

Sharing Your Views at a Town Hall

Town hall meetings and similar virtual events, such as Facebook live chats or tele-town halls, are the perfect opportunity for scientists to directly share their priorities with elected officials. Many of these events are not scheduled far in advance, so it's important to monitor for opportunities to engage.

Stay Informed of Local Events

- ▶ Join your policymaker's email list — offices often send out information regarding these events.
- ▶ Follow them on **Facebook** and Twitter.
- ▶ Check your policymaker's official website frequently.
- ▶ Read your local paper, including the "events" and "local news" pages.

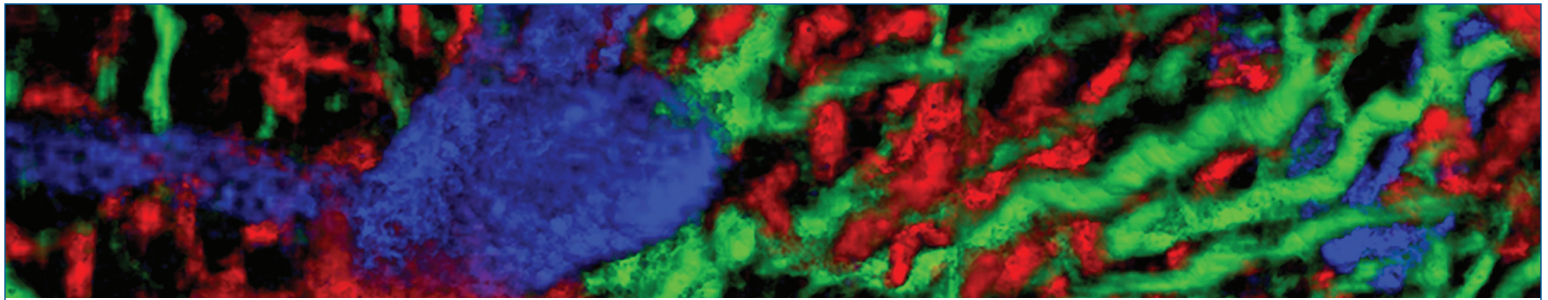
Prepare for an In-Person Town Hall

- ▶ Prepare brief remarks and your question(s) in advance. Include your town or neighborhood to demonstrate that you are a constituent and tie in your work as a neuroscientist.
- ▶ Practice your talking points with a like-minded colleague or in the mirror to practice being calm and charismatic.
- ▶ Arrive early to get a spot near the microphones or in the front.
- ▶ Be polite but assertive.
- ▶ If you were unable to ask your question during the meeting, try to connect with them afterwards.
- ▶ Encourage others to attend. If the policymaker doesn't answer your question, a colleague may be able to follow-up. Your policymaker will take notice if attendees are talking about the same topic.
- ▶ Take a picture of or with the policymaker and post it to your social media. Connect the post to your desired outcome and be sure to tag them. You can find their Twitter handle at govtrack.us.

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Prepare for a Tele-Town Hall

- ▶ Events may be advertised with call-in information, or you may receive a call with an automated message asking you to remain on the line if you're interested in "attending."
- ▶ The call-in service will provide you specifics on how to ask a question and unmute your line.
- ▶ After the event, there may be a survey and other opportunities for continued engagement, so listen for further instructions and recordings.
- ▶ As with the in-person town hall, prepare and rehearse your question in advance so you can be efficient and clear when the opportunity arises.
- ▶ Contact the district or state office for your policymaker to follow-up if you are unable to ask your question during the event.

Sample Questions

It always helps to have your questions ready to go. Here are some sample questions:

- ▶ What are you willing to do to ensure there is adequate funding for biomedical and neuroscience research?
- ▶ What are your ideas for ensuring that our nation continues to robustly support and invest in biomedical and neuroscience research?
- ▶ My research is looking at [topic], which is helping us better understand the brain [and XXX devastating disease]. How can we work together to ensure that adequate funding for biomedical and neuroscience research remains strong and a priority?

Let your SfN staff partners know if you attend a Town Hall as we monitor individual policymakers and their interests. You can also let us know if you need help preparing questions by contacting us at advocacy@sfn.org.

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