

# QUICK TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE FORUMS |

- I. **Keep it nonpartisan:** This means inviting all the candidates for an elected position, and not just the Democrat and the Republican. Inviting only the major parties shows partisan preference to those two groups.
- II. **Build a coalition:** You can generate a larger audience and guarantee more candidates accept your invitation by having more groups involved in hosting the event. Caution: one issue with having too many groups involved in hosting is you might not have enough time to focus specifically on housing.
- III. **Bring the cameras:** Do your best to get commitments from media outlets to broadcast the event or cover it in their publications. Use live-streaming options such as Facebook or consider posting recordings to your website or your blog. Let the candidates know the media has been invited.
- IV. **Follow-ups are essential:** Be sure to have a sign-in table where you can collect contact information of attendees. This table should also have voter registration forms for people who have not yet registered.
- V. **Materials and factsheets:** Provide information to attendees and candidates in advance so that the conversation starts from an informed perspective with the most recent data available about the housing shortage and homelessness in your community.
- VI. **Curate the questions:** A fully open Q&A can often get off topic or even unruly. Ask attendees to write their questions on note cards as they arrive. Arrange for some of your volunteers to go through the cards to pick the ones that are most interesting, relevant, and timely.
- VII. **Give the candidates time:** The candidates for office are making time available during their very busy campaign schedule. Be sure to offer them time at both the beginning and end of the forum to discuss their vision and campaign in their own terms.
- VIII. **Make it easy to attend:** When organizing events where many attendees are likely to be low-income, always consider barriers that can be addressed to get people in the room. Offer food or childcare services, which can often be coordinated through volunteers. If you have the capacity, organize carpools to the event to boost attendance.