



How to Hold a Letter Writing Party

National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) is partnering with Vote Forward to Get Out The Vote (GOTV)! [Vote Forward](#) is a nonprofit organization that empowers grassroots volunteers to encourage their fellow citizens in underrepresented communities (like young people, people of color, and those that live in rural areas) to vote by writing and sending them letters. For more information about Vote Forward, review NCJW's Frequently Asked Questions resource and/or visit the [website](#).

Vote Forward has a complete guide to hosting a letter writing party — virtually or in-person — on their website: <https://votefwd.org/votefwd-letter-party-guide.pdf>. Use the guide to plan your event and add some NCJW touches along the way using this supplement.

Goals

Successful events begin with goal setting! Set goals for your letter writing party and evaluate the party after it is over to identify best practices and where to improve. Here are some sample goals for a letter writing party:

- Help increase voter turnout by encouraging voters from underrepresented communities, who do not always make it to the polls, to vote.
- Harness the volunteer power of NCJW members and friends toward this effort when traditional GOTV may not be feasible because of COVID 19.
- Join others and have fun while doing good.
- Have each participant complete 20 letters during the party.

Organizing the Party

If you are a member of an NCJW Section, work with your Section leaders to organize a letter writing party (or parties). Consider creating a committee or nominating a point person to organize the event and keep momentum going for this project. If you are

participating as in individual, you will be the point person for your event. Vote Forward has host tips in addition to the party guide shared above:

<https://votefwd.org/instructions#hosttips>.

All attendees must register with Vote Forward in advance of the party. If you are a member of an NCJW Section in the following states, use their specific portals: [California](#); [Florida](#); [Minnesota](#); [New York](#); [Ohio \(Cleveland Section\)](#); [Texas](#). If you do not fit into this category, you and your guests should register using NCJW Inc.'s portal: <https://votefwd.org/ncjw>.

If hosting an in-person letter writing party, consider the following:

- *Accessibility.* Keep in mind practicalities like parking or public transportation. Make sure the location is accessible to people with disabilities. Note: accessibility is important for virtual events as well; you may need closed captioning or an ASL (American Sign Language) interpreter for a zoom event.
- *Location.* Select a space big enough to accommodate all those who might want to attend.
- *COVID-19.* Make clear to those you invite what the event expectations will be for vaccines and masking. Consider a space big enough for letter writers to spread out. You may not want to serve food and drink so people can stay masked.
- *Social Media.* Take pictures and post about your letter writing party on social media. Tag @NCJW on Twitter / @NCJWInc on Facebook / @ncjwinc on Instagram so we can see the fun and amplify to our followers. Note: ask participants first if they are ok with photos being shared.

Sample Agenda for the Letter Writing Party

An agenda can help an event start and end on time. Consider creating an agenda for your letter writing party, drawing inspiration from the sample below:

Pre-Party Tech Support (for virtual events; 15 minutes before start)

- Join early to help anyone new to Zoom (or the platform of your choice)
- As people join, welcome them, and let them know when the party will start.

Introduction (virtual or in-person; 10 minutes)

- Introduce yourself and explain why NCJW is supporting Vote Forward and your goals for the party.

- Thank people for coming
- Ask participants to introduce themselves and say why they came and why doing GOTV is important to them.
- Ask participants to share their “why I vote” messages they intend to include in their letters.
- If some participants have not pre-registered, walk through the process and ensure participants who have already registered begin letter writing.

Writing Letters (virtual or in person; 40 minutes)

- Talk through how to complete a letter from start to finish.
- Remind participants that this is a non-partisan campaign so candidates and political parties should not be mentioned.
- Let participants know that the most common mistakes are:
 - Addressing letters to the wrong voters. *Remember the voter's name and address is at the bottom of each letter.*
 - Using their own address as the return address, as opposed to the return address listed at the bottom of each letter.
 - Putting the wrong letter in the wrong envelope.
- Tell folks they can ask questions at any time.
- Encourage people to chat as they write letters. Consider having prepared questions for people to break the ice.
- Ask participants after the first 10 minutes or so if anyone needs help.
- Make it fun! Play music, ask election-related trivia questions, set up a friendly competition over who can write the most letters — anything that makes it feel like a party.

Closing the Party (virtual or in person; 10 minutes)

- Remind everyone what to do with their letters after the party.
 - Move them to the “prepared” column on the Vote Forward website.
 - Store them in a safe place until they are ready to be mailed.
 - Mail the letters when instructed by you / your Section / Vote Forward.
- Ask attendees if they would like to participate in another letter writing party and/or if they would like to write letters on their own.
- Thank everyone who attended and any volunteers who helped plan the event. Remind everyone of the importance of this work.

Report Back to NCJW

After the letter writing party, follow up with a thank you email to attendees with a recap of the event and what to do with the letters after the event. Then contact your other volunteers or Section leadership (if applicable) to discuss what went well and what could be improved in the future. If people indicated a willingness to attend another party, consider holding more events. Please let NCJW, Inc. know how your event went! Email Faith Williams at fwilliams@ncjw.org to fill us in and tag us on social media (@NCJW on Twitter; @NCJWInc on Facebook; @ncjwinc on Instagram).

Questions? Reach out to Faith Williams (fwilliams@ncjw.org) with any questions or if you need technical assistance holding a letter writing party!