



# **STRATEGIES FOR INCREASING INVOLVEMENT IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION PLAN. RECRUIT. INVOLVE.**





Our City strives to meet the needs of all residents who choose to call Orlando home. To do this, I have made it a priority for the Neighborhood Relations team to organize, support, mentor and guide residents and neighborhood organizations in their effort to keep Orlando a great place to live, work and play. In 2014, we launched iLead, a comprehensive neighborhood-training program that informs, connects and involves our neighborhood leaders through a series of interactive guides, videos, webinars and workshops. I encourage you to use the iLead program to build and sustain your successful neighborhood organization.

Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer

## Guides



- Board Orientation and Operations
- Communication Tools
- Effective Meetings
- Engaging the Next Generation of Leaders
- Event Planning
- Ice Breakers
- Leadership Skills
- Neighborhood Grants
- Parliamentary Procedures made Simple
- Writing Your Neighborhood History

iLead is a comprehensive program that provides you with the tools to inform, connect and involve your neighbors through a variety of trainings, such as the iLead Leadership Series, Lunch and Learn and Community Connection Workshops. These tools cover topics such as how to effectively hold meetings, how to utilize a variety of communication tools and how to engage the next generation of leaders. iLead is your one stop shop for online leadership training.



Increasing neighborhood involvement is crucial to a successful organization. Whether you belong to a voluntary or mandatory association, you are a volunteer working through your neighborhood organization.

To operate an effective organization there are three things that should be included in your “toolkit” - **planning, recruiting and involvement.**



## SECTION ONE: PLANNING

**If we fail to plan, we plan to fail.** Planning is an essential function of any effective neighborhood organization.

### WHERE TO BEGIN

**1. Make sure your board members have the skills necessary to assist the association in meeting its mission and goals.**

This will attract residents to become involved. The leadership team needs to demonstrate a vision, a positive attitude, inclusivity, mentoring and cultivation and recognition. When recruiting potential board members, seek out neighbors that may have the skills, expertise and knowledge that is missing on the current board. Tell them why you are asking them to run for the board...its because they have a specific talent or experience with planning events, etc. For more information on recruiting potential board members, read the Cultivating New Neighborhood Leadership iLead Guide on [orlando.gov/ilead](http://orlando.gov/ilead).

**2. Have a clear and concise mission, and set goals.**

- The mission keeps you focused on the reason your organization exists.
- The goals are statements of what needs to be done to achieve results, demonstrate success and meet your mission.

- Keep your goals simple and realistic based on your resources. Be “S-M-A-R-T” Specific – Measurable- Attainable – Relevant/Realistic – Time Based - when generating goals.
- Put goals in writing and post it in all the association communication tools. For more information on creating goals, read Board of Directors Operations iLead Guide on [orlando.gov/ilead](http://orlando.gov/ilead).
- Measure your actions against goals. How do you measure up? Achieving your goals will define success for your association.

**Your mission statement and annual goals act as the roadmap for the association’s success.**

**3. What is in it for me-“WIIFM” ? Make involvement in your association meaningful and personal when developing your leadership or membership recruitment and retention plans. Here are some things that will impact your plan:**

Your association is:

- competing for neighbors’ time and commitment. People are busy and have many demands for their time;
- needing to invest the time and resources in getting to know the neighbors;



- c. having to share why a neighbor should make the time and a commitment to the association verses other organizations and activities; and,
- d. matching neighbors' talents and interests to the association's mission and goals – in other word, use a neighbor's experience, interests, talents and connections to benefit the neighborhood.

Applying WIIFM will make the involvement, experience and satisfaction of your members more personal and valuable. Help your neighbors define their "WIIFM".

#### **4. Plan to incorporate the time, talent and treasures of all the neighbors.**

- e. When a new neighbor moves in or joins the association, give them copies of your association bylaws, rules, etc.
- f. Have a board member visit the new neighbor to share the role and benefits of your association and how to get involved. If your organization is a mandatory association, be sure the board member covers key deed restrictions and rules of the association.
- g. Be sure to extend an invitation to participate in association meetings and activities that appeal to their interest. Consider swinging by to pick up the

new neighbor to attend the next meeting or activity. It can be intimidating and/or stressful as a new person to walk into an association meeting or event on their own.

- h. Make them feel welcome and included.

#### **5. Plan for fun!**

Be sure to add "fun" into all your association meetings and events. For information on adding fun read the Ice Breakers and/or Engaging Volunteers: Let's Stay Together iLead Guides on [orlando.gov/ilead](http://orlando.gov/ilead).

### **To be a successful leader you must:**

- Be willing to take a chance
- Have a plan or mission in mind
- Surround yourself with doers
- Keep them motivated
- Share the success with them
- Have fun!



## **SECTION TWO: RECRUIT**

Now that your association has taken the steps to plan for involving residents, it is time to recruit.

#### **When recruiting consider using these rules as a guide:**

- a. Rule of 3: In order for people to see and hear your message you need to communicate in 3 different ways. For example, in your newsletter, on your website, on our social media platforms or verbally at meetings and events.
- b. Rule of 7: The message needs to be heard by your neighbors at least 7 different times for them to remember it and to act.

#### **1. Know your neighborhood demographics: Who lives in your neighborhood?**

Why is it important to know who lives in your neighborhood? This information enables your association to tailor its meetings, resources, activities and events to the neighborhood. For example, if you have a neighborhood with lots of young families, you may want to consider having "babysitting" at your meetings and children activities at your events so the whole family can participate. If you have an older population, you may want to consider holding your association meetings in late afternoon or on the weekend before it gets dark to make it comfortable for your seniors to attend and get home before dark.





**Success Tip:** Visit [orlando.gov/orlandoinformationlocator](http://orlando.gov/orlandoinformationlocator) to find out about your neighborhood demographics.

1. In the top right corner where it says "Find Your Address" type in your street address.
2. Once populated, click your address.
3. Scroll to the bottom of the page and click "Census Data: Block Group Summary Sheet".

### 2. How does your neighborhood organization add value to the neighborhood and its members?

- **Protecting** the value of their homes.
- **Enhancing** and protecting the quality of life in the neighborhood.
- **Strengthening** the bond between neighbors.
- **Creating** a safer environment through Neighborhood Watch.
- **Building** neighborhood connectivity, unity and pride by hosting activities and events.
- **Providing** a unified voice for the neighborhood by identifying, addressing and resolving neighborhood issues and implementing neighborhood initiatives.
- **Communicating** and partnering with the City of Orlando and Orange County to ensure a livable and sustainable neighborhood.

### 3. Recruit talent within the neighborhood. Seek out all of the talents and treasures of your neighbors.

**Everyone** in your neighborhood is an asset to your organization and has something to give. People are flattered when asked personally to do something. This is especially important for mandatory associations where some owners feel paying their association dues is more than enough.

**Success Tip:** Appeal to what inspires the neighbor with WIIFM to increase the odds of the neighbor seeing the value and worth their time to participate in the association.

#### When targeting your recruitment, consider:

- **"That" vocal person**—don't avoid that person because they talk your ear off, give them a task, a duty, empower them and they'll likely be the ones to get it done.
- **Business Professionals** - get to know what people do in your neighborhood, what skills do they possess, how can they utilize their business or skill set that benefits them and the neighborhood.
- **Older Adults/Retirees** – more availability during days. They have professional experience, community outreach, networks and connections. Working as a group can help them feel connected.
- **Youth** – young residents can be a positive influence on the younger children, and provide more eyes on the street.
  - a. Youth often have great computer skills and knowledge of today's technology and social media.
  - a. Are up for physical activity and have lots of energy.
  - a. High schoolers can get community service hours for the time and talent they donate to the association. Call your local high school administration office to find out their community service criteria and needed documentation for the youth to get credit for hours donated to the association.

**4. First impression is the last impression.** Your association meetings are often the first impression new neighbors have about your association. What do your meetings say about your association? Remember, you don't get a second chance to make a first impression.



- a. Keep association meetings to an hour or an hour and a half max.
- b. Start and end on time.
- c. Create a welcoming and fun atmosphere, which includes using a comfortable meeting space, distributing and following an agenda and before adjourning, summarizing decisions and results.
- d. Establish rules keeping comments to two or three minutes per person on the topic. It's important to let everyone have a chance to speak before calling on a neighbor that has already spoken on the topic.

### Success Tip: Make the meetings enjoyable and entertaining:

- a. Providing food is a plus, ask members to bring food to share.
- b. Provide a social time for neighbors to meet each other and talk.
- c. Use guest speakers with a good topic.
- d. Conduct business and reports in a timely manner.
- e. Association leadership needs to be approachable and available after the meetings.
- f. In closing your meeting, summarize the actions and assignments made during the meeting to help all in attendance realize what was accomplished during the meeting.

**5. Talk about association successes.** Promote association successes consistently. Use your goals to define success. Ask your active neighbors/members to use every opportunity to talk about the association's successes and activities with other neighbors. People like to be a part of a winning team.

**6. Be a good listener.** Genuinely listening and knowing when to keep your mouth shut are important skills for a leader. Listening to your neighbors and demonstrating you understand what they are saying is a great way to build rapport and relationships.

**7. Be welcoming and inclusive:** Consider a welcome committee whose main purpose is to make neighbors feel welcome. Include neighbors in association decisions and goal setting. People support what they themselves help to create.

**8. Communicate: keep me informed.** We are a 24/7 society with the newer generations accustomed to accessing information via the Internet or social media at any time. Knowledge is powerful and the association plays an invaluable role in sharing what is going on in the neighborhood and the community.

### Communication tools:

- e. E-mails
- f. Newsletters
- g. Website
- h. Social media
- i. Nextdoor (Nextdoor.com)
- j. Word of mouth

### TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING:

**Newsletter** – should focus on the purpose and the neighborhood needs the association has identified; have fun while you do it and in how you present it. Your format will be determined by whether it's going to be printed or distributed electronically. For more information on formatting, Google tips on "newsletter formats in print or digital."

- President's message and board contact information
- Meeting minutes and announcements
- Recognition of neighbors/members that have helped the association
- Advertise fun events and activities
- Helpful household hints
- Training/education materials
- Hot topics or issues



- City events, activities, training, seminars, etc.
- City contact information – Commissioners, Code Enforcement, Public Safety, City Office of Communications and Neighborhood Relations
- Thought for the day
- Swap shop-local classified section
- Membership recruitment
- Advertisements for local businesses – help offset cost of newsletter publication
- Photos from successful events, activities, or just having fun
- Spotlight someone who stands out in your community

**Website** – same as the newsletter. It should focus on the purpose and neighborhood needs the association has identified; have fun while you do it and in how you present it.

- Provide basic neighborhood organization data and contact information
- All (or most) newsletter items
- How to get involved

- Committees
- Upcoming meetings and events
- Use pictures of meetings and events
- Keep it updated and fresh!

### Social Media

- Use photos
- Keep is short and simple
- Keep it relevant
- Keep it updated!
- Always provide contact information

**Success Tip: Call the City of Orlando Office of Communications and Neighborhood Relations' Neighborhood Relations team for recruitment and communication strategies and resources. Contact us at [neighborhoods@orlando.gov](mailto:neighborhoods@orlando.gov).**



## SECTION TWO: INVOLVE

**1. Events and general socializing.** Fun with a purpose. Remember to be inclusive when helping neighbors to socialize. This is a key role of the association. Organize activities and events that create a sense of community, social network, and a livable and sustainable neighborhood.

### IDEAS

- Allow informal and/or meet and greets (avoid holidays).
- Host movie nights, using a garage door as the movie screen. Alternate which home gets to pick the rental, and don't forget the popcorn.
- Community clean up or beautification project.
- Youth activities to bring families together. This is a great way to reach parents.
- Coordinate a weekly bike ride around the neighborhood for all ages.

- Dinner at a local restaurant.
  - Promote activity along the streets – garden tours, walking club, dog walkers.
- 2. Involve the Entire Family.** A great way to engage neighbors is through their children. Host events for the neighborhood youth, such as basketball games, movie nights, game nights, Halloween parties, etc.
- 3. Give them a small task.** To get and keep neighbors engaged, give them a job. Use committees to accomplish association goals. This is a great way to delegate work and get more neighbors involved.
- 4. Neighborhood beautification.** The neighborhood's physical condition is what people see first. Consider doing a neighborhood cleanup. The City of Orlando's Keep Orlando Beautiful and Green Up programs are a great tool to involve neighbors. Visit [orlando.gov](http://orlando.gov) for more information about these programs.





## Success Tips:

- Take time up front, when forming the committee or assigning a new task, to clearly and concisely spell out the outcome of the project.
- Determine what resources will be needed for the committee to be successful.
- Establish realistic timeline and deadlines.
- Get the committee's complete buy-in on the project/task, outcome and deadlines.
- Let people do it their way as long as the outcome is accomplished and deadlines are met.

**5. Neighborhood projects and grants.** Do projects that build neighborhood pride. Projects should support the association's mission and address neighborhood concerns and issues. The City provides grants to assist associations with implement projects to enhance their neighborhood.

**6. Keep a positive attitude.** Leaders' set the tone of the association with their own attitude and actions. Leaders need to lead by their actions and words. Be publically positive about your leadership position.

**7. Create a simple communication tool.** Make available a simple form for neighbors to write out their concerns, complaints or ideas that are not on the agenda, but will be responded to within a specific period of time after the meeting. This form provides the neighbor the opportunity to express a concern without taking up time at the meeting.

**8. Ask questions and seek the input of neighbors.** Most people appreciate the opportunity to express their opinion. Always strive to gain group and neighborhood consensus, particularly on sensitive issues. When seeking input, the association may want to adopt some basic rules to ensure input doesn't make the association meeting hours long.

## 9. Be generous with recognition and thanks.

Recognition is its own form of currency. One of the outcomes is ordinary things get done extraordinarily well. Don't forget the KUDOS—lots of praise, recognition and thank yous. Let people know their contribution is valuable. For additional information on saying thanks, read the Engaging Volunteers: Let's Stay Together iLead Guide on [orlando.gov/ilead](http://orlando.gov/ilead).

Use written notes to express the association's thanks and appreciation. Make it fun by attaching candy to reinforce your message:

1. Thank you for being a red hot volunteer! (Red Hots candy)
2. You're a star in my galaxy! (Milky Way candy bar)
3. You're worth even more to me! (100 Grand candy bar)
4. I'm nuts about you! (Peanuts)
5. You never snicker at my concerns; thanks for being such a great friend! (Snickers bar)
6. Here's a kiss and a hug for all you do! (Kiss and Hug)
7. It's a joy working with you! (Almond Joy candy bar)
8. For all you do, you deserve an extra pay day! (Pay Day candy bar)
9. You've made a mound of difference! (Mounds candy bar)
10. Thanks for going to bat for me! (Babe Ruth candy bar)
11. This place would be a zoo without you! (Animal crackers)
12. You're a lifesaver! (Lifesavers)
13. You add pop to our association! (Popcorn)
14. You're a star! (Starburst candy)
15. Thank you for staying fresh with your ideas! (Winter fresh gum)
16. Thank you for putting your heart into our organization! (Candy hearts)



Planning, recruiting and involving leads to successfully increasing neighbor participation in your association. Every neighborhood organization is different. What works for one, may not work for another. Use the information above as a guide to your success.

### **YOU ARE NOW READY TO INCREASE YOUR NEIGHBOR INVOLVEMENT!**

The following are three exercises we encourage you to do with your members or board. This information will help you with your planning, recruitment and involvement.



### **EXERCISE 1 (INDIVIDUAL)**

**Write down what immediately comes to mind when answering these questions. Try not to “over think”.**

1. Why did you move into your neighborhood?

---

---

---

2. What is special about your neighborhood?

---

---

---

3. Why are you involved in your association?

---

---

---

4. What do expect to get out of your involvement in your association?

---

---

---

5. What is the most successful thing your association has done?

---

---

---



EXERCISE 2 (BOARD)

Why do neighbors get involved in an association?

Why?	It make me feel...



## EXERCISE 3

### What is working?

It Works?	Neighborhood	Contract

## STAY INFORMED, CONNECTED AND INVOLVED

[orlando.gov/neighborhoods](http://orlando.gov/neighborhoods)

### NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

Events, information and helpful resources to share with your neighborhood straight to your inbox! Subscribe at [orlando.gov/neighborhoodnews](http://orlando.gov/neighborhoodnews)

### NEIGHBORHOOD RELATIONS FACEBOOK

Like us at [facebook.com/orlandoneighborhoodrelations](https://facebook.com/orlandoneighborhoodrelations)

### NEIGHBORHOOD RELATIONS NEXTDOOR

Sign up at [nextdoor.com](http://nextdoor.com) to receive important information that effects your neighborhood.

## LEARN ABOUT THE CITY OF ORLANDO THROUGH OUR OTHER SOCIAL CHANNELS:



[facebook/cityoforlando](https://facebook.com/cityoforlando)



[instagram/thecitybeautiful](https://instagram.com/thecitybeautiful)



[twitter/citybeautiful](https://twitter.com/citybeautiful)



[youtube/cityoforlando](https://youtube.com/cityoforlando)



[flickr/cityoforlando](https://flickr.com/photos/cityoforlando)



[neighborhoods@orlando.gov](mailto:neighborhoods@orlando.gov)

City of Orlando  
Office of  
Communications  
and Neighborhood  
Relations

407.246.2169  
[orlando.gov/neighborhoods](http://orlando.gov/neighborhoods)

The City of Orlando is the owner of the mark “iLead” in connection with the programs outlined on this guide. The City of Orlando is happy for other local governments to use the materials found in this guide as long as 1) credit is given to the City of Orlando if such materials are re-used by another local government and 2) no commercial use is made of the materials.

