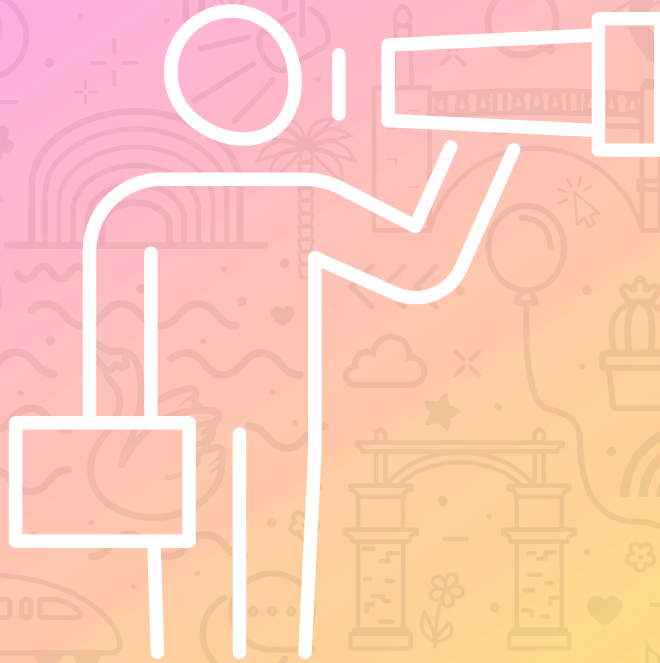


[orlando.gov/ilead](http://orlando.gov/ilead)

# iLead

Updated January, 2024

Your Interactive Neighborhood Training Source



# COMMUNICATION TOOLS

PREPARED BY



**CITY OF  
ORLANDO**

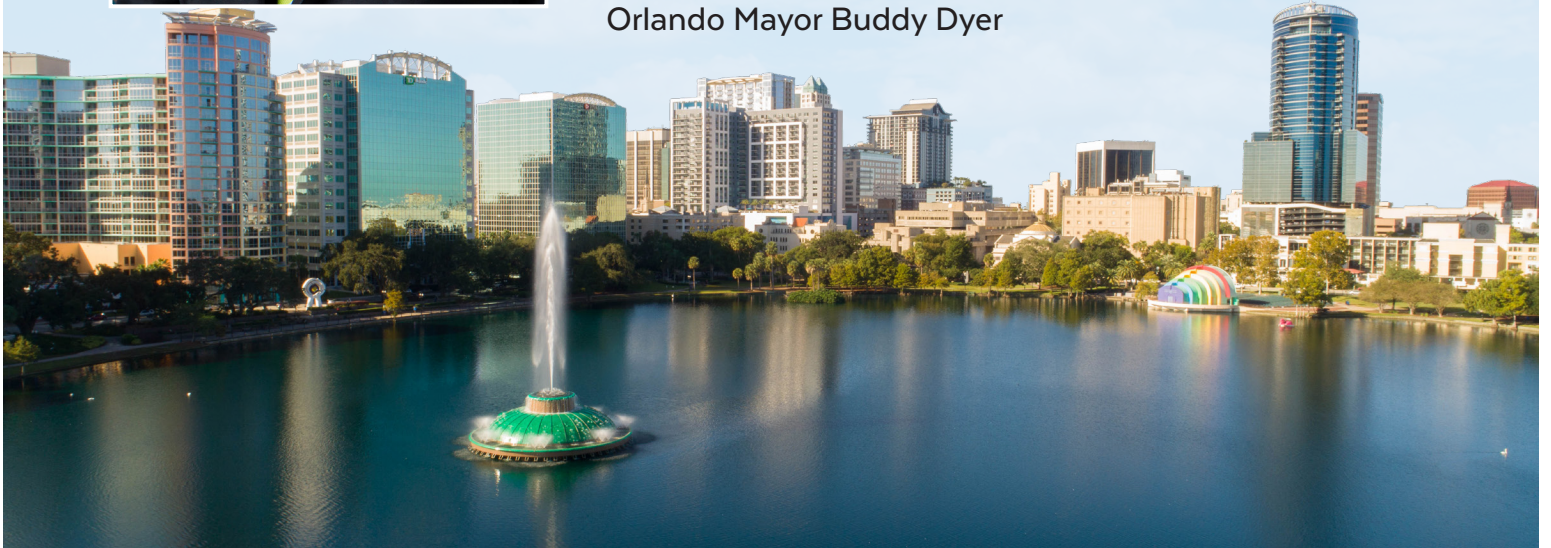
COMMUNICATIONS AND  
NEIGHBORHOOD RELATIONS





Our City strives to meet the needs of all residents who choose to call Orlando home. To do this, I have made it a priority for the Neighborhood Relations team to organize, support, mentor and guide residents and neighborhood organizations in their effort to keep Orlando a great place to live, work and play. In 2014, we launched iLead, a comprehensive neighborhood-training program that informs, connects and involves our neighborhood leaders through a series of interactive guides, videos, webinars and workshops. I encourage you to use the iLead program to build and sustain your successful neighborhood organization.

Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer



# iLead

Your Interactive Neighborhood Training Source

iLead is a comprehensive program that provides you with the tools to inform, connect and involve your neighbors through a series of guides, videos, webinars and workshops. These tools cover topics such as how to effectively hold meetings, how to utilize a variety of communication tools and how to engage the next generation of leaders. Whether you download a guide, view a video, participate in a webinar or attend a workshop, iLead is your one stop shop for online leadership training.

iLead offers more than 25 comprehensive guides, including:

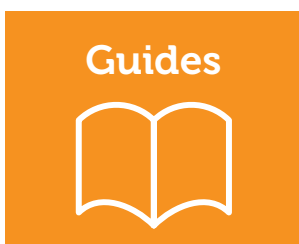
- Board Orientation and Operations
- Communication Tools
- Effective Meetings
- Engaging the Next Generation of Leaders
- Event Planning
- Ice Breakers
- Leadership Skills
- Neighborhood Grants
- Parliamentary Procedures made Simple
- Writing Your Neighborhood History

View the full list of guides on a variety of topics relevant to neighborhood associations at [orlando.gov/ilead](http://orlando.gov/ilead).



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ILEAD is a comprehensive program that provides you with the tools to inform, connect and involve your neighbors through a series of guides, videos, webinars and workshops. These tools cover topics such as how to effectively hold meetings, how to utilize a variety of communication tools and how to engage the next generation of leaders. Whether you download a guide, view a video, participate in a webinar or attend a workshop, iLead is your one stop shop for online leadership training.



**EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION**

is key to the success of your association. **STRONG COMMUNICATION** links people who are committed to working together to improve their neighborhoods. Weak communication can hinder your group’s progress and success. Strong communication becomes even more important when your organization **BRINGS TOGETHER** people of diverse languages, cultures or experiences.

 **BE EFFECTIVE**

Whether you are communicating with your members, neighbors, city officials, community stakeholders, or other organizations, it’s important that you explain your message clearly so that others understand it. Everyone has been in a situation where you have said something to a friend or neighbor and they took it the wrong way and thought you meant something completely different. This misunderstanding is exactly what you want to avoid when communicating with other people.

**ASSOCIATIONS ARE COMMUNICATING TO...**

- Inform
- Persuade
- Raise awareness
- Create understanding
- Generate interest
- Motivate people to act

Getting your message across is vital to moving your organization forward. To do this, you must understand what your message is, what audience you are sending it to, and how it will be perceived.

**COMMUNICATION TOOLS**



There are three basic methods to communicate your message when you are organizing a neighborhood project.

These include printed promotional materials such as flyers, posters and newsletters; public relations tools such as news releases and public service announcements; and direct communication or “word of mouth.”

Consider which method is more likely to be seen or read, which is the easiest to distribute, and how much each one will cost.



Associations use messages all the time for many different purposes. Without **STRONG AND CLEAR COMMUNICATION**, you will not be able to effectively convey your message to others. There are six key questions you'll need to ask and answer in order to develop an **EFFECTIVE WAY** to communicate your message to others:

 **1. WHO?**

Begin by asking yourself “who?” Who is the individual or group of people you want to reach?

This is the most important question to ask and must always come first. **If you don't know who your audience is, it will be difficult to create a message that will capture their attention.** Your target audience will likely include people who you want to respond and be aware of your message. You may determine that you have to write one message for one audience and a different message for another audience.

Take advantage of every opportunity to express your association's goals and activities to as many people in your community as possible, especially based on need, interest and past experience. Include your neighbors, community board members, local businesses, elected officials and more.

 **2. WHAT?**

“What?” is actually a very important question to ask. In order for you to communicate well with your audience, you should know what you want to say to them.

To figure this out, ask yourself, **“What is my primary goal in communicating this message to my audience?”** Asking yourself this question will help simplify your message and make it as clear as possible.

“What do I want my audience to do as a result of receiving this message?” Asking yourself this question will help you write a message that is persuasive and motivates your audience to respond how you want them to.

 **3. WHY?**

“Why?” is a question you should ask yourself to help determine why your message is important in the first place.

It will help you to simplify your message and make certain that you emphasize the most important points, especially how your audience will benefit from your message or activity.

In order to create a message that will motivate others to do something—for example, join a neighborhood event or group—you must step into their shoes and figure out what their needs and motivations are. **The most effective way to do this is to talk to a few neighbors and local experts who are not involved in your group and ask them.** Also, explain to them some of the benefits that you have thought of and see if they agree. Between your own ideas and those of a few others, you should be able to come up with two or three benefits that will be the most motivational to the majority of people.



## 4. WHEN?

The question “when?” is important for two reasons.

**The first reason is that if you try to organize an event, it is important to let people know the date and time that it takes place.** The second reason “when?” is a very important question because it helps you to think about when you should communicate with your audience and how far in advance of an activity. Two or three weeks is a good rule.

People are much more likely to attend an event if they have it on their calendar well in advance. This is especially important when working with the media, who have strict deadlines for news releases and announcements. Follow up with a reminder call to your audience a day or two before the activity.



## 5. WHERE?

“Where?” ties into the question of “when?” to have the event. Anytime a person organizes an event or meeting they should include not only the date and time of the meeting but also the location.

**It is very helpful to put an address and phone number on your flyers or posters in case someone needs more information, directions or want to make contact before they come.**

Another reason “where?” is an important question to consider, is that it reminds you to think about where to publicize your message so that your target audience is exposed to it many times. Make sure you get permission to post or hand out flyers at local schools, church events, etc. You may hand out flyers to residents in their homes and in public places but you may not leave them in mailboxes or on telephone poles, etc.

## GUIDELINES TO MAXIMIZE PROMOTIONAL & COMMUNICATION EFFORTS



### KEEP IT SIMPLE

Be sure to answer the basics Who, What, When, Why and How in all your printed materials.

### CHOOSE YOUR WORDS CAREFULLY

Less is better when designing flyers and notices. Be sure your printed materials are easy to read and quickly get to the point. Your prime promotional material should let the reader skim the page and get the basics without having to scrutinize the page.

### USE LARGE TYPE

In upper and lower case letters on flyers and posters. This will make your promotional materials easier to read and draw the reader's attention.



## 6. HOW?

“How?” is the final question to ask.

**It will help you determine how you will communicate your message.** For instance, you might want to handout a flyer or go to a meeting to address local officials. In either case, you should define the steps of your delivery of the message in advance. The hard work is done but the final task is to put the information into a clear format that your audience will understand.



**EMAILS, WEBSITES, SOCIAL MEDIA, PRINTED MATERIALS**

These examples of communication can be used to provide people with detailed information that would be difficult to promote through word of mouth only. People can also refer back to the information later if needed.

**CREATING WEBSITES**



A website is a very powerful communication tool and makes information about your association much more convenient to access. An association website, which is properly maintained and

utilized, makes it possible to share information and announcements in a very cost effective and timely manner.

- Include an explanation of what the association is all about.
- Talk about the mission and vision.
- Include a map or boundaries of your neighborhood.
- Add a page for news and updates.
- Promote contact information for the association as well as contact information for City services and officials.
- Use photos of your events, etc.

**OTHER PAGES TO CONSIDER**

- Calendar
- Photo page
- Interactive forums or chats
- Classified
- Member login
- Reference social media pages

Below is a sample of companies that provide associations with websites tools. This is not intended to be an inclusive list, nor does the City endorse these companies.

- Community123.com
- NextDoor.com
- HOAWebsites.net
- MeettheNeighbors.com
- NeighborhoodLink.com
- YahooGroups.com
- InteractiveHOA.com

**A FEW WAYS TO GET THE WORD OUT:**

- Neighborhood association newsletter
- Neighborhood survey
- E-mail
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter)
- Websites
- Person-to-person
- Letters
- Neighborhood Watch network
- Door-to-door handouts
- Weekly area newspapers
- Schools, churches and club newsletters
- Bulletins, notices, pamphlets, posters, flyers
- Booths at local events
- Cooperative efforts with other neighborhoods

**SOCIAL MEDIA**



- Keep the social media page active and up to date.
- Designate someone familiar with social media to serve as an administrator and post regular updates on behalf of the association.

- Run contests that require people to “like” and “share” your page.
- Use your network of neighbors to share the page.
- “Like” City of Orlando, local officials, media outlets, local businesses, etc., to keep the neighborhood informed about what is happening in your City.





### NEWSLETTERS



- Production cost can be high. You may want to contact local businesses to help sponsor or charge them a fee for advertising within the newsletter.

- Usually, a team effort works best when producing newsletters;

however, there should be someone to coordinate the efforts of the group and edit the newsletter. Your association should appoint a committee and chairperson to be responsible for producing the newsletter.

- By enlisting the participation of as many members as possible, you can appoint members of different committees to author articles and assign reporters to collect information from authors or research topics for the different columns of the newsletter.
- Like many other community groups, neighborhood associations in Orlando have found a newsletter is a great tool to communicate to neighbors about current activities of the neighborhood association. Members can be motivated and informed about association activities.
- Identify individuals who have strong computer skills.
- Select committee members who are proficient in writing and editing.
- Have clear deadlines for submitting all articles, editing, printing and distributing each issue of the newsletter.

### WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR NEWSLETTER

- Your general meeting notice.
- A “word from the president” column.
- Subtle reminders: A newsletter is an excellent means of correcting problems such as early placement of garbage, illegal parking and other code violations. Also, remind members about dues payment through your newsletter.
- Classified ads: List neighborhood babysitters, handymen, lawn care services, etc.
- Local businesses can advertise their goods and services. If enough businesses participate, the cost of the entire newsletter can be financed in this manner.
- Post upcoming events such as public hearings, block parties and general meetings. Use this opportunity to recruit volunteers for committees.
- An announcements section for engagements, weddings, anniversaries, birthdays, etc., adds a nice personal touch to a neighborhood newsletter. Also, use this section to welcome new residents to the neighborhood.
- Recognize neighbors for community involvement and volunteerism in a “neighbor profile” column.
- Feature a City sponsored program or service that may be of special interest to your neighborhood.
- Include a link to City News from [orlando.gov](http://orlando.gov).
- On occasion, use a “Bright Ideas” column to share ideas for neighborhood projects used by surrounding neighborhood groups.
- Most importantly, ask your readers for suggestions and input into the newsletter.



## DIRECT COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

One-on-one meetings, informal get-togethers and telephone calls are time-tested, effective means of communication. Although print and media tools are powerful forms of communication, nothing replaces talking with people. Talking with others takes more time, but is usually worth the investment. Another benefit of direct communication or “word of mouth” messages is that your audience will often pass your communication on to others whom they believe will be interested in your message.

### DEFINE WHO YOU ARE

As a group, determine the mission and goals of your group that you would like to communicate to your community. If your group can't state its mission in one or two brief sentences, you may still be unclear what you're really about. What do you hope to change? Are you looking for people to get involved? Are you looking for funding sources?

### INVOLVE COMMUNITY LEADERS



■ “Good news travels fast,” especially when it comes from the mouths of community leaders or “stakeholders”—those individuals, agencies, organizations or groups who are known for taking

responsibility for solving local problems or who would benefit from the problem being solved.

- Alert key community stakeholders, including elected officials, community board members, local business people, community nonprofit staff, teachers and newspaper staff about your group's work.
- Involve informal leaders too—those who may not have an “official” title but who usually have a lot of respect from neighbors, a solid group of followers and a passion for the issue you're working on.
- Put together a contact list of community stakeholders and invite them to attend one of your regularly scheduled meetings. Better yet, ask them to speak at your events.
- By involving those with a stake in the success of your efforts, your group is bound to strengthen communications with the neighborhood at large

### CREATE A BASIC FACT SHEET

- Put your goals in writing, using brief statements or bullet points.
- Describe your group, your goals, activities and who's involved.
- Keep it to one page.
- Include the group's contact information.
- Provide fact sheets at each gathering for any newcomers who may attend.
- If you live in a neighborhood with residents who do not read English well, translate your materials.
- Create a 30-second description of the purpose and value of your association.

### ENCOURAGE FEEDBACK

It's important that your efforts reflect the interests of your community, so regularly ask for feedback from your neighbors including those who are not part of your group. Ask them what they think you're doing right and what they think you could be doing better.

Use a variety of methods to get input, from surveys (lists of questions asked in person or by phone), to questionnaires (formal lists of questions circulated in writing), to focus groups (discussions with groups of people who would be impacted by your issue).

Open and frequent communication is especially critical to organizing successful projects that involve many neighborhood groups. Group members need to interact often, update one another, discuss issues openly and convey all necessary information to one another and to people outside the group. Ensure that information sharing occurs and you'll discover that your group will attract positive attention from places least expected.

# NOTES

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.

# STAY INFORMED, CONNECTED AND INVOLVED

## NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

Events, information and helpful resources to share with your neighborhood straight to your inbox! Subscribe at [orlando.gov/neighborhoodnews](http://orlando.gov/neighborhoodnews)

## NEIGHBORHOOD RELATIONS FACEBOOK

Like us at [facebook.com/orlandoneighborhoodrelations](https://facebook.com/orlandoneighborhoodrelations)

## NEIGHBORHOOD RELATIONS NEXTDOOR

Sign up at [nextdoor.com](http://nextdoor.com) to receive important information that effects your neighborhood.

## LEARN ABOUT THE CITY OF ORLANDO THROUGH OUR OTHER SOCIAL CHANNELS:

 [facebook/cityoforlando](https://facebook.com/cityoforlando)

 [instagram/thecitybeautiful](https://instagram.com/thecitybeautiful)

 [twitter/citybeautiful](https://twitter.com/citybeautiful)



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