

GETTING STARTED

The Neighborhood Group Leaders Association

The NGLA is a joint effort between the City of Longmont and Longmont's residential neighborhood groups. The primary purpose of the NGLA is to enhance communication between residential neighborhood groups and the City of Longmont, and to provide a forum to identify concerns, discuss issues, and resolve conflicts. Meetings frequently include guest speakers and topics cover neighborhood, city, community, and school district issues. Businesses may participate as members of residential neighborhood groups. Members of the public are welcome to attend and speak during the "Public Invited To Be Heard" segment of NGLA meetings. The NGLA meets at 7:00 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month.

Benefits of Registering Your Neighborhood and Participating in the NGLA

- Monthly meeting with other neighborhoods to share information and creative solutions to neighborhood problems and concerns.
- Presentations on topics requested by the NGLA
- Registered neighborhood groups receive information and meeting agendas from the Planning Division of the Community Development Department, the Planning and Zoning Commission, and the City Council.
- Neighborhoods that are registered and involved in the Neighborhood Group Leaders Association are eligible to apply for Neighborhood Activity and Neighborhood Improvement Grants.
- No cost printing of your neighborhood fliers, agendas, minutes, etc.

Requirements

To receive the benefits and services available to registered neighborhoods, a neighborhood must renew their registration annually. The purpose of the renewal is to verify that each group is still active, and to confirm the name and contact information of each group's leader. Registered neighborhood groups are required to meet at least once a year to elect a group leader. The neighborhood group must be open to all residents or owners of real property within the neighborhood group boundaries.

For more information on the Neighborhood Group Leaders Association contact the Neighborhood Resource Program at 303-651-8721.

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Benefits of Starting a Neighborhood Association

∪ **BUILD RELATIONSHIPS.** Residents of a neighborhood can live a lifetime without knowing their neighbors. A neighborhood association provides a common bond that draws all residents together. Organizing an association is one of the best ways to build positive relationships with your neighbors. A spirit of warmth and neighborliness can be generated within the neighborhood. Many residents claim some of their strongest friendships resulted from their participation in an association.

∪ **CREATE A STRONG VOICE.** It is often said that there is strength in numbers. An association in your neighborhood can address local concerns and set goals that can be reached more readily with everyone working together. Information requested concerning city services can be provided to a greater number of residents through association newsletters or flyers, thus benefiting the neighborhood as a whole.

∪ **IMPROVE YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD.** If your neighborhood needs a beautification project, such as trees along the parkway, pocket parks, or a community clean-up, local residents are the best resource to help make those improvements. Working together with your neighbors in the planning and completion of a project helps build a stronger neighborhood. Neighborhood associations are also great resources to assist city staff in long range planning for neighborhood improvement projects.

∪ **BUILD A SENSE OF COMMUNITY.** By fostering a neighbor helping neighbor philosophy you and your neighbors will build a strong community within your neighborhood. By helping to mow someone's lawn when they are sick or by taking in the newspaper when they are on vacation you can enhance the quality of life in your neighborhood and make your neighborhood a better place to live. Involving your children in these kinds of activities will show them that they are part of the community as well.

∪ **SAFETY.** Knowing and looking out for your neighbor makes your neighborhood a better and safer place to live. In 1829, Sir Robert Peel presented the British Parliament with factors that he felt important to maintaining an effective public police force. These factors remain at the heart of Community Policing today. Peels's first factor states "To maintain at all time a relationship with the public that gives reality to the historic tradition that the police are the public and the public are the police: the police being only the members of the public that are paid to give full-time attention to the duties which are incumbent on every citizen in the interest of community welfare and existence." Your involvement will help keep your neighborhood and our City a safer place to live.

If you are interested in getting involved in your neighborhood, building relationships with your neighbors, creating a strong voice for your neighborhood, or working to make your neighborhood a safer place to live, call the Neighborhood Resources Program at 303-651-8721 for more information.

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Building Strong Communities:



Six Steps to Organize Your Neighborhood

The Neighborhood Resource Program is here to work in partnership with you and your neighborhood to help you make positive changes in your neighborhood. If there is an active neighborhood organization in your area we will be able to put you in contact with the group leader so that you may become involved. If there is no active neighborhood organization in your area you may want to help start one. Our office is here to help you. For more information call the Neighborhood Resources Program at 303-651-8721.

Step One: Volunteer to be a Neighborhood Organizer

- ◆ Talk to your neighbors to see who is interested in organizing your neighborhood. Ask a few neighbors to form a “core group” to share the responsibility. Start by talking to people that you already know, and introduce yourself to others. The core group is there to support each other to get your association off the ground.

Step Two: Call a Meeting of Your Core Group

- ◆ The Core Group meeting can be held informally at someone’s home or at any other small meeting location.
- ◆ Invite the Neighborhood Resource Coordinator to the meeting. The Neighborhood Resource Coordinator will discuss the advantages of starting a neighborhood organization and be available to answer questions that may come up.
- ◆ The core group votes on whether to proceed with organizing their neighborhood.
- ◆ The Core Group suggests the tentative boundaries of the neighborhood and helps plan for the full neighborhood meeting.

Step Three: Call a Meeting and Invite all Your Neighbors

- ◆ Bringing people together in a meeting provides an opportunity for neighbors to get to know one another and share ideas and concerns. Set a date, time and location for the meeting. Hold the meeting in a neutral location such as a school, church, or public building, or in any location where people feel comfortable.
- ◆ Invite the Neighborhood Resource Coordinator to discuss the advantages of starting a neighborhood group and to answer questions that may come up.

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- ◆ Develop the meeting agenda. The purpose of this meeting is to:
 - Discuss the importance of having an organized neighborhood.
 - Conduct a vote to determine if the neighborhood wants to organize.
 - Conduct a vote to determine the boundaries for your neighborhood.
 - Conduct a vote to elect a Neighborhood Group Leader to represent your organization in the Neighborhood Group Leaders Association.
- ◆ Create a flier based on your agenda. Include information on who, what, where, when, why, and how long the meeting will last. Include the things you want to accomplish in your first meeting. The Neighborhood Resources Program will assist in printing your flier.
- ◆ Pass out fliers to houses in the neighborhood. Ask several neighbors or a local Boy Scout Troop to help pass out fliers and remind others of the meeting. Place the fliers in storm doors or on porches. Person-to-person contact is the best way to involve individuals as well as spread information about the meeting.
- ◆ Make it comfortable and informal and provide refreshments. Make sure there is time for people to socialize and get to know one another. Be sure to include teens and older children who wish to get involved.
- ◆ It's all right to start small. Don't feel discouraged if only a few individuals are willing to participate. Membership and interest will grow over time and will fluctuate, but all neighbors should be included.

Step Four: Facilitate the Neighborhood Meeting

- ◆ Take care of final meeting arrangements before the meeting begins. Allow enough time before the meeting to set up the room. It's helpful to have a board to write on. A sign-in sheet for neighbors' names, addresses, phone numbers, and E-mail addresses should be placed on a table near the entrance. Nametags will also help the neighbors become acquainted.
- ◆ Greet your neighbors as they arrive. Let them know you appreciate their participation.
- ◆ Start your meeting on time. Begin by introducing yourself. You also may want a volunteer to take notes.
- ◆ Ask everyone to introduce himself or herself. Ask each person to tell a little about themselves. This will help everyone to feel comfortable and allow folks to get to know each other.
- ◆ Review the agenda. Stress that the focus of the meeting is to discuss the formation of a neighborhood organization. Discussing issues and concerns and developing solutions can be accomplished as part of the ongoing partnership that will be developed between your neighborhood and the City.
- ◆ This is your neighborhood meeting. The Neighborhood Resource Coordinator will be there to discuss the advantages of having a neighborhood organization and answer any questions.

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- ◆ Conduct votes to:
 - Determine if the neighborhood wants to organize.
 - Determine the boundaries for your neighborhood.
 - Elect a Neighborhood Group Leader to represent your organization in the Group Leaders Association.
- ◆ To wrap up the meeting:
 - Plan your next meeting. Set the next meeting date, time, agenda and location. Let people know that they will be reminded by phone or flier. Ask your neighbors to bring another neighbor to the next meeting.
 - Review and summarize what was accomplished at the meeting. Remind volunteers about their tasks for the next meeting.
 - Close the meeting. Thank everyone for attending and for his or her interest.

Your neighborhood will accomplish its goals by getting everyone involved. At the first meeting, you may want to choose co-leaders. Ask for volunteers to help with future meetings, to create fliers, to create a neighborhood directory and/or neighborhood map, set up a phone tree, or host the next meeting. All ideas are welcome and worth consideration. Make and distribute a list of everyone's name address, phone number, fax number, and e-mail address. Set up a phone tree to notify neighbors about meetings, events, and other timely information.

Step Five: Continue to Hold Regular Meetings

- ◆ Plan regular meetings to accomplish your goals.
- ◆ At the end of every meeting plan the next meeting. This will help maintain interest and focus. Think about starting a neighborhood newsletter.
- ◆ Maintain communication among your neighbors.

Step Six: Have a Celebration!

- ◆ Celebrate the neighborhood working together by having a picnic or dinner. At the celebration, briefly cite the neighborhood's accomplishments.



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New Association Initial Meeting Guidelines

First General Meeting

- ◆ Always have a sign-in sheet and an agenda at each meeting. The agenda can be handed out as the residents sign in.
- ◆ A designated core group member should be the spokesperson for the association. He/she should introduce the members of the core group to the residents. An agenda listing the topics to be discussed should be available as the residents sign-in.
- ◆ Discuss the reasons why the core group initially came together to form a neighborhood association. Decide whether the association will elect officers and develop by-laws to be adopted at a future meeting.
- ◆ Discuss the boundaries that the neighborhood association will represent and a name for the association.
- ◆ If a survey was taken in the neighborhood, discuss the results of the survey. If a survey has not been taken, discuss whether one is needed. (See Example A: Survey to assist in organizing a new neighborhood association or to learn more about your neighbors.)

Second General Meeting

- ◆ Prepare and follow an agenda based on the discussion and concerns raised in the first meeting.
- ◆ If it was decided to have an election of officers at the second meeting, have the election at the beginning of the meeting. The newly elected officers and chairperson can then oversee the meeting. Robert's Rules of Order has a section on procedures for an election. It is very helpful, especially if no one has ever been involved with holding an election.
- ◆ Form committees to work on concerns raised at the first meeting.
- ◆ Your association should decide whether or not to collect dues from its members at this meeting. It costs money to run an association, and dues may be an option. As a volunteer neighborhood group you can not make dues mandatory for your entire neighborhood.
- ◆ Discuss inviting your City Council member to a future meeting. You may also want to invite leaders from other neighborhood associations. They can provide insight on how their association has participated in successful projects and activities.

Third General Meeting

- ◆ If you have invited your City Council member to this meeting, introduce the Council member first, so that he/she can address the neighborhood. If the neighborhood has some major concerns, bring them to your Council member's attention. The Council member can provide support and assistance in reaching your association's goals.

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- ◆ Identify and prioritize areas of concern and issues to address. List all proposed projects, outstanding concerns, and social events that the residents have discussed. Determine the most important things to accomplish, decide who will work on them and by what date they will be completed. Choose 3-5 issues that the group will work on
- ◆ At subsequent meetings, participants can develop action plans to create change within the neighborhood. Brainstorm to generate ideas to solve problems. After deciding which strategies to use, decide on the exact tasks that need to be done, and how much time they need. Does the group need more information about an issue? Who should be contacted for help and information on an issue? Where are potential resources to accomplish the tasks?
- ◆ Introduce the committee leaders. Allow each committee leader to address the concerns and questions from the last meeting. After each report is given open discussion for any additional questions or concerns about the issue.
- ◆ Start to set a schedule to kick off projects to improve the neighborhood. Set up social events that allow residents to become better acquainted with their neighbors. Some social events can also raise funds for certain projects or goals.
- ◆ Identify speakers or programs that the residents would like to hear or know more about. Set a proposed schedule to invite those that can be of assistance in achieving association goals.

Neighborhood Association Committees

It is frequently beneficial to form committees to address the various concerns and goals of the association. Committee members can research and report the needed information at meetings of the full association. Announce the date, time, and location of committee meetings. As with meetings of your full association, provide a sign-in sheet, name tags, and an agenda. Allow time for participants to socialize. Some examples of neighborhood organization committees are:

- ◆ **Organizational Committee:** Develops by-laws, obtains the state requirements for incorporation. Registers the neighborhood with the City of Longmont.
- ◆ **Goals and Projects Committee:** Coordinates the association's goals and initiates improvement projects within the neighborhood.
- ◆ **Welcome Committee:** Welcomes new residents to the neighborhood and contacts local businesses for support.
- ◆ **Membership Committee:** Responsible for keeping a membership list and conducts regular membership drives.
- ◆ **Newsletter Committee:** Compiles pertinent information from the neighborhood to be distributed to all residents in a newsletter.
- ◆ **Issue Resolution Committee:** Seeks solutions to concerns raised in the neighborhood.

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How to Make Your Organization Grow

- ◆ Keep the process moving to make your neighborhood a better place in which to live.
- ◆ Continue to motivate your neighbors to be involved in the goal-setting and completion of projects and social events.
- ◆ Keep communications open to all neighbors through newsletters and fliers.
- ◆ Get involved in your city government.
- ◆ Establish a program of community outreach to include as many residents as possible in neighborhood activities.
- ◆ Survey neighborhood residents to discover their unique talents and abilities, then utilize these talents and abilities help achieve neighborhood projects and goals.