



lovemyhood.ca



In Your Neighbourhood: Tips and tools for making a positive impact

Thank you.

We appreciate your efforts.

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*** This information is available in accessible formats upon request.**
Please call 519-741-2200 ext. 7083 or TTY 1-866-969-9994 for assistance.



Introduction to #LoveMyHood

Kitchener's Neighbourhood Strategy

In 2015, the City brought together a project team of residents from across the city to develop #LoveMyHood - Kitchener's first ever Neighbourhood Strategy.

#LoveMyHood aims to build on the great things already happening in Kitchener's neighbourhoods by giving residents tools, programs and resources to affect positive change in neighbourhoods.

One of the key deliverables from the project was to provide residents with a guide on how to make a positive impact and lead change – both big and small – in their neighbourhoods.

Got questions?

Contact City staff anytime. We're happy to help!

Neighbourhood Development Office, City of Kitchener

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What is **Neighbourhood Leadership**?

Neighbourhood leadership is essential to a vibrant community.

From leading a large project to shoveling a neighbour's driveway, neighbourhood leadership comes in many forms and may be led by any individual or group of neighbours who are looking to make a positive impact where they live.

Who is a **Neighbourhood Leader**?

Anyone can be a leader in their neighbourhood.

After all, the best neighbourhoods are made by the people who live in them. We know that neighbourhoods are more than just a physical location where we happen to live. They are more than an apartment building, townhouse complex, street or boundary drawn on a map.

Our neighbourhoods are a reflection of who we are—diverse, unique, interesting—and they are the foundation of the community we are working to build together.

Residents define their neighbourhood boundaries and identify the priorities that represent the many diverse voices of their community.

This toolkit features photos of just a few Kitchener residents who have led projects and have made a positive impact in their own neighbourhoods.



What is the purpose of this **guide**?

This guide provides you with tools and case studies that we hope will inspire you to lead positive change in your neighbourhood.

To help you get started, this guide covers five topics:

1. Identifying neighbourhood strengths
2. Connecting with your neighbours
3. Finding funding and resources
4. Planning a neighbourhood gathering
5. Creating welcoming spaces

Each topic explores ways you can work to make a positive impact in your neighbourhood, and includes links to useful toolkits, templates and additional resources to help you get started.

! **TIP:**

Each **TOOLKIT** tab indicates which tools and templates may be useful to you. To access these tools, click on the **TOOLKIT** tab and you will jump to a list of tools on page 10 of this document, or connect with City staff for physical copies of these tools and templates.

Need a refresher on a word used in this guide? Refer to the **WORD LIST** on page 12 of this guide, or click on the **WORD LIST** tab and you will jump to the definitions.





Neighbourhood Leadership Toolkit

Tools to help you along the way.

We have developed, collected and categorized a number of tools from a variety of residents, neighbourhood groups, community partners and City staff.

Click on a tool below to be directed to the online resource, or **connect with City staff** for physical copies of these tools and templates.

TOOL A – Neighbourhood Action Plan Template and Instructions

TOOL B – Engaging the Neighbourhood

TOOL C – Valuing Inclusion and Diversity in the Neighbourhood

TOOL D – Community and Neighbourhood Association Map

TOOL E – Asset Mapping: Gathering, Walking and Asset Chart

TOOL F – How to Plan and Run Meetings

TOOL G – Decision-Making Tools

TOOL H – Workplan Template

TOOL I – Communications Plan

TOOL J – Neighbourhood Demographics

TOOL K – How to Develop Vision Statements and Objectives

TOOL L – Implementation Plan Template

TOOL M – How to Plan a Street Party

TOOL N – LoveMyHood Matching Grant Budget Template

TOOL O – What's In My 'Hood? Map



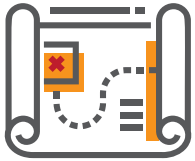
Neighbourhood Leadership

WORD LIST

This guide uses some words that you may not be familiar with. If you find a word you're not sure about, flip back to this page to get a description of what that word means.

- **ACCESSIBLE:** All people can enjoy and participate in the opportunities their neighbourhood provides.
- **ASSET:** Physical things such as material objects (e.g. community centre, library, grocery store) and personal qualities such as a person's skills, knowledge and/or experience (e.g. leadership skills, local knowledge, academic experience).
- **ASSET BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:** A process that encourages community driven development by building on assets already found, rather than focusing on the needs, in the neighbourhood.
- **ASSET MAP:** A map with information that identifies the strengths and resources of a neighbourhood and can help uncover solutions.
- **COMMUNICATIONS PLAN:** A plan to communicate with the neighbourhood by identifying who to target, when, with what message and how.
- **COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION:** A voluntary, not-for-profit, non-partisan, non-denominational group based in a geographic neighbourhood within the borders of the City of Kitchener that is: inclusive of and responsive to the needs of the community within the specific geographic area defined by the group; open to the public and makes this known through communications to the residents of that neighbourhood; active; and, accountable.
- **COMMUNITY PARTNER:** Groups or organizations that have an interest in great neighbourhoods (e.g. not-for-profits, school boards, police, etc.).
- **CONNECTED:** Neighbourhoods have links between people and between people and places.
- **DIVERSE:** Neighbourhoods have a variety of people, places, activities and services.
- **ENGAGED:** People are involved and committed to activities, programs and places.
- **INCLUSIVE:** People are welcomed and feel a sense of belonging in their neighbourhood.
- **NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATION:** A voluntary, not-for-profit, non-partisan, non-denominational group based in a geographic neighbourhood within the borders of the City of Kitchener that is: inclusive of and responsive to the needs of the community within the specific geographic area defined by the group; open to the public and makes this known through communications to the residents of that neighbourhood; active; and, accountable.
- **NEIGHBOURHOOD LIAISON:** Neighbourhood liaisons are your single point of contact at the City, providing support throughout your project. Whether it's helping to ensure your budget is accurate or providing insight on city permits and licenses, your neighbourhood liaison will help connect you to the resources you need to make things happen and can provide useful knowledge on navigating city processes.
- **LOVEMYHOOD MATCHING GRANT:** A one-time grant provided by the City of Kitchener that provides support to Kitchener residents who want to make positive change in their neighbourhood. With up to \$30,000 in matching funding available per project, this grant helps support resident-led projects and neighbourhood initiatives across the city.
- **SAFE:** People build trust and familiarity, look out for each other and are comfortable spending time out in their neighbourhood.
- **VISION:** A statement that captures the neighbours' dream of what their neighbourhood will be in the future.
- **VOLUNTEER:** A range of formal and informal ways people contribute to their neighbourhood, like being a member of the Neighbourhood Action Team, being involved with a neighbourhood association or just being engaged and helping out your neighbours.
- **WARD COUNCILLOR:** An elected official who represents a specific ward within the City.
- **WORKPLAN:** A plan that establishes clear expectations and timelines for developing the Neighbourhood Action Plan, including dates and responsibilities for key tasks, meetings and major milestones.





TOPIC 1

Identifying neighbourhood strengths

Every neighbourhood has a collection of assets that make it unique.

Assets are the strengths that already exist in your community and can include physical things, such as material objects (e.g., a community centre, library or grocery store) and personal qualities such as a person’s skills, knowledge and/or experience (e.g., leadership skills, local knowledge or academic experience).

Focusing on your neighbourhood’s strengths is a great starting point for bringing people together to make positive change. Recognizing what strengths are present in your community can help when starting a new neighbourhood project or making connections between neighbours.

There are a number of exercises and tools that can help you identify the existing strengths in your neighbourhood, including neighbourhood mapping activities and neighbourhood asset charts. Check out the toolkits below for these tools and more!

SEE TOOLKITS:

TOOL D – Community and Neighbourhood Association Map

TOOL E – Asset Mapping: Gathering, Walking and Asset Chart

TOOL J – Neighbourhood Demographics

TOOL O – What’s In My ‘Hood? Map

RESIDENT STORY



Meet Dawn Gill

Dawn Gill’s passion for hospitality and making connections is part of what drives her to help plan the Glenwood, Idlewood, Shuh Neighbourhood block party year after year.

Get to know your neighbours and strengths and start planning a project.

“We rely on neighbours with different skills, qualities and interests to work together to organize our block party,” says Dawn. “You need someone with a gift of hospitality, someone who loves to welcome everyone and host planning meetings. You also need a good administrator to keep everything organized; that administrative person who likes to write things down so you don’t forget what to do. If you have kids

in your area, you also need the person who loves working with children to plan activities for kids, and if you choose to have a paper flyer, a person who can get a good deal on printing and a person who has time to deliver flyers to make sure everyone is invited, and more.”

“We rely on neighbours with different skills, qualities and interests to work together to organize our block party.”

So how does Dawn find out her neighbours’ strengths and interests? “We invite everyone to participate. We make small, clear and specific asks of our neighbours, and are clear about the time commitment,” says Dawn. She also learns about her neighbours by welcoming feedback from them on an ongoing basis. “We really value constructive feedback,” says Dawn. “Sometimes I get great feedback when I strike up a conversation with a neighbour I see while walking my dog. Lots of great things can come from the informal meetings that happen between the planning meetings when you’re open to having those conversations.”



TOPIC 2

Connecting with your neighbours

Strengthen relationships by connecting with other residents in your neighbourhood.

When you have an idea for a project, initiative or event that you think will have a positive impact on your neighbourhood, it is important to let neighbours know and provide options for them to give input or get involved. Leveraging different skill sets and hearing different perspectives will help ensure the work is meaningful and reflects the neighbourhood as much as possible.

Getting support for your idea

You'll need support and buy-in from others in your neighbourhood before you can implement your idea. There are a variety of different stakeholders you may want to connect with, including organizations, groups, experts, and, of course, your neighbours. There is no right or wrong order in which to start making connections—do what makes sense to you and to start where you feel most comfortable.

Talk to organizations, groups, and experts

You might find it helpful to talk about your idea with a **Neighbourhood Liaison**, your **Neighbourhood Association**, the **Festival of Neighbourhoods** (if you want to host a neighbourhood gathering), and/or other groups or organizations that have a presence in your neighbourhood. They may be able to help you find out about:

- Similar work already happening in your neighbourhood that you can be part of;
- Similar work in another neighbourhood that you can learn from;
- The feasibility of your idea;
- What to expect and how long it might take to make your idea happen;

- Other people, organizations, or groups you can talk with; and
- How they can help you or support your work.

If specific expertise is needed for your idea, you may also want to seek out people, organizations, or groups with that knowledge. For example, if you want to create a pollinator garden in your neighbourhood you may find it helpful to contact **Bee City Kitchener**, join a Facebook group for local gardeners, or connect with environmental organizations.

Talk to your neighbours

It is important to talk with people who live in your neighbourhood to see if your idea resonates, get feedback, build excitement, and (hopefully) recruit some help. Having a clear idea, being flexible and open to feedback, and knowing what kind of input you are looking for can help make these conversations easier and more productive.

There are lots of different ways to share information with, and get feedback from, your neighbours. You might want to consider:

- Posting information to neighbourhood social media groups (you may need to create a group if one doesn't already exist for your street, neighbourhood, or building).
- Chatting informally when you see people you recognize around your building or out in the neighbourhood.
- Hosting a meeting in a nearby park, neighbourhood/building gathering space, or on your front lawn or porch.
- Placing flyers with contact information in mailboxes or on doors.
- Posting flyers around the neighbourhood (e.g. community centres, places of worship, schools, recreation facilities, businesses, non-profit organizations).
- Asking your Neighbourhood Association to share information via their newsletter, website, and/or social media accounts.

Getting help to implement your idea

Now that you have an agreed on an idea, it's time to figure out what there is to do and how many people you need to do it. Hopefully, while getting support for your idea you meet people who expressed an interest in helping. If you want to make it as easy as possible for them to get involved and make a commitment, or if you need to find more help, consider:

- Making a list of everything that needs to be done. A key factor to having a solid plan is knowing how many people you need and finding people to do those things.
- Dividing tasks and responsibilities as much as you can. Most people are busy and it will be easier for them to commit to taking on one or two smaller tasks than a bigger role with a lot of responsibility.
- Making what you are asking clear. Before most people will feel comfortable making a commitment, they will want to know exactly what you want them to do and how much time it will take.
- Letting people share tasks and work together. Many tasks are more enjoyable with a friend or family member, or when completed in a team setting.
- Letting people choose what they would like to do. People are more likely to become and stay involved if they get to do something they are good at, enjoy and are interested in.
- Not everyone needs to be in the core group, at all meetings or involved with all decisions. You will likely want to have a small core group of people who are helping with planning, but keep in mind that not everyone has to (or wants to!) be involved with everything.
- In-person meetings are not always necessary. As a group, decide what makes sense for keeping in touch, making plans and decisions. Keep it easy. Neighbours are more likely to become and stay involved if it fits with their busy schedules. As alternatives to in-person meetings, consider using a free messenger service like WhatsApp, Facebook or Google groups, and/or emails to communicate.
- Word of mouth works. If you have a core group, ask them to invite neighbours, family and friends to get involved.
- Recruiting more widely. The tactics you used while talking to your neighbours are also great ways to recruit more helpers.



If you aren't getting the help and support you need to implement your work, consider how you might be able to simplify or scale back the idea so that it can be accomplished with the help and resources that you have. You may also want to consider recruiting outside your neighbourhood, and your **Neighbourhood Liaison** may be able to help you advertise opportunities through the Volunteer Action Centre website by visiting www.volunteerwr.ca.

Keeping people involved.

If you're hoping to recruit people to help you on an ongoing basis (e.g., monthly, annually or for an extended period of time) it's important to think about creating a positive experience for them. When people have an enjoyable experience they will be more likely to stay involved and may even encourage others to get involved too. To help create a positive experience try:

- Checking in to be sure they are clear on what they are doing and feel comfortable with their responsibilities or tasks.
- Asking for feedback and implementing it when possible so people know that their opinions are valued and appreciated.
- Celebrating successes, big and small, so that people know how much their contributions are appreciated. Don't underestimate the power of saying thank you in person, through a note or card, or via a small token of appreciation, especially if the thank you is personal.

SEE TOOLKIT:

TOOL B – Engaging the Neighbourhood

TOOL F – How to Plan and Run Meetings

RESIDENT STORY



Meet Mukul Verma

Mukul Verma is passionate about creating spaces and places for neighbours to connect. He helps administer the Doon South Community Facebook Group that he enthusiastically describes as a “true community for residents, businesses and everyone!” He also started a Facebook group for his street.

Build a community online for neighbours to connect.

For Mukul, these online communities provide more than just an opportunity for neighbours to share information digitally, they are also a way to encourage in-person connections. Group members are encouraged to attend neighbourhood gatherings as well as share ideas and support one

another in implementing them. “It’s all about taking the online world offline,” says Mukul.

“It’s all about taking the online world offline.”

When it comes to his street, Mukul doesn't only rely on online channels to make connections. He uses many approaches like having informal conversations, hosting events (like water balloon fights and snow days), delivering flyers to every residence and surveys.

Regardless of what he's doing, he doesn't do it alone and is always inviting others to get involved. He's always asking, “Does anyone want to help?”



TOPIC 3

Find funding and resources

Funding and other resources can help bring your idea to life.

Whether you are planning a neighbourhood event or thinking about pursuing a placemaking project to improve your neighbourhood, knowing what funding options are available can help turn your vision into a reality. In this section, you will learn about a few different types of funding options, tips for successful grant applications and what other kinds of support to look for.

We've put together a list of a few things you may want to consider when exploring funding options and developing a grant application to help support the work you're doing in your neighbourhood.

Things to consider.

Before applying for funding, it's important to determine what you want to do in your neighbourhood. Some things you may want to think about include:

- What am I trying to achieve?
- What is my timeline for achieving this?
- Will I need a space?
- Will there be any costs associated with this work?
- Will I need the help of volunteers?
- How will I advertise this to the community?
- What unanticipated costs may come up (e.g., permits, licenses)?

These are just a few of the questions you may want to consider in order to understand the size and scope of your project and what kinds of costs you may need to account for. Knowing what you want to do and how much it will cost helps you to plan and execute your project.

! TIP

When planning any project, you should also become familiar with **Neighbourhood Liaisons**. They work for the City of Kitchener and can help you plan your project and navigate City processes. They have expertise on a wide range of topics and should be your number one contact at the City throughout your planning process!

Once you've thought through your project's details, you can determine what kind of funding you require to make your project happen.

Sources of Funding

Your idea may be eligible for funding from the City of Kitchener, other governments, local businesses, corporations and community foundations. Check out the options below and see if your project idea fits the criteria.

In-kind Support and Other Resources

Approach the groups, organizations and businesses in your neighbourhood. It is common for groups to provide in-kind donations for an event rather than financial support; for example, space to host the event, prizes for participants, materials, advertising and just about anything else you can think of! An example of this would be the City of Kitchener's **In-kind Facility Grant** which can provide a venue for your event or project at a minimal or no cost.

This is a common form of support for local groups, organizations or businesses that may not have the financial means to support an event but may be able to donate something. Think about what groups, organizations or local businesses are located in or nearby your neighbourhood, and whether they might be interested in supporting your project. For example, if you're hosting a block party, think about whether there might be market or grocery store that may be willing to donate food for the event or provide a discount.

When approaching local groups, organizations and/or businesses for in-kind donations, it is a good practice to have an information letter they can review to help them determine the nature of your project and how they can help.

City of Kitchener Grants

The City of Kitchener supports many individuals and groups in need of financial assistance to accomplish good work in our community, through our various grant programs. Learn more about these grants by visiting www.kitchener.ca/en/city-services/grants.aspx.

LoveMyHood Matching Grant

- For projects that strengthen relationships between neighbours, foster neighbourhood pride or renew a public space
- For both formal and informal neighbourhood community groups
- Up to \$30,000

Community Grants

- For projects providing a public event in the areas of arts and culture, minor sports and recreation or community support and development
- For not-for-profit organizations and service groups

Inclusion and Belonging Grant

- For one-time projects that support inclusion and/or belonging in Kitchener neighbourhoods
- For formal or informal groups of residents
- \$1,000-\$2,000

Community Development Infrastructure Program (CDIP)

- Support projects that take actions to address issues in community
- Available for neighbourhood groups or associations
- Up to \$10,000 available

Community Environmental Improvement Grants

- For projects to build a cleaner, more environmentally sustainable city
- Example: install permeable paving to replace broken, hard surfaces in a neighbourhood park
- Up to \$5,000 available

Heritage Grants

- Help repair and/or restore property designated under Ontario Heritage Act
- \$500-\$3,000 available

Travel Assistance Grant

- For youth (18 and younger) to travel to sports or cultural events outside the city
- Example: neighbourhood soccer team that wants to play in a tournament
- Amount varies depending on event details

In-kind Facility Grants

- Provides affordable space for a public event in the areas of arts and culture, minor sports and recreation, and community support and development
- For community groups and organizations
- Up to \$500



Funding may be available through a number of other sources, including:

Provincial Funding

The Provincial government may have funding, loans and other kinds of financial assistance to help support your project. For a full summary of the different grant options available, visit the www.grants.gov.on.ca/GrantsPortal/en for more information.

Federal Funding

A few examples are listed below; however, for a full summary of the different grant options available, visit the federal government’s grants website at www.canada.ca/en/government/grants-funding.html.

Other Community Grants

The Awesome Foundation

- The Kitchener-Waterloo chapter of the Awesome Foundation provides funding of up to \$1,000 for a wide variety of projects including local festivals, events and community groups

Kitchener-Waterloo Community Foundation Community Grants

- The Kitchener-Waterloo Community Foundation offers Community Grants to support a wide range of projects in the areas of affordable housing, healthy children and youth, and/or social inclusion.
- Grants are available to registered Charitable Organizations or qualified donees under CRA guidelines that reside in and/or serve the citizens of Waterloo Region.

Tips on writing a grant application or project proposal.

Do background research.

Before you begin, ensure you meet the eligibility criteria for the grant you are interested in applying for, as some are restricted to specific types of events or groups. Ensure you have reviewed the goals and vision the organization has for that grant and are making those the theme of your responses, where applicable. Also, where possible, review information regarding previously successful applications. Often, projects or groups that were successful in securing a grant will be profiled on that grant’s website and can contain useful information about the kind of projects likely to be funded.

Think of your language.

When writing your application, use similar language that the granting agency does. For example, if the grant is offered to promote “community building and social inclusion,” use those same words to demonstrate your project is a fit for that grant. Also, keep your writing clear and concise. Don’t feel the need to fill answers with unimportant information to reach a maximum word count. Keeping paragraphs clear and to the point shows that you understand what you’re trying to accomplish and anyone reviewing your proposal will appreciate this!

Plan ahead.

Leave yourself enough time to write, edit and re-write your proposal. Taking time and coming back to your proposal is a great strategy to ensure you are submitting the strongest proposal possible. Where needed, ensure a budget is attached that is thorough and well developed. This will show the granting agency that you have thought through your project and can be trusted to execute it successfully.

Consult with others.

Be sure to consult with anyone who can help make your application as strong as possible. This could include other members of your planning group, your Neighbourhood Liaison, neighbours who have experience applying to grants and/or people from other communities who have applied for similar grants. Don’t hesitate to ask questions! Most granting agencies have designated staff assigned to answer questions about specific grants so be sure to contact them if you’re unclear about anything related to your grant application or your project’s fit for a grant. Your **Neighbourhood Liaison** is a great source of information and should be consulted throughout your planning process.



SEE TOOLKIT:

TOOL D – Community and Neighbourhood Association Map

TOOL E – Asset Mapping: Gathering, Walking and Asset Chart

TOOL N – LoveMyHood Matching Grant Budget Template

RESIDENT STORY



Meet Amanda and Giselle, residents of Forest Heights

Amanda Farquhar and Giselle Carter, both passionate about environmental issues and sustainability, came together around a shared vision: creating a pollinator patch in the Forest Heights neighbourhood. Through grants, donations and in-kind contributions, they were able to raise over \$20,000 to bring their vision to life. Here are a few of their tips for fundraising:

- Ask for donations in person and make sure to talk to the right person. Giselle visited some businesses multiple times or followed up with a phone call when she didn't get a response.

- Don't take rejection personally—not everyone will be able to support your cause.

“*Having people cheering you on is everything. They can also share information with their networks, help you with grant applications, provide expert advice, and advocate for your idea.*”

- Expect unexpected expenses. “Additional costs will arise, whether it's an item that was forgotten on the original budget, a shortage of materials or a 'hiccup' that changes the plan, having a cushion is important,” says Amanda.

- Apply for more grants than you need to increase your chances of success. To save time, Giselle and Amanda used their original grant application as the basis for their second.
- Talk to your friends and family about your idea and seek out local experts or enthusiasts who believe in your cause. Amanda and Giselle used social media to reach out to special interest groups they felt would be interested in the pollinator patch. “You never know who might be willing to donate skills, expertise, or items unless you ask,” said Amanda.
- Don't do it alone. Over the course of their project Amanda and Giselle got help and support from their Neighbourhood Association, local organizations and groups, local politicians, City of Kitchener staff, and more. “Having people cheering you on is everything. They can also share information with their networks, help you with grant applications, provide expert advice, and advocate for your idea,” said Giselle.





TOPIC 4

Plan a neighbourhood gathering

Neighbourhood events are a great way to help people get to know each other.

Neighbours can discover common interests that can help form or strengthen relationships. When neighbours know each other, they can look out for each other and be ready to help out in times of need. Talk to your neighbours and work with interested neighbours to organize a gathering. Let's get you started!

If you have never organized an event before, an important part of any event is to determine who, what, when, where, why and how:

Who?

A **true neighbourhood gathering** includes everyone in your neighbourhood. By extending an invitation to all of your neighbours, you are taking an important step to making your neighbourhood more inclusive by inviting all neighbours to come together. Not only are you reshaping a physical space where people can interact in new ways, you are also creating the potential for long term relationships to flourish.

What?

Brainstorm ideas on what to do. Think about what might attract people of different ages, interests and cultural backgrounds, so everyone feels welcome. Together, identify a vision for your event and answer the 5 W's in relation to your event (who, what, when, where, why).

If you have never planned an event before it's okay to start small. If you need ideas to get started, check out Festival of Neighbourhood's **Neighbourhood Activity Guide**.

When?

Pick a date and time for your neighbourhood event. If you make it an annual event, it is a good idea to stick with the same date year after year. Remember to set a rain date as well! You can also consider hosting your event on **Neighbours Day** – always the second Saturday in June – when people across Kitchener host and attend events in their neighbourhood.

Where?

Depending on where you plan on having your neighbourhood event, you may need to take into account the time needed to secure permits and approvals.

For example, if you are planning on a street party we recommend starting to plan three to four months in advance. This will ensure you've got lots of time to get everyone involved, arrange for the special event permit, road closure and promote your event. Please remember to submit your road closure petition and noise exemption forms at least four weeks before your event. If approval from **Waterloo Region's Public Health** is required, provide at least 45 days notice.

Connect with the **Neighbourhood Development Office** to work with a **Neighbourhood Liaison** who can help you through the permit process.

Why?

Bringing members of the neighbourhood together helps to foster a sense of belonging and instill a sense of pride. Often, conversations at neighbourhood events can help neighbours discover common interests and form or strengthen relationships.



Things to consider when planning your event.

Bring together a group of three to five people who are eager to be involved can help you with planning. It's also a good idea to identify a coordinator who can help keep everything on track. Keep in mind your strengths, interests and passions and reach out for help from your neighbours or City staff if needed.

- Use various types of communication to invite neighbours including large print, translations and verbal invitations.
- Encourage your neighbours to share their culture through the neighbourhood gathering being organized.
- Does the space fit the event?
- What barriers are there to people participating?
- Low cost or free events may encourage more people to participate.
- Ensure you create a safe space for everyone to participate.
- Consider opening the event using a land/territory acknowledgment.
- To make your event accessible become familiar with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) event guidelines which include what to do if someone attends with a support person or a service animal.
- Have childcare available, and if needed, ensure the person is qualified and has appropriate certifications and police clearances.
- Think about safety and possible emergencies. Follow our Safety Checklist for guidance.
- A rain date or inclement weather plan.
- Food can be a perfect way to attract people to a fun neighbourhood event!



Permits and insurance for the event.

- You will need a business license if you charge money at the event for admission, food or entertainment (such as food trucks/vendors, retail vendors or busking). You don't need a license for free or donated food, like potlucks and BBQs. Collecting donations on a "pay what you can" basis to cover costs of your event does not require a license. Ask City staff for more direction or learn more about Kitchener's business licensing by-law [online](#).
- Good news! There is no cost from the City for the special event road closure permit. We also cover insurance costs for neighbourhood street parties up to 200 people.
- If you connect with Love My Hood, we can help connect you with a Neighbourhood Liaison who can help you through any permit processes.

Safety Checklist

Please take the time to plan so your event can be safely enjoyed by everyone:

- Follow public health [food safety guidelines](#) and contact Region of Waterloo Public Health at 519-883-2008 ext. 5147.
- Identify a single person to make decisions in case of an emergency and prepare an emergency plan.
- Monitor the weather in case plans need to change.
- Clearly communicate to all event attendees that alcohol is not permitted on city property.
- Have a first-aid kit and fire extinguisher.
- Complete a safety check before the event starts to be sure things like barricades, tents or tables are set up properly.
- Leave an emergency route free of barriers.
- If an accident or injury occurs and you received insurance through the City, complete an incident report form, found [here](#).

Spread the word about your event.

There are lots of ways to spread the word about your event. When going door-to-door bring your event flyers or posters. Other ideas include social media, emails, media or advertising. Notify your neighbourhood association or local community partners and ask them to include your event in their newsletters or communications. Think about different ages, demographics, cultural backgrounds or special interest

groups when spreading the word about your event. They will all have preferred ways of communicating, so reach out in different ways to connect with different people.

Have fun.

On event day remember to have fun! Set things up – and get partying! Don't forget to take pictures and share on social media, using #LoveMyHood!

After your event.

Reflect on how things went and any feedback you may have received. Making notes of any items that may need to be taken into consideration for future events.

Make sure you thank all your volunteers and any sponsors or donors.

SEE TOOLKIT:

TOOL B – Engaging the Neighbourhood

TOOL H – Workplan Template

TOOL I – Communications Plan

TOOL M – How to Plan a Street Party

TOOL N – LoveMyHood Matching Grant Budget Template

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Kitchener Events Planning Toolkit

www.kitchenerevents.ca/get-involved/plan-an-event

Social Development Centre's Neighbourhood Activity Guide

www.waterlooregion.org/neighbourhood-activity-guide

Making Outdoor Events Accessible

www.aoda.ca/making-outdoor-events-accessible/

Accessibility Canada's Events Resources

www.accessibilitycanada.ca/resources/

Festival of Neighbourhood's REACH! Inclusion Challenge

www.festivalofneighbourhoods.ca/inclusion-challenge/

RESIDENT STORY



Meet Denise and Savannah, residents of McKenzie Avenue

Denise Gruber and Savannah Sattler are part of a group of residents who plan the McKenzie Avenue street party, a longstanding annual event that brings neighbours together so they can get to know one another. Here are a few of their tips for planning a successful event:

- **Work together.** “It’s important to have key people who want to work as a group,” says Savannah. A group of women who live on the street have dinner together several times a year. The evenings out are when “everyone starts to give ideas for the next street party and discusses what supplies they have leftover and what’s needed” says Denise.

- **Invite everyone.** “We hand deliver invitations to everyone on the street,” says Savannah. “When you apply for a road closure permit, you have to get signatures of support from your neighbours. This is also a helpful way of letting everyone know what you’re planning,” adds Denise.

“It’s important to have key people who want to work together as a group.”

- **Intentionally encourage connections among neighbours.** “Name tags are key. They help you learn and remember everyone’s name,” says Denise.

- **Use creative ways to keep costs down.** “We’ve borrowed games from friends and the City of Kitchener and neighbours barbecue and bring tables and lawn chairs,” says Savannah. One year they invited the Kitchener Fire Department, which was free and appealed to adults and children alike.

- **Keep it simple.** “It doesn’t have to be complicated. We focus on three main things for our street party: games, a craft, and food,” says Denise. “Try not to take on too much,” adds Savannah. “It helps you worry less and makes the whole experience more enjoyable.”





TOPIC 5

Welcoming all neighbours

Neighbourhood gatherings are a great way to get to know your neighbours, both people who are new to the area and people who have lived there for many years.

When you are planning a neighbourhood gathering, inviting everyone in your neighbourhood helps to ensure that your neighbours feel truly welcome and builds a stronger community.

Be sure to include youth, seniors, people with disabilities and neighbours who may not share your language or cultural background and involve them in planning the event.

To make everyone welcome, consider the following:

- What barriers exist to people participating?
- How can you ensure you create a safe space for everyone to participate?
- If you are serving food, don't forget to ask people in advance if they have any dietary restrictions. To help accommodate any dietary needs, talk to your neighbours who have identified a need and ask them how to best meet that need.
- Consider placing an ingredient list with each item if you are having a buffet or potluck.
- If you have neighbours who belong to different faith groups and cultures, before choosing a date for your event, check with your neighbours to make sure the event date does not conflict with significant cultural or faith days.
- To make your event accessible to people with disabilities become familiar with the AODA event guidelines.



Things to consider.

- See if any of your neighbours can help with translations and sharing information about your event.
- Ask neighbours if they would be interested and comfortable sharing their culture as part of the event.
- Low cost or free events may encourage more people to attend.
- Having qualified childcare available may encourage more people to participate.
- Having the gathering in spaces that can be easily accessed by people who use mobility devices, strollers, etc. may encourage more people to take part.

! TIP:

Most people will need a personal invitation to get involved. Use different methods to communicate such as posters, social media groups, flyers and word of mouth. You may also want to consider developing a large-print version or translations of promotional materials. Consider asking neighbours you know to help spread the word.

🔧 SEE TOOLKIT:

TOOL B – Engaging the Neighbourhood

TOOL C – Valuing Inclusion and Diversity in the Neighbourhood

TOOL J – Neighbourhood Demographics

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Making Outdoor Events Accessible

www.aoda.ca/making-outdoor-events-accessible/

Accessibility Canada's Events Resources

www.accessibilitycanada.ca/resources/

Festival of Neighbourhood's REACH! Inclusion Challenge

www.festivalofneighbourhoods.ca/inclusion-challenge/

RESIDENT STORY



Meet Faduma Musse

Faduma Musse sits on the board of the **Somali Canadian Association of Waterloo Region (SCAWR)**, a grassroots organization that offers family literacy and recreation programs in three Kitchener neighbourhoods. Faduma and the SCAWR are very intentional about creating welcoming spaces for everyone.

Here are a few of Faduma's tips:

- Getting to know your neighbours is key to making sure your work reflects what they want and need. "That means listening to everybody and involving everyone in your process." Faduma does this very informally by connecting with people around a shared experience. "When you connect around something you

have in common, people may start to feel comfortable sharing their needs and wants around shaping the neighbourhood."

- Focus on quality over quantity. "If only 5 people show up, those people will draw in more people if they have a good experience. Don't ever be discouraged by numbers. Quality will bring in the numbers."

“When you connect around something you have in common, people may start to feel comfortable sharing their needs and wants around shaping the neighbourhood.”

- One person cannot do it alone. "Once you understand what the needs are, leverage the strengths of people in your community and bring a core group together around a shared goal." Creating partnerships has also helped the SCAWR achieve their goals. "Lean on other people who are doing similar work. People can share information and resources that you can build off of."
- Ask for feedback so you and your group can grow. "Always debrief your work. It's not about making people feel bad, it's about asking what can we do better?"

Get started

Now that you have read this guide, you might be feeling inspired to get started on making a positive impact in your neighbourhood. Circle back to the beginning of this document to begin planning and using the toolkits and templates, and remember, it's okay to start small.

Don't be afraid to ask for help. City staff are more than happy to get you going!

Got questions?

Contact City staff anytime. We're happy to help!

Neighbourhood Development Office, City of Kitchener

lovemyhood@kitchener.ca

519-741-2200 ext. HOOD (4663)

* This information is available in accessible formats upon request.

Please call 519-741-2200 ext. 7083 or TTY 1-866-969-9994 for assistance.





love my hood
Kitchener's guide to **great neighbourhoods**

| great **places** | connected **people** | working **together** |