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## ORGANIZING A TOWN HALL MEETING

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### Getting Started

Once you have decided on the kind of Town Hall Meeting you want to host, it's time to begin. First, identify and enlist a small group of people who are motivated to work—and who can make things happen—to be part of a planning committee. Forming partnerships with local organizations or businesses is an important way to increase the visibility of your Town Hall Meeting. The following are suggestions to help make your planning committee a success.

- Hold planning committee meetings at times and places convenient for everyone.
- Have an agenda for every meeting so you can focus on getting the work done.
- In each meeting, introduce the attendees and thank them for coming.
- Make sure all attendees sign in with telephone number, address, and email. Even if some people cannot attend the meetings, they can write letters or make telephone calls.
- Choose someone to take notes and keep track of the key points.
- Make sure every volunteer has a specific role and assigned tasks.
- Keep a record of everything you do.

The planning committee is responsible for making the Town Hall Meeting happen. Members will need to consider a number of factors in their planning process. Below is a checklist to help the committee plan the meeting:

#### Getting Started Checklist

- Define the purpose of the Town Hall Meeting.
- Choose one person to lead the meeting. Try to find someone knowledgeable about local problems with underage drinking. (See the [Facilitator's Guide](#) for tips to help you select a moderator.)
- Identify faith-based and community agencies and organizations to cosponsor the event. Define their responsibilities.
- Ask people in relevant agencies and organizations to serve on a planning committee.
- Identify people to help build momentum: legislators, parents, local leaders, and teachers.
- Put together the planning committee. Keep it to no more than 10 to 12 people. Make subcommittees for panelists and the moderator, if desired.
- Develop a program budget and a timeline for accomplishing all tasks.
- Begin brainstorming ways to spread the underage drinking prevention message, such as through public service announcements (PSAs). For [downloadable PSAs](#) and additional information about underage drinking, visit <http://www.stopalcoholabuse.gov>.