

# Six Steps to Organize Your Neighborhood

## Step One: Volunteer to be a Neighborhood Organizer

- Talk to your neighbors to see who is interested in organizing your neighborhood. Ask a few neighbors to form a “core group” to share the responsibility. Start by talking to people that you already know, and introduce yourself to others. The core group is there to support each other to get your association off the ground.

## Step Two: Call a Meeting of Your Core Group

- The Core Group meeting can be held informally at someone’s home or at any other small meeting location.
- Invite the Neighborhood Resource Coordinator to the meeting. The Neighborhood Resource Coordinator will discuss the advantages of starting a neighborhood organization and be available to answer questions that may come up.
- The core group votes on whether to proceed with organizing their neighborhood.
- The Core Group suggests the tentative boundaries of the neighborhood and helps plan for the full neighborhood meeting.

## Step Three: Call a Meeting and Invite all Your Neighbors

- Bringing people together in a meeting provides an opportunity for neighbors to get to know one another and share ideas and concerns. Set a date, time and location for the meeting. Hold the meeting in a neutral location such as a school, church, or public building, or in any location where people feel comfortable.
- Invite the Neighborhood Resource Coordinator to discuss the advantages of starting a neighborhood group and to answer questions that may come up.
- Develop the meeting agenda. The purpose of this meeting is to:
- Discuss the importance of having an organized neighborhood.
- Conduct a vote to determine if the neighborhood wants to organize.
- Conduct a vote to determine the boundaries for your neighborhood.
- Conduct a vote to elect a Neighborhood Group Leader to represent your organization in the Neighborhood Group Leaders Association.
- Create a flier based on your agenda. Include information on who, what, where, when, why, and how long the meeting will last. Include the things you want to accomplish in your first meeting. The Neighborhood Resources Program will assist in printing your flier.
- Pass out fliers to houses in the neighborhood. Ask several neighbors or a local Boy Scout Troop to help pass out fliers and remind others of the meeting. Place the fliers in storm doors or on porches. Person-to-person contact is the best way to involve individuals as well as spread information about the meeting.
- Make it comfortable and informal and provide refreshments. Make sure there is time for people to socialize and get to know one another. Be sure to include teens and older children who wish to get involved.
- It’s all right to start small. Don’t feel discouraged if only a few individuals are willing to participate. Membership and interest will grow over time and will fluctuate, but all neighbors should be included.

## Step Four: Facilitate the Neighborhood Meeting

- Take care of final meeting arrangements before the meeting begins. Allow enough time before the meeting to set up the room. It’s helpful to have a board to write on. A sign-in sheet for neighbors’ names, addresses, phone numbers, and E-mail addresses should be placed on a table near the entrance. Nametags will also help the neighbors become acquainted.
- Greet your neighbors as they arrive. Let them know you appreciate their participation.
- Start your meeting on time. Begin by introducing yourself. You also may want a volunteer to take notes.
- Ask everyone to introduce himself or herself. Ask each person to tell a little about themselves. This will help everyone to feel comfortable and allow folks to get to know each other.
- Review the agenda. Stress that the focus of the meeting is to discuss the formation of a neighborhood organization. Discussing issues and concerns and developing solutions can be accomplished as part of the ongoing partnership that will be developed between your neighborhood and the City.

- This is your neighborhood meeting. The Neighborhood Resource Coordinator will be there to discuss the advantages of having a neighborhood organization and answer any questions.

Conduct votes to:

- Determine if the neighborhood wants to organize.
- Determine the boundaries for your neighborhood.
- Elect a Neighborhood Group Leader to represent your organization in the Group Leaders Association.

To wrap up the meeting:

- Plan your next meeting. Set the next meeting date, time, agenda and location. Let people know that they will be reminded by phone or flier. Ask your neighbors to bring another neighbor to the next meeting.
- Review and summarize what was accomplished at the meeting. Remind volunteers about their tasks for the next meeting.
- Close the meeting. Thank everyone for attending and for his or her interest.
- Your neighborhood will accomplish its goals by getting everyone involved. At the first meeting, you may want to choose co-leaders. Ask for volunteers to help with future meetings, to create fliers, to create a neighborhood directory and/or neighborhood map, set up a phone tree, or host the next meeting. All ideas are welcome and worth consideration. Make and distribute a list of everyone's name address, phone number, fax number, and e-mail address. Set up a phone tree to notify neighbors about meetings, events, and other timely information.

### **Step Five: Continue to Hold Regular Meetings**

- Plan regular meetings to accomplish your goals.
- At the end of every meeting plan the next meeting. This will help maintain interest and focus. Think about starting a neighborhood newsletter.
- Maintain communication among your neighbors.

### **Step Six: Have a Celebration!**

- Celebrate the neighborhood working together by having a picnic or dinner. At the celebration, briefly cite the neighborhood's accomplishments.