

How To Host a Town Hall Meeting

Town Hall Meetings can be an effective approach to educating a community about underage drinking and engaging its members in identifying and implementing prevention measures. These events also can help expand the prevention message by generating news media coverage, inspiring action, and encouraging adults and young people to actively advocate for measures that prevent and reduce underage drinking.

Key Steps in Hosting Your Event

Town Hall Meetings are as varied as the communities in which they are held. Formats can be a panel discussion, student presentation, roundtable, open-microphone community forum, or another approach that will help you achieve your event goal and objectives. All events, however, will run more smoothly if you follow the basic steps below:

1. **Establish a planning committee.** Surround yourself with interested and available people who can fill a variety of roles in planning and conducting your event. Engage as many different sectors as possible. If your event is not youth led, identify how you can make it youth informed.
2. **Create your meeting strategy.** Outline your goals or objectives for the event; that is, what *outcome* is your meeting intended to support or generate? Determine whom you want to reach and what it is you want them to do. Identify local programs and resources already in existence to help address the issue.
3. **Brainstorm a list of contacts.** Form partnerships with others in the community to multiply your resources, reach more members of your target audience, and create a collaborative environment using resources that already are available.
4. **Attend to event details.** Select a time and date for your event that won't compete with other events for the same target audience. Anticipate how many attendees you will get based on location, date, time, speakers, and event activities. Consider audiovisual needs.
5. **Develop a media strategy.** Determine which media channels best serve your target audience. Is social media a better way to promote your event? Maintain a record of media contacts and outreach. In addition to contacting traditional television stations, consider contacting [Public, Education and Government Access Television Stations](#).
6. **Engage your community.** Promote your event through standard and social media channels to build interest and increase attendance. Place promotional items in places frequented by your target audience, for example, a school Web site or the local sports arena.
7. **Hold your Town Hall Meeting.** Once you have planned and promoted your event, you are ready to hold a successful Town Hall Meeting. Don't forget reminders and signage—make it easy for attendees to attend your event.
8. **Follow up.** Communicate with participants after your event to maintain community momentum in taking action to prevent and reduce underage drinking.