



How To Plan An Open House

If you don't feel your Unit is large enough to host one by yourself, combine efforts with another Unit (or have your Group host it).

Work with your Public Affairs Officer and create a "press release"

Announce your Unit to the area: what CAP is and what your Unit is doing in the community with contact information so they can learn more. Take your new "press release" and send it out to: local newspapers, government offices, Air Force Recruiter offices, Chamber of Commerce, VFW & American Legion posts, EAA Young Eagle groups, schools, etc.

Get on Facebook and "share" your release

Post on your local news and radio station Community pages
Post to your area Congressman and other elected officials
Post on local business pages that include the type of audience you are trying to reach
...and remember to include a photo to grab their attention!

Plan activities for it:

Have demonstrations for Emergency Services, Cadet Programs, Aerospace Education...things that your audience can take part in so that they can, right away, see if they feel part of the group. Don't create a speech or presentation that they just sit and listen to...welcome them, give a brief rundown of what your Unit does and what they will be participating in that night and get them engaged.

Have photos on display

Of activities your Unit has participated in over the last year and create a PowerPoint to show plans your Unit has for activities for the coming year.

Have equipment we use on display

Bring out your 24hr and 72hr gear!
Have an ELT on hand and demonstrate how it works.
If you are at an airport, have a CAP plane positioned where your guests can walk up to it and see for themselves what aircraft they will be flying in.
If you have cadets and they have participated in model rocketry, bring that out and use one of the first "rockets" as an activity for your guests to partake in.

Bottom line:

You want your guests to be able to already picture themselves as part of your Unit – showing them your equipment, photos of past events, holding demonstrations and conducting interactive activities for them helps put them in that mindset...and sends them home wanting to come back again to learn more.



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SIX WEEKS PRIOR TO YOUR OPEN HOUSE

- 1) Select a date for your Open House
- 2) Appoint a Project Officer to select a staff and develop a plan
- 3) Order recruiting materials from eServices
- 4) Let your Unit Members know what date has been chosen

FOUR WEEKS PRIOR TO YOUR OPEN HOUSE

- 1) Start advertising!
 - * Send flyers to local schools, community newspapers and government offices
 - * Place flyers (with permission) at libraries, airports, military recruiting offices, park districts, community centers
 - * Contact local radio stations about including the announcement in their "community happenings" segment
 - * Post to your Unit's webpage on the "home" page
 - * Post to your Unit's Facebook page and create it as an "event" and invite friends & family
- 2) Project Officer should have a staff together:
 - * Who will handle the advertising?
 - * Who will plan the demonstrations and schedule members to conduct them?
 - * Who will create and arrange the displays for the day?
 - * Who will gather sign-in information from guests and then follow up after the Open House?
 - * Who will greet guests and be the point-of-contact on all questions during the event?
 - * Who will bring drinks and refreshments for the day?
 - * Who will create a sign for outside the main entrance or serve as a guide to direct guests to where the Open House will take place?

THREE WEEKS PRIOR TO YOUR OPEN HOUSE

- 1) Have a planned schedule developed with times and instructors listed
- 2) Create the displays and visual aids that will be used
- 3) Create an "Open House Agenda" that will be given out to all guests with that day's schedule of events and contact information for the Unit RRO or Commander

TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO YOUR OPEN HOUSE

- 1) Follow-up on advertising
- 2) Re-post the event to your Unit's Facebook page as a "reminder" as well as to the other Community pages that you contacted
- 3) Challenge every Unit member to bring at least one friend to the Open House

ONE WEEK PRIOR TO YOUR OPEN HOUSE

- 1) Do a "dry" run-through – have the assigned members conduct their demonstrations for the Unit to see if there are any areas that need to be addressed beforehand or last minute supplies that will be needed
- 2) Prepare "recruiting packets" for your guests.
Include: a recruiting flyer, an application for membership, Unit newsletter (if you do one), a personal invitation to attend the next Unit meeting (so they can hang on their frig as a reminder) and a business card with the contact information of the Unit RRO or whomever is designated to follow-up.