

How to Brew A Tea Party...

A hands on guide to hosting
a tea party demonstration
in your community brought to you
by the Institute for Liberty

Congratulations on becoming part of the National Tax Day Tea Party movement, a truly grassroots effort to tell Washington and our state legislators that we've had enough of the borrowing, the spending and the taxing – that enough is enough.

You probably have a lot of questions about what to do next. This guide to “Brewing a Tea Party” should help you by answer some of the FAQs – that’s “frequently asked questions” for those of you who have not yet mastered the language of the Internet – to help you organize, perhaps even lead a Tea Party on April 15, 2009. Remember – YOU are not alone – YOU are part of something much bigger, an effort by your fellow citizens to raise their voices in protest against the out-of-control spending, record deficits, coming tax increases and other nonsense emanating from the nation’s capital.

Step One: Plan Your Agenda

Even before you determine the place or the time, you have to have a vision for your event. Will you have a big rally with speakers, special invited guests, leaders of civic groups talking about taxes and spending and borrowing and regulation? Will you focus your event around an elected official who is staying true to the spirit of Sam Adams and the others who threw the tea into Boston Harbor? Or will you just organize a small group of people to hold signs and pass out fact sheets and other information about what Washington is doing to our wallets and our families? The choice is yours – but it’s a lot easier to pull an event together if you have an idea in advance of what it should look like if it’s successful.

Step Two: Pick a Site

Those of you who are planning events for major metropolitan areas have the luxury of many possible sites from which to choose. Just remember, it has to be easily accessible to you, to your volunteers, to the media and to the public. You want to try and get an area with a lot of street traffic so that people will be talking about you and why you were there even days after the event is completed.

Those of you organizing events in smaller communities may not have as broad a menu of venues from which to choose but the principles involved remain the same: pick a site that has a lot of street traffic that you, your volunteers and the media can all get to easily. Since its April 15 – Tax Day – a spot at or near the local U.S. Post Office is ideal. It will certainly have a lot of street

traffic that day. If it's impractical to go to a post office, look for a place that is significant in political terms: a local IRS Office, a state or local government building, the county courthouse or the district office of a U.S. Senator or Member of Congress who voted for the Stimulus package. And, if you're near a body of water you might even want to consider some kind of reenactment of the original tea party as a way to attract the media.



The important thing to remember is your rally, whether it's large or small is part of a much larger national event. So even if you only have five people in front of the local post office on April 15, your event is one of hundreds all across America. Make sure people know that.

A quick note about crowds – lots of people ask if it's better to have a large group of people in a small space or a smaller group in a larger space. The important thing is to think visually – what is the best way to organize your event so that it comes across strong and proud overall? Remember, a news photographer may sometimes shoot what we used to call several rolls of film from all angles and then use a picture of a little kid holding a balloon. So try to plan for as many outcomes as you can. And if you're stuck, [here's a link to the last D.C. tea party from You Tube that might help give you some ideas.](#)

Step Three: Obtain a Permit (If necessary)

This is really part of Step Two but it is so important we wanted to reinforce it. If your rally site is on private property you will need to get the permission of the owner to use it, in writing if possible. If you are holding an event on public property you need to check with the local authorities about whether a permit is needed and what other rules may apply. Some venues, for examples, don't allow balloons. Others don't allow sound amplification devices like bullhorns or the construction of platforms. As an organizer it is your job to know the rules... and to make sure everyone abides by them.

If you run into trouble getting a permit or if the local authorities make your jump through too many hoops, you have several options. One is to simply move your event to another place. Another is to let friendly political and civic leaders, reporters and radio talk show hosts know. And, in the worst case, you may need to call in an attorney to fight the battle for you. There are a number of organizations that may be able to help you including the Republican National Lawyers Association, which has members in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. [If you click here you can go to the RNLA's "Find a Lawyer ASAP" page.](#)

Step Four: Target Your Audience and Your Participants

In today's political environment this may be the easiest part of the event. In order to swell your ranks to maximum capacity it is important you be creative and think of natural allies in your community to whom you can go in search of recruits for your event. These include local

taxpayer groups – and [Americans for Tax Reform](#) and the [National Taxpayers Union](#) both may have ideas of people and groups to contact in your state. Don't forget about neighborhood associations and groups of property owners. Additionally, the local Chamber of Commerce, civic groups like the Lions and the Elks, small business groups and the Rotary all might be willing to send an email on behalf of your event to the membership or let you come to a meeting and speak for five minutes about what you are doing and why. Make sure you check the Internet – Facebook as well as the Web -- for likeminded groups in your area. And, lastly, you need to go through your personal address book – the one in the drawer and the one in the computer – and send flyers to your friends and associates.

Step Five: Advertise Your Rally

You need to create a flyer which, in the age of “Photoshop,” is much easier to do than when all we had was blank paper, magic markers and scotch tape. Don't worry if you don't think of yourself as especially creative: all you really need to do is design something that lets people know the three key Ws: **When, Where and Why**. Once you got something together, email it to everyone you think might have an interest, use social media networks like Twitter and Facebook to spread the word and, most of all, don't forget the old-fashioned way of putting flyers up on bulletin boards, lampposts, at the supermarket and any other place it is likely to be seen. Remember, you may be well versed in the online world but not everyone who might want to come to your rally carries a Blackberry or an iPhone. Don't forget to get them involved too.

Step Six: The Press

People often say this is the area they find the hardest. Just remember – they are responsible for reporting on the news of the day. Your event is news. You have something they want, at least in theory. Your job really is to make it as easy as possible for them to come get it. But you have to give them something to cover – an activity that will photograph well or tell a good story.

As part of this kit we have included a draft release. You want to take that, modify it to fit the

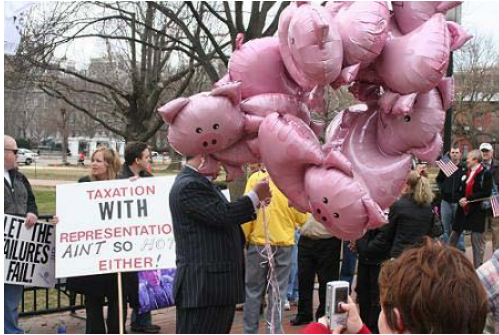


description of your event – or make one of your own from scratch– and send it out to the television news departments and newspapers in your area. Most releases these days are sent by email, so dropping one in the regular mail just might give you an edge. But however you send it remember it needs to go to someone specific. Most media outlets have a “Contact Us” page on their Web site that will tell you the name and the email of the person you want to reach. If you know of a specific reporter somewhere who has covered stories like this, send it there, wait a day or so and follow it up with a phone call to see if

they got it. Try to stretch out the conversation in order to get the chance to better “sell” your event – but keep in mind that reporters, even friendly ones, often have deadlines to meet and don't have the time to talk to you right then and there. Start by asking if they have time to talk

and, if they don't, ask when would be a good time to call back. Be considerate of their time and it increases the chance they will do something to help you.

It is also important that you prioritize the information you give them. The idea that this is a national event is important, but it's more important that people from the local community are gathering to express their concerns. Play up the local angle as much as you can.



Lastly, you want to get the phone numbers for the producers of the local radio talk shows you think might be favorable to what you have planned. Instead of trying to wade through the dozens of calls in the on-air queue at any given moment, call the producer or the host at a time when the show is not on the air and ask if you could come on for five minutes to talk about what you are doing, when it is, where and to invite people to join you.

Step Seven: Before the Event

You need to develop checklists to make sure you have taken care of everything you need for the big day. For a checklist the week out you want to make sure the props you need are ordered, the permits are obtained, the media releases are either out or ready to go, your flyers have been distributed and anything else that needs to happen is done to get you the biggest, best event you could possibly hope for. The checklist for the night before needs to confirm everything from the week out and allow to make sure the props, if your using any, are assembled or, if they need to be picked up, who is picking them up and when. If you're using a stage and a PA system, when are they being delivered, who is assigned to meet the folks bringing it and how is it getting set up. If you have invited special speakers, who is in charge of meeting them? What is the order of the speakers? Who is in charge of taking pictures and video and get them up on Twitter through Twitpix and You Tube? And if you are doing something like staging a reenactment of the original Boston tea Party – even if it's dumping tea bags into a kiddie pool full of water and a couple of toy boats – have you and your team practiced doing it a couple of times so you it will come off well when you do it for real? Practicing gives you the chance to spot the hidden problems.

If you get it all down in writing ahead of time, it makes for a much smoother flow once the event is underway.

Step Eight: During and After the Event

There are still a couple of things you need to do while your event is going on. One is to collect the names and emails of the press who attend – so have a place for them to sign in. Don't make a big issue of it but this will form the basis for your press list whenever you want to announce something in the future, even if it is just a release commenting on a state, federal or local proposal.

You also want to have a sign in table or a way to collect the names and emails of anyone who attends the event. Again, don't make a big deal out of it – you don't absolutely have to get every one to sign up but you do want to be able to contact them again. If they came to one event, they might come to another so you want to be able to reach them easily. And you may want to start meeting on a more formal basis to come up with strategies for future events or to go lobby your local elected officials on a series of issues.

You should ask the League of Women Voters to come and set up a voter registration table close by your event or at least help you organize your own. Voter registration is what they do. It's why they exist, more or less. And if they don't want to help you, well, that's a story for the news too isn't it.

Step Nine: Afterwards

Once your event is over, and you've swept the area and left it neater than it was when you arrived, go somewhere and relax. You've accomplished something important -- you and your team were part of something important. But make sure you follow up with everyone you can – send thank you notes to the people who really helped you pull the event off. If a radio talk show host let you come on for five minutes, send a thank you email and offer to come on again and tell everyone how the event went. Collect as much information from the press as you can, send it out to your volunteers and co-sponsors and let people know where they can find it on the Web. You will be amazed at how enthusiastic people will be about future events if the last one they attended made news.

The most important thing you can do after the event is keep the momentum going. You started something by hosting a Tax Day Tea Party – now keep it going. And, by the way and before we forget, thank you for all you do.

Your Friends at The Institute for Liberty.

For Immediate Release

Contact: **NAME**
PHONE NUMBER

DATE OF RELEASE
ORGANIZER'S EMAIL

Taxpayers to Rally in **COMMUNITY NAME** As Part of Nationwide Tea Party



When: **Date and Time**

Where: **Location – the more specific the better**

Taxpayers will give voice to their opposition to out-of-control government spending, taxing and borrowing that has pushed the federal deficit to record levels as part of a nationwide “National Tax Day Tea Party.”

The protest, which will feature **(who – any featured speakers, what – the television people need a visual of you doing something, not just a crowd – like throwing tea bags into a kiddie pool)**, and is one of hundreds to be held on the same day in cities and towns all across the United States. Tea parties will also be held in Chicago, Washington, Atlanta, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Fort Worth, San Diego, Portland, Ore., and at hundreds of other locations around the United States.

Sample Organizer Quote: **Organizer** said, “This event, and the hundreds like it across the country, is our way of letting Washington – and our legislators here – know that we are fed up. Government spending is out-of-control. It started under Bush. It’s already gotten worse under Obama. Enough is enough.”

“This is a real grassroots effort, of ordinary Americans talking to each other on the Internet, to show there are people who, like the Sons of Liberty in Boston so long ago, are willing to stand up and be counted,” **Organizer** said. “I ask everyone in our community to join with us, in their hearts if not at our rally and make their voices heard. And I invite all the legislators and politicians who agree with us to stand with us.”

In addition to the local organizers, the National Tax Day Tea Parties are backed by national groups including the Institute for Liberty, American Solutions for Winning the Future as well as online communities including Smart Girl Politics, TCOT and the Don’t Go Movement.

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Possible Slogans for Signs, Banners and Buttons

- Taxed Locally So Others
Can Be Bailed Out Globally
- Born Free –Taxed to Death
- Obama Promised Change –
And That’s All I Have Left
- Too Much Borrowing,
Too Much Spending,
Too Much Taxing
- Putting Wall Street First –
Putting Us Last
- Unlike Charlie Rangel, I Pay My Taxes
- Unlike Tim Geithner, I Pay My Taxes
- We Can’t Afford More Change
 - Taxes Kill Jobs
 - Raise Taxes –
Kill Jobs
 - Cut the Waste –
Cut the Spending
- Stop the Pork
- The Only Thing Stimulated
Is My Outrage
- Stop A.I.G. –
America’s Inept Government
- Who is Going to Bail Out
Me & My Family?
- Hey Chris Dodd!
I work, where’s my bonus?
- You Want the Blame Obama –
You Got It
- Reid & Pelosi Are Killing Our Jobs
 - It’s All Barney’s Fault
- I Paid My Mortgage & All I Got Was
This Stupid Bail Out
- Obama’s Spending is Killing My Future
- Will There Be Anything Left For Me
 - My Kids Have to Pay for This