

Tips for Effective Community Meetings

Holding a community meeting is a perfect way to bring together all the entities and residents in your community with a variety of viewpoints to exchange ideas and information and establish goals and action plans. This document lists some tips and suggestions to think about for carrying out a community meeting.



Preparation and Advertisement:

- Give yourself enough time to prepare the agenda and advertise for the meeting.
- Advertise using the best methods in your community such as radio, flyers, announcements at events (basketball games, etc.) Also see <http://www.zendergroup.org/education.html> for more ideas



Development of the Topic/Agenda:

- Have a clear goal for the meeting and stick to the goal when developing the agenda
- Don't overload the agenda
- If the topic you want to meet about is small, consider simply adding your topic to an agenda of another meeting that is already planned



Selection of the Date/Time of Meeting:

- Make sure your meeting doesn't conflict with any other event happening in the community where the majority of community members will be attending.
- Consider what the best time is in your community to hold a meeting so that you get the best attendance (such as evenings, week-ends?)



Consideration of the Meeting Logistics and Characteristics:

- Will there be a single facilitator /moderator leading the meeting, or multiple people?
- Do you need visual (projector) or audio (microphone) technology so everyone can see and hear the information presented?
- Will it be an informational meeting where you are just trying to get information across or will you have Talking Circles or group discussion breakouts (such as Elders, youth, adults)?
- Do you need to arrange a note taker to take minutes of the meeting (or to jot down general notes of what people say)?
- Select a suitable location for the meeting that will adequately hold the number of people expected, have seating provided, be temperature controlled, and will allow for the presenters to be seen and heard.
- If necessary provide an interpreter for Elders.



Ideas for Improving Attendance:

- Entice people with food! Maybe make it a potluck or provide coffee/tea and cookies.
- Provide entertainment such as a youth dance group performance.
- Let people know you'll have door prizes
- Offer childcare
- Research past meetings that had high attendance and figure out what worked for those (and conversely low attendance meetings for what didn't work)
- Create a phone tree by asking two people to call two of their friends to explain the meeting and encourage them to attend, and then have them call two of their friends to do the same (and so on)



Basics For Planning And Creating A Meeting Agenda Think about the 5 W's:

WHY? Purpose of meeting-- informational, making decisions/identifying actions, persuasion to improve situation

WHAT? What topics to talk about, handouts, speakers, performers.

WHEN? When is the best time of day, best day of the week, and the length of the meeting.

WHO? Is there a targeted audience or do you want the whole community there.

WHERE? How much space will be needed and what is the best location.

