HOW TO START A NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Gather Information & People

To start a neighborhood association, the first thing you should do is contact the City of Fort Wayne at 311 and let them know you are interested in starting an association. City staff will then let you know if you live in an active association and/or if you are eligible to start or relaunch one.

Then, if you are eligible to start an association, you will need to find at least 5 business owners or residents who want to be members and leaders of your new association and organize a meeting.

- First, decide the meeting's time and location and communicate it to as many people who live and work in your association as possible.
- Next, use your first meeting to highlight the benefits and value of forming an association (for example: new and improved communication, events, safety,) and to see if you have enough interest from your neighbors to begin the next step.



Initiate the Process

It can take about a year to launch an association. First submit a formal letter addressed to the Director of the Department of Neighborhoods including the following information:

- Date of request
- Name of Organization
- Brief summary of the proposed association's purpose

City Due Diligence

After you submit your request, the Department of Neighborhoods team will begin their internal due diligence process. This process can take 3-6 months. Once the process is done, a City staff person will provide their findings and recommendations for the neighborhood association to you and your team.



Neighborhood support

Once you receive the Department of Neighborhoods team's recommendations, you may need to submit one or more of the followings documents to them within 180 days:

- A copy of the association's bylaws for review and approval
- A boundary map confirming the association's proposed or new borders.
- Signatures of four or more officers willing to serve on the association's board for at least one election cycle.
- Signatures (or letters of support) from 51% of the households and businesses in the neighborhood. Remember to include full names and addresses of each individual who signs the document or provides a letter.

Final Review

After 30 days, Department of Neighborhoods staff will have reviewed all materials and approved or conditionally approved the submission if all requirements have been met.

Advantages

Some of the great benefits of becoming- and becoming a part of- a neighborhood association may include:

- Building relationships and strengthening communication among neighbors.
- Creating a unified voice to tackle issues. A collective voice is often a stronger voice.
- Establishing an effective communication link with the City of Fort Wayne.
- Receiving notifications about news, decisions, and events that affect the neighborhood.
- Increasing the number of funding opportunities available for neighborhood projects

Grants/Funding

Once you have your neighborhood association started you may need funds to help get some of your new projects started! Coaching and technical assistance may be available from City staff. Call 311 and ask for a member of the Department of Neighborhoods team to learn more about available grants including the Neighborhood Improvement Grant and opportunities for fundraising assistance.

Assistance

If you need more guidance on how to start a neighborhood association don't be afraid to call 311 (260-427-8311) or contact staff in the Department of Neighborhoods or reach out to other local neighborhood association leaders to hear about their experience.

Final Reminder



Remember, starting and managing a neighborhood association requires community involvement and a commitment from residents. Building relationships with your neighbors and engaging them in the process is crucial for a successful association.

We look forward to supporting you in your neighborhood efforts!

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This guide was created by the City's Department of Neighborhoods and AMP Lab students.
For more information visit our website or scan the QR Code.

www.fortwayneguides.org