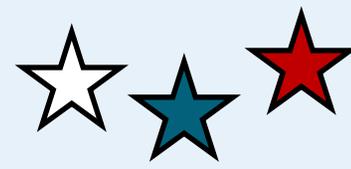


TOWN HALLS



What is a town hall?

There are two types of town halls. One type is a building that holds the offices of the town government. The other type is a political event in which candidates speak directly with voters. That's the type of town hall being discussed here—when presidential candidates hold meetings with voters.



Who can come to town halls?

Anyone! The people who attend town halls don't need to be from the candidate's political party to attend. They don't even have to be from the town. They could be from another town or even another state. In fact, the people who attend don't even need to be voters yet. Lots of kids attend town halls with their parents so they can learn how the primary process works. And if they raise their hand to ask a question, candidates usually call on them because they want kids to learn how to participate in our democracy.



How does a town hall work?

All town halls are different, but most of the time, a candidate's campaign will book a large room and then invite voters from the town to come meet the candidate. The candidate will often give a short speech about his or her beliefs or explain why they are running for president. Then the town hall is opened for questions from the voters. The voters can ask the candidate anything they want, and the candidate answers. Voters might ask a candidate about America's role in the world, or about the economy, the environment, college tuition, education, national parks, or anything else they are interested in!

Where are town halls held?

A town hall doesn't have to be held in the actual town hall building. In fact, most of them are held in other public places, as long as the place is big enough to hold many people. Most town halls have between 50 and 100 people attend, but they can be either bigger or smaller. Town halls can be held in churches, fire or police stations, meeting rooms, libraries, restaurants, or anywhere else!

Watch out! Don't confuse town hall meetings with town meetings. Town meetings are official meetings of the town government, when the townspeople vote for officers, pass town ordinances, and approve a budget.