

Starting a Neighborhood Association

Neighborhoods are the basic building blocks of community. Neighbors may want to organize to:

- Get to know each other
- Improve the appearance of the neighborhood
- Address a common concern
- Have a stronger voice in the community or local government

Organizing your neighborhood can foster communication and interaction between neighbors. And will help to boost neighborhood pride.

Benefits of starting a Neighborhood Association

There are many benefits to having a Neighborhood Association. Among them are opportunities to:

- Get help setting up meetings with our staff, or with elected officials.
- Reserve picnic areas or park facilities free of charge up to six times per year. For reservations contact us.
- Get a free dumpster for annual neighborhood clean-up efforts. Contact Neighborhood Preservation at 408-730-7610.
- Network with other Sunnyvale Neighborhood Associations at the quarterly meetings.

What Makes a Successful Neighborhood Association

All neighborhood associations are different. Some are large with several hundred residences. Others are small covering one or two blocks. Some meet monthly. Others meet when a need arises.

Successful Sunnyvale Neighborhood Associations practice the following:

- Establish defined geographic boundaries.
- Develop a formal structure for their organization (President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer).
- Adopt by-laws which govern the association's operations.
- Communicate with neighbors through meetings, newsletters or email.
- Stay informed about issues, activities and events within the neighborhood.
- Plan and make a yearly calendar of neighborhood meetings and events.
- Attend the Sunnyvale Neighborhoods Quarterly Meeting. There you'll network, share insights and address your questions and concerns.
- Develop clear neighborhood goals and strive to achieve those goals.
- Work with us to address neighborhood questions or issues.
- Invite our staff to attend meetings to discuss topics of interest or concern.

How do I start a Neighborhood Association in Sunnyvale?

Follow these steps to build your neighborhood association:

1. Check that there is not already a neighborhood association in your area. [View the current map and neighborhood association listings.](#)
2. Develop a core group of neighbors (five to 10 people) committed to the effort.
3. Set up an organizational meeting of the core group. Meet at someone's house or a nearby park building. Try to reach as many neighbors as possible to invite them to the meeting. At the first meeting you may:
 - a. Agree to continue meeting to build neighborhood relationships.
 - b. Plan for a neighborhood event, such as a block party or an ice cream social.
 - c. Create a list of issues that neighborhood residents want to discuss.
4. Identify the general purpose and mission statement of your Neighborhood Association. A mission statement explains why a group exists and what it hopes to do. You can update it as needed.
5. Determine boundaries for your association. You would identify these by streets, city limits or other natural borders.
6. Develop a structure for your association. Elect officers such as President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. Create bylaws. Bylaws are the rules that govern internal operations, purpose, membership, terms of officers, committees, voting procedures, etc.
7. Set up a meeting schedule. A regular meeting schedule can provide stability to an emerging organization.
8. Establish goals. These goals identify neighborhood priorities.
9. Plan how to build support for your neighborhood association. Examples include:
 - a. Plan a block party.
 - b. Set up a neighborhood watch program. Our Department of Public Safety will help.
 - c. Develop a neighborhood newsletter. This will share updates on local issues and meeting reports. Plus, it will attract members and increase community pride.
 - d. Invite guest speakers from the City to present at your meeting.
 - e. Develop a neighborhood emergency preparedness plan. Our Department of Public Safety will help.
 - f. Learn more about the Neighborhood Grant Program. It supports projects that improve neighborhoods and build community.
10. Register the Neighborhood Association
 - a. Submit [Neighborhood Association Registration](#)
 - b. After receipt and review, we will confirm official registration of the neighborhood association. We will add the contact to our Neighborhood Association List and Map.
 - c. Your association must keep us updated with any changes, such as a change in leadership. You may send us an email or an updated registration form.

Neighborhood Association Responsibilities

To remain an active Neighborhood Association with the City, you must:

- Submit the registration form each year.
- Meet one of the following requirements:
 - Hold at least one meeting or event per year.
 - Distribute a newsletter to all members at least once a year.
- Have defined boundaries. These must not overlap any other Neighborhood Association. If they do, the affected association must agree in writing. Boundaries must include at least one block with no less than five homes. Boundaries should include no more than 2,600 homes.
- Membership must be open to anyone who lives in or owns real property within the association's boundaries.
- Leaders (for example, officers) must take part in a quarterly Neighborhood Associations meeting at least once a year.

Contact Us

You may contact us by phone or email:

- Phone: 408-730-7599
- Email: ncs@sunnyvale.ca.gov