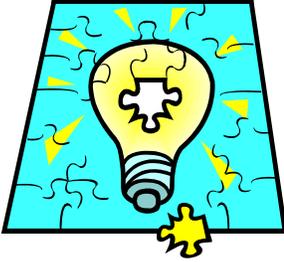

Eight Steps to Starting a Neighborhood Organization



Although it would be nice if people formed groups just on the basis of wanting to better their neighborhood, it usually doesn't work that way. Most of us respond to issues; and it is pretty hard to attract anyone to a meeting if there is no issue or major concern.

Once you have an issue that people can rally around, it is time to start talking about it. Getting started is probably the hardest part of neighborhood organizing. Here are some ideas to help you start an organization that has the potential to involve and invigorate your whole neighborhood.

- 1) Check with the Fargo Planning Department staff (241-1474) to see if there are any registered neighborhood organizations in your area. If there are, we can put you in contact with them. If not, continue with step 2.
- 2) Get a few interested neighbors together to serve as an "organizing" committee, to help get the organization started. If you need help recruiting people for this organizing committee, you can go door-to-door, send fliers or hold a block party. Once you've found a small group, get together for a meeting in someone's home. Discuss each person's idea of the issues facing the neighborhood. Also talk about the items in steps 3, 4, and 5.
- 3) Determine the boundaries of your neighborhood. Boundaries can be based on geographic features, transportation routes, residents' perceptions, or other factors. At this point, boundaries can be tentative. If boundaries include all or part of another neighborhood organization, this organization should be notified about your group's intentions.
- 4) Begin to define an initial mission, or purpose, for your organization.
- 5) Find a location and set a date for your first "official" neighborhood meeting. (Refer to "Tips for Planning a Meeting" for more information)
- 6) Conduct publicity to inform all residents within the boundaries that a group is forming and that a neighborhood meeting will be held. Invitations to the meeting should be extended to all property owners and residents within the identified boundaries. Fargo Planning staff can help you with mailing lists and invitations.
- 7) Hold at least one neighborhood meeting. Design the first meeting as an introductory session and get to know your neighbors. Designate a main contact who will serve as a liaison between the City and the neighborhood organization and a referral contact who will serve as a liaison between the neighborhood organization and all the residents within the boundaries.
- 8) Contact the Fargo Planning Dept to register your organization.

Remember that forming an organization does not happen overnight. A lot of work and patience will be required to develop a strong organizational foundation...but it will be well worth the effort!

