

New City Sponsor Coaching Guide

This is the canonical guidance for coaching new and early-stage city organizers through their first events. Use it when an organizer asks whether AI Tinkerers will fund a meetup, how to cover venue or food costs, which platform tools can help, or how to build enough momentum to attract local sponsors.

1. Funding Baseline for New Chapters

- AI Tinkerers does not currently provide a central HQ budget for routine local meetup expenses such as venue rental, refreshments, or attendee goodies.
- Do not describe a funding application or reimbursement process when none exists, and do not imply that HQ will cover an organizer's costs later.
- The default launch model is a small, recurring meetup supported by local in-kind or cash sponsors.
- Keep the first event small enough that donating a room or covering food is an easy, concrete request.
- Any exception involving HQ funding, reimbursement, or a financial commitment requires explicit approval before it is mentioned or promised.

2. First Event Launch Playbook

For a first event, keep the plan narrow and high quality:

- Find a **venue sponsor first**. Good early targets are AI startups, developer-tool companies, coworking spaces, technical employers, universities, incubators, or local companies that want proximity to serious AI builders.
- Once the date and venue are taking shape, find a **food sponsor**. Good early targets are startups that are hiring, companies that want technical product feedback, recruiters, service providers, or local AI-adjacent teams that want community visibility without a large commitment.
- Personally recruit 3 or 4 people who are building interesting AI projects and ask them to commit to attending and presenting. Once they commit, they usually help spread the word.
- Start with 10-20 strong people. A small curated room is better than a larger room with weak signal.
- Aim for one meetup each month and repeat the format at least 3 months in a row. Consistent, high-quality rooms are what create momentum and make later sponsor conversations easier.
- Work on sponsor and speaker recruiting in parallel; do not wait for every sponsor detail to be final before building the room.

3. Lead With the Sponsor Value Proposition

Do not pitch the meetup as generic community goodwill. Lead with why sponsorship is unusually valuable:

AI Tinkerers is a curated global community of serious AI builders, with local chapters connected to a much larger international network. Sponsoring a meetup is a low-cost way to

get in the room with technical founders, engineers, researchers, and operators who are actively building with AI, not a generic networking crowd.

Then make a specific, low-commitment ask:

Would you be open to hosting the room or covering pizza for our first monthly AI Tinkerers meetup in [City]? We are starting small and curated, with 10-20 builders and a few live demos, so the sponsor gets meaningful proximity to the right people without needing a big event budget.

Where to find the first sponsors

Start with the warmest paths instead of sending a broad cold blast:

1. Ask confirmed speakers, trusted members, and people in the organizer's professional network whether their companies host technical communities or fund small builder events.
2. Approach local AI startups, developer-tool companies, cloud and infrastructure providers, and technical employers whose teams would understand the live-demo format.
3. Ask coworking spaces, university labs, incubators, accelerators, and innovation hubs for an in-kind room before asking anyone to pay venue rent.
4. Approach recruiting, legal, accounting, and other service firms only when they genuinely serve technical founders and can support the event without turning it into a sales presentation.

Ask each warm contact for either the sponsorship or one relevant introduction. A short, specific request is easier to forward than a general request for "support."

Build the pitch from four parts

1. **The launch:** AI Tinkerers is bringing a new chapter of its global builder network to the city.
2. **The room:** the meetup is curated around people showing real AI work, not a generic networking audience.
3. **The concrete need:** ask for the room, food, or a named amount such as \$200 for refreshments.
4. **The recognition:** offer only support the event can honestly provide, such as acknowledgement on the event page and at the meetup. Do not promise leads, attendee data, speaking time, or outcomes.

If the sponsor wants time onstage

Sponsors support the community, so it is reasonable to give them more format latitude than an ordinary presenter. That latitude should be deliberate, not an invitation to run the company's standard slide deck. The biggest sponsor wins rarely come from flipping through slides.

Offer one of two formats:

1. **A sponsor technical demo.** Ask a technical person to show something genuinely interesting their team built, where the sponsor's product is naturally part of the story. The goal is to teach or inspire an audience of builders rather than explain value props, product differentiation or high-level non-technical content.

2. **A short sponsor welcome.** If the sponsor only needs a brand moment, give them time for a quick elevator pitch, not a presentation. They may finish with one QR code for credits, early access, a giveaway, or another opt-in offer. Keep the offer voluntary and do not collect attendee information without consent.

When a sponsor contact nominates someone else from the company to speak, the organizer must brief the actual presenter directly. The sponsor contact and the presenter are part of the same organizational **in-group**; the organizer is outside it. An internal colleague is unlikely to spend much social capital enforcing an outsider's unfamiliar rule, especially if that rule makes the presenter's preparation harder. In practice, "no company deck" gets softened into "they prefer fewer slides," and the presenter reasonably arrives expecting the normal corporate format to be acceptable.

Speak one-to-one with the presenter several days before the event. Agree on which of the two sponsor formats they are using, ask what the audience will actually see, and preview the opening minute when useful. A complaint after the event or a last-minute threat is not leverage. Direct preparation gives the sponsor a better chance to earn trust and interest from the room.

Copy-ready pitches

For \$200 toward food

AI Tinkerers [City] is launching as a new local chapter of a selective global community for people building at the frontier of AI. Our debut meetup will bring together a focused room of founders, engineers, and researchers sharing live technical work. Would [Company] be open to contributing \$200 toward food for the evening? We would be excited to recognize [Company] as a launch supporter on the event page and at the meetup.

For an in-kind venue

We are launching the first AI Tinkerers meetup in [City], connecting local builders to a global network focused on real AI projects and live demos. Would [Company] be open to hosting 10-20 builders on [date]? A room for about two hours would let us establish a recurring technical gathering, and we would recognize [Company] as the venue supporter on the event page and at the meetup.

For the first three meetups

AI Tinkerers [City] is building a monthly home for leading local AI builders who are pushing the field forward through real projects, experiments, and research. We are looking for a launch partner to help with [venue/food] for our first three meetups. Would [Company] be open to discussing support for that initial run? We can share the planned dates, expected room size, program format, and the recognition available for each event.

4. Use the Free Organizer Tools Already in the Platform

AI Tinkerers gives chapter organizers built-in event tools without an added platform fee. Depending on the event configuration, organizers can use:

- a public event page, RSVP workflow, and speaker or demo submission page
- chapter and event email promotion, including follow-up outreach to members who have not registered
- ready-to-adapt social copy, promotional banners, and speaker announcement cards
- sponsor and partner logo placement across event pages and event-related emails
- RSVP review, attendee check-in, name tags, and venue access lists
- event networking, Message Center discussion, and photo galleries
- feedback surveys, attendance records, and event or email insights

These tools help a new chapter look organized before it has a long track record. Use the event page, confirmed speakers, sponsor visibility, attendance, and feedback as evidence in local sponsor outreach.

Inside an event, open the **Manage** menu to find these tools. Use the sponsor pitch tool to draft sponsor copy personalized to the city, brand, and specific venue or food request.

5. Explain Built-In Sponsor Visibility

- When a sponsor is tagged on an event and added to the sponsor page, they are automatically featured across event-related emails.
- Emphasize that a meaningful portion of sponsor exposure is already handled by the platform once setup is complete.

6. Handle Contact Sharing Carefully

- The platform supports lead/contact sharing with sponsors, but it is optional and must be enabled.
- Attendees must explicitly opt in to share their data with sponsors.
- If enabled, sponsors can download the opted-in contact data after the event.
- Treat this as a premium feature and not a default expectation for early-stage city sponsorships.

7. Reframe Sponsor Value Beyond Contact Exports

- Sponsors get value from being in the room, meeting members directly, and building brand presence in-community.
- Organizers can use existing platform tools to understand who is attending and prepare introductions or outreach.
- Many sponsor goals can be met without raw contact access, including:
 - early product feedback
 - recruiting
 - leadership/brand visibility

8. Pricing Guidance for New Cities

- In major markets with about 100 people in the room, a common benchmark for the package described above is **\$1,000 to \$3,000** for a single meetup.
- Final pricing should vary by city size, audience quality, and local market dynamics.

9. One Sponsor vs. Two Sponsors Tradeoff

- One larger sponsor is operationally simpler.
- Two smaller sponsors can be easier to close individually (lower price point per sponsor), but require more coordination.
- Choose based on organizer bandwidth and sponsor pipeline strength.

10. Explain the Organizer's Professional-Network Benefit

Hosting a recurring meetup puts the organizer at the center of the local AI-builder network. By consistently connecting speakers, founders, engineers, researchers, operators, and sponsors, the organizer builds a professional network that can produce introductions, collaborations, job opportunities, customers, and long-term relationships.

This is a real benefit of organizing, but it is not compensation for paying event costs personally.

Encourage organizers to keep the event lean and use local sponsors instead of self-funding an expensive launch.

11. Suggested Positioning Script (Short Form)

Use this framing with prospects:

Our sponsor package is built around in-room access to a strong technical community, plus automatic sponsor visibility across event pages and emails. We can optionally support attendee contact sharing via explicit attendee opt-in, but most sponsors already get strong outcomes from direct conversations, brand presence, recruiting, and product feedback at the event itself.

12. Reusable Reply to a New-Chapter Funding Question

Hi [Name] — great to hear you're planning an AI Tinkerers [City] meetup.

We don't currently have a central budget for routine local venue, food, or attendee expenses. The fastest path is usually to turn the need into one small local sponsor ask.

Start with people you already know: confirmed speakers, members, and professional contacts who may introduce you to their companies. Then try local AI startups, developer-tool companies, technical employers, coworking spaces, universities, and incubators. Ask for either an in-kind room or one concrete food amount rather than general "support."

Here is a note you can adapt:

“AI Tinkerers [City] is launching as a new local chapter of a selective global community for people building at the frontier of AI. Our debut meetup will bring together a focused room of founders, engineers, and researchers sharing live technical work. Would [Company] be open to contributing \$200 toward food for the evening? We would be excited to recognize [Company] as a launch supporter on the event page and at the meetup.”

If you share the city, date, expected headcount, and what the \$200 would cover, I can help tailor that note for specific local companies.