



Guide to Hosting a Visioning Circle

Welcome!

Anyone can host a Visioning Circle. This guide will take you through it step by step. You start by making some decisions:

1. Who? Decide which group of people you want to invite (friends? members from your church? an entire organization?) and make a list of the names. We recommend no more than 15 people per circle. In most cases for personal networks, you can count on one out of every three or four people you invite to show up. That means if you invite 40 people, you can count on 10-13 to attend. However, if you're hosting this Circle as part of a regularly scheduled event, such as a book club, you can expect the usual number of people to show up.

2. Where? Home? Office? Church? A local café? Make sure there will be room for everyone to sit comfortably in a circle, and ideally a place to post big sheets of paper for brainstorming.

3. Choose a facilitation method. You have 3 options:

Option 1: Create your own agenda and visioning/brainstorming process. We welcome your creativity in creating questions and processes! We ask the following: that you focus your on creating a positive vision for change, and that you use the sign-up sheet and demographic sheets from our Facilitation Guide, so that your guest's visions will be justly represented.

Option 2: Download our detailed facilitation guide and follow it, or modify it as you see fit.

Option 3: Contact Let Us Rise to book a facilitator for your gathering. We do not charge, we only ask participants to donate what they feel the process is worth to them. Email info@letusrise.org.

4. When? Choose a date and time. Most people need 3 weeks notice. If you are bringing in a Let Us Rise facilitator, make sure you agree on a date with them, first!

5. What? Think about the kind of party you what to throw. A potluck? A dinner party? Hors d'oeuvres?



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Once you have made those decisions:

6. Invite Create and send your invite. Decide whether you want to send emails or cards. See the sample invitation below. The most important thing is to write in your own voice, and to communicate your passion for this movement. Evite works well.

7. Follow up with a phone call

In this era of too much email, you'd be amazed at the difference a personal phone call makes. It won't take you as long as you think – you'll get people's voicemail most of the time anyway. Call people a few days after you send the invite, and then the day before your circle.

8. Prepare refreshments and other materials

- Food
- Drink
- Plates, utensils, cups, napkins
- At least 20 big pieces of paper (you can buy flipchart paper at office supply stores. You can even get flipchart paper that is like a huge post-it-note, so you will stick to your walls.
- Tape (if you didn't buy sticky flipchart paper)
- Pens that show up from several feet away – flipchart and dry erase markers work great. It helps people to read the writing if you get at least two colors and alternate with each idea.
- Your agenda (see below)
- Sign-in and demographic sheets (included with sample agenda below.)
- Digital camera and video camera (optional)
- Chairs or cushions for everyone
- Donation basket or hat

Sample Invite

Suggested subject for emails/Evites: Making the Change Real: A Visioning Party

Friends,

This past year has taught me that change happens when we become active participants in the political process, when we come together at the grassroots around an idea of what's possible, and work together to achieve it.

So what's next? Consider the power we could unleash, if we could come together to articulate a collective vision for our future, rooted in our deepest values and independent of any political party. Consider how we could drive the winds of change, if we are the vision holders for our future!

YOU are invited to share your dreams for our future at a Visioning party at [INSERT LOCATION], on [DATE] at [TIME]. [INSERT REFRESHMENT INFO]

This is not an isolated event. People are meeting all over Colorado for these "Visioning Circles". This is being coordinated by a new, independent community group called Let Us Rise, which welcomes all people, all political affiliations, everyone. We'll publish our visionary ideas at www.letusrise.org -- a publicly owned space where all visions can be seen – and we can also submit our visions to the Obama team.

Let Us Rise will coalesce the visions into a unifying vision for change for Colorado. We'll have a chance to give feedback on it, and take action to implement it.

Please RSVP by [INSERT YOUR RSVP DATE].

Let's make the change real!
[YOUR NAME]



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On the day of your Circle, prepare the space

The circle is, in our experience, the spatial arrangement which best encourages community and honoring every voice equally. It works even better without a table.

Unless you have a flipchart stand, you will probably want to arrange your circle so it touches a wall. You can tape the flipchart paper to the wall in advance and then write up people's ideas easily

Convening Your Visioning Circle

Have fun!!!

If you elected to bring in a Let Us Rise facilitator, she or he will handle the facilitation. You can expect to say a few words of welcome and closing, and to help with writing up the ideas.

If you are facilitating the group yourself, remember the following:

- To explain the Visioning Campaign
- To keep the group focused on generating positive visions, rather than debating each other
- Write down every idea expressed. Your role is that of a conduit and fellow visionary, not a judge.
- When the visioning and brainstorming is complete, pass out the sign-up sheets and demographic sheets, so that your guests and their ideas will be fairly represented.
- Digital photos create a very nice touch for the website!



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Afterwards: Critical Follow-Up

To make sure that all of your work doesn't go to waste, complete these steps within one week of your circle:

1. Call the people who are interested in hosting a Visioning Circle within **3 or 4 days** of your Circle and support them to make it happen.
2. Upload your vision, along with the names, contact info, demographic info, any photos, video or audio submissions, by going to www.letusrise.org (click on the Participate section) within one week. If your group identified action steps, be sure to include those as well. **This is critical – otherwise your ideas will not become part of the larger collective vision!**
3. Send the donations you collected to Let Us Rise, c/o Community Resource Center, 655 Broadway, Suite 300, Denver, CO 80203 within one week.
4. Send out a thank you email to the folks who participated, with a link to your vision on letusrise.org, within one week.
5. Follow-up on other action steps the group decided on. If your group elected to share your vision with the Obama team, the current place to do so is here:
<http://change.gov/page/s/yourvision>