



## CLIMATE ORGANIZING

### EVENTS AND ACTIONS

Hosting an event can be a great move for campaigns at any stage, whether you're just getting started and trying to recruit new members, or celebrating a victory and wrapping things up. This toolkit provides some creative ideas for events and actions, and a simple step-by-step guide to how to create them.

**1. Choose an event or action.** The possibilities are endless. Think about what your goals are and what would be a popular event in your community. Get creative! Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Townhall
- Music concert
- Festival
- Walk or march
- Workshop
- Coffeehouse
- Rally
- Art-related activity
- Community dance
- Potluck
- Speakers panel
- Lecture
- Film screening
- Kitchen table meeting
- Meet up
- Street party
- Symbolic photographs

**2. Decide on a date and time.** Some events, like townhalls, film screenings, meet-ups, and potlucks, can be held during the week. Wednesday and Thursday nights often have the best turn-out, but Friday evenings are also a good bet. Other events, like rallies, marches, festivals, and street parties, are better suited to Saturday or Sunday. Use your judgment and think about your audience when choosing a date and time. Make sure your event doesn't conflict with other big community events.

**3. Choose a location.** Pick a venue for your event that's a friendly and non-exclusive community space. Ideal locations provide enough space, but not too much; are easily accessible by public transit, walking, or cycling; and are free to use. Community centres, churches, schools, theatres, and parks are just a few options. Depending on the type of event, someone's home could also work. Be sure to reserve the space. If you choose an outdoor public space, check to see if you need a permit.

**4. Bring together a coordinating team.** It is critical to recruit other people to help with event coordination. \* Maybe it's just you and a friend, or maybe it's a team of 10 or more. No matter the size, it's important to have collaborators to help plan and promote the event, and make it popular in the community. \*Wilderness Committee staff are also available for coaching on event coordination.

**5. Invite your speakers.\*** For townhalls, a panel of three speakers is ideal. For rallies, you may wish to invite a few more speakers. Film screenings and music events can also be accompanied by short presentations. No matter the number of presenters, always try to invite multidisciplinary speakers with different perspectives, experiences, ages, and ethnicities. You will also need an event host – someone to introduce the speakers and/or musicians and give some context to the event. The host will ideally be you or another local community member. \**The Wilderness Committee's Climate Campaigner, Eoin Madden, is available to speak at community events and advise on optimal townhall format.*

**6. Work out the details.** Plan and arrange the logistics and nitty-gritty details as soon as possible. Important things to think about are the schedule of events (make an event timeline), presentation equipment (sound system, projector and screen, microphone/megaphone, extension cords, etc.), stage/podium, tables/chairs, sign-up sheets and clipboards, volunteers, photographers, signage, food



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and water, permits, transportation, bathrooms, etc. Remember to anticipate unexpected events (e.g. sound system issues) and be prepared with back-up plans.

**7. Spread the word.** Invite people to join you! Try to recruit diverse participants. Start with your friends, neighbours, and local environmental groups, but be sure to think outside the box about who to reach out to – maybe local labour unions, sports teams, businesses, high school and university students, ethnic community groups, arts groups, churches, mosques, or synagogues would be interested in getting involved. Consider inviting local political and community leaders. Get your coordinating team to help with this – everyone has different contacts and connections to reach out to. Here are some ideas for how to promote your event:

- Send email invitations to your contacts (and ask your group members to do the same)
- Put up posters\* around town (cafes, community message boards, telephone poles, etc.)
- Create a Facebook event and invite people to join
- Announce your event at other community events (e.g. classes, fairs, church gatherings, etc.)
- Post event details in online and printed community calendars
- Submit details to radio stations that make community event announcements
- Submit event write-up to online and printed community newspapers and newsletters
- Ask other community groups to send out an invite to their mailing lists
- Pick up the phone to personally invite community and political leaders

*\*The Wilderness Committee can help with graphic design and/or print your posters.*

**8. Tell the media.** It's critical to contact local, provincial, and national media to ask them to report on your event. Make a list of all the media (print, radio, television, online) in your area, and record contact information and submission deadlines for each one. Send out your press releases a few days before the event (or earlier for media with specific submission deadlines) and follow up with phone calls on the day of your event.

**9. Make a banner, signs, and/or props.** This isn't necessary for some events, but is essential for others like rallies, marches, and symbolic photographs. Be sure to make some extra signs to pass out to people who didn't bring their own.

**9. Run the event.** Try to stay on schedule to respect people's time, but be prepared to be flexible and go with the flow. Be ready to troubleshoot unexpected issues while remaining calm. Remember to bring a sign-up sheet to collect participants' contact information so you can follow up and build your group. Ensure you have a photographer to document the event (photos of your event are great to share on Facebook and for updates in the local paper).

**10. Follow up.** Try to leave your participants with a follow-up action – something they can do after the event to stay involved and keep their momentum up. If you have an email list of participants, follow up as soon as possible to thank them for coming, share event outcomes (media coverage, political decisions, etc.), and remind them about the follow-up action or next event. Be sure to send a special thank you to all your volunteers.