



# How to Start a Neighborhood Organization

NORMA Y. VERGARA  
NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORK SPECIALIST  
[NVERGARA@PASADENATX.GOV](mailto:NVERGARA@PASADENATX.GOV) | 713.475.5578 | 832.495.8593



JEFF A. WAGNER  
MAYOR

# Your Community Relations Staff

**Hal Burke**

Neighborhood Network Manager

713-920-7969

[Hburke@pasadenatx.gov](mailto:Hburke@pasadenatx.gov)

**Norma Y. Vergara**

Neighborhood Network Specialist

713-475-5578

[nvergara@pasadenatx.gov](mailto:nvergara@pasadenatx.gov)

**Lauren Mitchell**

Neighborhood Network Specialist

713-920-7930

[lmitchell@pasadenatx.gov](mailto:lmitchell@pasadenatx.gov)

**Lorrie Jowell**

Volunteer Pasadena Manager

713-475-7259

[Ljowell@pasadenatx.gov](mailto:Ljowell@pasadenatx.gov)

**Tish Eubanks**

Education Liaison

713-920-7924

[Teubanks@pasadenatx.gov](mailto:Teubanks@pasadenatx.gov)

**Cindy Haynes**

Neighborhood Network Office

Assistant

713-920-7948

[Chaynes@pasadenatx.gov](mailto:Chaynes@pasadenatx.gov)



# Defining Your Organization

## Neighborhood Organizations Types

- **Neighborhood Associations**

- **Civic Club/Civic Groups**

- Both are a group of people organized within a specific sub-area of the city, governed through by-laws, and other applicable city codes. These groups are formed based on the needs and desires of residents. Organizations will give residents a forum to discuss common concerns and to brainstorm possible solutions.
- Examples: improved street lighting, bike trails, sidewalks, traffic calming devices, park amenities, & beautification projects.
- **Neighborhood Associations have no membership fees.**
- **Civic Clubs/Groups have optional membership fees.**

- **Homeowners Association (HOA)**

- HOAs are governed by deed restrictions, articles of incorporation, by-laws and applicable city codes.

Any person who wants to buy a residence within the area of a homeowners association must become a member of that particular HOA, and therefore must obey the restrictions and pay dues to designated HOA.

- **Dues are mandatory.**

# What Makes Your Organization Eligible?

A recognized & active neighborhood organization through the City of Pasadena Neighborhood Network requires the following:

- **Copy of Organization's By-Laws:**  
By-laws are the written rules that control the internal affairs of an organization. It defines the group's official name, purpose, requirements for membership, officers' titles & responsibilities, how officers are elected, how meetings should be conducted, and how often meetings will be held.
- **List of Organization's Board Members:**  
List the president, vice president, secretary, & treasurer. This allows us to have updated and current contact information.
- **Hold Open Public Meetings:**  
Public meeting must be held at least once a year for the entire neighborhood. This shows that you are active and communicating with your neighbors. Our office requires one meeting agenda & minutes.
- **Deed Restrictions:**  
Deed Restrictions are written legal agreements that dictate aesthetic requirements or the types of activities that may take place on a property in a subdivision. While Deed Restrictions are not required, they are recommended to have as part of your file.

# Create a small Core Group to get started.

- Create a small core group of neighbors to identify and determine what people care about.
- Every neighborhood organization is different, some start in response to one particular concern such as neighborhood improvements. Examples may include: speeding cars, street parking, etc.
- Benefits include the Neighborhood Watch Programs & National Night Out events.
- The organization will represent all the residents in the neighborhood.



# Core Group Meets To Discuss Concerns

After the core group defines the major concerns of the neighborhood, their primary function is to then [help plan the first general meeting of the entire neighborhood](#). The core group will need to do a number of important things in preparation for the first general neighborhood meeting:

- Define a list of small "kick-off" projects that should be fairly simple such as; a block clean-up, letter writing, or a potluck fundraising event. The idea is to make it easy for the people who come to the first meeting and get involved.
- Decide who you want to tell about your new organization such as community newspapers, local government, churches, and other neighborhood groups. Create a list with contact names, phone numbers, and email addresses.
- It is important to know the history of concerns and what had been done in the past to prevent previous mistakes.



# Plan the First General Meeting

Once the core group has completed their research they should decide on a [date](#), [time](#), and [location](#) for the first general membership meeting.

- Keep in mind that you want to choose a date and time that is going to be convenient for the largest number of people possible.
- Weekday evenings usually work the best.
- Consider work and family schedules.
- Schools, public libraries, churches, and community centers make great locations for the meeting and may be available free of charge



# Create an Agenda



## First general meeting is very important!

Primary purpose is to lay the foundation of the organization. At the end of this meeting there should be an agreement on goals that the organization will take on. Below is a framework for what your agenda might look like at this first meeting.

- **Introduction:** Introduce the core group and explain the purpose of the meeting. Also, everyone attending should introduce themselves, share where they live, and what improvements they would like to see.
- **Discuss the Issues:** Everyone attending should have a chance to voice their opinion and make suggestions, but limit each persons time (2-3min).
- **Set Priorities:** Based on the issues discussed, prioritize one or two areas of interest and create projects.
- **Create Tasks:** Break your project ideas down into a series of tasks and ask for volunteers.
- **Create the Organization Structure:** You will need to create a name and a leadership team. Rules for operation and elections can either be adopted at the first meeting or put off until the organization has become more established.
- **Set a date for the Next Meeting:** It is essential to agree on a date and time for the next meeting before adjourning.



# Get The Word Out!



After the first meeting, you need to publicize the event to insure the highest participation possible. Below are some tips to insure high attendance:

- Create meeting announcement flyers which include date, time, & place.
- Distribute to all residents in your neighborhood, nearby churches, schools, and social media forums such as Facebook and Nextdoor.
- Set up a free neighborhood website (such as [nextdoor.com](http://nextdoor.com)) so that when you distribute flyers in the neighborhood, you can give neighbors a place to go online for more details. Be sure to print the address of your website on each flyer.
- Take your flyers door-to-door and canvass the neighborhood you are organizing.
- If you have any questions on how to promote your meeting, please ask us.



# Tips For The Meeting

- **Everyone should sign in-** Collect as much contact information as possible: name, address, phone number, & email.
- **Be prepared for a big meeting-** There can be lots of discussion and more ideas than expected.
- **Or be prepared for small meeting-** Low attendance is common for new organizations. Stay positive and enlist the energies of everyone in attendance.
- **All ideas should be given fair consideration.** Everyone needs to be treated with respect.
- **Publicize!** Use social media such as Facebook Groups/Pages & Nextdoor, they are great resources!
- **Invite guest speakers for your meetings-** This will draw attention to your meeting, especially if it's regarding a topic of interest for your neighborhood. Your local police, fire, and various city departments provide good information.
- **Refreshments-** Can add community fellowship. Encourage people to bring their favorite dish or dessert.



Additional Questions?  
Contact Us!



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*Thank  
you!*