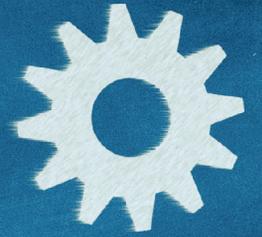


communities  
**talk**   
town hall meetings  
to prevent underage drinking



# QUICK START

## PLANNING GUIDE



#CommunitiesTalk



# COMMUNITIES TALK: TOWN HALL MEETINGS TO PREVENT UNDERAGE DRINKING

## QUICK START PLANNING GUIDE

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 the next round of Town Hall Meetings to prevent underage and high-risk drinking.

Since 2006, thousands of Town Hall Meetings held across the country have helped increase public awareness of and action around the prevention of underage drinking. Community-based organizations and colleges and universities that hold Town Hall Meetings are essential in leading the conversation and promoting the idea that underage drinking is preventable. A concerted effort made by many community sectors is the key to making a difference.

This Quick Start 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 [www.stopalcoholabuse.gov/townhallmeetings](http://www.stopalcoholabuse.gov/townhallmeetings), call 1-866-419-2514 (toll-free), or e-mail [info@stopalcoholabuse.net](mailto:info@stopalcoholabuse.net).



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

# PLANNING CALENDAR

Although many Town Hall Meeting events are held in the spring, they can be held at any time during the year. Below are seasonal observances and other key times for a community conversation on underage drinking prevention:

- **JANUARY**—National Drug & Alcohol Facts Week
- **FEBRUARY AND MARCH**—Spring break for colleges and universities
- **APRIL**—Alcohol Awareness Month, high school prom season, 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, freshmen orientation at colleges and universities
- **OCTOBER**—National Substance Abuse Prevention Month, Child Health Day, Halloween, homecoming
- **NOVEMBER**—National Night of Conversation, Thanksgiving
- **DECEMBER**—National Impaired Driving Prevention Month

**Additionally, a Town Hall Meeting can be held to respond to a timely community policy need or tragedy around underage drinking.**





# PLANNING CHECKLIST

## 3 Steps to Completing Your Town Hall Meeting Online Profile

- 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](mailto: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!
- 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](http://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](mailto: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 and Federal Tax Identification (ID) Number ready before you begin registering (see more information below).
- ✓ Go to [www.stopalcoholabuse.gov/townhallmeetings](http://www.stopalcoholabuse.gov/townhallmeetings) and watch the Town Hall Meeting webcast from Prevention Day in February.
- ✓ Read the [frequently asked questions and answers](#) and search for [tips and resources](#) for ideas to plan your event.
- ✓ Town Hall Meeting events can be held at any time of the year. Most 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.

## 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 and attend homecoming.

## 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 and assess your community's need.** Consider how you can apply this framework to your Town Hall Meeting. Gather and assess data to ensure that your Town Hall Meeting is designed for your community.
- 2. Organize a planning committee.** Engage key community stakeholders in planning your event. Consider involving partners from different aspects of the community, including law enforcement, elected officials, youth, faith-based organizations, businesses, schools, parent groups, health care professionals, and local colleges and universities.
- 3. Define your goals and objectives.** Determine what you want to accomplish with your meeting based on your community assessment. Are you creating awareness about an issue? Are you inviting feedback on public policies related to underage drinking? Are you launching a new prevention tool or program?
- 4. Obtain your organization's Form W-9 and 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 treasurer, fiscal agent, or bank/budget manager. If you do not have a Form W-9, they are [available online](#). Having these items before you start registering 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 by using the URL provided in your unique e-mail invitation. Even if you are not applying for a stipend, please register so we can post your meeting on the website and recognize your success.



# 10 STEPS FOR TOWN HALL MEETING PLANNING (continued)

- 6. Determine your event type, day, time, and location.** To be effective, Town Hall Meeting venues can be anywhere a community gathers—they do not need to be limited to auditoriums or community centers. Some organizations hold 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.
- 7. Promote your event.** There are many [tips and resources](#) for promoting your event on the Town Hall Meetings website. Resources include a flyer, presentation template, proclamation, news release, certificate of appreciation, social media content, and tips and tools 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 and on the [Town Hall Meetings website](#).
- 9. Tell us about your event.** We want to know what worked and share it with others! All organizers will receive an e-mail survey following their event. Some participating organizations may also 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 you to 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 can also share event photos and videos on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram using #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 solution-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 organization 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 (substance abuse prevention) 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, check with your state or territory's National Prevention Network member, or contact us at [info@stopalcoholabuse.net](mailto: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 processed, 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 facility rentals, printing, and promotion. If guest speakers are unable to donate their services, the stipend may be used to cover their honoraria.



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT PLANNING STIPENDS (continued)

## Q. What can my stipend NOT be used for?

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

SAMHSA encourages organizations to reach out to other community groups, agencies, and businesses in the community to supplement the stipend by donating services, supplies, or separate funding. Contact [info@stopalcoholabuse.net](mailto:info@stopalcoholabuse.net) with questions about how to use the planning stipend. Or check out the [tips and resources](#) and [success stories](#) sections of the Town Hall Meetings website.

## Q. How should I report my stipend?

**A.** Stipends are not considered grants and therefore are not reported in the same way. Each organization submits a W-9 form through the registration process, and this income is reported to the federal government through the registration process. SAMHSA does ask all participating organizations to log in to their online registration after their Town Hall Meeting and answer brief questions about their event.



# 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 as soon as possible after your event. Also, don’t forget to upload any flyers, pictures, and media coverage and use #CommunitiesTalk on social media.

## CHALLENGE

What challenge was your community facing? Was 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? Who did you involve in your event?

## RESULT

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



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

# TOWN HALL MEETINGS IN ACTION

Below are brief success stories from previous rounds of Town Hall Meetings. Read the latest [success stories](#) and be inspired!



The Coffee County Anti-Drug Coalition in Manchester, Tennessee, hosted parents, law enforcement, and public officials to help gain their support of Tennessee’s social host liability law, and to encourage law enforcement agencies and the courts to effectively enforce the law. Engaging key public officials, including three mayors, two police chiefs, one sheriff, and one district attorney, signaled the community’s intention to put its combined influence behind Tennessee’s social host law.

**FLORIDA'S kids&alcohol** A collaboration among the Florida-based LiveFree! Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition of Pinellas County (LiveFree!), the Coalition for a Drug-Free Southwest Florida, and Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) television stations WEDU-Tampa Bay and WGCU in Fort Myers provides an annual opportunity to engage a potential audience estimated at 250,000 in a 16-county area. Since 2005, WEDU has worked with LiveFree! and other groups to produce Florida Kids and Alcohol, a series of live, local Town Hall Meetings in April about underage drinking issues in Florida. WEDU has broadcast events from its Tampa Bay studio and from different high schools in Pinellas County. These televised events have built public support for environmental prevention and law enforcement efforts to stop underage drinking.



“Todo tiene su comienzo” (“Everything has a beginning”) was selected as the theme for a series of Town Hall Meetings aimed at addressing underage drinking problems among Georgia’s growing Latino population. Held in Spanish, the events were organized by the Clinic for Education, Treatment and Prevention of Addiction, Inc., (CETPA) and featured State Representative Pedro Marin. Since 2003, CETPA has been holding Town Hall Meetings that focus on using a culturally sensitive approach to educating Latino parents about the laws, risks, and consequences of underage drinking. CETPA now includes five regions in Georgia, creating for the first time a statewide effort to combat alcohol use among Latino teens.



Anadarko Indian Education (AIE) in Anadarko, Oklahoma, held a Town Hall Meeting at the landmark 275-seat Redskin Theater in downtown Anadarko to rekindle established local partnerships and cultivate several new ones. With the help of 10 co-sponsors, more than 260 young people and adults attended a popular movie showing for youth combined with an educational presentation on underage drinking prevention for parents. Following the meeting, AIE began holding monthly and quarterly events to improve tribal relationships and collaboration with community partners.

**West Virginia University** 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 perspective on the consequences of underage and excessive drinking and potential solutions for the community to consider. WVU posted the Town Hall Meeting online and also provided the hashtag #WVUTownHallMeeting as a way for community members to continue the dialogue.



The state of Massachusetts has gotten behind Town Hall Meetings in a big way. In the 1990s, Massachusetts reported some of the highest rates of underage drinking and youngest ages of first alcohol use in the nation. But thanks to prevention efforts led by the state’s Bureau of Substance Abuse Services and supported by its Interagency Council on Substance Abuse and Prevention, Massachusetts is reporting significant success: More of the state’s youth are waiting to take their first drink. State leaders credit Town Hall Meetings with contributing to declining youth access to alcohol and growing public support for environmental prevention measures.