

# ORANGE COUNTY NEIGHBORHOOD RESOURCE GUIDE

**2023 Edition**



Orange County Government  
**Neighborhood  
Services  
Division**

*"Engaging and Strengthening Neighborhoods"*



# PURPOSE

The Orange County Neighborhood Resource Guide is a tool for neighborhood groups wishing to organize for the first time, reactivate an existing neighborhood organization, or revitalize an HOA or Condo Association. This guide is a compilation of information derived from various community organization sources and is a valuable tool for all types of community organizations. Many community organizations and neighborhoods throughout the United States follow similar organizational guidelines.

This Resource Guide offers suggestions for planning a first meeting, starting community projects and activities, keeping residents informed, working with local government, and much more. It also provides valuable resources, such as Orange County Government programs and services to assist residents' efforts to improve their neighborhood.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>PURPOSE</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>ORANGE COUNTY ELECTED OFFICIALS</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>ORANGE COUNTY ELECTED OFFICIALS</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Geographic Location.....	9
Orange County History .....	9
Orange County Charter.....	9
<b>ORANGE COUNTY FAST FACTS</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>GETTING STARTED</b> .....	<b>10</b>
Neighborhood Services Division.....	10
The Get Organized Program .....	10
Safe Neighborhoods Program.....	10
Neighborhood Beautification Grant .....	11
Orange County Community Conference.....	11
Citizen Planner Academy .....	11
Community Connection Workshops.....	11
What is a neighborhood organization? .....	11
Why is neighborhood organizing important? .....	11
What are the various types of neighborhood organizations? .....	12
Where can I obtain a list of mandatory homeowner’s associations?.....	12
Does Orange County regulate homeowners associations? .....	12
What is the Florida State Statutes, Chapter 720, Homeowner Association? .....	12
How to select the right property management company? .....	12
How is a voluntary neighborhood organization established?.....	13
Important Guidelines to keep in mind as you begin to organize:.....	13
How can an organization recruit new members?.....	13
What are some ideas for setting goals? .....	14
What are some advantages of goal setting?.....	14
What are organization bylaws? .....	14
What is the role of a neighborhood organization Executive Board? .....	15
What is the role of neighborhood organization committees?.....	15



What is the role of neighborhood organization committees? .....	15
What are some tips for maintaining active and productive committees? .....	16
How do we register our neighborhood organization or report a change? .....	16
<b>INCORPORATION AND TAX EXEMPT STATUS .....</b>	<b>16</b>
How do I incorporate my organization with non-profit status? .....	16
What will tax-exempt status do for my organization? .....	16
<b>WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF TAX-EXEMPT STATUS? .....</b>	<b>17</b>
How do I incorporate my organization with non-profit status? .....	17
What will tax-exempt status do for my organization? .....	17
<b>EFFECTIVE MEETINGS .....</b>	<b>18</b>
How do I plan for an effective meeting? .....	18
What are some tips to running an effective meeting? .....	19
How do I take effective meeting minutes? .....	20
Helpful tips for the Minutes taker.....	20
<b>NEIGHBORHOOD EVENTS AND VOLUNTEERS .....</b>	<b>20</b>
How do I organize a successful neighborhood event? .....	20
How do I plan a neighborhood block party? .....	21
What is the best way to work with volunteers? .....	21
How can I prevent volunteer burnout? .....	21
What are some innovative ways to reward volunteers? .....	22
<b>NEIGHBORLY COMMUNICATION .....</b>	<b>22</b>
Where can I obtain more information on volunteer participation? .....	22
Hands On Orlando (HOO) .....	22
What are some helpful hints for a Neighborhood Newsletter? .....	23
What is the ideal length for a Neighborhood Newsletter? .....	23
Cutting costs on Newsletter Production .....	24
Successful Newsletter Distribution .....	24
What are some tips for preparing Flyers, Posters and Meeting Notices? .....	24
Why survey your Neighborhood? .....	25
How many kinds of surveys are there? .....	25
<b>WORKING WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT .....</b>	<b>27</b>
How can our group work effectively with local government? .....	27
How can I present successfully to a government board? .....	28



**NEIGHBORHOOD BEAUTIFICATION ..... 29**

- What is Orange County C.A.N.? ..... 29
- Comptroller’s Office 407-836-5690 ..... 29
- Cooperative Extension 407-254-9200 ..... 29
- Environmental Protection Division 407-836-1400..... 29
- Housing and Community Development 407-836-5181 ..... 30
- Neighborhood Services Division 407-836-4200 ..... 30
- Roads and Drainage 407-836-7900 ..... 31
- Water Division Programs 407-254-9850..... 31

**NEIGHBORHOOD GRANTS & FUNDRAISING ..... 32**

- What are some tips for successful fundraising? ..... 32

**NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS ..... 33**

- Who do I call to replace a burned-out streetlight? ..... 33
- How do I request streetlights or additional streetlights for my neighborhood? ..... 33
- Who do I call to report a missing stop sign?..... 33
- Who do I call if my neighborhood needs a stop sign installed? ..... 33
- Who do I call to repair a pothole on my street?..... 33
- What can be done when plants or trees are hanging in the street? ..... 33
- Are there parking restrictions on residential streets? ..... 33
- What can I do about speeding on my neighborhood streets? ..... 33
- Who do I call to report flooding or drainage problems in my neighborhood?..... 34
- Who do I call to report an unsafe sidewalk? ..... 34
- What should I do if I see GANG activity? ..... 34
- Who do I call to report stray or troublesome animals?..... 34
- What is the Sheriff’s Office Children’s Safety Village? ..... 34
- What is the Sheriff’s Office Citizens On Patrol Program? ..... 34
- How can I participate in the Sheriff’s Office Civilian Police Academy Program? ..... 35
- What is the Sheriff’s Office Explorers Program?..... 35
- How can I get involved with the Sheriff’s Office Volunteer Task Force?..... 35
- How can I start a Neighborhood Watch group? ..... 35
- How can I dispose of Hazardous Household Waste from my home? ..... 35

**LAND USE ..... 36**

- What is Zoning?..... 36



What is Future Land Use?.....	36
What is a nonconforming use?.....	36
How can I find out what the Zoning and Future Land Use is on my property? .....	36
Where can I obtain the Orange County Code?.....	36
<b>OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION.....</b>	<b>37</b>
When do I need a building permit?.....	37
How can I get a Lynx bus stop moved or added to my neighborhood?.....	37
Where can citizens go to settle unresolved problems with neighbors? .....	37
Where do we go to find legal expertise related to Homeowners Associations? .....	37
Orange County Bar Association Attorney Referral Service .....	37
<b>ORANGE COUNTY SERVICES &amp; HELPFUL NUMBERS .....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>COMMUNITY RESOURCE ORGANIZATIONS .....</b>	<b>42</b>



# ORANGE COUNTY ELECTED OFFICIALS



**Orange County Mayor**  
**Jerry L. Demings**  
**Telephone:** 407-836-7370  
**Email:** [Mayor@ocfl.net](mailto:Mayor@ocfl.net)



**District 1 Commissioner**  
**Nicole Wilson**  
**Telephone:** 407-836-7350  
**Email:** [District1@ocfl.net](mailto:District1@ocfl.net)

**District One** celebrates both the rural tranquility of Orange County's small town past and the cutting-edge excitement of its future. The Cities of Winter Garden and Ocoee and the Town of Oakland lie at the northern boundary of this District and offer both the convenience of a country lifestyle and a wide range of urban amenities.



**District 2 Commissioner**  
**Christine Moore**  
**Telephone:** 407-836-7350  
**Email:** [District2@ocfl.net](mailto:District2@ocfl.net)

**District Two** located in northwest Orange County offers the choice of a rural or urban lifestyle. The quiet communities of Tangerine and Zellwood are located in the district's northwest section. Tangerine is located along U.S. Highway 441 near the Orange / Lake County line. Zellwood, home of the annual Zellwood Sweet Corn Festival, is south of Tangerine.



**District 3 Commissioner**  
**Mayra Uribe**  
**Telephone:** 407-836-7350  
**Email:** [District3@ocfl.net](mailto:District3@ocfl.net)

**District Three** comprising north central Orange County is the center of business for the County and Central Florida. Orlando's central business district is located within the District's northwest section.



**District 4 Commissioner**  
**Maribel Gomez Cordero**  
**Telephone:** 407-836-7350  
**Email:** [District4@ocfl.net](mailto:District4@ocfl.net)

**District Four** is Central Florida's gateway to the world. Quality and innovation are the hallmarks. In contrast to the fast pace set by the Orlando International Airport, there are ample areas in District Four to the south and east untouched by urban life. The Econlockhatchee and St. John's Rivers flow through the western area of District Four and wetland/conservation areas are scattered throughout this section.



**District 5 Commissioner**  
**Emily Bonilla**  
**Telephone:** [407-836-7350](tel:407-836-7350)  
**Email:** [District5@ocfl.net](mailto:District5@ocfl.net)

**District Five** has experienced rapid growth and a transition from a rural environment to urban development. The University of Central Florida plays a major role in stimulating economic and residential development in the district.



**District 6 Commissioner**  
**Michael "Mike" Scott**  
**Telephone:** [407-836-7350](tel:407-836-7350)  
**Email:** [District6@ocfl.net](mailto:District6@ocfl.net)

**District Six** is the leading tourist destination in the world. Many of our vacationing guests stay at the hotels and motels located on International Drive. In addition to lodging accommodations, visitors can walk or ride the I-ride bus system to a variety of exciting restaurants, entertainment, and shops along International Drive.



# ORANGE COUNTY ELECTED OFFICIALS

**Orange County  
Supervisor of Elections  
Bill Cowles**  
Telephone: 407-836-2070

**Orange County  
Property Appraiser  
Amy Mercado**  
Telephone: 407-836-5044

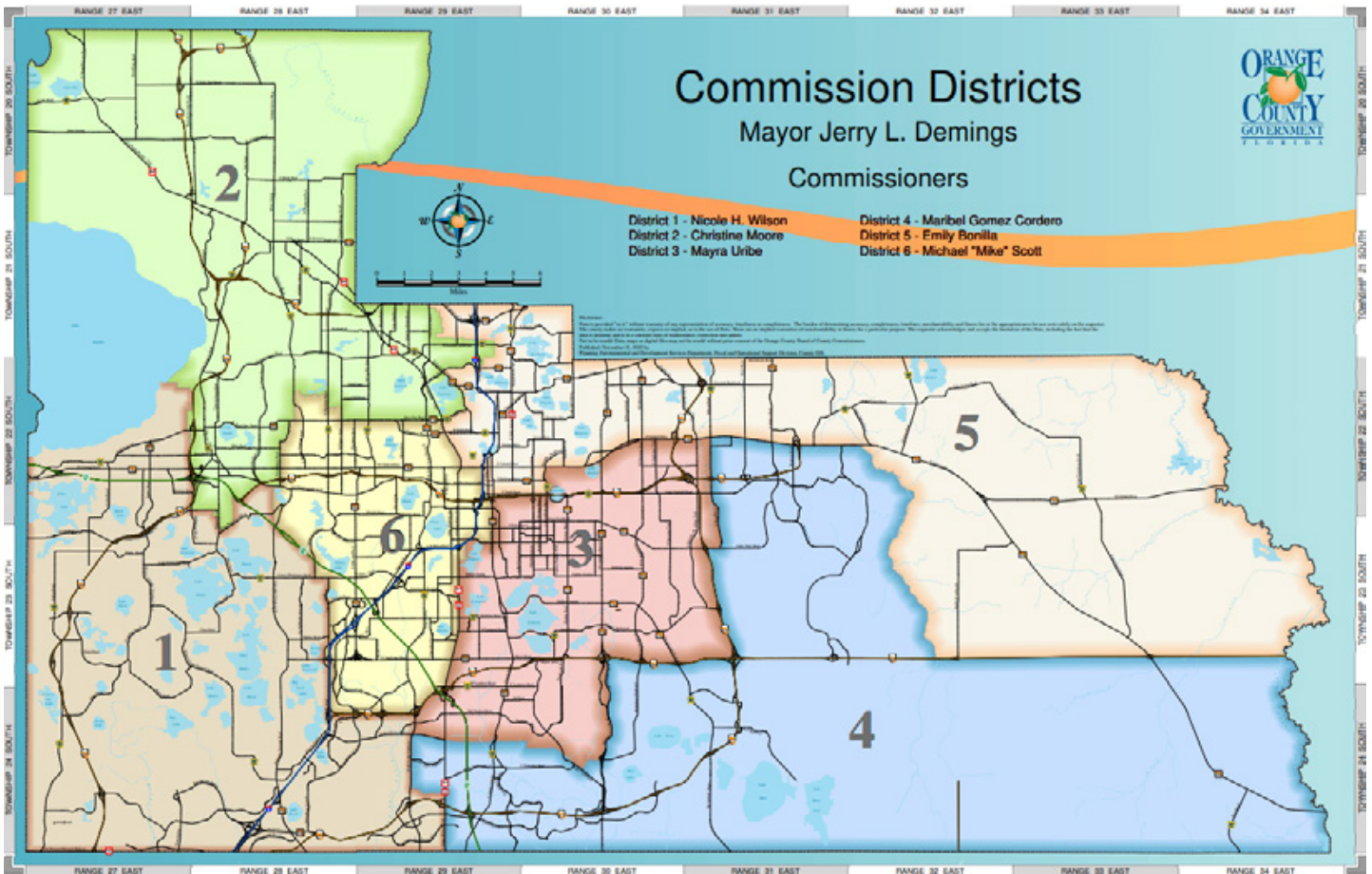
**Orange County Sheriff  
John Mina**  
Telephone: 407-254-7000

**Orange County Comptroller  
Phil Diamond**  
Telephone: 407-836-5690

**State Attorney,  
9th Judicial Circuit  
Monique H. Worrell**  
Telephone: 407-836-2400

**Orange County Tax Collector  
Scott Randolph**  
Telephone: 407-434-0312

**Orange County Clerk of Courts  
Tiffany Moore Russell**  
Telephone: 407-836-2000





# ORANGE COUNTY FAST FACTS

**Location:** 28.5139 N Latitude & 81.3221 W Longitude, in East Central Florida, USA

**Area:** Total area - 1,003 square miles • Land area – 902.2 square miles

**Established:** Dec. 29, 1824 • **Renamed:** 1845 • **County Seat:** Orlando

## GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

Orange County is situated in the approximate center of the state of Florida, midway between Jacksonville and Miami. The St. Petersburg-Tampa area on the Gulf of Mexico and Daytona Beach on the Atlantic Coast are easy drives for beach-goers.

Two of the state's major highways, Interstate 4 (east-west travel) and the Florida Turnpike (north-south travel), intersect just outside Orlando.

## ORANGE COUNTY HISTORY

Immediately after the secession of Florida by Spain in 1821, the territory was divided into two counties: Escambia (which included the northern portion) and St. Johns (which included all the territory lying to the south and east of the Suwannee River). Three years later, the Legislative Council separated the central portion of Florida to form Mosquito County. This vast region contained 466 residents according to the 1850 census.

After Florida became a state in 1845, the County was renamed Orange County. Its territorial limits as they exist today were defined in 1913 and encompass an area of approximately 1,000 square miles. There are 13 municipalities within Orange County; Orlando is the county seat.

## ORANGE COUNTY CHARTER

Orange County is a Charter County, meaning it has its own constitution and is self-governing. Having a Charter gives the County the ability to respond to a changing environment and meet local needs. The first Charter was adopted in November 1986 and went into effect on January 6, 1987. In November 1988, voters approved the creation of a new form of government for Orange County: a chairman elected by the community at large and the creation of six single-member districts.



# ORANGE COUNTY FAST FACTS

## GENERAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Orange County*	2010	2020
Total Population	1,145,956	1,429,908
Residents/Square Mile (density)	1,268	1,585

## ORANGE COUNTY MUNICIPALITIES

Incorporated Municipalities*	2010	2020
Apopka	41,542	54,873
Bay Lake	47	29
Belle Isle	5,988	7,032
Eatonville	2,159	2,349
Edgewood	2,503	2,685
Lake Buena Vista	10	24
Maitland	15,751	19,543
Oakland	2,538	3,516
Ocoee	35,579	47,295
Orlando	238,300	307,573
Windermere	2,462	3,030
Winter Garden	34,568	46,964
Winter Park	27,852	29,795

## OTHER CENTRAL FLORIDA COUNTIES

Population*	2010	2020
Brevard County	543,376	606,612
Lake County	297,052	383,956
Seminole County	422,718	470,856
Osceola County	268,685	388,656
Polk County	602,095	725,046
Volusia County	494,593	553,543

## ORANGE COUNTY POPULATION

Population By Race (2020)	Number	% Population
Total Population	1,429,908	100
White, Not Hispanic	531,362	37.1
White	629,789	44.0
Black or African American	277,027	19.3
American Indian & Alaska Native	6,328	0.44
Asian	78,348	5.4
Hawaiian & Pacific Islander	1,417	0.09
Two or more races	265,095	18.5

## ORANGE COUNTY HISPANIC POPULATION

Hispanic or Latino (2020)	Number	% Population
Total Population	1,429,908	100
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	473,025	33.0
Non-Hispanic or Latino	956,883	66.9

## ORANGE COUNTY POPULATION BY AGE

Population By Age (2020)	Number	% Population
Total Population	1,429,908	100
Population under 18 years	307,341	21.4
Population 18 years and over	1,115,405	78.0
Population 65 years and over	182,124	12.7

Sources: \*Florida Quick Facts and American Fact Finder from the U.S. Census Bureau, Census.gov.

## GETTING STARTED

### NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES DIVISION

The Neighborhood Services Division is here to engage and strengthen neighborhoods through encouraging compliance with the relevant codes, community development, outreach, and planning.

### THE GET ORGANIZED PROGRAM

The Get Organized Program provides the necessary resources to create and maintain a self-sufficient voluntary neighborhood organization, with the goal of addressing the challenges confronting neighborhoods. Participants are guided through the process of developing organizational bylaws, electing leaders, running meetings, identifying resources, and establishing direct lines of communication with various Orange County divisions affecting the quality of life in their neighborhood.

### SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS PROGRAM

The Safe Neighborhood Program works with a group of volunteer residents and stakeholders to help designated neighborhoods address issues that are causing the neighborhood to decline in quality and livability. Groups quarterly.



## **NEIGHBORHOOD BEAUTIFICATION GRANT**

The Neighborhood Beautification Grant Program provides direct funding to support and assist citizens and organizations in improving the physical and social quality of neighborhoods. Funding is available in the form of grants to help both mandatory and voluntary neighborhood communities revitalize and preserve their neighborhoods. Grant awards are available countywide from October to April of each year in amounts between \$0 up to \$15,000. Each grant has specific guidelines and requirements that must be followed. Neighborhoods that demonstrate a need will receive greater consideration. For more information, please reach out to [neighborhoodgrants@ocfl.net](mailto:neighborhoodgrants@ocfl.net)

## **ORANGE COUNTY COMMUNITY CONFERENCE**

The annual Community Conference is an action-packed day filled with opportunities for residents to learn more about Orange County services, attend workshops about how to strengthen their neighborhoods, and share new ideas for preserving and enhancing their communities. The workshops and resources offer a well-rounded blend of topics for individual citizens, voluntary neighborhood organizations, homeowners associations, non-profit organizations, and other community groups.

[www.ocfl.net/CommunityConference](http://www.ocfl.net/CommunityConference)

## **CITIZEN PLANNER ACADEMY**

The Citizen Planner Academy is designed to educate the public about planning for a sustainable community, the land development process, and special topics within the planning field. The goal of the academy is to empower citizens with the tools and knowledge to become active decision makers within their community. Attendees that complete core classes and three special topic classes are recognized as graduates of the Citizen Planner Academy.

[www.ocfl.net/CitizenPlannerAcademy](http://www.ocfl.net/CitizenPlannerAcademy)

## **COMMUNITY CONNECTION WORKSHOPS**

These free workshops are designed to educate residents about a variety of topics to help make them more effective neighborhood leaders. Additionally, the workshops provide a great opportunity for neighborhood leaders to interact and learn from one another.

## **WHAT IS A NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION?**

A neighborhood organization is a group of neighbors working together for the good of all, with a common vision, goals and objectives. A neighborhood organization makes decisions on common problems within a community by sharing ideas and solutions. Neighborhood organizations are the vehicles for communities to revitalize and preserve neighborhoods and enhance property values.

## **WHY IS NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZING IMPORTANT?**

We all live in a community; as such we share a unique collection of problems and prospects in common with our neighbors. Participation in neighborhood affairs builds on the recognition of here-we-are-together, and a desire to recapture something of the tight-knit communities of the past. Neighborhood groups can act as vehicles for making connections between people, forums for resolving local differences, and a means of looking after one another. Most importantly, neighborhood organizations create a positive social environment that can become a community's best feature.



## **WHAT ARE THE VARIOUS TYPES OF NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS?**

A *Voluntary Neighborhood Organization* is a voluntary association of homeowners, renters, and sometimes businesses formed within a specific geographic area. The issues of a voluntary organization are broad based, and address residential and business concerns which impact the community's quality of life. A voluntary organization **does not** enforce architectural controls, maintain deed restrictions or charge mandatory dues.

A *Mandatory Homeowners Association* is a corporation of homeowners responsible for the operation of a community in which the membership is mandatory. This type of association has the power to impose assessments or dues, which if unpaid, may become alien on the property. This association has the authority to enforce covenants through civil action. In Florida, subdivisions built after 1987 have mandatory homeowners associations. The governing authority of such organizations can be found in the Florida State Statutes, Chapter 720.

## **WHERE CAN I OBTAIN A LIST OF MANDATORY HOMEOWNER'S ASSOCIATIONS?**

Every mandatory homeowners association within the State of Florida must register with the State Department Division of Corporations. The Division of Corporations has a comprehensive website where you can obtain copies of annual reports for every corporation in Florida. You can search by the name of the homeowners association and obtain the names of Board members. Search the Division's website at [www.sunbiz.org](http://www.sunbiz.org).

## **DOES ORANGE COUNTY REGULATE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATIONS?**

Orange County, as with almost all other local governments, has no power to enforce or regulate the restrictive covenants or proceedings of mandatory homeowners associations. Restrictive covenants, also known as homeowner's covenants, or deed restrictions are private land use controls included as part of the property title when a home is purchased. A covenant restricts the use of the property and is enforceable usually by other property owners in the same subdivision who are part of the homeowners association Board of Directors. In some instances, a management company may run a homeowners association. Orange County Government has no jurisdiction to intercede in the affairs of these private non-profit corporations.

If you have questions or concerns regarding your homeowners association, you should first familiarize yourself with your association documents, including: Bylaws; Articles of Incorporation; and Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions (CC & R's). To obtain a copy of these documents, first contact your HOA Board. A copy of these documents *may* be available from the Orange County Official Records Department at (407) 836-5115. If the associations' articles of incorporation or bylaws have not been recorded in the public records, a copy of the articles of incorporation can be obtained from the Florida Department of State Division of Corporations, Corporate Filings, PO Box 6327, Tallahassee, FL 32314.

## **WHAT IS THE FLORIDA STATE STATUTES, CHAPTER 720, HOMEOWNER ASSOCIATION?**

Florida State Statutes, Title XL, Real & Personal Property, Chapter 720, Homeowners' Associations, provides for reasonable rules governing homeowners associations. The purpose of state statutes 720.301-720.312 are to give statutory recognition to corporations that operate residential communities in this state, to provide procedures for operating homeowners association, and to protect the rights of the association members without duly impairing the ability of such associations to perform their functions. For more information the website address is [www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes](http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes).

## **HOW TO SELECT THE RIGHT PROPERTY MANAGEMENT COMPANY?**

There are two different types of property management companies. If you decide to hire one, you will want one that specializes in HOA's. You may want to contact other HOA Board Members to get a recommendation for a management company or you can get a listing from the Community Association Institute (CAI) at <https://www.caionline.org/pages/default.aspx>



## **HOW IS A VOLUNTARY NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION ESTABLISHED?**

To start a voluntary neighborhood organization, first talk with other neighbors to see if they are interested. Once you have a group of four or five interested residents contact Orange County Neighborhood Services Division to express interest in participating in the G.O. Neighborhoods program. G.O. Neighborhoods is designed to assist neighborhoods and communities in unincorporated Orange County in organizing effective associations. The Neighborhood Services Division will provide residents with the information needed to create and maintain a self-sufficient, active neighborhood organization.

## **IMPORTANT GUIDELINES TO KEEP IN MIND AS YOU BEGIN TO ORGANIZE:**

- Building an organization is a process. It cannot be done overnight; be patient. Identify neighborhood priorities and build on them step-by-step.
- Set realistic goals. Start small and build upward. As your organizational structure grows, start setting your goals higher.

## **HOW CAN AN ORGANIZATION RECRUIT NEW MEMBERS?**

Getting new people involved in an organization is exciting. New people have enthusiasm and energy, which can be infectious, serving to motivate others in the group. The following are some volunteer recruitment strategies to bring life into your organization:

- Door to door personal contacts such as surveys and interviews.
- Place recruitment ads in newsletters from other groups, community newspapers, etc.
- Adopt-a-Neighbor (each member brings a neighbor to the meeting).
- Contact local volunteer resource agencies for referrals.
- Media involvement to promote a special meeting or event.
- Place exhibits in stores, malls, volunteer fairs, etc.
- Post fliers announcing your meeting at neighborhood markets, laundromats, businesses, schools, etc.
- Work with Neighborhood Watch block coordinators to identify people who care about the neighborhood.
- Keep your group diversified. Healthy groups have a mix of age, gender, ethnic background, businesses, schools, etc.
- Use your newsletter to promote and recruit. Instead of reporting on an issue, showcase how your group has made a difference.
- Develop a recruitment brochure explaining your neighborhood organization.
- Be honest about time demands. Be specific about the job and how the person could help.
- Involve other groups in the community with goals or activities similar to your groups.
- Assure new volunteers that they do not have to be experts; training and support will be provided.
- Never recruit for specific jobs until you know how you will use each volunteer.
- Personal invitations.
- Do not be afraid to try different approaches to advertising, such as T-shirts, bumper stickers, buttons, calendars, open houses, neighborhood tours, etc.



## WHAT ARE SOME IDEAS FOR SETTING GOALS?

Your neighborhood organization needs clear direction. In order to chart that direction, it is important to determine the social and physical needs of your neighborhood and identify goals accordingly. A **Goal** is simply a statement of what your organization wants to accomplish over a specified period of time. For example, “To physically improve the neighborhood by implementing a beautification project to enhance the common areas, the main entrance and medians throughout the neighborhood”. An **Objective** is a statement that explains how your organization will reach its goal. Your objectives need to be specific, measurable, clear and concise, realistic and achievable within a certain timeframe. For example, “Create a site plan by September 1st identifying all the common areas and medians requiring landscaping.”

## WHAT ARE SOME ADVANTAGES OF GOAL SETTING?

Goal setting allows a neighborhood organization to:

- **Become aware of neighborhood needs.** By setting goals for your organization, the needs of your neighborhood will come into focus. These needs give your organization a purpose and meaning.
- **Strive towards a mark.** Goal setting keeps your members involved and motivated. If your organization has set a target date to complete a project, then the energy level of members will increase as the target dates draw near.
- **Accomplish projects.** By setting time limits for project completion, your organization can anticipate how much work is ahead and schedule it accordingly.
- **Keep members active.** If your neighborhood organization has set goals, there will be plenty of projects to work on. If members are not busy, then it is time to get them working to accomplish existing goals.

## WHAT ARE ORGANIZATION BYLAWS?

Bylaws are the governing documents of any neighborhood organization and are central to establishing a successful organization. Bylaws specify how an organization operates. It is not necessary for bylaws to detail every aspect of the organization. However, bylaws must provide enough guidance for officers and members to perform necessary tasks. When bylaws are too vague, the organization will not have adequate structure. Also, frequent amendments often cause the organization to stray too far from its original purpose. Much literature, including *Roberts Rules of Order*, has been written for the purpose of assisting residents in writing bylaws. These books are available at your local library. Or, contact the Orange County Neighborhood Services Division to request a sample set of bylaws for a voluntary neighborhood organization (407-836-5606).



## **WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION EXECUTIVE BOARD?**

The officers of the neighborhood organization make up what is often called the Executive Board. The organization's bylaws outline the duties of the officers. Sometimes, the Executive Board also includes Committee Chairs. General duties are listed below:

### **President**

- Chief executive officer of the organization.
- Presides over all meetings.
- Prepares meeting agendas with the Secretary.
- Delegates responsibilities fairly.
- Ensures effective and productive meetings.
- An impartial and fair bystander.
- Promotes and interprets the Organization's goals.

### **Vice President**

- Performs duties of the President in his or her absence.
- Supports the President as requested.
- Acts as an ex-officio member of all standing committees.
- Organizes special committees and projects as needed.

### **Secretary**

- Maintains Organization's records.
- Prepares meeting notices.
- Takes and prepares all meeting minutes.
- Maintains membership list.

## **WHAT IS THE ROLE OF NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION COMMITTEES?**

Most neighborhood organizations organize their work and accomplish their objectives through the dedicated work of committees. These committees are established for the purpose of accomplishing the organization's goal. For example, if an organization's goal is "Neighborhood Beautification", the Executive Board will establish a "Beautification Committee" to ensure the objectives of that goal is realized. Following are various types of neighborhood organization committees:

- Neighborhood Beautification Committee
- Code Enforcement Committee
- Crime Prevention & Safety Committee
- Traffic Committee
- Social Activities Committee
- Social Concerns Committee
- Fundraising/Finance Committee
- Neighborhood Communication Committee



## **WHAT ARE SOME TIPS FOR MAINTAINING ACTIVE AND PRODUCTIVE COMMITTEES?**

As with any situation involving volunteers, neighborhood organization committees need specific direction and clear objectives to accomplish their tasks effectively and efficiently. Following are some general tips to ensure committee productivity:

- Clearly define and discuss the goals and objectives of the committee.
- Publicly recognize members and committees who have contributed to the advancement of the neighborhood organization.
- Ensure meeting time and committee work is as productive as possible. No one wants to feel they are wasting time.
- Ensure the work of the committee is accepted and makes a valuable contribution to the organization.
- Consider using subcommittees to increase individual responsibilities and focus on goals.
- Conduct yearly committee evaluations where committee members evaluate each other.

## **HOW DO WE REGISTER OUR NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION OR REPORT A CHANGE?**

To register your Orange County neighborhood organization or to report a change in your organization's contact information, simply complete the registration form at <https://www.ocfl.net/NeighborsHousing/DirectaryRegistrationForm.aspx>. Registering for the NOD is voluntary. Orange County does not endorse or legitimize any organization registered with our office. Orange County reserves the right to deny the registration and/or publication of any organization that does not meet the organizational criteria to be listed in the NOD.

## **INCORPORATION AND TAX EXEMPT STATUS**

### **HOW DO I INCORPORATE MY ORGANIZATION WITH NON-PROFIT STATUS?**

Incorporating as a non-profit organization can help define a group and contribute to its credibility as a viable, working body of interested citizens. Incorporation also protects the liability of group members. Within the State of Florida, the cost for filing a nonprofit incorporation is **under \$100.00**, but then there are annual fees that are less than the original filing fee. For incorporation papers contact the Florida Department of State, Division of Corporations, Post Office Box 6327, Tallahassee, FL 32314, (850) 245-6000 or visit their website at <https://dos.myflorida.com/sunbiz/start-business/efile/fl-nonprofit-corporation/>

### **WHAT WILL TAX-EXEMPT STATUS DO FOR MY ORGANIZATION?**

Tax-exempt status is often confused with incorporation. A group must usually be incorporated at the state level before it can apply for tax exemption from the federal government, Internal Revenue Service (IRS) [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov). When organizing your association you may want to consider filing for tax-exempt status. This status allows contributors to deduct from their income taxes any financial contributions donated to your organization. Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 exempts a non-profit organization from paying federal, state, and local taxes if the activities of the organization are carried out for "charitable purposes." The IRS defines charitable purposes as:

- Relieving poverty.
- Advancing religion, education or science.
- Lessening the burdens of government.
- Reducing neighborhood tensions.
- Eliminating prejudice and discrimination.
- Defending human and civil rights.
- Combating community deterioration and juvenile delinquency.





# WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF TAX-EXEMPT STATUS?

## HOW DO I INCORPORATE MY ORGANIZATION WITH NON-PROFIT STATUS?

Incorporating as a non-profit organization can help define a group and contribute to its credibility as a viable, working body of interested citizens. Incorporation also protects the liability of group members. Within the State of Florida, the cost for filing a nonprofit incorporation is **under \$100.00**, but then there are annual fees that are less than the original filing fee. For incorporation papers contact the Florida Department of State, Division of Corporations, Post Office Box 6327, Tallahassee, FL 32314, (850) 245-6000 or visit their website at <https://dos.myflorida.com/sunbiz/start-business/efile/fl-nonprofit-corporation/>

## WHAT WILL TAX-EXEMPT STATUS DO FOR MY ORGANIZATION?

Tax-exempt status is often confused with incorporation. A group must usually be incorporated at the state level before it can apply for tax exemption from the federal government, Internal Revenue Service (IRS) [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov). When organizing your association you may want to consider filing for tax-exempt status. This status allows contributors to deduct from their income taxes any financial contributions donated to your organization. Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 exempts a non-profit organization from paying federal, state, and local taxes if the activities of the organization are carried out for “charitable purposes.” The IRS defines charitable purposes as:

### Advantages of Tax-Exempt Status

- Exemption from federal, state, and local corporate income taxes, federal excise and employment taxes, and state and local usage, property and other taxes.
- Ability to accept tax-deductible charitable contributions from individuals, corporate donors, private foundations and governmental agencies.
- Lower bulk mail postage rates for second and third class mailings.
- Exemption from the Organized Crime Control Act, which prohibits illegal gambling; i.e., bingo, lotteries, raffles, or other games of chance.
- Exemption from taxation under the Federal Insurance Contribution Act (Social Security) and Federal Unemployment Tax Act, when professionals, such as attorneys or accountants, perform services for the organization.

### Disadvantages of Tax-Exempt Status

- Application is time consuming and complicated.
- Extensive annual reporting requirements.
- Observance of numerous limitations to maintain the taxexempt status.
- Close scrutiny by the IRS and the general public.



# EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

## HOW DO I PLAN FOR AN EFFECTIVE MEETING?

The success of any event is directly related to the planning and detail that was involved. As such, planning for your neighborhood organization's meeting is just as important as hosting them. Here are some meetings planning tips to keep in mind:

- **Meeting Location** – Find a meeting place that can accommodate the meeting. If you are expecting a small group, you may want to have your first meeting in someone's home. For a group of larger than ten people, check the availability of your local community center, church or school. Schools and some County owned community centers might waive fees for neighborhood organization meetings.
- **Speakers'** – You may want to invite someone to speak to issues, concerns, and interests expressed by your neighbors. You may invite speakers from various County Divisions such as Planning, Roads and Drainage, Traffic Engineering, Code Enforcement or the Sheriff's Office. If you have a concern that you want addressed, call the Neighborhood Services Division at 407-836-5606 for potential speaker ideas.
- **Meeting Announcement** - Good promotion and advance notification of the meeting are important. Give neighbors at least two weeks notice of the dates and times of meetings.
- **Sign-in** – Provide a sign-in sheet for neighbors and guests. This allows you to keep track of attendance and to develop a mailing list for future notifications.
- **Name Tags** – Provide name tags to identify the officers/directors and neighbors. Often neighbors may recognize faces, but may not know names. The nametags help to promote friendliness.
- **Agenda** – Provide an agenda to keep the meeting flowing and in order. Keep it simple and follow the agenda at all times.



## **WHAT ARE SOME TIPS TO RUNNING AN EFFECTIVE MEETING?**

The ability to host effective meetings can often be the pass-fail mark for neighborhood organizations. The success of your organization is a result of the energy, productivity and efficiency of your monthly membership meetings, executive board meetings and even annual election meetings. Following are some tried and true tips for hosting an effective meeting:

- Always start meetings on time.
- Open the meeting location at least 15 minutes early for residents to arrive, socialize, and prepare.
- Begin meetings with an icebreaker to lighten the mood.
- Prepare any needed research ahead of time.
- Make frequent summaries during the discussion so that everyone clearly understands what is being stated.
- Introduce public officials at the beginning of each meeting.
- Recognize newcomers and ask them to state what street they live on.
- State the purpose of the meeting and proposed discussion items.
- Be brief and keep comments relevant to each discussion. Monitor the pacing so the meeting is not too long (consider using Roberts Rules of Order).
- Use visual aids. Residents will relate to something they can see.
- Allow everyone to contribute. After a concern or project is presented, open the discussion. However, set a time limit.
- Promote cooperation not conflict. If conflict occurs, appoint a committee to research the concern and report findings at next meeting. Encourage those individuals who are voicing their concerns to be on the committee.
- Assign tasks and delegate responsibility as the meeting proceeds. This gives neighbors a feeling of belonging instead of just listening.
- Guide the meeting from concerns to solutions. Always ask your neighbors how they would solve or approach a concern. Keep in mind that some solutions may take time.
- Towards the end of the meeting, go over the agenda, giving an overview of each concern discussed or raised.
- Before adjourning, state the next meeting date, time and place, and thank everyone for attending.



## **HOW DO I TAKE EFFECTIVE MEETING MINUTES?**

**What are minutes?** - Effective meeting minutes provide a history of the organization's progress as well as informing absent members of meeting discussions and outcomes.

### **Why keep minutes?**

- To record decisions.
- To document who participated in decisions.
- To know how many people agreed and disagreed.
- To understand some of the reasons leading to the decisions.
- To register minority opinions.
- To document citizen participation in government.

## **HELPFUL TIPS FOR THE MINUTES TAKER.**

- Obtain previous meeting agendas, minutes and discussion items.
- Focus on recording actions taken by the group.
- Maintain a consistent format with all minutes.
- Types of motions and resolutions and names of people who made them.

### **What should minutes contain?**

- Organization's name and type of meeting.
- Date, time, and location of meeting.
- Name of members present.
- Name of presiding Officer and Secretary.
- Quorum details.
- Approval of previous minutes.
- Officer and Committee reports. Attach if written, briefly describe if verbal.
- Business of the meeting in order of agenda.
- Brief description of matter and outcome.

- Record of motion and resolution outcomes.
- Record of vote process and outcome.
- Adjournment time.
- Secretary's signature.

## **NEIGHBORHOOD EVENTS AND VOLUNTEERS**

### **HOW DO I ORGANIZE A SUCCESSFUL NEIGHBORHOOD EVENT?**

Whether you are holding a summer block party, a holiday social or any other community event, it is crucial the event is well organized. Here are some steps for organizing a successful event:

- Explore the possibilities. What will work in your neighborhood?
- What kinds of activities will your neighbors support?
- Select the appropriate event for your neighborhood.
- Appoint an event Chairperson.
- Set up an event Committee.
- Define the Committee's tasks and event budget.
- Get the word out via word of mouth, media, flyers, signs, or mailings.
- Develop an event timetable.
- Recruit as many event volunteers as possible. Find out people's interests and match tasks.
- Conduct a pre-event inspection to ensure everything is as planned.
- Observe the event and troubleshoot as needed along the way.
- Clean up and give thanks to all participants.
- Evaluate the event to note successes and improvements and learn from the experience.



## **HOW DO I PLAN A NEIGHBORHOOD BLOCK PARTY?**

There is no better way of getting together and meeting your neighbors than having a block party. Neighborhoods are better and safer places to live when there is a sense of caring and friendliness in the area. Block parties can vary from a simple gathering of a few folks in a front yard, to a highly organized event involving dozens of streets in the neighborhood. Start with a neighborhood block party Committee. Assign responsibilities for the party's components. Event planners should meet as often as needed before the party to assign responsibility for every event task and to continue to build volunteer support. Publicize, Publicize, and Publicize! If you are thinking of having a block party, contact the Orange County's Office of the Fire Marshall at (407) 836-0004 for the appropriate permit.

## **WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO WORK WITH VOLUNTEERS?**

Neighbors and volunteers remain active in their organization when they feel they are contributing positively to the community and when they are recognized for the effort they make within the organization. People join community groups to meet people, to have fun, to learn new skills, to pursue an interest, and to link their lives to some higher purpose. They leave if they don't find what they are looking for. Citizens groups need to ask themselves more often: What benefits do we provide? At what cost to members? How can we increase the benefits and decrease the costs? Here are some items to keep in mind when working with volunteers:

### **Most people volunteer if:**

- They have information about the organization and its purpose.
- They identify with the objectives of the organization.
- They know what is expected of them in time and effort.
- They know that their interests and abilities will be effectively utilized.

## **HOW CAN I PREVENT VOLUNTEER BURNOUT?**

Volunteer burnout can be devastating to the productivity of a neighborhood organization. In order to keep your volunteers energetic, creative and enthusiastic, keep the following volunteer burnout tips in mind:

- Develop coherent operating plans.
- Set realistic objectives.
- Prepare job descriptions or task outlines so people know what is expected of them.
- Recognize different abilities and tolerance levels in handing out work assignments. Do not let one person take on everything.
- Remind people that the quality of their work is important, not the quantity.
- Organize fun events. This will create a social network of friends and neighbors and give people an opportunity to have a good time.



## **WHAT ARE SOME INNOVATIVE WAYS TO REWARD VOLUNTEERS?**

Volunteer burnout can be devastating to the productivity of a neighborhood organization. In order to keep your volunteers energetic, creative and enthusiastic, keep the following volunteer burnout tips in mind:

- Certificates of appreciation.
- Informal celebrations or gift presentations at meetings.
- Thank-you notes. Send a copy to the individual's employer or family to let them know about that person's achievements.
- Take pictures of events/achievements. Framed copies of pictures make terrific awards.
- Recognize individual special needs. If someone in your group is ill, a get-well card affirms the volunteer is valuable and missed.
- Use media sources to announce achievements. Invite media photographers to recognition events.
- Consider gift certificates or a scholarship to a conference or workshop.
- Prepare personal profiles, articles for your neighborhood newsletter/webpage, or other media sources.
- Plan a formal recognition party for members and families to celebrate the group's success and acknowledge individual volunteers.
- Do not forget the value of very simple thank you gestures.

## **NEIGHBORLY COMMUNICATION**

### **WHERE CAN I OBTAIN MORE INFORMATION ON VOLUNTEER PARTICIPATION?**

The following organizations are valuable sources of information and experience for neighborhood organizations throughout Orange County to assist with and promote volunteerism in Central Florida:

#### **HANDS ON ORLANDO (HOO)**

Hands On Orlando (HOO) is a non-profit agency that promotes citizen engagement through volunteerism. They coordinate, plan, and manage meaningful, flexible, creative, and fun projects and work with individuals, groups, corporate teams, and convention visitors who want to take part in direct, hands-on service. Most projects last less than a day while others are ongoing. Contact Hands on Orlando at 1850 Lee Road, #220, Winter Park, FL 32789, [www.handsonorlando.com](http://www.handsonorlando.com).



## **WHAT ARE SOME HELPFUL HINTS FOR A NEIGHBORHOOD NEWSLETTER?**

Newsletters can be simple or complex. No matter what format you choose, newsletters help keep everyone informed of concerns, meetings, activities, and other important issues. Here are a few things to think through before you **PUBLISH**:

- Production cost can be a significant factor in what type of newsletter you produce. Check with a local print shop for ideas for less costly newsletters. You may want to contact local businesses to help sponsor the newsletter or charge a fee for advertising in the newsletter.
- Usually, a team effort works best when producing newsletters. However, someone should coordinate the efforts of the group and edit the newsletter. Your organization should appoint a committee and chairperson to be responsible for producing the newsletter.
- By enlisting the participation of as many members as possible, you can appoint members of different committees to write articles and assign reporters to collect information from authors or research topics for the different newsletter articles.
- Like many other community groups, neighborhood organizations find newsletters to be great tools to communicate with neighbors about current activities of the organization.
- Identify someone who has a personal computer. You may save money by producing the layout yourselves.
- Select committee members who are skilled in writing and editing.
- Have clear deadlines for submitting all articles, editing, printing, and distributing each issue of the newsletter.

## **WHAT IS THE IDEAL LENGTH FOR A NEIGHBORHOOD NEWSLETTER?**

The length of your neighborhood newsletter depends on both your budget and the topics your group considers important. A good newsletter can be as short as one page. After settling on a length, structure your newsletter by organizing it into regular features or columns. Some regular newsletter items may include:

- Committee Reports
- Job listings
- Holiday Activities
- Organization meeting places and times
- Upcoming events
- Neighborhood Watch Report
- Personal announcements
- Editorials
- Items or services needed to complete neighborhood improvement projects
- Letter from the President
- Children's Column
- Updates on local issues
- Neighborhood News
- Volunteer Acknowledgements



## CUTTING COSTS ON NEWSLETTER PRODUCTION

Explore having your newsletter printed free or at a reduced cost. Possible sources of free copying are churches, schools, community boards and workplaces of group members. A local printer might donate the job or offer a special rate in exchange for a credit line in the newsletter that urges members to use his or her company. Another possibility is the local merchants association; try offering free ad space. You may also want to sell ads in the newsletter itself to defray your costs. Here are some possible revenue sources:

- Talk to local merchants; they are often happy to reach out to members of the community through community newsletters.
- Stress the interdependence of commercial and residential areas in a neighborhood -- how the health of one depends on the health of the other.
- You may want to offer special rates for larger ads -- i.e., \$10.00 for a quarter-page ad, \$17.50 for half a page.
- Encourage readers to patronize your advertisers and to tell merchants they saw their ad in your newsletter.

## SUCCESSFUL NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION

Before you reproduce your newsletter, make a list of all the people who need to get it. This could include all members of your group, other members of the community, elected officials, local institutions (such as county/city agencies, schools, community board members, local development organizations), and local press. This will tell you how many copies to print. Once printed, newsletters can be distributed door-to-door or e-mailed. Here are some successful distribution tips:

- Be consistent. If your newsletter comes at the same time each month, people will begin to expect and anticipate it. Some groups issue newsletters quarterly.
- Call a meeting of building and/or block captains. Ask them to distribute the newsletters and to make sure everyone gets a copy.
- Rather than leave newsletters in lobbies of large apartment building, try to get residents to slip a copy under each door.
- Some community groups hire neighborhood youth or youth groups, like the boy scouts, to distribute the papers.
- Ask local merchants if you can leave newsletters on the counter for people to pick up. This is a good way of reaching out to potential new members.
- If you mail your newsletter, be sure to figure postage expenses into your budget.
- If your mailing list is large and speedy delivery is not a concern, you may want to save money by sorting your labels into strict zip code order and mailing bulk rate; call the Post Office for full details.

## WHAT ARE SOME TIPS FOR PREPARING FLYERS, POSTERS AND MEETING NOTICES?

Below are some guidelines to maximize your promotional and communication efforts via flyers, meeting notices, and correspondence for your neighborhood:

- When producing your printed information flyers and materials, be sure to answer the basics – **Who, What, When, and How** in all printed materials.
- Choose your words carefully – less is better when designing flyers and notices. Be sure your printed materials are easy to read and draw the reader's attention.
- Mandatory associations have a legal responsibility to keep residents informed and must produce notices in a timely fashion.
- Check your articles of incorporation and bylaws for more information.





## **WHY SURVEY YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD?**

There are infinite reasons to conduct survey research in your neighborhood. You may need to know what issues are impacting your neighbors the most. Is it traffic, noise, or lack of recreational facilities? Survey research is one method for documenting what the concerns and needs of the neighborhood are. It is also used as a method of public outreach and involvement. Survey research is a major part of neighborhood planning since it is a grassroots form of obtaining public participation and input.

## **HOW MANY KINDS OF SURVEYS ARE THERE?**

There are three different types of survey questionnaires:

- The mail survey also known as the self-administered questionnaire.
- The interview survey that requires face to face reading and recording of answers,
- The telephone survey that is administered via telephone.



## Ten Ways to Improve Your Neighborhood: (adapted from Kansas City)

1. Report crime promptly. Neighbors sometimes don't report criminal activity because they don't want to bother the police; they assume police are too short-staffed to respond, or they think there isn't much a policeman can (or will) do about a problem anyway. Whether the issue is petty vandalism, graffiti, or something more serious, police cannot act without first hearing about the problem from citizens.
2. Report nuisances and other noncriminal problems promptly.
3. Take away the opportunity for crime.
  - Lock your car, and never leave valuables, even for a few minutes, in the car where would-be thieves might see them.
  - Trim bushes or trees on your property that offers convenient hiding places.
  - Make your front porch visible and make sure your home looks like someone lives there.
4. Meet the young people who live on your block, and greet them by name. This ensures that each adult is better able to help in an emergency and is better prepared to discuss problems immediately as they arise.
5. Make a list of the names and phone numbers of every neighbor on your block unless you know your neighbors' names and numbers, you can't call them about a concern or let them know about a neighborhood problem.
6. Make a list of landlords in your area. As property owners in our community, landlords are responsible to the neighborhood, and most are rightly concerned about the health of the community in which they own property.
7. Turn your porch light on. Crime tends to decline in neighborhoods that are well lit. Turning on porch lights is a simple way to increase neighborhood security. Stay where you are. Stable neighborhoods are built on the commitment of long term residents who would rather live in a healthy community than move to a bigger house or to the suburbs.
8. Walk around the block, neighbors benefit over time when responsible citizens walk more at night (every night) around their block. Get involved with your neighborhood. If you don't have a neighborhood organization or crime watch, gather some neighbors together and start one. If there already is a group, get involved. You'll be kept better informed of the issues facing your neighborhood and how you can help; more importantly, you can shape, guide and participate in the future of your neighborhood and our city.
9. Drive slowly on neighborhood streets. You can take the lead in slowing down traffic in your neighborhood.
10. Pick up litter near your home, even if you didn't put it there. You can help stop the growth of trash in your neighborhood by taking away the existing litter that attracts still more litter. In addition, residents will be less inclined to litter when they see you set the opposite example.



# WORKING WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT

## HOW CAN OUR GROUP WORK EFFECTIVELY WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT?

A successful neighborhood organization is one, which understands the “ins and outs” of local government. Effective partnerships between neighborhood organizations and local government are essential both to the success of the organization and the responsiveness of local government to the needs of its communities. Following are some tips for working with local government:

- Set your goals. What is most important for your neighborhood organization to accomplish in order to maintain livability?
- Know your issues and do your homework. Find out who is affected and whom the appropriate people are that can help.
- Become familiar with the structure and purpose of your local government.
- Become acquainted with procedure. Attend meetings of your public officials; understand how they operate and the pressures they are under.
- Allow your officials to get to know you. The best form of contact is through meetings, phone calls, letters or emails.
- Keep your public officials informed and do not surprise them with unexpected actions. Give your officials written copies of your concerns and follow up with letters.
- Work on all levels. First, contact the person most directly responsible for your concern. Then work on all levels by going to your appointed and elected officials.
- Make it clear that you represent a group. Identify the name of your group and its purpose and ensure that you have the group’s authorization before acting.
- Get solid answers. Don’t be satisfied with vague responses. Talk to informed people and solicit answers you can rely on.
- Be open to suggestions. Take them seriously and follow up. Progress occurs when everyone pushes in the same direction.
- Follow up a discussion with a memo summarizing the items discussed and outcome. Check periodically on the status of the action to see if decisions are being made.
- Do not work in a vacuum. Keep the neighborhood informed about proceedings with local officials.



## **HOW CAN I PRESENT SUCCESSFULLY TO A GOVERNMENT BOARD?**

Giving public testimony before the Board of County Commissioners or any County Board can be frightening if you have never done it before. There are several things you can do to make your thoughts and presentation clear and successful:

### **How to give public testimony:**

- Be familiar with the Board's process. Attend meetings before you testify to get familiar with the room layout and meeting procedures.
- Know your issues. Support opinions with as many facts as possible. Be knowledgeable of the opposition's arguments and be prepared to counter.
- Know your audience. Try to stress what you have in common and respect the differences of Board members.
- Wear appropriate clothing. Men should wear a business suit with tie. Good grooming is also important for men and women making presentations.
- Be aware of how you present yourself. Be conscious of your body language and how you may be perceived.
- Check your feelings at the door before you speak. Don't overshadow your presentation with strong feelings.
- Don't ask questions at the public hearing. Schedule an appointment with staff well in advance of the hearing to get your questions answered.
- Be courteous when making your presentation. For example, avoid complaining about having to take time off from work to attend the hearing.
- Maintain eye contact. Use notes rather than a written manuscript so you can develop good eye contact.
- Define what you want. Make it perfectly clear what action you want the group to take.
- Summarize important points.
- Provide copies of your written remarks for each member of the board, appropriate staff, and the media.



# NEIGHBORHOOD BEAUTIFICATION

## **WHAT IS ORANGE COUNTY C.A.N.?**

Orange County **C.A.N.** is a Clean and Attractive Neighborhood initiative that provides citizens and neighborhood organizations with detailed information about the county programs that help beautify and revitalize neighborhoods. The purpose of this initiative is to comprehensively package and market all county programs that help to preserve and restore neighborhoods, such as the Neighborhood Pride Grants, the Neighborhood & Community Clean Up Program, the Yard-of-the-Month Program, etc. Orange County **CAN** have Clean and Attractive Neighborhoods!

## **COMPTROLLER'S OFFICE 407-836-5690**

### **What is Municipal Service Taxing Unit/Benefit Unit?**

The main function of a Municipal Service Taxing Unit/Benefit Unit (MSTU/BU) is to collect funds from benefited property owners for the provision of municipal services such as street lighting, retention pond maintenance, road paving, subdivision wall construction, common area maintenance, and other essential facilities. Types of services not provided with a MSTU/BU include, street lighting on major roadways or private roads, recreational facilities, wall and fence maintenance, security gates, boat control or maintenance of common areas where access is not available to all residents and property owners. Orange County can establish MSTU/BU's for any unincorporated area. MSTU/BU's are adopted by resolution of the property owners and are subject to a public hearing and approval by the Board of County Commissioners. Call the Comptroller's Office for more information.

### **How do I get my subdivision wall repaired or replaced?**

Orange County is granted the authority to establish Municipal Service Benefit Units ("MSBU") for the construction of subdivision walls under Section 125.01 of the Florida Statutes and the Orange County Charter and Ordinance No. 2001-07 (the "Ordinance"). Wall construction MSBUs are administered by the Orange County Comptroller in conjunction with Board staff as necessary. Please contact the Orange County Comptroller at (407)-836-5770 for further details about the process.

## **COOPERATIVE EXTENSION 407-254-9200**

### **Where can I learn more about plants, pest, and weed control?**

Attend to the Environmental Horticulture educational classes offer by Cooperative Extension Department. These classes can help you landscape, your home, or your neighborhood. Some classes are also available to teach you how to grow a portion of what your family eats. Cooperative Extension will answer questions, provide soil testing, and help residents identify plants, pests, and determine weed control for their lawns. A full list of focus areas are available at [sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/orange](http://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/orange) or call to request.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DIVISION 407-836-1400**

### **What can my neighborhood do to help the environment?**

#### **LAKEWATCH/Volunteer & Internship Program (eVIP)**

Learn how to care for and monitor your lake while providing Orange County with important water quality data.

#### **Storm Drain Labeling**

The program provides supplies and guidance to assist neighborhood residents label their storm drains with "No Dumping, Drains to Lake" signs. Labeling storm drains promotes healthy lakes by educating residents about the important environmental role of storm drains.



### **Florida Friendly Demonstration Garden**

This garden demonstrates environmentally wise choices to reduce energy and water use and prevent storm water pollution, while providing aesthetics and wildlife habitat to home and business landscape. The demonstration garden is located at the Orange County Administration Building, 250 E. Rosalind Avenue in downtown Orlando. Call EPD for more information.

## **HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT 407-836-5181**

### **How can I get assistance to make repairs to my home?**

#### **Minor Repair/Rehabilitation Program**

The Housing & Community Development Division provides assistance to qualified homeowners for repairs for the correction of code violations and unsafe conditions of their owner-occupied home.

## **NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES DIVISION 407-836-4200**

### **How can I organize a clean-up in my neighborhood or community?**

#### **Neighborhood Clean Ups**

The Neighborhood Services Division will assist residence with a neighborhood cleanup by providing the neighborhood volunteers with free trash bags, gloves, and planning tools.

#### **Community Clean Up**

If you would like to see trash and debris removed from your neighborhood and surrounding community, the Orange County Community Clean Up Program may be just what you are looking for. This has been a successful program to beautify neighborhoods and create neighborhood pride throughout the county. Following a community clean up request, a Neighborhood Services Division representative will conduct an inspection of the area to determine if a cleanup is feasible. If approved, a date is selected and the clean-up is coordinated. The results will make for a cleaner community and the partnerships created between citizens and local government will be priceless!

### **What can residents do to reduce code violations in their neighborhood?**

The Neighborhood Services Division offers neighborhoods in unincorporated Orange County the *Community Code Enforcement Program*. Staff will meet with interested neighborhood organizations and provide detailed education about code violations. The neighborhood organization will appoint representative(s), whom after a training session will act on behalf of the neighborhood by observing and requesting correction or elimination of specific code violations.

### **How can I improve my neighborhood entrance way?**

The Neighborhood Services Division offers Neighborhood Beautification Grants to neighborhood residents and non-profit organizations. These grants provide funding for neighborhood beautification projects that ultimately help to improve our Orange County Community as a whole.

### **How can I start a Yard-of-the-Month program in my neighborhood?**

*Yard-of-the-Month* is a fun and relatively simple program designed to recognize and reward great looking yards in the neighborhood. Orange County Neighborhood Services Division encourages residents to keep their neighborhoods clean and attractive and has developed basic program guidelines that any neighborhood organizations can use to start a Yard-of-the-Month program in their neighborhood. Staff will meet with a small group of volunteers to go over the program logistics. Neighborhood organizations will receive free assistance, as well as free yard signs and evaluation materials.



## **NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES DIVISION CODE COMPLIANCE 3-1-1 (407-836-3111)**

### **What do I do if I receive a “notice of code violation”?**

Find out how to correct the problem and do so promptly. Prompt action to correct the violation will avoid fines and liens. Call the Code Enforcement Office immediately. You may elect to speak with a Code Enforcement Officer by telephone to inquire what remedial actions are necessary.

### **What can our neighborhood do about graffiti?**

Graffiti is a violation of the Orange County Ordinances. Studies have shown that graffiti has less chance of reappearing and accumulating if it is removed quickly after a property is “tagged.” All graffiti issues must be reported to the Code Enforcement Division at 3-1-1, so it can be documented and conveyed to the Orange County Sheriff’s Office in case it is gang related. The Code Enforcement Officer will assess the location to determine what corrective action should be taken and will usually have Code Enforcement staff paint over the graffiti or cite the property requiring the property owner to paint over the graffiti.

### **How do I get trash and junk removed from my neighbor’s property?**

Trash, junk, and debris cannot be left in the yard and must be disposed of properly. This includes junk such as auto parts, appliances, furniture, building materials, and tires. Call the Orange County Government Customer Service Center at 3-1-1 or (407) 836-3111 to report the problem. You will need supply the address you wish to have inspected to the customer service representative. All complaints are placed into the county’s tracking system and a Code Enforcement Officer will be scheduled to investigate the site. If a violation is observed, a notice of violation will be issued and remedial action to correct the situation will be taken.

## **ROADS AND DRAINAGE 407-836-7900**

### **What can I do about the litter on the road near my neighborhood?**

The Orange County Roads & Drainage Division offers the *Adopt-A-Highway* program. Residents and organizations can adopt a section of roadway and take responsibility for periodically removing litter! Volunteers receive training, Adopt-A-Highway signs displaying their organization’s name, safety vests, trash bags, traffic control signs as required, and bagged litter pick up.

## **WATER DIVISION PROGRAMS 407-254-9850**

### **How can I have nice landscaping and conserve water at the same time?**

#### **Florida Friendly Landscape Workshops**

Attend a landscape workshop to help you and your neighbors design landscaping that will help conserve water. You will learn how much water and fertilizer should be used on your lawn, information about good bugs versus bad bugs, and how to keep landscaping looking great with minimal maintenance.

#### **Residential Irrigation Inspections**

Simple adjustments to your in-ground irrigation system can save you money and Florida’s precious water resources. If you are an Orange County Utilities customer and use at least 20,000 gallons of water per month, you are eligible for an audit of your irrigation system to make sure it is operating efficiently.



# NEIGHBORHOOD GRANTS & FUNDRAISING

## WHAT IS THE ORANGE COUNTY NEIGHBORHOOD BEAUTIFICATION GRANTS PROGRAM?

Orange County administers annual Neighborhood Beautification Grants that provides funds to neighborhoods/communities for physical improvements. For more information, contact [neighborhoodgrants@ocfl.net](mailto:neighborhoodgrants@ocfl.net) or visit the Office's webpages at: [www.ocfl.net/neighborhoods](http://www.ocfl.net/neighborhoods).

## WHAT ARE SOME TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL FUNDRAISING?

You do not need to raise funds to begin organizing your neighborhood. However, you will need money to launch a large action program or complete neighborhood improvement projects. If you decide to fundraise, be careful; you can lose money and at the same time divert time and resources away from your objectives. If you decide to raise money, here are some suggestions:

- **Individual contributions** - Asking for contributions from local people turns fundraising into community building. People become more attached to groups, projects, and places they feel they own. Money can come from membership dues, advertisement fees from your community newsletter, collections at meetings, door-to-door canvassing, planned giving, memorial giving, and direct mail. Some groups make donations tax deductible by registering as a charity with the federal government.
- **In-kind donations** - Seek in-kind or non-monetary contributions. Examples include donations of printing, equipment, furniture, space, services, food, and time. Local businesses respond well to requests for in-kind donations.
- **Auctions** - Consider an auction. Neighbors can donate babysitting on a Friday night, chocolate cake for eight, or three hours of house repairs. At a community party, your auctioneer sells every treasure to the highest bidder.
- **Grants from governments & foundations** - With so many potential sources of assistance, half the challenge is figuring out who supports what. After identifying a possible grant, find out about application procedures. Receiving a grant usually requires writing a good proposal. Look for matching grants. In many cases governments will contribute a dollar for every dollar raised by citizens.
- **Bake sales** - Bake sales can be a very effective method for raising funds for your community. Food provides a good crowd-gathering event. Bake sales can also present an opportunity for displaying culinary aptitudes for children and adults alike. Children can help with the baking and selling of the goods.
- **Garage/Yard sales** - Consider an annual weekend community-wide garage or yard sale. The proceeds from your community-wide sale go to your organization's treasury. A \$3 fee is required per household and paid to the Zoning Division (407-836-5525). Orange County Code allows two consecutive days for garage sales every six months.
- **Community Cookbook** - Everyone needs a cookbook! Gather together many different recipes from neighbors and add stories about what the recipe means to the cook, where the recipe came from, and so forth. The cookbook doesn't need to be fancy, just print it up on the computer and have it bound at a local copy shop. The first couple of pages can be dedicated to talking about your organization.
- **T-shirt Sales** - Many neighborhood organizations have their own t-shirts. T-shirt sales can be quite profitable as well as a great way to promote your group. They can be sold through a variety of ways: at every fundraising event that you hold or maybe you have friends/family who work in offices that can distribute the t-shirts.





# NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS

## **WHO DO I CALL TO REPLACE A BURNED-OUT STREETLIGHT?**

Call your local Utility Company to report a burned out or defective streetlight. Within Orange County there are several Utility Companies, including Orlando Utilities Commission (407) 423-9018 and Duke Energy (800) 777-9898. Before calling, make sure you have the pole number or the street address closest to the streetlight.

## **HOW DO I REQUEST STREETLIGHTS OR ADDITIONAL STREETLIGHTS FOR MY NEIGHBORHOOD?**

Streetlights are provided within Orange County through the MSTU process. A written request to establish or amend a MSTU for street lighting is required from a property owner. The request should reference the property owner's name, address, and parcel id number, if available. The letter should be sent to the Orange County Comptroller, Special Assessments, Post Office Box 38, Orlando FL 32802-0038. After costs estimates are determined, the property owner is sent a ballot to vote on the streetlight MSTU. At least 66 2/3% of property owners must agree to the MSTU. Contact the Orange County Comptroller's Office at (407) 836-5690.

## **WHO DO I CALL TO REPORT A MISSING STOP SIGN?**

Citizens should report a down or missing stop sign to Orange County Government Customer Service Center at 3-1-1 or (407) 836-3111. A missing sign can create a dangerous situation; once reported it will be replaced promptly.

## **WHO DO I CALL IF MY NEIGHBORHOOD NEEDS A STOP SIGN INSTALLED?**

Stop signs are installed as safety measures. To determine if a stop sign is needed, sites must meet several conditions, including heavy traffic, poor visibility, and a pattern of accidents or proximity to schools. Citizens may call Public Works Traffic Engineering at (407) 836-7890. A representative will monitor the location before a determination is made.

## **WHO DO I CALL TO REPAIR A POTHOLE ON MY STREET?**

Anyone may report potholes to the Orange County Government Customer Service Center at 3-1-1 or (407) 836-3111. An inspector will be scheduled to investigate reported potholes and evaluate the urgency of repair. The pothole will be placed on a list for repair in priority order.

## **WHAT CAN BE DONE WHEN PLANTS OR TREES ARE HANGING IN THE STREET?**

To report locations where road visibility is obstructed due to plants or trees, contact the Orange County Government Customer Service Center at 3-1-1 or (407) 836-3111 with a complete address of the location that needs attention. Blind corners, mid-block obstructions and weeds on the right-of-way should also be reported.

## **ARE THERE PARKING RESTRICTIONS ON RESIDENTIAL STREETS?**

In Orange County, parking is permitted on residential streets as long as there is not a sign posted stating "No Parking." If you suspect a violation, contact the Orange County Sheriff's Office at (407) 836-HELP (4357).

## **WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT SPEEDING ON MY NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS?**

Traffic Calming is an important mechanism for neighborhood street safety to deter speeding. In order to get traffic calming on your street or within your subdivision, contact Orange County Public Works, Traffic Engineering, at (407) 836-7890.



## **WHO DO I CALL TO REPORT FLOODING OR DRAINAGE PROBLEMS IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD?**

To report flooding or drainage problems in your neighborhood, report the problem to the Orange County Government Customer Service Center at 3-1-1 or (407) 836-3111 with a complete address of the location that needs attention.

## **WHO DO I CALL TO REPORT AN UNSAFE SIDEWALK?**

Sidewalks, which have become obstructed either by overgrowth, uprooting of tree roots, or physical obstructions within the path can be hazardous. If you believe there is an unsafe sidewalk in your community, report it to the Orange County Government Customer Service Center at 3-1-1 or (407) 836-3111 with a complete address of the location that needs attention. The situation will be evaluated and repaired as soon as possible.

## **WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I SEE GANG ACTIVITY?**

Definition of “Gang” according to F.S.S. 874.03, a “criminal street gang” is a formal or informal ongoing organization, association, or group that has as one of its primary activities the commission of criminal or delinquent acts, and that consists of three or more persons who have a common name or common identifying signs, colors, or symbols and have two or more members who, individually or collectively, engage in or have engaged in a pattern of criminal street gang activity. Gang growth and gang violence have seen dramatic increases across the nation during the past decade. There are no simple solutions to this problem. Communities choosing to ignore or deny the existence of gangs will face a much tougher battle in the future. For more information call Orange County Sheriff’s Office, Gang Enforcement Unit at the Non-Emergency line (407) 836-4357.

## **WHO DO I CALL TO REPORT STRAY OR TROUBLESOME ANIMALS?**

Animal Services enforces Chapter 5 of the Orange County Code, pertaining to animals. Animal Services investigates inquiries relating to animal nuisances and ordinance violations. Report all potential problems to the Orange County Government Customer Service Center at 3-1-1 or (407) 836-3111. For 24-hour emergency service on weekends, holidays, and after hours, call the Sheriff’s Office non-emergency complaint line at (407) 836-4357.

## **WHAT IS THE SHERIFF’S OFFICE CHILDREN’S SAFETY VILLAGE?**

The Children’s Safety Village is a state-of-the-art educational complex where children can learn the basic life skills that will enable them to grow up safely. Over 10,000 Central Florida children visited the village to learn about bicycle safety, helmet safety, pedestrian safety and other lifesaving skills. For more information on the Sheriff’s Office Safety Village contact (407) 521-4673.

## **WHAT IS THE SHERIFF’S OFFICE CITIZENS ON PATROL PROGRAM?**

The Citizens On Patrol (C.O.P.s) program is a non-confrontational neighborhood patrol program. Volunteers are not law enforcement officers, but are trained to be the “eyes and ears” for the Sheriff’s Office in their own neighborhood. Volunteers donate their time to patrol neighborhoods while driving special Sheriff’s Office vehicles. Citizens who have passed a screening process will then participate in a volunteer academy that includes training in areas such as crime prevention, first aid, CPR, how to spot suspicious and criminal activity, and more. For more information call Citizen on Patrol Coordinator at 407-254-7374.



## **HOW CAN I PARTICIPATE IN THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE CIVILIAN POLICE ACADEMY PROGRAM?**

If you have ever wondered what a day in the life of an Orange County's Sheriff's Deputy is like, this is your chance. The Sheriff's Office Civilian Rider Program allows you to be a passenger in a Sheriff's vehicle. For more information on the Civilian Police Academy Program, call (689) 688-7154 - Linette Lopez.

## **WHAT IS THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE EXPLORERS PROGRAM?**

If you or someone you know is between the ages and 14 and 19 and considering a career in law enforcement, Explorer Post 61 is a great opportunity. You need only to be enrolled in an academic institution with a minimum average of 2.0 to be eligible. The program provides role models to showcase the various aspects and responsibilities of a law enforcement officer while instilling values and leadership skills. Participants will perform good deeds to civic organizations and give back to the community. For more information on the Explorers Program contact (407) 254-7265.

## **HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED WITH THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE VOLUNTEER TASK FORCE?**

The Volunteer Task Force is one of the Sheriff's Office most active units. Members, who are in uniform, are trained in traffic, crowd and perimeter control, search and rescue, disasters, parades and other public activities. Members are ready to be of service whenever needed, serving the community and promoting public safety by assisting city, county, state, or federal agencies in any endeavor for which they are qualified. Contact (407) 836-4582 for more information about the Volunteer Task Force.

## **HOW CAN I START A NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH GROUP?**

The best crime prevention device ever invented is a good neighbor. The security steps you and your neighbors take, as a group is just as important as the things you would do individually. This joint effort is called Neighborhood Watch. It is easy to organize a Neighborhood Watch in your area. Coordinate a date, time, and location for your neighborhood's initial meeting with a Crime Prevention Officer from the Sheriff's Office. During this initial meeting, the Crime Prevention Officer will offer tips on home security, crime awareness, and how to report suspicious activities. Find out the Crime Prevention Officer assigned to your Sheriff's Office Sector by calling (407) 254-7000

## **HOW CAN I DISPOSE OF HAZARDOUS HOUSEHOLD WASTE FROM MY HOME?**

Many household products contain dangerous chemicals that require special handling. If not properly disposed of, these chemicals can harm humans, animals, and the environment. The household hazardous waste program provides Orange County homeowners with the opportunity to dispose of household hazardous waste safely and properly at no charge. The Orange County Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility at the Landfill is open Monday through Saturday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The address is 5901 Young Pine Road, Orlando FL 32829. An attendant is present during these hours to assist with unloading. For more information and directions, please contact the Solid Waste Division at (407) 836-6601.



# LAND USE

## **WHAT IS ZONING?**

Zoning is an aspect of current, or short-range, planning for the use and development of property. It is a set of laws, codes, and rules that determine what type of building or development can be built in specific areas of unincorporated Orange County.

## **WHAT IS FUTURE LAND USE?**

Future Land Use is a more general specification of use that recognizes both existing uses and planned future uses of land on a long-range basis within the time horizon of the Comprehensive Policy Plan, currently the year 2030. The zoning of a property must be consistent with the Future Land Use.

## **WHAT IS A NONCONFORMING USE?**

A non-conforming use is any use of a building or land lawfully existing at the time of passage of the Orange County Zoning Code, or any amendments, which does not conform after the passage of the Code or amendments with the use regulations of the zoning district in which it is located.

## **HOW CAN I FIND OUT WHAT THE ZONING AND FUTURE LAND USE IS ON MY PROPERTY?**

Call the Orange County Zoning Division at (407) 836-5525 with a legal description, parcel identification number (found on property tax notices), or street address to find out what a property is zoned. Contact the Orange County Planning Division at (407) 836-5600 with a legal description, parcel ID number, or street address to verify a property's Future Land Use.

## **WHERE CAN I OBTAIN THE ORANGE COUNTY CODE?**

If you would like information on the codes and ordinances, which regulate development of land, code enforcement, transportation, and many more topics within Orange County, MuniCode is your best source. MuniCode Online (Municipal Code Corporation) allows you to look up codes for almost any county or city in the United States. This is a valuable tool for inquiries about the rules and regulations that govern your community. Learn more about MuniCode at [www.municode.com](http://www.municode.com).



## OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

### WHEN DO I NEED A BUILDING PERMIT?

If your property is located within unincorporated Orange County and you are

- Erecting
- Repairing
- Removing
- Improving
- Constructing
- Enlarging
- Altering
- Converting
- Moving
- Demolishing

Any building or structure, you are required to obtain an Orange County Building Permit. For more information, please call the Orange County Building Division at (407) 836-5550.

### HOW CAN I GET A LYNX BUS STOP MOVED OR ADDED TO MY NEIGHBORHOOD?

Moving a bus stop in your neighborhood involves a couple of steps. Provide Lynx the locations of the current and proposed stops. Lynx will review the request and evaluate the new location for safety. To add a bus stop in your neighborhood, please contact Lynx at (407) 841-2279 x3705.

### WHERE CAN CITIZENS GO TO SETTLE UNRESOLVED PROBLEMS WITH NEIGHBORS?

Within Orange County, there are several agencies available to assist neighborhood organizations with issues related to dispute resolution and legal aid. Following are several of these organizations:

#### **Orange County Bar Association Citizen Dispute Settlement**

The Citizen Dispute Settlement Program is a mediation program where two parties who are having a dispute can meet with a neutral third person to discuss ways to solve the matter outside of court. Types of cases handled are Landlord/Tenant, Neighborhood Disputes, Property Damage, and Recovery of Money/Property, Animal Nuisance, Harassment, Disorderly Conduct, and Consumer Complaints. Contact the Citizen Dispute Service at (407) 422-4551

#### **Central Florida Conflict Resolution Consortium**

Since 1987, the Florida State University based Consortium, with the support of the Florida Legislature, has taken a leadership role in promoting the informed use of consensus building and alternative dispute resolution to meet the growing demand for better and more durable solutions to Florida's public problems. The Consortium has a local office at UCF's Academic Center in Downtown Orlando and information is available at [www.consensus.fsu.edu](http://www.consensus.fsu.edu).

### WHERE DO WE GO TO FIND LEGAL EXPERTISE RELATED TO HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATIONS?

It is a good idea to select someone with experience in handling HOA problems. You could begin looking for an attorney by talking with members in other HOA's, contacting Community Management Companies for referrals, or contacting Community Association Institute at [www.caicf.org/](http://www.caicf.org/).

### ORANGE COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION ATTORNEY REFERRAL SERVICE

The Orange County Bar Attorney Referral Service makes legal services readily available to individuals and families in need of a lawyer. When you call the Attorney Referral Service, a referrer will confidentially take your name and address and a brief statement of your problem and arrange an appointment with an attorney in your community. The fee for your initial consultation will be free. You will have up to one-half hour to discuss your problems. The fee for any additional services should be arranged between you and the attorney. Contact the Attorney Referral Service at (407) 422-4537, or [www.orangecountybar.org](http://www.orangecountybar.org).



# ORANGE COUNTY SERVICES & HELPFUL NUMBERS

In addition to the program mentioned above, Orange County government offers other valuable programs and services for the education and awareness of the general public. In addition to providing educational programs that allow citizens to learn more about services provided by their government, programs are also available that assist in the revitalization and beautification of Orange County communities. Additional Orange County programs:

**Advisory Boards and Commissions ..... 407-836-5426**

A number of advisory boards, authorities, commissions, and committees have been established through the years by the State Legislature, federal regulations, and by resolution or ordinance of the Board of County Commissioners. Members of these boards are appointed based on their education, training, experience, and interest in a particular field. Call the Agenda Development Office for a volunteer application and a complete list of current citizen advisory boards.

**Animal Services Division ..... (3-1-1) or 407-836-3111**

Enforces Orange County Code, Chapter 5. Animal Services operates public spay/neuter clinics, pet adoption program, and community speakers' bureau. Provides educational programs to schools, homeowners associations, and other civic groups. Investigates inquiries relating to animal nuisances and ordinance violations. Coordinates with the Board of Health in investigating bite cases. Assists local Sheriff, Police, humane societies, and other state and municipal agencies. Counsels pet owners on responsible pet ownership. For 24-hour emergency services weekends, holidays, and after hours, call (407) 836-HELP (4357).

**Board of County Commissioners ..... 407-836-7350**

Orange County Board of County Commissioners is composed of six elected commissioners and an elected chief executive officer, the County Chairman. Single member districts elect commissioners; the County Chairman is elected at large. The seven officials review all county activities and set policies for growth and development in Orange County.

**Building Division..... 407-836-5550**

Coordinates the plan review process. Issues building, electrical, mechanical and plumbing permit for new construction and alterations. Conducts inspections for the construction of residential and commercial structures, including installation of electrical, gas, low voltage, mechanical, plumbing, refrigeration, roofing and solar systems. Issues all types of contractor's licenses. To request forms, brochures and fee information, visit the website [www.ocfl.net/building](http://www.ocfl.net/building).

**Citizens Commission for Children (CCC)..... 407-836-7610**

The CCC is an advocate for children, youth and families in Orange County by assessing their needs and planning appropriately to address those needs. The Commission also funds collaborative prevention and early intervention efforts and evaluates the outcomes and impacts of such programs, in addition to educating Orange County's stakeholders and the community about latest research, trends, and best practices for effective programs and service delivery models.

**Clerk of Courts..... 407-836-2000**

An elected official, the clerk oversees Circuit and County Courts Divisions and coordinates other support services in the court system.



**Coalition for a Drug Free Community..... 407-836-7335**

The Orange County Coalition for a Drug Free Community utilizes all resources within Orange County to effectively provide for the prevention of substance abuse when possible and provides effective intervention and/or treatment when appropriate.

**Neighborhood Services Division Consumer Protection Office ..... 407-836-4200**

If you have been a victim of a consumer fraud or unfair and deceptive business practice, the Orange County Consumer Fraud Unit will receive and investigate your complaints and attempt to secure a just resolution to the problem.

**Cooperative Extension Division..... 407-254-9200**

The Orange County Cooperative Extension’s mission is education. It is a partnership of County residents, Orange County government, the University of Florida, and the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Programs provide practical information produced by research centers and universities. The Cooperative Extension helps families and communities identify and solve problems in order to improve the quality of life.

**Environmental Health Services ..... 407-858-1497**

Monitors the sanitary conditions in childcare centers, nursing homes, foster homes, and hospitals. Also licenses tanning parlors, mobile home parks, public swimming pools and bathing places, septic tanks, and private, small public and commercial drinking water wells. Monitors the indoor air quality for persons in private and residential facilities, investigates animal bites for potential rabies transmission, distributes rodent bait and traps and information to property owners, investigates reported cases of food-borne and water-borne illnesses, and investigates unsanitary conditions thought to be sanitary nuisances and injurious to the public health.

**Environmental Protection Division..... (3-1-1) or 407-836-1400**

Investigates complaints and maintains files relating to air, surface water, groundwater, hazardous materials, and the environment in general. Provides laboratory services to monitor existing conditions in the County. Maintains a database of historical information, which is available to citizens and other agencies. Reviews applications to build boat docks, spread sludge, construct wastewater treatment plants, remove shoreline vegetation, and variances to install septic tanks closer than 150 feet from a lake. Also inspects industrial sites and businesses utilizing toxic chemicals for safe disposal. Permits and regulates all private landfills in unincorporated Orange County. Provides a wide range of public education and outreach programs, including presentations on general environmental protection and conservation.

**Community and Family Services ..... 407-836-7616**

Orange County Family Services Department promotes and provides family services to Orange County citizens through effective planning, implementation, and management of the following programs and services:

- Citizens Commission for Children
- Citizen Resource and Outreach
- Community Action
- Cooperative Extension
- Head Start
- Mental Health and Homelessness
- Parks and Recreation
- Regional History Center
- Youth and Family Services



- Head Start** ..... **407-836-6590**  
 Provides comprehensive early childhood development and education for children 3-5 years of age and their families’ direct services shared governance, leadership, advocacy and collaborative services. Services include nutrition, medical and dental health, disabilities and mental health, early childhood development and education parent involvement, family support, and community partnerships.
- Health Services Department** ..... **407-836-7611**  
 Promotes and provides health and family services to Orange County citizens through effective planning, implementation, and management of programs and services.
- Housing and Community Development Division** ..... **(3-1-1) or 407-836-5150**  
 Provides services related to improving housing and living conditions in Orange County’s low-income neighborhoods through the provision of improved infrastructure and community facilities.
- Impact Fees**
- Transportation, Law Enforcement, Fire and School** ..... **(3-1-1) or 407-836-5617**  
**Sewer and Water** ..... **(3-1-1) or 407-836-5515**
- Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC)** ..... **407-836-8800**  
 Books and receives juveniles arrested in Orange County. The JAC is a collaborative effort funded by Orange County, the Department of Children and Families, and the Department of Juvenile Justice. Operational 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a- week
- LYNX**..... **407-841-2279**  
 Provides residents and visitors in Orange, Osceola, and Seminole Counties with safe, reliable, and affordable public transportation.
- Community Action Division** ..... **407-836-9333**  
 The Office of Community Action is the local Communication Action Agency for Orange and Osceola Counties. Community Action’s mission is to work in partnership with service organizations, the private sector, and citizens to offer decentralized programs and services for low-income individuals and families through community centers that build and sustain self-reliant individuals, families, and communities.
- Office of Emergency Management**..... **(3-1-1) or 407-836-9140**  
 Responsible for saving lives and protecting property by developing programs and emergency management operational capabilities that prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergency or disaster, regardless of the cause.
- Official Records** ..... **(3-1-1) or 407-836-5115**  
 Creates and maintains the Official Records for Orange County, including the alphabetical index. Computes and collects money to register various legal documents as well as for Florida documentary stamps, intangible taxes, tax deed sales, recording fees, and other fees.
- Orange County Library System** ..... **407-835-7323**  
 The public library system serves residents of Orange County (including 11 of 13 municipalities). Winter Park and Maitland each support an independent library. The branches are located throughout the county. The full resources of the library are open to everyone at the library premises.
- Orange County Regional History Center** ..... **407-836-8500**  
 The History Center opened on September 29, 2000 in the historic 1927 Orange County Courthouse. It brings history to life through audio and video presentations, educational programs, lifecast figures and costumed docents.





- Orange County School Board** ..... **407-317-3200**  
Public schools in Orange County are operated by the Orange Public School system, under the jurisdiction of the Orange County School Board.
- Orange County Utilities Department**..... **407-254-9900**  
Provides water, wastewater, and solid waste services for residents of Orange County.
- Parks and Recreation** ..... **407-836-6200**  
Develops, maintains, and operates parks and recreation facilities primarily located in unincorporated Orange County. Offers a variety of youth, adult, and senior citizen recreation programs and activities.
- Planning Division**..... **407-836-5600**  
Insures compliance with state-mandated growth management legislation and County ordinances related to growth and development within unincorporated Orange County.
- Public Works** ..... **(3-1-1) or 407-836-7900**  
Provides for the County’s infrastructure needs through proper placement and maintenance of roadways, drainage structure, pedestrian walks, and traffic control devices.
- Property Appraiser** ..... **407-836-5000**  
The property appraiser is an elected official who appraises all real property and tangible property on an annual basis. Determining a fair and equitable value, which includes granting exemptions, is a role of the property appraiser office.
- Roads and Drainage Division** ..... **(3-1-1) or 407-836-7919**  
Responsible for maintenance of County roads, drainage systems, and rights-of-way, excluding privately owned roads. Also responsible for Adopt-a-Highway program, residential driveway permits, sidewalk repair and cleaning, removal of private signs from rights-of-way, and tree trimming.
- Solid Waste Division** ..... **(3-1-1) or 407-836-6600**  
Provides solid waste disposal services, including operation of landfill, transfer stations, and household hazardous waste facilities. Administers mandatory refuse collection and recycling programs.
- State Attorney, 9th Judicial Circuit** ..... **407-836-2400**  
This elected official represents the state’s interest in criminal and some civil matters in both circuit and county courts.
- Supervisor of Elections** ..... **407-836-2070**  
An elected official, the supervisor of election is mandated by Florida law to register voters and keep registration records current for Orange County and 13 municipalities.
- Tax Collector**..... **407-836-2700**  
The Tax Department administers the collection of all current taxes on real and tangible personal property, sends out tax notices, conducts the annual tax certificate sale, collects delinquent taxes, and collects all special assessment taxes.
- Traffic Engineering Division**..... **(3-1-1) or 407-836-7890**  
Works with communities and local law enforcement agencies to provide traffic safety and resolve traffic problems within neighborhoods. The Division researches and collects traffic data to determine the need for speed humps, traffic signals, signs or other safety controls for the betterment of the community. They also monitor the development of roadways and their capacity for the transportation concurrency management system, in addition to installing, operating and maintaining traffic signals, signs, speed humps, and pavement markings in unincorporated Orange County.



**Zoning Division..... (3-1-1) or 407-836-3111**  
Maintains and enforces county zoning regulations and controls development and use of land in the county. Regulates size and placement of buildings. Processes applications for zoning changes for the Planning and Zoning Commission, Board of Zoning Adjustment variances, and special exceptions to the Zoning Resolution.

## COMMUNITY RESOURCE ORGANIZATIONS

The Central Florida region is fortunate to be home to many enthusiastic and successful community based organizations established to improve the quality of life of residents and visitors to the area. In addition to an extensive network of social and civic organizations dedicated to building community and breaking down barriers, there are also many organizations committed to disseminating information and educating the public on many aspects of organizing effectively. Listed below are a handful of such organizations:

**Access Links Program..... 407-423-8747**  
A+Link is a special door-to-door van service managed by LYNX for those unable to access regular bus service. For many people, A+Link is the only way they have to get to work, to the doctor, or to meet other needs.  
[www.golynx.com](http://www.golynx.com)

**Community Associations Institute (CAI)..... 407-850-0106**  
CAI offers valuable information on running homeowner and condo associations. Their website provides you with the ability to search through back issues of their publications by topic. CAI also offers for sale many good books and pamphlets on managing homeowners associations. [www.caionline.org](http://www.caionline.org)

**Community Care for the Elderly..... 407-628-2884**

**National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ)..... 860-683-1039**  
The National Conference for Community and Justice, founded in 1927 as The National Conference of Christians and Jews, is a human relations organization dedicated to fighting bias, bigotry, and racism in America. NCCJ promotes understanding and respect among all races, religions, and cultures through advocacy, conflict resolution and education. [www.nccj.org](http://www.nccj.org)

**Orange County Mobile Applications and Newsletters .....**  
Orange County’s unique OCFL Alert, OCFL 311 and OCFL News apps are available for free on Apple and Android devices. In addition to the benefits of digital and online emergency management communication capabilities, Orange County’s smartphone applications encourage transparency and citizen engagement and help residents stay more connected with their government. [www.orangecountyfl.net/home/newslettersalerts.aspx](http://www.orangecountyfl.net/home/newslettersalerts.aspx)

**Seniors First..... 407-292-0177**  
Seniors First, Inc. enhances the quality of life for Orange County’s senior citizens by maintaining their independence and dignity through nutrition, home improvement and support services, which assist seniors in need. Any Orange County residents’ age 60 or older may be eligible for Seniors First services. Eligibility requirements vary by program and some programs require a professional in-home assessment.  
[www.seniorsfirstinc.org](http://www.seniorsfirstinc.org)



