

# **BCGEU CHILD CARE CAMPAIGN TOOLBOX**

## **4: Town Hall meeting**

### **Town hall planning check list**

- Choose speaker/panel members
- Locate an accessible site
- Identify a date
- Develop a budget (if needed)
- Liability insurance/waiver (if needed)
- Meeting agenda

## **Location, Location, Location**

Pick a central community location for the town hall meeting. Check out community halls, recreation centres, churches, schools, or a local union office (the rental cost is often lower at these places and, in some cases, it may be donated free of charge. Ensure there are adequate washroom facilities, access for those with disabilities and that the facility is child friendly.

## **Planning check list**

Set up an organizing committee for your planning meeting. If your committee is small and you expect a large crowd, recruit some volunteers to help out. No matter the size of your meeting, others will have to help. This can give different groups an interest in the issue.

## **Volunteers**

- Photographer
- Recorder
- Registration
- Set-up
- Take down/clean up
- Outreach and public relations activities
- Radio/news spots
- Newspaper articles
- Leaflets, poster
- Email, faxes
- Invitation letter
- Arrange transportation (coordination if applicable)
- Supplies and hand outs

## Supply:

- clip boards if available
- pads of paper or photocopied sign in sheets / volunteer sheets
- highlighter pen, regular pens, stickies, felt pens, crayons
- rubber bands, masking tape, stapler
- snacks, drinks
- blank paper for a sign, extra flip chart paper (if using flip charts or for kids to draw on), flip chart pens
- a list of phone numbers for volunteers and speakers
- anything else you think you may need

## Facility set-up

Make sure the public entrance is clearly marked and that people know what to do once they enter.

It's good to have a few greeters at the main door who can welcome people and answer any questions about logistics (such as where to sit and where are the washrooms). Greeters can also direct members of the media to a special media table and point out organizers or spokespeople.

Have the greeters hand out the agenda.

Place a table near the entrance where people can pick up materials, including the agenda and background information (without blocking the way). Have a few clipboards with sign-in sheets and ask people to sign in with their name, phone number or email address. Keep enough clipboards available a table so people do not have to wait in line to sign in.

The greeters can direct latecomers to an empty seat.

If you anticipate children coming and the space is large enough, have an area set aside with some tables and chairs, art materials and toys. Delegate someone to oversee the activities. Kids could perhaps draw placards for an upcoming march or event.

You will need a head table and chairs for the speaker(s) and a podium if available. Have a microphone at the head table and 1-5 in the audience area (aisles) depending on size of the space and the crowd.

Ensure that aisles are wide enough for people can get through. Leave a four-foot wide space directly in front of the head table for photographers and camera crews. Have a table set up off to the side of the head table where radio journalists can plug their recorders into the sound system (check with your sound technician).

## **The moderator**

Introduce yourself to the guest speaker(s) or panel members before the meeting starts. Find out if they have any preferences or concerns (like having to leave early or not wanting to go first). Welcome them and try to make them feel comfortable.

## **Start the meeting on time!**

- Have a pad of paper and pen to jot down notes.
- If a panel member has not shown up by the time you start, switch up the order.
- Maintain the flow of the meeting as planned.
- Start by welcoming people to the meeting and explaining the purpose. Go over the agenda and the format ( speaker followed by questions for example) and give times for how long the meeting is expected to go on.
- Introduce the guest speaker(s) and their affiliations. Identify in order people who want to speak during the open mike discussion.
- Remind those who haven't signed in they can do so at the clipboards near the door on their way out.

## **Sample Agenda**

### **6:30 - 7:00 Registration**

### **7:00 Welcome and Introductions**

Introduce any politicians, municipal, school board, etc. This will help media identify people for interviews and bring more attention to the issue.

### **7:10 Panel Discussion**

The panel should be comprised of three guests to make the issue three dimensional:

- One panel member who gives the background;
- One panel member who relies on the services;
- One panel member who provides the services.

Each panel member should have 5-10 minutes. (Make sure to advise them of this 5-10 minute limit BEFORE the meeting) Hold them to the time limits.

### **7:50 Topic Discussion/ Action Plan**

Advise people that the moderator will identify people in order as best they can.

Ask people to keep their comments brief. You may want to ask what they can contribute to the campaign.

Have a volunteer documenting the discussion.

Talk to a couple of people in advance who are attending and ask if they can start off the discussion, this will make others feel comfortable about standing and speaking.

Advise attendees that minutes of the town hall meeting and updates will be provided to those who have provided contact info.

If someone suggests an adhoc working action group direct those interested to the back to sign up, identify the volunteer that will be assigned to the task.

### **8:30 Wrap up**

Identify topics and actions people have suggested and give an overview of the meeting and where everyone is at. Invite people to stay and mingle, and thank them for coming out for this very important event.

### **8:40 Adjournment**

Thank people for taking the time to attend and participate.

Thank them in advance for the work they are going to be doing to ensure that together they are all making a difference. Remind them again to pick up the info and leave contact info.

If lots of media in attendance let them know location of any interviews for participants panel members.

## **Media package**

You should have a press release prepared for the media. Hand out a statement as part of a package with issue leaflets, biographies and information sources which can be used as background by media.

Don't be stingy with the material. Anything you can provide to help them understand the issue will be worth it.

Banners and signage should be displayed behind the head table. This will assist in promoting the cause. When the image appears on camera or in a photo it will help identify the cause.

## **Media contact**

Ensure media releases go out identify to the key people for interviews. Identify a volunteer for media table sign in. If a large meeting is taking place you may also want to have an area reserved for media off to the side, and point out to the media photo opportunity. This person can also do all advertising for the event, and press releases.

## **Event spokesperson**

All questions related to event go to that person. They are responsible to ensure volunteers get the info out to invite public to town hall meeting.

## **Written materials**

Have a table of written materials near the back of the room. Invite people to take materials and distribute them. If no folders are available, you may want to bring in a bunch of shopping bags people can use to carry their info.

## **Volunteers**

Be realistic in what you can expect from volunteers, don't plan more than what can be expected.

The following assignments will need a volunteer:

## **Meeting set up**

Scout location and take care of rental agreement. Visit location if unknown prior to ensure it can work. Recruit volunteers for handouts, greeters, logistics questions, sign up, set up and clean up.

## **Lobby coordinator**

This person will identify people or organizations that need to be invited as well as act as a liaison. Contact all supporting groups personally. Concentrate on natural allies first, approach affected groups and recruit friendly politicians.

## **Public relations support person**

They ensure all event invitations get to the public, by word of mouth, email alerts, fax alerts, postering, advertising, public service announcements, community calendar listings, leafleting public areas etc.

## **Transportation volunteer**

In case someone needs a ride or info on how to get there by public transit etc.

You can never have too many volunteers. The shorter the time they are allotted for the duty, the longer they will stay, and you can count on them to volunteer in the future.

Have all volunteers arrive at least half an hour prior to the event to identify logistics and set up.

**Have fun, be professional, stay on time... and always have a backup plan!**