

NATIONAL ISSUES FORUMS NETWORK

Getting Started

www.NIFL.org



1. Local Ownership and Capacity

Get organized into an advisory committee and assign specific responsibilities.

Tailor the format to the community or to the audience you are trying to reach.

Start with an existing group in the community. Think about audiences who would see it as being in their self-interest to engage in choice work and deliberation about specific issues. For the affordable housing topic we suggest inviting the following key groups:

Realtors, Habitat for Humanity, Local Official ~ Mayor, Zoning Official, City Manager; Community Action Agency, Library, Churches, Housing Authority, League of Women Voters, Landlord Association, Bankers, School Counselors,



2. Partners for Tasks

Each of the forums controls and finances it's own program. Costs that you need to consider are promotional costs, material costs, room expenses, and refreshments or meals. Moderator's travel and expenses are covered through a partnership with the College of DuPage. You will want to be sure to contact Moderators early in your planning to find the best possible date.

Many local agencies and organizations will be excellent financial partners in this project. You may even find it beneficial to divide responsibilities among several partners.

You may order issue books at a cost of \$3 per book plus shipping and handling from ...

Document and Publications Services (DPS)
Horrabin Hall 46
Western Illinois University
Macomb, IL 61455
(800)322-3905
email: dj-burnell@wiu.edu

Be sure to include date, location and list of forum sponsors in your request. You may also fax the letter to CPC at (309)298-2869.

“...makes a difference.”



3. Keep Making Connections

Public politics is a politics of connections or relationships, not only of those with similar self-interests but those with very different self-interests.

One of the most important questions organizers can ask is:
Who is not in this room who needs to be here?

That question should be followed by:
Why aren't they here? How can we bring them to the table?



4. Build on What Grows

Before ending a forum, be sure to ask:

What, if anything, do we want to do next?

Many experienced convenors have experienced an increase of activity around issues following a forum.

“...makes a difference.”

