

### III. COMMUNICATE

Successful neighborhood organizations are skilled communicators. They know how to say what they want to say. They also know how best to get the word out.



### IV: HAVE A PLAN

Successful neighborhood organizations have a purpose and a plan. Everything the group does must link to or support the purpose. A plan for the organization is developed to address the purpose. The plan will answer basic questions about how the organization will be set up, i.e. *What needs to be done? Who will do it? When? How?*



If the purpose of the organization cannot be understood by the residents, by the city, and/or by its resources, then its constituency and support will diminish.

### V: BE PATIENT

Successful neighborhood organizations have goals that will take years to achieve. Thus it is important to plan accordingly and realize that results may not occur overnight.

### VI: BE COMPREHENSIVE

Successful neighborhood organizations do not narrowly define their aspirations, plans, or programs.

Successful neighborhood organizations know that treating outward symptoms of decline such as peeling paint and overgrown vacant lots will not fix the causes of their neighborhood's instability.

Successful neighborhood organizations look at their neighborhood as a total environment and include everyone who lives there...homeowners, renters, and youth...in helping to create and maintain their neighborhood's stability.

### VII: CONCENTRATE RESOURCES

It is better to do one thing well than many things poorly. Successful neighborhood organizations know what attributes each member brings to the organization and how to utilize them effectively.

### VIII: GET VISUAL

Successful neighborhood organizations know that visual enhancements such as flower beds and coats of paint show that neighborhood residents care about where they live.



Visual improvements help to create pride in ones neighborhood.

### IX: INVOLVE BUSINESSES

Most of the decisions that affect the fate of a neighborhood are made by the private sector, not by government.

Successful neighborhood organizations have the full support and cooperation of the businesses located in their neighborhood.

Business owners are an immense asset in advising neighborhood organizations on ways to receive, manage and invest money for the benefit of the organization as well as the neighborhood.

If the neighborhood organization has no cash plan, it often has no future.

### X: INVOLVE SCHOOLS

Next to residents themselves, local schools offering assets such as the buildings, grounds, teachers, and administrators are perhaps a neighborhood's most under-utilized resource.

Successful neighborhood organizations take advantage of educational resources, and the schools usually benefit from resident support and participation.



### XI: ANALYZE NEIGHBORHOOD SOCIAL / ECONOMIC TRENDS

Successful neighborhood organizations know why families are leaving the neighborhood, and know what must be done to keep them.

Successful neighborhood organizations know how to interpret their social and economic situation for investors. They know how to market their neighborhoods. They know how much land costs, who is buying, and who is selling.

### XII: DEVELOP MULTIPLE FUNDING SOURCES

Successful neighborhood organizations draw financial support from many sources. Successful organizations learn how to develop services that are in demand in the marketplace, or are unique to the neighborhood.

Civic responsibility does not mean living off of grants. Most neighborhood organizations collect dues to print, publish and mail newsletters partially financed with advertising. Others grow to a level of acquiring funds to purchase vacant lots and/or buildings to use as financial investment tools.



## KEYS TO A NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION'S SUCCESS

### Leadership:

- When leaders ask who will perform a certain task, they may face an audience without a raised hand. An option is to pass out index cards and ask participants to write what they would like to do, are able to do, and enjoy doing.
- Only elect officers and Board members who are willing to actively participate.
- Engage many people to perform small amounts of work to keep others from 'burning out'.

### Membership:

- Remember that membership means different things to different people. In many organizations, a small core group of people will be active while others only pay dues once a year. Successful neighborhood organizations need both types of members and everything between. Welcome all levels of commitment, and remember that all members are VOLUNTEERS!

### Getting Things Done:

- Decide on a project with the members.
- To successfully complete a project, list the tasks that will be involved, who will be performing the tasks, how long each task will take, and how each task will be completed.
- **Celebrate** the success of a project's completion.

### Running Effective Meetings:

- Establish the type of meeting you are having - i.e., regular, called, annual, etc.
- Establish what you want to accomplish.
- Create an agenda with time constraints.
- Keep the meeting on schedule, and preferably no longer than 1 hour.



# Tips for Creating a Successful Neighborhood Organization

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## What is a SUCCESSFUL Neighborhood Organization?

There is no magic formula for creating a successful neighborhood organization. What works for one neighborhood may not work for another. However, there are common characteristics that successful neighborhood organizations share, the most important being - all successful neighborhood organizations have active citizens participating in them.

### Why We Need More Active Citizens

When people decide they are going to become actively involved in their neighborhood, they become involved in the decisions being made about their neighborhood. As a result, local problems begin to get resolved, and positive ideas implemented.

Citizens understand their neighborhood better than anyone else. Active citizens coming together as a neighborhood organization can accomplish what individuals working alone may not.

Neighborhood organizations provide a forum for resolving local differences, and a venue for neighbors to socially connect with one another, creating a positive social environment within the neighborhood.

Neighborhood organizations act as a bridge between citizens and city government, providing a link between services offered and services provided as well as the decision-making processes between elections.

There are additional characteristics that are shared by most successful neighborhood organizations. They are as follows:

## I: GAIN RESIDENT COMMITMENT

Unless a high proportion of the neighborhood's residents are demonstrably committed to staying and working to save or strengthen their neighborhood, there will be no one group of people to continually address the issue of what must be done or be a voice for the neighborhood.



One way to encourage commitment is to engage neighborhood residents in the decisions being made about their neighborhood.

Another way to encourage commitment is to have some fun. Festivals, block parties, and potlucks put people in touch with each other, encourage participation and introduce neighbors to neighbors.

Once people know each other, they can get to work together.

## II: DEVELOP LEADERS

Successful neighborhood organizations develop strong leaders. Without strong leaders, the destiny of neighborhood organizations is more often determined by forces outside of the neighborhood.

