



Registered Neighborhood Organization Program

Policy & Procedures
Amended - May 2021

Hampton Neighborhood Commission
www.hampton.gov/neighborhoods

Registered Neighborhood Organization Program

I. HAMPTON NEIGHBORHOOD INITIATIVE OVERVIEW

The Hampton Neighborhood Initiative is a partnership of neighborhood organizations, the Neighborhood Commission, and the City of Hampton, that are dedicated to improving the quality of life in Hampton's neighborhoods. The Neighborhood Commission is a council appointed board comprised of neighborhood representatives, non-profit, faith-based, business, youth, schools, police, and other city leaders.

Any organization can participate in the Hampton Neighborhood Initiative; the basic criterion for participation is that the organization be inclusive, is working at a neighborhood level and follows the guiding principles of the Hampton Neighborhood Initiative. A participating neighborhood organization must demonstrate that they have given everyone in the organization's area the opportunity to participate. A neighborhood organization is an inclusive group of neighborhood stakeholders who come together in order to improve the quality of life in their neighborhood.

The Guiding Principles of the Neighborhood Initiative are listed below:

1. *Hampton neighborhoods are valuable community assets.*
2. *City government should be flexible enough to serve the unique needs of individual neighborhoods.*
3. *Partnerships are critical. Everyone has a stake in neighborhoods and everyone has a contribution to make.*
4. *Neighborhoods should be places where families are strengthened and youth are supported.*
5. *Neighborhoods should be safe, offer economic opportunity, support social interaction and civic involvement, and provide recreation and education opportunities to all residents.*
6. *Neighborhoods should be places where people want to live.*

II. REGISTERED NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION [RNO] PROGRAM POLICY

A. Purpose of Program

The primary purpose of the Registered Neighborhood Organization (RNO) program is to serve as a tool to identify and develop relationships with key organizations and networks that make up the Hampton community. The registration program helps to initiate and maintain current contact information for neighborhood organizations throughout Hampton. These organizations represent a variety of interests, concerns, and perspectives but all are actively involved in improving the community through their ongoing efforts. The benefits listed below represent a portion of resources that the city and schools have offered to support the work of neighborhood organizations.

B. Eligible Organizations

A neighborhood organization is defined as an inclusive group of neighborhood stakeholders who work to make their local neighborhood or community better.

C. Description

Neighborhood organizations are primarily place-based organizations that serve a self-defined area located within the city of Hampton. While these inclusive organizations represent unique interests and participate in various social activities, generally, they focus their efforts on improving the quality of life within a specific portion of the community.

1. Expectations

Applicants must be able to demonstrate to the Neighborhood Commission that the group is organized, representative and making efforts towards improving the quality of life within a specific area of the city.

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2. Examples

Examples of eligible organizations include: neighborhood watch, neighborhood associations, block groups, homeowners' association, PTA's, Neighborhood Watch Associations, civic leagues etc.

D. Benefits of Registration

1. Benefit Overview

Participation in the Registered Neighborhood Program gives neighborhood organizations access to several benefits from various city agencies. These benefits are offered because an organization is considered a community partner in improving the places where they live through volunteerism, representation, building relationships, encouraging community resiliency, and fostering inclusive and caring communities. The following benefits may change or be suspended based on the ability of the agency to offer them, changes in staffing capacity, or unforeseen circumstances (state of emergency, closures...). An organization that does not embody the guiding principles or operate as a good partner with the organizations below may be restricted in their access to such benefits at the discretion of the partner agency or the responsible Neighborhood Commission committee.

2. Potential Benefits

a) Recognition & Promotion

- (1) Recognition by the Hampton Neighborhood Commission at various times of the year
- (2) Opportunity to spotlight your organization. For example: Neighborhood Commission meetings, Round Robin, featured neighborhood of the month on City of Hampton website, and be included in communication to Council

b) Events & Meetings

- (1) Application fee waived for neighborhood-scale special event permit (www.hampton.gov)
- (2) The waiver of insurance requirements for school division facility use or rental for qualified meetings and events (www.hampton.k12.va.us/)

c) Communication & Awareness

- (1) Automatically signed-up for the Hampton E-News for neighborhood related events, opportunities, and news
- (2) Notified of rezoning petitions and planning processes by the Community Development Department
- (3) Added to official contact lists for neighborhood-level public meetings related to rezoning and land use cases
- (4) Notification from local agencies that may interest residents, including special events, training, grants and other neighborhood opportunities
- (5) Opportunity to build organizational coalitions and obtain community input on private sector project

d) Coaching & Other Support

- (1) Priority access to training opportunities, including the Neighborhood College, Hampton 101, Hampton Leadership Academy and neighborhood-related workshops
- (2) Opportunity for technical assistance (dependent upon the availability of staff/commissioners) in improving:
- (3) Outreach efforts and effectiveness of your organization, and
- (4) Methods to address complex community issues

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E. Annual updates

1. Requirement

Registered Neighborhood Organizations (RNO's) are required to update their contact information annually with their Neighborhood Commission representative, or Community Development staff person.

2. Removal

If the registered organization does not respond to request for updates or a current update is not provided within a three (3) month period, the organization will be removed from the current RNO listing. Those removed from the listing, will be required to resubmit their registration for review by the Commission.

F. Guidelines for Overlapping Neighborhood Organization Boundaries

1. Introduction – Participation in Neighborhood Commission Programs

Since the Hampton Neighborhood Initiative was established in 1993 the registration of organizations with the Hampton Neighborhood Commission has been a key initiative. Each organization provides their own geographic boundaries within which their areas of interest, purposes or territories are established. Sometimes boundaries of adjacent organizations overlap, while at other times several niche specific organizations are included within the territory of a much larger umbrella organization. While overlapping boundaries may, at times, conflict, it is the intent of the Neighborhood Commission to encourage the formation of neighborhood-based organizations which embrace and operate in a manner consistent with the values of the Hampton Neighborhood Initiative. The purpose of this policy is to articulate how the Neighborhood Commission will address issues of relevance to the Commission's activities that arise from overlapping boundaries.

2. Neighborhood Initiative

The Hampton Neighborhood Initiative is focused on providing a city where individuals and families, by creating healthy neighborhoods, have the opportunity to succeed in realizing their full potential for a better quality of life. The guiding principles establish neighborhoods that are safe, offer economic opportunity, support social interaction and civic involvement, and provide recreation and education opportunities to all residents. Neighborhood serving organizations may form around any or all of these areas.

3. Related Considerations

A neighborhood entity is defined as an inclusive group of neighborhood stakeholders who bond together for the purpose of making their neighborhood a better place to live.

a) Organizational Structure:

Each neighborhood formulates its own organizational structure consistent with fulfilling their unique needs and goals. The Neighborhood Commissioners and Neighborhood Services staff do not interfere in this process, but will offer to help neighborhoods reach their full potential by providing coaching and resources to enhance success.

b) Inclusive Outreach:

Each neighborhood organization must invite all residents, businesses and organizations within its defined territory to participate either as members or partners. Approaches and methods for encouraging membership as well as information exchange within the neighborhood must be included as part of the structure of the organization. This does not preclude organizations from allowing members from outside of their boundaries to join.

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c) **Inclusive Perspectives:**

The Commission acknowledges individuals to belong to one or more neighborhood organizations. Potential members are not prevented from joining an organization because they belong to another organization in the same geographic area. Inclusion also encourages organizations to welcome the views and support of other organizations within a neighborhood in carrying out their stated purposes.

4. **Definitions**

A neighborhood organization's geographic reach must be clearly defined. Therefore, By-laws and other foundational documents must contain clearly defined boundaries.

a) **Boundaries:**

Boundaries are dividing lines that define the territory, purpose or scope served by a neighborhood organization.

b) **Overlapping:**

Boundaries are overlapping when two or more organizations include all or part of the same geography and purposes within their by-laws or organizational documents.

(1) The HNI discourages overlapping boundaries of organizations because they confuse identification and representation, as well as create duplication in communications, membership, and the ability of the City to provide service delivery.

(2) While the HNI does discourage overlapping organizations, it does not prohibit such organizations from participating in Neighborhood Commission programs.

c) **Unlimited:**

Unlimited boundaries refer to organizations that are open to membership from all neighborhoods within Hampton. Such organizations deal with large quality of life issues that may affect all residents. Examples: NAACP, Urban League, Kiwanis, 200 Men, Exchange Clubs, ect.

d) **Interest-based:**

Interest-based organizations may support specific neighborhood areas but are focused on a single issue or area of quality of life. The boundaries of these groups may change based on the issue or service area changes. Such groups are often considered Neighborhood Serving Organizations. Examples: recreation associations, non-profit service organizations, garden clubs, motorcycle club, Adopt-A-Spot groups, neighborhood center boards, etc.

5. **Neighborhood Commission Overlapping Organizations Guidelines:**

When addressing requests for support (registration, grant funding, coaching) from any neighborhood organization which overlaps with another organization, the Hampton Neighborhood Commission shall use its resources to the extent possible to facilitate collaboration between the overlapping organizations. While each situation should be carefully evaluated based on the facts and merits of the request, the following guidelines should be used to inform the Commission's decisions:

- a) Highest preference should be given to applications for support when the overlapping organizations jointly submit the request so that it is clear that all overlapping organizations support such request and will contribute toward fulfillment of the goals, objectives and

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guiding principles embodied by the Hampton Neighborhood Initiative.

- b) When overlapping organizations do not submit a joint application,
 - (1) *evidence shall be provided which demonstrates two-way communication between the organizations regarding the proposed request has occurred, as well as,*
 - (2) *formal acknowledgement that two-way communication has occurred (in writing) from the appropriate officer of the overlapping neighborhood organization not submitting the request*
- c) The Hampton Neighborhood Commission shall generally refrain from approving registration, assistance, or resources to a neighborhood organization with overlapping boundaries who has not demonstrated a level of collaboration described in #1 and #2 above.
- d) The Neighborhood Commission realizes that policies cannot adequately address all possible situations, therefore the Commission may deviate from the above guidelines if they believe approval of the request:
 - (1) *Does no harm to or jeopardizes the success of the other overlapping neighborhood organization; and*
 - (2) *The request clearly furthers the goals, objectives and guiding principles of the Hampton Neighborhood Initiative even if little or no collaboration occurred.*

III. NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

A. Registration Form Submission

All forms are to be submitted to or reviewed by a Hampton Neighborhood Commissioner either in person or electronically. Should the Community Development staff person receive a form prior to a Commissioner, staff will forward the form to the appropriate Commissioner for follow-up.

B. Commissioner Follow-up

The District Commissioner, or designated Commissioner, will then make direct contact with the organization to discuss the group's history, purpose, goals, and any potential partnership opportunities in which the Commission may assist in helping the organization to achieve their goals. This initial conversation should be done prior to review of the registration by the responsible committee.

C. Committee Review

The District Commissioner, or designated commissioners, will submit the form to the chair of the appropriate committee and share any additional relevant information with the Resources committee.

1. At the following meeting, the committee may request additional information from the Neighborhood Commissioner or directly from the organization regarding the registration. Additionally, they may provide information regarding specific resources and/or potential partnerships that may assist the neighborhood group in achieving their organization's goals.
2. The appropriate committee would then forward the list of the identified organizations to the Hampton Neighborhood Commission for recognition as a registered organization.
3. The committee will be responsible for ensuring the list is updated, the process is effective, and expectations are communicated clearly.

D. Neighborhood Commission Recognition

The newly identified organizations may be invited to attend a Neighborhood Commission Meeting to be recognized as a registered neighborhood organization and a new partner in the Hampton Neighborhood Initiative.