



Guide To Planning A Town Hall Meeting, Building Activism in Your Local and Your Community

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Updated 2019

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WHAT CAN I GET OUT OF THE TOWN HALL MEETING?

- It will help you get more community members to sign your petition and solicit more petition collectors
- Secure legislative representatives, Mayor, Governor, and others to sign and pass a resolution and/or letter of support to: Saving the Postal Plant or Post Office, Stop Privatization of our Public Postal Service, and help in gaining additional political support
- It will educate and mobilize more community members against the privatization plot against the People's Postal Service
- It promotes your local community coalition to strategize for protection and expanded service not less service
- It will help start to build a spirit for the community to stand together, provide pledge cards and inspire them with important values that compel them to join and become activists
- You can start plans on your next activity, and build long-term relationships with community allies
- You can inspire other locals around the country by sending photos and a report to APWU, NALC, NPMHU, NRLCA so that the Communications Department can share your actions on the web page, the union magazines and social media.
- Add the contacts from your town hall to your database of those that signed in and who participated. Send them (by mail) a thank you note and ask if they can volunteer to help build the community movement. This is a great way to get volunteers.

Why should you plan a Town Hall Meeting?

You want to have a place to bring members of the community together to discuss the issues and actions that need to be taken to protect the community's treasure, the United States Postal Service. This is a great way to get your message out not only to the community but to legislative members and the media as well. A Town Hall meeting can jump start your activities to stop consolidations, privatization, stop cuts in service, and stop your facility from closing. This meeting will help you to identify people and organizations who want to participate in the campaign.

How to have a Successful Town Hall Meeting

You want to make sure you invite community organizations and partners that will make a difference in your campaign. You want to have key political figures, businesses, mailers, customers that can increase the chance of success as you build a power base. You want to provide an action activity at the meeting while you have an interested audience. Examples would be petitions, resolutions, initiatives, educational leaflets, and an attendance sign-up sheet to collect contact information.

This Booklet helps you develop a written plan, how to organize, and delegate tasks and have the kind of Town Hall that will be successful.

Preparing for Your Town Hall Meeting

Step 1. Form a Planning Committee



Pocatello, Idaho Community "Save the Plant" Coalition 2017

Recruit early, find support with some union members but also representatives that work for the community. Look at partners, businesses, and mailers that you want at your Town Hall. Especially those organizations and businesses who depend on the services the Postal Service provides.

Make sure those organizations represented on the committee are publicly recognized in your promotional materials and during the program. Everyone will play a part in planning, managing and promoting the event.

Step 2. Select a Location and Date



Consider a location that is well known and has easy access with plenty of parking, wheelchair accessible, public transportation nearby, room with chairs, tables, and ability to have audio-visual equipment.

Remember that it can be at a community center, auditorium, city hall, public library, place of worship, community college, office of a public official, local school. Ask you legislative leaders to help attain a site for free or see if they will sponsor the town hall.

Schedule the event at a time most convenient for the greatest amount of people. Consider the business hours and schedules of your audience. A weekday early evening is often the best time to get turnout and media. Remember not to schedule the event on a date that there is other sports and/or community events that you would end up competing with for media and air time.

Step 3. Determining your Format and Agenda

One of the most common formats is an educational meeting on the community campaign issue along with speakers and/or a panel discussion with a moderator, community discussion, question and answer period and then an action exercise. The town hall should not last longer than an hour to an hour in a half.

You should have an agenda with time allotted for each segment for the moderator. (See Sample Town Hall Agenda on page 17). Type and provide a simple agenda for the audience.



Step 4. Identify and Invite Speakers and/or Panelists

Select trusted well respected speakers that have a great connection with the community and are important to inspire your audience. Your speakers or panelists could be diverse including an economist, local elected officials, community and faith-based leaders, union leaders etc. Remember ethnic diversity with regard to your speakers examples would be seniors, disabled, low income advocates, city council, pastor, mayor, state legislators, and youth organizers. Find a valued celebrity to bring on a great crowd.

Prepare in advance who will be assigned and ready to give on the spot interview with the press. They should be prepared with press packets to give to media groups. This person should be someone who can stay on target with the campaign issues, a “media spokespeople”.

Step 5. Select a Moderator or Facilitator

This person will be responsible for keeping the program on track. The moderator should be able to keep the conversations on topic and be a good timekeeper so that there is time to complete the agenda. This person should be able to keep the audience encouraged and the meeting exciting.



Step 6. How to Promote Your Event

Enlist support from your members, and other organizations you work with, even if they are not a part of your committee. You want to increase publicity. Check in regularly to get an idea of how many people your volunteers have recruited to attend the event.

Keep It Open
TUCSON USPS PLANT
 Senator Schumer
 Congressman Maloney
 Mayor Romero
 Community Coalition
TOWN HALL
MEETING
6:30PM -7:30PM
Tuesday Oct. 10, 2014
 Community Center
 10 Union Ave
STAND UP for your Public
 Postal Service **NOW!**
 Family, friends , neighbors, welcomed!

A Call  Action
Town Hall Meeting
 Tuesday, April 6, 2010
 6:30 p.m.
 Leon County Health Department
 872 W. Orange Avenue
 Tallahassee, Florida 32304
Sponsored by the Health Equity Alliance of Tallahassee (HEAT) and the Leon County Public Health Professionals of the Institute of Public Health at the College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences of FAMU.
  
 This event is designed to involve the community in a discussion with community representatives about issues, recommendations, and actions that can impact the health of America.
An organized discussion of issues facing a community in a public setting.
 In Celebration of
National Public Health Week
 April 5-11, 2010

- Check with the city clerk as to what is scheduled so as not to compete with other events and add your townhall event to the clerk’s schedule. Advertise with newspapers, church letters, community bulletin boards, posting flyers, posters or banners that are visible, popular places such as schools, community centers, coffee shops, grocery stores, public libraries, hospitals, businesses. Keep flooding your town with posters and flyers.
- Create a list of events where people can make announcements about your Town Hall, before the event like a local business or organization meeting. Don’t forget to utilize the AFL-CIO, central labor council and federation meetings, and have them e-mail all the union affiliates. You can create a Facebook page for your event where you can post updates on the event. Facebook can also help you to get people to RSVP if they are attending. Send e-mails and social media reminders. Utilize radio and community cable networks to share information about your public service event. Utilize every door direct mailing.

Step 7. Invitations to the event

The public leaders that are important to helping your campaign should be given a special invitation. Invite them all: members of congress, city council, mayors, school board, judges, law enforcement, labor relations office, public services leadership, the Governor, ACLU, Civil lawyers, airport authority, mailers, businesses etc. Give them a special invitation and an RSVP. Contact them to confirm and remind them 1-2 weeks before the event and the day before the event.

Step 8. Assign Volunteers for the Town Hall



Have a written list identifying those who have volunteered to help out the day of the event as well as preparations made prior to the event. Assign someone to handle media, to greet and seat members of the audience, to distribute materials, to manage equipment, set-up and break-down to include the sound system, banners, signs, photographer or videographer, set-up of stage props, table near entrance to have people sign petitions, resolutions, contact info or sign-in sheets, fact sheets etc. Keep a checklist for media, and assigned volunteers. Keep in touch before the event to make sure they will attend (see attached example on page 22, 23)



- Follow a time line sending invitations/flyers to the speakers and/or your panel at least 3 weeks before the event, keep an updated calendar
- media advisory 5 days before event, phone calls to participants and media 36 hours before event,
- On the morning of, re-send media advisory and by 7:30 am start calling all TV, radio, newspaper, and associated press to list event on the day book and ask if they will be able to cover the town hall
- Do a public radio interview, submit story pitch and press release, remind all media contacts and assign people to help make these important contacts.



The Day of Your Town Hall

Have materials (press kit) ready to hand out to reporters. Have sign-in sheets (see page 24). Make sure speakers and panelists and local officials have packets. Include press release, fact sheet, pledge cards (See page 25) and your campaign information.

Refreshments/Coffee, Water & Food Set up a table for light refreshments and water. Be sure they are set for individuals to grab and go, without making too much noise or effort. Add upbeat music to a colorful visual slideshow on your topic, as people arrive.

Preparing Panelists, moderator, and timekeeper Meet with individuals prior to the event and include the panelists, moderator and timekeeper. Go over the agenda, how questions will be handled, how audio-visual and computer equipment will be used. List the time scheduled including question and answers and respond to any questions they may have. Timekeeper should have 5 minute, 1 minute and stop cards made, that will be visual cues for the panelists and moderator.

Tip: Have bottles of water available for the panelists

Tip: Have a Coordinator who will take care of problems as they arise like volunteer needs, fixing sound system, grabbing more chairs, etc.

Prepare Media Spokespersons

Meet with your designated spokespersons. Remind them that they will greet the reporters, ask for their business card, getting them information (press kits) press release (See pages 20 & 21) and a fact sheet. Make sure spokespersons know the subject matter and if they can't answer a question point to the person who would know. Make sure the reporter has the correct information including names and titles of those involved in the campaign and the panelists (See Media Support Form page 22)

Tip: Make sure that those reporters who don't show up get sent the press release, media kit and pictures of the event immediately after.

Use of Social Media and Live Tweeting

Assign someone in charge of handling social media for the event. Assign someone to do live tweet from the Town Hall Meeting and hashtag the campaign, as well as tagging members of congress or relevant organizations. Be sure to take pictures and share with our Communications Director: eharris@apwu.org, Facebook, Instagram and twitter. During the meeting encourage everyone with a smartphone to share news of the event through social media and through coalition members.

Clean-up and Break Down

Be mindful to leave the meeting location as you found it and assign volunteers, to make sure to take down posters and banners and not to lose them in the cleaning process.

The Critical Tool of Debriefing after the Town Hall

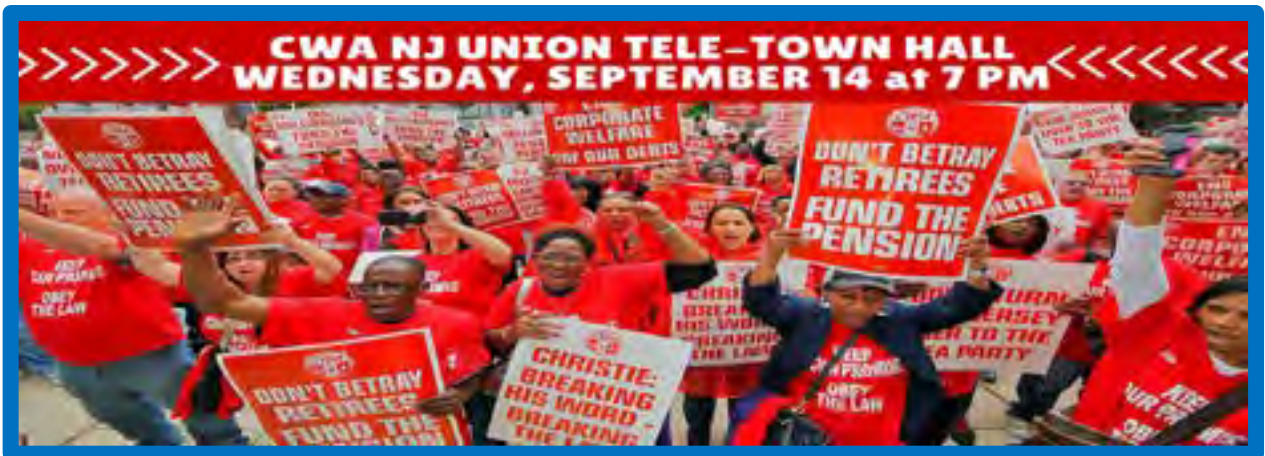
Getting feedback from volunteers, panelists and even key attendees (assign someone to take notes)

Ask Debrief Questions after the Town Hall Meeting (15-20 minutes):

- What are your initial thoughts of tonight's event?
- What worked and what was most effective?
- What would you do differently next time?
- Did enough media show up and media questions?
- How many sign-in community members and pledge cards to volunteer in our campaign did we receive? Did we reach enough community organizations and businesses?
- How well did our panelists reach our attendees?
- What did we learn from the question/comments period?
- Did we reach enough organizations that we can start to build our community coalition?
- What should be our next campaign strategies?

Thank everyone for their activism and the energy they put into the Town Hall. Their commitment made the event successful and so glad to have them as part of our team.

TELE-TOWN HALL EVENTS



Interact live with hundreds and thousands of union members, community members, and coalition members conducted over the phone and the web.

- A Tele-Town Hall rapidly dials out to a list of phone numbers you have that was provided by your members, union partners, and community organizations, and mailing businesses, as well as community leaders.
- The targeted audience will receive your personalized, pre-recorded message inviting them to remain on the line if they wish to be transferred automatically to your live Tele-Town Hall event.
- When they join, participants have the opportunity to ask you the “Star Speaker” questions live, as well as respond to survey questions using their phone keypads.
- You can also use a web interface that you control on which participants are able to ask their questions live on the conference call as well as when you want to pose a survey question, or have them type a question into a chat box.
- Participants that are unable to ask their questions live, have an option to leave a personal message with a Call Screener, or tele-Town Hall voicemail for the “Star Speaker or Speakers”.
- Following the Tele-Town Hall event, you can receive a detailed report (if you ask for one) complete with participants statistics as well as a digital recording of your event that may be posted on your website.

Tele-Town Hall Meetings



There are many companies today that can help you set up a Tele-Town Hall. ATT, as well as companies that just do Tele-Conferencing like Tele-Town Hall, LLC, Nation Builder, Teletownhall.com, etc.

These sessions are utilized by elected officials, political candidates, non-profit organizations, unions, schools, universities, businesses, and think tanks.

Unions of course utilize them to mobilize support for their causes, getting members active in elections and getting involved locally including helping union members to contact their representatives with ease.

Before signing up to a specific company ask for recommendations from other locals, AFL-CIO state and central labor councils and their affiliates. Speak with congressional representatives who have utilized Tele-Town Halls in your area for their opinion on companies utilized.

- **Peer to Peer Texting**

Rapidly personalize text to large audiences anywhere in the world. Links and phone numbers in your text for effective calls to action. Break down texts by area code, reply to responses create custom tags to categorize responses.

- **Voice Broadcasts (Robo Calls)**

Rapidly delivers your messages to large audiences, 40 million plus calls a day

- **Patch/Transfer Calls**

Transfer people directly to a legislator or advocate on behalf of a cause, or to a call center to learn more about the issue or candidate

- **IVR Automated Surveys**

This service targets your audience through a series of pre-recorded polling questions. It records participants speech and tones input via their keypads and intelligently uses your pre-defined logic to customize surveys efficiently based on participant responses. It can be used for elections, delivered outbound, inbound, during a tele-town hall or live call. It accepts multiply choice and open-ended verbal responses. It is an automated polling of your members.

- **Volunteer Phone System**

Provides volunteers and staffers with the most user-friendly and cost effective solution for conducting live audience ID, survey and GOTV (Get out the vote) programs. It can be utilized for fund-raising history, help build a get out the vote list, and help with surveys, micro targeting, persuasion and building supporters.

- **Click to Call**

One click of the mouse, a user can receive a variety of types of calls including live calls, IVR calls, Patch calls, Robo calls, Fundraising calls, and Tele-Town Hall invitation calls.



Sample Town Hall Agenda

Suggested Time: 1 hour

- 1) **Welcome, Introductions, Opening Remarks**
Moderator: ask different organizations in the room to announce themselves and thank them for attending and not to forget to sign-in. Briefly go over the agenda and open remarks, introduce panelist (plan 5-10 minutes)
- 2) **Speakers or Panelists** begin their discussion, possibly have a short video on the subject, possible PowerPoint presentation, (plan to run 20 – 25 minutes)
- 3) **Remarks from the Coalition leader** discuss the needs of the campaign and plans for actions. sign petitions, pledge cards and push for a resolution. What audience can do today and next week. (10 min)
- 4) **Open for Questions and Comments** (10-15 minutes)
- 5) **Closing Remarks and Thanks** (Moderator) Thank the organizations that came, the panelists and members of the community, remind attendees to sign petitions and pledge cards and their location in the room. Make sure the event ends on a positive note and remind the audience We Can Win! Give Contact information (plan for 5 minutes) Remind volunteers, panelists and others about the debriefing meeting in front of room (15 min)

(sample)

TOWN HALL MEETING

What happens when the Postmaster General shuts down your Postal Facility?

Mail is slowed down: Checks, medicines, payments, bills, newspapers, church bulletins, books, magazines, special greeting cards, holiday cards and letters Advertisements, sale circulars, discount coupons all delayed

Loss of revenue, lost of community connection and loss of future jobs for our children, loss of good service

Your Invited to a Town Hall Meeting to help Stop Your Postal Plant From Closing

Date:

Time:

Location:

For More Information

Contact:

Join the Community Coalition to Save our Services our Community and our Public Postal Service!!

The law says the PMG is mandated to serve everyone with **prompt, reliable, and efficient services** no matter where they live (city or rural) and regardless of income (rich or poor). In other words, all households are to receive equal service.

Sample Schedule on the Day of The Town Hall

6am – 8am Newspaper editorial board meeting

9am-10am TV Cable News Show

10:30am Local radio morning show interview

1pm Media interviews, contact with speakers and panelists

2pm-3pm Contact all coalition members to remind them of Town Hall Meeting tonight

3pm-4pm (eat) Check setup at Hall

5:30pm- 5:50pm Panelists, leaders meeting at Hall

6pm Town Hall Meeting begins

7pm Media Interviews if still there

7:30pm Clean-up, collect petitions, sign-in sheet, collect Posters and banners

7:31 -7:50 Debriefing with volunteers, panelists
Thank the volunteers for a great job.

Sample Press Release

For Immediate Release: For Information
Contact:

KEEP THE YOUNGSTOWN PLANT OPEN
YOUR MAIL SERVICE WILL BE DEGRADED!!
(A Town Hall Meeting to be held by the Community)

Our two Senators (names) and the Postal Community Coalition is sponsoring a **Town Hall Meeting October 16, 2019 6:00pm** to plan our strategy to stop the Youngstown Processing Plant from being Consolidated. We need the community support and community action to save the People's Post Office.

The meeting will focus on strategies in how we can protect our community from losing our prompt efficient, affordable, services. We will have our house representative as well as Community Activists who can lay out our strategies to fight and save our first class overnight delivery services. We need our Community to play a part in the solution to keep the Postal Service Public and available to all.

This is a wakeup call. Our community is vulnerable to losing services that we have come to rely on. This is about the Postmaster General and the President putting privatization first and the community last.

The time is now to stand strong! Don't let our community lose our essence, and become economically impacted, watching our local businesses and workers leave our city.

Sample Press Release

Advisory To the Press

Media Advisory for (date) Contact:

Protect Our Community **KEEP THE TUCSON POSTAL PLANT OPEN** **OUR MAIL SERVICE IS UNDER SEVERE ATTACK**

**Tucson Town Hall Meeting to include Senator McCain,
Community Activists and Leaders, including the Mayor**
(list the top names who will be there)

Community Members, local businesses, mailers, will be joined with the Tucson Postal Coalition on May 17, 2019 Thursday at the Community Center. We will be highlighting the adverse economic impact of our first class mail service to our community. The USPS intends to consolidate our Tucson Plant with the Phoenix Plant.

Our State will be left with only one mail processing center located in Phoenix. Our mail service will be delayed. Many businesses and mailers that depend on this overnight delivery in town will be adversely affected. We will be economically impacted. We must get involved. The time is now. Be there at the Town Hall Meeting to stop the closure and help keep the Tucson Mail Processing Plant here in our city of Tucson.

Who: Community Leaders Mayor and Senator

What: Town Hall Meeting

When: October 17, 2019 Thursday at 6pm

Where: Tucson Community Center 10 Boulder Rd

Town Hall Media Support Form

Town Hall Date:	
Time:	
Location Address:	
Primary Name: Primary Contact Phone: Primary Contact E-Mail:	
Secondary Contact: Secondary Contact Phone: Secondary Contact E-Mail:	
Purpose of Town Hall:	
Sponsoring Organizations:	
Will member of Congress be present? Speakers and Panelists	
Other elected officials to attend:	

SUPPLIES & ASSIGNMENTS CHECKLIST

Supplies		Assignments	
	Person(s) Responsible	Task	Person(s) Responsible
Audio-Visual			
Laptop, Projector, Screen	<input type="checkbox"/>	General Coordinator	
Power, Extension cords	<input type="checkbox"/>	Room Set Up Crew	
Locate outlets	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Flip chart, Markers, Easel	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Table for A/V equipment Music/slideshow	<input type="checkbox"/>	Audio-Visual, Laptop/Screen	
Microphone	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Batteries	<input type="checkbox"/>		
USB	<input type="checkbox"/>	Preparing PP/Videos	
Internet/Wi-Fi	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Meeting Room			
Direction signs to room	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sign-In Table	
Sign-In sheets	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Campaign materials Press Kits, flyers, agenda	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Call-In Flyers	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Letter Template Pack	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Volunteer/Action Form/ Pens	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Media contacts ,morning of, and after the event	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Tables	<input type="checkbox"/>	Campaign Materials Table/ Distribution/Volunteer Forms, pledges	
Podium	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Water for speakers	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Decorations banners/signs	<input type="checkbox"/>	Greeters	
Refreshments			
Table/table cover	<input type="checkbox"/>	Media Spokespersons	
Refreshments/ Food	<input type="checkbox"/>	timekeeper	
Plates/cups/ Utensils, napkins	<input type="checkbox"/>	Moderator	
Trash bags, cans	<input type="checkbox"/>		
De-brief meeting with volunteers, Panelists,	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social Media/Twitter	
		Refreshment & food crew	
		Clean-up crew and breakdown	
		15 -20 minutes	
			24

(example)

“STOP OUR PLANT CONSOLIDATION” ACTIVIST VOLUNTEER PLEDGE FORM

Why? We need to mobilize our community to activism in order to stop plant consolidations. The Postal Service belongs to the community and we have rights to protect and demand prompt, efficient and affordable services that is equal to those services others are given in other areas of the country. We need your help!

How Can I Help? I commit to volunteering for the following actions (check all that apply):

- Calling my members of Congress* *Phone Banking*
- Collecting Hand-Written Letters*
 - 5 Letters* *10 Letters* *15 Letters* *20 Letters*
- Attending a Rally or Action Event*
- Attending a Meeting with my Members of Congress*

“Yes, I’ll be there!”

Name:	Organization (if any):
Address:	Home Phone:
Mobile Phone:	E-Mail

(example)

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Mobile Phone:	E-Mail