



NEIGHBORHOOD PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

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Neighborhoods are the basic building blocks of the community, and their health and vitality are essential to the future of College Station. Strong neighborhoods are not just a collection of houses within a subdivision boundary; they contribute to a unique sense of place and community identity, with residents contributing to partnerships, leadership, and civic involvement. In many ways, a community is only as strong and sustainable as its neighborhoods.

The Neighborhood Partnership Program was created to build helpful, collaborative relationships between neighborhoods, community organizations, and the City of College Station. The Neighborhood Services Unit is the City's primary liaison with neighborhood organizations, and on behalf of the City and these neighborhood organizations, Neighborhood Services maintains ongoing communications with community organizations that can have a positive impact on neighborhoods. As with any successful relationship, all parties share responsibility in creating an alliance that is effective and benefit all involved. The following describes the benefits the City offers to participating neighborhood organizations and the City's expectations for the neighborhoods in the partnership.

The City's Commitment

To increase neighborhood integrity, in partnership with College Station homeowner and neighborhood associations, other City divisions, and community organizations, the City of College Station through Neighborhood Services pledges to:

- Provide start-up support to neighborhoods establishing or revitalizing associations;
- Assist with the planning of annual or large neighborhood meetings;
- Host meetings and trainings that provide training for association officers and representatives;
- Host meetings and trainings that provide a forum for networking and education on local and regional topics;
- Help to resolve neighborhood conflicts;
- Administer the Strong & Sustainable Grant Program to foster neighborhood identity and community;
- Administer the Mosquito Abatement Grant Program to facilitate the systematic reduction of mosquitoes and associated diseases;

- Assist Homeowner Associations, Neighborhood Associations, and other City departments in their implementation of adopted neighborhood plans;
- Maintain a database of all registered Homeowner Associations (HOAs) and Neighborhood Associations (NAs) to enhance community communication;
- Notify associations of public hearings pertaining to development, public works, and other municipal projects in the vicinity of their neighborhood;
- Distribute a regular neighborhood email newsletter to association board members providing information regarding neighborhood, community, and City events; and
- Act as a central access point within the City to direct questions, concerns, and complaints to various departments. Serve as the liaison between the City departments, City Managers, the Mayor, and neighborhoods.

The Neighborhood's Commitment

In the spirit of partnership, homeowner and neighborhood associations that are a part of the Neighborhood Partnership Program will:

- Have an active board with officers in place;
- Provide Neighborhood Services with a list of all association board officers' contact information and promptly notify Neighborhood Services when there are association leadership changes in personnel or contact information;
- Distribute information communicated from Neighborhood Services to the association's board to association members, as appropriate;
- Provide Neighborhood Services with a copy of current association bylaws and promptly provide Neighborhood Services with any amendments;
- Provide Neighborhood Services with association meeting agendas at least 72 hours prior to meetings, copies of association minutes within a week after meeting, and an annual update on the neighborhood organization;
- Hold at least one annual meeting where the entire neighborhood is invited and can attend;
- Attend at least one Neighborhood Services sponsored event annually; and
- Attend at least one Neighborhood Services sponsored board-member training session annually.

Please note that all information that is provided to the City of College Station's Neighborhood Services Division becomes public information and subject to open records requirements.

The details of the program are described below.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

Neighborhood Criteria

The following criteria were established to encourage homeowner and neighborhood associations, and the individuals making up the associations that register with the Neighborhood Partnership Program to function as democratic representatives of neighborhood residents.

Eligibility.

Only associations within the College Station city limits will be eligible to participate in the Neighborhood Partnership Program and receive services. Associations outside of the city limits and/or in the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction can sign up for Neighborhood Services emails, newsletters, and other similar communications via the City's E-Notifier System at cstx.gov/enotify.

Membership.

- ***Homeowner Associations.***

Homeowners associations are governed by the State of Texas Property Code. Membership guidelines are detailed in the property deed restrictions. Race, color, creed, sex, age, heritage, or national origin shall not limit participation or membership. Homeowners associations are encouraged to involve non-property owner neighbors in their social and civic events.

- ***Neighborhood Associations.***

Neighborhood association membership should be open to all tenants and property owners residing within the neighborhood association boundaries. Race, color, creed, sex, age, heritage, national origin, or income level shall not limit participation or membership. Neighborhood Associations dues and membership fees are voluntary.

Boundaries.

The boundaries of an association may not overlap the boundaries of another formally registered association in partnership with the City. Homeowners Associations boundaries are determined by deed restrictions. Neighborhood Association boundaries shall be established by the association membership. The following should be considered when establishing Neighborhood Association boundaries:

- Patterns of development and placement of property lines;
- Natural physical boundaries such as landforms and water bodies; and/or
- Man-made boundaries such as major thoroughfares and street connection patterns.

Bylaws.

Each association must adopt written bylaws. At a minimum, bylaws shall include a description of the organization, procedures for democratic voting and elections, and the process for the adoption and amendment of bylaws. A copy of the bylaws must be provided to Neighborhood Services.

Meetings.

Associations should establish a meeting schedule. Quarterly meetings are encouraged, with the minimum requirement of one general neighborhood meeting per year. Subject to the State's Open Meetings Law, meetings and records are open to all residents in the neighborhood. The time, place, and purpose of the meeting must be well publicized throughout the neighborhood and provided to Neighborhood Services at least 72 hours prior to the meeting.

Officers and Representatives.

Associations must have an election or agreed-upon selection process for officers and representatives.

Association Management Companies.

All associations that employ management companies are still required to provide Neighborhood Services with the contact information for each association's board members. This will allow Neighborhood Services and other City staff to be able to directly contact neighborhood representatives when necessary as well having contact information for management company staff.

Neighborhood Partnership Records.

In order for association information to remain current and accurate, Neighborhood Services shall to be kept up to date on any changes to required association information. All changes to association boundaries, by-laws, officers, and contact information shall be emailed, mailed, or faxed to Neighborhood Services within 30 calendar days of the changes. Please note that all records and information kept by Neighborhood Services, including association leadership contact information, is subject Open Records Requests and may appear on the list of Registered Partners on the Neighborhood Services web page.

Program Benefits

The City of College Station is dedicated to assisting neighborhoods, and has found that it is most beneficial to all involved to work with organized groups that have come together to strengthen the fabric of where they live. The City strives to engage neighborhoods in the community dialog and support their enrichment.

Information Exchange.

Neighborhood Services is the City's primary liaison with HOAs and NAs. Typical communications include:

- Notifications of public hearings pertaining to development;
- Regularly emailed newsletters containing topics that affect neighborhoods and information regarding community and City events;
- Press releases and memos forwarded via email to inform citizens of a pressing community issue in a timely manner;
- Efforts to coordinate meetings between City staff and neighborhoods regarding public safety, public works projects, and other municipal projects and services planned in the vicinity of the neighborhood; and
- Notifications sent via email of public works and other municipal projects in the vicinity of the neighborhood.

All information is communicated to association board members, in trust that the information will be appropriately distributed to all association members and neighbors in a timely manner.

Educational and Networking Opportunities.

There are a number of educational and networking opportunities available throughout the year to associations that are a part of the Neighborhood Partnership Program. Examples of such events are:

- **Seminar Suppers:** These events provide a venue for associations to network, to hear presentations on topics of importance to associations, and to give them a chance to learn about important issues going on in the City. They are typically held every other month.
- **Green College Station:** This initiative focuses on educating residents on all of the “green” and conservation-oriented programs the City of College Station offers, as well as informing residents of other similar programs and opportunities available in the community.
- **Community Association Institute Training:** Neighborhood Services has partnered with the Greater Houston Chapter of the Community Association Institute (CAI) to bring quality training and workshops to College Station homeowners associations and neighborhood associations. CAI specializes in training neighborhood leaders and managers on the best practices of association operations. The trainings feature experts in the subject areas and offer participants certificates and continuing education training credits for attending workshops.

CAI workshops may or may not be open to individuals and community associations outside of the Neighborhood Partnership Program, depending on the value it may provide to neighborhoods and to the City. If there are budgetary or space limitations, priority will be given to those that are part of the Neighborhood Partnership Program.

Schedules for educational and networking opportunities will be sent out on a regular basis with dates, times, and registration information.

Grant Programs.

One of the benefits of the Neighborhood Partnership Program is being eligible for grant programs offered through Neighborhood Services. To be eligible to receive Strong & Sustainable Neighborhood Grant funds, associations must have been active members of the Neighborhood Partnership Program for at least one year prior to applying for funds. The Strong & Sustainable Neighborhood Grant may be awarded for several purposes—neighborhood identification, neighborhood-building activities, and the implementation of City Council adopted neighborhood plans. Gateway Grants are one type of grant in the program and are matching grants for homeowner associations to construct signs identifying their neighborhoods at or near their entrances. Other Strong & Sustainable Neighborhood Grants are for activities that strengthen associations and improve neighborhoods, and they may or may not be matching grants, depending upon the project being funded. Homeowners associations and neighborhood associations will need to provide a match for non-physical projects and community building projects. They may provide a match for a physical project that helps to implement their City Council adopted neighborhood plan.

The Mosquito Abatement Grant Program allows associations to annually receive up to \$200 worth of mosquito abatement products to assist in the prevention of mosquito breeding. All active neighborhood partners may apply for a Mosquito Abatement Program grant, regardless of their length of time in the program. Program applications are typically accepted beginning in April of each year, and are accepted throughout the mosquito breeding season, usually ending around October.

Neighborhood Clean Up Program.

Neighborhood Services has partnered with the City of College Station Sanitation Department to offer the Neighborhood Clean-Up Program. Two or three neighborhoods may be chosen annually after they submit brief applications about the purposes and goals of their clean-ups. Once selected, neighborhoods will schedule a day for the clean-up. Sanitation crews will deliver one or two large containers to the neighborhood the day before the clean-up and pick them up the end of the day after the clean-up, at no cost to the neighborhood.

Membership Status

In the nature of partnership, it will be necessary for HOAs and NAs to maintain “active” partnership status to receive the benefits of the City/neighborhood collaboration.

Active Status

To be active, an association must:

- Attend at least one Neighborhood Services sponsored event annually;
- Attend at least one Neighborhood Services sponsored board-member training session annually;
- Have an active board with officers in place;
- Provide Neighborhood Services with a list of all association board officers’ contact information and promptly notify Neighborhood Services when there are association leadership changes in personnel or contact information;
- Provide Neighborhood Services with a copy of current association bylaws and promptly provide Neighborhood Services with any amendments;
- Provide Neighborhood Services with association meeting agendas at least 72 hours prior to meetings, copies of association minutes within a week after meeting, and an annual update on the neighborhood organization;
- Provide Neighborhood Services with meeting agendas sent prior to meetings, copies of association minutes within a week after meetings and an annual update on the neighborhood organization; and
- Hold at least one annual meeting where the entire neighborhood is invited and can attend.

Inactive Status

Communication is the cornerstone of the relationship. If Neighborhood Services is not provided information or updated information in the expected timeframes, it cannot exchange effective and timely information with the association. If Neighborhood Services becomes aware that association information has become outdated and new information has not been provided to the Neighborhood Services Coordinator, the neighborhood will be sent an Association Information Update Form via the last known addresses of the association’s leadership. A completed form is required to be returned within 30 calendar days of postmark to Neighborhood Services.

Neighborhood Services will review its programs annually and if an association is not participating in at least the minimum required amount of networking or training provided by the City, the association's leadership will be contacted by the Neighborhood Services Coordinator to discuss why the opportunities were not valued or to see if the association would benefit from one-on-one organizational support. A goal of the program is to help associations be strong and successful.

- ***Letter of Non-Compliance.***

If an Association Update Form is not returned within 30 calendar days, and/or the Neighborhood Services Coordinator is unable to reach a designated contact for the association to discuss training needs, a Letter of Non-Compliance will be sent to the last known contacts for the association.

- ***Compliance Time Limit.***

An association receiving a Letter of Non-Compliance will be given 30 calendar days from postmark to provide the required information to Neighborhood Services to maintain its active status in the Neighborhood Partnership Program. The Neighborhood Services Coordinator shall receive this information by email, fax, mail, or hand delivery.

- ***Letter of Removal from Active Status.***

If an association has not responded to the Letter of Non-Compliance within the defined timeframe, a Letter of Removal to designate the association as "Inactive" will be sent to the last known contacts for the association. This inactive status will be reflected in the Neighborhood/HOA Association listing and database, and likewise will be removed from the official map showing neighborhoods that are a part of the Neighborhood Partnership Program. Associations designated "Inactive" will not be eligible for the benefits provided through the Neighborhood Partnership Program and will lose their tenure with the program.

- ***Reinstatement to Active Status.***

The City values the relationship with and the efforts and accomplishments of neighborhood organizations, and would be disappointed to see any of them struggle to strengthen the integrity of their neighborhood. If assistance from Neighborhood Services is needed to re-establish the organization, the City will provide the start-up support requested. An association that is designated "inactive" may be immediately reinstated into the Neighborhood Partnership Program once updated information is submitted to Neighborhood Services.

For more information on the Neighborhood Partnership Program, please contact the Neighborhood Services Coordinator at 979.764.3570 or at NeighborhoodServices@cstx.gov. To apply for the program, please complete the attached Neighborhood Partnership Program Application and submit to the Neighborhood Services office.



NEIGHBORHOOD PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM APPLICATION

Neighborhood Services, 1207 Texas Ave., P.O. Box 9960, College Station, TX 77842
Phone: 979-764-6262 Fax: 979-764-3496 E-mail: NeighborhoodServices@cstx.gov

Minimum Submittal Requirements

- Completed Neighborhood Partnership Program Application.
- Declaration of Participation
- List of association board members and their contact information (phone number, email address, mailing address). Please note that all of this information will be subject to Open Records Requests unless contact information is specifically requested by the individual to be withheld. Listing of committee chairs is appreciated, but optional.
- Copy of current association bylaws, including any recent amendments.
- Map of neighborhood showing association boundaries.

DATE: _____ ASSOCIATION NAME: _____

- Neighborhood Association – A voluntary organization of residents.
- Home Owners' Association – Legal entity operating under State regulation.

Describe the geographic boundaries of your association (north, south, east, west):

How many households are in this association? _____

In what month are new officers elected? _____

When and how often will neighborhood meetings be held? _____

Association's website (if applicable): _____

CONTACT INFORMATION

The Neighborhood Services Office requires each association to identify a primary contact who will serve as City staff's first point of contact concerning neighborhood issues. This contact may be changed by the association at any time. Establishing a first point of contact is strictly for efficiency in disseminating information. Neighborhood Services welcomes any association member or College Station resident to contact our staff at any time.

Primary Contact (whose contact information for first point of contact):

Name: _____ **Title:** _____

Address: _____ **Zip:** _____

Email: _____

Phone number where this person may be reached *during* business hours: _____

Phone number where this person may be reached *after* business hours: _____

Person in charge of the association's newsletter and/or website (if applicable):

Name: _____ **Title:** _____

Address: _____ **Zip:** _____

Email: _____

Phone number where this person may be reached during business hours: _____

Neighborhood Partnership Program Declaration of Participation

The

Name of Association

- Homeowners' Association
 Neighborhood Association

declares on this date

_____, _____, _____
Month Day Year

our desire to participate in the City of College Station
Neighborhood Partnership Program.

We understand the expectations of the association and the City
of College Station and look forward to a mutually beneficial
relationship.

Signed by:

Association Officer

Date