



# Neighborhood Associations: Getting Started

[www.greenvilleneighborhoods.org](http://www.greenvilleneighborhoods.org)

### **What is a neighborhood association?**

A neighborhood association is a group of residents who meet regularly to improve their neighborhood. It may include homeowners, renters, apartment residents, business owners, school and church officials, and members of non-profit organizations.

### **What the benefits of a neighborhood association?**

Accomplish neighborhood goals • Preserve and improve the neighborhood • Facilitate social activities • Create a unified voice to advocate for neighborhood needs • Build a sense of camaraderie

### **How often do neighborhood associations meet?**

Depending on the association's goals, meetings may be held twice a year, once a quarter, or every month.

### **What types of projects do neighborhood associations do?**

Neighborhood improvement or clean-up projects • Crime watch • Social activities • Neighborhood marketing

### **Is a homeowners' association and a neighborhood association the same type of organization?**

**No.** Homeowners' associations are formal legal entities created to maintain common areas; they have the authority to enforce deed restrictions. Unlike neighborhood associations, membership includes only property owners.

# **Neighborhood Associations 101**

# Getting Started

## 1. Educate yourself.

What are the benefits of starting a neighborhood association (see *Neighborhood Associations 101*)? What is the process to start one (see below)?

## 2. Identify core leaders.

The long-term success of a neighborhood association depends on the commitment of its leaders and participants.

Bring a few other interested neighbors together and canvass the neighborhood to explain the importance of organizing a neighborhood association in your area. Be sure to gather contact information from interested neighbors.

Plan a meeting soon after canvassing to discuss ideas for a neighborhood association and strategize how to encourage more participation.

Choose a place and time for the first neighborhood-wide meeting. Some neighborhood associations meet in resident's home, while others meet in a civic building located within the neighborhood.

Consider ways to break the ice and encourage interaction, such as having refreshments.

## 3. Meet & decide.

Once the core leadership has drummed up interest in starting a neighborhood association and planned its first meeting, what topics should the neighborhood association discuss at its first few meetings?

**Issues of importance.** What issues matter to residents? How could the neighborhood association address these issues in the future?

**Bylaws.** Bylaws help determine how often the association will meet; when it will hold elections; voting procedures; and the area that the neighborhood association represents. Draft bylaws are available from the City of Greenville's Neighborhood Liaison/Ombudsman.

**Executive board.** An executive board—president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer—is the elected leadership of the neighborhood association. The bylaws outline each member's responsibilities and how to elect each member.

An election for the executive board should be held as soon as possible (within the first few meetings).

**Dues.** Dues are voluntary, but help offset the costs of social events, projects, and association operations, like printing a newsletter.

**Means of Communication.** How will your neighbors communicate about upcoming events and celebrate past accomplishments? A quarterly newsletter (either paper or electronic) is a popular way to communicate.

Other neighborhood associations have a website or use social networking tools, such as Facebook, to keep residents up-to-date.

## 4. Sustain.

**Meetings.** Invite speakers to educate residents on topics that relate to the neighborhood or officials to express concerns about neighborhood issues.

**Social events,** such as cookouts, holiday open houses, can or coat drives, or a back-to-school block party.

**Beautification activities,** such as landscaping or gardening projects, neighborhood clean-up, or Adopt-a-Street.

# City Resources for Neighborhoods

Visit [greenvilleneighborhoods.org](http://greenvilleneighborhoods.org) for more information about the resources below.

## **Neighborhood Liaison/Ombudsman**

The City of Greenville's Neighborhood Liaison/Ombudsman can provide more detailed information about the process to start and sustain a neighborhood association, as well as assist you and your neighbors in the process.

## **Neighborhood Advisory Board**

The City of Greenville's Neighborhood Advisory Board (NAB), established by City Council in 2008, acts as a bridge between neighborhood residents and local government.

The NAB encourages participation from all neighborhood associations. Neighborhood associations can appoint a liaison and alternate liaison to represent their interests on the NAB.

## **Neighborhood Improvement Grants**

By providing funding to complete improvements, neighborhood improvement grants encourage neighborhood associations to identify creative projects that will benefit their neighborhoods.

The City of Greenville's Community Appearance Commission awards grants in two cycles: spring and fall.

An eligible neighborhood can receive up to \$750.00.

**City of Greenville  
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