

# The Role of the Residents Association

Definition: A Residents Council is a group of concerned citizens who are elected to represent the housing community in which the residents live. The Council is the voice in the community. It strives to make the housing community a better place to live by actively seeking to influence decisions that directly affect the residents it serves.

To do this effectively, it acts as a liaison between management and residents, and residents and the community. A very important part of every residents' councils' efforts should be devoted to programming or activities. Residents' Councils develop and carry out programs which they feel will improve the social, economic and /or political status of their constituency.

## Why Have a Resident Organization?

According to HUD, a resident organization can be a highly structured resident council or a simple social club. It is a group of residents in a housing development who join together to fulfill common needs and to accomplish specific goals.

The organization can help to: Enhance the quality of life in the housing development.  
Plan the future of the community. Resolve community problems.  
A resident organization can be a benefit to both residents and management.

| Benefits for residents   | Benefits for management  |
|--|--|
| Enhanced mutual support  | Enhanced job satisfaction  |
| Increased sense of community and decreased isolation   | Better, more satisfying relationship with residents                            |
| New experiences, new relationships   | Reduced resident complaints  |
| Shared responsibility, pride, and joy of accomplishment  | Help in maintaining positive image for the property                            |
| Development of skills, especially leadership   | Support in resolving property problems such as vandalism                       |
| Delivery of new services by accessing resources, developing activities, and creating opportunities | Creation of an orderly communications channel between management and residents |

# How to Create and Maintain an Effective Residents Association

- 1. Set realistic goals based on the overall abilities and interests of the residents.*
- 2. Maintain and follow a set of by-laws.*
- 3. Establish a working relationship with management.*
- 4. Involve residents in the life of the housing community.*
- 5. Inform the residents about issues affecting them.*
- 6. Influence decisions affecting the life of the residents.*
- 7. Resolve problems or grievances among and between residents.*
- 8. Share resident concerns – both positive and negative.*
- 9. Provide an advocacy role on behalf of older adult issues.*
- 10. Welcome new residents and provide resident orientation.*
- 11. Maintain fiscal responsibility for the Residents Association.*
- 12. Avoiding conflicts of interest and petty personality feuds*
- 13. Be transparent and run efficient meetings where all feel they have a voice.*

# Running an Efficient Residents Association Meeting

- A. Maintain and Follow an Approved Set of By-Laws
- A. Planning Meetings and Formulating Agendas
  1. *Call to Order*
  2. *Roll Call or Attendance*
  3. *Approval of Minutes*
  4. *Report of Officers, Committees & Residents*
  5. *Old or Unfinished Business*
  6. *New Business or Suggestions from the Floor*
  7. *Announcements and Good-n-Welfare*
  8. *Adjournment*



# More Meeting Tips

## REMEMBER:

- Start and finish on time
- Know what you want to say
- Have your materials ready
- Talk the participants' language
- Make your presentation simple and to the point
- Keep the meeting lively and moving forward
- Speak clearly
- Be confident and be enthusiastic
- Take a break if the meeting runs too long
- Close on a positive note
- Make sure everyone understands what has been decided.



*Typical Langley Trustees Meeting audio visual tools*

**"I hope this bullhorn will make this meeting a little less boring."**

# Resident Association By-laws

By-laws should include:

- Name of the resident organization
- Purpose of the organization
- Membership who is eligible, how are members selected?
- Officers number, duties, terms of office, nomination, and election procedures
- Committees number and duties, procedures for setting up ad hoc committees
- Finances, accounting and auditing procedures
- Meetings: When, how often, who attends?
- Quorum percentage of members needed to pass a vote
- Amendments procedures for changing by-laws

Although they may seem complex, the details are intended to avoid many predictable questions or problems that simple by-laws often do not address. In the long run these by-laws may avoid arguments, misunderstandings, and amendments.

# Resident Rights Involving Resident Organizations

Residents of HUD-assisted multifamily housing developments have the right to:

- Organize as residents without obstruction, harassment, or retaliation from property owners or management.
- Post materials in common areas and provide leaflets informing other residents of their rights and of opportunities to involve themselves in their project.
- Use appropriate common space or meeting facilities to organize or to consider any issue affecting the condition or management of the property. This may be subject to a reasonable, HUD-approved fee.
- Meet without the owner/manager present.
- Be recognized by property owners and managers as having a voice in residential community affairs.

# Troubleshooting Common Problems of a Resident Organization

# Difficulty in finding residents willing to hold office.

1

Meet with residents face-to-face. Find out about their gifts and interests and sell the job to their interests.

2

Make the term and scope of officer duties manageable.

3

Arrange for leadership training.

# Residents are hesitant to preside at meetings.

Initially, the manager, resident leader, or community organizer can chair the meeting while helping residents build their leadership skills.

Have officers share the duties so that no one feels overwhelmed.

# Poor attendance at meetings.



Hold meetings regularly, at the same time, in the same place.



Make sure that all residents know when and where meetings take place. Use flyers, announcements on the bulletin board, newsletter, etc.



Start with simple activities, projects that are exciting and have wide appeal and let everyone know what they will be.



Make the meetings fun as well as productive. Start with success. Nothing is as attractive as success.

# Members are disruptive

Members focus on personal issues instead of group issues during meetings. Acknowledge the importance of the issue. Arrange for a private meeting later.

Overly talkative members should be tactfully interrupted. Acknowledge the person's contribution, then ask others to add their comments.

Argumentative members – Keep your cool and make sure others keep theirs. Ask for clarification and specific examples of general complaints. Steer discussion away from personal attacks to dealing with the issues raised. After the issues have been discussed, summarize and move on to the next point. If he continues to argue, explain that the issues have been covered, and offer to meet with him privately after the meeting to resolve any remaining personal issues.

Know-it-all – Acknowledge her expertise. Assure her that she has a valuable contribution to make, and then seek comments from other members. Give her more responsibilities. (“Sue, we will be able to tap your experience in fund-raising. Does anyone have similar experience?”)

# Members are passive

- Shy – Call on him by name and smile at him. Ask him easy questions, especially about his area of knowledge. Give him an assignment.
- Disinterested – Ask her direct questions about her area of special knowledge. Ask her advice. Mention something she said to you at another time. Give her an assignment.

Sometimes it  
can be  
aggravating,  
but...

You are helping to build a sense of  
community for the residents of your  
building to help you get thru good times  
and bad.

# Benefits of Getting Involved

The infographic is titled "doing Good is Good for You" in a mix of orange and blue text. Below the title, it says "Volunteering" in a large, bold, dark blue font, flanked by two blue boxes containing the words "Reduces" and "Increases". A vertical dotted line separates the two columns of benefits. On the left side, under "Reduces", there are five items: depression (sad face emoji), chronic pain (grimacing face emoji), stress (worried face emoji), risk of disease (sweating face emoji), and social isolation (neutral face emoji, which is circled in red). On the right side, under "Increases", there are five items: physical fitness (neutral face emoji), mental functionality (halo emoji), sense of purpose (smiling face with sunglasses emoji), social connection (smiling face with hearts emoji), and longevity (thumbs up emoji). The background features a colorful, wavy pattern. In the bottom right corner, there is a logo consisting of three stylized 'A's.

doing Good is Good  
for You

Reduces ◀ Volunteering ▶ Increases

depression  
chronic pain  
stress  
risk of disease  
social isolation

physical fitness  
mental functionality  
sense of purpose  
social connection  
longevity

# Programs, Activities and Resources

## Social Activities

## Financial Resources

- Fundraising Resources
- Developing Budgets and Spending Money
  - Resident Events
  - Staff Gift Fund
  - Purchase Equipment
  - Community & Organizational Donations
  - Parties/Events
  - Gift Shop or Convenience Store
  - Books
  - Others

## Human Resources

- Recruiting Volunteers
- Involving New Residents
- Use of Committees
- Volunteer Recognition

# Social Activities Ideas

- Cooking Class
- Fashion Show
- Senior Prom
- Day Trip
- Movie night or movie outing
- Dance/exercise class
- Educational programs – speakers
- Bingo/Musical Bingo
- Arts & Crafts
- Language Classes
- Current Event Discussion groups
- Library or Mobile Library

- Volunteer Programs
- Intergenerational Program
- Card parties/ Mah Jongg/ Rummy
- Picnics & BBQs
- Art Classes
- Musicals
- Birthday Parties
- Art Shows
- Quilters Club
- Walking Group
- Senior Olympics
- Tournaments – Pool, Chess, Checkers, Bridge





Questions  
or  
comments?

