ESEP Regional Happy Hour Guidelines

Before you begin planning your first science policy happy hour, consider the following questions:

- What kind of happy hour do you want to host? Formal? Laid-back? Themed?
- What are you willing to spend money on? Nothing? Drinks? A few appetizers? Minimum for reserving space at a bar/restaurant?
- Will this be a one-time event, or do you plan on repeating the happy hour throughout the year?

Recommended best practices:

1. **Choose your date**: Decide if the happy hour will be held only once or will be a repeating event. Choose a standard date and time for repeating events so that attendees can mark it monthly on their calendars. For example, the D.C. Science Policy Happy Hour occurs the first Thursday of the month at 5:30pm at rotating locations. Changing location can be great at targeting different neighborhoods and increasing the amount of people attending a happy hour. However, it does mean you will need to communicate the change to attendees and work with multiple locations with various policies concerning happy hours.

   Perhaps host your first happy hour in conjunction with a larger event to have a built-in crowd. If you go this route, be sure to communicate with the people hosting the larger event and ask if there is any way to advertise with them.

   Confirm that there are not any major events occurring on your chosen date (i.e. local science meet-up, holiday, major sporting event near your chosen location) and confirm that transportation, security, and excessive crowds will not impact your event.

2. **Choose your location**: Find a place that is easy to get to and near transportation and/or parking. Once you have a list of a few locations, contact the bar/restaurant about their happy hour policy. Typically, they will fall into one of three categories: required minimum to reserve space; reserve space for free; or reservations not accepted.

   If you choose to go with a location that requires a minimum, you’ll need to decide how much money you are willing to spend if the minimum is not met by your party. For locations that do not accept reservations, give the bar/restaurant notice about the size of your party and the date and time you will be visiting so that they can properly prepare and let you know if there are any conflicts (i.e. the bar/restaurant has been sold out for the night). No matter the happy hour policy, visit your preferred locations ahead of time.
3. **Work with on-site staff:** In advance of your event, visit the location at the same day of the week and time of your planned happy hour to get an idea of its ambiance. That day in person or via email, follow up with a manager or event coordinator before deciding on a location. You should consider the following:

- Which space would your group receive? Can the manager guarantee a certain area?
- Is the space adequately sized for the expected number of people? Will people be able to move around comfortably?
- What is their policy for reserving space?
- What are their happy hour deals?

After you decide on the space, set a reservation and be prepared to provide an estimated guest count and contact information. Be sure to get the manager or event coordinator’s contact information. A written confirmation can be helpful as well.

4. **Advertise your event:** Communicate the details of your happy hour a few weeks before the event and send a reminder the week of the event. Send an email blast to science policy-related listservs and use social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook.

ESEP is also happy to promote your event. Please email contactESEP@science-engage.org with details for your event to be posted on the [ESEP Science Policy Happy Hours website](#). If using Twitter, tag @ESEPCoalition and we will make sure to retweet. We also use #ESEP.

5. **Attend your event:** Arrive about thirty minutes before the start of the happy hour. Check in with the manager or event coordinator and make sure everything is ready to go. Suggested set-up materials include:

- **Signs/tent cards** that say “Science Policy Happy Hour.” These are helpful when you are sharing space with other groups or guests. If your party is near the back of the bar/restaurant, ask the manager or event coordinator if you can post a sign directing your science policy guests to your location.
- **Sign-up sheet** for new attendees. Use this form to add new attendees to your happy hour email list. Please email contactESEP@science-engage.org with a list of individuals who want to receive the ESEP newsletter after your event.
- **Name tags** (optional).

If you have any additional questions about arranging an ESEP Regional Happy Hour, please email contactESEP@science-engage.org.