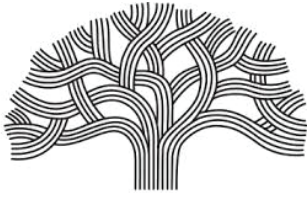




COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION



Safer communities begin with **well-organized and prepared** local groups of neighbors or associates. Oakland residents are highly encouraged to create their own “organized neighborhoods,” blocks or groups to address areas of local concern, prepare for emergencies, and build stronger and better-connected communities.

WHY ORGANIZE YOUR COMMUNITY GROUP?

Organizing (or reorganizing if necessary) your community group can significantly help your area by improving safety and overall quality of life. Neighbors who know each other are more likely to help each other in times of need. Organized groups can also help to overcome the effects of limited City resources.

An organized community can address issues of greatest interest or concern:

- ❖ Preparing for and responding to emergencies together
- ❖ Deterring crime
- ❖ Improving traffic and parking safety
- ❖ Cleaning up and beautifying the neighborhood and making it more firesafe
- ❖ Creating a support network for those who need extra assistance
- ❖ Socializing and building a stronger sense of belonging

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE AND DO?

An organized community group typically covers a block or two of connected streets (some are larger), or perhaps all the units in an apartment building. The organized community has one or preferably several leaders/coordinators/Block Captains, keeps an updated and secure roster with resident’s contact info and holds regular events during the year.

Community activities can include:

- ❖ Informal social gatherings to welcome new neighbors
- ❖ Holiday parties
- ❖ National Night Out
- ❖ Neighborhood Watch crime prevention training
- ❖ Firewise USA® wildfire safety efforts
- ❖ Emergency preparedness (CERT) coordination, training and drills
- ❖ 2-way radio communications practice



Many Oakland communities are very well organized and have been for many years, and are willing to serve as model groups and mentors for those just starting out. **The Oakland Firesafe Council team can help coordinate this assistance, please contact us.**

HOW TO ORGANIZE YOUR COMMUNITY

GETTING STARTED

Organizing a community or neighborhood group requires just a few neighbors and a little bit of effort to get the ball rolling.



1) Form a small start-up team of engaged neighbors



2) Determine the boundaries and the home/apt. addresses to be part of your group



3) Compile a roster of neighbor's contact information (usually restricted to the team)



4) Determine how best to communicate: email, text, social media, etc.



5) Hold an event for the community to introduce the why and how of organizing



6) Engage more neighbors to help out with other activities



7) Break tasks into small actions doable for people with busy lives



MOST OF ALL, WELCOME EVERYONE AND HAVE FUN!

KEEP THE MOMENTUM GOING

Don't be discouraged if participation is not what you expected, as some folks just may not share the enthusiasm for a well-connected community. **If you get half of your households engaged, you're on the road to success.** Be sure to welcome new residents and tap into their energy and desire to connect with their new neighbors. Always include everyone in important communications.

Rotate duties and responsibilities to avoid burn-out among your core team. Mix up activities and ensure each event includes time to socialize and have fun. Revisit why your community organized in the first place and keep neighbors informed of accomplishments.

RESOURCES TO HELP YOU ORGANIZE

There are many resources available to help organize your community. A comprehensive organization and leader's guide is available through **OFSC/PPNA***. A skills ladder is included that suggests levels a group can progress through as it organizes. Programs such as **CERT**, **Firewise USA®** and **Neighborhood Watch** provide steps to help a community be more disaster- and crime-safe. Reach out to us with any questions – we are here to assist.

Organized communities are the foundation for residents being able to best prepare for and respond to a disaster together, and then to help each other recover.