



EVENT STRUCTURE: *How To Structure Your Town Hall*

The town hall concept is envisioned to achieve a shared outcome in each county — an annual community event focused on the state of young children — that can be customized to feature issues most critical to reaching your county’s policy education goals.

The town hall provides an optimal opportunity for you to:

- 👉 Spotlight the issues that impact young children
- 👉 Highlight the work of First 5 in your community
- 👉 Provide a forum for a productive dialogue with local policymakers about your priority policy issues
- 👉 Effectively get a commitment from policymakers to take action

These are lofty yet achievable goals, and this Toolkit provides you with techniques and tools for creating your very own town hall event! In this section, we outline ways to structure your town hall to cover all the bases.

In the next sections of this Toolkit, you’ll find tips and strategic advice about who to include, how to plan and find partners/co-hosts, as well as ways to promote your town hall.



**CHECK
IT OUT!**

Use the Toolkit templates to communicate a consistent brand

The Toolkit materials are strategically designed, branded templates to help build a consistent statewide brand for each town hall. These recommended templates can be customized and used by your county commission.



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Town Hall Structure Overview

PART 1: Welcome and Introductions

Warm welcome by a county commission representative or other high-profile influential community member who also introduces the “why” for hosting a town hall. The person who kicks off the town hall then introduces (and hands off the event to) the moderator.

PART 2: Brief Presentations

Introductions and presentations by subject matter experts on the selected issues with content specific to what each issue looks like in your community.

PART 3: Panel Discussion

Moderated Panel Discussion

Panelist introductions and discussion. Panelists may or may not include the experts who just presented — this depends on how many policymakers attend the event and how you structure the panel discussion. At a minimum, your policymakers should make up the bulk of your panel, as they are the event’s main draw: Guests are there to hear what they have to say!

Moderated Q&A with Audience Participation

The moderator should moderate all questions (both planned and audience), facilitate the “ask” for panelists’ commitment to specific First 5 Calls to Action, and lead the discussion of next steps needed to advance the work.

PART 4: Positive Event Close

Moderator provides event summary/top level take-aways, and highlights any commitments made during the event.

Moderator provides a positive conclusion that focuses on opportunities for positive change on behalf of young children and families, and thanks the panelists, partners/co-hosts, and guests for giving back to your shared community.

SAMPLE

This suggested 90-minute town hall event outline follows a four-part format.

This is just a guideline. You are welcome to use variations of this agenda and format it to suit your needs. For example, you can make the event feel less formal in the way you set up the room and how you field questions. See the “Planning” section to learn more.

F5 TIP:

Use the back of your External Agenda

(hand-out) for biographies of your expert speakers, policymakers/panelists and moderator. Be sure to include information about First 5 and your county commission. This also is a perfect place to further recognize your partners/co-hosts and sponsors.

Tools Available in the “Event Structure” Section:

- ✓ **Sample Internal Agenda** with a suggested format and timing to help conduct and guide the town hall planning and day-of-event pacing
- ✓ **Sample External Agenda** (hand-out) for you to customize and distribute to your audience

You can use these templates exactly as outlined, adapt them, or create new agendas to meet your needs. See the “Participants” section to learn about participants involved in making your town hall a success and more tips for structuring your event.