

About Neighborhood Associations



What is a Neighborhood Association?

A neighborhood association is a group of residents who meet regularly to accomplish goals in their neighborhoods, such as crime prevention or litter control for example. The association may include homeowners and renters, apartment residents, business owners, school and church officials, and members of nonprofit organizations.

Neighborhood associations help represent neighborhood residents to elected officials, identify challenges and problems in the neighborhood, support change and improvement efforts, help resolve conflicts, provide volunteers for community projects, and find and get resources to make the neighborhood a better place to live.

Although neighborhoods are different, the motivations for organizing are often the same – bringing people together to shape change.

In Amarillo, neighborhood associations play an important role in the Neighborhood Planning Initiative by overseeing implementation of the adopted neighborhood plans. By meeting certain organizational criteria, they become recognized by the City of Amarillo as the official partner for plan implementation. Known as the Recognized Neighborhood Association Program, the partnership ensures a mutual commitment to the neighborhood plan goals.

Levels of Organization

Voluntary Informal Neighborhood Group — This is an informal gathering of neighbors that may come together to participate in getting-to-know-you activities and neighborhood crime watch groups. These groups are not incorporated with the Texas Secretary of State and do not pursue filing of 501(c)3 tax-exempt status with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

Voluntary Formal Neighborhood Association — This is a more organized group of residents. Neighborhood associations adopt bylaws, meet at regular intervals, and can collect dues on a voluntary basis. These groups file a Certificate of Formation with the Secretary of State so they can be recognized as a non-profit corporation and may apply for 501(c)3 status with the IRS. They typically manage a bank account for organization funds.

Mandatory Homeowners Associations — These groups are typically created and filed legally by the subdivision developer. Participation is mandated and the HOA generally exists to enforce rules for the properties and their residents. The HOA is managed by a Board of Directors and those who purchase property within an HOA's jurisdiction automatically become members and are required to pay dues and follow the codes, covenants and restrictions (CC&Rs) which are recorded legal documents in the county records.

Public Improvement District (PID) — PIDs are designated areas where property owners elect to pay a special assessment for improvements and services within that area. The services must benefit the PID area only and are supplemental to any City service. PIDs are created by the authority of Chapter 372 of the Texas Local Code. Projects may include entry treatments, additional city park amenities, and maintenance and improvement of common areas.

About the Recognized Neighborhood Association Program in Amarillo

What does the RNA program do?

The RNA program formally recognizes the partnership between the City and the neighborhood association as the one and official partner for coordination on neighborhood plan projects and other initiatives such as grants. This allows for direct communication between the City and RNAs while also helping them understand how to navigate local government and be active participants in the process.

How do neighborhoods become Recognized?

Neighborhoods must meet certain eligibility criteria that ensures that they are running transparent, organized associations that are open to all residents, business owners and property owners. They must demonstrate their eligibility through an application process and are then Recognized by a resolution adopted by City Council.

Is there a fee?

There is no fee to apply for Recognition.

Are neighborhoods required to participate?

If you have a neighborhood plan adopted as part of Amarillo's comprehensive plan, you will be required to meet the eligibility criteria through an application process in year one and then renew your application each year. Other neighborhoods may also become Recognized provided they meet the eligibility criteria.

What is the eligibility criteria?*

1. Be governed by a board of directors with a minimum of seven members in regular attendance. The composition of the board shall include at least one representative of each of the following types of members: resident; property owner; non-profit/institutional/educational; neighborhood business owner; and at-large providing expertise in other priority areas as identified by the organization such as finance, historic preservation, marketing, etc.
2. Maintain open membership to any person who lives, rents, or owns any real property in the neighborhood.
3. Be an organized entity recognized by the Texas Secretary of State through the filing of a Certificate of Formation and abiding by adopted bylaws.
4. Establish and maintain 501 (c)(3) nonprofit status as a tax-exempt, charitable organization approved by the Internal Revenue Service.
5. Hold an annual meeting at which all members vote.
6. Hold regularly scheduled board of directors' meetings at which business is conducted in an organized manner following best practices for meeting procedures.
7. Hold regularly scheduled community meetings and events at which all members are invited to participate in ongoing neighborhood initiatives.
8. Post notice of all meetings in advance in public places and in readily obtained online and print publications.
9. Have clearly stated boundaries.
10. Not discriminate in policies, recommendations, or actions.
11. Follow a strategic plan of work demonstrating active engagement in projects that improve neighborhood quality of life.

**PIDs and Homeowners Associations are not eligible at this time.*

Can multiple organizations be Recognized within the same neighborhood boundary?

No. Recognition of neighborhoods with overlapping boundaries is not allowed.