



*City of Albuquerque*

# NEIGHBORHOOD HANDBOOK

*A Guide to Creating and Sustaining Vibrant Associations*

**2018 EDITION**

A community resource provided by:



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# THE BASICS

*“The basic community organization for empowering individuals and mobilizing their capacities is the association. An association is a group of citizens working together. An association is an amplifier of the gifts, talents, and skills of individual community members... They are the basic American tool for: empowering individuals, building strong communities, creating effective citizens, making democracy work.”*

Source: “Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community’s Assets” by John P. Kretzmann and John L. McKnight



# ORGANIZE

## **Establish the Purpose:**

What do you want to accomplish by creating a neighborhood association? What is important to you and your neighbors? Consider sending out a survey or going door-to-door to identify those priorities. If you have a clear purpose it will help guide the decisions and priorities of your association.

*Let your “why”  
guide your “what”*

### **Create the Structure:**

Your neighborhood is made up of individual homes, which create a block, which then come together to form the larger community. How can you take advantage of that natural structure?

Typically a neighborhood board of directors consists of a President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary. You might also consider having a block captain coordinator on your board who is responsible for identifying block captains on each block who would then, in turn, create a neighborhood watch program for their block. You'll improve public safety, increase membership, and improve communication.

Contact your APD Crime Prevention Specialist to set up a neighborhood watch!

Your neighborhood is also part of the larger city. Consider having a member who is assigned to attend the coalition meeting on behalf of your neighborhood. This will keep your neighborhood knit into the larger community discussion and provide additional opportunities for support and collaboration. Contact the Office of Neighborhood Coordination to find out details about your coalition and when they meet.

Make sure your board is staggered and consists of an odd number of board members. You don't want to make your board so large that you have a hard time filling positions and getting a quorum, but you also want to make sure you have the leadership and level of involvement needed in order to meet the purpose outlined in the bylaws.



*Example of  
Neighborhood  
Map Template 1*



*Example of  
Neighborhood  
Map Template 2*

### **Map Your Association:**

There is a city-wide interactive map and a PDF map of individual associations at [cabq.gov/neighborhoods/resources](http://cabq.gov/neighborhoods/resources) under “Maps”. If you would like a custom association map, reach out to the Office of Neighborhood Coordination.

We have two templates you can choose from:

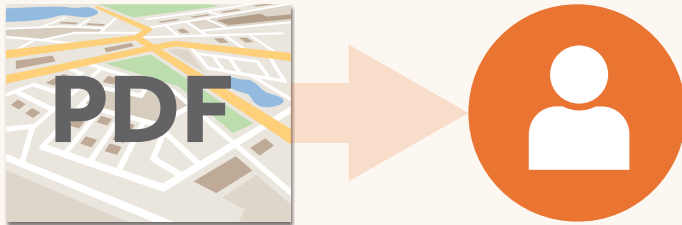
#### ***Template 1:***

- An aerial background
- Public Facilities
- APS schools and charter schools, as available
- Faith-Based Institutions, as available
- Parks
- Streets
- Date printed

### **Template 2:**

- A clean white background
- Parcel lines & street addresses
- Streets
- Date printed

We will send you a PDF of the map of your choice that you can publish on your website or get printed at a local print shop. Please note we cannot provide customizations beyond these two templates.



*Maps help your board break down the association by area to make sure each street is represented, reached with door-to-door initiatives, or organized into a neighborhood watch program.*



*Maps help members visualize areas of concern or priority.*



*Maps can bring clarity to meeting discussions.*

### Develop Bylaws:

The Office of Neighborhood Coordination's website has sample bylaws available at [cabq.gov/neighborhoods/resources](http://cabq.gov/neighborhoods/resources) under "Neighborhood Resources".

Other ideas to keep in mind when writing bylaws are:

- Understand the purpose of bylaws. Bylaws are an association's written rules. Bylaws are important because they can help resolve problems or conflicts that may arise and will guide the process your association follows to make decisions.
- Gather information. To properly draft bylaws, you need to understand the association, its purpose, how the officers will advance that purpose, and the future priorities of the association.





- Designate a committee. A bylaws writing committee should consult with as many people as possible and use their input to help write the bylaws. Working as a team ensures that all perspectives are represented and accounted for in the bylaws.
- Reference other applicable documents. You want your bylaws to be consistent with other core documents, such as your articles of incorporation, governance policies, and any other document that reflects how the association operates.
- Meet with an attorney. Consulting with a lawyer who specializes in non-profit law can be useful to make sure your bylaws cover critical legal requirements depending on the

structure and goals of your association. An attorney can also make sure your bylaws harmonize with New Mexico's non-profit law. Examples of local legal organizations that your association may want to contact include the State Bar Association and/or New Mexico Legal Aid.

- Keep them up-to-date. It is recommended that the association reviews their bylaws every few years. This ensures that the current board is aware of what is included in the bylaws, it checks the association's current processes against the bylaws to make sure they aren't unknowingly in violation, and it allows for timely revisions to fix procedures that might not be workable for the association at that time.

### **Your First Meeting:**

It is important that your first meeting is well-run or it might discourage future participation. You want your meeting to be efficient, be fun, and give residents an opportunity to discuss goals, solve problems, and get to know each other.

- Set goals for the meeting.
- Identify decisions that need to be made for the association to officially form. Hold a visioning session to identify the neighborhood's short term and long term goals.
- Hold elections. Alternatively, you can assign members to fill key roles on a temporary basis until you have a larger membership meeting after you've gained some momentum.

*Follow the election process outlined in your bylaws. Have a copy of your bylaws at-hand to reference.*

- Consider creating committees or subdividing projects to help accomplish the larger goals.

### **Tips for Holding Elections:**

- Consider setting term limits for board members. Term limits help increase leadership capacity by keeping leadership building front-of-mind and by giving an opportunity for new people to step into leadership positions.

- Make sure you follow the election process outlined in your bylaws. Have a copy of your bylaws at-hand in case there are any questions.
- Have a meeting with the board prior to the election to ensure everyone has the same understanding of the bylaws.
- Clarify who gets to vote per your bylaws. One vote per adult? Per family? Per business? Only dues-paying members? Anyone who attends the meeting? To track membership make sure you have records present at the meeting.
- Do your bylaws call for a nominating committee? If so, think through proper representation, who is active in the community, and who knows their neighbors. Your nominating committee does not get the final say, they just make sure there is at least one nomination on the floor. The membership still gets to offer nominations or self-nominate.





- Prepare ballots in advance with nominated candidates as well as a blank space for write-in candidates. The more prepared you come to the meeting the smoother the election process.
- Have two members who are trusted, but not candidates, gather and count the ballots.
- Thank the outgoing board members for their accomplishments, time, and service.
- Celebrate the newly elected board members. Make sure the new board member gets linked up with the outgoing board member and feels welcomed and connected to the rest of the board.



## GATHER PEOPLE

### How to get people involved:

At its most basic level, a neighborhood association is a network and community of people. In order to create that network you need to start building relationships.

- Find a few committed people, divide up the streets within the association, and go door-to-door.
- Connect with people out walking their dog, checking their mail, or bringing in their trashcans.
- Encourage people to invite their neighbors, who then invite their neighbors and so on.
- Have a goal that each member talks with one neighbor during the week about the association.
- Share invitations to your meetings on NextDoor, Facebook, or your association's website.

### Share the “Why”:

Why should people get involved? Here are some ideas on what to say as you speak with your neighbors:

- Fresh ideas and energy. You need people to get involved in order to bring their ideas and energy to the discussion and work of the association.
- Speak with a collective voice. The neighborhood will be stronger if everyone is working together. Get support for concerns you have about your neighborhood and identify the top priorities of your neighborhood.
- Turn your neighborhood into a community. Your neighborhood will thrive if it shifts from a place where people sleep to a place where people live.



- Watch out for each other. A connected community is a safer community. If you know your neighbors and have a way to communicate with them you can watch out for each other.
- Support each other. Every single person in the association has assets, resources, and skills that might help their neighbor. With everyone working together to meet each other's needs the neighborhood will become a nicer place to live.

An example of how to “Take a Street and Build a Community” can be seen here: <http://www.tedxperth.org/take-street-and-build-community>

*Think through a series of questions to which most people will answer “yes.”*

### **Getting People to Say “Yes”**

A trick to getting people to participate and help out is to think through a series of questions to which most people will say “yes.” For example:

- Who is concerned about crime?
- How many of you live in this neighborhood?
- How many of you would like to feel safer in your neighborhood?
- Who lives on \_\_\_\_\_ street?
- Which of you will agree to serve as the block captain of \_\_\_\_\_ street?

# GET TO WORK

## Board Manual:

Your board might want to consider getting together at the start of each year to cast vision and plan for the year. Additionally, it helps make sure the board is connecting and communicating, and shares the same vision. Some suggested ideas for a manual that could be provided to board members are:

- Bylaws and any other applicable, official documents.
- Board roster with addresses, emails, and phone numbers.
- Description of board member and officer responsibilities.
- Schedule of upcoming year's board meetings and general meetings.
- List of committees, the chairperson of each committee, and their current members.
- A statement of the organization's purpose, if not included in the bylaws.
- Association's budget.
- Association's annual report.
- Copy of the association's financial statement from the previous year.
- A set of board minutes from the previous year.
- Any appropriate forms:
  - Agenda form
  - Minutes form
  - ONC's Annual Report Form
- A copy of the Neighborhood Association Recognition Ordinance



**Incorporation:**

A neighborhood organization can operate as a group even without any formal, legal status. Technically such groups do not “exist”, but are only individuals acting together. A neighborhood association may decide to incorporate because incorporation makes a group a legal entity responsible for the actions of the group.

Incorporation forces the group to develop some organizational structure by requiring Articles of

Incorporation, a board of directors, a registered agent, and bylaws. Many neighborhood associations apply for State of New Mexico Non-Profit Incorporated Status because it provides a type of liability shelter for board members. Incorporation requires yearly reports to be filed with the Secretary of State.

For more information call 505.827.4508 or go to: [http://www.sos.state.nm.us/Business\\_Services/Domestic\\_NM\\_for\\_Non\\_profit\\_Corp.aspx](http://www.sos.state.nm.us/Business_Services/Domestic_NM_for_Non_profit_Corp.aspx)





### **Tax Exempt Status:**

Generally, a group must be incorporated before it can apply for tax-exempt status through the Internal Revenue Service. 501c3 status (charitable organization) permits large contributors to your group to claim a deduction on their income tax.

<https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/charitable-organizations/exemption-requirements-section-501c3-organizations>

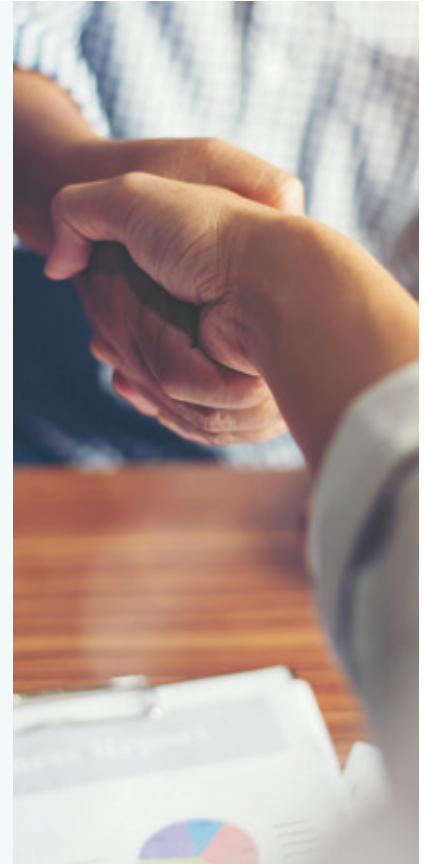
501c4 status (social welfare organization) exempts your organization from certain taxes, but does not offer a tax exemption for donations to the organization. Some type of tax-exempt status is almost mandatory if your group plans to apply for foundation monies or solicit large donations.

<https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/other-non-profits/types-of-organizations-exempt-under-section-501c4>

# MEETING STRUCTURE

## Agenda creation:

- Keep your meeting under two hours.
- Set time limits on each agenda item to give an expectation for how long the discussion should last.
- Find a speaker/educational topic that people will find of-interest. The Office of Neighborhood Coordination (ONC) has a list of suggested city guest speaker topics.
- Allow time for mixing and mingling before the meeting starts. If you build community and create a cohesive group that has fun it will result in more participation.
- Try to address the quickest and most important decisions early on in the agenda.
- Always try to redirect discussions to tangible, actionable items.



### **How to set up a meeting:**

Reserve a room at a neighbor's home, park, faith-based institution, school, community center, or local business close to or within your neighborhood boundaries. Keep in mind the time constraints of using the space, the room noise level (will people be able to hear each other speak?), the size of the room, whether refreshments are allowed, and whether there is access to amplified sound (if needed)

- Consider setting up the chairs in a circle to encourage participation from all attendees
- Don't reserve a room that is too large as this may cause attendees to infer that there is inadequate participation. An appropriately sized room will give the group a greater sense of unity and closeness.

*Setting up the chairs in a circle encourages participation*

### **Think through needed supplies/resources/snacks:**

- Could a grocery store or local business within your boundaries donate refreshments? How about have a sign-up sheet where people rotate bringing snacks?
- Would a map of your neighborhood be useful for the discussion?
- Provide copies of the agenda or project it on a wall so everyone knows what to expect and how much time is allotted for each item.

- Always have copies of your association's bylaws on-hand for members to review.
- Have a sign-in sheet where people can sign in with their name, phone, address, and email so you can start building a neighborhood directory.

### **Advertise the meeting:**

- Create a flyer that is simple yet eye catching. The flier should include the date, time, location, and purpose of the meeting. Work with a local school or scout group to help get the word out.
- Share the meeting information on your website, NextDoor, Facebook, or any other social media outlet.
- Have each board member personally invite 3 people to the meeting.
- If you have an email list, send out the agenda and remind people about the meeting the day prior.



### How to get people to come back:

- Remember that people come to community meetings because they want to, not because they have to.
  - Make sure the meeting location is easy to find.
  - Welcome new attendees to ensure they feel included.
  - Start on time and end on time.
  - Encourage participation and show you are listening by summarizing the information you hear from members.
  - Treat everyone with respect. Have an open mind to hear their opinions, concerns, or ideas.
  - Don't let a few people dominate the topics of discussion.
- Try to be sensitive to terminology or language the average person may not understand or may find intimidating.
  - Think through meetings that you have attended in the past. Try to identify what you did not like about the meeting, what made it ineffective, and what you can do to avoid those pitfalls for your neighborhood meetings.

*People come to community meetings because they want to, not because they have to.*



# RUN THE MEETING

## How to run a meeting:

- Make sure someone (i.e. Board Secretary or designee) is taking notes (minutes) so that members who aren't able to make the meeting can stay informed.
- Have people introduce themselves and share what street they live on as this may provide opportunities for meeting participants to connect.
- Provide a specific time for people to share personal concerns.
- Follow the agenda. Make sure people feel heard while keeping the meeting moving forward.
- End the meeting with next steps and announce the date/time of the next meeting.

For more information: <http://www.parliamentarians.org>



### Reasons to use Parliamentary Procedure:

- Help an organization achieve its purpose
- Provide equal treatment for all
- Expedite business and save time
- Maintain order
- Universal rules from one organization to another
- Protect the right of the majority to decide
- Protect the right of the minority to be heard
- Protect the rights of individual members to make motions, to debate, and to vote
- Protect the rights of absent members

*From: Robert's Rules in Plain English by Doris P. Zimmerman*



*Make sure people feel heard  
while keeping the meeting  
moving forward.*

**Challenges:**

- Language may feel unfamiliar and foreign at first.
- New members might feel excluded or on the outside.
- Can make the meeting feel dry and “business only”.

**Dealing with the Challenges:**

- Make the meeting more lighthearted.
- Simplify the language for newcomers.
- Let your agenda provide the structure and simply guide, encourage, and limit discussions when appropriate.





# ACCOMPLISH GOALS

## The Importance of Goals:

- Goals provide a sense of direction: Without goals, an association tends to react to situations instead of being proactive. Without goals, an association lacks a clear sense of what they want to achieve. By setting goals, associations bolster their motivation and gain a sense of inspiration that helps them overcome the obstacles they encounter.
- Goals focus on efforts: By selecting just one goal or a set of related goals, associations make a commitment about using scarce resources and begin to set priorities.
- Goals guide plans and decisions: Goals will help you move your association in the right direction with each decision.
- Goals help evaluate progress: Goals should be clearly stated, measurable, and with a specific deadline.

### **Work with community partners:**

You don't have to do this alone! There are existing groups you can partner with to help accomplish your goals and see positive change in your neighborhood.

- Other neighborhood groups: the imaginary boundary between your association and neighboring associations doesn't divide the shared concerns or common goals. By working together you can ensure a more cohesive attempt at addressing those concerns, divide up the larger projects to put less work on any one person, access a larger base of assets and skills, and strengthen your voice as a more cohesive community.
- Non-profits: based on the needs of your neighborhood, there might be a non-profit

## ***You don't have to do this alone!***

that is tasked with accomplishing those very same goals. Why not do some internet research to see if there is a nearby group with whom you could partner?

- Businesses: neighborhood businesses might appreciate an advertisement in your newsletter in exchange for help in printing costs, meeting supplies, or meeting snacks. Have your neighborhood meeting at a local neighborhood business and attract patrons to their place of business. Work with a local realtor to determine which homes in your neighborhood are newly sold so you can welcome the new neighbors into your neighborhood.



***Work alongside groups with similar goals and priorities like other neighborhood groups, non-profits, neighborhood businesses, schools, or faith-based institutions.***



- **Schools:** Partner with the school for distribution of the newsletter in exchange for promotion of school activities. Reach new members through the school. Help support school events and in turn ask that they support neighborhood events. See if the school in your neighborhood has a newsletter where you can promote the association.
- **Faith-Based Institutions (FBIs):** A local FBI likely has similar goals of community building and might even have programs that can meet some of the needs in your neighborhood. Consider partnering together to promote their programs in exchange for promotion of your association. FBIs might also be able to offer a meeting space and/or administrative support.

### **Recruiting Volunteers:**

Volunteers are the vitality of any neighborhood association: new leadership, new membership, and a more connected community all stem from volunteers. Volunteers can either be dues-paying members or residents of your neighborhood who aren't yet dues-paying members. Volunteers must be inspired to join and motivated to work.

*Volunteers must be inspired to join and motivated to work.*



### *How do I get people to volunteer?*

- Ask them! Few people will volunteer their services. This does not mean that they don't want to be active. People wait to be asked, so make sure to personally invite them to volunteer.
- Have in-person communication. Do not rely on printed circulars, letters, phone calls, or email. There is no substitute for talking face-to-face. It shows that you consider the discussion important and it gives you a chance to get acquainted with neighbors.
- Understand why people volunteer. People like to feel needed, important, and appreciated. People enjoy a challenge, an opportunity to be creative, and a chance to make a difference. People enjoy making new friends and having fun. People want to be a part of something where they identify with the cause and can improve their community. And sometimes people just want to volunteer because they are bored or lonely.

### *Who should ask them?*

If possible, someone they know, trust, and respect: a friend, a neighbor, or someone they share an affinity with. If you cannot arrange that, do it yourself. Remember that it is the very act of asking that is important.

*How do I ask them?*

- Ask about their interests, skill-sets, and goals. People will be more committed to work they see value in and are passionate about. Think through how they specifically could fit into your association. Have an open mind - perhaps their specific skill set can fill a need you haven't thought of yet.
- Provide as much detail as possible about the available opportunities. Give the position a title so people know what they are signing up for. If applicable, write a job description. Make sure there is a clear beginning and ending so they don't feel like they are over-committing themselves. Make it clear how their role fits into the big picture. Break the work into bite-size chunks.
- Make it clear that their help is needed. What they bring to the table is unique and specifically needed



to make your neighborhood successful. Tell people how the project will benefit them and the entire community. Make sure they understand how the work they are doing fits into the purpose of your association. People will be more committed to work when they know others are depending on them.;

- Help them keep their expectations realistic. If their expectations of the neighborhood association can't be met, your group will become a source of disappointment rather than fulfillment.
- Give them an opportunity to ask questions. They might have questions about the type of help you need. This is also a great opportunity for them to ask more about the goals and purpose of your neighborhood association.

*How do I keep them around?*

- Show your volunteers appreciation. Recognize their service and how they have made your neighborhood successful. Everyone has different motivations and the more you get to know your volunteers the better you can show your appreciation.
- Show your volunteers respect. Volunteers cannot be fired, given a raise, or ordered around. They must know that they are needed and be treated with respect and appreciation.
- Keep your volunteers plugged in and informed. Invite them to all meetings. Make sure they feel welcome at all events. Have reports available that inform volunteers of the impact of their work. And be sure your volunteers have an opportunity to share their ideas.





- Create a volunteer community. Plan a gathering in a nearby park for the volunteers and their family. Have a special “happy hour” just for the volunteers before or after each meeting. Create opportunities to build relationships and make the work fun.
- Share success stories. Brag on your volunteers. Share stories with the rest of your membership about the difference made, the fun had, or the accomplishments of your association’s volunteers.
- Have your volunteers recruit more volunteers. Encourage them to share their stories and get their friends from the neighborhood involved. You’ll grow your volunteer base and make volunteering more fun.

- Have an organized system to track volunteers. Create a database for volunteers that includes contact information, interests, skills, experiences, where they have already volunteered, what their time limitations might look like, etc. Any information that will help you track and utilize neighbors who are interested in getting involved.
- Build relationships among the volunteers. Offer time for those volunteering for the association to network and build relationships to add a little more fun to their work.
- Identify projects based on available skills. If you have someone who is a great writer, someone who has access to a

large printer, and someone who is good with computers, that would be a good indication that your neighborhood can support the creation of a newsletter. Use the available skills in your neighborhood to determine ways to serve and support the community.

- Avoid burnout. Try not to let one or two persons shoulder all of the responsibility of the group. Break up the job into committees and subcommittees. If you spread the work around you'll reap the benefits of an involved and interested group of people. If appropriate, give people an opportunity to change their roles in the association so they can try something new.


For more information on recruiting and training volunteers: <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/structure/volunteers>



## Fundraising

Clearly communicate what the money will go toward and why that project or priority is important. Offer a way for people to receive updates on the project. Use this as an opportunity to not only raise money but to raise awareness of the good work your association does. Those planning the event should have fun! After the event, be sure to celebrate how much money was raised.

- Host a community-wide garage sale and encourage donations by all members.
- Host a collectibles sale in a community building and request donations.
- Host an auction with donated goods and services. Some auctioneers may also choose to provide their services free of charge.



*Fundraising is an opportunity to raise money and raise awareness of your association's priorities.*

- Organize an arts and craft fair. Rent table space to participating craftspeople. Provide refreshments booths for customers.
- Sponsor a skills for-a-day bazaar. Solicit your most talented neighborhood representatives to volunteer services: dog grooming, hair cutting, letter writing, lawn care, garden advice, technology help, and other skills. Charge fees for the services.
- Host a themed dance.
- Conduct a bake sale at a neighborhood shopping center.
- Host a house tour program. Include various types of homes in the neighborhood.
- Host a marathon ballgame. Feature local celebrities and have people sponsor a team or person of their choice.

- Sponsor a walk-a-thon of neighborhood residents with local merchant sponsors.
- Develop a community guide through photographs. This publication can be sold at other fundraising events.
- Contact people in the arts community and get students to put together a sketchbook album of the community. These drawings can be translated into cards, notepaper, and envelopes that can then be sold at neighborhood events.
- Develop a neighborhood cookbook, based on donated recipes, and sell them door to door or at community events.
- Identify local artists in your community; raffle a donated piece of art.
- Organize a neighborhood park event and sell food and drinks.

For more information on fundraising:

<http://www.thefundraisingauthority.com/fundraising-basics>





## SHARE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

You must be creative in how you communicate your accomplishments. You want to catch everyone interested in celebrating with you or participating in your association.

You'll need to have multiple platforms of communication to catch those who use social media and those who don't, those who may or may not rely on email, and those who do not use computers. It is all about variety in the forms of communication you use.

**Website:**

A website is a great place to store meeting information, contact information, bylaws for your association, and photos from your events. Make sure the URL is logical and easy to share with neighbors. You can put the website on your flyers, link to meeting information through your social media, and promote it at your meetings to remind members that the information they seek is at their fingertips.

- **Less is More:** Keep your content as concise as possible and avoid jargon. Most people don't want to read a long chunk of text and scroll incessantly. Use photos or graphics to capture attention. Rely on bullet points over narratives.
- **Logically Organize the Site:** Make information easy to find with accurate titles and logical

organization. Have the most sought after information easily accessible on the homepage. Make sure the content of each page matches the page title.

- **Test Hyperlinks:** Ensure your hyperlinks are correct, active, and take people to the right place. Check your hyperlinks regularly, as web links change all the time.
- **Look for Outdated Information:** Revisit your content regularly and revise it if necessary. New contact information, a new location for a meeting, or even just updated general information needs to be shared so your membership can stay informed and connected.
- **Think About Search Engine Optimization:** Think about how people will find your site



through search engines (Google, etc.) and use words that will increase your search engine optimization (SEO). SEO is the strategy of using key words that will help bring traffic to your website, so think through what words you would use when doing an Internet search and try to use those words in the content of your site as much as possible. This will increase the chances of people finding your website through a search engine.

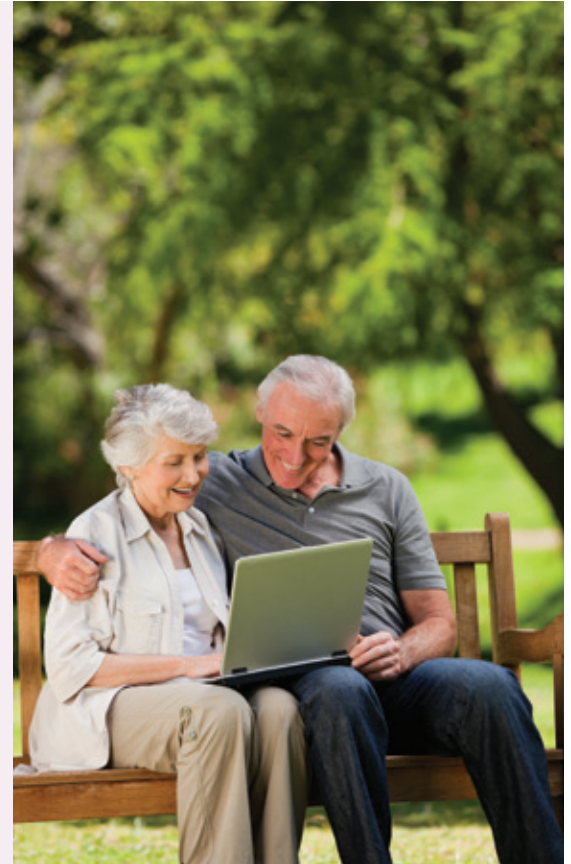
- Consider Visual Impairments: Remember that some people may use a screen reader or other accessibility device. Keep this in mind when selecting graphics, fonts, or font sizes.



### **Social Media:**

Using social media to promote your association is a great way to keep the work of your association front-of-mind and reach people who aren't currently involved.

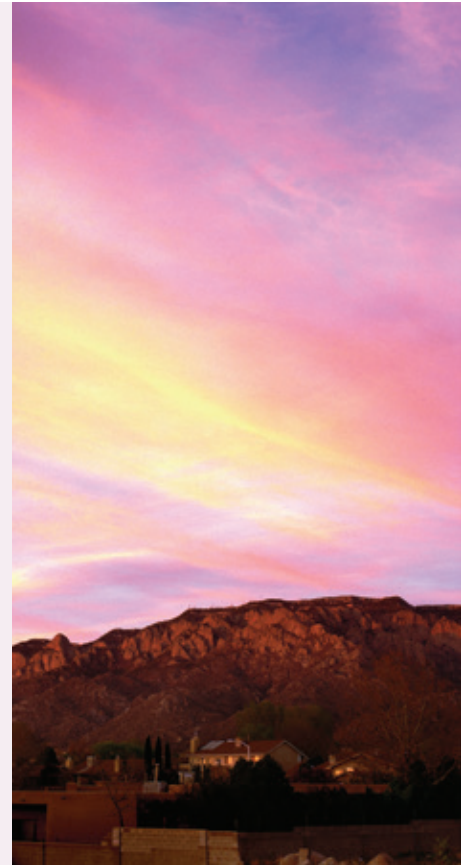
- Facebook: your association's Facebook page is a place to promote events happening in the neighborhood. If people like your page, others will see it and can also participate in the discussion. Don't forget to follow the Office of Neighborhood Coordination!
- NextDoor: this social media platform is created specifically for neighborhoods. This is one of the avenues your neighbors can use to communicate suspicious activity (although keep in mind the police cannot see your posts so you still must call 911 or 242-COPS), advertise a yard sale, find lost pets, or promote neighborhood meetings.



## Flyers:

Flyers are a great universal tool for catching someone's attention. Ask local businesses if you can post a flyer on their message board. Go door-to-door to deliver flyers for a neighbor to place on their fridge as a reminder of the event. You can post the flyers in a nearby library, community center, senior center, or school. You can work with your neighborhood school to see if you can send the flyers home with the kids so their families know about the neighborhood events.

- What makes a flyer effective? It must be eye-catching, informative, easy-to-read, and well organized. Use bright colors, bullet points, large fonts, and detailed information to try and address the basic questions (who, what, where, why, when).
- Resources: [Canva.com](https://www.canva.com) is a free website that allows you to create flyers, posters, or brochures. Additionally, Microsoft Word has some templates available. PowerPoint is also a great way to create a custom flyer.



## Newsletters:

Newsletters can be printed and hand-delivered (which can be effective but cost prohibitive) and/or emailed and posted on your website/social media platforms. A newsletter is a great way to compile the accomplishments of the association and have a call for action for areas where members can get involved. You want your newsletter to be easy to read, eye-catching, and full of pictures of the community.

- How to minimize the cost: ask a local business if they'd like to buy an advertisement. Keep the newsletter in an electronic format save for a few paper copies you place in strategic locations or businesses in the area. See if there is a local printing shop who might be interested in reducing the printing cost in exchange for advertising space.
- How to gather information: have each board member write an article on something they believe to be important. Ask your City Councilor if they would be willing to write an article highlighting improvements to the area and upcoming policy decisions. Ask your crime prevention specialist if they have any information or crime tips. Use information shared by the Office of Neighborhood Coordination.



### **Yard Signs:**

A cheap and easy way to promote your neighborhood meeting is to ask a few active members if they are willing to put a yard sign in their front yard with the association's meeting details. You'll want to try to make sure the homes are spread out throughout the association's boundaries in order to capture as many people driving by as you can. The sign must be a single, small, and unlit sign displayed for a maximum of 15 days per City Code of Ordinances.





# GENERAL TIPS

## Tips for a Successful Association:

- Go door-to-door to communicate the existence and purpose of the neighborhood association and to encourage people to get involved.
- Establish a membership welcoming committee to help new members feel welcome and find a place to get plugged into the work the association is doing.
- Prevent power cliques from developing by requiring diverse representation on the board and committees.
- Make sure meetings are well-publicized and well-organized.

- Develop and focus on a few implementable goals at a time.
- Select projects carefully, making sure that everyone understands the who, what, why, where and how of each task.
- Maintain good records of all meetings, communications, and actions.
- Publicly thank volunteers for their help.
- Put together a newsletter or website that tells everyone about what is happening in the neighborhood, what the association has accomplished, and the future plans/priorities.
- Help build a positive public image for your neighborhood by announcing activities and events in neighborhood newsletters and social media sites.
- Build a good working relationship with City Hall.
- Make the meetings and events fun – have social gatherings before or after a meeting.
- Consider providing childcare to help increase meeting participation.
- Consider providing transportation for senior citizens if the meetings are at night.
- Survey your membership to make sure the leadership is upholding the values of the entire association.
- Plan regular membership drives to help bring in new members. Have a reward for a friendly competition to see who can bring in the most members.

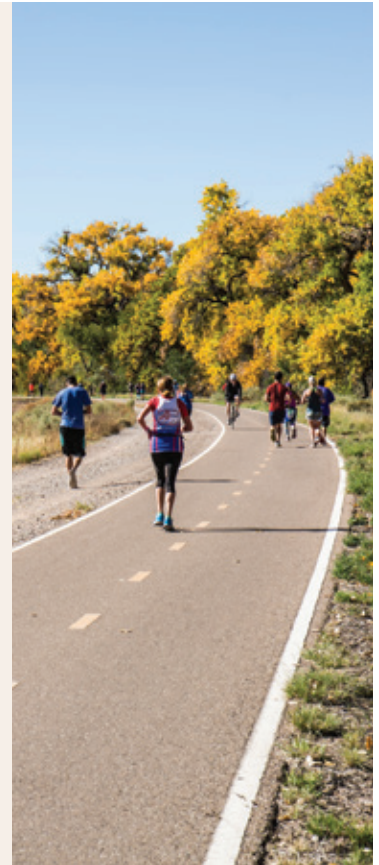


### What to Avoid:

- Avoid spending too much time during meetings attempting to solve organizational problems. Instead, consider setting up committees to discuss and offer solutions to the larger group.
- Discourage participants from becoming cliquish and excluding others from participating, making decisions, and getting things done. Instead, include newcomers from the beginning, tap into other people's skills, and delegate authority.
- Ineffective associations tend to focus their efforts on the goals and needs of a few individuals. Instead, focus on the priorities of the neighborhood as a whole.
- Avoid non-democratic leadership and decision making. Remember that people only participate when they feel supported, valued, and part of a worthwhile cause.

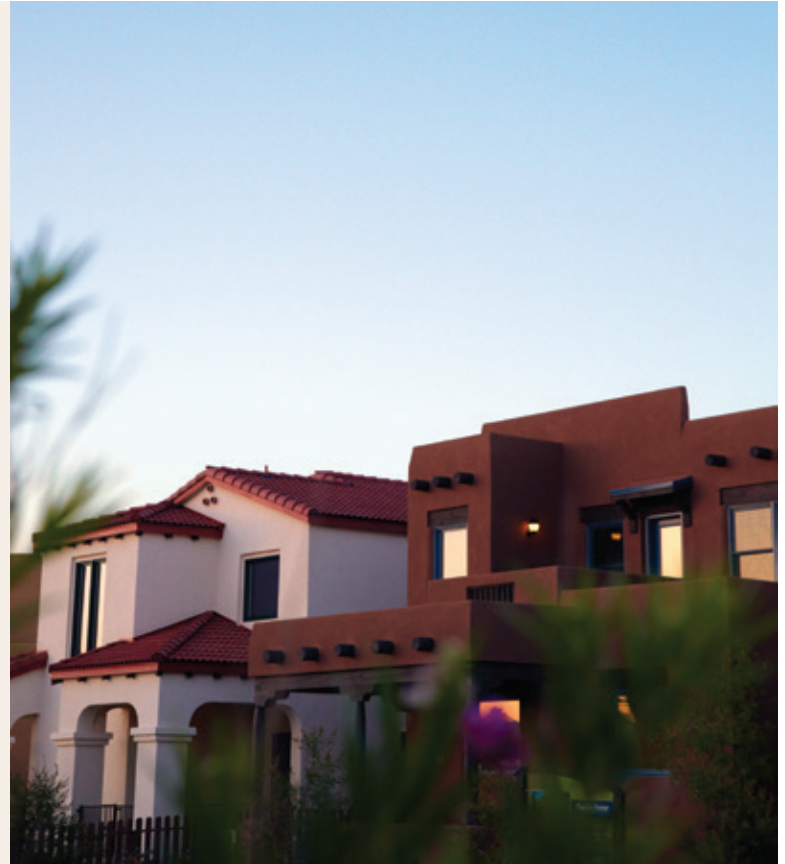
## How to Prepare for a Change in Leadership:

- Note potential leadership within your organization: In order to get to know your members' skills and interests, give them responsibility (managing events, keeping contact lists, etc.). This will also keep them engaged and invested into the work of the association. By giving them responsibility you will notice potential leadership skills in them and they will be more comfortable with stepping into a larger role in the future.
- Continuously recruit new members: An association works best when it has a mix of seasoned and new members working together. An organization that recruits new members and gives them a voice has a better chance of finding new leaders as compared to one that closes itself off from new people or opinions.
- Stay organized: Make sure that you have clear documentation of finances, events, and contacts, to ensure nothing important slips through the cracks during a leadership change. Being organized will make it easier for a new leader to continue work that was started by their predecessor.





- Define the role: If you know a member will leave the organization in the near future, make sure they provide clear guidelines for the next person to follow. This could be a summary of their role, instructions for accessing a bank account or files, or even contact information if their successor has any questions.
- Address underlying conflicts: Oftentimes conflicts can erupt amidst a leadership change, which puts the organization at risk. Make sure you address conflicts among members when they first come up. Listen for the underlying concerns from both sides and try to address the root of the conflict for a more lasting resolution.



### Be a Good Leader:

- Be inclusive. Make sure every person living or owning a place of business within the boundaries of your neighborhood feels invited to participate. It is the diversity of your neighborhood that will add richness to your association.
- Create a network of relationships. People will participate if someone they trust is also involved. As you network and build relationships with people in your neighborhood you will also bring in their networks and relationships.
- Delegate responsibility. As you involve people and give them responsibility they will be more invested in the work of the association. If people feel valued and needed they will step

up and get involved. Also, there are assets, skills, and resources you will be able to tap into by delegating tasks.

- Develop new leaders. In order for your neighborhood to stand the test of time, you'll need to start raising up new leaders today. This will save you from burn-out and will bring in some fresh ideas and perspectives. You develop leaders by allowing people to run with projects or tasks which will help them build confidence and see the value of the work.

*It is the diversity of your neighborhood that will add richness to your association.*

- Communicate. There is no such thing as “over-communication”. Communicate with those who weren’t able to attend a meeting or event. Share information about upcoming activities. Part of communicating is also listening. Dialogue (not debate), listening (not dismissing), and transparency (not controlling information) are all signs of a good leader.
- Stick to the “why”. Once your association has developed its purpose it is useful to filter all decisions through that purpose. It is the responsibility of the leader to make sure the association’s purpose is at front-of-mind. This will keep people engaged and remind them of the big picture and long-term goals. Let the vision drive your actions and meetings.
- Rely on your neighborhood’s assets. Build on the strengths within your neighborhood. Start with looking at the assets you have at your fingertips and then proceed, relying on those assets.
- Appreciate and Celebrate. Your association will run on the time, energy, and work of volunteers. It is important as the leader to make sure they feel appreciated and are recognized for their work. Be creative and genuine in how you celebrate people!



*City of Albuquerque*

# NEIGHBORHOOD HANDBOOK

*A Guide to Creating and Sustaining Vibrant Associations*

A community resource provided by:



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