



**Modern Military  
Association  
of America**

## **HOUSE PARTY ORGANIZING GUIDE**

### **Our Mission**

Modern Military educates, advocates, and champions for the rights and well-being of LGBTQ+ service members, veterans, and their families as well as people living with HIV.

### **Letter from the Modern Military Team**

Dear Friend,

Want to support LGBTQ+ and HIV-positive service members and veterans? Host a Modern Military house party! It's a fun way to raise awareness and funds while connecting with friends and family.

Your party will help answer important questions about our work, the challenges our community faces, how we're addressing key issues, and most importantly, how you can help. We can help answer questions, like: What is Modern Military doing to address the challenges LGBTQ+ service members, veterans, and their families face? What policy issues and barriers continue to impact individuals living with HIV who want to join or are already in the military? What do the new executive orders from the administration mean for trans service members and veterans? What can you do to be an ally to your LGBTQ+ family, friends, or community? How can you build community support systems and mutual aid to keep your community safe?

This packet provides everything you need to plan your party, including a presentation about Modern Military and fundraising tips. Your support is invaluable to our work. Thank you for supporting our community!

In solidarity,  
Modern Military Team



# PLANNING GUIDE

## Step-by-Step to Hosting a Successful “FUNdraising” Party

### 1. DEFINE YOUR GOALS

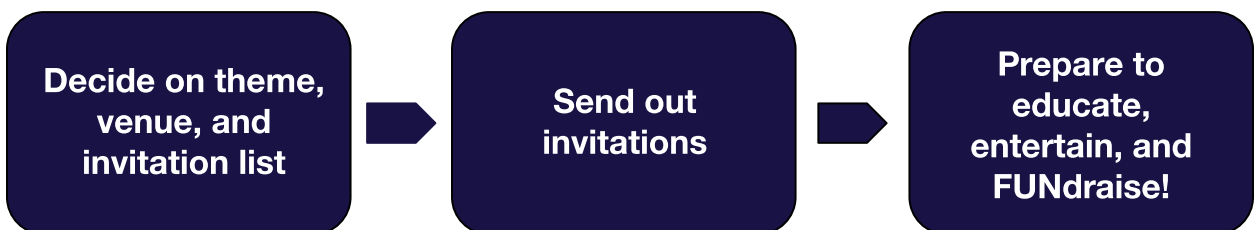
A house party is an event held by you (or a group) in someone’s home or a comfortable, private location. The goals of these events are to:

- **Increase awareness and educate guests about the work of Modern Military**
- **Raise funds to support the continuation of our mission and advocacy**
- **Create an environment for you and your guests to enjoy themselves and build community networks for future mutual support**

This guide is intended for smaller, informal events, where guests can be expected to contribute in the \$25 to \$100 range. If you are considering a more formal event, designed for donors who can give at higher levels, please contact us.

### 2. START PLANNING

Start the process by thinking about the type of event you want to have. Have a vision: what will be the theme, how many people can you accommodate, and what is the best venue that meets your needs? Remember, your enthusiasm for our work is the key to getting everyone invested and having a successful event.



**The type of party is only limited by your imagination.**

**Start by picking a theme. Anything goes! Some ideas include:**

- Backyard barbecue or chili cookoff
- Cupcake decorating contest
- Board or video game night
- DIY craft night
- Mocktail party
- Themed party (e.g., Hollywood glamour, tropical getaway, or 90s flashback)
- Karaoke night
- Coffee and dessert social



**Things to consider:** What type of event would draw the most people in your personal network? Choose a theme everyone will enjoy and is appropriate given the venue, date, time, and weather. Remember, this can be as formal or informal as you prefer. The possibilities are endless.

**Timing is important.**

1. Pick a day and time that considers the type of event, people's availability, weekday vs. weekend schedules, and when there are fewer competing events/activities.
2. If you want to coordinate your event with other Modern Military happenings or need additional organizational information, please contact [info@modernmilitary.org](mailto:info@modernmilitary.org).

**Remember, your enthusiasm for Modern Military's mission is the key to getting everyone invested and having a successful event.**

**Everyone is a prospective guest.** Cast a wide net: friends, family, neighbors, coworkers, workout buddies: anyone who is part of the LGBTQ+ community or an ally. Keep safety in mind when planning; you should know each person you invite or have a mutual connection that can confirm they are sympathetic to our mission.

### **3. CREATE AN AGENDA/RUN OF SHOW**

Project management tools can assist you in not feeling overwhelmed and help ensure you don't forget anything. We've provided a sample timeline below.

- **Keep track of your invitation list**, including email and mailing addresses.
  - [Apple Invites](#) is a great virtual invitation tool where you can invite individuals directly from your contact list, via text message, email, or link sharing.
  - If you choose to use a social network like [Evite](#) or [Punchbowl](#), consider making the event private to avoid uninvited guests.
  - We recommend that you request approval from attendees to share their email with Modern Military so we can follow up with them following the event to share updates and other ways to remain involved.
  - Make sure you're tracking your guest list, RSVP list, who attended, and who donated to share with Modern Military following the event.



- **Set clear deadlines** for:
  - Sending invitations; smaller events may only need to be sent 2-3 weeks in advance, whereas a larger event might be 1-2 months in advance.
  - When guests must RSVP. Depending on the type of event, this could be 2-3 days before the event or 1-2 weeks in advance for a larger event.
  - Ordering food and beverages. If you're hosting a large event with lots of guests, you'll want to ensure you have enough food/snacks/beverages based on your RSVP list which is why you'll want a few days/weeks between RSVP and event date.

Sample Timeline	
Item	Target Completion Date
<p><b>Kick-off To-Do List:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Create a budget:</b> Determine the size, type of event, theme, and other aspects to determine how much you want to spend on hosting the event. Based on your theme, you could have very few expenses if you host at home and have a potluck event.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Select venue:</b> Visit and inspect the venue for capacity if it's outside your home.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Set a <b>date and time</b></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Set a <b>goal</b> for how many donations and/or dollars raised to support Modern Military's mission. For instance, if you want 100% giving from your attendees, you can request a donation of any amount when they RSVP. If you want to set a dollar goal, invite guests who 1) have a shared interest in the mission, 2) make charitable donations to other organizations, and 3) have the financial capacity to make larger gifts to help you achieve your goal.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Create and send <b>invitations</b> by text, email, phone, or online.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Send 1-2 <b>reminders</b> a week or a few days before the event.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Choose appropriate <b>food and drink</b> for the occasion and finalize logistics.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Identify</b> the LGBTQ+ military/veteran issue areas that your community is most concerned about to tailor your presentation and fundraising ask.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Consult Modern Military</b> about ideas, calendar, and educational materials, if needed.</li> </ul>	



Item	Target Completion Date
<p><b>Preparation To-Do List:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>6 weeks prior:</b> Send out invitations</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>4-5 weeks prior:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Manage event logistical details</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Recruit 1-2 close friends to assist</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Identify which issue area you want to highlight and research Modern Military's work in that area. Contact Modern Military for handouts or other materials.</li> </ul> </li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>2-3 weeks prior:</b> Send an invitation reminder</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>1-2 weeks prior:</b> Set your RSVP deadline. Based on the expected number of guests, print reference materials from Modern Military.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>1 week prior:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Finalize guest list and confirm attendance</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Send event reminder to guest list</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Confirm order for food/catering/drinks, purchase any needed decorations and tableware, etc.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<p><b>Day of the Event</b></p> <p>Sample Party Schedule:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>7:00 pm</b> – House party begins</li> <li>➤ <b>7:00 – 7:45 pm</b> – Eating, drinking, socializing</li> <li>➤ <b>7:45 – 8:05 pm</b> – Presentation on Modern Military and time for Q&amp;A</li> <li>➤ <b>8:05 – 8:15 pm</b> – “The Pitch”</li> <li>➤ <b>8:15 – 9:00 pm</b> – More chatting and conversation</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Post Event Follow-up and Thank You</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Mail paper check donations to Modern Military (anyone can make a donation on the website with a QR code if you don't want to send mail)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Email Modern Military guest information and any post-event notes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Send thank-you notes to each attendee</li> </ul>	



## 4. SEND OUT INVITATIONS

Invite roughly 2-3 times the number of people that you would like to show up. Ideally, invitations should be sent six weeks before the event. See our sample invite letter at the end of this house party kit. You can use online tools like [Apple Invites](#), [Evite](#), or [Punchbowl](#) to send and manage invitations.

**Paper or email invites?** Both are effective and should be considered. Traditional paper invitations look great and give guests the special feeling of an exclusive event, but email invites are more modern, cost-effective, and easier to customize for each guest. Consider using [Canva](#) to create customized invitations.

**Ensure that the invitations specify this is both an awareness-raising and fundraising event.** Setting the expectation that guests will be asked to make a contribution will relieve awkwardness at the event. The invitation serves as the first opportunity to raise money.

- Include an event schedule so guests can be sure to attend the presentation portion of the event.
- Invite your guests to bring their checkbooks, share our QR code, or link to Modern Military's donation page.

**Have one point of contact for the RSVP process.** Provide an email address and phone number, so guests can text, phone, or email their RSVP.

## 5. WELCOME YOUR GUESTS

It's time to celebrate! Once everyone arrives, thank them for coming, and share your appreciation for their interest and commitment to the LGBTQ+ military community. Keep the party upbeat and fire up attendees to take action!

## 6. PRESENT MODERN MILITARY

Schedule your presentation about Modern Military, our history, and the work we are doing for the natural midpoint of the event, when attendance is at its maximum. This will also include "The Pitch."

Find a creative but brief (10-15 min) way to present the work of Modern Military. Remember, your passion for our mission is what matters: what do YOU find most important about our work? Why are YOU involved with our organization? Let your purpose and passion lead the way.



### **Include the following in your presentation:**

- A brief history of Modern Military
- Our mission and vision
- Current programs
- Key issues areas (e.g., trans ban, HIV+ service, discrimination, MilPride, etc.)
- Why the LGBTQ+ military community matters to YOU

**Share information about Modern Military.** The Tool Kit and Information Slideshow include background information, statistics, and details about each of our programs. Print out as much or as little of this information as you'd like, or share the slideshow with your guests.

You might also highlight [Modern Military Magazine](#), which provides a deep dive into the issues impacting the LGBTQ+ and HIV-positive military community. This is also a great time to ask attendees to follow us on social media and [sign up for our email newsletter](#).

Leave 5-10 minutes of time at the end of your presentation to allow attendees to ask questions or share why they decided to come to the event and support our organization. Personal stories are a powerful way to show why our work is important.

## **OUR HISTORY**

Modern Military is the result of decades of work for the LGBTQ+ and HIV+ military and veteran community through four organizations, each focused on serving their respective community in different ways. These organizations are the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network (SLDN), the American Military Partner Association (AMPA), OutServe (OS), and the Military Partners and Families Coalition (MPFC).

Some of Modern Military's founding organizations were created in direct response to Don't Ask, Don't Tell (DADT) and the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), others were created to be a resource and a voice for the thousands of "hidden partners" who lacked access to the benefits traditionally bestowed upon military spouses and family members. If not for their hard work and advocacy, Modern Military would not be the organization it is today.

## **THE ISSUES**

Modern Military educates, advocates, and champions for the rights and well-being of LGBTQ+ service members, veterans, and their families as well as people living with HIV.





We envision an inclusive and equitable military environment where every member of the LGBTQ+ and HIV-positive community is respected, valued, and empowered to thrive.

## **THE IMPACT**

Highlight what Modern Military is doing for the LGBTQ+ military community:

Programs:

### **Strong Communities**

Modern Military Strong Community meetings are a safe, virtual, moderated monthly meeting for adult LGBTQ+ service members, veterans, and their partners to find fellowship, community, resources, and support

### **MilPride**

Modern Military understand navigating the challenges of military life with a family is tough. But when you have an LGBTQ+ child, those challenges are magnified. That's where MilPride comes in: to help families with LGBTQ+ children find resources, gain education and understanding, and connect with one another.

### **Resilient Heroes**

At Modern Military, we care deeply about the mental health and well-being of LGBTQ+ veterans. That's why we help address these challenges. The Resilient Heroes Program is designed to meet veterans and their families where they are in their mental health journey to reduce suicide risk and improve overall well-being.

### **HIV Positive Service Program**

Modern Military's previous advocacy stance prioritized supporting the creation and passage of a law to allow service members living with HIV the ability to serve their country without arbitrary restrictions on their assignments and ability to deploy. Modern Military, alongside Lambda Legal, filed the *Roe and Voe v. Austin* and *Harrison v. Austin*. In April 2022, a federal court ruled that the DoD could no longer discriminate against service members living with HIV and must allow them to deploy and commission as officers.

### **Rainbow Shield**

Rainbow Shield provides in-person and virtual training for companies, military institutions, nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and individuals seeking to increase their understanding of LGBTQ+ and HIV topics through a military and veteran lens.



## **Advocacy and Strategic Litigation**

Despite the LGBTQ+ community being well represented within military and veteran spaces, LGBTQ+ individuals still navigate unique challenges when accessing healthcare, employment, housing, becoming parents, or integrating into their communities. These challenges are amplified when considering intersecting factors related to military service and other personal identity traits. Modern Military and other LGBTQ+ military and veteran service organizations worked with both the House and the Senate to ensure no anti-LGBTQ+ legislation passed. Modern Military partners with law firms and legal service organizations to take legal action and challenge discriminatory policies impacting the LGBTQ+ military and veteran community as well as service members living with HIV.

## **7. THE PITCH: MAKE A CLEAR ASK FOR DONATIONS**

After your presentation, either you or a guest speaker should make “The Pitch” for donations. Thank the guests for attending and, if someone other than the host is making the pitch, thank the host for throwing the event.

Next, ask all guests to make a donation to Modern Military Association of America. The pitch should always be personal and can begin with: “I am committed to the mission of this organization because...” and share a personal story or anecdote about how our work impacts YOU and YOUR family.

If possible, have pre-addressed and pre-stamped envelopes ready for your guests. They can fill out a donor contact form, write a check directly to Modern Military, seal the envelope, and place them in the basket. Guests can also donate directly through our donations portal on the website, using the QR code provided in the Tool Kit.

Also, remember to state that Modern Military is a registered 501(c)(3) organization and that all contributions are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowable by law.

## **8. THE CLOSE**

Thank everyone for coming. Invite guests to mingle and ask questions. Ask everyone to visit our website, [www.modernmilitary.org](http://www.modernmilitary.org).

Be available to answer any questions about the organization, and feel free to share our contact information: [info@modernmilitary.org](mailto:info@modernmilitary.org).



## 9. THANK YOUS AND FOLLOW-UP

Immediately after the event, mail the checks to Modern Military at:

1725 I (Eye) Street NW, Suite 300, Washington DC, 20006

Within a week to 10 days following your event, be sure to send a thank you letter, card, or email to each guest who attended, reminding them to make a gift to Modern Military if they haven't already. Please mention that donors can also set up recurring monthly donations or visit our website to learn about various other ways to provide funding.

Our organization will send all donors a receipt for tax purposes.

Need help? We are here for you!

We can help:

- Give feedback about timeline and agenda
- Provide necessary informational materials about our organization, our programs, and the work we do to help you craft your presentation
- Send thank-you emails to attendees who donate directly through the website
- Provide information about alternative donation options, such as beneficiary gifts, employee matching, and others
- Answering program-related questions

Please reach out at [info@modernmilitary.org](mailto:info@modernmilitary.org).



## Sample Invitation Letter

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I am writing to invite you to a house party in support of Modern Military Association of America. I am thrilled to be able to host this event to raise awareness about the challenges facing the LGBTQ+ military community, including active duty service members, veterans, and their families.

Modern Military provides a united voice for the LGBTQ+ military and veteran community and is dedicated to upholding and expanding LGBTQ+ civil rights progress through education, advocacy, support programs, suicide prevention and mental health outreach, and discrimination tracking.

In this time of uncertainty, Modern Military needs our support more than ever. Please join in this effort and enjoy a fun, informative event that not only gives us a chance to be together, but also impacts the military community in a positive way.

### Details

When: October 7 from 6:30-8:30 PM

Where: The Home of Jack and Jill Doe, 1000 Center Street, Anytown, USA 00000  
{Insert Map & Directions}

RSVP by July 31 to Jill Doe at (555) 555-5555 or {email address}

Food and drinks will be provided! Your donation of \$25 or more would be greatly appreciated. Guests can donate by check or online on the evening of the event.

If you are unable to attend, but would still like to donate to the cause, visit <https://modernmilitary.org/donate/>

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me. Hope to see you at the party!

Sincerely,

{Your Name}

{phone number}

{email address}

***Send your invitation using an online tool like Evite or Punchbowl, or create your own invitation using a free design program like Canva.***



## Sample Follow-Up/Thank You Letter

***\*To be sent by host or directly from Modern Military (for online donations) within 30 days after event.***

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

"It was wonderful having you at the party benefiting the Modern Military Association of America, hosted by [insert host]! We truly hope you had a great time. Your presence and support mean the world to us and the LGBTQ+ military community.

Thanks to your generosity, we can continue our vital work advocating for LGBTQ+ and HIV-positive service members, veterans, and their families. We're growing every day, providing essential education, resources, and support to military-affiliated individuals worldwide.

We'd love for you to stay connected! Visit our website, follow us on social media, or subscribe to our weekly newsletter to learn more about our programs and how you can get involved.

Consider becoming a monthly donor to help us make an even greater impact on the lives of the LGBTQ+ military community.

Once again, thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your incredible support and your commitment to Modern Military's mission. We're so grateful for your partnership in serving those who serve our country."

Sincerely,