

Holding a Panel Discussion

Hosting a panel discussion on a community issue can alert and educate people about the problem. Invite experts from government, business, and nonprofit organizations to take part in the discussion.

Set a date, time, and place. Make sure everyone attending has directions and parking instructions.

Identify the purpose of your panel discussion.

Determine what you want to accomplish by conducting the discussion, and what general questions will be answered.

Focus on one or two main topics. This will help to direct the panel discussion in an organized way.

Invite experts to take part on the panel. Choose individuals who are knowledgeable or who are involved in the focus of your discussion. Invite panelists at least two to three weeks before the discussion to give them time to clear their schedule and to prepare.

Invite guests to attend the discussion. You might create a flyer to publicize the event or post it on social media. Help educate and spread awareness about your issue. This may even build more support from your community.

Call and email the panelists to confirm the date days before the discussion.

Create a short introduction for each panelist and questions to ask. Questions should be open-ended and require more than yes or no answers. They should require the person to expand on the question. Ask about the problem, policies, resources, and possible actions.

Practice before the panelists arrive. Consider holding a mock panel discussion to practice the format.

Thank the panelists. Thank them before they leave and mail or email personal thank-you notes.

