

# Preparing for The First Meeting

## **Do your homework!**

1. Write out what you know about the issue/problem and why you are concerned. Look over the information/materials that helped you come to your conclusions.

## **You can't do it alone!**

2. Make a list of friends on the street and ask them to help. Think about a neighbor you know whom you might want to talk to about the issue you are organizing around. You might take your neighbor/s to coffee and explain what you have learned and are concerned about. Give your neighbor a few days to a week to absorb the material. Once she/he has done this, your conversation could turn towards sharing this information with the rest of your neighbors.

3. You might decide to skip step two and put out a flyer inviting your neighbors to dessert and coffee, BBQ, or other get-together to discuss the issue. Food is usually a good thing to have at the meeting. Whether you take step two or three, give people enough notice (two-three weeks in advance of the meeting should give neighbors enough time to plan). Think about the need for childcare.

## **Be prepared!**

4. Before the meeting, make enough copies of materials to hand out. Think about other supplies you might need: colored pens, flip charts, and visual aids.

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By Kathy Garcia, [Utne Reader](#)

## **The meeting: "What I Found Out"**

1. Welcome people and have everyone grab something to eat or drink before settling down.
2. Let everyone know where the bathrooms are.
3. Take time for introductions and have people sign in with address and phone numbers.
4. "Hi! My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am helping prepare the community for possible flooding that may occur in our neighborhoods. How many here know what a 100 year floodplain is?" (Solicit comments.) Find out what they heard and/or know. What are some of the implications they have thought about.
5. If you have a video or some other visual aid, show it now. Then take a break for refills of coffee and refreshments.
7. Come back together. Let people know how you felt when you first learned about the information. You might inform your group that there are those who say "head for the hills" and others, like you, who believe in "strength in numbers." Ask people what they learned and how they feel about the information.
8. "As community members to ask our government officials to tell us the status of water and sewage. Have they begun to address the problem? Have they done testing? What were the results of the testing? Repair timetable? Retesting timetable? Will they keep the community informed?  
"We as community members need to become responsible for our community by being individually prepared, then helping our neighborhoods to prepare, then helping our community to prepare for any possible flood events. How can we do this?" (Open discussion.)
9. Pass out materials if you have them\* for people to take home and review at their leisure. Ask them if they would agree to a second meeting and set a date. Ask each of them to look through the newspapers and magazines and bring back any information on Y2K they find.
10. Find out who will bring refreshments for the next meeting and if there is another person who would like to host the meeting. Ask who will help with reminder calls. Let them know you will get information on preparedness to share with them for the next meeting. Thank them for coming.