

TIP SHEET

STARTING A NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION

A well-organized neighborhood can wield powerful influence when addressing the needs and problems of local residents. A group representing the community in all neighborhood issues will have the stability, credibility and political clout necessary to be an effective force in creating a better neighborhood. If you think your building, block, or neighborhood needs to be organized, follow these 6 rules.

- ✓ *DEFINE THE ISSUES: Prepare yourself to represent all the people in your neighborhood. Talk to other residents to find out what they think the important issues are and what should be done. Collect information about the issues, what space is available in the community, and how to get access, who wants to participate, and what resources exist to help you. You would also need to know the history of the issue or issues that you're dealing with. Your local Community Board, the public library, and the community newspaper are likely to have answers.*
- ✓ *RESEARCH YOUR COMMUNITY: What's the size of the area you want to organize. Find out what resources your community has and talk to the neighborhood business and government leaders. Take a walk and look at your neighborhood with a critical eye. Where do people socialize, which local merchants might be supportive? Are there any buildings with rooms suitable for meeting?*
- ✓ *BUILD A CORE GROUP: Recruit a handful of people. Find candidates for your core group by talking to your neighbors. Talk to leaders of churches, community centers, or similar organizations and ask them whether they know people who may be interested.*
- ✓ *HOLD CORE GROUP MEETING: The core group acts as the temporary steering committee until the general membership meeting is held. When the core group meets, it should come up with ideas for projects to kick off the organizing drive, starting with simple activities like block cleanup, a letter writing campaign, or a potluck fundraising dinner. Divide up responsibility for contacting neighborhood institutions.*
- ✓ *PLAN A GENERAL MEETING: Decide on a time, date and place that are convenient for people in the neighborhood. Prepare an agenda for your first general meeting, keeping in mind that you're laying the foundation for the organization. A good agenda should include the following; Introductions, Discussions on problems and issues, Setting priorities, Structure – agreeing on a name for the organization.*
- ✓ *REACH OUT TO THE COMMUNITY: Getting the word out is crucial to create a well-balanced, fully representative organization. Print flyers listing the time, dates, place and purpose of the first general meeting. Take the flyers door-to-door.*

When your are finish organizing take a survey of neighborhood opinion, hold a community forum, meet with the government agencies that are supposed to be dealing with your issues.
GOOD LUCK