

NEIGHBORHOOD DISTRICTS RESOURCE GUIDE

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Introduction

The Bend Neighborhood Districts are the bridge between the City and the people who call Bend home. Across 13 recognized districts, volunteer boards work to improve quality of life, increase community participation in local decision-making, and build strong partnerships between the City and neighborhood community members.

What informed this guide: This guide was developed in direct response to what Neighborhood Districts shared they needed. In January 2026, the City of Bend hosted a listening session with representatives from all 13 districts. Boards discussed the challenges they face and identified the support they need most around communication, engagement, and organizational priorities. The content of this guide reflects those priorities.

We also recognize the reality: Districts are operating with limited funding, limited volunteer capacity, and limited board membership, along with competing demands on board members' time. This guide provides strategies and tools designed to meet you where you are and help your district thrive—whatever your level of experience and capacity.

What this guide covers: Each section focuses on a specific communication channel, engagement method, or area of organizational support. You can read this guide section by section or jump to what's most relevant to you:

- *Communications and Engagement Foundations*
- *Website*
- *Newsletter*



- *Social Media*
- *Surveys*
- *Event Planning*
- *Physical Materials*
- *Organizational Support*

Most sections include:

- *Before You Start*: important context to help you plan
- *Getting Started*: how to set up or get going
- *Best Practices*: guidance on doing it well
- *Measuring Success*: how to know it's working
- *Level-up*: additional strategies if your district has extra capacity
- Examples for inspiration
- Templates of tools to download and use

Look for two callouts throughout the guide:

TIP: Additional considerations to help elevate your work.

City Support Available identifies what support the City can directly provide. Anything beyond what is noted is the district's responsibility. For questions not answered by this guide, reach out to the City's Communications and Engagement Department.

A Note on Funding: Your district receives funding from the City to support communications, engagement, and operations—delivered in the form of reimbursements. Before diving in, familiarize yourself with what expenses are eligible. Visit the [City's website for information on eligible and ineligible expenses](#).

Communications and Engagement Foundations

Best Practices for Communications and Engagement

These are best practices to follow for informative, equitable, and effective communications and engagement. These principles apply to all channels and methods. Keep them in mind as you delve into each section.

Use multiple channels to provide and gather information: Use a mix of physical and digital communication and engagement methods to reach a wider audience and meet people where they are.

Consistency is key: Share information consistently and ensure consistency across channels. Establish one channel as the main "source of truth"—such as your website or newsletter—and have other channels point to it.

Be strategic, focusing on quality over quantity. You don't need to be everywhere, posting all the time. Choose your methods strategically and go where people are. It's better to use a few channels well rather than trying to be everywhere at once.



Strong messaging and repetition: Neighborhoods and community members are always changing. Keep your district brand identity and messaging consistent. Use a layered approach to communicating information—reminders are key!

Closing the loop: Whenever you seek feedback from the community—via a survey, engagement activity at an event, or anything else—is it absolutely essential to follow up with the community after to let them know how that input was used. This is key to building trust and encouraging future participation.

Standardized tools and systems: Create systems and processes that board members can access and use, and be sure to document them! Visit Organizational Support for more tips.

Equitable engagement: Often the same engaged community members will show up to district activities, but this isn't always representative of the larger community. Use an equity-based approach prioritizing outreach to underrepresented groups. Here are some strategies:

- Gather demographic information in your area if available. Who have we engaged in the past? Who is missing?
- Go where people are, rather than expecting them to come to you. Consider hosting events in spaces people already frequent or collaborate with existing community or school events.
- Address barriers to participation. Be mindful of event timing and avoid religious or cultural holidays. Provide multiple ways to engage—such as joining virtually or in person—and hold activities at various times to avoid excluding any group.
- Seek out local knowledge and contacts. Reach out to community leaders and collaborate with them to help reach and engage underrepresented audiences.
- Provide translated materials. Whenever you are promoting an event or seeking feedback, be sure to offer translated materials based on the demographics of your neighborhood, or include information on how to access translations

City Support Available: *The City can help connect you with interpretation and translation vendors. Visit the [Language Assistance Services](#) webpage for more information.*

Overview of Communication Channels

There are a variety of different digital and physical tools available to your district for communicating with and engaging community members. Choose the ones that work for you and your capacity—don't feel pressure to do it all. Start small and scale as you are able. Consistency and quality are key.

TIP: When creating accounts on third-party platforms (e.g., website builders or social media site), don't use your personal email address to setup or manage accounts. Instead, use a district general address such as "info@[districtname].com or "info.[districtname]@outlook.com."



Types of Content and How They Work Together

Table 1 provides an overview of each channel and its strengths. The sections that follow provide a detailed explanation of each, including best practices and examples.

Table 1: Communications Channels

Channel	Strengths
Website	The central hub for all Neighborhood District resources, information, and updates.
Newsletter	The consistent, reliable monthly source of district news. The best way for community members to stay up to date with upcoming events, engagement opportunities, and other happenings.
Social Media	Visual-forward communications, event promotion and reminders, and event recaps. Good for timely updates between newsletters.
Physical Materials	Reaching community members who are not online. Additional event promotion and information sharing.

Content Strategy: Start with a strong foundation of a website and regular newsletter. Then, if you have the capacity, use social media and physical materials to supplement these channels.

Creating a Content Calendar

To keep track of your communications and maintain consistent outreach, use a content calendar. A content calendar is an internal planning tool, often a spreadsheet, used to plan and manage all content and communications shared with your community. Even a basic spreadsheet calendar works well.

The City has provided a [Content Calendar](#) to get you started. Create a copy and adjust the structure and categories to fit your needs.

What to include on your content calendar:

- Website posts and updates
- Newsletters, organized by send date
- Social media posts, organized by planned publish date
- Physical materials, organized by distribution date
- Any other communications you plan to share

How to use it:

- Plan content by adding information to rows on the spreadsheet and filling in the details for each communication
- Create a new calendar each fiscal year, and save past calendars in your shared drive for reference—avoid deleting rows once content has been shared, as these are helpful to look back on



- If you use tools like the [Social Media Post Planner](#), hyperlink them in the Link to Assets column

TIP: Review the content calendar during your monthly board meeting and plan content for the coming month. For districts with limited capacity, planning even one month ahead is a win!

Recommended categories to include:

- Date to post or share, listed chronologically
- Working title
- Status (e.g., concept, drafting, needs review, scheduled, sent/posted)
- Content type or format
- Assigned to (who is responsible)
- Link to assets (copy, images, drafts)

The Example tab in the [Content Calendar](#) includes a sample content plan for promoting a Neighborhood District-organized event.

Website

Your website is the central hub where community members can find information, resources, and updates about your Neighborhood District. A thoughtfully organized, up-to-date website keeps the community informed, establishes your district's identity, and makes it easy—and therefore appealing—for people to get involved.

Before You Start: Understanding Your Web Presence

Every Neighborhood District is automatically given a webpage on the City's website with basic information; this is your foundation. We recommend building on that foundation with your own independent website, depending on your capacity.

Your City-Managed Webpage

Your City webpage follows a standardized format. Neighborhood Districts provide the content, and the City maintains the page. It will include:

- Landing page with mission or purpose statement
- District location and map
- Newsletter sign up
- Latest news and updates
- Links to social media platforms
- Contact information and current board membership
- Land use contract
- Link to independently managed district website (if applicable)



You will not be able to edit your page directly—all changes must be submitted through the City. Use the City's form to submit content updates: bendoregon.gov/neighborhood-districts/update-request/.

Maintaining Your Own Website (Recommended)

The City's page is a great starting point for community members to learn about your district—but because it does not include recurring meeting information, an events calendar, or agendas, minutes, and other key documents, we strongly recommend building and maintaining your own independent website. It's the most reliable way to ensure community members can find this essential information in one place, and gives you greater flexibility over design, content, and structure overall.

If you already have an independent website, you don't have to start from scratch. You can continue using it alongside the City's page or assess and improve what you already have. See [Revamping Your Current Website](#) below for guidance.

If Building Your Own Site Isn't Feasible Right Now

We recognize that maintaining an independent website requires time and resources that not every district has, and that's okay. If managing your own site isn't possible right now, make sure community members can still access essential information through other channels:

- **E-newsletter:** Include your recurring meeting schedule, upcoming agendas, and event details in every issue.
- **Social media:** Post monthly upcoming event overviews, and individual reminders about upcoming events and meetings.

Getting Started: Setting Up Your Website

To set up or continue managing your own website, you'll need to choose a website builder platform and a domain name. We recommend [Wix](#) as a user-friendly option with a variety of templates you can customize with your district's colors, logo, and content.

For your domain name, choose something that clearly identifies you as a Neighborhood District, such as [www.\[Name\]NeighborhoodDistrictBend.com](http://www.[Name]NeighborhoodDistrictBend.com) or [www.\[Name\]Bend.com](http://www.[Name]Bend.com)

TIP: If you already have a website and are planning to revamp or switch platforms, keep your existing domain name to avoid confusing community members.

Best Practices: Creating a Strong Website

The most important thing that your website can do is be reliable. Here's what to include and how to keep it updated.



What to Include

Think of the City's page as the baseline, not the limit, for what to include on your own website. Because the City's page doesn't include meeting schedules, agendas, or event information, community members will visit your site in search of this content. Make sure it's easy to find.

Table 2 outlines a recommended website structure. Not every district needs all these pages, but it's a strong starting point. Content marked with * goes beyond what is included on the City page.

Table 2: Web Content

Section	Content
Homepage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• District name, logo*, and photo or video*• Mission or purpose statement• Recurring meeting information*• Newsletter sign-up link
About	<p>District overview (subpage)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brief history*• How to stay informed and get involved <p>The board (subpage)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Current board members and roles• Monthly meeting date, time, and location*• Bylaws and policies*• Contact information for board leaders and City councilors <p>Neighborhood overview* (subpage)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Amenities (parks, trails, businesses, schools)• Defining characteristics or history• Neighborhood-specific maps
Calendar*	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Upcoming District-organized events and meetings*• City or agency engagement opportunities* (e.g., open houses, land use meetings)*• Local volunteer opportunities* <p><i>For all events, include date, time, location, and RSVP or sign-up link (if applicable).</i></p>
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Newsletter sign up link, and archive of past issues*• Past meeting minutes and agendas• Emergency preparedness or other neighborhood-specific resources*
Get Involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Subscribe to newsletter• Attend a board meeting or join the board• Volunteer locally*• Attend district events*• Contact information• Donate button, if 501(c)(3)*
Footer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contact information• Social media links



Section	Content
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Newsletter sign-up link• Donate button (if applicable)

TIP: Visit the City’s website regularly and subscribe to local project email lists to stay up to date on upcoming engagement opportunities to add to your calendar.

Web Design and Writing Tips

- **Lead with the most essential information.** Think from the perspective of a community member. What are they looking for, and how can your site make it easy to find?
- **Write in plain language.** Avoid jargon and technical terms. Write for your audience.
- **Make the design visually appealing.** Use photos, videos, color, and white space. Avoid visual clutter.
- **Keep fonts and colors simple.** Choose two or three that are easy to read and use them consistently throughout your site.
- **Make it mobile-friendly.** Test how your website looks on different screen sizes before publishing (e.g., computer, phone, or tablet) and adjust as needed.
- **Ensure accessibility.** There are many design choices that can make your website easier to navigate both visually and with a screen reader. For more information, visit the ADA website for [guidance on web accessibility](#). Key practices include:
 - High color contrast
 - Alt text for images
 - Captions on videos
 - Descriptive links (e.g., “Learn more about our next meeting” instead of “click here”)
 - Keyboard navigation

Keeping Your Site Up to Date

Use this checklist to stay on top of regular maintenance:

Weekly

- ✓ Add urgent announcements or update the announcement banner
- ✓ Check and respond to board emails

Monthly

- ✓ Update the events calendar with upcoming meetings and engagement opportunities
- ✓ Upload the latest newsletter issue
- ✓ Upload new meeting agendas and minutes
- ✓ Check for broken or outdated links

Quarterly

- ✓ Add photos or videos from recent events



Yearly

- ✓ Remove or reorganize outdated content
- ✓ Review the site for accessibility
- ✓ Update board member list and contact information
- ✓ Refresh major documents (bylaws, policies)
- ✓ Back up the website and store it securely

TIP: Designate one board member to own website maintenance—including regular updates and leading larger reviews. Use the [Roles and Responsibilities Template](#) to keep track.

Revamping Your Current Website

If you have an existing self-managed website you'd like to update, here's a simple framework:

1. **Assess what you have:** Review each page and note what's outdated, missing, or unclear
2. **Compare against the recommended structure:** What's working well? What gaps exist?
3. **Create a priority list:** Identify the most critical changes and tackle those first
4. **Make updates incrementally:** You don't have to redo everything at once

Measuring Success: Metrics and More

Most website builder platforms, including Wix, provide analytics to help you understand how people are using your site. Key metrics include:

- **Traffic:** number of visitors, unique visitors, and where they're coming from (direct, social media, search engine)
- **Behavior:** page views and top-performing pages
- **Actions:** form submissions (event RSVPs, newsletter sign-ups) and board contact

Review these periodically and look for patterns. Which pages are performing well, and how can you apply those lessons elsewhere?

Broader signs that your website is working include:

- Increased attendance at district-organized events and City engagement opportunities
- Continued growth in newsletter sign-ups
- Fewer questions from community members about basic information

Level-up: Amplifying Your Website

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

SEO is the practice of structuring your website so it appears higher in search results, helping more community members find your page organically. This isn't expected of every district—but if you have the capacity, it's worth exploring.



Neighborhood Blog or Newsfeed

A blog or newsfeed lets you share neighborhood stories, news, and updates beyond specific event promotion, helping you bring neighborhood activity to life on your website. Wix makes it easy to add a blog to your existing site.

Newsletter

By delivering information directly to community members on a consistent, predictable schedule, a regular newsletter is one of the most effective ways to reach and engage your community. Community members should be able to rely on the newsletter as their go-to source for district happenings.

Monthly e-newsletter. It's more cost-effective than a printed newsletter (no printing or mailing costs), allows you to hyperlink resources, and keeps information timely and relevant. A consistent bi-monthly newsletter works too.

TIP: To reach community members without email, consider offering a print opt-in list. Only send paper copies to those who request them to keep printing costs down.

Before Your Start: Choose Your Distribution Option

While it's possible to manage your email list manually, we recommend using a distribution platform like [Mailchimp](#), which allows you to collect email sign-ups, design, and send emails to your community all in one place.

You have two options for distributing your newsletter:

Option 1: City-Managed Mailchimp Account

The City uses Mailchimp for newsletter distribution and can send newsletters on your behalf. Contact the Communications and Engagement Department for assistance.

- The process:
 - Neighborhood Districts share newsletter content with the City's Communications and Engagement Department
 - The City adds content into their pre-designed template
 - The City distributes the newsletter to the district's email list
- Considerations:
 - The City will have access to your email list
 - Saves Neighborhood Districts time and money
 - Less flexibility over newsletter design and layout

Option 2: Self-Managed Newsletter

Alternatively, you can design and distribute your own newsletter independently.

- The process:
 - You draft and send your own content



- You manage your own email list
- Considerations:
 - Full autonomy over design and your email list
 - Requires more time and budget

TIP: Mailchimp’s free version supports up to 250 contacts. As your list grows, you can use your district funding to upgrade to the Standard Plan at \$20/month. Visit [Getting Started with Mailchimp](#) to get started.

City Support Available: Even if you choose to manage your own newsletter, the City is still available to provide technical support.

NOTE: The City of Bend presented newsletter distribution options to the districts at the May 29 meeting. The next step is for the City to meet with Neighborhood District board members who manage the newsletter to review additional options.

Getting Started: Building Your Subscriber List

Your newsletter is only as effective as your subscriber list, so growing it should be an ongoing priority. Your website and other channels should consistently encourage people to sign up, and position the newsletter as the best way to stay up to date on neighborhood happenings.

Ways to grow your list:

- Include sign-up links on all major channels, including your website and social media bios
- Promote sign-ups at board meetings and district events
- Distribute posters with a QR code to sign-up at high-traffic locations in your neighborhood

TIP: Your subscriber list can also be used for time-sensitive communications outside the newsletter—such as event follow-ups, traffic notices, or urgent updates. However, use this sparingly to avoid spamming community members.

Best Practices: Creating Your Newsletter

Keep your newsletter focused on content that is directly relevant to your community and prioritize what will have the greatest impact on community members.

Design tips for maximum effectiveness:

- Use a consistent structure and template: use the same format every issue so readers know what to expect
- Lead with the most important, time-sensitive information
- Use headers, bullet points, and short paragraphs to make content easy to scan
- Match your branding: use logos and fonts consistent with your website and social media
- Include visuals: a photo or graphic for each item makes the newsletter more engaging
- Write in plain language



- Use hyperlinks liberally: link to your website, the City's site, event RSVPs, sign up forms, and more. This keeps the newsletter clean while giving readers easy access to additional information.

TIP: Most newsletter platforms offer pre-designed templates. Start there and customize with your district's colors, fonts, and other branding.

What to Include

- Time-sensitive updates
- Upcoming events and meetings
- City and agency engagement opportunities
- Neighborhood news
- Closing the loop—What We Heard
- Contact information

TIP: Build a template you can update each month without starting from scratch.

Example Event Promotion:

[Neighborhood District] May 2026 Monthly Board Meeting

Tuesday, May 12, 2026 | 7-8 p.m. | [INSERT] Community Center

Join the [Neighborhood District] Board for our monthly meeting, open to all community members. We will discuss [INSERT agenda items].

No RSVP required. We look forward to seeing you there!

TIP: Archive past newsletter issues on your website so community members can reference them anytime.



Example of online open house promotion in the Orchard District April 2026 newsletter.

ONLINE OPEN HOUSES



NOW is the time to contribute to the conversation!

Virtual open houses are currently open for TWO major projects:

Midtown Crossings Project - Franklin Avenue

- Read updates on the project.
- Learn more about the upcoming changes to Franklin Avenue.
- Review the initial timeline for construction.

[Click to Participate on the Franklin Ave Open House](#)

Hawthorne Connections Study

- Learn about the study and why it is needed.
- Explore potential biking and pedestrian improvements for Hawthorne Avenue and Harriman Street.
- Share your priorities for these future improvements.

[Click to Participate on the Hawthorne Connections Study](#)

Managing and Maintaining Your Subscriber List

Keeping your subscriber list clean saves money, reduces spam risk, and leads to more accurate reports.

To clean your list, periodically:

- Remove invalid or bounced email addresses
- Delete duplicate contacts
- Archive contacts who have been inactive for a long time

Measuring Success: An Engaged Subscriber List

One measure of success is how people engage with your newsletter. Mailchimp's email reports dashboard lets you track how your audience engages with each issue, including open rates, clicks, and unsubscribes. Review these after each issue is distributed and look for patterns over time.

Beyond analytics, broader signs of success include:

- Increased attendance at events
- Growth in sign-ups for engagement and volunteer opportunities
- Fewer questions about where to find information



Level-up: Doing More With Your Subscriber List

Segmenting Your List

In Mailchimp, you can use tags to organize your contacts into groups. Tags let you send targeted messages to a specific segment of your audience or view reports filtered by group. For example, you might tag people who attended a specific event, so you can follow up with them directly to thank them for attending.

Social Media

You've probably heard you "should" be on social media, but social media only works if community members are using it, and you have the capacity to maintain it. When used effectively, social media can help you promote events, share timely updates, connect community members with engagement opportunities, and build a shared neighborhood identity. That said, several Neighborhood Districts engage their community successfully without any social media presence, relying instead on newsletters and websites.

If you choose to use social media, start with one platform and do it well, rather than spreading limited capacity across multiple. Whatever platforms you use, your website and e-newsletter should remain your main sources of truth; social media works best to supplement, not replace, these channels.

Before You Start: Assessing Your Capacity

Before creating or expanding your social media presence, ask yourself:

- Are community members already using this platform?
- *Do we have time to post regularly (at least once a month)?*
- Can someone monitor comments or messages and respond when needed?
- Is that person capable of using the platform's tools?

If your answer to any of these is "no," focus your efforts on your website and newsletter first. You can always add social media later when capacity allows.

If you answered yes to all three, great! Continue to the next section to choose your platform and get started.

Getting Started: Choosing a Platform

The most important factor in choosing a platform is your audience—go where your community is already. The January 2026 listening session with the Neighborhood Districts found that most districts use Facebook as their primary social media platform, with fewer districts using Instagram or Nextdoor.

TIP: Survey community members to find out which platforms they use and check regularly.



City Support Available: The City can provide graphic design support for your posts. Reach out to the City's Communications and Engagement Department to request assistance. Planning and sharing content, and managing your account, remain the responsibility of your Neighborhood District.

Overview of Social Platforms

Table 3 outlines the most common social media platforms for Neighborhood Districts, and how each can support your communications and engagement goals. The time investment of each channel will vary depending on your posting frequency. View the [Event Checklist](#) for recommended posting frequencies when using social media to promote your event.

Table 3: Commonly Used Social Media Platforms

Platform	Typical Audience	Best Used For
Facebook	Broad, older audiences	Event promotion, sharing updates and resources
Instagram	Younger audiences, visual preference	Visuals (graphics, photos, videos), event promotions, event recaps
Nextdoor	Hyperlocal, neighborhood members	Event and meeting notices, reminders, announcements

Platform Guidance

Facebook is the most versatile option for Neighborhood Districts. It supports text, images, video, and resharing, and has strong event promotion tools, including the ability to create an "event," collect RSVPs, send reminders, and reshare other page's events.

- **Pages vs. Groups:** We recommend setting up a **Facebook Page**, where only administrators can post, and community members can comment. In Groups, anyone can post. Based on an assessment of existing Neighborhood District accounts, most Groups tend to become dominated by spam or self-promotion. If you want a community discussion space, consider creating a Group in addition to your official Page, not instead of it.

TIP: If you reshare another page's event, be sure to add your own comment to the post. For example, "Check out this engagement opportunity with the City of Bend!"

Southern Crossing Neighborhood Reshares a Tree Planting Opportunity from Deschutes Public Library



Southern Crossing Neighborhood Association

February 25 · 🌍

How cool is this! [Deschutes Public Library](#) is helping kids plant more trees in Bend! Here are the details on how kids can get a free tree!



Deschutes Public Library

February 23 · 🌍

Earth Week is almost here! 🌍🌱

To celebrate, we've partnered with Neighborhood Forest's annual Free Trees for Kids program. Register by March 15 to receive a free tree t... [See more](#)

Instagram is visual-first. Posts appear in a feed or grid of images and graphic designs, making it particularly popular with younger audiences. In the context of Neighborhood Districts, it works best as a complement to Facebook—not a standalone channel. Use Instagram for event promotion graphics, event recaps (photos or short videos), and building neighborhood identity. Keep captions short; detailed information belongs on your website or Facebook.

Nextdoor is designed for neighborhood-level communication, with content tied to geography. Think of it as a digital bulletin board: best for meeting announcements, reminders, and directing community members to more information elsewhere.

Table 4: Sample Social Media Priorities for a Neighborhood District

Channel	Role
Website and newsletter	Main source of truth
Facebook	Primary social channel
Instagram	Visual amplification
Nextdoor	Hyperlocal reminders and notices

TIP: We recommend that Neighborhood Districts share similar content across platforms to support consistent, frequent posting. For example, if you post about an event on Facebook, share a simplified version on Instagram and Nextdoor (see the [Event Checklist](#) for more details on promotional strategy). Consistency is key!

Best Practices: Creating Effective Posts

Keep it simple. Each post should have one clear message, a strong visual, and a clear call to action. Quality matters more than quantity: a few well-crafted posts will do more to engage the community than many hasty ones.

For every post, ask:

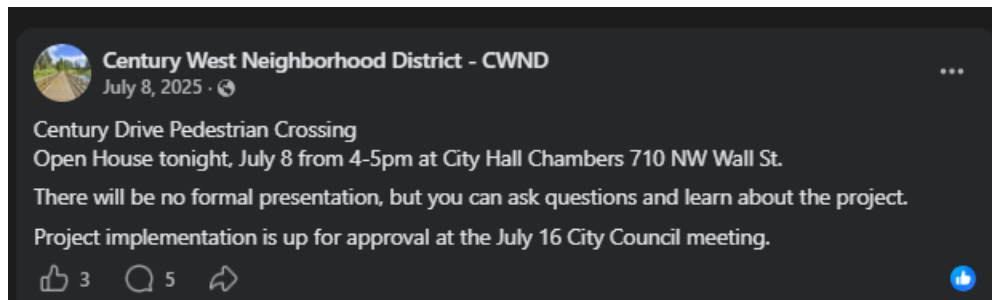
- Who is this for?
- What do we want them to do?
- Where can they learn more?

Use the [Social Media Post Planner](#) to plan your posts before you write them.

Message

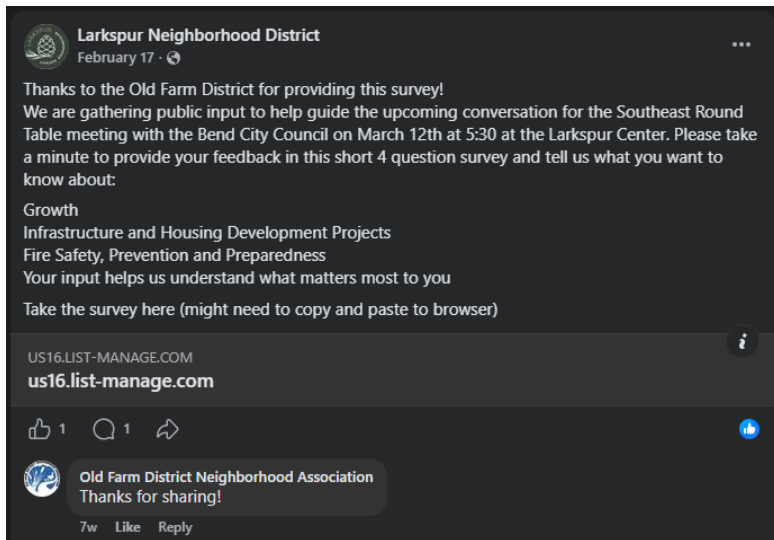
Lead with the most important information (who/what/when/where/how to engage) and provide links to additional details rather than cramming everything into the caption. For example: "Visit [website] to learn more."

Example of clear, succinct copy for day-of event reminder on Facebook:

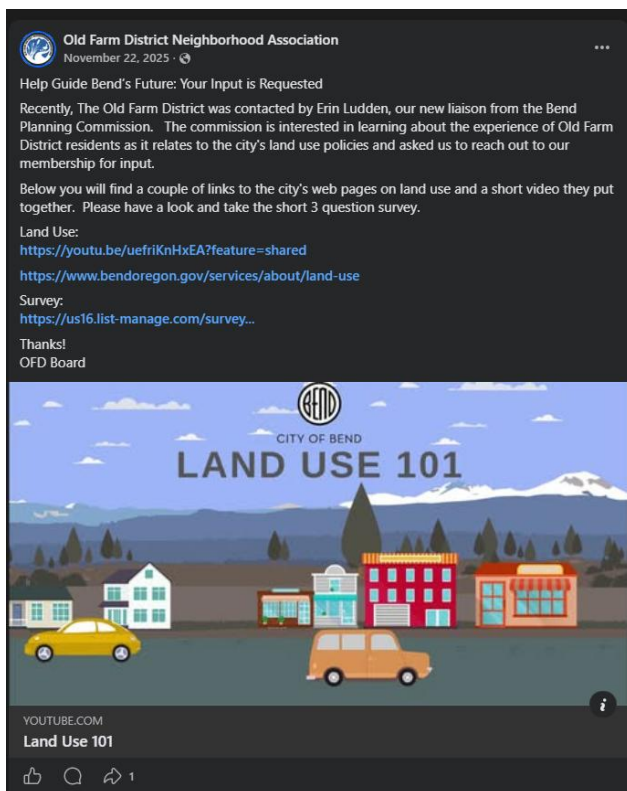




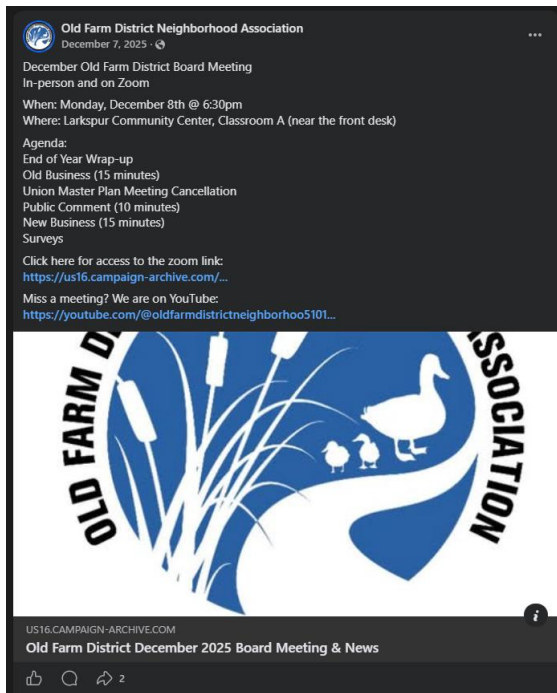
Example of survey promotion on Facebook and collaboration between Neighborhood Districts:



Example of survey promotion post on Facebook that links out to more information, rather than overwhelming the copy:



Example of board meeting promotion on Facebook that provides key details and links out to additional resources:



Visuals

Social media is a visual medium. An eye-catching graphic can stop someone from scrolling past your post. Each post should include an image or graphic that communicates the key information at a glance. Aim for **simple, colorful graphics with minimal text**, and use the caption for additional details.

Example of event promotion graphic on Facebook that is visually engaging, easy to read, and provides key information at a glance:

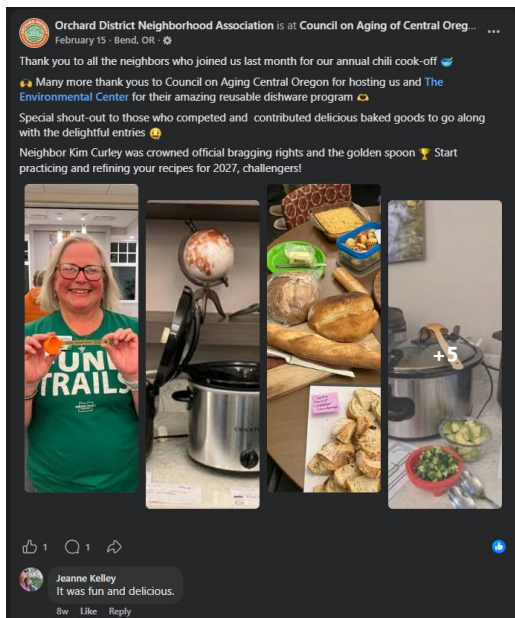




Example of Instagram graphic promoting multiple “upcoming events” that is easy to read and provides key information at a glance:

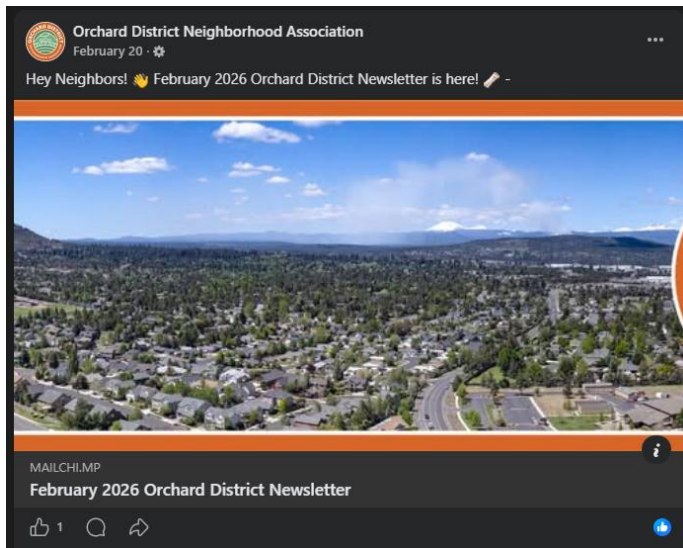


Example of event recap on Facebook with photos:





Example of monthly e-newsletter promotion on Facebook:



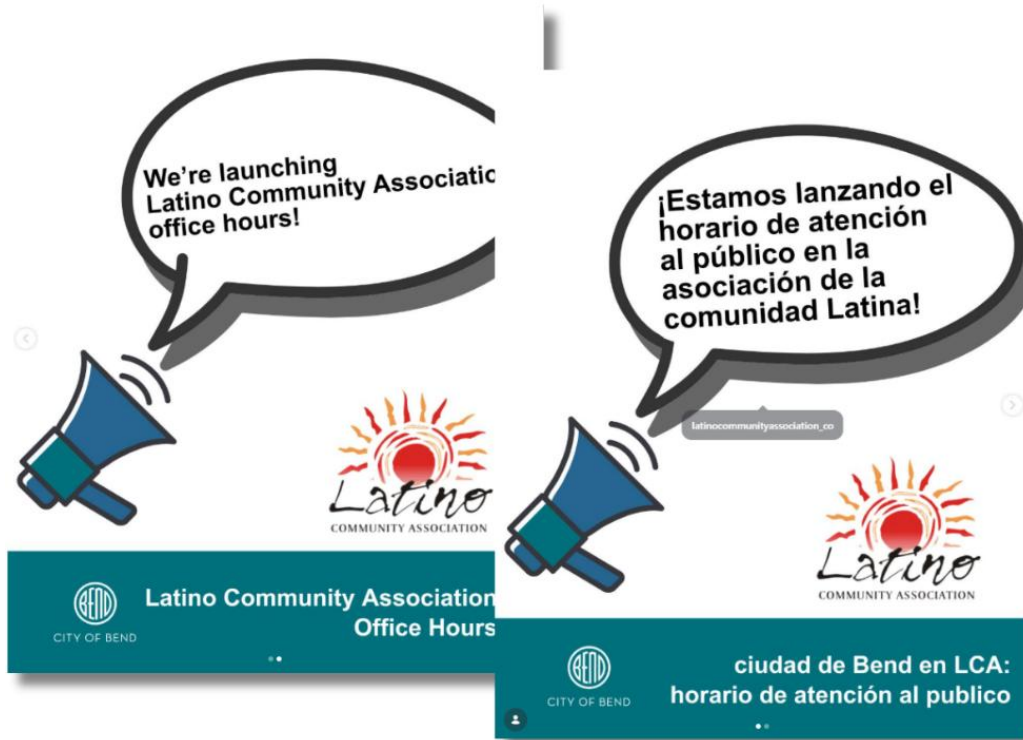
Free graphic design tools like [Canva](#) are easy to use and offer ready-made social media templates you can customize with your Neighborhood District's colors and information.

Accessibility: Making posts accessible ensures everyone can engage with your content:

- High color contrast between text and background
- Alt text on images (a brief description of what the image shows, available to add when posting)
- Closed captions on videos
- Avoid all caps
- Shorten URLs using a tool like [Bitly](#)
- If your neighborhood has non-English-speaking community members, consider translating captions or creating graphics in multiple languages.



Examples of Instagram posts from the City of Bend, in multiple languages



Tagging and Hashtags



- Tag partner organizations, city agencies, or local businesses that appear in your posts. This makes your post visible to their followers as well as your own, expanding your reach and helping build relationships with community partners.
- Adding relevant hashtags makes your post discoverable to people who don't already follow you but are searching for or following those topics (e.g., #BendOregon #[NeighborhoodName] #CommunityEngagement).

TIP: Use the [Content Calendar](#) to plan your posts in advance and stay consistent. Use the [Social Media Post Planner](#) to draft your posts and hyperlink this document in your content calendar for easy access.

Using Social Media for Event Promotion

Social media is most effective for reinforcing event awareness, not as your sole promotion method. Use it to build a layered approach: an initial announcement, reminders as the event approaches, and a recap afterward.

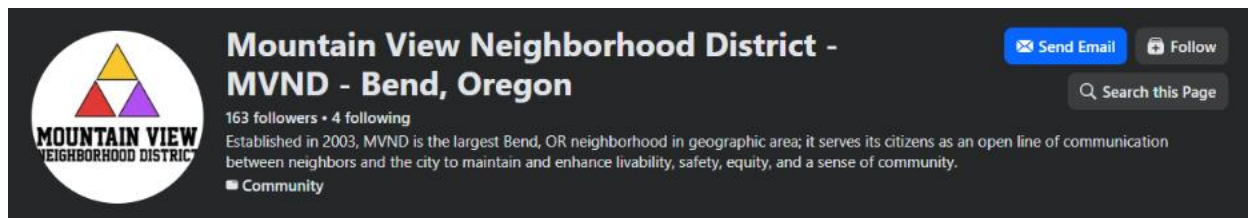
See the [Event Checklist](#) tool for recommended timing and frequency.

Managing Your Accounts

Setup basics:

1. Choose a clear, consistent name across platforms that identifies you as a Neighborhood District.
 - Display Name: *[Neighborhood Name] Neighborhood District, Bend OR*
 - Handle: *@[neighborhood] or @[neighborhood]Bend*
2. Profile photo: your Neighborhood District logo
3. In your bio, include:
 - Short slogan, mission, or purpose statement
 - Dates/times of regularly scheduled open board meetings
 - Link to your website or link-in-bio tool (see "Level Up" below)
4. Document all usernames, passwords, and recovery emails in a secure, shared location.

Example of Facebook header with clear district name, mission in bio, and logo profile picture:





Example of Instagram bio with clear district name, mission in bio, and logo profile picture:



Dividing responsibilities: Identify who on your team is responsible for each of these key functions:

- Writing and designing content
- Scheduling and sharing the posts
- Monitoring and responding to comments and messages

Recognizing that districts often have limited capacity, it's okay if one person handles multiple—or even all—of these tasks. The key is to clearly define who owns them. Use the [Roles and Responsibilities Tracker](#) to help divide responsibilities among your board members.

Responding to the Community

Social media is a two-way channel: users can comment on your posts and send direct messages. This is an opportunity to build trust and show that your district is responsive and engaged. A few tips:

- Keep responses timely, friendly, and brief
- Direct detailed questions to your website or email, following with additional information as needed
- Avoid engaging in comment disputes and invite people to follow-up via phone or email for concerns that need more discussion

Upholding community standards: As the account administrator, you have the right to hide or delete comments that violate community standards and report accounts engaging in harassment, spam, or harmful content (Table 5).

Table 5: Example Comments and Neighborhood District Responses

Comment	Response
"I am planning to attend."	"We look forward to seeing you there!"
"How do I register?"	"Registration details are available on our website: [link]."
"I don't agree with this."	"We'd love to hear more. Please reach out to us at [email]."
"This is a problem in our neighborhood."	"Thank you for raising this. Please contact us at [email] so we can follow up."



Measuring Success: An Expansive Definition

Success on social media does not mean high follower counts or viral posts. For Neighborhood Districts, success might look like:

- More people showing up to events
- Increased website traffic
- Higher newsletter sign-ups
- Fewer repeated questions

Analytics

Each platform provides some basic analytics to help you understand how your posts are performing (Table 6). You don't need to dive deep—just pay attention to patterns over time.

Table 6: Social Media Platform Analytics

Facebook	Instagram	Nextdoor
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reach• Impressions• Engagement (likes, comments, shares)• Link clicks• Post and page insights dashboard	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reach• Impressions• Engagement (likes, comments, shares, saves)• Link clicks (for paid/boosted posts)• Profile visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• View counts per post• Reactions and comments <p><i>Link click data is not available for standard posts on Nextdoor</i></p>

Tracking Post Performance

Track which posts get the most engagement and do more of what works. Some questions to guide you:

- Which types of posts get the most interaction? (e.g., event announcements, reminders, City reshares, recaps, etc.)
- What days or times do posts perform best?
- Which posts lead to clicks, event attendance, or sign-ups?

Use these insights to adjust your post timing, content type (design, copy, etc.), and platform focus. Even small observations can help you improve the effectiveness of your content over time.

TIP: Consider keeping a simple log or spreadsheet to track top-performing posts and note what worked. Include columns like: date/time, platform, topic, format, engagement, link clicks (if available), and notes on what seemed to work.

Level-up: Elevating Your Social Game

Scheduling Tools

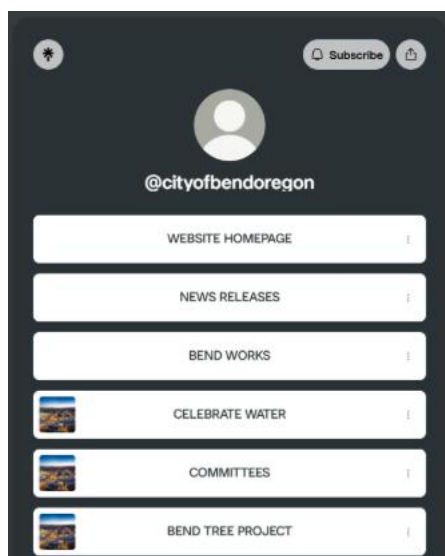
A social media scheduler lets you plan and schedule posts go to live in advance, saving time and improving consistency. [Buffer](#) offers a free plan worth exploring.

Link-in-Bio Tools

While Facebook and Nextdoor allow you to include links in post copy, Instagram does not, meaning users can't click links directly from posts. Link-in-bio tools are especially useful on Instagram for this reason.

Add a [Linktree](#) or similar tool to your profile so community members can easily find important information—your website, newsletter sign-up, event RSVP links—all in one place. This makes it easier for people to access what they need and take action. Update your links regularly, especially after events have passed.

Example of a City of Bend Linktree page



Organic vs. Paid Social Posts

Every post you share on social media is organic by default (free to post and visible to your followers' feeds). However, if you have budget to spend, you can pay to promote a post or run a targeted ad. Both options extend your reach to people who don't already follow your page (Table 7).

Table 7: Overview of Paid Content

Post type	What it is	When to use
Boosted posts	Paid promotion of an existing organic post, extending its reach beyond your current followers.	Visibility and awareness. Best for amplifying a post to reach a broader audience. Examples:



Post type	What it is	When to use
	Functions like a regular post, but allows a call-to-action button.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Promoting an upcoming event to encourage attendancePromoting an informational post to build awareness around a project or initiative
Targeted ads	Advertisements shown to specific audiences based on location, demographics, or interests. Ads appear in feeds but do not need to live on your page. Key feature: You can include direct links and strong calls to action.	Best when you want a specific audience to take a clear action. Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Encouraging people in your neighborhood to join the district boardSharing a survey link and encouraging responsesPromoting RSVPs for an event related to a local project

How to Set Up Paid Content

To run paid content, you do not need a full Business Manager setup, but you do need:

- A Facebook page (not a personal profile)
- An Instagram professional account (Business or Creator). Visit Meta's website to learn how to "[Set up a professional Instagram account](#)"
- Meta Ads Manager (for targeted ads only)
- A connected payment method on your Meta account

Boost a Post (Quick and Simple)

1. Share the post on your chosen platform
2. Go to your published post, and click "Boost" (Facebook) or "Promote" (Instagram)
3. Choose your goal (e.g., engagement, website visits)
4. Add or edit a call-to-action button/URL if needed
5. Select your audience (automatic or custom location/demographics)
6. Set your budget and duration
7. Review and publish

Create a Targeted Ad (More Control)

1. Log into [Meta Ads Manager](#)
2. Click "Create" and choose an objective (e.g., awareness, engagement, event RSVPs)
3. Define your audience (location, age, interests, gender, etc.)
4. Set your budget and schedule
5. Create your ad (image/video, text, link, call-to-action)
6. Review and click "Publish"
7. Monitor performance in Ads Manager (key metrics: reach, link clicks, cost per result)



TIP: Before creating any paid content, clearly define your goal, audience, and budget. This makes it easier to choose between a boosted post and targeted ad, and measure success afterward.

Surveys

Surveys are one of the most flexible and reliable tools a Neighborhood District has for gathering input directly from the community. They can be administered in a variety of formats—online, by mail, or in-person—and customized to fit your districts' specific goals and needs.

Neighborhood Districts are required to conduct an annual survey of district membership to maintain recognition in the City's code. The City provides a free [SurveyPlanet](#) account to support this requirement.

Beyond fulfilling this requirement, surveys are a valuable opportunity to prioritize neighborhood projects, understand community members' experiences and concerns, and track changes in attitudes or demographics over time. Asking the same core questions every year allows you to monitor trends and show how the neighborhood is evolving.

Before You Start: Understanding the Survey Lifecycle

While the survey might feel "done" once responses are collected, data collection is only the middle of the process. Every step matters:

Plan > Design > Share > Analyze > Report Back

- **Plan:** Define your goals, decide how you'll administer the survey, and make sure you have the capacity to follow through
- **Design:** Write clear, unbiased questions and organize the survey in a way that's easy to understand
- **Share:** Distribute the survey through the right channels, at the right time, to reach as many people as possible
- **Analyze:** Review results carefully and look for meaningful patterns, not just what you may have expected to see
- **Report:** Share what you heard with the community and decision-makers

The rest of this section walks through each of these steps.

Getting Started: Planning Your Survey

Deciding to Survey

A strong survey answers key questions and produces data you can act on. Before writing a single question, consider:

- **Why are you doing this survey?**



- What questions are you trying to answer?
- What information would help your Neighborhood District better serve your community?
- How will you use the survey data?
- **Do you have someone who can analyze results and share them with the community?**
- Collecting data without using or sharing it can undermine trust. Make sure you can follow through and “close the loop” with the community.

A note on survey fatigue. Community members are often asked by multiple organizations to complete surveys. Be thoughtful about when and how often you survey. Long surveys also reduce participation, so focus only on questions you truly need answered. Each survey should have a clear purpose and plan for what will happen with the data.

Choosing a Format

Choose the format—or combination of formats—that best fits your district’s capacity and your community’s needs (Table 8).

Table 8: Survey Formats

Format	How it Works	Considerations
Online	Using a platform such as SurveyPlanet (free through the City) or Google or Microsoft Forms, depending on which file-sharing platform your district uses	Easy to analyze; may exclude people without internet access
Mail	A paper survey people return by mail or drop off at a designated location	Guaranteed to reach more people; slower and harder to process; must pay for printing and postage
In-person	Collecting responses live at a community event	High engagement; limited to event attendees

TIP: Offering multiple formats can improve response rates by letting people choose what works for them. Just make sure you have a system to track responses and prevent duplicates.

Best Practices: Designing a Strong Survey

Both the questions you ask and the way your survey is structured contribute to its effectiveness.

Types of Survey Questions

Different question types produce various kinds of data. Before writing your questions, decide what kind of information you are after.

Quantitative questions produce numerical data that is relatively easy to analyze, but more limited in the range of responses. Common formats include:



- **Multiple choice:** best for priorities or preferences
- **Likert scale:** Measures opinions or attitudes (use 5-7 options with a neutral midpoint)

Qualitative questions produce detailed, open-ended, descriptive data. They take more time to analyze but can offer deeper insights.

- **Open-ended questions:** capture perspectives and ideas

TIP: Use a mix of both question types. Quantitative questions can help identify trends, while qualitative responses can explain the “why” behind them.

Writing Strong Questions

How you phrase a question shapes the answer you get. These principles will help you write questions that collect honest, useful data.

Use plain, neutral language. Avoid jargon, technical terms, and emotional language. If a question is hard to understand or loaded, respondents may skip it or answer based on a misunderstanding.

- **Example:** “Do you believe the City of Bend should lower the existing performance measures for streets and intersections to allow more congestion to occur without construction of remedies to mitigate future increase traffic?”
- **Problem:** This question is long and uses technical language that many respondents may not understand, which can lead to confusion or unreliable answers.
- **Improved:** Some people suggest the City of Bend could lower its performance standards for streets and intersections. This might reduce costs but could allow more congestion. Others prefer keeping current standards to manage traffic growth. What is your preference?

Measure one idea at a time. Each question should focus on a single topic. If a question includes multiple ideas, respondents may agree with one part but not the other.

- **Example #1:** If you have ever called to complain about a noise violation or loud event, were you satisfied with police or city response? (Yes / No)
- **Problem:** This question combines two different services, making responses unclear.
- **Improved:** Were you satisfied with the City’s response? (Yes / No / No response received) Were you satisfied with the police response? (Yes / No / No response received)
- **Example #2:** Do you have ideas you would like to see implemented?
- **Problem:** This is too vague and may not produce useful responses.
- **Improved:** What are one or two improvements you would like the Neighborhood District to prioritize this year?

Avoid leading questions. Don’t assume how people feel or guide them toward a specific answer.

- **Example #1:** What makes this intersection dangerous?
- **Problem:** This question assumes the intersection is dangerous and may bias responses.



- **Improved:** How would you describe your experience at this intersection?
- **Example #2:** There are numerous infrastructure and housing projects underway or planned for SE Bend. There exists quite a lot of information on these projects, but it isn't always easy to find or navigate the system where it is published. Would you like easier access to this data via a more friendly user experience?
- **Problem:** This wording suggests that information is difficult to find, which may influence responses.
- **Improved:** How easy or difficult is it for you to find information about current and planned projects in SE Bend? (Very difficult / Somewhat difficult / Neutral / Somewhat easy / Very easy)

Create space for all perspectives. Response options should reflect a full range of possible opinions.

- **Example:** How safe do you feel at the park? (Somewhat safe / safe / very safe)
- **Problem:** Positive answers are overrepresented. People who do not feel safe have no response option that is true to them.
- **Improved:** "I feel safe at the park." (Strongly disagree / Disagree / Neutral / Agree / Strongly Agree)

Allow for non-applicable responses. If a question doesn't apply to everyone, give respondents a way to opt out.

- **Example:** Do you feel safe biking on [INSERT] road? (Yes / No)
- **Problem:** Responses from people who don't bike are not useful.
- **Improved:** If you bike on [INSERT] road, do you feel safe? (Yes / No / Does Not Apply)

Ask specific, actionable questions. Focus on questions that produce information you can use to make decisions.

- **Example:** How would you describe the atmosphere of your neighborhood?
- **Problem:** This question is too abstract and may result in general answers that are difficult to act on.
- **Improved:** What are your top three priorities for the Neighborhood District this year?

Structuring Your Survey

The order and organization of your survey affect both your response rate and the quality of your data. We recommend the following:

- **Start with a brief introduction** that explains the purpose of the survey and how long it will take. "This survey takes about five minutes" sets expectations and increases completion rates.
- **Keep it as short as possible.** The longer the survey, the lower the response rate. Include only the questions you genuinely need answered.



- **Start general, then get specific.** Ease respondents in with broader questions before moving to more detailed or sensitive ones. Keep in mind that earlier questions can prime how people respond to later ones.
- **Group related questions together** so the survey flows logically by topic.
- **Collect demographic information toward the end.** This is particularly useful for understanding your community and changes over time. Respondents are more likely to complete these questions after investing time.
- **Close with an open-ended question**—something like “Is there anything else you’d like to share.” This helps capture candid useful feedback.

Accessibility. To reach and engage all community members, consider:

- Offering multiple languages or translation services
- Making online surveys mobile-friendly
- Providing paper alternatives to online surveys and vice versa

City Support Available: *The City can help connect you with interpretation and translation vendors. Visit the [Language Assistance Services](#) webpage for more information.*

Sharing Your Survey

Before You Distribute: Pilot Your Survey

Before sending your survey to the full community, have a small group of people—such as your Neighborhood District board members—test it out. Ask them whether the questions are clear, whether anything felt confusing or uncomfortable, and how long it took them to finish. It’s much easier to catch and fix problems at this stage, rather than after hundreds of people have already seen it.

How to Distribute Your Survey

Use multiple channels, both digital and print, to share your survey:

- Email list or newsletter
- Website
- Social media (examples of survey promotion posts can be found in the Social Media section)
- Physical mailings
- Posters
- In-person at community events

Match your promotional approach to your format. If your survey is digital, share the link via email and social media, and post flyers with a QR code (see the *Physical Materials* section for guidance on creating a QR code). If your survey is print, consider mailing it directly to homes and use email and social media to let people know it’s coming.



Getting a Good Response Rate

A survey is only useful if enough people fill it out; even a well-designed survey can struggle to get responses, and that's not always a reflection of survey quality. For a survey to be considered representative, aim for a response rate of at least 10-30% of the people you surveyed.

Response rates are influenced by several factors:

- **Timing.** Avoid holidays, allow at least 2-3 weeks for responses, and be sure to send reminders
- **Channels.** Promote the survey across multiple platforms and formats.
- **Trust.** People are more likely to respond when they believe their input will be used. Be sure to “close the loop” with community members and show how information gathered from past surveys was used.
- **Incentives.** Offering a small incentive, such as entry into a raffle, can improve response rates.

Analyzing Your Results

Before you can share your results with the community and decision makers, you have to make sense of what you heard. Here's some basic ways to analyze different types of data:

Quantitative Data: Tallied responses, percentages, averages (means), comparisons between groups, basic charts (bar charts, pie charts)

Qualitative Data: Read and look for themes and patterns, coding (grouping responses by key themes), pull representative quotes

TIP: Have more than one person review the data before comparing notes to reduce bias. It's easy to unconsciously overemphasize findings that confirm what you already believed, or downplay those that do not. Aim to present information in the most objective manner possible to maintain trust with community members and decision-makers.

TIP: Use the annual survey as an opportunity to ask community members about their communication and engagement preferences:

- What communication channels do you prefer?
- What social media platforms do you use and check regularly, if any?
- What types of events would you like to see the Neighborhood District host?
- What is the last Neighborhood District event you attended, if any? How did you hear about it?



Sharing Results: Reporting Back to Your Community

This step is most often skipped and is critical to building and maintaining trust with the community. When the Neighborhood District asks for input and does nothing visible with it, community members may stop trusting the process and stop participating.

What to Share

- Share a one paragraph summary of what you learned from the survey, and what you are doing with the information (e.g., how it is guiding your board operations, how you are forwarding it to the city, etc.)

How and Where to Share

- Use the same channels you used to distribute the survey to close the loop with the community. Consider including “what we heard” updates in your newsletter to recap survey findings.
- Present findings at your monthly and annual board meetings.

Sharing with Decision-Makers

- Write an “Executive Summary.” It should be no more than two pages in length. Include a brief introduction that includes the goals of the survey. Follow that with a brief breakdown, by theme, of what the survey told you. Quantitative data can be put in a table. Attach the complete results of the survey in an index if desired. If you have a call to action for the Decision Makers (something you want from them after reading the summary), call it out in the body of the email.

Measuring Success: More Than Just Numbers

Response rate is one useful measure of a survey’s success: the more people you hear from, the more representative your data is likely to be. But it’s not the only measure. A successful survey is one that:

- **Produces high quality data.** A high response rate on a poorly constructed survey is much less successful than a lower response rate on a thoughtfully constructed survey.
- **Answers your key questions,** even if the answers weren’t what you were expecting. A good survey is not about achieving a specific outcome; it’s about an honest process.
- **Provides useful information.** If the results sit in a folder and are never used for anything or discussed, then the survey was not successful regardless of how many people responded.
- **Builds trust with the community.** A survey that community members see leading to real action, even a simple acknowledgement of what was heard, strengthens the relationship between the Neighborhood District and the community.



Level-up: Post-Event Surveys

Post-event surveys are a low-lift and effective way to gather feedback after a community event. They can be administered in person as attendees leave or sent digitally shortly afterward.

Keep them short (3-5 questions is plenty). Useful things to ask:

- What did you enjoy?
- What could be improved?
- Would you attend a similar event in the future?
- What other types of events would you like to see?
- How did you hear about this event?

This information can help you understand which communications channels are working and help plan future events the community is excited about.

Event Planning

Events bring your neighborhood together and help you understand what people care about.

With **thoughtful planning** and **clear goals**, events can do more than just bring people together. They can increase awareness of city projects, create genuine opportunities for community members to connect on issues that affect them, gather meaningful input, and strengthen relationships between neighbors, Neighborhood Districts, and the City.

Most Neighborhood Districts host 1-2 events per year, which is a completely appropriate number given limits on time, budgets, and volunteer capacity. The goal is not necessarily to host more events, but to make the events you host as intentional and impactful as possible.

Before You Start: Setting the Vision

Planning events—including the required annual board meeting—is solely in the hands of Neighborhood Districts. While this section is primarily aimed at larger Neighborhood District-organized community events (beyond a recurring monthly board meeting), the strategies here, particularly around promotion and input gathering, are flexible and adaptable to events of all types and size.

Before planning any logistics, get clarity on the purpose and goals of your event. Your answers will shape every decision that follows, from the format you choose, to how you promote it, and what you do with the input you collect.

Ask yourself:

- **What is the primary goal of this event?** Are we building community, sharing information, gathering input, or some combination (often ideal)?
- **Who are we trying to reach and engage?** Are there community members or groups we haven't connected with before?
- **What does success look like, even if attendance is modest?**



- **What kind of input, if any, are we hoping to collect, and what will we do with it** (e.g., priorities on a proposed project, reactions to a City plan, or desires for future Neighborhood District events)
- **What is realistic given our current capacity?**

TIP: Use a board meeting to brainstorm event ideas, align on goals, and divide responsibilities before diving into logistics. Early clarity saves time and prevents last-minute changes.

Types of Events

Neighborhood Districts host a variety of events to meet different goals. Table 9 is organized from typical highest to lowest time investment, though the actual time required for any event depends on your promotion strategy and the number of channels you use. Use this as a starting point, not a fixed rule.

Table 9: Types of Events

Event Type	Format	Best For
Annual open board meeting	Recommended in-person	Required for funding; broader community updates
Neighborhood District-organized community event	In-person or virtual	Building community, sharing information, gathering feedback
Monthly board meeting	In-person or virtual	Formal business, updates, discussion
Pop-up at existing events (e.g., festivals, markets)	In-person	Reaching new audiences, sharing information, gathering feedback

In addition to your required annual open meeting, we recommend regular monthly board meetings. Beyond that, add Neighborhood District-organized events based on your capacity and goals.

TIP: At your annual meeting, ask community members what kinds of events they'd like to see in the coming year. This builds buy-in and helps you plan.

Getting Started: Planning an Event

City Support Available: *The City provides a list of pre-approved venues. Contact the City's Communications and Engagement Department for the current list.*

Begin your event planning with a work-back schedule. Start with a rough target date—a range works well to begin—then work backwards to identify when each task needs to be completed. A timeline-based [Event Checklist](#) is available to guide you through this process. Not every event will require every step; smaller or informal events may move more quickly. Use what is helpful and adapt as needed.

Volunteer Capacity and Role Planning



Events are most manageable when responsibilities are clearly divided in advance. Before reaching out to anyone, decide what kind of support is needed to plan and run the event. Start by assigning roles among your board members, then enlist additional volunteers via your email list if needed.

For each event, clarify who is responsible for:

- **Logistics:** securing the venue, arranging equipment, managing setup and breakdown
- **Promotion:** designing materials, posting on social media, distributing flyers, sending reminders
- **Day-of coordination:** welcoming attendees, facilitating activities, managing technology
- **Follow-up:** sending recaps, thank you messages, and closing the feedback loop with community members

TIP: Even a simple shared document with names next to tasks prevents things from getting missed.

Not enough volunteers? Consider the following:

- Ask each board member to recruit one additional helper
- Partner with another neighborhood organization or district to share the load
- Scale the event down to match your actual capacity

Event Ideas to Get You Started

A great Neighborhood District event combines opportunities for social connection, information sharing, and gathering community input. Below are several event formats for inspiration, including examples from Bend neighborhoods.

Annual Community Day: A multipurpose, few-hour gathering at a park, community center, or block party. Elements that work well include:

- Free food and beverages from local restaurants
- Kids activities or family-friendly games
- Live music or entertainment
- Project booths where community members can learn about and provide feedback on local initiatives
- Information on ways to get involved or run for the board
- Community resources and information tables
- Opportunities to meet local elected officials, law enforcement, or first responders
- Giveaways or raffles

This format can also serve as your annual meeting.

Topics-Based Gatherings and Discussions. A structured conversation around a relevant local issue, such as an upcoming development project, transportation changes, wildfire preparedness, or housing and land use. Smaller in scale than a community day, these work well in a community room, or flexible space. Food and refreshments help with turnout. Consider



inviting City staff or project teams to present and take questions directly from community members.

Community Dinners or Coffee and Conversation. A sit-down meal or casual coffee gathering with opportunities to connect and engage. A good format for building relationships, sharing information, and gathering input in a relaxed setting. Can double as a feedback session for a specific City project or initiative.

Lower Lift Options. Not every event needs to be large or complex. Some formats that have worked well for Bend Neighborhood Districts include:

- Neighborhood walks or clean-ups
- Pop-ups at existing community events like farmers markets or festivals
- Board recruitment gatherings at a local brewery or coffee shop
- Family-friendly events at a library or community space

What draws crowds: Across all event types, attendance tends to increase when events include free food and refreshments, family-friendly activities, entertainment, giveaways or raffles, and access to useful resources.

Upgrade your annual meeting: Consider hosting information tables from various City and community groups, or inviting a guest speaker, such as a City Councilor or staff member.

City Support Available: *The City provides a [Meeting Request Form](#) for Neighborhood Districts seeking staff participation, presentations, or outreach support at meetings and events. Staff can share updates on City projects, Council goals, and other topics relevant to your neighborhood. City Councilors may also be available to attend upon request.*

How to Collect Meaningful Input at Events

The difference between an event that functions primarily as a social gathering and one that advances the Neighborhood District's role as a community bridge often comes down to how intentionally information is shared and input is collected and used.

Whenever you collect input, it is important to clearly set expectations with community members upfront:

- What is this feedback being used for?
- What can and cannot be influenced?
- How and when will they hear back?

Transparency builds trust and reinforces the Neighborhood District's role as the bridge between community members and the City, not the decision-makers. Choose a feedback method that aligns with the type of data you are looking to collect, and the formality level of the event.

Input-gathering methods to consider:

- **Facilitated discussion:** structured small or full group conversation around a specific question or topic



- **Priority voting activity:** community members place tokens or stickers next to ideas or priorities they support; quick, visual, and easy-to-facilitate
- **Comment cards:** written responses to a prompt; useful for community members less comfortable speaking in a group
- **Informal conversations or interviews:** at pop-ups or social events, a simple conversation guide can help volunteers gather input naturally
- **Live polling:** tools like [Mentimeter](#) allow community members to respond to questions in real time via their phones
- **Surveys:** distributed at the event (via paper or QR code) or sent after to collect structured feedback

TIP: Assign someone specifically to capture responses at every event. Don't rely on memory or informal notes.

Best Practices: Putting On a Great Event

Reaching Diverse Audiences

One of the most common challenges for Neighborhood Districts is reaching people beyond their regular participants (the same engaged community members who show up to everything). Connecting with the broader community, including historically underrepresented groups, requires intentional, equity-focused efforts to meet people where they are and reduce barriers to participation.

- **Go where people are.** Rather than always expecting community members to come to you, bring the Neighborhood District to them. Pop-ups at existing community spaces and events (farmers markets, festivals, libraries, coffee shops, etc.) can help reach new audiences without requiring them to seek you out.
- **Provide multiple ways to engage.** Not everyone is comfortable speaking in a group or attending a formal meeting. Offering a mix of engagement formats (e.g., comment cards, digital options, etc.) allows more community members to participate in a way that works for them.
- **Partner with trusted organizations and community leaders.** Community organizations, faith communities, schools, and local businesses often have established relationships with community members that the Neighborhood District may not yet have reached. Ask these partners to share information or consider co-hosting events in spaces where people already feel comfortable.
- **Address barriers to participation**
- **Language:** Provide translated materials and interpreters at events if your neighborhood includes non-English speaking community members. Visit the [City's Language Assistance Services](#) webpage for help connecting with interpretation and translation services.
- **Cultural inclusivity:** Offer culturally relevant food and be mindful of cultural and religious holidays when scheduling events.



- **Accessibility:** Choose physically accessible venues and include access details in all promotional materials. Use accessible design principles (see *Social Media* section).
- **Time and childcare:** Offer events at varied times and consider whether providing childcare would increase attendance.
- **Awareness:** Many community members do not participate simply because they are unaware of opportunities. Timely and repeated promotion is essential.

Event Promotion Strategies

Thoughtful promotion can significantly increase event awareness and attendance. Many Neighborhood Districts report strong online engagement, but low event turnout. Often, this is because of timing and repetition, not the channel itself.

Effective promotions

- Sharing event information with enough advance notice
- Sending reminders, not just a single announcement
- Using multiple channels—both digital and print—to reach different audiences.

Common promotion channels include the website calendar, e-newsletter, social media, flyers and posters at high-traffic locations, and a mailed postcard.

City Support Available: You can ask the City of Bend to share your event on social media. Contact the City's Communications and Engagement Department for assistance.

The [Event Checklist](#) includes recommended promotional strategies and timelines. Use what is helpful and adapt as needed.

Measuring Success: Event Success

High attendance is often treated as the measure of a successful event—but for Neighborhood Districts, success is more nuanced than that. A well-facilitated event with fifteen engaged community members can be more impactful than a poorly structured one with sixty.

Measure success by how well you met the goals you set at the start. That might look like:

- A small group of highly engaged community members and meaningful feedback collected
- Increased awareness of a City project or issue
- New community members reached or connected to the Neighborhood District for the first time
- Trust built between the Neighborhood District and the community
- Volunteers or partners engaged for future events



After the Event

- **Evaluate:** Take time after each event to reflect as a team—what worked, what didn't, and what you would do differently. A simple post-event survey for attendees can also provide useful feedback.
- **Close the Loop:** If you collected input, follow up to share what you heard and how it will be used. This step of “closing the feedback loop” is often skipped—but it’s one of the most important things you can do to build lasting trust and continued engagement with the community. Even a brief email or social media post summarizing the feedback and next steps goes a long way.

Level-up: Taking Your Events Further

Partner with the City

Many of the projects and decisions that affect your neighborhood are managed at the City level—which means there are often existing opportunities for Neighborhood Districts to plug in. Consider inviting City representatives to your events to answer questions, share updates, and gather feedback directly from the community. You can also explore ways to get involved in existing City engagement opportunities, such as open houses, public comment periods, and City-sponsored events. Reach out to [contact] to explore opportunities.

Co-Host with Other Organizations

Collaborating with other Neighborhood Districts—particularly those similarly affected by a project or sharing common interests—is a great way to expand your reach and build community across the city. Partnering with community organizations can also connect community members to additional resources and help both organizations reach broader networks than either would on their own.

Develop a Signature Event

Consider developing a “signature event” for your Neighborhood District—something people come to recognize and look forward to, like an annual Community Day or recurring Community Dinner series built around structured topics. Start with a pilot event: if it goes well, make it a regular occurrence. Familiarity encourages participation—when people know what to expect and when to expect it, they’re more likely to show up and bring others.

Physical Materials

In the digital age, an online presence is essential for reaching and engaging your community. But not every person is online, and even those who are can benefit from a tangible reminder. Physical materials work great to complement, not replace, your digital channels, helping you reach community members who don’t have internet access or simply prefer print.



Common types of physical materials include:

- Mailed materials (postcards, printed newsletters, letters)
- Posters and flyers
- Yard signs
- Door hangers

You can design your own materials using a platform like **Canva**, which offers customizable templates for postcards, flyers, and more.

Eligible Expenses: Your district funding can be used for printing and postage for all these materials. Visit the City's website for a full list of eligible and ineligible expenses.

When to Use Them

Physical materials work especially well for:

Event promotion: hang flyers in local spaces (coffee shops, libraries, churches, community centers), or send a postcard to your mailing list as a reminder. View the [Event Checklist](#) for more information on how to integrate physical materials into a larger event promotion approach.

TIP: Include QR codes (see below on how to create a QR code) on your physical materials to direct people to an event RSVP or other sign-up page. Be sure to provide another RSVP option for people who can't scan the QR code, such as a phone number they can call.

Ongoing community building: yard signs with your neighborhood's branding can build a sense of community identity throughout the neighborhood or encourage people to take action on a specific City initiative.

TIP: Be sure to review the City of Bend sign codes before investing in yard signs, which often need to be ordered online.

Reaching people at their homes: mailed materials (such as a print copy of your newsletter) and door hangers ensure that important messages reach everyone, not just those who are online.

Creating a QR Code

Including a QR code on printed materials is a great way to combine physical and digital channels. People can use their phone camera to instantly visit a link from a poster or mailed material.

- To create a QR code, all you need is the URL you want the code to link to. Use a tool like [Bitly](#) to generate the code. Bitly's free plan allows 2 QR codes per month.
- Download the QR code as an SVG (scalable vector graphics) or high-resolution PNG file (low resolution files can look blurry when printed and may fail to scan).



- When placing the code in your design, leave a small white border around all four sides to help scanners read it.
- Always test your QR code by scanning with both an iPhone and Android to ensure it works before printing materials.

TIP: Consider shortening your URL first with a tool like [Bitly](#) before generating the code (Bitly's free plan allows 5 links per month). Shorter URLs produce simpler, less dense codes that are easier to scan. Bitly also lets you track how many times the code has been scanned, which can help you measure the success of your printed materials.

How to Mail

The City maintains a mailing list of all residential and commercial properties, including unit numbers, which is divided by Neighborhood District. Visit this link to: "[download your Neighborhood District mailing list](#)."

NOTE: It is against federal law to place anything inside a mailbox if you are not with the postal service. If you choose to hand-deliver materials, either use door hangers, or tape flyers to front doors.

Organizational Support

For your district to effectively communicate with and engage your community, and to support your broader goals, strong internal systems are essential. Behind-the-scenes operations ensure smooth day-to-day functioning, reduce overreliance on individuals, and create a clear division of responsibilities. These foundations are critical to your long-term organizational health.

Recognizing the very real limits districts face in time and capacity, this section offers realistic strategies, practical tools, and priorities to help your district build a stronger organizational foundation.

Documentation and File Management

Documenting processes, meetings, and decisions—and storing them in a secure, shared location—is critical for long-term organizational health. Information can't live only in one person's head. When processes are written down and easy to find, your district can handle transitions without starting from scratch.

We recommend using a cloud-based file sharing platform through your board email account. The City uses Microsoft, so we suggest that option for ease of file sharing; however, Google Drive is also a strong alternative. This platform should serve as the central location where all board members can access and contribute to shared files.

TIP: Never store files only on one person's device. If something happens to that device, or if that person leaves the board, those files may be lost permanently.



What to Document:

- District bylaws (every district should have them, see "Bylaws 101" below for more information)
- Board member roles and responsibilities (see template below)
- Budget tracking (use the [Budget Tracker](#) template)
- Key decisions made by the board
- Processes for recurring tasks (e.g., managing each communication channel, sending the newsletter, etc.)
- Login information for all accounts
- Onboarding and offboarding processes
- Event planning checklists and post-event evaluations
- Meeting agendas and minutes
- And more!

TIP: Use specific file names that include the date and a clear title. This makes files easy to find and differentiate. Organize your shared drive by content type, then year, then specific document.

For example: *Larkspur Neighborhood District Shared Drive > Meeting Minutes > 2026 > 2026_April_Larkspur_Board_MeetingMinutes*

For example: *Larkspur Neighborhood District Shared Drive > Events > 2026 > Community Fun Day > 2026_CommunityFunDay_PlanningChecklist*

Bylaws 101

Bylaws are internal rules, agreed upon and adopted by members, that guide how Neighborhood Districts operate. Having bylaws in place helps make roles, processes, and decision-making clear, and makes board transitions much smoother.

Many of the "What to Document" items listed above may be included in your bylaws. At minimum, bylaws should address:

- Purpose
- Membership
- Meetings (including agendas, quorum, and participation)
- Board structure and roles
- District boundaries
- How bylaws can be amended

TIP: Store your bylaws in your shared drive and review them periodically—especially when leadership changes or new needs arise.

Running Effective Meetings

Monthly meetings are not required, but they do help with effective operations.



For every meeting:

- Prepare an agenda and share it with board members ahead of time--this helps everyone come prepared
- Designate one person to take meeting minutes (ideally the Secretary)
- Record key decisions and action items, noting who is responsible for each.
- Store finalized minutes in your shared folder and upload them to your website once approved

TIP: Keep a running list of topics to bring to the next meeting, so nothing gets forgotten.

Board Roles and Responsibilities

Clearly defined roles, where everyone knows what they're responsible for, improve consistency, reduce stress, and make board transitions smoother.

While every district is different, these are the core board positions to fill:

- Chair
- Vice Chair
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Land Use Chair
- Board Member At Large

As capacity allows, consider designating people for additional topic-specific roles, such as communications, events, and public safety.

Dividing Responsibilities

In many districts, one person wears multiple hats—and that's okay. The goal is to spread the work out and make sure responsibilities are clearly documented and that at least one other person knows how to support if needed.

Use the [Roles and Responsibilities Tracker](#) to document who owns what across all core board functions (board administration, communications, financial management, operations). Store it in your shared folder and update it whenever board membership changes

TIP: For larger tasks like planning an event, designate one person to take the lead and then divide the work into smaller tasks to delegate across the board.

TIP: Increase community awareness of your board by posting a "Meet the Board" feature on social media annually or whenever new members join and keep your website up to date with current board membership.

Recruiting Board Members

Board vacancies are one of the most common challenges for Neighborhood Districts. Here are some strategies to help recruit people.:



- Recruit on an ongoing basis, not just when a seat is empty. Consider an annual board recruitment event led by current members.
- Promote open positions across all your communication channels. Many community members simply might not know seats are available
- Add a “Get Involved” or “Join the Board” section to your website with a brief description of what board membership involves and the expected time commitment.
- Mention open board positions at every meeting since the attendees are already engaged community members.
- Post in neighborhood Facebook groups or on Nextdoor.
- Don’t wait for people to come to you. Consider personally inviting community members who show up for meetings or engage online.

Onboarding and Offboarding

Informal or missing onboarding and offboarding processes are one of the most common ways that organizational knowledge gets lost. A little structure goes a long way.

Onboarding New Board Members

When someone joins the board, set up an onboarding meeting to cover:

- Board roles and responsibilities and their specific role. Update the board roles and responsibilities document.
- The shared drive and where key documents are stored
- Login information for all relevant platforms and accounts
- Key City contacts (introduce them!)
- Have them shadow a meeting or other event before fully taking on responsibilities

TIP: Even if someone is filling a role left abruptly, shadowing generally (not just for their specific role) will help them understand how the board operates as a whole.

Offboarding Departing Board Members

Before someone’s last day:

- Set up an offboarding meeting to review responsibilities and transfer knowledge
- Make sure all files they used are stored in the shared drive and up to date
- Update login credentials for any shared accounts
- Make sure two-factor authentication is not tied to their personal phone number or email
- Ask them to complete a short exit survey to capture any feedback

Financial Management

Delegate one person (ideally the Treasurer) to manage your district’s finances and track spending. Use a spreadsheet to keep track of your expenses and the status of reimbursements for each fiscal year.



You have several options for managing your district's finances, ranging in complexity. Here is an overview from simplest to most complex:

City Reimbursement: The simplest option. With this method, your district does not need a bank account, debit card, or checks.

District Bank Account: If you may be earning additional funds, such as from small grants, consider opening a bank account in the name of the district with board members listed as signers. Districts with a bank account can still use the City's reimbursement system alongside it.

Nonprofit Incorporation - 501(c)(3): Some districts have taken the step of becoming formal nonprofits through 501(c)(3) incorporation. As a registered charitable organization, your district may be eligible for larger grants and can collect tax-deductible contributions through a variety of online giving platforms.

However, 501(c)(3) status comes with additional responsibilities, including filing annual tax returns and submitting reports to the Oregon Secretary of State.

TIP: If your district becomes a 501(c)(3), add a donation button to your website and newsletter so community members can easily contribute.

You can apply online to become a nonprofit through the Oregon Secretary of State (OR SOS) by filling out the "Articles of Incorporation" form. To get started, visit the State's [Nonprofit Services](#) page, and refer to the [Form Instructions](#) page for a step-by-step overview of the process. When registering with OR SOS for the first time, be sure to create a new account.



