



PLANNING GUIDE

FOR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

communities
talk 
town hall meetings
to prevent underage drinking

COMMUNITIES TALK: TOWN HALL MEETINGS TO PREVENT UNDERAGE DRINKING

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Welcome to Communities Talk: Town Hall Meetings to Prevent Underage Drinking. This guide is intended to help reinforce your ongoing commitment to provide a safe and healthy learning environment so that your students can succeed in their higher education pursuits.

As the lead agency for the Interagency Coordinating Committee on the Prevention of Underage Drinking (ICCPUD), the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is sponsoring this initiative to help prevent underage and high-risk drinking among campus communities.

Since 2006, thousands of Town Hall Meetings held across the country have helped increase public awareness of underage and high-risk drinking, as well as mobilize communities to take action to prevent adverse consequences. Community-based organizations, local governments, local educational authorities, and colleges and universities that hold Town Hall Meetings are leaders in the conversation to promote the idea that underage and high-risk drinking is preventable. A concerted effort from many community sectors is the key to making a difference.

This planning guide is intended to help you quickly and easily join SAMHSA, ICCPUD, and other national partners in preventing underage and high-risk drinking by hosting a results-oriented event in your community.

For more information, visit the Town Hall Meetings website at www.stopalcoholabuse.gov/townhallmeetings, call 1-866-419-2514 (toll free), or e-mail info@stopalcoholabuse.net.



Join the conversation on
underage drinking prevention.
Follow #CommunitiesTalk for
the latest underage drinking
prevention resources and updates.

WHY SHOULD COLLEGE CAMPUSES AND UNIVERSITIES PARTICIPATE?

Roughly 65 percent of college students drink alcohol in any given month, and a large percentage of them binge drink (drinking at least five drinks on one occasion). Almost all college students experience the effects of college drinking, whether or not they consume alcohol. College student drinking can lead to a diminished learning environment, physical and sexual assaults, and other alcohol-related negative consequences.

Town Hall Meetings provide an opportunity to address underage and high-risk drinking. They also help promote adoption of evidence-based prevention strategies that can make a difference. Collaboration with stakeholders, both on and off campus, strengthens resolve in pursuit of effective public health and safety policies and practices.

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WHO PLANS OR ATTENDS A TOWN HALL MEETING?

Any segment of your community that is adversely affected by student alcohol consumption—either on or off campus—is an important audience to engage for Town Hall Meetings. These groups could include:

- Campus leadership
- Student affairs
- Campus ministries
- Student government
- Student judiciary
- Local government
- Local business
- Neighborhood associations
- Law enforcement



WHAT UNDERAGE DRINKING PREVENTION RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE FOR CAMPUS COMMUNITIES?

Town Hall Meetings to Prevent Underage Drinking: Catalyst for Change for Campus Communities

This brochure discusses how the 2014 Town Hall Meetings initiative successfully united campus and community stakeholders to engage in peer-to-peer efforts, educating attendees and implementing programs to prevent underage drinking on college campuses.

The Sound of Your Voice Video and Talking With Your College-Bound Young Adult About Alcohol Parent Guide

This video and guide for parents of college-bound young adults help parents discuss alcohol avoidance strategies before their children enter the first year of college.

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism's College Alcohol Intervention Matrix (*CollegeAIM*)

CollegeAIM helps schools address harmful and underage student drinking by providing a tool that identifies effective alcohol interventions.

The Guide to Community Preventive Services: Preventing Excessive Alcohol Consumption

The Guide to Community Preventive Services provides a list of interventions, task force findings, presentations, and promotional materials to prevent excessive alcohol consumption.

The National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments: Substance Abuse

The National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments website addresses the issue of substance use, reporting alcohol as the substance most used by students.

Safer University Program

The Safer University Program aims to reduce binge drinking at off-campus locations near colleges and universities by providing a toolkit that enhances enforcement laws to encourage responsible hosting and service of alcohol.

<https://www.stopalcoholabuse.gov/townhallmeetings/tips-resources/resources-for-college.aspx>



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KEY TIMES FOR COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS ABOUT UNDERAGE DRINKING

Although many choose to convene Town Hall Meeting events in the spring, you can schedule them at any time during the calendar year. Below are seasonal observances and other key times for a community conversation on avoidance of student drinking problems:

- **JANUARY**—National Drug & Alcohol Facts Week
- **FEBRUARY AND MARCH**—leading up to spring break for colleges and universities
- **APRIL**—Alcohol Awareness Month, prior to finals period for colleges and universities
- **MAY**—National Prevention Week, graduation season
- **JUNE AND JULY**—A popular time for alcohol use initiation
- **AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER**—Back to school, college freshman orientation
- **OCTOBER**—National Substance Abuse Prevention Month, Halloween, homecoming
- **NOVEMBER**—National Night of Conversation, Thanksgiving
- **DECEMBER**—National Impaired Driving Prevention Month, New Year's Eve

Additionally, a Town Hall Meeting can be held to respond to a campus tragedy or timely community policy need.





PLANNING CHECKLIST

1

register

- **First**, obtain your organization's tax ID # and W-9 form from your treasurer or bank/budget manager. If you don't have a W-9 form, we'll provide you with one, along with instructions on how to complete it.
- **Next**, look for your unique invitation via e-mail or request one at info@stopalcoholabuse.net and click on the invitation link. Complete your personalized log-in information and fill out the registration form completely. Save your log-in information and note your password!
- **Finally**, you should receive your \$500 stipend within 14 days of completing registration. Cash your check immediately, and start planning your great event!

3 Steps to Completing Your Town Hall Meeting Online Profile

2

complete
your event
profile

- Post your Town Hall Meeting's date, location, target audience, and other details so they can be featured on the Town Hall Meetings website.

3

submit your
event recap

- Log back in to your event profile.
- Answer the brief event recap questions.
- Upload materials including media coverage, flyers, and pictures.

Please respond to the separate e-mail survey as soon as possible.

www.stopalcoholabuse.gov/townhallmeetings

WINTER/SPRING (January–May)

- Look for an e-mail invitation to participate beginning in January, or request one from info@stopalcoholabuse.net.
- During a SAMHSA-supported stipend year, complete your online registration to apply to receive a \$500 planning stipend. Have your organization's Form W-9 ready before you begin registering (see more information below).
- Go to www.stopalcoholabuse.gov/townhallmeetings and watch the Town Hall Meeting webcast from Prevention Day in February 2016.
- Read the [frequently asked questions and answers](#) on the Town Hall Meeting website and search for [tips and resources](#) for ideas to plan your event.
- Town Hall Meetings can be held at any time of the year. Many organizers hold their events in the spring, when national alcohol and prevention observances increase public interest in underage drinking.

SUMMER (June, July, and August)

- Organizers who wish to receive a planning stipend must **register no later than June 30**. Keep in mind that stipends are available on a first-come, first-served basis. A limited number of SAMHSA-sponsored stipends are available; as such, their availability may cease prior to June 30.

FALL (September, October, and November)

- Many colleges and universities and their community partners hold their events in August, September, or October, when many families visit campuses and students start their freshman year.

DECEMBER

- All Town Hall Meeting organizers who received a stipend will have completed their online registrations, cashed their checks, held their events, and shared their results via the Town Hall Meetings online profile portal. Even if you did not elect to receive a stipend, please complete an online profile so we can share your success.

10 STEPS FOR TOWN HALL MEETING PLANNING

- 1. Review SAMHSA's Strategic Prevention Framework on www.samhsa.gov and the above resources, and assess your campus community's need.** Consider how you can apply this framework to your event. Gather and assess data to ensure that your Town Hall Meeting is designed for your campus community.
- 2. Organize a planning committee.** Engage key stakeholders in planning your event. Consider involving partners from different campus sectors, including student government, student affairs, residential life, peer educators, campus ministries, and public safety. Also consider engaging the community, including elected officials, police, state alcohol control, health care leaders, faith-based organizations, neighborhood associations, and businesses, including alcohol retailers.
- 3. Define your goals and objectives.** Based on your community assessment, determine what you want to accomplish with your meeting. Are you creating awareness about an issue? Are you inviting feedback on policies related to problematic student drinking? Are you launching a new prevention tool or program?
- 4. Obtain your organization's Form W-9 and Federal Tax ID Number.** Before you start your online registration, get your organization's Federal Tax ID Number (also called an Employer Identification Number) and Form W-9 from your fiscal agent. Having these items before you begin will allow you to start and finish the process uninterrupted.
- 5. Register online.** If you wish to receive a stipend, you must complete your online registration and provide a Form W-9 using the URL provided in your unique e-mail invitation. Even if you are not applying for a stipend, please register so we can include your meeting in the national registry to recognize your campus commitment and record your success.



10 STEPS FOR TOWN HALL MEETING PLANNING (continued)

- 6. Determine your event type, day, time, and location.** Effective events can take place anywhere a community gathers, such as campus auditoriums or off-campus community centers (where free parking may be more available). Some host events online in a webinar format or partner with local television stations. Decide which Town Hall Meeting setting and format will best help meet your objectives. Read past **success stories** for ideas on the Town Hall Meetings website: www.stopalcoholabuse.gov/townhallmeetings.
- 7. Promote your event.** Find **tips and resources** for promoting your event on the Town Hall Meetings website, including a sample flyer, presentation template, proclamation, news release, certificate of appreciation, social media content, and strategies and suggestions for working with the news media. All are downloadable and customizable.
- 8. Conduct and evaluate your event.** How well did you deliver your Town Hall Meeting, and how successful was it in achieving your desired outcomes? Who participated? Read more about evaluation in SAMHSA's Strategic Planning Framework mentioned previously and on the Town Hall Meetings website.
- 9. Tell us about your event.** We want to know what worked so we can share it with others! All organizers will receive an e-mail survey following their event. Some participating organizations also may be asked to collect and submit a participants' survey. Please complete and submit these to us as soon as possible, but no later than 30 days after your event. We also ask that you answer brief questions in your online organizer's profile to share the success of your event. Upload flyers, pictures, news clips, and more to share your success in the online portal. You also can share event photos and videos on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram using the hashtag CommunitiesTalk.
- 10. Keep the momentum going!** SAMHSA encourages community-based organizations and colleges and universities to hold Town Hall Meetings every year. Seeking alternate support for events in non-stipend years can be another opportunity to involve local businesses and other groups in your underage drinking prevention efforts. Keep the momentum going by developing and implementing a solutions-focused plan for underage drinking prevention in your community. Use #CommunitiesTalk to share what you are doing year-round on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT PLANNING STIPENDS

Q. How does my campus obtain a planning stipend?

A. SAMHSA issues e-mail invitations to community-based organizations and colleges and universities recommended by state and territory National Prevention Network representatives and other national partner organizations. Qualified participating community-based organizations may request a \$500 planning stipend to help offset the costs of planning an event. Only one planning stipend is issued per community-based organization or collaborative.

If your organization wishes to participate and has not received an invitation, contact us at info@stopalcoholabuse.net.

A limited number of stipends are available. Stipends are distributed on a first-come, first-served basis, so register early. June 30 is the final date when stipend requests can be requested, although available funds may be exhausted before that time.

Q. What can my stipend be used for?

A. The planning stipend is meant to help offset the costs of planning and holding an event. Stipends can cover costs such as facilities rentals, printing, and promotion.

Stipends cannot be used to pay for food and beverages, entertainment, door prizes, discounts, incentive giveaways, promotional products (e.g., T-shirts, baseball caps, coffee mugs), or anything not specifically related to planning and conducting a Town Hall Meeting.

SAMHSA encourages Town Hall Meeting hosts to reach out to other community groups, agencies, and businesses to supplement the stipend by donating services, supplies, or separate funding. Contact info@stopalcoholabuse.net with questions about how to use your planning stipend or check out the tips, resources, and success stories on the Town Hall Meetings website at www.stopalcoholabuse.gov/townhallmeetings.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR EVENT

Begin with the end in mind. Below are several questions that you will be asked when you complete the “Share Success” section of your online profile after your event. As you complete this section, don’t forget to upload any flyers, pictures, and media coverage.

CHALLENGE

What challenge(s) was your community facing? Were there any data to support this challenge?

SOLUTION

How did your event address a solution to this challenge? What goals and objectives did you set? What environmental prevention strategies did you consider? Whom did you involve in your event?

RESULT

What were the outcomes of your event? How did your event make a difference in your community? What are your future plans for the prevention of underage drinking?



TOWN HALL MEETINGS IN ACTION

Below are brief success stories from previous rounds of Town Hall Meetings. Read the latest success stories on the Town Hall Meetings website and be inspired!



West Virginia University (WVU) and the City of Morgantown co-hosted a Town Hall Meeting as a solution-based dialogue forum on underage and high-risk drinking. More than 100 students, university and community members, and local government officials attended the event. Seven experts offered their professional perspectives on the consequences of underage and excessive drinking and potential solutions for the community to consider. WVU posted the Town Hall Meeting on YouTube and also provided the hashtag WVUTownHallMeeting as a way for community members to continue the dialogue.

[READ THE FULL STORY.](#) Watch the meeting on [YouTube](#).



More than 60 representatives from 29 collegiate institutions, eight city agencies, and community prevention partners took part in a four-hour New York City Town Hall Meeting, called “Our City Is Our Campus: Alcohol in the Collegiate Environment.” The event featured a keynote speaker who shared statistics about underage and excessive drinking on campuses, a panel that addressed barriers to implementing specific best practices, a breakout session on intervention techniques, and a large group discussion to share information and discuss next steps. The large-scale event allowed attendees to network with colleagues who represent different disciplines and expertise.

[READ THE FULL STORY.](#)



Alcorn State University in Lorman, MS, used its Upward Bound Program’s orientation session to host a Town Hall Meeting with local community members, administrators, and students. The Town Hall Meeting attracted an audience of more than 60 students, as well as parents and community members of the four counties surrounding the university. The meeting featured panelists from law enforcement, the judicial sector, local businesses, education, parent organizations, and state mental health agencies. Participants filled out an underage drinking survey, which showed that many respondents believe more education and stiffer penalties would help decrease underage drinking.

[READ THE FULL STORY.](#)



WESTERN
 NEW MEXICO UNIVERSITY

The Youth Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition (YSAPC) held a youth-led Town Hall Meeting on the campus of Western New Mexico University to discuss evidence-based methods of reducing and preventing alcohol and other drug use among teens and young adults. A panel of community members discussed evidence-based strategies to lower rates of youth substance use in order to create positive changes in the lives of students. The meeting attracted 85 community members, including 15 young people. Since this meeting, YSAPC has held three follow-up Town Hall Meetings with youth-led panels to discuss policy enforcement.

[READ THE FULL STORY.](#)



The University of California–Santa Barbara (UCSB) held a Town Hall Meeting in the community, rather than on campus. The event organizers invited a broad, but carefully selected, list of stakeholders. This strategic decision encouraged a sense of ownership and encouraged action-oriented solutions. The two-hour event attracted 75 participants, 30 of whom were students. The meeting featured 10 themed table discussions and invited participants to share their responses with their smartphones using Poll Everywhere. The event organizers held a follow-up meeting one month after the initial Town Hall Meeting, catering to event participants’ feedback. The follow-up meeting attracted 65 attendees, about half of whom were students.

[READ THE FULL STORY.](#)



The Campus Community Coalition in Bellingham, WA, partnered with the Whatcom County Health Department, Whatcom Prevention Coalition, and Western Washington University’s Prevention and Wellness Services to host a Town Hall Meeting to address environmental factors that affect underage alcohol use in Whatcom County. To promote the event, the Campus Community Coalition sent high volumes of event flyers to nearly every department on campus, posted updates on social media, and sent press releases to campus and local newspapers. After experts and community members gave presentations at the Town Hall Meeting, attendees participated in silent reflections and small group discussions.

[READ THE FULL STORY.](#)