

Hosting an Open House

What an open house is

The open house is WMI's monthly community gathering and member meeting. It is free and open to everyone: members, guests and people who are just curious. It is not a governance meeting and nobody takes minutes. The goals are to:

- Welcome members, guests and newcomers.
- Share shop updates and improvements.
- Announce upcoming events.
- Highlight volunteer opportunities.
- Build community.

Open houses rotate between days of the week, so they do not always fall on the same day. Check the events calendar on <https://waukeshamakers.com> for the next date and time.

Format

- **About 30 to 45 minutes** of updates and announcements, run by a facilitator from an agenda.
- **Then social time and tours** until the event ends: tours for guests, project show-and-tell, and time to meet board members, committee leads and volunteers.

Visitors tour, talk and look around. **Open houses do not include equipment demos or hands-on activities for visitors.** Guests may not use any equipment.

Preparing the agenda

1. **Gather updates** from board members, Area Champions, the events calendar on waukeshamakers.com, recent Discord announcements, and the previous month's agenda (for follow-ups).
2. **Write the agenda** 3 to 5 days before the open house, using the standard sections below.
3. **Share it with the board** for review before finalizing.
4. **Print copies** for the meeting and have a digital copy available.

To get the word out, see **Promoting an Event**.

Standard agenda

1. Member shout-outs (3 to 5 min)

Start by celebrating the community. Ask whether anyone has a thank-you or shout-out for another member: help, collaboration, going above and beyond. Have one or two ready in case nobody speaks up.

2. Welcome and introductions (5 to 6 min)

- Welcome everyone: members, guests and newcomers.
- Describe the space in a sentence or two: Waukesha Makerspace is a **nonprofit, fully volunteer-run community workshop** where people learn, create and share skills, with equipment for woodworking, metalworking, 3D printing, electronics, leatherworking, fiber arts and more. Members get shared tools, community knowledge, and the chance to teach and learn.
- Explain how the evening works: updates first, then open discussion, tours and social time. The meeting is casual; people can raise a hand or chime in during open-floor moments.
- Ask who is here for the first time. With a small group, do a quick round of names; with a big one, give a warm welcome and invite newcomers to ask for a tour afterward.
- Introduce the board members and volunteers in the room, and point out who can give tours, answer membership questions and answer tool questions.
- Optional icebreaker question (see the bank below).

3. Board and committee updates (5 to 6 min)

Board announcements, committees forming or reporting, and calls for involvement.

4. Shop updates and projects (8 to 10 min)

- New equipment and installations.
- Area improvements (Wood Shop, Metal Shop, Electronics Lab, Fiber Arts, Flex Space and so on).
- Ongoing projects that need volunteers.
- Recent donations, and thanks to the donors.

5. Events and activities (8 to 10 min)

Upcoming events with dates and times: classes and workshops, recurring social nights, seasonal events, special events. Remind people to register.

6. Volunteer opportunities (6 to 7 min)

- Specific needs around the shop.
- Committee openings.
- Orientation volunteers.
- **Teach a skill.** Read this callout every month: "We're always looking for members to lead short sessions, 30 to 60 minutes, on anything: table saw use, welding, 3D printing, fiber arts, or other skills. You don't need to be an expert, just willing to share what you know." See **Classes and Instructors**.

7. Community news and member updates (5 min)

Quick announcements, then open the floor for members to share project updates, ideas and community news.

8. Looking ahead (2 min)

The next open house date and any big milestones coming up.

9. Social time and tours (until the end)

- Tours for guests and prospective members.
- Project show-and-tell.
- Meet board members, committee leads and volunteers.

Icebreaker question bank

Use one per meeting:

- If you had to build a robot sidekick, what would you name it and why?
- What's the last thing you made that you're proud of?
- What tool or skill would you most like to learn this year?
- If you could add any equipment to the shop, what would it be?
- What's your favorite thing about the makerspace?
- What project are you currently procrastinating on?
- If you could teach a class here, what would it be about?

Tips for the facilitator

- Keep the meeting part short, about 40 minutes at most, so there is plenty of time for tours and social time.
- Ask members to stick around and help with tours. An active shop, with members working on projects, makes a much better impression than an empty one.

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