



2023 Candidate Forum Guidance

Before the forum

- **Find partners.** Approach allies, education stakeholders, and community non-profits to partner on candidate forum. Do not partner with organizations that directly conflict with our issues.
- **Secure a time and place.** Ensure your location is ADA accessible. Union halls or public libraries are often free and accessible options. Consider a virtual option like Facebook Live or Zoom.
- **Set the forum format.** Work with partners to set guidelines for your forum. We recommend having a moderator and several prepared questions. Map out a timeline for your forum and how long you plan to give each candidate for their introduction, answers, and closing. Keep the entire event under two hours.
- **Invite all candidates to participate.** Explain forum guidelines in your invite and set a deadline to RSVP. Follow up with candidates. If only one candidate RSVPs or if there is not a contested race, consider not hosting a forum.
- **Recruit volunteers.** Consider the following jobs needed for your forum to be a success: moderator, sign-in table, candidate greeter, beverages and refreshment helpers, timecard holder.
- **PROMOTE YOUR FORUM!** Invite all members to attend. Use newsletters, emails, phone calls, and social media to promote your event.

Day of the forum

- **What to bring:** sign-in sheets, nametags, pens & markers, timecards, voter registration forms, absentee ballot request forms, notecards for the audience to submit questions, and light refreshments.
- **Things to consider:** parking, sound, seating, layout, streaming event online.
- **Moderator responsibilities:** welcome guests; thank sponsors, hosts, and candidates; explain format; keep event moving forward and adhere to guidelines.
- **Timing:** have a volunteer with timecards in front to keep candidates on track.

After the forum

- **Submit** any voter registration forms or absentee ballot request forms to the county auditor's office. *It is illegal to turn in **completed absentee ballots** outside your household.
- Send a "**thank you**" to participating candidates, moderators, and volunteers.
- Meet with members to **evaluate candidates** for your final recommendations.