Guest Speakers Guide

Programs for Neighborhood Groups

Last updated September 20, 2013

This guide — published by the Office of Neighborhoods — lists programs and speakers available for neighborhood meetings in the City of Knoxville, Tennessee.

Neighborhood groups needing a speaker or program should contact the agency or organization directly and make your own arrangements. However, you can still contact the Office of Neighborhoods (215-3232) for ideas and suggestions if the topics listed in this guide do not meet your needs.

This guide is updated as needed. If your agency, organization or business wishes to be included, email dmassey@cityofknoxville.org with the following information: organization name; program topic; brief description of what can be covered; web address; and contact name, phone and email.

Business owners, nonprofits, and professionals — as well as government agencies — are urged to submit program topics for this publication.

To be included in this Guide, presentations must not solicit business or make direct appeals for donations. The Office of Neighborhoods reserves the right to edit entries submitted for this Guide and to reject entries deemed unsuitable for any reason.

If your neighborhood group has enjoyed a particular program or speaker not listed here, please let us know.

For updates to or questions about this guide, please contact Neighborhood Coordinator David Massey at 215-3232 or dmassey@cityofknoxville.org.
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**Tips on Making Arrangements for a Guest Speaker**
City of Knoxville

311 Call Center
Russ Jensen, Director
(865) 215-2066
rjensen@cityofknoxville.org

The City’s 311 telephone service provides a gateway to all programs and services the city provides. A 311 official will explain how 311 works and how to best use this service for maximum benefit in your neighborhood. With years of accumulated data, the official will also address the benefits of 311, including greater efficiency in delivery of services.

Community Development Dept. - Housing Rehabilitation
Janna Cecil
Housing Finance Supervisor
(865) 215-3079
jcecil@cityofknoxville.org

Owner-Occupied Rehab Program – Learn how this program helps low- and moderate-income homeowners make significant repairs to their homes to bring them up to the City’s Neighborhood Housing Standards. Income limits apply.
http://www.cityofknoxville.org/development/ownerrehab.asp

Rental Rehab Program – Learn how landlords can receive assistance to make significant repairs to rental homes and bring them up to the City’s Neighborhood Housing Standards, in return for their agreement to lease the units to lower income tenants at an affordable rent.
http://www.cityofknoxville.org/development/rentalrehab.asp

Disability Services
Stephanie Brewer Cook
Disability Services Coordinator
(865) 215-2034 Voice
(865) 215-4581 TTY
scook@cityofknoxville.org

Learn about the services available throughout the city for Knoxvillians with disabilities. Also, learn about the rights and responsibilities of persons with a disability under the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and how they can expect to interact or participate in the programs and processes of the City of Knoxville. General information about the ADA and the Mayor’s Council on Disability issues (CODI) is also available.

Accommodations such as interpreters for the Deaf, large print or Brailled documents for people who are blind or have low vision, and information on CD or via email are available for anyone who may need an accommodation in order to communicate with City personnel or individual departments. These are provided free of charge, but 72 hours’ notice is needed.

Fire Department
Captain Paul Trumpore
(865) 805-2890
ptrumpore@cityofknoxville.org

The fire department is willing and able to talk to any group about fire safety, fire codes, and arson. The fire department can train any group on proper fire extinguisher techniques.
City of Knoxville

Knoxville Area Transit (KAT)
Cindy McGinnis, General Manager
(865) 215-7824
cmcginnis@katbus.com

KAT General Manager Cindy McGinnis is available to speak about one or more KAT topics, such as how KAT is structured and funded, the services KAT provides, tips on how to ride the bus, cost and payment options, and the Knoxville Station Transit Center.

Office of Neighborhoods
David Massey, Neighborhood Coordinator
(865) 215-3232
dmassey@cityofknoxville.org

The Office of Neighborhoods offers a wide variety of programs for meetings of an entire neighborhood or a smaller group, such as the board of directors. Topics include:
- Starting a Neighborhood Organization
- Holding Effective Meetings
- Recruiting & Retaining Members
- Working with City Government for the Benefit of Your Neighborhood
- From Conflict to Resolution: Getting Past Disagreements in Your Neighborhood

If you have an issue that may involve city government and don’t know who to call, or who to invite to your meeting, call the Office of Neighborhoods to get started.

Police Advisory and Review Committee
Avice Evans Reid, Executive Director
215-3869
areid@cityofknoxville.org

The Police Advisory and Review Committee (PARC) is available to meet with neighborhood groups to share information about the work of the committee and to receive allegations of possible KPD officers' violation of KPD policies. PARC also serves as the liaison between the citizens of Knoxville and KPD. If citizens suspect illegal activities occurring in their neighborhood and are ill at ease with going directly to KPD, they may bring those concerns to PARC to address on their behalf. PARC participates in mediation between citizens and police officers to resolve issues that involve areas such as: understanding of laws; perceptions of professional behavior; lack of communication; and actions or verbiage that may be perceived as threatening, rude, or disrespectful.

PARC meets quarterly and all citizens are encouraged to attend and participate in those quarterly meetings. See: http://www.cityofknoxville.org/boards/parc/

Police Department
Safety Education
Sergeant Kelly Tanner, Safety Education Supervisor
(865) 215-1510
ktanner@cityofknoxville.org

The program covers a broad range of topics from personal safety to violence in the workplace and pretty much everything in between. A lot of requests are specifically tailored to a particular group. Our program delivers all types of crime prevention training and topics.
City of Knoxville

Public Service Department
David Brace, Director
(865) 215-2060
dbrace@cityofknoxville.org

Chad Weth
Deputy Director
(865) 215-6053

PSD Overview
The program will provide a general overview of services provided by the department. Topics Include:

- Trees, Tree Planting and Maintenance
- Public Grounds Maintenance
- Construction and Facility Maintenance
- Downtown Special Events and Maintenance
- General Public Works
- Snow/Ice Removal

Neighborhood Codes Enforcement
Robert Moyers, Manager
(865) 215-2119
rmoyers@cityofknoxville.org

Learn about investigations of codes violations in regards to dilapidated buildings, dirty or overgrown lots, illegal dumping, and abandoned vehicles — and how these violations are corrected.

Solid Waste & Recycling
John Homa, Solid Waste Project Manager
(865) 215-2872
jhoma@cityofknoxville.org

PowerPoint presentation about the Solid Waste Office, transfer station, household hazardous waste collection, recycling and general services provided by the Public Service Department. Flyers can be provided as well.

- Adopt-A-Stream Program
- Rain Barrel Workshops

PowerPoint presentations cover our NPDES (National Pollution Discharge Elimination System) Program, Basic Water Quality, Low Impact Development, and Rain Barrels.

Trees & Urban Forest
Kasey Krouse, Urban Forester
(865) 215-3504
kkrouse@cityofknoxville.org

The City of Knoxville Urban Forester is responsible for the expansion, protection, and maintenance of the City’s urban forest and implementing the City’s Urban Forest Management Plan. Topics for neighborhood groups include:

- Right Tree, Right Place: Proper planting practices
- Proper Pruning Practices
- Overview of the City's Urban Forest Program and Management Plan
- Neighborhoods for Trees: How can your neighborhood increase tree benefits?
- Tree Preservation: Protecting tree assets within your neighborhood
- Plant Health Care—Includes topics on Emerald Ash Borer and 1000 Cankers Disease
- How to promote and protect the tree canopy within your neighborhood
- Develop a community planting plan
- Tree Risk Assessment—How the city determines when a tree needs to be removed or pruned.
City of Knoxville

Stormwater Engineering
Brent J. Johnson, PE, RLS, Engineering Planning Chief
215-2148
bjohnson@cityofknoxville.org

The City's Stormwater Engineering Division offers a wide array of programs for neighborhood associations. These include:

- Basic Stormwater Drainage
- Illicit or Illegal Discharges - Water Quality Hotline 215-4147
- Commercial Construction Inspection (run-off from a commercial project)
- Best Management Practices (Requirements for stormwater pollution prevention and erosion control, e.g. topics such as how to wash your car, pet waste, silt fence)
Disaster Preparedness Speakers Series

American Red Cross of Tennessee Mountain Valley
Lucia De Vors, Disaster Services Volunteer
http://www.redcross.org/tn/knoxville

Learn how to protect yourself and family in times of disaster by making a plan, preparing a kit, and keeping informed. Specific information will be provided regarding planning for likely area disasters including storms, tornadoes and fire. In addition the Red Cross will emphasize the importance of developing a family communication plan. Details will be provided about how to prepare a "disaster kit and its composition, and finally, we'll review the resources available for additional training and keeping yourself informed.

Neighborhood Disaster Preparedness
Natalie Crone, Neighborhood Disaster Preparedness Coordinator
www.cityofknoxville.org/neighborhoods

Discuss the importance of disaster preparedness and learn the steps to organizing a disaster prep plan for your neighborhood. Eden will give an introduction to disaster prep and the Disaster Speakers Series. She will work with you throughout the series to take the new information and use it to help create a resilient neighborhood, build participation, and utilize each other as resources.

KEMA (Knoxville Emergency Management Agency)
Colin Ickes, Operations Officer
http://www.cityofknoxville.org/kema

Find out how the emergency management and response system works in Knoxville. Colin will explain the key players in emergency management, the roles they play in disaster response, and how they interact in the event of an emergency. Learn about the Emergency Operations Center and the way disasters are handled on a local, state, and national level.

Knox County Health Department
Emergency Preparedness Division
www.knoxcounty.org/health

Hear tips on handling a health based emergency and everyday preparedness tips for individuals, civic groups, faith-based organizations, and businesses. The Health department is flexible on covering a variety of different topics. When you call, please be prepared to provide the following information to our staff: the date/time, subject(s) you would like to be covered, the timeframe allowed, and the type of audience.
Disaster Preparedness Speakers Series

**Knoxville Fire Department**  
Public Fire Education Division  
[www.cityofknoxville.org/kfd](http://www.cityofknoxville.org/kfd)

The City of Knoxville Fire Department provides the following educational programs. Learn important fire safety information from the following **free** classes:

- Fire Extinguisher Training
- Adopting an Attitude of Safety
- Fire Escape Planning
- Burn Prevention
- Basic Burn First Aid
- Fire Safety House

Be trained in emergency response and life saving techniques with the following classes available with **appropriate fees**:

- First Aid
- CPR

**Knoxville Police Department**  
Safety Education Unit  
[www.cityofknoxville.org/kpd](http://www.cityofknoxville.org/kpd)

Learn from the experts in crisis management how to prepare for, handle, and recover from a critical incident. Let KPD share their expertise on dealing with a terrorist related event, homicide, or mass shooting.
Knox County

Health Department
Katharine Killen
Community Relations Director
(865) 215-5534
Katharine.Killen@knoxcounty.org
http://knoxcounty.org/health/

Community Engagement
Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities
(865) 215-5184

Topics include:
- Neighborhood Placemaking – Cheap and easy ways to transform unused space in your neighborhood into something that helps build community.
- Community Slow Bike Rides – Creating a neighborhood bike ride is a wonderful way to have fun, meet your neighbors and recruit for your meetings.
- A Better Block – How some cities are creating street fairs and public markets for next to nothing.
- PhotoVoice – How to use pictures to more effectively communicate your neighborhood issues.

Emergency Preparedness
Emergency Preparedness Division
215-5093

Emergency preparedness tips for individuals, civic groups, faith-based organizations, and businesses. When you call, please be prepared to provide the following information to our staff: the date/time, subject(s) you would like to be covered, the timeframe allowed, and the type of audience.

Health and Environment
Environmental Epidemiologist
(865) 215-5242

Topics include: Radon risk; air quality and health (asthma); health risks from various pollutants / contaminants in our environment, food, or water; health implications of climate change; risks from pharmaceutical waste & what to do about it; why the built environment is a public health issue; and more.

Healthy Eating
(865) 215-5304

Choose nutritious foods for long term health benefits! Sarah Griswold, registered dietitian, can show you how nutritious food is affordable and delicious.

Healthy vs. Unhealthy Relationships, Dating/Domestic Violence
Rape & Violence Prevention Educator
(865) 215-5061

Recognizing the signs of healthy & unhealthy relationships, what are the characteristics of a good or bad partner, how to intervene in an unhealthy relationship, what resources are available if you or someone you know is an unhealthy (abusive) relationship.

How Healthy Are We?
(865) 215-5095

Topics include: Heath indicators and insight to what challenges Knox County; food-borne illness and reducing your risk; specific health conditions in Knox County including heart disease, diabetes, arthritis, teen pregnancy, cancer. Will discuss who is at risk, contributing risk factors, and prevention strategies.

Mosquito Control
Environmental Health Department
215-5200
Knox County

Mosquito control measures are discussed and literature distributed to neighborhood association meetings and other groups upon request.

**Preventing Falls for Seniors**
(865) 215-5175

**Sexual Assault Prevention**
Rape & Violence Prevention Educator
(865) 215-5061

Basics of sexual assault, legal definitions, statistics, safety tips for risk reduction, date rape drugs, effect on the victim, how to respond to a disclosure, myths about sexual assault, local & national resources.

**Staying Active**
(865) 215-5610

People are made for movement! Rachel Foster, exercise physiologist, can "walk" you through the numerous benefits of physical activity and show you that being fit is fun.

**Understanding HIV and AIDS**
(865) 215-5545

HIV is still present, still a risk: What it means to our community.
Other Public Agencies

**Knoxville Utilities Board (KUB)**
Trina Gallman
Community Relations
(865) 594-7233
KUBcommunity@kub.org.
www.kub.org

You can also request a speaker here: www.kub.org/wps/portal/kubcommunity

KUB offers presentations on Energy Conservation and other company-wide initiatives and projects that affect customers. KUB’s topics include:

- Can the Grease (preventing sewage backups in homes/neighborhoods caused by cooking grease)
- Century II (proactive infrastructure management and replacement program for all services)
- Construction Projects (electric, natural gas, and water system upgrades)
- Energy & Water Conservation (tips to conserve energy and save on utility bills)
- Green Power (reducing our region’s dependency on non-renewable resources like coal and other fossil fuels)
- PACE 10 Wastewater Collection System Improvement (construction projects, wastewater facilities, environmental impact, etc.)
- Private Sewer Lateral Program (maintaining proper connections to sewer mains to protect your property and the environment)
- Natural Gas Safety & Call 811/Utility Damage Prevention (what to do if you suspect a natural gas leak and information about calling 811 to have utilities marked before digging)

- Vegetation Management (tree pruning and clearance in the utility maintenance zone around power lines). Contact KUB at 865-558-6658 or trees@kub.org to see when tree-trimming work is scheduled for your area.

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**Metropolitan Drug Commission**
Heather Sutton
(865) 588-5550
hsutton@metrodrug.org
http://metrodrug.org

Speakers are available to address youth use and adult abuse of alcohol and drugs in Knox County. Possible Featured Subjects: Underage Drinking, Prescription Drug Abuse, Drug-Free Workplace, Parenting Tips, Social Host Law, Drug Trends, Media Literacy, General information about alcohol and other drugs. *(NOTE: All topics can be tailored to fit each audience.)*
**Other Public Agencies**

**Transportation Planning Organization (TPO)**

**Safe Routes & Complete Streets**
Ellen Zavisca, Transportation Planner  
(865) 215-2500  
Ellen.Zavisca@knoxtrans.org  
www.knoxtrans.org

**Safe Routes to School**: The TPO works in partnership with the Knox County Health Department and other city and county departments to create promotional and educational programs that make it safer for children to walk and bicycle to school. They will also help identify low-cost safety projects near schools that they can help bring to the attention of the city, county or other appropriate agency. Program website:  
http://www.knoxtrans.org/plans/complete_streets/index.htm

**Complete Streets**: The TPO’s recently completed Regional Complete Streets Study identifies ways in which streets can be constructed or reconstructed to safely accommodate all users—including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and drivers—and people of all ages and abilities. The Complete Streets Guidelines produced as part of the study show how streets can work for everyone. Neighborhoods can play a big part in seeing that this happens. Program Website:  
http://www.knoxtrans.org/plans/complete_streets/index.htm

**Transportation Choices**
Kelley Segars, Transportation Planner  
(865) 215-3815  
kelley.segars@knoxtrans.org

The TPO’s Bicycle Program strives to encourage more people to bicycle and improve the safety of bicyclists through implementation of the 2009 Knoxville Regional Bicycle Plan. This presentation includes information on education, engineering, encouragement and enforcement. Handouts are available: Knoxville-Knox County Bicycle Map, series of Biking 101 brochures, and a guide on public input.

**Bike Commuting 101**: This presentation covers the basics of how to get started biking to work or school, from choosing a route to what to wear and how to carry stuff on your bike.

**Bicycling Ambassadors Booth**: Available for community festivals, this booth features all the information you could want about bicycling. Bicycling Ambassadors are on hand to answer questions as well.

**Smart Trips Program**
Sara Martin, Outreach Coordinator  
(865) 215-3234  
sara.martin@knoxtrans.org

Smart Trips offers information on carpooling, transit, bike commuting and other options like telecommuting and compressed work weeks. Participants can find a list of potential carpool partners through the free online system. By logging “clean commutes,” participants earn chances to win prizes. The coordinator is available to come to your meeting, or anyone can contact the coordinator directly with questions.
Nonprofit Organizations

Boy Scouts of America
Great Smoky Mountain Council
Anthony L. Ingram, District Executive
(865) 566-0644
Anthony.Ingram@scouting.org

Citizenship and Character Development
Programs for Youth ages 5-21: Programs for youth ages 5-21 that can help build strong communities. We have Cub Scouts – for boys ages 5-10 that are at least in the first grade; Boy Scouts – for boys ages 11-18; Venture Scouts – for boys and girls ages 13-21; and Career Exploring – for boys and girls ages 13-21.

Scouting is a GREAT program that would benefit every neighborhood because it promotes Citizenship (in the community, nation and world), Leadership and Character Development. Scouting also strongly encourages community service (once you learn a skill you are morally obligated to share that knowledge with others).

Knoxville Bar Association
Lawyer Referral Service
(865) 522-7501
www.knoxbar.org

The speakers from the Knoxville Bar Association Lawyer Referral and Information Service won’t be outspoken. That is, they intend to be second to none when it comes to speaking out about the law. Attorneys experienced in a wide range of practice areas will speak to your group or organization without charge on the subject of your choice. The Speakers Bureau is offered as a free public service. Please allow 4 weeks advance notice.

Community Mediation Center
Jackie Kittrell, Executive Director
(865) 594-1879
jkittrell@2mediate.org
www.2mediate.org

The Community Mediation Center helps resolve neighborhood conflicts through the use of trained volunteers. Using a facilitated six-step process, co-mediators meet with the parties to work out a fair and acceptable agreement. CMC can present a program that includes some simple conflict resolution skills.

Knoxville Botanical Garden and Arboretum
Keyes Williamson, Executive Director
(865) 862-8717
Keyes@KnoxGarden.org
www.KnoxGarden.org

KBGA staff has developed a short list of garden-related presentations. They also can speak about the history of the Howell Family and their nursery which remained open for over 200 years. KBGA is focused on making Knoxville a wonderful place to live and recreate.

The KBGA grounds – including walking trails and finished gardens – are open 365 days a year, from dawn to dusk, free to the public. Also, KBGA makes its “Garden Club Room” available to community groups for regular meetings or special occasions.
Information will be shared about the Volunteer Assisted Transportation (VAT) Program that provides rides for Knox County seniors and people with disabilities who need aid and assistance to travel safely by providing rides using agency owned hybrid sedans and wheelchair accessible minivans, as well as training volunteer drivers to provide (nonmedical) door-through-door transportation to those who need help.

**Volunteer Assisted Transportation**

VAT staff - 673-5001

Staff from the Senior Employment Program will share tips for individuals 50 and over returning to the work force. Information about the program is detailed including valuable job-search training in monthly workshops and interaction with employers with available positions, 2 to 3 job fairs annually, and individualized help with job counseling and resume assistance.

**Senior Employment**

Bonnie Lyle
Senior Employment Service Manager
524-2786

Staff from the Grandparents as Parents Program (GAPP) explain the unique needs of Knox County grandparents and relative caregivers raising children whose parents are unable to care for them. Information will be provided about GAPP’s support meetings, information and referrals to community resources for grandparents and relative caregivers, and GAPP’s trained Volunteer Advocates who can assist grandparents through the challenging Juvenile Court custody process or school IEP meetings.

**Grandparents as Parents**

Edna Eickman, GAPP Program Manager
edna.eickman@knoxseniors.org
524-2786

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program is sponsored through the Knoxville-Knox County CAC Office on Aging, and funded through the Corporation for National and Community Service. RSVP Staff is available to present information to the retired and senior population of Knox County on a wide range of volunteer opportunities. Additional presentations on volunteer recruitment, volunteer training, volunteer recognition event, and general volunteer management are also available.

**Volunteerism**

Ashley Rex, RSVP Coordinator
Retired and Senior Volunteer Program
(865) 524-2786
Ashley.rex@knoxseniors.org

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program is sponsored through the Knoxville-Knox County CAC Office on Aging, and funded through the Corporation for National and Community Service. RSVP Staff is available to present information to the retired and senior population of Knox County on a wide range of volunteer opportunities. Additional presentations on volunteer recruitment, volunteer training, volunteer recognition event, and general volunteer management are also available.
Nonprofit Organizations

**Prescription Drug Consumer Information and Advising**
David Holden or Peggy Ransom, 524-2786

Presentations and exhibits are provided by staff from Affordable Medicine Options for Seniors (AMOS). Special focus is on Medicare Part D, Medicare Advantage insurance, and the new Affordable Care Act. Information is also available about prescription drug free medicine and discount programs. AMOS volunteers provide in-depth research and advising for seniors and people with disabilities.

**Senior Companion Program**
SCP Staff, 524-2786
Deisha Finley, Senior Corps Manager
deisha.finley@knoxseniors.org

Information will be shared about the Senior Companion Program (SCP), which provides low-income volunteers an opportunity to serve homebound and isolated individuals in the community. Volunteers receive a stipend for providing respite care, home maker services, personal care, and companionship to the vulnerable population.

**Support Services for Seniors**
Misty Goodwin, Melinda Bryant, 524-2786

Staff from Project LIVE (Living Independently through Volunteer Efforts) explain services provided by the program including in-home assessment, care management, and referral to community services and resources. Volunteers do chore services and make minor home repairs and safety modifications for seniors who are determined eligible.
**Business and Professional**

**Eat Your Yard**  
Greenbrier Farm and Nursery  
Glenda Ross  
865-742-8708  
rossglenda@gmail.com  
www.eatyouryard.org

This education-based nursery can provide a speaker to discuss how you can make your yard “gorgeous, affordable and edible naturally and organically.”

**Residential Landscaping & Stormwater Control**  
Patrice Cole, PhD  
865-216-7626  
patrice.cole53@yahoo.com

Patrice Cole operates Stormwater and Wetland Consultants LLC. She is available to address: 1) promoting the use of native plants in residential landscaping and eradicating non-native, invasive species such as Chinese privet; and 2) promoting the use of rain gardens and other low-impact development practices for stormwater management to reduce runoff and increase beneficial use of rain water.

**Programs on Domestic Violence & Human Trafficking**  
Silvia Calzadilla  
405-8491  
Silvia8491@yahoo.com

Based on her previous personal and professional experience and training, Silvia Calzadilla can address two issues she wants more citizens to know about.  
**Domestic Violence** – What it is and is not, why it occurs, how it affects the whole family, how to recognize it, and who to call if you suspect that domestic violence is taking place.  
**Human Trafficking** – This talk covers the two types of human trafficking (labor and sex), how human trafficking differs from smuggling and domestic violence, statistics, the existence of human trafficking in Tennessee, how to recognize it, what to do about it. Both talks can be in Spanish, English, or both, and can be tailored appropriately to the specific audience, including teens as well as adults.
Making Arrangements for a Guest Speaker at Your Neighborhood Meeting

Just a little advance planning and clear communications will go a long way toward ensuring a successful meeting with a guest speaker. Here are a few tips:

- First and foremost, select speakers and topics of interest to your members. A program topic may be tied to a particular challenge or opportunity facing your organization. Also, stay tuned to issues and concerns expressed by your neighbors, and set aside time at the end of your meetings to ask for program ideas for future meetings.

- Contact your speaker as far in advance as possible — three or four weeks if possible.

- There is nothing worse than having your speaker show up on the wrong day, so double-check the date and time of the meeting, and the location. Even then, confirm the arrangements by telephone or email a day or two prior to your event.

- Ask for some biographical information so that someone in your organization can introduce the speaker. The introduction does not have to take more than a minute or two. Focus on the biographical details relevant to your organization or the topic at hand.

- Will your speaker supply needed audio-visual equipment? What about extension cords and outlets? It’s a good idea to meet the speaker well before the start of your meeting so that you know the equipment is working before the meeting begins.

- Be sure you and your speaker have agreed on all of the details about the program itself, including the topic(s) to be covered, whether there will be questions and answers, and the total amount of time that can be devoted to the topic, including Q&A.

- Try to narrow down the focus or topic that you're asking the speaker to address. It's difficult for a speaker to know what to do with a topic that's too broad; be as specific as you can about what aspects of the subject you'd like addressed or what points you'd like covered. (This can be worked out in a single conversation with the speaker.)

- Some details can be covered in writing. Ask if the speaker will bring hand-outs to supplement the presentation.
If you will be describing the upcoming presentation in a flier, newsletter, or program, it's best to ask your speaker for a title and description of what they will cover. They may ask you to go ahead and write it, but if possible ask them to approve the wording. Their understanding of what they have to say may be very different from yours! Do you have the speaker's name and title spelled correctly?

Provide your speaker with information he or she may need about your group: how many people to expect, needs or interests of your membership, and anything else they could use to plan their presentation to best meet your needs.

Designate one of your members to be on the look-out for your speaker, escort him or her to the meeting room, and address any needs (e.g., water). This can be the same person who introduces the speaker.

Is there enough time for your speaker/program AND any other business you need to conduct at your meeting? Advance planning helps ensure you do not run out of time.

Do not expect a guest speaker to run your meeting. For example, the meeting facilitator should know how much time is available for Q&A. If there is time for just one more question, say so.

The speaker may be comfortable fielding questions, but it is the responsibility of the meeting facilitator to make sure the speaker is treated with respect and is not subjected to more than one question at a time.

Decide in advance whether the guest speaker will go before or after your regular order of business. This decision may depend on the speaker’s schedule and the length of your agenda. (For example, many neighborhood groups allow police officers to go first so they can get back on their beats.)

If your speaker goes first, give this person the opportunity to leave after her presentation, if there is no reason she needs to sit through the rest of your meeting.

It’s a nice gesture to send your speaker a thank-you card following the event.

Consider forming a “program committee” to handle these tasks so that they do not fall on a single person.

Do not take these tips as gospel. Every situation is different, and not all of these steps necessarily need to be followed. If you are clear why you need to do things differently, go for it!

Office of Neighborhoods
City of Knoxville