

2008 Town Hall Meetings

*Sponsored by the
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration*

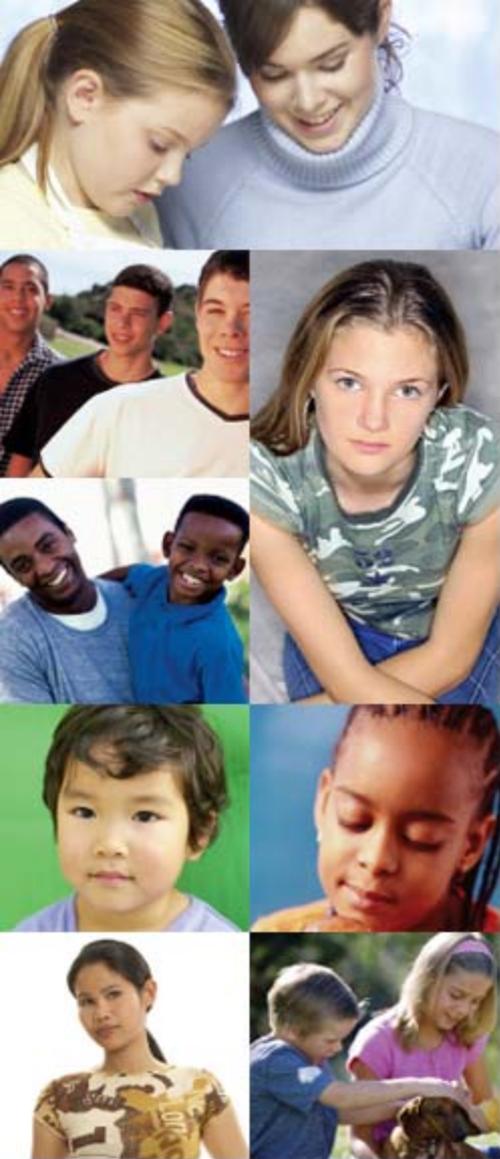
*With support from the
Interagency Coordinating Committee on the Prevention of Underage Drinking*



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- Alcohol use among children and adolescents starts early and increases rapidly with age. (National Institute on Drug Abuse [NIDA]. 2007. *Monitoring the Future Survey* [electronic version]. Retrieved from www.drugabuse.gov/DrugPages/MTF.html.)
- In 2007, 15.9 percent of 8th graders, 33.4 percent of 10th graders, and 44.4 percent of 12th graders reported drinking an alcoholic beverage in the previous month. Heavy drinking is a problem at all three grade levels. Among eighth graders, about 1 in 20 (5.5 percent) reported being drunk at least once in the past month. Nearly 1 out of every 5 10th graders (18.1 percent) and about 3 out of every 10 12th graders (28.7 percent) reported being drunk at least once in the last month. (NIDA. 2007. *Monitoring the Future Survey* [electronic version]. Retrieved from www.drugabuse.gov/DrugPages/MTF.html.)
- Perceived parental disapproval is a powerful influence on youthful alcohol use. Children who believe their parents would strongly disapprove of their using a particular substance are less likely to do so than those whose parents somewhat disapprove or neither approve nor disapprove. (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. 2006. *Results from the 2005 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National Findings*. Retrieved from www.oas.samhsa.gov/NSDUH/2k5NSDUH/2k5results.htm.)



State of the Problem

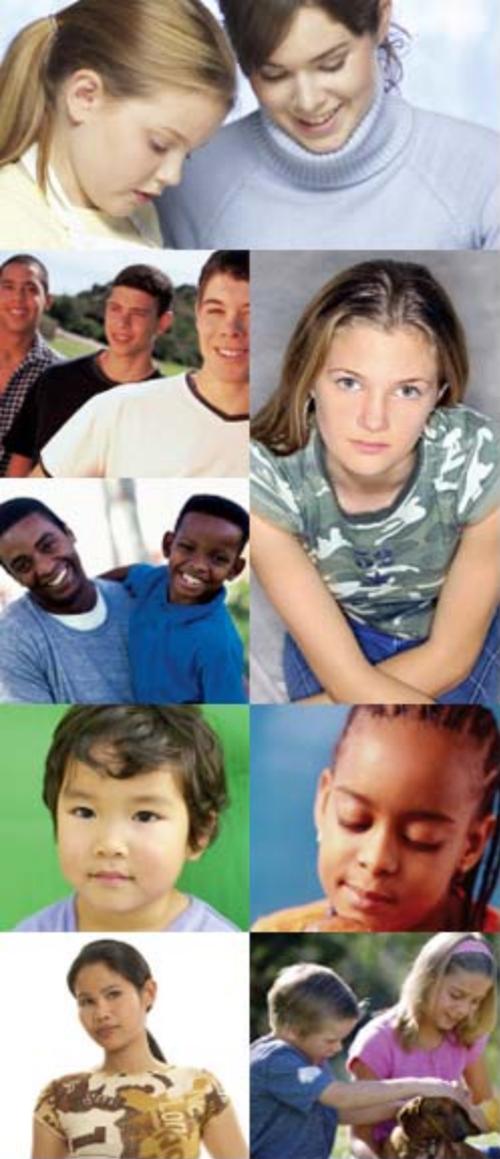
- Alcohol use among children and adolescents starts early and increases rapidly with age.
- Alcohol use by middle- and high-school students is significant.
- Parental disapproval is a powerful influence.



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Town Hall Meetings will take place all over America to raise awareness and talk about the issue of underage drinking during the week of March 31–April 4, 2008, which coincides with April's Alcohol Awareness Month.



Town Hall Meetings

- **Town Hall Meetings will take place all over America to raise awareness and talk about the issue of underage drinking.**

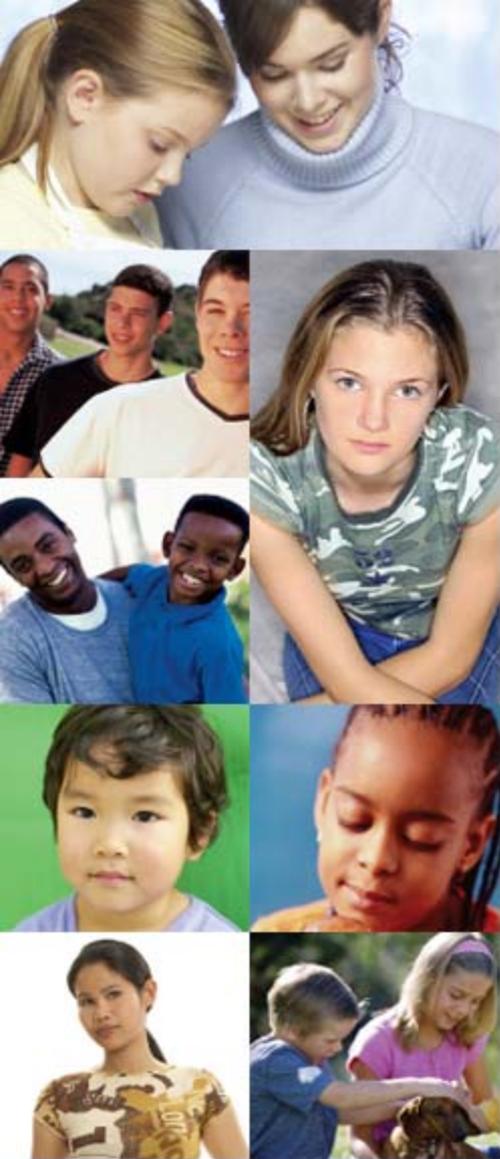


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A Town Hall Meeting is an opportunity for a community to:

- Discuss a topic and its impact on the community.
- Educate its members on the subject.
- Encourage action.
- A Town Hall Meeting brings together politicians, teachers, business owners, service providers, faith-based and community leaders, and parents in a venue where an issue of concern can be discussed publicly.
- In this case, the prevention of underage drinking is of prime interest to every community.



What Is a Town Hall Meeting?

- **An opportunity for a community to discuss, educate, and encourage action.**
- **A gathering of key community stakeholders.**
- **A venue to focus attention on underage drinking.**



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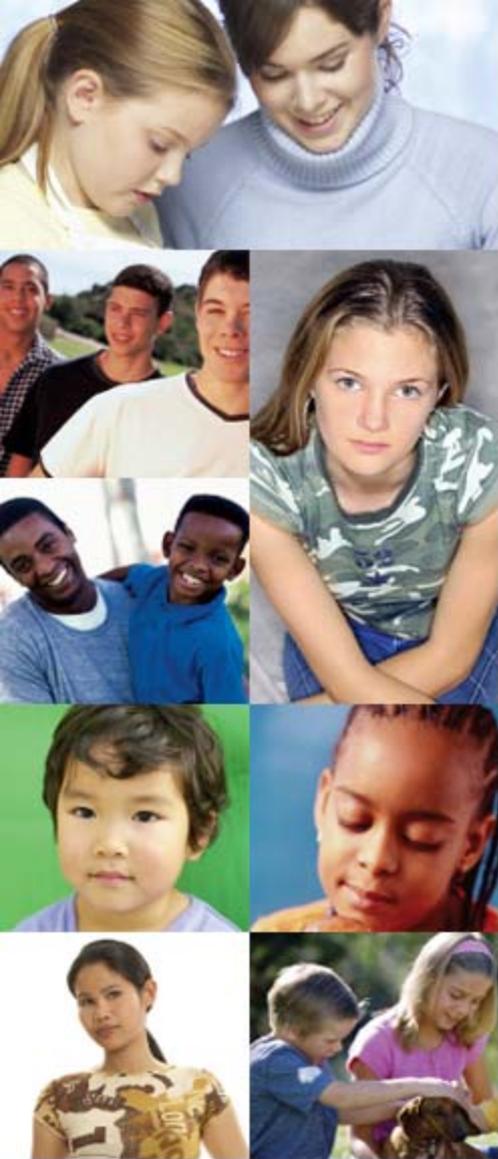
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A Town Hall Meeting can:

- Raise awareness in the community about underage drinking and its risks.
- Encourage community involvement in preventing underage drinking by making people aware of current efforts and suggesting ways to become involved.
- Encourage community members to work together to determine effective strategies for preventing underage drinking and to develop a plan for implementing them.
- Generate interest from the media.

Why Hold a Town Hall Meeting?

- To raise community awareness about underage drinking and its risks.
- To encourage community involvement.
- To encourage community members to work together.
- To generate media interest.



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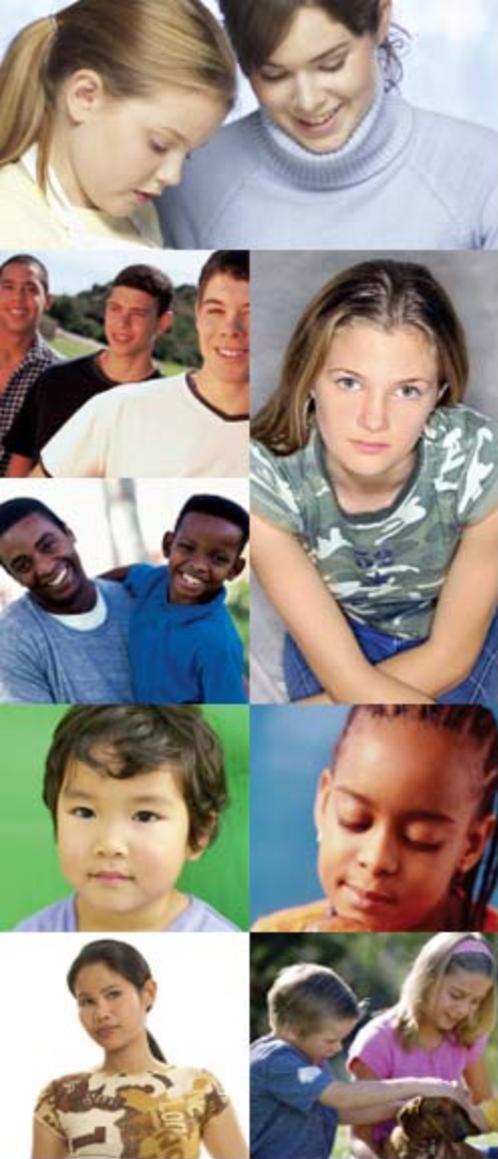
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The whole community can learn about:

- The dangers of underage drinking.
- The impact of underage drinking on the community.
- The importance of preventative steps for youth.
- The value of parents discussing the issue with their children.
- The value of changing the community environment within which underage drinking takes place.
- Other steps the community can take to prevent young people from trying alcohol.

Why Hold a Town Hall Meeting? (cont.)

- **To educate the community about:**
 - The dangers of underage drinking.
 - The impacts of underage drinking.
 - The importance of prevention.
 - The value of parent-child communication.
 - The value of changing the community environment within which underage drinking takes place.



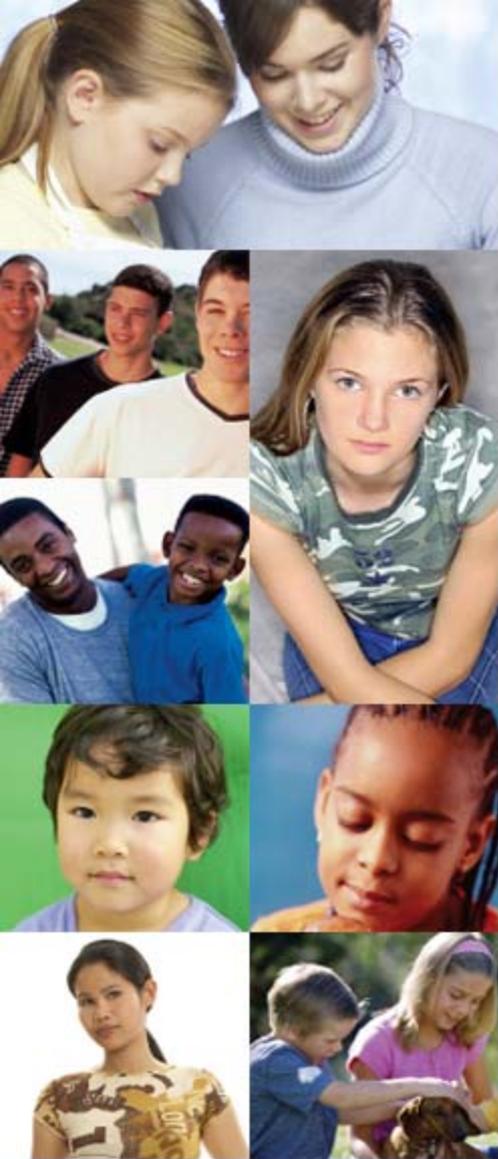
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- Decide what kind of Town Hall Meeting to have.
- Determine how large and complex the event should be.
- The following slides offer samples of activities that you can do for various levels of Town Hall Meetings.

Getting Started: Step One

- **Determine what type of Town Hall Meeting to host:**
 - Simple Event
 - Complex Event



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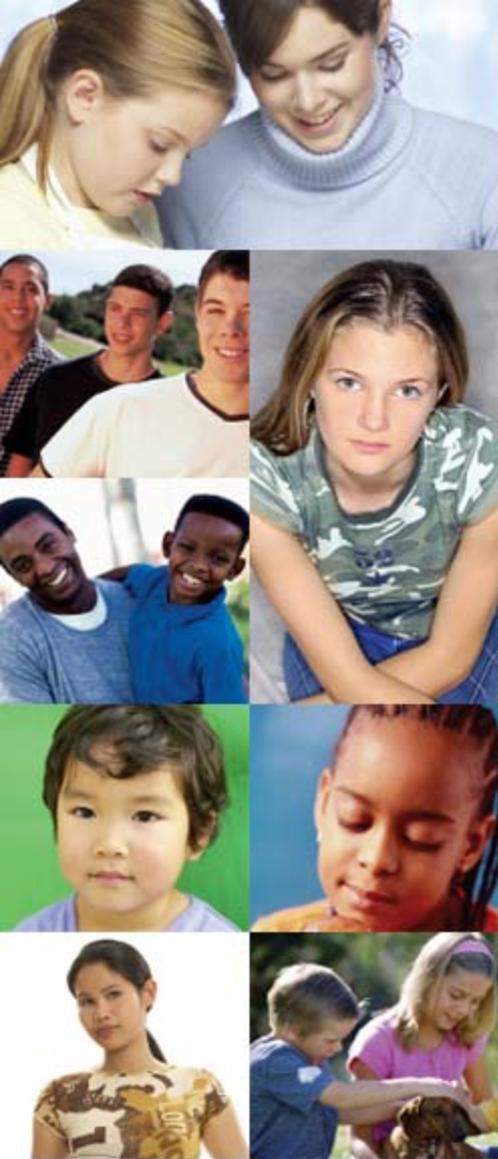
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Simple event:

- Combine the Town Hall Meeting with another community event, such as a PTA meeting or a major school event.
- Include adults and youth.
- Hold the event in a school gymnasium or auditorium.
- Limit the event to an hour or an hour and a half.
- Prepare a media advisory or news release to encourage media coverage.
- Involve mayors and other public officials, police and health representatives, faith-based organizations, and other representatives.

Simple Event

- **You can:**
 - Piggyback on another community event.
 - Include adults and youth.
 - Use school auditorium.
 - Limit to 60–90 minutes.
 - Prepare news release.
 - Involve community leaders.



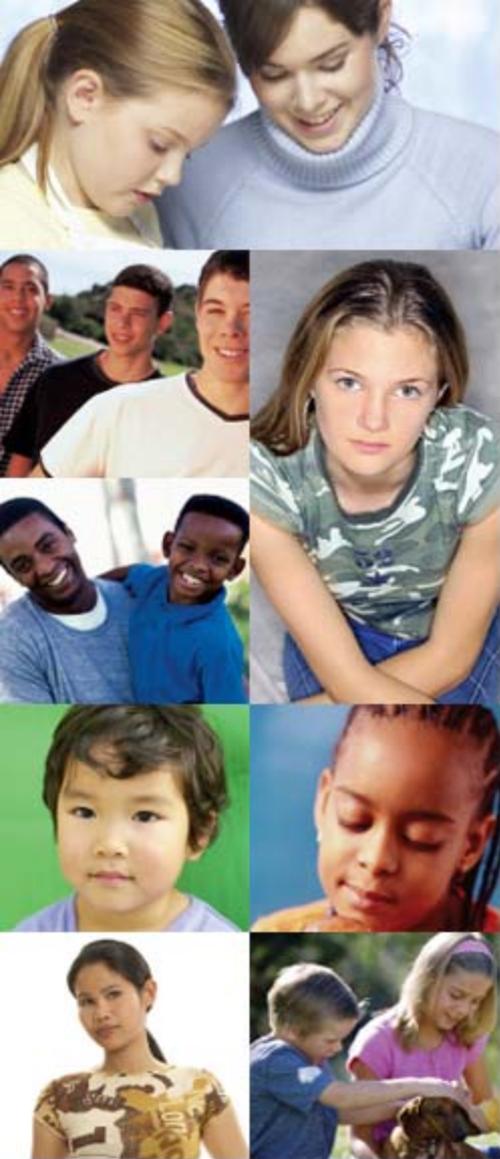
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Complex event:

- Make the meeting a separate event, possibly in a hotel ballroom, school auditorium, local library, or an alcohol and drug information resource center.
- Prepare flyers or mailings to reach out to the entire community.
- Use the media kit as a guide to help reach out to the media and encourage press coverage.
- Videotape the meeting for your records or for future use.
- Involve mayors and other public officials, police and health representatives, faith-based organizations, and other representatives.
- Offer snacks or light refreshments.
- Plan a follow-up meeting to discuss lessons learned and results.
- Organize a post-meeting reception.

Once you have decided what kind of Town Hall Meeting to host, it's time to begin....



Complex Event

- **You can:**
 - Create a stand-alone event.
 - Prepare flyers/mailers.
 - Use media kit to encourage coverage.
 - Videotape your event.
 - Involve community leaders.
 - Offer light refreshments.
 - Conduct follow-up.
 - Organize a post-meeting reception.



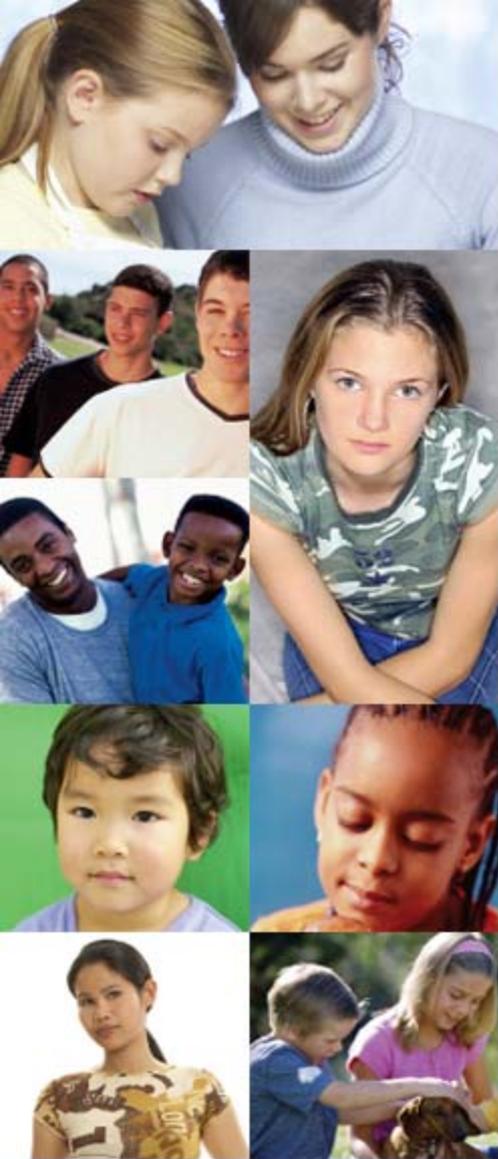
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- Identify and enlist people who are motivated to work—and who can make things happen—to be part of your planning committee.
- Form partnerships with local organizations or businesses to increase the visibility of the Town Hall Meeting.
- Meet with the planning committee:
 - Take notes and keep track of the key points during the meeting.
 - Keep a record of everything that is done.
 - Make sure every volunteer has a specific role and assigned tasks.
 - —Use the “Getting Started” checklist on page 5 of the Community Briefing Prevention Toolkit for assistance.

Getting Started: Next Steps

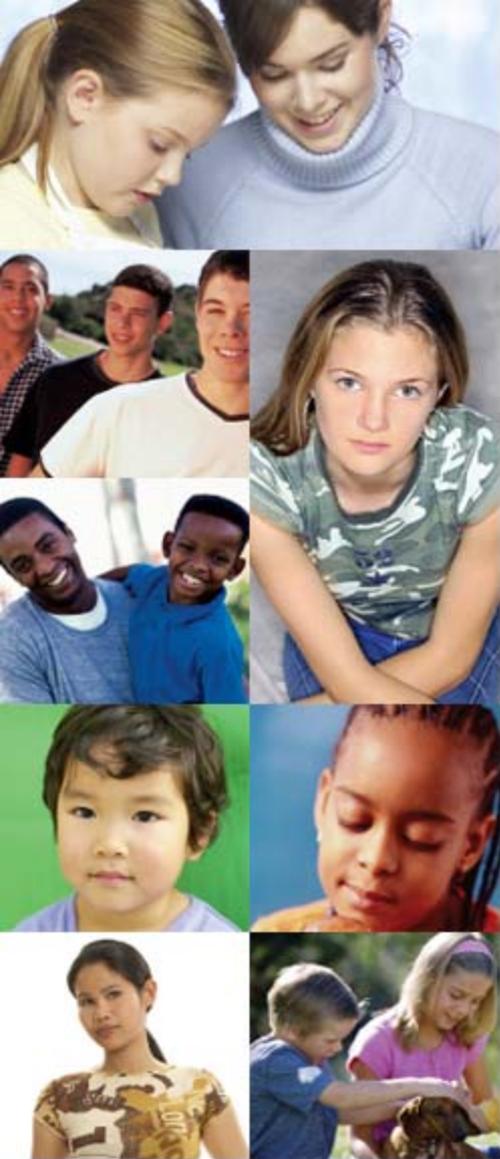
- Identify and enlist planning committee members.
- Form partnerships with local organizations or businesses.
- Convene the planning committee.



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- Committee members play an important role in ensuring that the Town Hall Meeting runs smoothly. They will work together to decide:
 - When and where the meeting will be held.
 - Who will present and what their focus will be.
 - What type of media coverage will be most effective for the purpose of the meeting.
- Committee members also will decide on:
 - Meeting preparation logistics.
 - Meeting participants.
 - Meeting supplements.
- Use the “Planning Committee” checklist in the Community Briefing Prevention Toolkit for assistance.



Key Planning Decisions

- **When and where?**
- **Who will present?**
- **What media coverage is desired?**
- **Who will participate?**
- **What materials will be provided?**

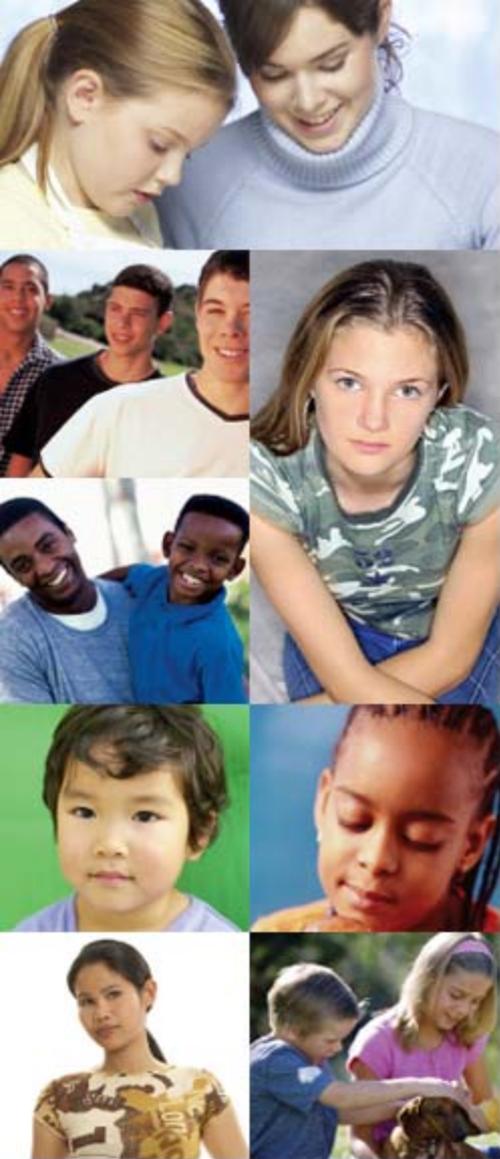


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Several items should be considered before the day of the meeting. Each will help keep the focus of the Town Hall Meeting on preventing underage drinking.

- Choose a moderator to explain the purpose of the meeting.
- Identify sponsors as well as VIPs and speakers or panelists.
- Have sign-up sheets for attendees and speakers.
- Have an agenda that includes the names of the VIPs and sponsors.
- Determine the amount of time for each speaker's presentation.
- Decide whether questions to or from the panelists will be allowed.



Advance Preparations

- **Select a moderator.**
- **Identify sponsors, VIPs, and speakers.**
- **Create sign-in sheets.**
- **Develop formal agenda.**
- **Determine if format will be interactive.**

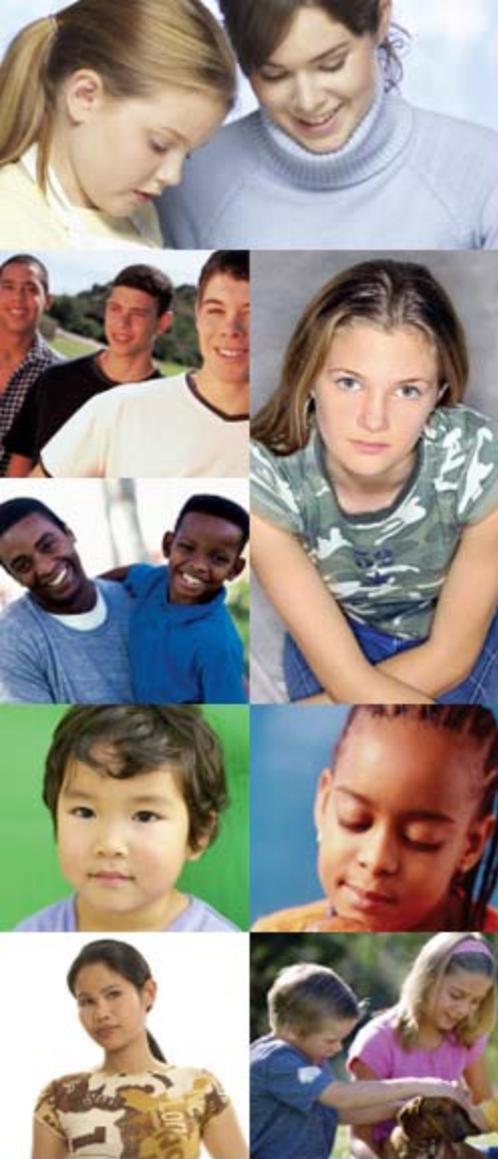


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- Obtain signed releases if a photo, audiotape, videotape, or report is used.
- Consider showing a video or film clip on underage alcohol use to generate discussion.
- Determine how to handle any necessary post-meeting cleanup.
- Send out an advisory to the media and make follow-up calls to ensure that the event will be on their calendars and that they will attend.
- Contact VIPs, speakers, and sponsors to make sure they know the schedule and the length of time they may speak.
- Use the Planning Committee checklists and the media samples in the Community Briefing Prevention Toolkit.

Advance Preparations (cont.)



- Obtain releases.
- Plan to show video clip.
- Plan for post-meeting cleanup.
- Send media advisory and make follow-up calls.
- Enroll VIPs and stakeholders.
- Use the toolkit.



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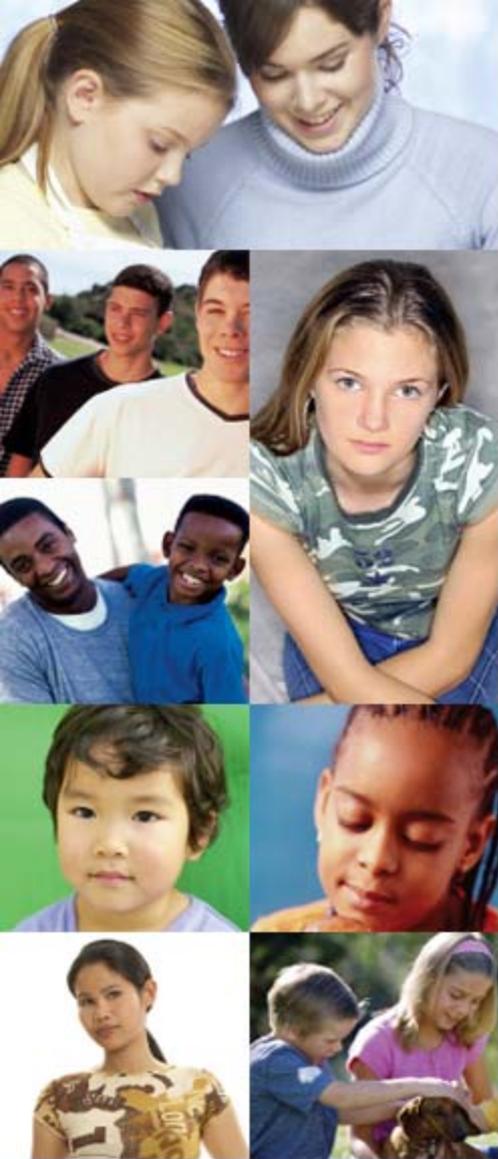
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The day of the Town Hall Meeting:

- Arrive early to make sure the room is set up properly.
- Greet participants and show them to their seats.
- Steer media to the reserved section.
- Start on time and keep the panel moving.

Day-of Activities

- Arrive early to set up the room.
- Greet participants.
- Assist and support media representatives.
- Start on time.
- Facilitate the meeting.

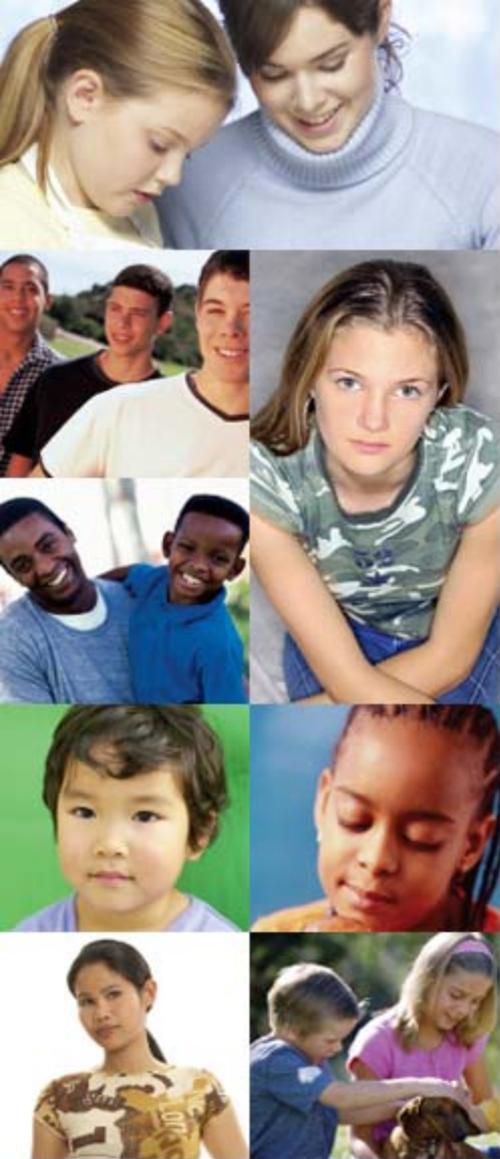


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After the Town Hall Meeting:

- Send out a news release describing the meeting and mentioning speakers and the number of attendees.
- Make sure to follow up with the media representatives who attended.
- Write thank-you letters to the VIPs.
- Develop and distribute a report on the meeting.
- Follow up with agencies and organizations and get their feedback.



Immediate Follow-Up

- **Send news release.**
- **Call to thank and support media that attended.**
- **Write thank-you notes to the VIPs.**
- **Distribute meeting report.**
- **Invite feedback from participating agencies.**



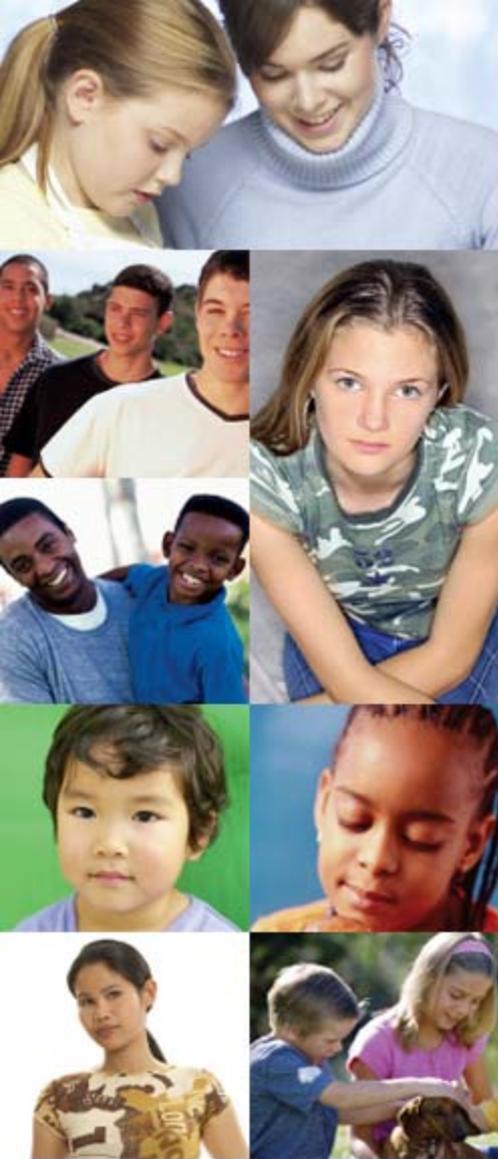
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To make sure the Town Hall Meeting is not a one-time event:

- Identify members of the community who are interested in working on a follow-up plan.
- Consider using the Strategic Prevention Framework as a planning process in deciding a long-term plan. Steps in this process include:
 - Assessment: Profile needs and response capacity.
 - Capacity Building: Mobilize and build needed capacity.
 - Planning: Develop a prevention plan.
 - Implementation: Implement programs, policies, and strategies based on what is known to be effective.
 - Evaluation: Evaluate program effectiveness and sustain what has worked well.

For more information on this process, visit: <http://prevention.samhsa.gov/about/spf.aspx>.



Long-Term Follow-Up

Ensure the Town Hall Meeting is not a one-time event:

- Identify community members to work on a follow-up plan.
- Use the *Strategic Prevention Framework*:



<http://prevention.samhsa.gov/about/spf.aspx>



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