



How to Organize a Successful Community Forum

It takes planning and hard work to get a good turnout at a community forum. Here are some points to consider in planning large public events:

- **People must recognize the problem.** The city makes an ongoing effort to keep citizens advised of the budget situation and its impact on the community. The city newsletter regularly outlines the budget situation, including reductions already made and those still ahead. Elected officials and staff make presentations about the budget situation at community gatherings, area service clubs and other forums. Regular budget updates are made at council meetings and current information is posted on the city's web site.
- **Involve the community.** The city organizes a citizen's committee that plays an active role in promoting a budget forum - placing notices in church bulletins, distributing flyers to neighborhood associations, talking to key

community members and in keeping up a lively discussion with friends. Networking the diversity of community connections helps you go beyond the service club audience.

- **Spread the word.** The city starts publicizing the budget forum nearly two months before the event. Announcements are made in the local papers, in flyers posted throughout town, on the city's website, in church newsletters, at service club meetings, in senior centers and in local downtown meeting places. Talk to the media about writing promo pieces.
- **Make it easy to come.** Provide free child care using local high school service clubs. Make your audience feel appreciated with something as simple as coffee and cookies.

Source: Oregon School Directors Association

