



TOWN OPEN HOUSE / ORIENTATION TOOLKIT

Looking for a great tool to reach your residents with important information?

How about a chance for your council or select board to interact in person with their constituents?

A way to make sure that your neighbors can find out what's going on in town, how to get involved, or how to make the best use of municipal services?

We have a suggestion!

It's an easy event that can involve as many or as few departments as you like, and all it takes is a little bit of planning and a few tables to reach lots of the right people! Check out our toolkit for a Community Open House and get in touch with ecomaine for any help, suggestions, or other info!





WHAT

It's an open house to promote your community and its services! Pull together your departments, get the info they want to share with your residents, set up some tables, and get going!

WHO

Make sure each of your departments has the opportunity to be represented. Of course, ecomaine would like to partner on a table with your public works team to tackle issues related to waste management.



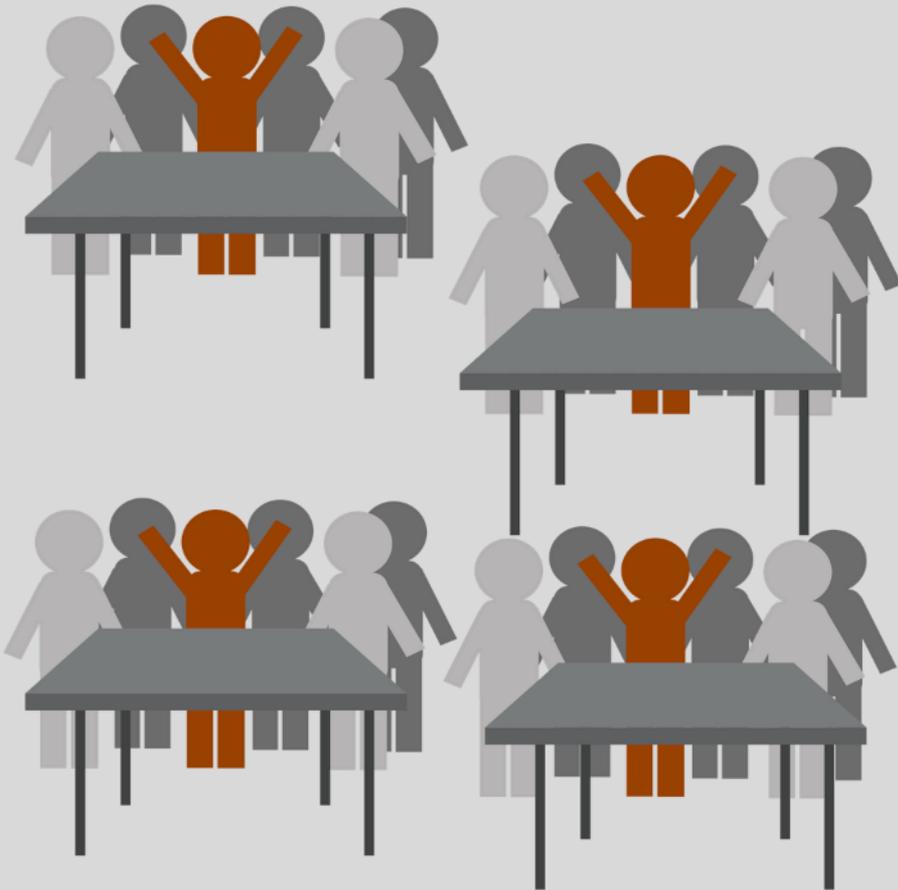
Think about what residents would most like to know – appoint a point person to coordinate the entire event, and reach out to the following...

- Fire & Police
- Schools & PTOs
- Public Works & ecomaine
- Town Clerk & Finance
- Recreation
- Library
- Planning, Zoning, & Code Enforcement
- Historical Society
- Animal Control
- Human Resources
- Other special town committees or school boosters

Don't forget to invite your councilors or select board! It's a *great* opportunity for them to interact with residents!

WHERE

Council meeting chambers, community centers, libraries, churches, village greens (weather permitting) – any place that has enough room for as many tables as you need!



WHEN

Early weeknights tend to be popular, so that young families can bring kids, if childcare is an issue (tip: put out some coloring books on a table and bring in some healthy snacks!) It's best to have a long enough range of time, though, so people who work later can also make it. We recommend 5:30 or 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

You can also tie it to a community event, like an electronic waste cleanup day at the transfer station, or a little league kickoff event.



WHY

We all want to get the attention of our target audience – in the case of towns and cities everywhere, it's the residents!

By creating a common event where all residents can convene, meet people from the town and each other, and get important information about their community all at once, we can make sure that the opportunity exists for each resident to interact with their town in a positive way.

HOW

Start by getting buy-in from your town manager and department heads; this is a low-cost way to reach residents with important information and services, and to be an active part of your community's life.

When you have the OK, identify people in each department who would put your town's best foot forward, and have the authority to speak for that particular team.

Create table displays that catch people's eye and demonstrate the relevant info – pictures from kid's story times at the library, job opportunities from human resources, fire safety info from the fire department, recycling tips from ecomaine and public works, and school registration information for families with new students.

(Tip: it also doesn't hurt to have giveaways like key chains, stickers, pens, or even a candy dish!)



HOW, continued

Make sure you get the word out – emails, flyers and posters, social media, newspaper ads, and more can all help drum up interest! Here's an example from the town of Cumberland:

Communication News

New Resident Orientation

Tuesday, May 7th @6-8pm (Cumberland Town Hall)



NEW RESIDENT ORIENTATION

Tuesday, May 7th
6:00-8:00pm
Cumberland Town Hall

Don't miss the New Resident Orientation next week! The event is on Tuesday, May 7th from 6-8pm at Town Hall. Stop by to meet town staff and elected officials, ask questions, and learn more about the community. It'll be a great opportunity to learn more about the services and activities Cumberland has to offer as well as a time to mingle with other new residents.

RSVP to the Event!

Our New Resident Orientation has been one of the most important programs we have implemented in my 16 years here as Manager. The energy in the room between staff, elected officials and new residents is exciting and contagious. All involved leave feeling good about their jobs, the staff and most importantly the Town. If you do this, do it well and keep it free flowing.

Structured presentations are necessary for specific meetings, not this one. This needs to be a “Meet & Greet” to be successful. It has to feel genuine and welcoming and I guarantee you it will be well received, because you cared enough to do this for your newest residents. Dare to try....

You won't regret it!

– Bill Shane, Cumberland Town
Manager

GET IN TOUCH!

ecomaine has some experience with open house events, both on our own, and as part of other communities' events that have reached many people on a single night. We'd be happy to share more of our insights – get in touch!

ecomaine



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