD deck

3. Preparing for any event, large or small

- Invite with as much lead time as possible
- Alert the Media (if larger than a house party)
 - Local papers, regional papers, calendar sections in the newspaper
 - Radio, local cable stations
- Determine expenses
 - If the venue will cost money, try to find a sponsor/donor to underwrite costs.
- Put up flyers

4. During the event

- Create handouts with a list of action items (please visit: <http://www.stealingamericathemovie.org/getactive/index.html>)
- Create a sign up sheet for attendees
 - Ask for their contact info (name, phone number, email address)
 - Ask if they'd like to be on a national election group mailing list (please visit: <http://www.stealingamericathemovie.org/getactive/links.html>) and/or a group in your area
- Select someone to speak briefly about the organization (if the screening is sponsored by a group) and introduce the film
- Arrange for someone to lead a discussion after the film (Discussion Points available here: <http://www.stealingamericathemovie.org/DiscussionPoints.html>)
- Encourage people to hold their own screenings
- Thank everyone for coming, being concerned, etc.

SMALL SCREENINGS

Advantages to holding a small, private event to which guests are invited (and bring friends):

- Can be organized on very short notice...within a week or even a few days
- Minimum of preparation, no publicity necessary
- Little or no overhead costs

1. Invite friends, family and neighbors

- If possible, serve refreshments and announce that there will be snacks on the invitation
- Ask for RSVPs and follow up each invitation with a phone call
- After the screening, follow up with everyone who was present
 - thank them
 - talk about action
 - talk about their showing the film to others

2. Following a screening, ask who would like to:

- Organize and host a house party, and show the film for a small group of their family, friends, neighbors, and work colleagues.
- Take home resource information about local and national groups, reading material, and other activities.

- Write letters of support to local community organizations about the importance of keeping elections fair and honest, possibly discussing STEALING AMERICA.
- Write a letter to the editor of the local paper about the issue.

3. Other things you might consider doing:

- Take donations for an election integrity group (local or national)
- Sell DVDs or send them to the STEALING AMERICA order page (please visit: http://www.stealingamericathemovie.org/order_dvd.html)
- Offer a local contact if attendees have more questions/suggestions

HOUSE PARTY TIPS

- Provide comfortable seats.
- Speak informally with people as they arrive. The greeting can be something as simple as, "Hi, I am (your name). I am so pleased you could come." Even if you don't know people, introduce yourself and welcome them.
- When the group is assembled, begin by asking people to share why they came. Have nametags if people don't know each other.

SMALL EVENT CHECKLIST

1. PREPARATION

ONE WEEK OR MORE BEFORE

- Call, email, or mail an invite to your guests with all details
- Check in with your speakers and verify time and place for them
- Call all guests to confirm their attendance, make sure they have directions

THE DAY BEFORE

- Check in with guests you know personally to let them know who else is coming, ask if they might be bringing guests, etc. Provide directions, if necessary.
- See if anyone needs a ride or can provide a ride
- If you have invited a member of the press, make a reminder call
- Call and re-confirm guest speaker(s)

2. DAY OF THE EVENT

- Set up equipment, make certain your DVD player is in good working order and placed at an angle with the best possible viewing for the most people
- Make last minute calls to people you couldn't reach earlier
- Lay out refreshments and set up literature tables

3. SPECIAL NOTES FOR THE HOST/HOSTESS (if the event is a gathering in a home)

- Clarify the length of the screening
 - Let your guests know how long the evening will be
 - In addition to the length of the film, allow about a half-hour for group discussion, and a half hour for light refreshments and informal conversation
- Ask each guest to sign in: name, address, phone, fax number, and e-mail
 - Save this list for future event/ mailing list use
- Provide literature about local election integrity and voting rights organizations and DVD order information
- Have voter registration cards/sheets and any fact sheets that may be useful
- Show the documentary
- After the screening is complete, do not turn on all the lights at once. Perhaps turn on one small light first.
- Give people a little while to make personal comments about their feelings
- Gradually introduce discussion questions that you have prepared, or chosen from the guide. Many questions will simply arise from the group.

LARGER / COMMUNITY SCREENINGS

Consider holding an event for your group or for the community at which the film is shown on DVD, with a TV monitor, followed by discussion.

Use the Discussion Points (<http://www.stealingamericathemovie.org/DiscussionPoints.html>) to create an open dialogue following any screening. Community screenings and home viewings are an opportunity to encourage attendees to become more active.

1. GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS

For larger screenings, contact groups and organizations that care about the subject. When possible, contact a key person in each organization by phone, and explain what you are doing. Most people will be interested. When you know someone is interested, perhaps you can use his or her organization's database for your next level of outreach. You might offer to exchange or trade mailing lists. Offer to volunteer your time in exchange. You may speak at a group's fundraiser, or write something for their newsletter.

- Send a stack of flyers to interested groups on the campuses of your local colleges and contact other groups interested in election integrity
 - A complete listing of ELECTION INTEGRITY ORGANIZATIONS can be found on the GET ACTIVE website (<http://www.stealingamericathemovie.org/getactive/index.html>)
- Send stacks of flyers to cooperating groups to distribute and have in their offices
 - In exchange for their support, you might invite the group to have their organization's literature available on information tables at the event
 - If you have a mailing list, offer to exchange with them
- Coordinate volunteers to help before the event, to distribute flyers and help get the word out. Arrange for volunteers to handle at the event to take tickets, pass out programs and order forms for the DVD
- Fax a press release and materials (see <http://www.stealingamericathemovie.org/publicity>) to both the Calendar and Arts editors of local publications (both traditional newspapers and alternative dailies/weeklies) to "pitch" an article about the event, the filmmakers, your other guest speakers, and your group
 - Send the information via both mail and fax, and follow up with a phone call
- Make follow-up calls to all media contacts
 - Continue calling until coverage is confirmed.
- Arrange for refreshments for the event
 - Either try to get items donated or at cost

2. PREPARATION:

1 Week Before

- Make follow-up calls to all important invitation recipients and groups
- Coordinate with venue management the specifics of the reception
- Print programs and DVD order forms

The Day Before

- Purchase and prepare refreshments for the reception or contact caterer with last minute details

3. THE DAY OF THE EVENT

- Make certain all the equipment is working well: DVD player is in the theater or screening space and is in good working order
- Set up tables for reservation ticket holders, guests, and press
- Lay out refreshments and set up literature tables, including DVD order forms
- Continue distributing flyers, postcards, and posters until the event
- Record all names, addresses, and phone numbers as a resource for future events

* The information on planning events is adapted from The Empowerment Project's Guide to Theatrical and Video Self-Distribution of Issue-Oriented Films and Videos.