

Neighborhood Association Recognition Requirements

Purpose of a Neighborhood Association

The purpose of the Office of Neighborhood Associations Program is to facilitate neighborhood involvement and give citizens a voice in decision-making as it affects their neighborhoods. It is the intent of this Program to provide an effective mechanism whereby the citizens of the city sharing common neighborhood identity, goals, and concerns may form organizations and become officially recognized as advisory bodies to the City Council to all boards and commissions engaged in community planning and development so that they may be more informed and bring their comments forward more efficiently.

Definition of Neighborhood Association

The purpose of a neighborhood association is to equip citizens to understand and participate in the processes that affect their neighborhood. The City of Bend recognizes that public participation through neighborhood associations can produce benefits for the general health, welfare, and pride of the total community.

Therefore, neighborhood associations are formally recognized organizations which offer an opportunity for citizens to participate in decision-making for their neighborhood. Participation is voluntary and open to all citizens who live or own property within its boundaries.

Most neighborhood associations are concerned with issues that affect the quality of life in their community. This can include issues such as land use, crime prevention, fire prevention, "Welcome Wagon" services, sidewalks, litter and parks. Neighborhood associations can also strengthen person-to-person contact by sponsoring neighborhood festivals and block parties.

Authority to Form - Council to consider recommendations

The residents and property owners of any city neighborhood may form such an organization and seek formal City recognition, thereby enabling them to make recommendations to the City, in accordance with the neighborhood association bylaws.

Procedure for Forming a Neighborhood Association

Residents interested in forming a neighborhood association should contact the Neighborhood Association Office for assistance. Meetings shall be held to gauge interest in forming an association. If meeting participants who qualify as members (see Item 2) agree to form an association, a formal request may be made to the Neighborhood Association Office. The request will be reviewed by the Neighborhood Association Office and forwarded with its recommendation to the City Council. Once the group has been recognized by council resolution, the City shall consider the association the official citizen organization for that area of the city. This process will formally recognize bylaws and boundaries of neighborhood associations.

Notice of Official Recognition

Upon formal recognition by the city, a letter from the mayor and also signed by the Neighborhood Coordinator shall be sent to all neighborhood association officers for distribution to property owners, residents and businesses within the neighborhood. The mayor's letter shall include the following:

- a) A statement encouraging all property owners, residents, and businesses within the newly recognized neighborhood to participate in meetings and other activities leading to proposals and recommendations to city government.
- b) A description and map of neighborhood boundaries.

- c) The names, addresses, and telephone numbers of all officers of the neighborhood association.
- d) The name and contact information of the City of Bend Neighborhood Association Coordinator.

Basic Requirements

Neighborhood Associations that are officially recognized by the City of Bend will be eligible for the range of services provided by the Neighborhood Association office as referenced in the Roles and Responsibilities of the Neighborhood Association Office. The City Council will consider all applications for formation of a Neighborhood Associations where the applications meet the following requirements:

1. Bylaws

All neighborhood associations will adopt bylaws which will govern rules of procedure, selection of spokesperson, information presented to the press, residency requirements, frequency of meetings, liaison with any city entity and other participating agencies, allocation of neighborhood budgets, and channels for presentations before all City Boards and the City Council. Bylaws will be presented to the City Council for formal recognition. A copy of the bylaws must be filed with the Neighborhood Association office.

2. Membership

Any person who lives, or owns any real property, or any legal entity who operates a place of business or institution, within the recognized boundaries of the neighborhood, and any person meeting this criteria shall be considered a member of the neighborhood association. An active member is defined as one who has attended at least one general or special meeting within the last calendar year. All neighborhood associations shall be responsible for maintaining up-to-date active membership lists and an updated copy shall be filed with the Neighborhood Association office.

3. Boundaries

Boundaries of the neighborhood associations will be defined by neighborhood associations and the Neighborhood Association office staff, and may be modified as noted in the bylaws. The boundaries must be clearly stated in the neighborhood association's bylaws and should not overlap those of any other neighborhood association. Disputes between neighborhood associations will be arbitrated as noted in the model by-laws. Neighborhood associations should incorporate a minimum of three thousand (3,000) residents and shall not exceed six thousand (6,000). However, Neighborhood Associations with less than 3,000 or greater than 6,000 residents will be considered for approval on a case by case basis. Excepted from this guideline is the downtown neighborhood, which shall include the downtown commercial zones and all adjacent residential areas.

4. Funding

No membership fees shall be levied. A neighborhood association may use contracts, grants, fundraisers and voluntary contributions.

5. Meeting Requirements

Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the neighborhood association bylaws.

6. Public Meetings/Public Records Law

All neighborhood associations must abide by the State of Oregon open meeting and public records laws, as outlined in the neighborhood association handbook. Neighborhood Associations must keep minutes.

7. Grievance Resolution

Bylaws shall include provisions relating to the resolution of grievances concerning the activities, policies, or recommendations of the neighborhood association including who is eligible to submit a grievance, a process for the receipt of complaints, and a procedure for final resolution.

8. Annual Reporting

All neighborhood associations must annually submit a copy of the dates of all meetings held in the past year and the names, addresses and phone numbers of the association's current officers and active members.

9. Procedures for Annual Review of Neighborhood Association Status

Within 30 days following an annual general meeting for electing officers, all neighborhood associations shall provide the Neighborhood Association Office with evidence of compliance with the requirements set forth in the bylaws and resolution. To assist with this, the Neighborhood Association Office will provide a compliance form. The completed compliance form will be reviewed by the Neighborhood Association Office. If the completed form indicates noncompliance, the association will be asked to take corrective action. If corrective action is found necessary and such action is not taken within 60 days of notification by the Neighborhood Association Office, the City Council will be advised of the non-compliance and may elect to suspend recognition of the neighborhood association.