

# HEY NEIGHBOR!

YOUR GUIDE TO STARTING AND SUSTAINING A NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION



**Neighborhood associations are formed by people who live near each other and want to come together to improve neighborhood amenities, organize activities, and take action to make their neighborhood an even better place to live. Sound like you?**

**THEN LET'S GET TO WORK!**

# WHAT IS A NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION?

A neighborhood association is a group of residents that come together to improve neighborhood amenities, organize activities, and advocate for the neighborhood's best interest. Neighborhood associations are formed by people who live near each other and want to take action to make their neighborhood a great place to live.

## WHY FORM A NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION?

Creating a neighborhood association and getting to know your neighbors through meetings, projects, and events brings about many benefits:

- You make friends. Seeing familiar faces on your walk and chatting with a neighbor over the fence creates happiness and long-lasting friendships.
- You have someone who has your back. Your neighbor may be able to lend you a tool for your yardwork, and you may be able to bring them some vegetables harvested from your garden.
- You get access to information and resources. You can find out what's happening on your street and in your city.
- Your neighborhood becomes safer. If a neighbor knows you and can get in contact with you, they can let you know if you left your garage door open or that someone was lurking around your car. Many times, neighbors are the first responders and the first to report incidents.
- You get the neighborhood you want. Many hands make light work when planning a block party or cleaning up trash in your neighborhood. Neighbors can have a shared interest in an idea you have to make the neighborhood even better.

Wondering if there's already an association nearby?

Go to [www.cityofdubuque.org/neighborhoodsupport](http://www.cityofdubuque.org/neighborhoodsupport) to view a map of current/active neighborhood associations.

# GETTING STARTED

Most neighborhood associations start with one small goal in mind. Maybe you'd like to see more art in your neighborhood and are wondering about the possibility of painting a mural somewhere for everyone to enjoy. Chances are, someone else in your neighborhood would also love to see a mural go up and is totally on board! Having a clear goal and getting others engaged are the first steps of starting a neighborhood association. Strike up a conversation with the couple across the street, or chat with the neighbor you see on your evening walk to get their input and agreement to join in.

With a goal in mind and a small group of people ready to achieve it, the City of Dubuque's Office of Community Impact & Neighborhood Support can help you create a neighborhood association.





# STARTING A NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

## CHECKLIST

Starting a neighborhood association from scratch can be intimidating. However, it doesn't have to be. By following the steps below you'll be able to achieve the shared goals of neighbors and structure your association for lasting success. Having these details in place allow you to host rewarding meetings, projects, and events.

### DEFINE THE ASSOCIATION'S GOAL & PURPOSE

Having a defined goal for the neighborhood association helps guide what actions the group takes. With a small group of neighbors who are interested in founding a neighborhood association, you can brainstorm top priorities. Think about what would make your neighborhood a better place to live and what you love about your neighborhood that you want to keep up. From this list, summarize the goal of the neighborhood association into a couple sentences that can be explained to other neighbors.

NOTES:

PURPOSE:

GOALS:

### SET THE ASSOCIATION'S BOUNDARIES

Having a neighborhood boundary helps determine where projects and events should take place and who is impacted. When setting boundaries, think of public locations that neighbors gather and share together. Setting boundaries around a park or community business helps attract neighbors who use that area and want to see it thrive. If you start with an idea of where your neighbor association's boundaries could lie, the City of Dubuque's Office of Community Impact & Neighborhood Support can help you solidify them. If you set your boundaries small and start with the neighbors you know on your block, you can always change or expand the boundaries to include new neighbors you meet and are interested in joining!

NOTES:

NORTH:

SOUTH:

EAST:

WEST:



## DESIGNATE ROLES

Leadership roles should be designated between the initial group of neighbors interested in starting the association. This helps keep the group organized by knowing who is doing what. At minimum, a president should be chosen to lead the group. If there is enough interest, and as the group expands, a vice president, secretary, and treasurer can be selected. Each role can contribute to the association by accepting certain tasks that are needed to be completed by the group.

NOTES:

PRESIDENT:

VICE PRESIDENT:

TREASURER:

SECRETARY:



## DETERMINE MEETING DETAILS

In order to achieve your neighborhood associations goals, meetings should be held regularly to plan projects and events and update members. Determine a time, date, and location that is accommodating to all. Meetings can occur once a month, or as needed – especially more frequently if the association has planned an upcoming event.

NOTES:

DATE:

TIME:

LOCATION:

AGENDA:



## ESTABLISH BYLAWS

Having all the details of your neighborhood association determined, bylaws can be established to make the group an official neighborhood association. Bylaws detail the goals, boundaries, and rules of neighborhood association for record keeping. With the information you provide, the City of Dubuque's Office of Community Impact & Neighborhood Support can help you create official bylaws for your neighborhood association to operate under.

NOTES:

# PROJECTS & EVENTS

Now that your neighborhood association is officially established, and your group is eligible for funding from the City of Dubuque's Office of Community Impact & Neighborhood Support, projects and events are a great way to help achieve your association's goals. Beautifying a neighborhood park creates a sense of pride in the community. Hosting a block party allows you to meet other neighbors and feel connected to your neighborhood. Projects and events are also a great way to recruit members; when you see something great happening in your neighborhood, you want to be a part of it. The City of Dubuque's Office of Community Impact & Neighborhood Support has compiled ideas and tips for neighborhood association projects and events and is here to help.





## NEIGHBORHOOD SUPPORT GRANTS

What could your neighborhood invest in with \$2,500?

The Office of Community Impact & Neighborhood Support provides grants of up to \$2,500 for neighborhood events, programs, and more!

Visit [www.cityofdubuque.org/neighborhoodsupport](http://www.cityofdubuque.org/neighborhoodsupport) or scan the QR Code below to learn more about this grant opportunity.



## IDEAS FOR YOUR NEXT PROJECT OR EVENT

- Neighborhood beautification day
- Community garden planting, tree planting, or flower planting
- Leaf rake-a-thon for elderly neighbors
- Murals or neighborhood art project
- Neighborhood cook-out, picnic, or potluck
- Block party or festival
- Holiday celebration
- Back-to-school party and school supply drive
- Tool lending libraries
- Little free food pantry
- Little free book library

Scan to watch a video from the Jackson Park Beautification Project, funded by a Neighborhood Support Grant!





## EXECUTING YOUR PROJECT OR EVENT

- Select the date of the project or event. Then, work backwards thinking what needs to be done ahead of time.
- Square away logistics of where you will complete the project or host the event such as reserving the location, obtaining any permits needed, or paying any associated fees. Consider what time the project and event will take place so as many people as possible can attend.
- Recruit volunteers to help organize the project or event, and help with efforts on the day of. Making this happen is a collective effort!
- Gather materials needed to make your project or event a success. Shovels will be needed for a park cleanup, food will be needed for a block party. Determine what is needed and who will be responsible for getting the items needed to make your project or event a success.
- Promote your project or event weeks in advance so people know how they can get involved. Create posters, post to social media, ask other neighbors if they want to join in.

Need help making sure your first project or event is a success? No problem! Contact the Office of Community Impact & Neighborhood Support. Staff will be able to walk you through the resources available and the steps you should take.

# RECRUITING & RETAINING MEMBERS

Doing good has a ripple effect and the word on the street will be all about how awesome your project or event was. Now is your chance to invite neighbors who may be interested to the association and help make even more good happen in the neighborhood.

When you see something great happening in your neighborhood, you want to be a part of it.

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## RECRUITMENT IDEAS

- Social media is a great tool to use when recruiting potential members. You can send a friend request or message to that neighbor who lives down the street but you don't see often. Maybe there is already a Facebook group that shares things happening on your block that you can post to. One great option is Nextdoor, a social media platform designed specifically for networking with neighbors through entering your address. Building connections on-line can bring neighbors to your next project, event, or meeting off-line.
- Invitations that invite neighbors to your next project, event, or meeting can be a great way to welcome potential new members. A flyer with the details of your next project or event, a letter explaining what the association does and inviting neighbors to get involved, or a 'welcome to the neighborhood' care package are all great ways to start the conversation and make someone feel included.
- Going door-to-door sounds uncomfortable, but you're sure to end up with a rewarding feeling. Knocking on a neighbor's door and simply introducing yourself is a great way to spark a conversation. You'll learn more about your neighbor and build a real connection. Getting to know them, you'll likely get to know more about their interests that will spark ideas of how they can get involved in the next project, event, or meeting. It all starts with a simple, "Hey, neighbor"!



# Retaining Members

Each neighbor will have a different reason for why they're interested in joining your neighborhood association. Some will be excited for the events and the opportunity to socialize with new neighbors. Some will be invested in the condition of the neighborhood and want to hold meetings regularly to devise a plan for improvement.

No matter what their level of interest is, you can keep neighbors involved in a few different ways:

- Offering social events or opportunities after meetings so everyone can really get to know their neighbors and feel like they have friends on their block.
- Making sure you share information and resources so neighbors can find out what's happening on their block and feel welcomed.
- Constantly communicating so neighbors feel like things are being accomplished and they are a part of the progress.
- Holding projects and events that make a real impact in the neighborhood, bringing about pride.

Above all remember to listen to your neighbors! Ask them what they want to see when it comes to meetings, projects, and events.

## WE'RE HERE TO HELP

You're not alone. The City of Dubuque's Office of Community Impact & Neighborhood Support is here to help whether you're just getting started or need to bring new life back into your neighborhood association.

### LET'S GET IN CONTACT

Office of Community Impact & Neighborhood Support  
Ruby Sutton Building  
1157 Central Ave., Dubuque, IA 52001  
[www.cityofdubuque.org/neighborhoodsupport](http://www.cityofdubuque.org/neighborhoodsupport)  
[tphiri@cityofdubuque.org](mailto:tphiri@cityofdubuque.org)  
563-564-5644

# | NOTES |



## STAY IN THE KNOW!

**Engaged residents are empowered residents.**

**The City of Dubuque uses many communication methods to keep residents informed.**

**1 |** Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, and Nextdoor



**2 |** Watch CityChannel Dubuque (Mediacom channel 8 or digital 117.2 and ImOn channel 5) or stream live on our website at [www.cityofdubuque.org/video](http://www.cityofdubuque.org/video)

**3 |** Sign up for newsletters, calendar events, and bid notifications at [www.cityofdubuque.org/notifyme](http://www.cityofdubuque.org/notifyme)