



## A Guide to Community-Building & Effective Neighborhoods



# Connected Neighborhoods



## ACTIVE, CREATIVE, AND FULL OF POSSIBILITY

**Y**our neighborhood can be as vibrant and engaged as you and your neighbors imagine it to be! At the City of Huntington, we're proud to support residents who take the initiative to build strong, welcoming communities—where people know each other, pitch in together, and have fun along the way.

Whether you plan a few small events or dive into bigger projects, hosting neighborhood activities helps build pride, strengthen relationships, and keep your part of Huntington safe, healthy, and full of life.

## Here are just a few ways your neighborhood can stay connected and active:

### 1. Make Everyone Feel Welcome

Welcoming new neighbors is a wonderful way to foster connection right from the start. Consider putting together a simple welcome basket with:

- » A map of nearby parks and community spaces
- » Contact info for neighbors on the block
- » Recommendations for local doctors, veterinarians, and services
- » A list of favorite local businesses, churches, and restaurants
- » Anything else that adds a personal touch
- » And most importantly—stop by and say hello! A friendly face makes all the difference.

### 2. Neighborhood Improvement Projects

Want to make a visible impact? Rally your neighbors for a project like:

- » Landscaping common areas
- » Planting flowers
- » Cleaning up roadside litter or alleyways
- » It's amazing what a few people and a couple of hours can accomplish together.

### 3. Group Volunteer Projects

Giving back as a neighborhood builds strong bonds and benefits the wider community. For ideas and opportunities, check out the Community Engagement & Volunteer Coordinating Office—find them on Facebook or visit [huntington.in.us/city](http://huntington.in.us/city).

### 4. Seasonal Neighbor Assistance

When the leaves fall or snow piles up, some neighbors may need a hand. Organize a volunteer crew to help seniors or those with disabilities. It's a great opportunity for youth and teens to get involved and make a meaningful impact.

### 5. Outdoor Movie Night

Plan a cozy movie night under the stars! Choose a family-friendly film and invite neighbors to bring chairs, blankets, and snacks. It's a fun, low-key way to connect.

### 6. Neighborhood Scavenger Hunt

Get creative with a scavenger hunt! Participants can use their phones to snap photos of fun items around the neighborhood—like unique mailboxes, murals, or local landmarks. Great for block parties or standalone fun!

### 7. Clean-Up Day

Host a neighborhood-wide clean-up! Volunteers can tackle litter, storm drains, overgrown plants, and more. For support, contact our Community Engagement Volunteer Coordinator at (260) 358-2323 to get started with help from City Services.

### 8. Turn Clutter into Community

That thing you no longer need might be just what a neighbor is looking for. Host a yard sale, swap event, or share items through your group's communication channels. Just remember—a permit is needed for yard sales! You can get one from the City Clerk-Treasurer's Office.

### 9. Emergency Planning & Preparedness

When the unexpected happens, connected neighbors make all the difference. Take time to talk through emergency plans—knowing who may need help and who has resources can bring peace of mind and real safety.

## Need More Ideas?

### Try Starting a:

- » Little Free Library
- » Seed Sharing Station
- » Public Art Mural or Project
- » Monthly Neighborhood Cookout
- » Seasonal Events like an Easter Egg Hunt or Christmas Light Contest

Whatever you choose to do, remember—every event, every project, and every friendly wave across the street brings your neighborhood one step closer to being a place where people feel like they belong.

And we're here to help every step of the way.

**Have a success story or fresh idea to share? We'd love to hear about it!**



# Mission Statement

Creating **connection** in our neighborhoods for a **healthier, safer** and **more enjoyable** life together.

## A Vision for Our Neighborhoods

Connections and relationships drive community — and they don't happen by accident. This booklet has been created to support Huntington residents who want to build community with their neighbors and create strong, vibrant and connected neighborhoods. It offers helpful information on how to start from the bottom up. Together, we can help shape Huntington's future.



## Create Connection with Your Neighbors

### WHY DO WE WANT TO BUILD CONNECTED NEIGHBORHOODS?

**T**here are so many wonderful reasons to connect with the people who live around us—and just as many benefits. Whether it's gathering for a neighborhood cookout, lending a hand to an elderly neighbor, or coming together to create a safer, more welcoming environment, the possibilities are endless when neighbors support each other.

Many people in our community dream of a close-knit neighborhood but aren't quite sure how to take the first step. Others are looking for ways to contribute—whether that's starting a community garden, organizing a block party, or simply looking out for one another. Whatever the goal, one thing is clear: when neighbors come together, good things happen.

This isn't about a directive from above—it's about us, as neighbors, taking small steps that lead to meaningful change. We believe every neighborhood has the potential to be a place where people feel safe, supported, and connected. And it all starts with getting to know each other.

As we build relationships, we can begin to discover:

- » What do we care about most?
- » What strengths and talents can we bring together?
- » How can we work as one to make Huntington an even better place to live?

The answers to these questions can open the door to:

- » New friendships and a greater sense of belonging
- » Creative solutions to local challenges
- » A better quality of life for everyone
- » A stronger, more unified voice for the neighborhood
- » A sense of empowerment to shape the future of our community

Let's take the first step, together. One conversation, one shared idea, one act of kindness at a time. Your voice matters, and your neighborhood is better with you in it.

### Everyone Deserves to Feel at Home in Huntington

At the heart of every great neighborhood is a simple but powerful idea: belonging. We believe that everyone who calls Huntington home should feel connected, valued and welcome.

While formal homeowner associations and structured neighborhood alliances can serve important roles, strong communities often grow best when they're a little more flexible—shaped by the people who live there, in the way that works best for them.



meeting, gathering, or project, be sure to include the key details in your invite:

- » **Day and time**
- » **Location**
- » **Who to contact with questions**
- » **Any planned activities** (especially fun things for kids and families)
- » **Topics you might discuss**
- » **What to bring** (like food for a potluck or tools for a cleanup)
- » **How to RSVP**, if that’s helpful

Your first gathering is something to celebrate! And keeping the momentum going with regular meetups, big or small, helps your group stay energized. How you do that is completely up to you and your neighbors.

**A few things to consider:**

- » **Location:** Will you meet in the same spot each time, or rotate? Think parks, front porches, driveways, or a neighbor’s backyard.
- » **Make it welcoming:** Be sure there’s space for everyone, and that the area is safe and inviting.
- » **Add a little fun:** Plan a game for the kids, a group project or just time to chat and connect.
- » **Food brings people together:** Whether it’s cookies and lemonade or a full-blown cookout, sharing food always helps people feel at home.

These gatherings are about more than organizing—they’re about building community, one neighbor at a time. Every time you come together, you’re making your neighborhood a little stronger, a little friendlier and a whole lot more connected.

**Key Ingredients for a Thriving Neighborhood**

Every great neighborhood starts with a handful of neighbors who care. It grows from there through shared goals, open conversations and small steps taken together. Here are a few simple ingredients that can help your neighborhood group thrive and make a lasting impact.

**1. Clear Goals**

Think about what your neighborhood needs most. Is it safer streets? More activities for kids? Better support for older residents? By identifying common challenges, you can begin working on solutions together.

Start by gathering a few neighbors for a casual conversation or meeting. You might be surprised by how many shared concerns—and great ideas—come to the

- surface when people feel heard.
- A few common neighborhood goals might include:**
- » Helping elderly or disabled neighbors with daily needs
  - » Creating youth-led projects (like lawn mowing, alley cleanups, or gardening)
  - » Organizing a neighborhood cleanup or beautification day

Every neighborhood is different, and your group’s goals should reflect the unique strengths and needs of your community.

**2. Input from Neighbors**

One of the most important parts of any neighborhood group is listening. Everyone deserves to feel like their voice matters. That’s why it’s so valuable to create space for neighbors to share ideas, concerns, and experiences.

This can be as simple as:

- » Hosting a neighborhood block party
- » Organizing a small, informal gathering
- » Taking a walk around the neighborhood and chatting with folks on their porches

These moments of connection lay the foundation for real trust and collaboration.

**3. Partnerships**

Look around—your neighborhood might already have some great allies nearby. Whether it’s a park, church, school, or local business, partnerships with nearby organizations can add valuable energy, resources, and reach to your efforts. Ask yourself:

- » Who else cares about our community?
- » How can we team up for a greater impact?

**4. Support**

Some projects (like planting trees, improving accessibility, or hosting events) may require a bit of funding. The good news is: Help is out there!

- » For environmental projects like tree plantings or green spaces, check in with **MACES** (Mayor’s Advisory Council on Environmental Stewardship).
- » For accessibility improvements, **MACCA** (Mayor’s Advisory Council on Community Accessibility) is a helpful resource.
- » And for general neighborhood support, the **Community Foundation of Huntington County** may be able to help with grants or guidance.

By combining your group’s passion with the right partnerships and a little planning, you can do a lot of good—right where you live.

Your neighborhood group can be whatever you want it to be. It might include:

- » Residents from an entire subdivision
- » Neighbors living on a few city blocks or gathered at the end of a cul-de-sac
- » Families and individuals who live near a local park
- » Residents of existing communities like Tree Streets or Hidden Hamlets

There’s no one-size-fits-all model. Some groups hold regular meetings and elect leaders, while others come together more informally—sharing ideas over coffee, chatting during evening walks or organizing occasional events. What matters most is the spirit of connection.

A connected neighborhood is simply a group of neighbors who care enough to come together. These groups become a space to:

- » Build friendships
- » Share information
- » Tackle projects
- » Set shared priorities
- » Celebrate together
- » And support each other, day by day

When neighbors unite, they create a stronger voice—not only within their own streets, but across our whole city. That’s why we also encourage neighborhood leaders to stay in touch with the City of Huntington. When residents speak with one voice, real progress follows.

If you’d like to learn more or get involved, feel free to reach out to the city’s Community Engagement Coordinator at (260) 356-1400 ext. 2003. We host regular gatherings to help neighbors share ideas, find encouragement and build a stronger Huntington, together.

**You Get to Define What ‘Neighborhood’ Means to You**

One of the beautiful things about starting a neighborhood group is that you get to shape it. That begins with deciding what “neighborhood” looks like in your area—it might include a few blocks, a cul-de-sac, or a wider section of your street. Think of these as flexible boundaries, not fixed lines. What matters most is being open and inclusive so that as many neighbors as possible feel welcome to take part.

Once you’ve identified the general area that makes sense for your group, it’s time to start reaching out and letting people know something meaningful is beginning. One of the best ways to do this? Just talk to your neighbors. A

simple conversation can go a long way in building trust and discovering what others care about.

**You might also try:**

- » Hand-delivering friendly flyers
- » Creating a neighborhood Facebook group
- » Posting yard signs
- » Starting an email list to stay connected

Whatever method you choose, be sure to include clear contact information so people know how to learn more or ask questions. The goal is to keep things welcoming and easy to join.

As your circle of interested neighbors grows, the next step is to bring people together. Find a spot that’s nearby, comfortable, and easy for everyone to access—this could be your local library, a coffee shop, a city park, or even someone’s backyard. Encourage folks to invite others, and think about ways to make the gathering inclusive for people of all physical abilities and ages.

And remember—this is a volunteer-led effort. Everyone involved is showing up because they care. The most successful neighborhood groups are built on mutual respect, kindness, and a shared commitment to making life a little better for everyone around them.

You’re not just starting a group—you’re helping build a stronger, more connected community. And that’s something truly special.

**Ideas for Good Communication with Your Neighbors**

Once your neighborhood group is taking shape, it’s helpful to think about how you’ll stay in touch. Good communication keeps everyone informed, included, and involved—and it doesn’t have to be complicated. In fact, some of the simplest methods are often the most effective.

**Here are a few easy ways to connect:**

- » Start an email list
- » Create a social media group
- » Set up a phone tree or group text
- » Drop off flyers at each doorstep
- » Or just have good old-fashioned face-to-face conversations

Whatever you choose, the most important thing is to meet your neighbors where they are. Use the tools that feel natural and accessible for your group, and don’t be afraid to mix a few methods to reach more people.

When you’re getting ready to host a neighborhood





# Resources for Neighborhoods

**A**s your neighborhood grows stronger and more connected, there are many local resources available to support your efforts. Whether you're organizing a project, looking to stay informed or just trying to lend a helping hand, these tools can make a real difference for you and your neighbors.

## Stay in the Loop

### • City Digital Newsletter

Stay updated with the latest Huntington news, events, and resources by subscribing to the city's weekly digital newsletter. It's a great way to stay connected and share updates with your neighborhood group. [Subscribe here.](#)

### • Spanish Newsletter

A translated version of the e-newsletter is posted weekly on the City's website, ensuring all neighbors have access to important updates. [Find it here.](#)

### • City Website

Visit [www.huntington.in.us/city](http://www.huntington.in.us/city) for city news, updates, services, and more—all in one place.

## Neighbor-to-Neighbor Support

### • Block Buddies

Need a hand with yardwork, snow shoveling, or household chores—or know someone who does? The Block Buddies pilot program connects neighbors with friendly volunteers. Reach out to [christina.knecht@huntington.in.us](mailto:christina.knecht@huntington.in.us) or call (260) 224-3867 to learn more.

**WE SERVE  
HUNTINGTON  
WEEKLY  
E-NEWSLETTER**

**Scan code or visit [huntington.in.us/city](http://huntington.in.us/city) to sign up now. Once you do, city news, updates and community information will be sent right to your email inbox!**



**DON'T  
MISS OUT  
- SIGN UP  
NOW!**

### • Seasonal Help Projects

Want to organize a fall leaf-raking or winter snow-shoveling crew? It's a great way to support elderly or disabled neighbors—and an easy project to get local youth involved in giving back.

## Home & Yard Improvements

### • Sidewalk Replacement Program

Need to fix a sidewalk in your neighborhood? The city may cover up to half the cost through its Sidewalk Replacement Program. Apply online or call (260) 356-1400 ext. 2021 for details.

### • Yard Waste Management (Brown Bag Program)

Dispose of yard waste like clippings, twigs, and leaves easily. Bag smaller items in brown paper yard waste bags (sold locally), and place large branches at the curb. Call City Services at (260) 356-4720 to schedule free Tuesday pickup.

### • Orange Sticker Program (Large Item Disposal)

For \$5 per item, the city will haul away bulky items like mattresses, sofas, or appliances. Call (260) 356-4720 to purchase stickers and schedule pickup.

### • Huntington County Solid Waste District

Dispose of hazardous waste, electronics, unused medication, and more responsibly at 515 S 300 W. Call (260) 358-4886 for details.

## Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

### • Garage and Yard Sales

Clean out clutter, help neighbors find useful items, and maybe raise a little money—together! Plan a group sale or swap. Just remember to call the City Clerk's Office at (260) 356-1400 ext. 2019 to get a garage sale permit.

### • Recycling

GFL Environmental provides curbside recycling in Huntington. Visit the city website under Trash & Recycling for guidelines and pickup info.

## Community Growing Together

### • Community Gardens

United With Love, a local nonprofit, leads community gardening efforts at sites across the city. These shared spaces grow food for the neighborhood, by the neighborhood. Want to get involved? Reach out to United With Love or the city's volunteer coordinator to learn more.

## CONTACTS AT CITY HALL

If you're trying to accomplish something new or tackle a neighborhood project, your local government offices can be a helpful place to get started.

### Primary Contact - (260) 356-1400

- » **Mayor's Office**
- » **Clerk-Treasurer's Office**
- » **City Utilities**
- » **Community Development & Redevelopment**
- » **Engineering Services & Public Works**
- » **Parks & Recreation**
- » **Community Engagment & Volunteer Coordinator**
- » **Communications**

### • Farmers Market

Support local growers and enjoy fresh produce every Wednesday, 4–7 p.m., June through October at Evangelical United Methodist Church (1000 Flaxmill Rd).

## Explore & Enjoy

### • Trail Systems

Huntington's paved trails connect neighborhoods, parks, and the heart of the city. Want to go further? Nearby hiking spots include Salamonie Lake, Kokiwanee Nature Preserve, and more. The Huntington Area Recreational Trails Association (HARTA) provides maps and info.

### • Activities for All Ages

From library programs to city-wide events, there's always something happening! Check:

- » The City of Huntington's Meetings & Events Calendar
- » The Huntington City-Township Public Library Events Calendar
- » The Huntington County Visitors Bureau's event listings

These resources are here for you—to help you build the kind of neighborhood where everyone feels supported, included, and proud to live. Whether you're just starting out or looking for your next big idea, you don't have to do it alone. Let's keep working together to make Huntington a place where community truly thrives.