

NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION TOOLKIT



THIS TOOLKIT IS DESIGNED TO HELP START & LEAD A NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION IN BURNSVILLE

What is a neighborhood organization?

A neighborhood organization is a group of homeowners, renters, businesses, churches, and schools who come together to connect or improve their neighborhood experience. The neighborhood organization helps support and bring neighbors together. Neighborhood organizations often:

- Help neighbors get to know each other
- Address a particular issue of the neighborhood
- Make physical improvements such as adopting a park or organizing a neighborhood clean-up
- Assemble a neighborhood crime watch
- Improve collaboration and communication with the city

In Burnsville, Neighborhoods are Defined by:

- **Geography:** neighborhood boundaries are within a walking distance of up to one square mile, providing enough space for homes, parks, and local amenities while maintaining a sense of identity, and avoiding crossing major barriers such as county roads, highways, or voting precincts.
- **Population:** there are no less than 200 households or approximately 500 residents within neighborhood boundaries, including people that live in single family and multi-family homes and supporting opportunities to convene near home.

Burnsville's Neighborhoods

To find out what neighborhoods are currently defined, visit burnsvillemn.gov/neighborhoods. If there is already an active neighborhood organization in your area, consider joining. If you live in a neighborhood that is not yet defined, consider starting a neighborhood organization.

Homeowners' Associations

Neighborhood organizations are different from homeowners' associations. Homeowners' associations (HOAs) are groups who live in an area developed by the same developer, usually referred to as a subdivision. HOAs usually have an elected board and set of rules that homeowners agree to when they purchase their house. Some also focus on items that affect their neighborhood such as beautification, crime, building issues, and social events.

Why start a neighborhood organization?

- Help neighbors get to know each other
- Address a particular issue
- Make a physical improvement
- Assemble a neighborhood crime watch
- Improve collaboration and communication with the city

Neighborhood Organization Assistance

The city of Burnsville is here to help neighborhood organizations by:

- Neighborhood startup assistance
- Hosting a startup meeting
- Neighborhood leader development
- Communicating with the neighborhood
- Providing free meeting space
- Making city leaders available
- Hosting a neighborhood webpage
- Providing print and mailing services
- Annual all-neighborhoods meeting
- Ongoing neighborhood support

Neighborhood Grant Program

In Burnsville, neighborhood organizations are eligible to apply for grants of up to \$10,000 to fund your projects. Here's how to participate in the grant program:

1. Submit a neighborhood recognition request
2. Work with your neighbors to define an eligible project
3. Submit a neighborhood grant application

How do you start a neighborhood organization?

Step 1: Contact the City

Our neighborhood liaison is available as a resource through the process. Once you're ready, we can assist with defining neighborhood boundaries, developing neighborhood leaders, scheduling the first neighborhood meeting and communication with all residents in a neighborhood organization.

Step 2: Form a Startup Team

Gather with a group of three or four people who are interested in organizing your neighborhood. The organizing team holds initial meetings to plan and promote the neighborhood meetings. During planning meetings, you can assign tasks based on interests to keep people engaged like:

- Contacting other neighborhood groups for ideas
- Planning conversations and activities
- Recruiting members

As soon as you are ready, decide on a time, date and place for a general membership meeting. Choose a time that is convenient for the largest number of people like an evening or weekend.

Step 3: Invite Your Neighborhood

Get your neighbors involved. The city will work with you to create promotional materials and send a neighborhood-wide meeting invitation. You can help get the word out by:

- Hanging posters around your neighborhood
- Knocking on doors in your neighborhood
- Sending a survey to get neighbor input

Your first meeting may be large or small; stay positive and work with the people in attendance to reach more neighbors.

Step 4: Hold a Neighborhood Meeting

The neighborhood meeting and agenda is led by the organizing team. Start the first meeting by:

- Getting to know one another
- Identifying a leadership team
- Competing a neighborhood recognition request

Selecting a leadership team helps with clear communication and decision-making. Leaders help organize activities, manage resources, and represent the neighborhood's interests effectively.

As you go, your meeting topics could include:

- Brainstorm ideas on what topics a neighborhood could address
- Assign tasks to keep people engaged
- A city leader facilitating a presentation or discussion on a topic of interest

Submit a neighborhood recognition request

A neighborhood recognition request is a simple form that describes the neighborhood. The neighborhood liaison will help you define the boundaries. The city manager reviews all neighborhood recognition requests. For assistance with creating or managing your neighborhood organization, contact your neighborhood liaison at: neighborhoods@burnsvillemn.gov.

Neighborhood Recognition Request

A neighborhood organization is a voluntary group of residents who meet to connect or improve their neighborhood.

Name of Neighborhood:	
Describe the proposed boundaries of the neighborhood:	
Neighborhood contact:	Date:
Phone:	Email:
Address:	

Need help? Contact your neighborhood liaison at: neighborhoods@burnsvillemn.gov