

Should I start a Neighborhood Association?

If in doubt ask yourself these 10 questions:

1. Do I know how to get in touch with my neighbors in case of an emergency?
2. Do my children know how to reach someone nearby for help when I am not home?
3. Do my neighbors know how to get in touch with me when there is an emergency?
4. Are there any problems in my neighborhood that need to be corrected?
5. Is there a problem with crime in my neighborhood?
6. Do I want my neighborhood to be friendlier?
7. Do I want more planned activities in my neighborhood for children and adults?
8. Do I know my neighbors on all sides of me? Are my neighbors my friends? Do we reach out to each other in times of celebration or crisis?
9. Do I feel safe and wanted in my neighborhood?
10. When I bring guests to my home, am I proud of the appearance of my neighborhood?

If you answer “no” to any of these questions, you should consider a more active role in your neighborhood.



Why should we organize and how will an association benefit my neighborhood?

Top Ten Reasons

1. It helps residents work for the preservation and improvement of the neighborhood and community at large.
2. Associations empower the neighborhood to control what happens in the area.
3. Associations allow residents to participate in the decision making that directs the future of their neighborhood.
4. Planned social activities for the neighborhood promotes neighborly attitudes and support.
5. The neighborhood will have an effective communication link with government officials and other influential groups.
6. An association is a forum for residents to address issues such as weeds, trash, graffiti, traffic problems, crime, social needs, infrastructure and beautification projects.
7. An association is the best way to communicate with the greatest number of people.
8. An Association is a way to involve citizens in the decisions at the front end, rather than late in the process after the decisions have been made.
9. An association helps to preserve the integrity of ones neighborhood and promote community.
10. By being the neighborhood watchdog of one's neighborhood, residents can learn that one does not have to “Fight City Hall”, but rather work with it to improve and maintain the quality of life in our community.



COMMUNITY SERVICES

NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION

HOW TO START A

NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION



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What is a neighborhood?

A neighborhood is more than just a group of homes surrounded by a geographic boundary. It is a critical element of the social, economic, and political foundation of a city. Each neighborhood takes on an identity based on the people who live, work or have an interest in the area. Residents are a crucial component in making neighborhoods more enjoyable, livable and satisfying.

What is a Neighborhood Association or Homeowners Association?

A Neighborhood Association or Homeowner Association is an organization comprised of stakeholders in a specific area, who work together to improve and maintain their quality of life. They establish goals and plan projects to promote the welfare of the entire neighborhood.

What is the difference between a Neighborhood Association and a Homeowners Association?

Neighborhood Association

- Neighborhood Associations are voluntary.
- A Neighborhood Association may be started at any time with the support of the stakeholders of the association's geographic area.
- They are open to all stakeholders in a neighborhood.
- There is no legal authority to enact or enforce maintenance or design requirements beyond those established by City ordinances or other governmental entity.
- The organization establishes formal or informal bylaws to provide for at least one general membership meeting per year and is required to hold an annual election of officers.

Homeowners Association

- Membership is mandatory for all property owners within the boundaries of the development.
- Homeowner Associations generally require residents to pay mandatory dues.
- Homeowner Associations have the legal authority to enact and enforce maintenance and design standards in addition to those established by City ordinances, or other governmental entities
- Homeowner Associations are corporations with formal by-laws. There is usually a governing board, which may hire a property management company to handle maintenance and enforce issues.
- Homeowner Associations are usually established by the developer of a sub-division/neighborhood at the onset of building homes.

How do we get started?

Develop a core group of people who have the vision to create and stay with the development of the organization through the good and bad for the first year. A commitment from 5 to 10 people is a great start. If the group gets too large, it could become unmanageable and potentially result in low productivity.

First determine the boundaries of your neighborhood then get a list of names and addresses of the households in the neighborhood and develop a mailing database.

Hold a "get to know your neighbor" meeting at your home or at a neutral area. Inform the neighbors of the group's interest in forming a neighborhood association. Discuss common concerns and neighborhood issues, such as crime reduction, after school activities for children, neighborhood beautification, traffic problems, etc.

Next create a questionnaire to be distributed to neighborhood households. This questionnaire will assess interest in forming an association, and identify demographics and concerns. Tabulate and evaluate the surveys to determine if there is sufficient interest in the neighborhood. If so then the group can continue to pursue establishing an association. Keep the residents informed of the groups progress.

Do not give up, patience and perseverance will be your greatest assets at this point. Developing an effective neighborhood association takes time; don't expect to see things happen right away. You will make a lot of phone calls, do a lot of talking and persuading to get the residents on board. Do not be surprised by the disagreements and frustrations that characterize the formation of a new organization. These things are normal. Just don't give up, focus on the common goal of improving your neighborhood.

After all the questionnaires have been collected and tabulated the information is sent back to the residents announcing the formation of the association, summarizing the questionnaire responses and announcing the next meeting date.

The group should be conducting research into various forms of associations and be ready to make recommendations for the preferred form.

On the date specified for the meeting, all residents of the neighborhood should sign-in on a sign in sheet and be asked if they can help. Identify the group's goals and develop a purpose statement.

After several meetings the group should be able to ascertain enough interested residents to begin developing bylaws, the creation of a process to elect officers and board members.

Hold an organizational meeting, in which officers are elected, choose key committee chairs and a newsletter editor. Establish goals for the year and begin working on a mission statement regarding the intentions of your neighborhood association. Involve as many people as possible. Find a job for every person that expresses the remotest interest in the organization. Individuals with a "job" tend to be more committed to the association.

Register with the City of Carrollton's Community Services Division.

