



*AAUW PROGRAM IN A BOX*

# RE: ACTION EVENTS

# AT A GLANCE

## RE: ACTION EVENTS

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

An AAUW Re: Action event is a debate or discussion of a hot, current topic that impacts women. Use this Program in a Box to gather a panel of local experts to reach out and start a discussion among various demographic groups in your community.

### INTENDED AUDIENCE

Community members, young adults, youth organizations, women's issues nonprofits, and nongovernmental organizations

### PROGRAM FORMAT

A panel or expert discussion followed by an audience question-and-answer session

### TIME CONSIDERATIONS

**Time frame:** Three to four days

**Estimated planning time:** No more than four days

**Estimated presentation time:** Two hours

**Estimated follow-up time:** One hour

### RESOURCES NEEDED

**Staff:** Assemble a committee that can meet quickly and decide when a Re: Action event is appropriate.

**Advertising:** Through any community venue available—commercial, library, or church bulletin boards; local media, and any interested organizations' established listservs

**Venue:** Secure a space that can seat at least 100 people and is appropriate for a town-hall style event.

**Equipment:** You'll need chairs, a panelist table and tablecloth, triangle name plates for your speakers (paper works fine), and tables for refreshments and handouts. Microphones might be necessary if you are in a large space.

**Handouts:** Participating panelists can display literature from their organizations or particular affiliations, but you should also provide brochures and information about AAUW and your local branches.

**Budget considerations:** Depending upon the time of day you hold this event, you can do anything from wine and cheese to heavy hors d'oeuvres. We do recommend that you offer some type of refreshment to entice those coming directly from work.

### BENEFITS TO YOUR STATE, BRANCH, OR COMMUNITY

- Fosters connection with your community and establishes AAUW as a leader and convener
- Offers an opportunity to come together for a conversation about the problems women face in our nation and globally
- Spurs thought around the controversy or issue being discussed

# PROGRAM DETAILS

## RE: ACTION EVENTS

Hosting an AAUW Re: Action event is an inspirational way to engage members of any branch's community and is especially helpful in raising awareness of AAUW's role as a community leader across various demographics. The single greatest challenge around hosting a Re: Action event is evident in its title; it is a reaction to something in the news or the public arena. In order to be timely, it must be planned and held within days of when an event is "trending." Trending is a social media term that means a particular story or event is being discussed by a significant amount of people on YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, or blogs. Local and national media also report on trending topics, so pay attention to what women's issues are being covered in news reports.

The AAUW national office held its first Re: Action event around the phenomenon known as SlutWalk. The local SlutWalk was happening on a Saturday. AAUW saw the event was trending on the Friday before and planned a Re: Action for the following Wednesday — after only four business days of preparation!

### HOW TO PREPARE

Once a topic has been determined, you have only days to host the Re: Action event. Arrange for volunteers from your branch to take on the following responsibilities:

- Invite panelists — This should fall to the most well-connected person in your branch. She or he should invite area experts on the issue that will be discussed. Remember that even if you hope to have a panel of three, you should aim for five acceptances. Last-minute schedule glitches and issues often occur! This volunteer should also arrange for gifts for the panel. [ShopAAUW](#) has some very appropriate, AAUW-branded items.
- Publicity — This position, coupled with the panel assembler, is the most crucial position to the success of the event. Due to the minimal amount of time to get the word out, this volunteer needs to be adept at the use of social media. Hopefully your panelists are well-known in the community and can spread word via their own networks and Listservs. A Listserv is nothing more than an e-mail group formed by an individual or an organization. These e-mail groups are very powerful tools for information dissemination. Publicity needs to also be focused on the usual channels such as flyers in retail locations, community centers, libraries, and church bulletin boards as well as direct outreach to local media and other feminist or women's issues organizations in your neighborhood. The publicity volunteer will work incessantly in the days leading up to the actual event.
- Venue logistics — This volunteer will secure a venue for the event. This needs to be done within hours of the decision to hold a Re: Action since there is minimal time for publicity. To facilitate greater attendance, it is best to hold a Re: Action in the early evening with a start time between 6 and 7:30 p.m. This will, of course, depend upon where you decide to hold the event. If your branch is in a suburb but you are holding the event in the city, you will want to start around 6 p.m. so people will come on their way home from work. If you are hosting the event in the suburbs, you will want people to be able to make their way home from work, so a 7 p.m. start time might be more appropriate. Remember that unless you are holding a Re: Action around retirees' issues, most of your potential attendees will be working women and men. Please schedule your event accordingly.
- Hospitality — You will want to offer some type of refreshments to your attendees. Again, this is dependent

upon the time you hold your event and where you are holding it. At a minimum, we suggest bottled water and some type of power bar or appetizer to hold people over. This is an outstanding opportunity to have members bring their favorite hors d'oeuvres.

- Door prizes — Nothing generates the public's interest like the possibility of winning something! If you have panelists who are published authors, see if they will offer signed copies of their books. Donate a mug or license-plate holder from [ShopAAUW](#). See if a woman-owned business will donate an item or gift certificate in exchange for publicity and a shout-out at the event. Please do make sure there is adequate signage to give them the publicity they deserve.
- Materials table — All panelists will want to display their or their organization's materials. Please include AAUW literature that describes what we are doing (if anything) about the issue and how people can join your efforts.

## HOW TO FOLLOW UP

1. Add the e-mail addresses of those who RSVP'd for your Re: Action event to your own branch Listserv. Send an e-mail thanking them for attending and say that you hope to see them next time. Indicate how AAUW can keep them informed.
2. Send a handwritten thank-you note to your panelists.
3. If you had a videographer tape your event, post the footage on YouTube and send the AAUW national office a copy as well.

## INCORPORATE MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT

Membership matters! Help grow the AAUW community by inviting prospective members to your event and encouraging them to join AAUW. Visit the membership campaign website to learn more. If your event involves college and university faculty or students or is held on a campus, invite schools that are not yet AAUW college/university partner members to join AAUW and offer their students the benefits that go with AAUW membership. All students attending a C/U partner member institution are eligible to join AAUW for free as e-students. For more information, visit the AAUW college/university partner recruitment web page.

# TOOLS

## RE: ACTION EVENTS

### RE: ACTION TOOLS

- [Eventbrite](#) online event registration
- [Video](#) from the national office's Re: Action event on SlutWalks

### PROGRAMS-IN-A-BOX TOOL KIT

The [tool kit](#) includes forms, checklists, and templates that you can modify and adapt for your program or event. The following may be helpful in planning this program.

- Attendee sign-in form
- Event evaluation form
- Event planning checklist
- Event registration form
- Photograph release form
- Press release template

### MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT TOOLS

- [Individual members](#)
- [AAUW college/university partner members](#)

### CONTACTS

- For questions or information about this Program in a Box, contact [bus-dev@aauw.org](mailto:bus-dev@aauw.org).