

ORGANIZING ISSUE FORUMS

THE BASICS

Issue forums are a great way to promote community dialogue on current issues of relevance to AAUW. We recommend choosing one topic on which to focus your event, such as equal pay, campus sexual assault, or an issue important to your members. An issue forum can be structured in one of many ways.

Panel Discussion

Panel discussions are a common format to share information with a community. Often there will be 3-5 experts or community leaders who each share a perspective on the issue, followed by a question and answer period.

Town Hall

Town halls are an great tool for engaging people around an issue. The format encourages community dialogue and can be used to generate awareness about an issue. This typically includes 2-4 panelists who bring different viewpoints to the issue. For these events it's helpful to have a neutral party moderate the discussion and manage audience questions.

Virtual Town Hall

A virtual town hall meeting is great choice if your speakers or participants are spread out, or if it's difficult for everyone to gather in one place. Platforms like Zoom or Google Meet can make it easy for people to participate from any location, as long as they have good internet.

CHOOSE GREAT SPEAKERS

The most interesting events usually feature speakers with a broad range of experience. Invite speakers with knowledge or personal experience with your chosen issue. Consider the goals of your program and invite people you believe would appeal to your audience.

Diversifying your speakers provides multiple perspectives and can lead to a memorable event. Think about speakers who will be there not there to incite but to discuss. If you invite more than one speaker, divide up topics, and ensure that speakers know who will join them on the panel.

WORK WITH PARTNERS

Use an issue forum to network by inviting organizations and individuals to strengthen preexisting relationships in your community and to establish new ones!

To learn more about the AAUW Action Fund, please email Policy@aauw.org or visit www.aauwaction.org.