

# NEIGHBORHOOD CAPACITY BUILDING: TIPS AND TOOLS



City of Madison Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development 2013





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# Starting a Neighborhood Association

A neighborhood association is a group of residents, business representatives, and other interested citizens that devote time and energy to maintaining and improving their neighborhood. Neighborhood association meetings are a place to meet neighbors, exchange ideas, prioritize projects, propose solutions, and implement plans.

## Neighborhoods usually organize to:

- Build a sense of community among neighbors;
- Address a particular issue such as zoning, traffic, crime, block parties, facility improvements;
- Provide the neighborhood with an effective communication link with government officials and other influential groups;
- Empower residents to work together to improve their neighborhood.



Carpenter-Ridgeway Neighborhood Association Little Free Library – 2012 Neighborhood Grant

## Are Neighborhood Associations Successful?

Yes! The efforts of neighborhood associations and other neighborhood groups prove integral in creating safe and healthy communities where residents can effectively address issues and help shape a positive future. The efforts of these organizations do not go overlooked.

## Follow these four simple steps to start a neighborhood association

1. Contact your Alderperson to inform him/her of your intention to create a neighborhood association. Your Alderperson will provide you with useful information about other neighborhood associations that are functioning within the area.
2. Contact Jule Stroick, Neighborhood Planner, and Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development to discuss establishing a neighborhood association. She will discuss the steps in forming a neighborhood association, setting boundaries, and refer you to other technical information that may be useful in your neighborhood-based initiatives.
3. Place a Class II Public Notice in the Wisconsin State Journal or Capital Times indicating the time and place for the first organizational meeting. Also post notices at frequently visited places in the neighborhood such as grocery stores, public schools; or go door to door inviting your neighbors to this meeting. An example of the public notice would be: Residents of the Vilas Neighborhood are invited to attend an organizational meeting at Monroe Street Public Library on November 10 at 7:30 p.m. for the purpose of establishing a neighborhood association, neighborhood boundaries, and to elect officers. The proposed boundaries of the neighborhood include the area circumscribed by Monroe Street, Regent Street, S. Randall Avenue, and Vilas Park and Lake Wingra. Contact Beth Madison at 222-2222.
4. Forward a copy of the public notice, a map of your neighborhood boundaries, and the name, address, and phone number of a neighborhood contact person to:

Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development, Planning Division  
Jule Stroick, Neighborhood Planner  
215 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, P.O. Box 2985  
Madison, WI 53701-2985  
Tel: 608-267-8744; Fax: 608-267-8739  
Email: [neighborhoods@cityofmadison.com](mailto:neighborhoods@cityofmadison.com)

## **Registering your Neighborhood Association**

The Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development, Planning Division maintains a database of the City's recognized neighborhood associations. Many City departments and agencies solicit neighborhood association opinions on upcoming approvals of development projects, programs and services, and other changes proposed in particular neighborhoods.

## **Determining your Neighborhood Boundaries**

Keep it simple. Draw your neighborhood boundaries reflecting the natural (e.g. lake) or manmade boundaries (e.g. major transportation corridors). Many times these particular boundaries form a coherent neighborhood area. A rule of thumb is to keep it simple and start with a relatively small (but not too small) area to help build a sense of community among neighbors.

## **Are there requirements on the formal structure of neighborhood associations?**

No. We do encourage neighborhood associations to develop an organizational structure that works for them. Some options for neighborhood associations to consider include:

- **Mission Statement:** An organization's vision is its driving force. The mission statement explains why a group exists and what it hopes to accomplish. A group can revise and clarify its mission statement whenever it is deemed appropriate.
- **Bylaws:** Bylaws are simply the rules governing an organization's internal operations, including: purpose of organization, membership information, terms of officers, committees, voting procedures and dues.

## **Resources**

- Neighborhood Associations "How to" Guide (2010). <http://www.talgov.com/> (go to Residents, Neighborhoods) Tallahassee, Florida is helping neighborhoods organize with this guide to creating neighborhood associations.
- How to Organize a Neighborhood Organization (2004). <http://lancaster.unl.edu> (go to Community Articles ) The University of Nebraska – Lincoln, Extension in Lancaster County has developed useful educational materials to help neighborhoods become more effective at achieving their goals.
- Organizing a Neighborhood Association. <http://www.ci.garland.tx.us/> (go to Community Services, Neighborhood Services, Neighborhood Vitality) The Garland, Texas – Office of Neighborhood Vitality helps residents strengthen their neighborhoods through education and training.



## Recruiting and Retaining Membership

Interested and involved membership is essential for the success of any organization. New members often bring fresh ideas, different perspectives, and solutions not-yet-considered. Neighborhood leaders, however, often find not only recruiting but also retaining people's interest and involvement as some of their most difficult tasks.

### Some Key Questions

- Are the neighborhood meetings publicized?
- Are you identifying and forming partnerships with organizations that support the residents of your community, such as: the schools, centers of worship, the merchants, business associations, employers, landlords, local government, hospitals, realty companies, libraries, community centers, and other entities?
- Are meetings easily accessible to neighborhood residents? Are they scheduled at a time of the day when most residents are not working and at a place that is centrally located within the neighborhood and open and accessible to people of all abilities?

### Tips

- Encourage friends to become involved in the community.
- Provide transportation to meetings and events by forming a rideshare program.
- Assign block captains to recruit their neighbors.
- Sponsor functions such as dinners or block parties which double as membership drives.
- Invite interesting speakers to meetings to attract potential volunteers.
- Make successes visible. Some neighbors might need to see results before they volunteer their time.
- Recognize people for their accomplishments.
- Conduct exit interviews when members leave.
- Use a variety of recruitment techniques: direct mail; information tables at community events; presentations to other community groups; potlucks and regular neighborhood celebrations; flyers, posters, and brochures; welcome visits and gifts for new neighbors; articles in local newspapers and other organizations newsletters; public service announcements; updated website.



Emerson East Neighborhood Newcomers Welcome: Decorative Flower Pots – 2003 Neighborhood Grant



Bram's Addition Neighborhood Association National Night Out: Safety Walk – 2007 Neighborhood Grant

# Fostering Diversity and Inclusiveness

A healthy neighborhood association serves the interests and concerns of all people within the neighborhood. An association that embraces and represents people of many different cultures and backgrounds will likely prove more successful in identifying problems and finding solutions, planning for the neighborhood's future, building support, and creating a strong community. A diverse organization may include individuals of different gender, education-level, sexuality, religion, age, upbringing, nationality, occupation, personality, customs, beliefs and values. Working in a diverse group provides an opportunity for growth and learning for individual members and the community as a whole.

## Key Questions

- Does your association demonstrate effective teamwork, recognizing the needs, interests and skills of all its residents? Are individuals from diverse backgrounds welcome at all stages of the planning process?
- Is the neighborhood association representative of the area? Are you involving individuals across barriers of race, religion, age and socio-economic status?
- What common ground do all neighborhood residents identify with?

## Tips for Your Neighborhood Group

- Listen to all of your residents. Find out their interests, talents and needs.
- Offer a diverse set of activities. Don't expect everyone to attend activities all the time. Some residents may not be able to, or want to come to monthly business meetings.
- Offer interpretation services upon request so that people who do not speak English as their first language will feel welcome and engaged, and they will be more likely to stay involved.
- Make sure that facilities for events and activities are accessible to people with mobility limitations.
- Value diversity. By capitalizing on the skills and experiences of all people in your neighborhood, the association will benefit from the rich diversity of the population.
- Trust is essential. Trust doesn't come until you have the chance to interact with one another. Sponsor activities that bring neighbors together.
- There are as many differences within ethnic and racial groups, as there are between them.
- Make the time to actively learn more about the different cultures in your organization.
- Examine your own biases.
- Be Inclusive: Too narrow of a focus and extreme positions can often alienate the very people you'd like to include.
- Practice active listening. Turn up your listening dial across cultural differences.
- Listen for clear expressions of values or outlooks that are different from your own. Seek to understand by listening carefully to what they say (or don't say).
- As cliché as they may seem, "icebreakers" help to create a comfortable environment.

## Resources

- **Teaching Children About Diversity.** <http://www.pbs.org/> (go to Archives from February 2009) Article by Christopher J. Metzler Ph.D. that is relevant and useful for neighborhoods looking for strategies to foster diversity in their associations and other organizations.
- **Icebreakers, Warmups, Energizers, and Deinhbitizers.** <http://wilderdom.com/games/Icebreakers.html> The Wilderdom Store offers gear, books and resources for team building, fun group games and experiential learning.



# Running a Successful Neighborhood Association

Successful neighborhood associations practice inclusivity, maintain formal structures that also allow for flexibility, and have effective leadership which is supported by active membership. The following tips will help neighborhood associations be more successful at reaching their goals.

## Tips

- **Be Inclusive:** Too narrow of a focus and extreme positions can alienate people.
- **Welcome New People:** Make sure new members are welcomed, listened to and, given opportunities to become involved. An open forum for half an hour can make a big difference in whether someone stays involved.
- **Bring in Young People as Constructive Participants:** Activities that let young people know there is a neighborhood group that cares about them will build their respect for the community's values.
- **Recognize Assets:** Conduct a survey to identify the skills of residents that might be hidden assets.
- **Stay Focused on the Bigger Picture:** Set goals each year and stay focused. Utilize subcommittees to handle the bulk of the work.
- **Host Productive Meetings with Relevant Topics:** Start meetings on time and stay on task. Include timeframes on the agenda for each topic. When a topic approaches its time limit but is not complete, ask the group whether the issue deserves more time.
- **Be Flexible:** If most of the people in a meeting want to carry a discussion in a new direction, effective leaders will act as facilitators and swim with the tide rather than fight it.
- **Anticipate Issues:** By staying on top of issues, you can often identify a potential zoning change, crime trend or other problem before it becomes harder to battle.
- **Act Quickly and Decisively:** "Strike while the iron is hot" is an important reminder in times of crisis. This is when people are most likely to get involved.
- **Set Clear Time Lines and Responsibilities:** Many internal conflicts occur because leadership is not clear in summing up discussions, identifying who is responsible for follow-up work, and determining a timeline for action. Ask the secretary to help you summarize discussions and clarify decisions.
- **Work with Other Community Organizations:** Do not forget to capitalize on the resources and skills of other community organizations. An inventory of the neighborhood might uncover a variety of helpful organizations, such as churches, schools, service clubs, nonprofit organizations and youth organizations.
- **Develop New Leaders:** Term limits for officers are helpful in forcing leaders to make way for new people. Committee chairs and project leaders are important positions for testing new leaders.
- **Admit and Learn from Mistakes:** Recognize mistakes and move on with new insight.
- **Celebrate Accomplishments:** Too often we forget to celebrate accomplishments or to even notify people of the results of our work. Even small victories can encourage people to attend neighborhood functions and give their time more freely.

## Resources

- **Empowering Communities.** <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cced/index.cfm>. The University of Wisconsin - Extension Center for Community and Economic Development provides educational materials and training for communities that are interested in taking charge of their future.
- **Maintaining a Neighborhood Association, January 2004.** <http://lancaster.unl.edu>. The University of Nebraska in Lincoln – Extension in Lancaster County, Community and Articles provides neighborhoods with resources that will help them succeed.
- **Lyndale Neighborhood: A Story of Success, 2009.** <http://www.lyndale.org/lyndale-neighborhood-a-story-of-success>. The Lyndale Neighborhood Association in Minneapolis Minnesota uses a nationally recognized asset

based model of community organizing, called the Lyndale Model, that encourages individual residents with the resources, respect, and encouragement they deserve to propose, develop, and lead programs for the neighborhood.



2009 Northport-Warner Park-Sherman Neighborhood Plan Open House



2007 Midvale Heights-Westmorland Neighborhood Plan Public Open House



2008 Southwest Neighborhood Plan Public Open House – Meadowood, Prairie Hills, Greentree, Park Ridge, and Orchard Ridge Neighborhood Associations

# Collaborating With Other Community Groups

Neighborhoods are often comprised of more than residences. Working toward a common goal with other entities such as businesses, schools, and not-for-profit agencies can lead to greater successes, a stronger community feeling and mutually beneficial relationships.

## Getting Started

- Identify your neighborhood's assets.
- Brainstorm resources, places, businesses, and organizations that define your community.
- Make a database of contact information: where, when, who, follow-ups?

## Building Relationships with Businesses

### *Approaching Businesses*

- Introduce yourself to the area business association leaders and ask to attend an upcoming meeting to become familiar with the members.
- Make one-on-one contact with business owners.
- If possible, initial contact should be made by a frequent customer or fellow respected business owner.

### *Communication*

- Listen to business owners' concerns and needs; often they are the same as those of the neighborhood.
- Be flexible in meeting times, especially with small businesses.
- Work directly with the business's decision-maker.
- To avoid confusion, delegate one neighborhood contact person to each business.

### *Working Together*

- Form partnerships for events and meetings.
- Businesses can be a powerful ally for lobbying.
- Businesses could also provide merchandise or gift certificates for neighborhood events to encourage participation and benefit the business-neighborhood relationship.
- Businesses may prefer to donate time or supplies rather than money.
- Familiarize businesses with local resources, including neighborhood newsletters and potential advertising opportunities.

## Building Relationships with Schools

### *Working Through Adults*

- Attend parent-teacher conferences, join parent-teacher organizations, volunteer, etc.
- Get involved with events at the school. Have a supportive neighborhood presence.

### *Programs with Schools*

- Bridge gaps; establish a mentoring program for community members.
- Work together to establish after-school programs or clubs.
- Recruit volunteers (e.g., seniors, college students) to volunteer in schools.

## Extend Schools into the Community

- Develop school-business partnerships

- Encourage your organization and the community to use your school's facilities – playgrounds, meeting spaces, etc.

### Building Relationships with Other Organizations

- Create community listings of important organizations.
- Build mutually beneficial relationships with non-profit organizations. These organizations can provide valuable community services and resources. Technical organizations may be able to provide assistance and advice, especially with websites and education.

### Remember to...

- Recognize and thank contributing businesses.
- Shop at local businesses! Encourage others to do the same.
- Recognize organizations or persons who positively impact your community.
- Match together strengths and needs to form mutually-beneficial relationships.
- Build inter-generational experiences (e.g., mentoring)
- Be democratic and inclusive, free of hierarchies
- Involve the support of prominent community leaders

### Resources

- W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Community Partnership Toolkit - <http://www.wkkf.org/Pubs/CustomPubs/CPToolkit/CPToolkit/>
- NPR Journalist Scott London on Community Collaboration - <http://www.scottlondon.com/reports/ppcc.html>



2012 Leopold Area Resource Coalition/Joining Forces for Families meeting. These two groups now meet jointly and also join meetings of the City of Madison Leopold/Arbor Hills Neighborhood Resource Team to collaboratively explore issues and devise strategies.



# Establishing a Vision, Goals and Objectives

A neighborhood organization is likely to experience greater success if it has clearly defined a vision and [strategic plan](#) with specific goals and objectives. Involving a wide cross section of the neighborhood to collaboratively craft a vision statement will help inspire residents to get involved and stay involved. Developing a coherent framework of goals and objectives will help your group see how it can achieve its vision, building confidence and helping ensure success.

## Vision

A vision statement expresses a desired future. For a neighborhood organization, a vision expresses the future conditions that the neighborhood aspires to achieve. A vision is often written as though the desired conditions already exist. As such, a vision statement can be a positive self-fulfilling prophecy for a neighborhood.

### Tips

- When brainstorming potential vision ideas, refer back to an established [mission](#) statement which communicates the organization's fundamental purpose.
- A vision is different than a mission. It is more specific in terms of both the future state and the time frame.
- Be objective in your approach. Consider neighborhood indicators such as homeownership, education, level of criminal activity, community action and involvement, etc.
- Look to other neighborhood associations and organizations for advice.
- Establish a desirable vision, but do not get "too lofty." Realistically push your neighborhood's capabilities.

## Specific Goals

By accomplishing a specific combination of well-defined goals, a neighborhood can achieve a desired vision. Goals are the primary components of a larger vision. They are broad principles that will help guide decision-making.

### Tips

- Much like a business, do an inventory and base goals off of a ["SWOT" Analysis](#), considering Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats.
- Ask, "what steps need to be taken and in what order?"
- Identify useful strategies and be creative.
- Consider/involve all stakeholders and invite them to brainstorming sessions.

## Objectives

Objectives are precise and measurable components of goals. They can be considered "milestones" as certain action strategies are implemented to achieve a greater vision.

### Tips

- Assign responsibilities to individuals or smaller groups.
- Set deadlines for each responsibility.

## Other Tips

- Describe the ideal end result and compare it to the current conditions in the neighborhood. What are the gaps? What actions are needed? Identify the necessary resources needed to execute goals and the larger vision.
- Celebrate successes and learn from mistakes.
- Both the goals and vision should be specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely, or **“SMART”**.

## Resources

The following neighborhoods have developed vision statements which can be used as examples in other communities:

- **Addenbrooke/Belmar Park Neighborhood in Lakewood, CO:** <http://www.lakewood.org/> (go to For Residents, Neighborhoods, Improvement Plans).
- **Terminal Park Neighborhood in Auburn, WA:** <http://www.auburnwa.gov/> (go to Planning & Development Department, Neighborhood Plans).
- **Cedar Street Neighborhood in Wellesley, MA:** <http://www.ci.wellesley.ma.us/> (go to Planning Department, Current Projects).



# Innovate and Communicate

Many options are available to community groups and individuals that, in the past, were too expensive, too difficult, or did not exist. Your neighborhood association may find it beneficial to explore some of the available technologies and resources as ways to increase communication and participation, build organizational capacity, improve community outreach, reduce resource consumption, and lower costs. Below are suggestions for innovatively presenting and sharing information in your neighborhood and in the larger community.

## Build a Website

- Create an up-to-date website to share your organization's mission statement and goals, meeting times and locations, community events, and other information.
- Use an online calendar and interactive maps.
- Provide a discussion forum for neighborhood residents.
- Develop a virtual tour of your neighborhood.
- Provide links to other neighborhood and community-based groups.
- Provide a printable walking brochure to inform visitors and residents of local businesses, parks, and cultural resources.
- Provide links to neighborhood businesses.

## Meetings

- Presentations through PowerPoint and video can be viewed at meetings and/or posted and streamed online.
- Consider using [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), or other similar resources to further expand communication.
- Create video or slideshow presentations which can be posted to your website using Youtube LINK or another video sharing tool.

## Community Events

- Post videos of ongoing projects or success stories on Youtube.
- Share pictures of neighborhood events and success stories. Consider using Flickr.
- Advertise Neighborhood Events on Facebook.

## Other Ideas

- Share email addresses with neighbors. Collect addresses at meetings and events.
- Create an email announcement group. Consider using [YahooGroups](#) or [Google Groups](#).

## Resources

- Website Tutorials, Tips, and Top Resources - <http://websitetips.com/>
- Effective meetings using technology - <http://www.effectivemeetings.com/technology/index.asp>
- Neighborhood Link  
[http://www.neighborhoodlink.com/article/Association/Neighborhood\\_Assoc\\_Websites](http://www.neighborhoodlink.com/article/Association/Neighborhood_Assoc_Websites)
- Wikipedia definition of social media - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social\\_media](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_media)
- Six Steps to Social Media Savvy - <http://impactmax.wordpress.com/six-steps/>
- Milwaukee's Cambridge Wood's Neighborhood - <http://cambridgewoods.org/>
- Atlanta, GA-Castleberry Hill Neighborhood's innovative website - <http://castleberryhill.org/wpmu/>
- Useful neighborhood network site - <http://www.i-neighbors.org/>

## Inspiring Your Neighbors to Get Involved

An involved resident-base is essential to running an effective neighborhood association. Neighbors each have their own talents, thoughts, values, and creative abilities which can serve to enrich neighborhood quality of life. Community outreach to effectively channel a neighborhood's creative energies can be one of the most difficult tasks a neighborhood association faces. Typically, inspiring citizen involvement is an ongoing process.

### Participation is often attributed to individuals' desire:

- for recognition
- for respect from others of values and self
- for an identifiable role within a community
- to build meaningful relationships
- for rewards in which the benefits of participation outweigh the costs
- to see results as an outcome of their actions

There are many ways in which your neighborhood association can engage residents and their talents, but considering who you are trying to involve in your neighborhood projects and their potential reasons for involvement will be helpful.

### Suggestions for Inspiring Involvement in Your Neighborhood

- Invite a friend to a meeting or neighborhood event.
- Visit with other neighborhood associations and community organizations to share information.
- Collaborating with other community groups builds capacity in your neighborhood and contributes to the success of your organization's cause/project.
- Try to involve under-represented groups in your organization including the youth, elderly, minority groups, low-income residents, and disabled individuals.
- Spend sometime discussing ideas in a less formal setting; i.e. go out for lunch or a cup of coffee, host a Potluck.
- Submit ads, event notices, and articles to local media announcing events, meetings, projects, etc.
- Create catchy flyers that announce events and/or meetings.
- Distribute tasks evenly, so nobody gets "burned-out." If members have a positive experience, they will likely encourage others to get involved.
- Create an up-to-date website that highlights your organization's vision, goals, bylaws, projects, events, meetings, etc.
- Consider going door-knocking for face-to-face communication of neighborhood projects.

### Inspiring Project Ideas

- Block parties
- Community gardens
- Crime prevention initiatives
- Directories and telephone trees
- Home tours
- Holiday celebrations/pot luck dinners



Summit Woods Neighborhood Association Zook Park Gardens – 2007 Neighborhood Grant

- Leadership projects
- Murals/art projects
- Neighborhood cleanups
- Newsletters
- Paint/fix-up projects
- Park developments
- Picnics/concerts
- Scholarship programs
- School supply drives
- Security lighting projects
- Street improvements
- Tree plantings
- Yard-of-the-month programs
- Youth activities
- Share information about volunteer opportunities within the community

### Resources

- How to Get More People Involved in Your Neighborhood Project or Effort, W.K. Kellogg Foundation - [http://www.wkkf.org/Pubs/GreaterBC/PeopleInvolved\\_00254\\_02990.pdf](http://www.wkkf.org/Pubs/GreaterBC/PeopleInvolved_00254_02990.pdf)
- Getting People, The Citizen's Handbook - [http://www.vcn.bc.ca/citizens-handbook/1\\_06\\_getpeople.html](http://www.vcn.bc.ca/citizens-handbook/1_06_getpeople.html)
- Building Community Involvement if you Want to Have a Community, Florida League of Cities, Inc. [http://www.flcities.com/membership/library\\_community\\_involvement.asp](http://www.flcities.com/membership/library_community_involvement.asp)
- VolunteerMatch - [www.volunteermatch.org](http://www.volunteermatch.org)



Meadowood Neighborhood Association Mosaic Project – 2010 Neighborhood Grant



Carpenter-Ridgeway Neighborhood Association Bringing Back the Mighty Oaks – 2011 Neighborhood Grant

# Managing Your Neighborhood Projects

Whether your neighborhood is undertaking a trash pickup project, developing crime-prevention strategies, or organizing a block party, being well-organized and communicating well will ensure greater success. It is important to plan activities starting with identifying what the group is trying to accomplish, who will be involved, what supplies are needed, and where, when and how the project will unfold. It may be helpful to break projects down into the following components: concept, development, implementation, and finalization.

## Concept

- Gather data, identify a need, and establish goals and objectives. If necessary, identify alternatives.
- As an organization, come to an agreement on the proposed project concept.
- As part of the proposal, identify key activities, funding, and dates.

## Development

- Appoint teams/committees with delegated tasks, and conduct necessary studies and research.
- Determine the project scope by identifying the amount and type of work required.
- Identify project phases and tasks. Depending on skills and resources required, delegate as necessary.
- Assess risks that may hinder the project, and based on the size of the risk, develop back-up actions.

## Implementation

- Follow through with specific tasks to achieve project goals and objectives.
- Remain organized, motivated, and practice good communication.
- Based on a detailed schedule, procure final results.
- Direct and/or monitor, project quality, time, and costs.

## Finalization

- Follow through with any final tasks.
- Review and accept results.
- Evaluate project.
- Celebrate successes and record lessons learned.

## Resources

- **Project Management.** [http://managementhelp.org/plan\\_dec/project/project.htm](http://managementhelp.org/plan_dec/project/project.htm)
- **A Guide for Starting a Successful Neighborhood Association (2008).** [http://www.accessfayetteville.org/government/neighborhood\\_resources/](http://www.accessfayetteville.org/government/neighborhood_resources/)  
Guide from Fayetteville Arkansas which offers help for residents who would like to create a neighborhood association, including neighborhood project management tips.

# Neighborhood Emergency Preparedness

Although we always hope for the best, it is smart to be prepared for the worst. In the event of a natural disaster, bioterrorism, infectious disease outbreak, and other emergencies, preparation can go a long way to minimize mass-confusion, despair, injuries, and deaths. Proactive steps taken by individuals, families, and neighborhoods to develop survival kits and emergency plans will improve communication and emergency response especially when resources are spread thin. The following tips and resources should assist your family and neighborhood in taking proactive steps to reduce the negative effects of an emergency.

- If your neighborhood has not created a designated emergency plan, doing so may be a good project for your neighborhood association or any other group of concerned neighbors.
- Prepare an emergency plan for your family. Establish an out-of-town contact person to communicate between separated family members.
- A variety of circumstances may present an emergency situation, including: fires, tornados, floods, winter storms, and infectious disease outbreak. Tailor your family's and your neighborhood's emergency plans to address these conditions.
- When preparing an emergency plan for your neighborhood or family consider basic human needs first: fresh water, food, clean air, and warmth.
- Be sure to involve and inform all neighbors and stakeholders of the emergency plan. Remember to establish a system to check on elderly neighbors or neighbors with special needs.
- Consider establishing Community Emergency Response Teams (see link below).

## Local Resources

- [People Responding to Emergencies Program](#) is a collaborative effort between the UW Health Emergency Medical Services program, the City of Madison Fire Department, and the Badger Chapter of the Red Cross. Provided are tips on survival kits, communication, evacuation, and links to other emergency preparedness websites.
- [Public Health - Madison Dane County's Emergency Preparedness Site](#) offers a neighborhood emergency preparedness toolkit, P.L.A.N. (Preparedness through Linking All Neighbors), as well as useful emergency resource links.
- [The City of Madison Emergency Preparedness Site](#) serves as the City's central clearinghouse for emergency preparedness information.
- [Dane County Department of Management](#) provides emergency information and plans.
- [City of Madison Fire Department](#)
- [City of Madison Police Department](#)

## Other Resources

- Ready America, Prepare, Plan, Stay Informed <http://www.ready.gov/>
- Community Emergency Response Teams <https://www.citizencorps.gov/cert/>
- Wisconsin Homeland Security, 30 Preparedness Tips, Emergency Kits, and Links to other Resources
- <http://www.homelandsecurity.wi.gov/section.asp?linkid=1236&locid=129>



## Making Physical Improvements

The physical environment supports the lifestyle of a community and reflects the people who occupy it. Residents and business owners can work together to ensure that the needs of their neighborhood are met and the appearance of their neighborhood positively reflects its vision. Shared responsibility for the surrounding environment will enhance its use and enjoyment.

### Beautify the Neighborhood

Collaborate with neighbors, the district Alderperson, and appropriate City Divisions to:

- Organize clean-up events or adopt an area for on-going maintenance.
- Install landscaping, public art, and pedestrian amenities.
- Initiate building improvements, and request services or improvements for public spaces.
- Create a neighborhood gateway with a welcome sign and landscaping (apply for a Planning Division Community Enhancement grant to help fund these efforts <http://www.cityofmadison.com/neighborhoods/grantprogram.htm>).



Capitol Neighborhoods, Inc. Period Garden Park Statue, Fountain and Plantings – 2008 Neighborhood Grant

### Add Landscaping

Add trees, shrubs, flowers, and other landscaping to parks, terraces, and traffic islands or medians in your neighborhood. Create a project plan, get approval for your plan, and secure funding.

- **Project Plans.** All projects should be developed in collaboration with neighbors, district Alderperson, and appropriate City Staff. Project approval by the [Parks Division](#) or [Engineering Division](#) is typical.
- **Capital Budget.** Capital budget requests can be made for landscaping projects with a life expectancy of 10 years or more (such as trees, large shrubs, or grading and seeding). You will need to work with your neighbors, [District Alderperson](#), the Parks Division, and the Parks Commission.
- **People for Parks.** [The People for Parks Matching Funds Program](#) is also reserved for projects with a 10 year or greater life expectancy.
- **Marguerite Pohle Flower Gardens Program.** This program provides plants, flowers, and soil amenities to gardeners whose plans have been approved by the Parks Division. You will need to work with the Parks Outreach Coordinator, the Parks Division, and your District Alderperson.

### Improve the Streetscape

Pedestrian amenities (such as street furniture, lighting, banners and signs, bike lanes, and traffic calming devices) can improve the appearance, safety, and enjoyment of your neighborhood. Work with your neighbors and District Alderperson to plan locations, size, use, and funding of pedestrian amenities.

- **Furniture.** The [Office of Real Estate Services](#) must approve plans for any benches, bike racks, kiosks, and signs that are proposed in street right-of-ways.
- **Public art.** Create gathering places and landmarks, increase the aesthetic quality, and celebrate the identity of your neighborhood. Mosaics, murals, statuary, signage, and many other creative projects will enhance pride and foster collaboration. (Contact [Madison Arts Coordinator](#)).



- **Signs.** Installing a neighborhood sign will vary based on its location on public or private property. Signs located in the street right-of-way require approval from the the [Office of Real Estate Services](#), the [Zoning Division](#), and the Common Council. Signs located on private property require the consent of the property owner and approval from the Planning Unit and Zoning Section.
- **Traffic Control Devices.** Traffic signs, signals, and pavement markings can be added to your neighborhood in cooperation with your neighbors, district alderperson, and the [Traffic Engineering Division](#). Detailed concerns must be outlined for the Traffic Engineering Division.
- **Bus Stops and Shelters.** Work with [Madison Metro](#) and your district alderperson to request additional bus stops and shelters for your neighborhood. Ridership criteria and available funding will determine if Madison Metro can meet these requests.
- **Lighting.** Your neighborhood can also request additional streetlights. Work with residents in the immediate area of proposed lighting, your district alderperson, and the [Traffic Engineering Division](#).
- **Sidewalks.** If you would like to add sidewalks to your neighborhood, you will need to work with your neighbors, district alderperson, and the [Engineering Division](#).

### **Improve/Maintain Neighborhood Parks**

- Participate in park maintenance activities through the [City of Madison People for Parks Program](#).
- Volunteer clean-up can include trash, recyclables, leaf, and brush collection.

### **Improve/Maintain Building Conditions**

- Building code violations should be addressed directly to owners first, then to City Staff in the [Building Inspection Division](#).
- Graffiti problems? The City provides a [Co-Pay Graffiti Removal Program](#). If graffiti repeatedly occurs on private property it may be most economical for residents and volunteers to remove it.
- Report graffiti on public property to the Graffiti Hotline at 608-246-4532.
- Resources for residential building improvements include home-help fund rehabilitation loans, as well as rent and down payment assistance.
- Resources for commercial properties include Business Improvement Districts, Tax Increment Districts, the Main Street Program, Façade Improvement Grants, Industrial Revenue Bonds, and Capital Revolving Funds. Refer to the [Community and Economic Development](#) webpage, and the [Community Development Block Grant](#) webpage.

### **Waste Collection**

- Refer to the [Streets and Recycling](#) website for information on refuse, yard waste, brush, and recyclable materials.

### **Street Maintenance**

- The [Streets Division](#) handles street cleaning and repairs, including sweeping, snow and ice removal, filling, and resurfacing. Work with your neighbors, district alderperson, and the Streets Division to request services or improvements.

### **Sidewalk Maintenance**

- Work with your neighbors, [District Alderperson](#), and the [Engineering Division](#) to handle sidewalk repairs and improvements.

## Creating a Greener Neighborhood

People make choices everyday that affect the local, regional and global environment. What we eat, what we buy, how much waste we create, how we get around, what we do for fun—all ultimately affect the health of our planet. Our choices impact the quality of the air, water, and soil, elements vital to all living creatures. Having respect for the earth's life-sustaining processes and being aware of the effects that our actions have on the environment can help promote healthier neighborhoods and communities, and in turn, a more sustainable planet.

The following ideas and suggestions aim to inspire your neighborhood to participate in cooperative efforts to minimize negative impacts on the planet.



Carpenter-Ridgeway Neighborhood Association Streambank Restoration and Stabilization – 2007 Neighborhood Grant

### Neighborhood Activities

- Host workshops to teach rain barrel and compost bin construction, gardening, canning food, improving insulation, etc.
- Organize a [rideshare](#)/carpool to school or work and a bike to work week.
- Organize a community garage sale, stuff exchange, or book and magazine swap.
- Participate in neighborhood restoration of streams, rivers, lakeshores and other natural habitats.
- Provide information in neighborhood newsletters and webpages on City environmental initiatives such the [MadiSun](#), [rain gardens](#), and [water conservation](#) programs.
- Create an E-newsletter that informs community members about farmers markets, [recycling/waste disposal](#), inspirational stories related to the environment, pending legislation that could affect the environment and how to have an influence, and more.

### Neighborhood Plan Suggestions

- Consider applying the standards of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) for Neighborhood Development.
- Consider the Natural Step Framework and be aware of the [city's initiatives](#).
- Promote mixed-use development that is accessible by public transit, bicycling, and walking.
- Encourage bicycle, pedestrian and public transit improvements.
- Preserve and/or increase green space and natural areas.
- Encourage urban agriculture and community garden facilities.
- Use landscape techniques such as bioswales, [native vegetation](#), and [rain gardens](#) to reduce storm water run-off and provide natural habitat.
- Maintain no-mow buffers to reduce run-off along shorelines.

## Resources

- **City of Madison Sustainability** <http://www.cityofmadison.com/Sustainability/residents/index.cfm>  
Sustainability suggestions and initiatives for the City of Madison including the MadiSun, Mpowering and Natural Step.
- **City of Madison Neighborhood Grant Program** <http://www.cityofmadison.com/neighborhoods/grantprogram.htm>  
Grants are awarded through a competitive process to neighborhood and business associations for projects designed to physically enhance the neighborhood, build leadership and capacity, or create a neighborhood plan.
- **Sustain Dane** <http://www.sustaindane.org/> A non-profit organization that provides education and resources to communities and organizations that are trying to become more sustainable.
- **LEED for Neighborhood Design** <http://www.usgbc.org/> The LEED for Neighborhood Development Rating System integrates the principles of smart growth, urbanism and green building into the first national system for neighborhood design.
- **The Natural Step** <http://www.naturalstep.org/> A non-profit organization dedicated to education, advisory work and research in sustainable development. Since 1989, Natural Step has worked with thousands of corporations, municipalities, academic institutions and not-for-profit organizations helping them discover new opportunities, reduce costs, and reduce ecological and social impacts.
- **Runoff Management** <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/runoff/rg/links.htm#basics>  
The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Runoff Management web site provides information and resources for effectively managing polluted runoff from agricultural practices, storm water drainage and nonpoint sources.
- **BioSwales for Stormwater Runoff** <http://www.cityofsalem.net/Departments/PublicWorks/> Case study of how Salem, OR has constructed a bioswale to treat some of the stormwater runoff from 16 acres of a nearby residential development.
- **Smart Growth Online** <http://www.smartgrowth.org/> Education and resources for promoting vitality in center cities and older suburbs through a greater mix of housing, commercial and retail uses, pedestrian, bike and public transit access, and preservation of open space and other environmental amenities.

# Funding Your Neighborhood Projects

Neighborhood projects require time, talent, and supplies. The most successful neighborhood projects are accomplished through good planning and a combination of public and private resources.

## Get Organized

- Outline a project plan and budget.
- Research what costs are involved. Be clear about the reasons that you are seeking funding.

## Build Community Support for your Project

- Coordinate your project plans with other projects or groups in the community. A combined effort may accomplish more than initially planned!
- Seek opportunities to apply jointly for funding with another organization.
- Remember: neighborhoods need social capital as much as economic capital.
- Don't reinvent the wheel; you may be surprised at what others are doing already.

## Do your Homework

- Search and narrow your field of potential funding sources. Know their parameters.
- Funding should be raised through variety of resources, including public, private, and non-profit.
- Venues can include grants, loans, [tax increments](#), [fundraising events](#), and solicitations. (Note: a fundraising permit must be obtained for sales or solicitation on public *and* private property).

## Ask for Advice and Assistance

- Contact [your District alderperson](#) to discuss potential city funding sources
- Identify experts who are familiar with your field or who are familiar with the funding sources that you are considering.
- Visit organization websites, request more information, and set up a meeting to discuss the application if necessary.
- Ask past applicants or the organization for examples of winning applications.

## Learn From Your Experiences

- If your application is selected for funding, celebrate your award and document the approach that you used. If your application is not selected, find out why. You can call the organization for more feedback and learn how to improve future applications.

## Resources

- City of Madison's Neighborhood Grant Program - <http://www.cityofmadison.com/neighborhoods/grantprogram.htm>
- Madison Arts Commission Grants - <http://www.cityofmadison.com/MAC/grants/index.cfm>
- City of Madison's Community Development Block Grant Office - <http://www.cityofmadison.com/cdbg/>
- Grants.gov - <http://www.grants.gov/>
- Fundsnet Services - <http://www.fundsnet.com/>
- Non-profit Guides, Grant Writing Tools - <http://www.npguides.org/>