



THE REALTOR® PARTY OF CALIFORNIA

Best Practices Guide

Hosting a Candidate Town Hall

Hosting a Candidate Town Hall is a great way for your local Association of REALTORS® (AOR) to connect with candidates and advocate for your association's needs. This guide will help you efficiently plan and execute a successful event. A town hall offers candidates a platform to interact with members, address housing-related questions, and understand local housing issues that are important to your association.

Checklist for Hosting a Candidate Town Hall

- ✓ **Identify Candidates:** Collect questionnaires, conduct interviews (if needed), and decide which candidates to invite.
- ✓ **Venue/Format:** Choose a location and decide if the event will be in-person or virtual.
- ✓ **Schedule Wisely:** Plan the event a few months before the election.
- ✓ **Plan Logistics:** Set dates, times, and a location for an in-person town hall or set up your virtual platform.
- ✓ **Localize Questions:** Tailor templated questions to your region and select a moderator.
- ✓ **Send Invitations:** Email candidates with RSVP deadlines; be flexible with scheduling.
- ✓ **Promote the Event:** Announce the town hall in newsletters and on social media.

Sample Candidate Invitation Email

Below is an email template you can use to invite a candidate to a town hall. The email should be addressed to the candidate and sent to all important contacts. If the candidate is a current elected official, include their assistant, scheduler, field representative, or other key contacts in their office. If they are not currently elected, include their campaign team in the email.

SUBJECT - You're Invited: Meet the Members of the [LOCAL ASSOCIATION] at a Candidate Town Hall

Dear [NAME],

Thank you for completing our [YEAR] Candidate Questionnaire. We are pleased to invite you to our [YEAR] Candidate Town Hall, a valuable opportunity to engage with our members and discuss housing-related topics such as supply, land use, rent control, and homeownership. The event will take place on [DATE/TIME/LOCATION]. Please confirm your attendance by [DEADLINE].

*Sincerely,
[Signatory's Name]
[Signatory's Title]*

Event Preparation Steps

- ✓ **Promote to Members:** Encourage members to attend and engage with the candidate.
- ✓ **Finalize Details:** Organize materials, confirm the agenda, and ensure all roles are clear.
- ✓ **Prepare Candidates:** Share the list of questions with candidates 10 days to two weeks prior to the town hall.

Sample Town Hall Questions

Each community in California faces its own unique challenges in addressing our state's housing crisis. The questions below can and should be localized to fit your specific obstacles and be appropriate for the election, whether it be on the local, state, or federal levels.

Homeownership Opportunities

- The median price for a home in the state of California in [YEAR] is [PRICE]. How do you plan to expand access to homeownership opportunities for working Californians, particularly those facing barriers such as down payment challenges?
- Aside from down payment assistance, what other policies do you believe can be implemented to make homeownership more attainable for California families?

Streamlining Development

- Regarding zoning and land use, what strategies do you propose to modify regulations to increase housing supply, including increasing density in urban and suburban areas?
- What are your views on increasing density in urban and suburban areas?

Housing Supply

- Should we encourage the conversion of underutilized commercial or retail properties to residential or mixed-use developments, and if so, what incentives would you support to promote adaptive reuse?
- How can local and state governments expedite housing production while preserving the character of a neighborhood? And when should housing policy be determined at the local level versus the state level?

Affordable Housing

- Subsidizing housing units is one way to build affordable housing, but the cost can be untenable for cities. What are your policy solutions to incentivize developers to build more affordable housing?
- What is your strategy for tackling homelessness and providing support for those in need of housing assistance?

Rent Control

- The voices of small rental housing property providers are sometimes overpowered by larger corporations when discussing rent control, yet many small owners are stakeholders in the community - investing in the improvement of aging housing stock. How do you plan to support small rental housing property providers to ensure they can thrive, particularly in the face of challenges like rent control?
- Considering concerns from economists on both sides, what is your approach to implementing rent control regulations, and how do you balance tenant protections with housing supply dynamics?

Step 5: Provide Follow-up Information

Share a summary with members, highlighting key points and commitments made by the candidate. Continue to keep members informed about ongoing advocacy efforts.