



# OPENING DOORS:

FINDING THE KEYS TO  
OPEN GOVERNMENT

## Event Guide

Thank you for volunteering to host an event in your community around OpenTheGovernment.org's broadcast of "Opening Doors: Finding The Keys to Open Government" – we're pleased that you'll be joining us and our panelists for our two-part discussion on open government and citizen activism. We've collected the following information to help you create and promote your event:

### Ideas for Promoting your Event:

- Invite speakers who will attract an audience – politicians, judges, government officials, reporters, professors, etc.; you know your community.
- Contact local groups, such as libraries, voter groups, civic/good-government groups, news organizations. Many national groups have local chapters that may be interested in participating in your event, or at least helping draw attention to the issues.
- Use our [design](#) to create your own posters or flyers—or both!
- Post information on your website (feel free to copy descriptions from our [2009 Event Page](#)) or blog about the event.
- Contact local media – print, radio, television – the issue of government transparency is very popular.

Also, check our site for information and links to other groups so that your invitees can read more about the issues and be better-prepared to participate in the program and discussions.

**Logistics and preparations:** The event will be webcast from the Center for American Progress. To show the webcast to an audience you will need: a computer, a LCD projector, and a screen (like for a movie) or a blank wall. To ask questions of the panelists during the event, you will also need either a phone or another computer.

About 24 hours before the event, you will have the opportunity to test the webcast (the link will be available on our [2009 Event Page](#)), and call someone to help with any technical difficulties.

We will send out programs, including information about the panelists, their experience, and (for the second panel) their websites, prior to the event. You will also be able to print the information from our website.

You may also find it useful to have a supply of pens and paper, for participants to take notes.

**Signing in and signing up:** Enclosed in the kit you will receive is a sign-in sheet for your participants. Encourage them to sign up to receive email alerts to learn more from OpenTheGovernment.org and our partners. After the event, fax it to us at (202) 683-4852. Or, you can email us the information at [info@openthegovernment.org](mailto:info@openthegovernment.org).

**Plan for the program, questions, discussion, and participation:** Before the broadcast begins, ask participants to begin thinking of questions. Both sets of panelists will be taking questions in Washington, D.C. from members of the on-site audience and participants at events like yours, via phone and email. To submit a question by email, write [questions@openthegovernment.org](mailto:questions@openthegovernment.org) (we will also provide a call-in number closer to the date of the event). Please remind questioners to identify themselves by name and to include the host site code for your event (we will provide this to you); questions from host sites will receive priority over questions coming from individual viewers.

**Have a local discussion:** After the broadcast, talk about ideas, experiences, and questions about local/state/federal policy and activism. We want our event to not only inform people but also inspire them to realize what they and their fellow citizens can do to overcome government secrecy in their communities. We want them to be comfortable with the kinds of tools that people are creating to facilitate that kind of empowerment, so encourage your participants to talk about uses they are making or could make of new technologies.

**Take action:** We encourage people to get involved in their communities, write their representatives and leaders, and join OpenTheGovernment.org and organizations like the host, co-sponsor, and community groups. One of the most important things that attendees can get out of the event is a sense that they are part of a larger movement. Help attendees see the impact open government has on their lives by providing them with information about state and local open government initiatives. Make sure your participants leave with at least one or two things they can do right away -- and if you can make it easy for them to do so, even better. Find out more about what open government advocates in your state are doing by visiting the [National Freedom of Information Coalition](#).

**Take pictures:** Send us pictures from your event, so we can share them on our website.

**Pass it on:** The webcast will be available on our website after the event. Consider holding another event at a time that is more convenient for people who work during the day or pass the information on to someone you think would be interested in hosting their own event. Also, consider holding a follow-up event later in the year to examine progress and action on open government initiatives.

**Help Us Improve Next Year's Program:** Please distribute the evaluation forms to your attendees and allow them some time to complete them, so that we can obtain effective feedback about our event. Encourage attendees to evaluate the event, the questions, the discussions, and to share their thoughts about the event in general. Please also let us know your thoughts as the host and organizer.

**Questions:** Please contact Amy Fuller at [afuller@openthegovernment.org](mailto:afuller@openthegovernment.org) or (202) 332-OPEN (6736) before or after the event.