

Six Steps to Organize Your Neighborhood

The Coalition of Asheville Neighborhoods (CAN) is here to work in partnership with you and your neighborhood to help you make positive changes in your community. If there is an active neighborhood organization in your area we will put you in contact with the group leader, facilitating your involvement.

If there is no active neighborhood organization in your area, you may want to help start one. CAN is here to help. For more information, call the Coalition of Asheville Neighborhoods at [ADD], or email at [ADD].

CAN is providing the following steps as guidelines for organizing a neighborhood association. *

**** Until the covid-19 restrictions are lifted, the meetings discussed in the following steps would be held via CAN's Google Meet. All CAN procedures, policies and meetings will adhere to the latest reopening phase guidelines as directed by the North Carolina Governor's Office and the Buncombe County Health Department.***

Step One: Be a Neighborhood Organizer

1. Communicate with your neighbors to see if there is interest in forming a neighborhood association
2. Ask a few neighbors to form a core group to share the responsibility and to get the association off the ground. Start by talking to people that you already know, and introduce yourself to others.

Step Two: Call a Meeting of Your Core Group

1. The meeting can be held informally at someone's home or at any other small meeting location. Suggested outside people to invite:
 - a. A CAN representative
 - b. An officer from an existing neighborhood association in your general community
 - c. The Neighborhood & Community Engagement Manager for the City of Asheville
 - d. A representative from the Neighborhood Advisory Committee to the Asheville City Council
2. These outside representatives can help you and your fellow residents discuss the advantages of starting a neighborhood organization and answer questions.

3. Discuss a few issues that are important to your immediate neighborhood.
4. Discuss whether it would be more advantageous to join an existing neighborhood association, or proceed with organizing your own
5. Ask the core group to vote on whether to proceed with organizing their neighborhood.
6. Discuss the tentative boundaries of the neighborhood and plan for the full neighborhood meeting.

Step Three: Call a Meeting and Invite all Your Neighbors

1. Bringing people together in a meeting provides an opportunity for neighbors to get to know one another and share ideas and concerns.
2. Set a date, time and location for the meeting.
3. Hold the meeting in a neutral location such as a school, church, or public building, or in any location where people feel comfortable.
4. Create a flyer outlining your intent, the proposed geographical boundaries that would incorporate the association, encourage people to bring their children, date/time/place of the meeting, and your contact information.
5. Distribute the flyer door to door, ask local businesses to post it, put it on local online neighborhood chat rooms, such as Nextdoor, submit it to online newsletters, such AVL Today, or general local Facebook pages
6. Develop the meeting agenda. The purpose of this meeting is to:
 - Discuss the importance of having an organized neighborhood.
 - Vote to determine if the neighborhood wants to organize.
 - Discuss issues important to the neighborhood and prioritize them
 - Determine the boundaries for your neighborhood.
 - Discuss the name of the neighborhood association
 - Determine eligibility for membership
 - Vote to elect an initial set of officers
 - Discuss becoming a member of the Coalition of Asheville Neighborhoods and designating a person to represent the association on the CAN Board of Directors
 - Discuss filing a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit status with the IRS

7. 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.

8. Invite to the initial neighborhood meeting:

- A CAN representative
- An existing officer from an existing neighborhood association in your general community
- The Neighborhood & Community Engagement Manager for the City of Asheville
- A representative from the Neighborhood Advisory Committee to the Asheville City Council

Step Four: Facilitate an Initial Neighborhood-wide Meeting

1. Provide a sign-in sheet for neighbors' names, addresses, phone numbers, and E-mail addresses on a table near the entrance.
2. Get a volunteer from the core group to take minutes.
3. Greet your neighbors as they arrive. Let them know you appreciate their participation.
4. Start your meeting on time. Introduce yourself and members of the core group, and any outside representatives. .
5. 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.
6. 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, CAN, and the City.
7. Invite the outside representatives to discuss the advantages of having a neighborhood organization and answer any questions.
8. Conduct votes to:
 - determine if the neighborhood wants to organize.
 - determine the boundaries for your neighborhood
 - decide on a neighborhood association name.

- list issues important to the neighborhood and prioritize them
- elect an initial set of officers
- become a member of the Coalition of Asheville Neighborhoods and designating a person to represent the association on the CAN Board of Directors
- determine a regular neighborhood association meeting date, time and location
- identifying three important standing committees, such as Issues, Communication, and Neighborhood Outreach and asking for volunteers for those committees
- file for a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit status with the IRS (if necessary)
- Wrap up the meeting by:
 1. planning the next meeting
 2. asking people how they would prefer getting notices: by phone, email
 3. asking neighbors to bring another neighbor to the next meeting.
 4. review and summarize what was accomplished at the meeting
 5. reminding volunteers about their tasks for the next meeting.
 6. close the meeting and thank everyone for attending and for his or her interest.

Step Five: After the Initial Neighborhood Meeting

1. Plan regular meetings to accomplish your goals.
2. Make and distribute a list of everyone's name, address, phone number, fax number, and e-mail address.
3. Get recognition by the City for your neighborhood association by registering with City of Asheville Neighborhood Services. Fill out City of Asheville's [Neighborhood Registration](#).
4. File through the IRS and the State of North Carolina for a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit status
5. Make sure your representative to the CAN Board of Directors attends each meeting to make a report of your association's activities and receive information from CAN to take back to the association

Step Six: Second Neighborhood Meeting

1. Discuss writing bylaws for the neighborhood association that outlines how the association will operate and the duties of officers and board of directors.
2. Determine the number of board of directors members appropriate for your association.
3. Elect the board of Directors
4. Discuss forming committees around each of the issues that has been identified as import to your neighborhood

A CAN representative can assist you through each step of this process.