

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) Center for Excellence is a Federal initiative devoted to preventing and treating FASD. The FASD Center provides information and resources about FASD, as well as training and technical assistance. The FASD Center Web site has materials that can help raise awareness about FASD and identifies useful publications about the disorders.



*FASD occurs in about 1 out of 100 live births.*

For information on the FASD Center's town hall meetings, visit the FASD Center for Excellence Web site:

[fascenter.samhsa.gov](http://fascenter.samhsa.gov)

THE SAMHSA FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDERS CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE

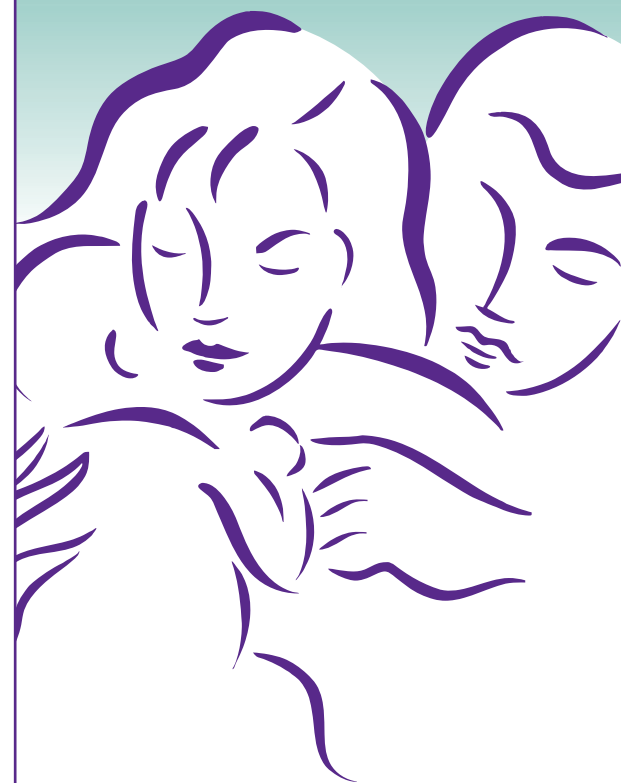
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## Planning a Town Hall Meeting on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders?

### Here's How!



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration  
[www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)



SAMHSA  
Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders  
Center for Excellence

## DECIDING THE PURPOSE

Why hold a Town Hall meeting? Here's what a meeting can do for you and your community:

- Raise awareness and increase understanding of FASD.
- Educate policymakers and service providers.
- Encourage changes in prevention and intervention practices.

## GETTING STARTED

Once you decide to move forward, a few key steps can help set the stage:

- Identify the sponsoring organizations and their responsibilities.
- Choose one person to take the lead—ideally, someone with an in-depth understanding of FASD.
- Ask relevant agencies and organizations to serve on a planning committee.
- Identify key stakeholders and “movers and shakers” who can help build momentum—parents, legislators, grassroots, groups.

## PLANNING

Getting the details right will ensure that your meeting is a success. Allow ample time to:

- Identify the specific purposes for your town hall meeting.
- Select the meeting date, time, duration, and location.
- Determine if video or audio taping should be done.

- Plan a premeeting workshop to help participants prepare their testimony.
- Identify and invite VIP panel members.
- Organize a postmeeting reception where participants and VIP panelists will have a chance to talk.
- Plan and implement a marketing strategy to promote the meeting.
- Coordinate with government agencies and nonprofit organizations.
- Ensure that individuals with FASD and their families and caregivers can attend the meeting.
- Decide whether a report, summary, or other product will come out of the meeting.
- Identify and plan meeting followup to respond to issues raised.

## CONVENING THE MEETING

The meeting will run more smoothly if you:

- Choose a moderator to explain the purpose of the meeting, identify the sponsors, introduce the VIP panelists, and serve as a timekeeper.
- Have signup lists for attendees and testifiers, as well as an agenda that includes the names of the VIP panelists.
- Determine the amount of time for each person's testimony.
- Decide on whether questions from the panelists will be allowed.
- Obtain signed releases if a report or audio or videotape is planned.

## FOLLOWING UP

Put the finishing touches on your town hall meeting:

- Send thank you letters to the VIP panelists.
- Develop and distribute a meeting report.
- Follow up with agencies and organizations that seemed open to change.

Then congratulate yourself—you've made a difference in addressing FASD!

