



# Guide To Planning A Town Hall Meeting

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## **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, cuts in service, and close facilities. 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, and 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 that are necessary for a successful Town Hall.**

# Preparing for Your Town Hall Meeting

- Step 1. Form a Planning Committee



Recruit early some union members but also representatives that work for the community partners you are inviting to the Town Hall. Especially those organizations and businesses who have given you early support.

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 your legislative leaders to help attain a site for free or at a very low cost.

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. (See Sample Town Hall Agenda on page 11). It should be typed and copies available for distribution at the event.



### Step 4. Identify and Invite Speakers and/or Panelists

Trusted well respected speakers that have a great connection with the community are important to have at your event. 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 seniors, disabled, low income advocates, city council, pastor, mayor, state legislators, and youth organizers. Find a valued celebrity.

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 as well. This 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 they may 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**  
**Community NOW!**  
**Family, friends, neighbors**

**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 Future 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.  
For more information please contact Mr. Kenneth Bryant at 905-286-0146 or Ms. Gabriela Johnson at 905-286-0201  
 **In Celebration of**  
**National Public Health Week**  
**April 5-11, 2010**

- Check with the city clerk who usually has a calendar of community events that they advertise. 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 the flyer.
- Create a list of events where people can make announcements about your Town Hall, before the event at a local business or organization meeting. Don't forget to utilize the AFL-CIO 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 event. Utilize every door direct mailing.

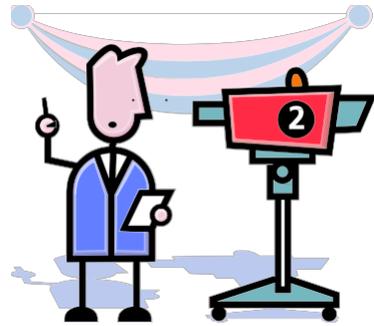
## Step 7. Invitations to the event

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.

## 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 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 with those assigned and keep in touch before the event to make sure they will attend (see attached sample page 17)



Follow a time line sending invitations and flyers at least 3 weeks before the event, media advisory 5 days before event, phone calls 36 hours before event, call associated press daybook (that is the scheduled reporters use to decide what to cover) between 8am and 8:30am on the day of the event, call tv and radio remind them morning of the event to make announcement and don't forget to do a public radio interview and submit story pitch and press release, remind all media contacts assign people to help.



## The Day of Your Town Hall

Have materials (press kit) ready to hand out to reporters. Have sign-in sheets (see page 18). Make sure speakers and panelists and local officials have packets as well to include press release, fact sheet, pledge cards (See page 19) and your campaign information.

**Refreshments/Coffee , Water & Food** Set up a table for light refreshments. Be sure they are set for individuals to grab and go, without making too much noise or effort. Make sure you have garbage bags available.

**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. Time scheduled including question and answers and respond to any questions they may have. Timekeeper should have 5 minute 1minute and stop cards made that are visual for panelists.

**Tip:** Have bottles of water available for the panelists

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

## Prepare Media Spokespersons

Meet with designated spokespersons. Remind them that they will greet the reporters, ask for their business card, getting them information (press kits) press release (See pages 14 & 15) and fact sheet. Make sure they know the subject matter and if 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 16)

**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](mailto:eharris@apwu.org), Facebook, Instagram and twitter. During the meeting encourage everyone with a smartphone to share news of the event through social media.

## 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.

# 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 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** to discuss the needs of the campaign and plans for actions, sign petitions, resolution. What audience can do today etc. (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, location to sign petitions in room or sign-up volunteer cards. Make sure the event ends on a positive note and remind the audience We Can Win! (plan for 5 minutes)

# TOWN HALL MEETING

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.

## 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

Election campaign materials and mail-in ballots

Loss of revenue and jobs for the Community

## 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!!

# Sample Schedule on the Day of The Town Hall

**6am – 8am Local radio morning show interview**

**9am-10am TV Cable News Show**

**10:30am Newspaper editorial board meeting**

**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 Leadership meeting at Hall**

**6pm Town Hall Meeting**

**7pm Media Interviews if still there**

**7:30pm Clean-up, collect petitions, sign-in sheet, collect Posters and banners  
Great Job and thank the volunteers**

## 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 Senator (name) and the Postal Community Coalition is sponsoring a **Town Hall Meeting October 16, 2018 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 how we can protect our community from losing our prompt efficient, affordable, services. We will have speakers from our legislative representatives as well as Community Activists who can lay out our options to fight the loss of our first class overnight delivery services. We need our Community to play a part in the solution.

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

The time is now to stand strong before our community loses our essence, and becomes economically impacted, while watching our local businesses and workers move out.

## 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, 2018 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 find a solution 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, 2018 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?	
Other elected officials to attend:	

## SUPPLIES & ASSIGNMENTS CHECKLIST

Supplies		Assignments	
		Task	Person(s) Responsible
<b>Audio-Visual</b>			
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	<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"/>		
		Sign-In Table	
<b>Meeting Room</b>			
Direction signs to room	<input type="checkbox"/>	Campaign Materials Table/ Distribution/Volunteer Forms	
Sign-In sheets	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Campaign materials	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Call-In Flyers	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Letter Template Pack	<input type="checkbox"/>	Refreshments & Food Crew	
Volunteer/Action Form/ Pens	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Tables	<input type="checkbox"/>	Greeters	
Podium	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Water for speakers	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Decorations banners/signs	<input type="checkbox"/>	Media Spokespersons	
<b>Refreshments</b>			
Table/table cover	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social Media/Twitter	
Refreshments/ Food	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Plates/cups/ utensils	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Napkins	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Trash cans	<input type="checkbox"/>	Clean-Up/Break Down Crew	



## “STOP OUR PLANT CONSOLIDATION” ACTIVIST VOLUNTEER PLEDGE FORM

**Why?** We need to mobilize our community to activism in order to stop plant consolidations, because the Postal Service belongs to the community and they 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.

**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

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

## 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 signatures around town
- Get those legislative representatives to sign and pass a resolution and/or letter of support to: Saving the Plant and the Services. Send to the PMG, Board of Governors
- It educates and mobilizes more people against the privatization plot against the People's Postal Service
- It promotes your local community coalition to fight for protection and expanded service not less service
- Start to build a spirit for the community to stand together, with pledge cards and inspire them with important values that compel them to join.
- Start plans on your next activity and send photos and a report to APWU, NALC, NPMHU, NRLCA to the National Communications Department to share on the webpage and the magazines. All our Unions are in this together.
- It will build long term relationships with community allies
- Follow-up after the event and add the contacts you received 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 through a pledge card.

• **CONTINUE TO BUILD!**