

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.*



How can the Residents Association help in the following situation?

Residents are complaining that the washers & dryers are always in use during the hours the laundry room is open. It seems there are not enough washers and dryers in the laundry room, but there is no room to add more washers and dryers. Is there a role for the Residents Association to find a solution to the problem?

Can the Residents Association get involved in starting a recycling program?

Is this an appropriate role for the Residents Association?

If the answer is yes, what steps should the Association take to create a recycling program in the building?



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.
- Meet without the owner/manager present.
- Be recognized by property owners and managers as having a voice in residential community affairs.

Who is a member of the Residents Association?

Residents that have signed a lease with the owner and the property management company of the building. By signing the lease, the resident, the owner and the management company have entered into a legal, enforceable contract. Caregivers would not be considered a member of the Residents Association.

Source: HUD Resident Rights & Responsibilities
https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/DOC_12162.PDF

Would a resident employed part time by management be eligible to be a member of the Residents Association?

If the person qualified by age (62 or older) and by income limit, has signed a lease with management, and must abide by the lease and house rules, the answer most likely is yes. Especially if the resident became a part-time employee of the building after qualifying and moving into the building.

If a building staff member, for example a maintenance person, is hired and as a condition of employment is required to live on site, the answer is no.

A resident has been telling management staff about discussions and building complaints addressed at the Residents Association meetings. What are some solutions for this problem?

Reinforce that the Residents Association is a benefit for residents & is a voice in the community for all residents.

What is discussed in the meetings is to be kept in the meeting.

The officers of the Residents Association should have a standing meeting with Management to bring to their attention issues/complaints on behalf of the residents.

CSS staff training for on-site staff emphasizes a regular channel of communication between the Residents Association and Management—ex: standing meeting, and mutual respect between the RA and Management. This is a partnership. Management can go to the RA if there is a building wide-problem they need help solving, and vice versa.

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.*

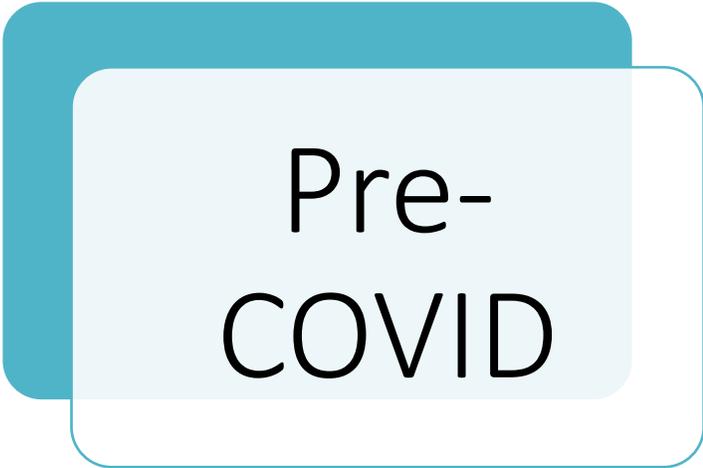
Resident Association By-laws

By-laws should include:

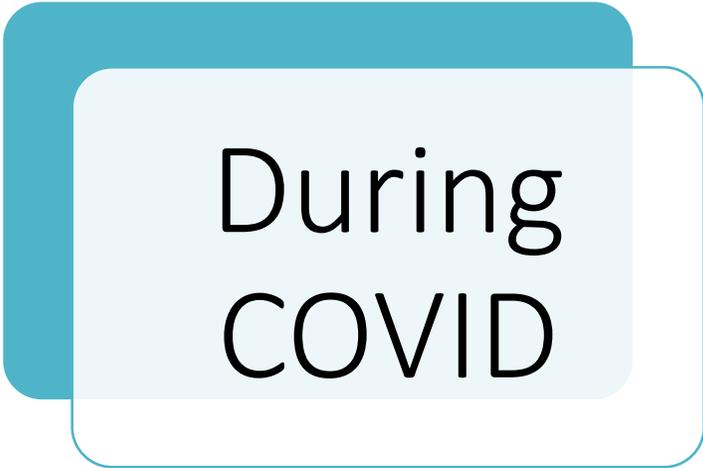
- Name of the resident organization
- Purpose of the organization
- Membership who is eligible, how are members selected?
- Officers number, duties, terms of office, nomination, and election procedures
- Committees number and duties, procedures for setting up ad hoc committees
- Finances, accounting 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 Association Programs & Activities

A teal-colored rounded rectangle with a white rounded rectangle inside it, containing the text "Pre-COVID".

Pre-
COVID

A teal-colored rounded rectangle with a white rounded rectangle inside it, containing the text "During COVID".

During
COVID

A teal-colored rounded rectangle with a white rounded rectangle inside it, containing the text "Post-COVID".

Post-
COVID

Social Activities Ideas Pre-COVID

- 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



Programs, Activities and Resources

Financial Resources

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

Human Resources

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

Is your
Residents
Association
holding
meetings and
activities
during the
Pandemic?

How are you holding meetings?

What activities are you holding?

Free Communication Resources

Free Conference Call

<https://www.freeconferencecall.com/>



Zoom

<https://zoom.us/>



Questions
or
comments?

