



How to form a neighbourhood association

What is a neighbourhood association?

A neighbourhood association is a group of residents from neighbouring streets or blocks who want to meet regularly to discuss issues and opportunities, such as:

- social/recreational events and programs
- parks and playgrounds
- neighbourhood beautification projects, clean-ups or improvements
- sharing of information on neighbourhood projects
- crime prevention ideas
- volunteer activities
- traffic issues

A neighbourhood association can be established for one specific cause, such as the creation of a playground or a one-time event or as a group that meets for years and tackles a wide array of community events, opportunities and regularly arising issues.

How do I form a neighbourhood association?

The first steps are to talk to your neighbours about the concept and organize a public meeting. Remember that it is important to include all people in your community. You'll never know what skills, talents and interests your neighbours have until you ask!

What if there is an existing association in my neighbourhood?

If there is already an existing association in your neighbourhood, ask how you can get involved.



How does a neighbourhood association function?

A neighbourhood association may be big or small, formal or informal. A more formal association elects board members* at an annual general meeting. They adopt written rules (by-laws) to guide its operations. Board meetings usually occur once a month. The following elected positions may be part of its structure:

- Chair - conducts the meetings fairly and efficiently and sees that tasks are being completed
- Vice Chair - fills in for the chair when not available; assists Chair with tasks
- Treasurer - responsible for the association's finances
- Secretary - keeps people informed by taking and sharing meeting minutes

** Detailed job descriptions should be developed for each position. For more information on job descriptions, contact Neighbourhood & Volunteer Services at volunteerhelp@halifax.ca.*

A neighbourhood association may want to form other roles or sub-committees. Smaller groups of residents can focus on a specific project or event. Committees report back on their activities at board meetings. Some committees operate on an ongoing basis and others may be created to address short-term issues. Here are a few examples:

- communications (social media/newsletter/website)
- fundraising
- community/social events

Benefits of registering as a Non-Profit Society

Associations may wish to register as a Non-Profit Society. Many grant-funding agencies require groups to be registered to be eligible for funding. For more information visit [Nova Scotia Registry of Joint Stocks](#)¹.



Insurance

While neighbourhood associations are not required to have insurance to operate in Nova Scotia, it is strongly recommended for protection against many kinds of losses including lawsuits. For more information, please read Nova Scotia's [Insurance and Your Non-Profit Organization](#)².

If your neighbourhood association plans to hold a community event that takes place on or passes over public property, the Halifax Regional Municipality requires that the event organizers carry third party liability insurance. More information on this can be found in our *Special Events Planning Guide*³.

Other resources that offer useful information:

- volunteer recreation groups may purchase General Liability Insurance through [Recreation Nova Scotia](#)⁴
- Volunteer Canada offers a group insurance program designed specifically for non-profit and charitable organizations and their volunteers. For more information visit their [membership page](#)⁵
- Insurance Bureau of Canada offers information on how to manage risk⁶
- Inform yourself, read the Nova Scotia Volunteer Protection Act⁶

Questions?

If you have any questions about starting a neighbourhood association or about your existing association, you can contact Neighbourhood & Volunteer Services team at volunteerhelp@halifax.ca.

1. Registry of Joint Stocks: rjsc.novascotia.ca
2. Nova Scotia's Insurance And Your Non-Profit Organization: novascotia.ca/finance/site-finance/media/finance/InsuranceGuideNon-Profit.pdf
3. Special Events Planning Guide: halifax.ca/parks-recreation/events/special-events-task-force
4. Recreation Nova Scotia: recreationns.ns.ca/insurance.html
5. Volunteer Canada: volunteer.ca/membership
6. Insurance Bureau of Canada: ibc.ca
7. Volunteer Protection Act: gov.ns.ca/legislature/legc/bills/58th_2nd/3rd_read/b098.htm