

Town Hall Meetings 2008-2009

This is the complete toolkit for the Town Hall Meetings leading up to the 2009 Nonprofit Congress. It provides all you need to know to organize a Town Hall Meeting or meetings in your state. The toolkit includes:

- **background** on the Nonprofit Congress,
- **tips** for publicizing your Town Hall Meeting,
- **facilitator guides** for the core Town Hall and the three optional Priority Pieces, and
- **handouts** you can copy or print for participants.

Since 2006, state associations and other nonprofits have used Town Halls to **raise visibility, raise membership, and even raise money** from corporate sponsors interested in underwriting Town Halls to show their support for the nonprofit community. In addition, Town Halls have been a central **input-gathering mechanism** for the Nonprofit Congress, leading up to each year's Nonprofit Congress national meeting.

Now in its second incarnation, the toolkit has been a staple of Town Halls for the past year. It includes several new features, including three skill-building "**Priority Pieces**" that can be added onto the core meeting, giving participants hands-on tools to strengthen their own organizations. The sample Town Hall Summary also streamlines the process of sending input to the National Council of Nonprofits. The Council will synthesize the input for a National Town Hall at the 2009 Nonprofit Congress, taking place in New Orleans, LA May 14-16, 2009.

Thank you for joining this effort!

Contents

I. Introduction

- A. What is the Nonprofit Congress?
- B. Why Host a Town Hall?
- C. Acknowledgements

II. Planning a Town Hall Meeting

- A. Get Your Plan On
- B. 6 Painless Ways to Host a Town Hall Meeting
- C. Shameless Promotion

III. Hosting a Town Hall Meeting

- A. How To Do This
- B. What is Appreciative Inquiry?
- C. The Scoop on Facilitation
- D. Town Hall Core with Attachments & Handouts:
 - a. Sample Invitation (1 page)
 - b. Nonprofit Congress Fact Sheet (1 page handout)
 - c. Town Hall Evaluation (1 page handout)
- E. Nonprofit Organizational Effectiveness Priority Piece
 - a. Organizational Strengths & Needs Assessment (side 1) &
 - b. Examples of Strengths & Needs (side 2) (handout)
- F. Advocacy & Grassroots Activities Priority Piece
 - a. Drafting Your RESULTS Laser Talk (handout)
- G. Public Awareness Priority Piece

IV. After Your Town Hall Meeting

- A. Report Back
- B. Sample Town Hall Summary (1 page)

Introduction: What is the Nonprofit Congress?

Welcome to the third round of Town Hall Meetings. If this is your first Town Hall Meeting, welcome! If you have previously attended or hosted a Town Hall, welcome back! Your participation has been crucial to the success of the Nonprofit Congress.

The Nonprofit Congress, an initiative of the National Council of Nonprofits and the state association network, empowers individuals and nonprofits to act collectively for positive change. Building on the fundamental belief that nonprofits are vital to society, the Nonprofit Congress is guided by shared values and priorities established by nonprofits in communities across the country. These priorities include effective organizations, timely and relevant information on best and promising organizational practices, successful strategies and approaches for advocacy and grassroots organizing, and improving our image and message to the public.

The National Council of Nonprofits, through the Nonprofit Congress initiative, seeks to achieve the following outcomes:

- *Advance* and share work being done in the three priority areas.
- *Create* stronger networks and collaborations.
- *Strengthen* the resolve and ability of nonprofit leaders throughout the United States to be part of this movement.
- *Invigorate* the passion and commitment of the current generation of nonprofit executives, while enlisting and supporting a new generation of leaders.
- *Empower* local, state, and national organizations to speak for nonprofit organizations and advocate at all levels of society.
- *Communicate* a nonprofit agenda to the country and to our elected leaders.

Town Hall Meetings are an important part of this effort.

Town Halls build support for action at local and state levels; identify and promote efforts already underway that can strengthen and coordinate with other efforts to achieve the Top Priorities; and inform collaboration and action across state lines.

This round of Town Halls also includes **skill-building Priority Pieces** designed to share knowledge and give participants hands-on experience to strengthen their organizations. Whether you host a full-day Town Hall with the core and all three Priority Pieces, or just a few hours of the core, you and your community will find the process eye-opening, inspiring, and empowering.

In the words of one of the attendees at the first Nonprofit Congress national meeting in 2006, “This is just the beginning. There is much to be done.” Your continued involvement is critical to the success of the Nonprofit Congress and we thank you for being part of this initiative.

Why Host a Town Hall Meeting?

The Nonprofit Congress is a major initiative of the National Council of Nonprofits and the state association network. Over the past three years it has funneled input from front-line nonprofits—those serving their communities every day—up to state associations and from there to the national level, and transformed this input from hundreds of organizations into the voice of a unified nonprofit sector.

The Nonprofit Congress is driven by nonprofits. Since its inception in 2006, the 41 state and regional associations of nonprofits have employed Town Hall Meetings, working groups, the annual meeting, and other hallmarks of the Nonprofit Congress to strengthen their members, advocate for their state nonprofit sectors, and draw attention to their causes. These tools bring together all nonprofits, regardless of mission and location, to exchange knowledge and speak with a collective voice.

Skill-Building Priority Pieces

In the 2008-2009 round of Town Hall Meetings, **skill-building Priority Pieces** are a new addition to give participants hands-on experience to strengthen their organizations. These three pieces—one for each Top Priority—are designed to build on the core, which, like in 2007-2008, is focused on collecting input and brainstorming ideas. The Priority Pieces will sharpen participants' abilities to:

- Address intergenerational tension in nonprofit leadership (priority: *Organizational Effectiveness*);
- Transform issues into cases for public policy change (priority: *Advocacy & Grassroots Community Activities*); and
- Build relationships with the media to change how they report on our work (priority: *Public Awareness & Support of the Sector*).

Grow and strengthen your organization

In addition to these skills, there is much to gain from hosting a Town Hall Meeting. Here are just a few examples of **how state associations and other organizations benefit**:

- Introduce yourselves to potential new members and partners
- Collect input and new ideas from current members
- Raise your visibility with local donors/funders
- Partner with other nonprofits, businesses, and government offices
- Publicize your current projects
- Network with members of the media

Past Town Hall hosts have used their knowledge of their membership or community to plan meetings that best address the needs and abilities of participants. Whether this means driving to remote parts of your state to touch base with nonprofits there or rallying at your state capitol, you can organize a Town Hall that highlights your strengths and becomes a reliable outreach tool for membership and funding.

Seven Creative Ways Organizations Have Hosted Town Hall Meeting

1. To share responsibilities and expand the reach of this movement (and your organization), partner with other organizations to host multiple meetings across your city or state.
2. Reach remote areas with an online Town Hall in a chat room or through Second Life (www.secondlife.com).
3. Adapt a Town Hall Meeting as a session at your organization's annual conference.
4. Host a Town Hall conference call where participants can collaborate from the comfort of their desks.
5. Integrate a meeting into your annual Day at the Capitol to generate extra media coverage and energy.

6. Invite constituents or members to a Town Hall potluck breakfast or lunch.
7. Partner with a local community foundation to host a meeting. You may be able to get underwriting for the effort this way.

By hosting a Town Hall Meeting, you connect your organization and your community with a nationwide movement. Ultimately, however, the best reason for hosting a Town Hall is about helping nonprofits across the country do their day-to-day work better, faster, and easier, and in the process, making their communities healthier, safer, and stronger. **These organizations deserve to be heard at the national level**, and gathering their input at a Town Hall Meeting is the first step to giving local nonprofits a national voice.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful for the contributions to this document provided by Town Hall hosts from 2007-2008: Ashley Herad, Louisiana Association of Nonprofit Organizations; Cari Taylor, Mississippi Center for Nonprofits; Brian Magee and Brad Robinson, Montana Nonprofit Association; Debby Hampton, Oklahoma Center for Nonprofits; Rose Mary Fry, Texas Nonprofit Management Assistance Network; and Deborah Williamson, Virginia Network of Nonprofit Organizations.

National Council of Nonprofits Board of Directors

Douglas Sauer, *Chair*— Council of Community Services of New York State
Melissa Flournoy, *First Vice Chair*— Rand Gulf States Policy Institute
Patrick McWhortor, *Second Vice Chair* – Alliance of Arizona Nonprofits
Elizabeth T. Boris, *Secretary* – Urban Institute, Center on Nonprofits and Philanthropy
Linda Czipo, *Treasurer* – Center for Non-Profit Corporations, Inc (NJ)
Kyle Caldwell, Michigan Nonprofit Association
Hunter Phillips Goodman, Arkansas Coalition for Excellence
Brian Magee, Montana Nonprofit Association
Mark McCrary, Mississippi Center for Nonprofits
Yolanda Nunn, Brilliance Strategies, Inc (Board Chair - California Association of Nonprofits)
Carlos Soto, National Hispanic Corporate Council
Dennis R. Young, Andrew Young School of Policy Studies, Georgia State University

National Council of Nonprofits Staff

Ann Beltran, Policy Analyst
 Elizabeth Clawson, Communications & Development Associate
 Richard Cohen, Director of Membership & Technology
 Tim Delaney, President & CEO
 Sherray Gibson, Administrative Assistant
 Sherrie Hinton, Manager of Finance & Administration
 Elisa M. Ortiz, Coordinator, Outreach & Special Initiatives

Get Your Plan On

Reach Out | Before you start scheduling your Town Hall, reach out to your Nonprofit Congress State Coordinator. These organizations are coordinating all Nonprofit Congress-related work in each state. You can access a full list at <http://www.nonprofitcongress.org/localefforts>. If your state does not have a Coordinator, please contact Elizabeth Clawson at the National Council of Nonprofits to let us know about your event at eclawson@ncna.org or 202.962.0322.

Date | Select a date that works with your organization's calendar of events. Once your meeting is scheduled, post it on the Nonprofit Congress website at www.nonprofitcongress.org.

Time | 1.5 to 5 hours, any time of day.

Price | Determine the expense of the meeting and whether a registration fee should be charged. In order to ensure maximum participation, the fee should be as low as possible. Many state associations and other hosts have successfully obtained corporate sponsors to help cover costs or donate meeting space for their events.

Number of Attendees | Any, but 20 to 40 is ideal.

Shameless Promotion

Promoting and advertising your Town Hall through your local networks is the best way to maximize attendance and impact. Starting with your members and constituents is best, but thinking more broadly to your state's entire nonprofit sector will yield more satisfying results. You will find sample invitation language following the Town Hall Core Facilitator's Guide.

Television, radio, internet, and print media are very popular communications resources that you can use to promote your Town Hall Meetings and other activities. These tools will help you reach thousands of supporters, volunteers, and donors, and increase public awareness of nonprofit activities in your area.

Local Television and Radio | Public broadcasting stations, public access channels, and public radio stations are available to grassroots organizations, individuals, and nonprofits throughout the country at low cost or free of charge. Their policies and regulations vary depending on local ordinances and community standards. They are inclusive, content neutral, and generally available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Many of these media outlets carry primarily locally produced programs while others carry regionally or nationally distributed programs. Public access programming is not necessarily bound to the traditional one-hour and half-hour block schedules. Some programs may be 30 or 60 minutes, while other programs may be of varying length. For more information on public broadcasting stations, public access channels, and public radio stations, visit the websites below.

- NPR - National Public Radio Stations: <http://www.npr.org/stations/>
- PBS – Public Broadcasting Service: http://www.pbs.org/aboutpbs/aboutpbs_support.html
- Public Access Channels: <http://www.communitymedia.se/cat/linksus.htm>
- Public Access Channels: <http://www.videouniversity.com/pubaccess.shtml>
- Starfish Television Network for Nonprofits - <http://starfishtv.org/introvideo.php>

Broadcast Your Event on the Web | The YouTube Nonprofit Program is a powerful way to promote your organization's activities to the world's largest online video community. The site was created for nonprofit organizations

that need to connect with their supporters, volunteers, and donors but do not have the funds to launch expensive outreach campaigns.

- YouTube Nonprofit Program - <http://www.youtube.com/nonprofits>

Post Your Press Releases to Print and Online Publications | Today, nearly all local, regional, and national news organizations have both print and electronic versions of their publications. Some publications provide an online press release submission form. You should also get the contact information of the person who reports on nonprofit activities and send your press releases directly to her or him.

- Chronicle of Philanthropy - <http://www.philanthropy.com/>
- Nonprofit Online News - <http://www.gilbert.org/news>
- Nonprofit Quarterly - <http://www.nonprofitquarterly.org/>
- The NonProfit Times - <http://www.nptimes.com/>
- Philanthropy Journal - <http://www.philanthropyjournal.org/>
- Philanthropy News Network Online - <http://www.pnnonline.org>
- Philanthropy Today E-Newsletter - <http://www.philanthropy.com/>

Post Your Town Halls Online | Many nonprofit organizations offer an online event calendar where you can post details about your upcoming activities. Listed below are just a few.

- Action Without Borders - <http://www.idealists.org/if/idealists/en/Post/Simplified/default?item-type=Event>
- The Foundation Center - Philanthropy News Digest - <http://fdncenter.org/pnd>
- Google Calendar of Events - http://www.google.com/googlecalendar/event_publisher_guide.html
- Independent Sector - <http://www.independentsector.org/members/events.asp>
- Nonprofit Congress Event Calendar - <http://www.nonprofitcongress.org/?q=node/add/event2>
- PNNonline - <http://pnnonline.org/search.php?query=&topic=8>
- Resources for Nonprofits - <http://www.neparentcenters.org/links.htm#event>
- Yahoo Events - <http://upcoming.yahoo.com/>

★ **HELPFUL HINT** | Hosting a Town Hall is a great opportunity to increase membership for and awareness of your organization. While promoting the meeting to your target audience, be sure to include marketing materials about your organization.

Hosting a Town Hall Meeting

Logistics

Format and Setup | The recommended format of a Town Hall Meeting is a local gathering where a diverse group of nonprofit leaders come together for two to three hours to discuss and plan for collaborative action on the Top Priorities of the nonprofit sector. It is very important that the participants are as representative of the sector as possible, including people from all subsectors (arts, education, health care, foundations, etc.), all sizes of nonprofits, and all locations around your state or region.

To ensure active participation from all attendees, discussions work best if they take place in small groups. The best way to accommodate this is to seat all participants at round tables in the same room. If possible, make roundtable assignments prior to the meeting, working to seat individuals from differing subsectors and/or geographic areas together. It is sometimes helpful to have one person at each table moderate the discussion. There are several ways to establish table moderators:

- Select them in advance and provide them with the appropriate materials and information prior to the meeting
- Recruit them as they arrive
- Assign them or ask for volunteers during the Town Hall Meeting itself
- Let table groups choose their moderators

Whatever your method of choosing table leaders, ensure that they are familiar with the materials and responsibilities in order to keep conversations open, yet focused, and to meet objectives.

While table leaders are not required, recorders are. Each table must have one person taking notes on the discussion in order to capture the main points and be able to report them back to the whole group after each roundtable session.

One or two facilitators are also necessary to lead large group discussions. These discussions should be led with the help of the **Facilitator's Guides** provided in this kit. The Facilitator's Guides are behind-the-scenes pieces and should not be handed out to participants. They are also meant to be suggestions, not rules; feel free to change them to meet your needs.

Materials and Resources | For a successful Town Hall Meeting, you will need the following supplies:

- Flip chart paper & markers
- Pens and paper for participants/facilitators
- A copy of the Facilitator's Agenda (below)
- Nonprofit Congress Fact Sheets (1 per participant)
- Evaluation Forms (1 per participant)
- Promotional materials for 2009 Nonprofit Congress (contact Elizabeth Clawson, eclawson@ncna.org, to request these materials)
- Light refreshments for attendees are always welcome.

Hosting a Town Hall Meeting, cont'd

Suggested Approach: An Appreciative Inquiry That Builds on What's Working

One suggestion for structuring your Town Hall Meeting is to use the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) process (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Appreciative_inquiry). AI makes the assumption that nonprofits are doing something right and that the participants in the Town Halls are the experts who can contribute to making the nonprofit community stronger and better. AI is also a way of thinking, seeing, and acting for powerful, purposeful change.

From the AI Commons website: "Appreciative Inquiry is the cooperative search for the best in people, their organizations, and the world around them. It involves systematic discovery of what gives a system 'life' when it is most effective and capable in economic, ecological, and human terms. AI involves the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system's capacity to heighten positive potential. It mobilizes inquiry through crafting an 'unconditional positive question' often involving hundreds or sometimes thousands of people."¹

Appreciative Inquiry is also a great complement to our base of shared values. Throughout 2006, we sought input from front line nonprofit staff and volunteers. We identified the *values* that best represent and reflect the nonprofit sector. Those essential qualities that bond the nonprofit sector include:

- The betterment of the communities we serve;
- Service to others;
- Ethics and integrity; and
- Change and innovation.

How to Build Your Town Hall Meeting

This third round of Town Halls introduces more working parts to the established core discussion of priorities and collaboration. These new parts are skill-building **Priority Pieces**, one for each Top Priority, and are intended to accompany the core Town Hall discussion. Think of the core as a main dish and the Priorities Pieces as side dishes. You can build one, two, or all three Priority Pieces onto the core, depending on how much time you have. Not sure what kind of Town Hall to build? Here are some tips:

- If you're new to hosting Town Halls, or expect that many participants will be first-timers, begin with the core discussion so everyone has a solid understanding of the Nonprofit Congress before tackling a Priority Piece.
- If you only have time for one Priority Piece in addition to the core, you have several ways to choose among them:
 - If you have a registration web page for the Town Hall, ask participants to vote on them.
 - Have participants vote on them by a show of hands at the beginning of the Town Hall.
 - Use your existing knowledge of your members' or community's interests to decide in advance.
 - Host one Town Hall for each of the Priority Pieces and let people self-select which they want to attend.
 - If you have a large space, you can facilitate more than one Priority Piece at the same time and allow people to self-select in which they will participate.
 - Consult the State Action Plans from the 2008 Nonprofit Congress to find out the interests of nonprofits in your state: www.nonprofitcongress.org/2008actionplans.

¹ Cooperrider, D.L. & Whitney, D., "Appreciative Inquiry: A positive revolution in change." In P. Holman & T. Devane (eds.), *The Change Handbook*, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., pages 245-263. <http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/intro/definition.cfm>

Hosting a Town Hall Meeting, cont'd

Overview: Town Hall Core For facilitator only; not to be handed out to participants

Agenda

Activity	Time Needed
Welcome and Icebreaker	10 minutes
Setting the Context	10 minutes
First Roundtable Discussion and Table Reports	25 minutes
Second Roundtable Discussion and Table Reports	20 minutes
Third Roundtable Discussion and Table Reports	20 minutes
National Feedback	10 minutes
Evaluation and Closing or Transition to Priority Piece	5 minutes
Total Time	100 minutes

Attachments to Help Facilitator Plan Meeting

- Sample Invitation

Attachments to Hand Out to Participants

- Nonprofit Congress Fact Sheet
- Town Hall Evaluation

Materials Needed

- Easel and flipchart
- Markers and pens
- Masking tape

★ **HELPFUL HINT** | Print off and review this facilitator's guide at least a couple of times before your Town Hall. The process will run much smoother if you are familiar with the setup, script, and basic timeline.

Facilitator's Guide - Town Hall Core

A Behind-The-Scenes Manual (do not hand out to participants)

Note: Sample wording has been provided in quotations (" ") below. Text in italics indicates actions to be taken by the facilitator(s).

Welcome and Icebreaker

10 minutes

Tables should have even numbers of people (4, 6, 8) and the relevant handouts and note-taking materials. Write the three Top Priorities on a sheet of flipchart paper or a whiteboard in advance so participants can refer to them during roundtable discussions. Include a few sentences or bullet points describing each Top Priority.

Welcome the participants; introduce organizers and hosts of the event.

Ask the participants to take a turn saying in a half minute or less: (1) their name, (2) their organization, and (3) one more thing (the facilitator can pick this, for example: a favorite food, a favorite place, a mentor who inspired you and why, a weird habit/hobby, something you enjoyed this past week, etc.) Keep it light, positive, and brief.

Announce any relevant housekeeping details, such as restroom locations, break times, etc.

Setting the Context

10 minutes

The Nonprofit Congress: Refer to the fact sheet for an overview of Nonprofit Congress activities for the past two years. Place copies of this document on the tables in the room prior to the meeting.

"The work we will be doing today will help address the Top Priorities of the Nonprofit Sector. These Priorities were identified through the series of Town Halls in 2006 and were voted upon at the national meeting of the Nonprofit Congress in Washington, DC. These Priorities have become the goals for collective action. Top Priorities include (refer to the list you have prepared in advance on a flip chart or whiteboard):

- **Nonprofit Organizational Effectiveness**, with an emphasis on *Accountability/Best Practices* and *Leadership*: To secure the sector's success, it is important to make sure all nonprofits are equipped to carry out their daily operations effectively. This includes, among other things, preparing the next generation of nonprofit leaders. In addition, a focus on accountability and best practices will not only ensure the sector is operating effectively, but will curtail the need for increased external regulation.
- **Advocacy & Grassroots Community Activities**: Engaging in proactive advocacy to strengthen the sector is more effective than reacting to new laws and regulations. Advocating on a local, grassroots level will help the sector as a whole.
- **Public Awareness & Support of the Sector**: For the long-term health of the sector, media coverage must be fair and balanced, reporting on the critical role that nonprofits play in the community and promoting nonprofits' good works, not just scandal and fluff. This will help increase public understanding and support so that nonprofits can continue to do their best work."

Invite any participants who have attended prior Nonprofit Congress Town Hall or national meetings to share some of their experiences at the meetings and in the movement so far.

"During this meeting we will:

- 1) identify what our local nonprofit community is currently doing to address the Top Priorities and learn what others across the state are doing;
- 2) focus on building on our individual successes and appreciating where we have collaborated well; and
- 3) consider how we can grow more collaboration and support for each other in the future. “

First Roundtable Discussion and Table reports

25 minutes

Topic: Addressing the Top Priorities

“The first thing we’re going to do is identify what those at your table have been doing to address the Top Priorities. We’re going to spend 15 minutes sharing information about anything you’ve been working on related to the Top Priorities, no matter how small. What have you been doing to advance leadership and effective organizations? What have you done to promote your nonprofit to the media and your community? What advocacy work have you engaged in recently?”

Please share this information and the recorder at your table will write down the activities around each priority. These notes are important as we will use them later today to continue our discussion.”

After 15 minutes, ask for table reports. Depending on the number of tables, ask for one to three items that those at each table have been doing under each priority and record them at the front (using flip charts or a board). Note: At the end of the town hall, gather notes from each recorder, so you can compile them for later use.

Second Roundtable Discussion and Table Reports

20 minutes

Topic: Building on individual success and growing sector collaboration: Appreciating where we have worked well together.

“The next item we’re going to discuss is collaboration. Each table will split up into pairs; everyone will remain in their seats. Each member of the pair will share a detailed story about collaboration and partnership with the other member of their pair. Each person gets 3 minutes to share their story. Then the table group will come back together and each person will tell the story they heard from their partner in 1 minute. The table group will then decide which 1-minute story will be shared with the entire group.

The point of this exercise is to help us distill out the elements of successful collaboration. As you share your stories with the entire group, we will keep track of key points at the front. At the end, we will all have a list of best practices on which to build future collaborations.

Here are your basic discussion questions: When was a time that your nonprofit partnered or collaborated with another nonprofit and the results were really good? Why did the collaboration happen? What was in place? Who was part of the relationship? What type of support was provided? What needs were met?”

After about 15 minutes, bring the entire group back together to share one story from each table and take notes at the front about the key elements of collaboration from each story.

Third Roundtable Discussion and Table Reports

20 minutes

“Now that we know both the principles of good collaboration and what we’re each doing around the Top Priorities, let’s work within our table groups to figure out how we can merge the two.

Spend a few minutes discussing what each of you are doing around the priorities and how you might be able to work together or help each other out. Can you share resources on a project? Do you have constituents or members that might be interested in getting involved in another group's work? Can you co-host a meeting or event with other groups?

Remember to keep in mind the elements of successful collaboration in making some preliminary plans. The recorders will keep track of all ideas with detailed notes on those who want to work together. In 15 minutes, we'll ask every table to share one idea for collaboration. After the Town Hall, we will compile all the ideas and share them with the whole group so that others can jump into the effort as well."

At the end of 15 minutes, each table reports to the full group their top idea for collaboration. Record ideas on a flipchart.

National Feedback

10 minutes

"We all need information and resources from outside this community to help us continue to successfully collaborate. Keeping in mind the collaborative relationships you've discussed, we'll brainstorm a list of informational or educational resources that we need to have. Please think specifically in terms of the three Top Priorities: Organizational Effectiveness, Advocacy & Grassroots Community Activities, and Public Awareness & Support of the Sector."

Record all ideas on a piece of flip chart people at the front of the room.

"We will now vote on the top three resources we need and we will send that information to the national office. They will gather all the feedback from all over the nation and begin working on what we ask for. Each person gets one vote."

Go through the list, one item at a time, and ask for votes (or ask each person to vote). Note the number of votes for each item next to it on the list. After the Town Hall is complete, include the top three needed resources in your Town Hall summary to send to the National Council of Nonprofits.

Formal Close (if not continuing on to a Priority Piece)

5 minutes

Thank participants for their contributions to this meeting, for their work in implementing the plans in 2007, and for their role in strengthening the nonprofit sector. Encourage participants to stay in contact with each other and work together to advance the priorities of the sector. Remind participants:

- *About the 2009 Nonprofit Congress in New Orleans, LA, May 14-16.*
- *Of the opportunities to remain engaged via the Nonprofit Congress website, projects, and working groups.*
- *Of the opportunity to take what they learned today back to their boards/staff, especially discussing the values and priorities of the sector.*

Distribute brochures for the 2009 event and evaluation forms. Collect the evaluation forms and return them to the National Council of Nonprofits.

If Continuing with Priority Piece: Break and Transition

5 minutes

Go to the facilitator's guide(s) for the relevant Skill-Building Piece(s).

Sample Invitation

Dear Colleague,

Are you interested in:

- **Building your network** of nonprofit leaders and growing collaboration?
- **Taking action** to improve the nonprofit community?
- **Being a part of a national nonprofit movement?**
- [For Organizational Effectiveness Priority Piece] **Strengthening the leadership** in your organization?
- [For Advocacy Priority Piece] **Crafting powerful “laser talks”** on your organization’s vital issues?
- [For Public Awareness Priority Piece] **Building stronger relationships** with the media?

If you answered ‘Yes!’ to any of these questions, please join [insert org name]’s **Town Hall Meeting on Collaboration in the Nonprofit Sector**.

Why?

The nonprofit charitable sector has long served our nation with distinction – from helping individuals survive (through health care, domestic violence centers, meals, and other human services) to helping local communities thrive (through artistic, cultural, educational, environmental, and other enriching services). *Every person in the US has been served at one time or another by the work of a nonprofit.*

Since 2005, thousands of nonprofit leaders have come together to identify top priorities for the sector to address. Now, building on this momentum, nonprofits and their allies across the country are coming together through local Town Hall meetings to share their successes, grow collaboration, and plan for action. We encourage you to join this unprecedented national movement by attending this Town Hall Meeting. Find out more about this effort at www.nonprofitcongress.org.

Who: All types and sizes of nonprofits are invited to [insert name]’s Town Hall Meeting on the nonprofit sector.

When: [insert key info]

Where: [insert key info]

Price: [insert price]

[insert registration information]

Thank you in advance for your leadership of the nonprofit sector! We hope to see you at our Town Hall.

[insert signature]

Know of another nonprofit leader who should attend this event? **Please forward their name to [insert contact info] and pass along this invitation.**



The Nonprofit Congress,

*an initiative of the National Council of Nonprofit Associations and the state association network,
empowers individuals and nonprofits to act collectively for positive change.*

*Building on the fundamental belief that nonprofits are vital to society,
the Nonprofit Congress is guided by shared values and priorities
established by nonprofits in communities across the country.*

Priorities

- *Nonprofit Organizational Effectiveness:* Ensure that the sector has the resources it needs to serve communities and is effectively and efficiently managed. This priority emphasizes Accountability/Best Practices and Leadership.
- *Advocacy & Grassroots Community Activities:* Advocate for the sector at large and engage our constituents to solve problems at the grassroots level.
- *Public Awareness & Support of the Sector:* Increase public understanding and support so nonprofits can continue to do their best work.

Values – Chosen in 2006 by national vote of hundreds of nonprofits from across America

- The Betterment of the Communities We Serve
- Service to Others
- Change and Innovation
- Ethics and Integrity

Nationwide

- Nonprofit Congress annual meeting
- Working Groups, nationwide campaigns, and partnerships with other national organizations
- Website, blog, and email updates
- Publications and resources, including:
 - *Work With Me: Intergenerational Conversations for Nonprofit Leadership*, a hands-on workbook for addressing intergenerational tension and transition in our organizations
 - Elections 2008: Raise the Nonprofit Profile, a candidate outreach and education campaign

State-Based

- State Coordinators
- State-wide Town Hall Meetings
- Priority-driven campaigns

Locally-Driven

- Town Hall Meetings in communities around the country
- Individual nonprofits taking action to advance the sector
- Daily actions to improve the sector

For more information and to learn how you can get involved, please visit our website: <http://www.nonprofitcongress.org>.

National Council of Nonprofit Associations
1101 Vermont Ave, NW, Suite 1002 | Washington, DC 22201 | 202.962.0322 | info@nonprofitcongress.org



Town Hall Evaluation (Please send all forms to the National Council of Nonprofits)

Thank you for participating in this Town Hall Meeting! Your feedback will help improve future Town Halls.

Date: _____ Location (City/State): _____

What is your primary involvement in the nonprofit sector? (check one)

- Board member Donor Executive Director Employee/Staff Volunteer Client/Constituent Press/Media
 Other: _____

Please check any other ways you are involved in the sector:

- Board member Donor Executive Director Employee/Staff Volunteer Client/Constituent Press/Media
 Other: _____

If applicable, please select the organization's classification:

- Arts, Culture, and Humanities Education Environment and Animals Health Human Services
 International, Foreign Affairs Public, Societal Benefit Religion Related Mutual/Membership Benefit
 Other: _____

Please consider your experience during the Town Hall and evaluate these statements:

I understand the Top Priorities of the Nonprofit Congress.

Strongly Agree Somewhat Agree Somewhat Disagree Strongly Disagree

I was able to express my thoughts and opinions.

Strongly Agree Somewhat Agree Somewhat Disagree Strongly Disagree

The discussion was well-facilitated.

Strongly Agree Somewhat Agree Somewhat Disagree Strongly Disagree

I'm willing to commit to one new thing to strengthen the nonprofit sector and work towards our Top Priorities and that is:

What worked well about this Town Hall?

What could have worked better?

Would you like to receive periodic e-mail updates about the Nonprofit Congress? Yes No

First and Last Name: _____ Email: _____

Your contact information is confidential and will not be sold or used for any other purpose.