

# Holding an Election Forum at your Library

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The purpose of an election forum is to give all the candidates an opportunity to present their platforms to the public, and for voters to hear what they have to say and ask questions. If no one else in your community is hosting an election forum, this is an opportunity for the library to take a lead.

Here are some simple steps to host the forum:

1

**Pick a date and time for your event** (make sure it doesn't conflict with other programs you are running or other community activities)

- Choose a moderator (this would be a good role for your board chair, if they are not a candidate).
- Ensure that you have enough space and chairs to host this event. If not, find a community organization to partner with.
- Decide whether you want to serve coffee and cookies.

2

**Select your format** -- there are several choices:

- Candidates giving prepared remarks and the attendees may follow up with questions, or
- Candidates are asked prepared questions (these may be distributed in advance) and provide answers. Questions may be asked at the end, or
- Candidates are asked questions submitted by the audience, and then add closing statements. This can be more challenging for the moderator (if there are contentious issues).

3

**Send an invitation letter to each of the candidates**

- Make sure to send it well in advance; explain the purpose and format of the event.
- Add a reminder to your calendar of when to follow up via phone if they do not respond. Plan to run the event if only one candidate agrees.

4

**Promote the event:**

- Use your social media platforms
- Reach out to local media
- Contact local organizations who may be interested (Friends of the Library, local volunteer groups, schools)

- Encourage employees to share the event details with interested parties

**After the event:**

5

- a. Send a follow up thank you letter/email to each of the participating candidates.
- b. Send a thank you to your moderator and any other volunteers who helped with the event.