

Strong Neighbourhoods

Neighbourhood Event Planning Guide



Great Reasons to Host a Neighbourhood Event

A Neighbourhood Event is a fantastic way to bring neighbours together, celebrate your community, and have fun! Whether it's your first-time hosting or you're looking to make your next event even better, this guide will walk you through everything you need to know to plan a successful and enjoyable Neighbourhood Event.

Connect with long-time residents and learn about the history of your neighbourhood

Build meaningful friendships

Get to know who lives in your neighbourhood and foster a sense of belonging

Have fun and celebrate the spirit of your neighbourhood

Discuss upcoming events and important happenings in your neighbourhood

Identify neighbours who may need help or those who could lend a hand in the future

Foster neighbourhood pride and encourage residents to care for their shared environment

Organize a neighbourhood enhancement day with activities like live music or a BBQ

Celebrate and showcase local culture, traditions, and unique community values

Share information about the neighbourhood association and its benefits



Benefits of Connecting with Your Neighbours

Makes Us Happy

Enhances
Neighbourhood
Safety

Builds Strong
Neighbourhoods

Raise
Awareness of
Your
Neighbours'
Skills and
Talents

Improves Our
Wellbeing

Supports the
Growth and
Success of
Young People



Getting Started

Find Neighbours to Help!

The purpose of a Neighbourhood Event is to bring neighbours together. Start by connecting with 1-2 neighbours you already know to see if they would be interested in helping.

The more neighbours who help plan and organize the party, the less the workload. Also, having extra neighbours help could make it easier for someone else to take the Neighbourhood Event planning lead the following year.

Tasks that could be assigned to neighbours include:

- Distributing invitations and promoting the event.
- Organizing/buying food and beverages. If it's a pot-luck style, make a list of items people can bring.
- Completing the Neighbourhood Event application form or completing necessary permits.
- Set-up and take-down.
- Organization of games or activities.

Establish a Budget

Determine how much money you can spend and allocate funds across key areas such as the venue, food, entertainment, and more. To help cover expenses, consider these available resources:

- Applying for a Strong Neighbourhood Grant. For more information and to access the application, visit: [Strong Neighbourhoods grants | City of Kelowna](#).
- To take advantage of neighbourhood event support through the Strong Neighbourhoods event trailer or the Meet Your Street Kit. For more details, visit: [Neighbourhood Event support | City of Kelowna](#).

Consider What the Purpose of Your Event is

- Simply getting to know neighbours
- Build long lasting connections
- Create forms of communication throughout your neighbourhood
- Learn something new with your neighbours
- Identify your neighbours skills, assets, passions, and hopes for the neighbourhood
- Identify neighbours that could need a hand with shoveling, yardwork, or other simple tasks



Choose the Type of Event You Want to Host

Here are some event ideas to inspire your next neighbourhood gathering:

- Neighbourhood Event
- Neighbourhood Clean-Up
- Porch Concert
- Game Night
- Outdoor Movie Night
- Talent Show
- Neighbourhood Yard Sale
- Workshop or DIY Class
- Trivia or Bingo Night
- Crafting circle
- Morning Coffee on the Front Lawn
- Plant Swap or Produce Sharing/Tasting
- Lawn Game Competition
- Themed Potluck

Choose a Date and Time

A Neighbourhood Event can happen any time of the year. However, block parties commonly occur between May and October when the weather is most favorable for an outdoor event. Weekends are often the best time for a Neighbourhood Event, though many residents have successful weekday evening block parties as well.

Choose the Right Location

The location of your Neighbourhood Event can make a significant difference to its success. Consider the following options:

- **Yard or House:** Ideal for smaller gatherings with close neighbours, whether it's for a meal or casual hangout.
- **Apartment Common Room or Green Space:** For apartment residents, host in an amenities room or local park. Patio parties are also a terrific way to connect with nearby neighbours.



- **Park or Green Space:** Ideal for larger gatherings with activities. Local parks and green spaces can be booked through Strong Neighbourhoods for neighbourhood events. Please note, however, that booking does not grant exclusive use of the space. An Outdoor Event Permit is required to host events on City property when any of the following apply:
 - The event is deemed complex by the Event Services Office.
 - Is a community wide event reaching farther than the immediate neighbourhood.
 - Access to City services is required.
 - A liquor permit is requested for an event on City property.
 - Infrastructure required (portable toilets, stages, greater than 10'x10' tent, etc.)
 - Vendors will be present.
 - Inflatables will be present
 - Anticipated attendance of 350 or more people.

For more information, visit [Plan an outdoor event | City of Kelowna](#).

- **Street:** Host on your street or cul-de-sac (excluding bus routes and main arteries). A Strong Neighbourhoods Event Road Usage Permit is required - [Road Usage Permit Application](#).
- **Activity Centres:** City-operated venues are great for year-round gatherings, especially when the weather is unpredictable. For more information visit: [Facility Rentals | City of Kelowna](#).

Decide What to Eat

Food is a great way to bring people together at a Neighbourhood Event. Here are some ideas:

- **Appy Hour:** A casual gathering where neighbours enjoy appetizers, drinks, and good company.
- **Barbecue:** Neighbours can bring portable BBQs, with guests supplying their own grillables or the organizing committee providing the food.
 - * Portable BBQs must be CSA/ULC approved, powered by propane, always supervised, and kept at least 1 meter away from structures, property lines, or other combustible materials (Bylaw 11023 section 3.26).
- **Picnic:** Neighbours bring their own food and enjoy a casual picnic together at the park.
- **Potluck:** Each household brings a dish to share. You can assign categories like desserts for even numbered houses and salads or appetizers for odd-numbered houses.



- **Catered Dinner:** Hire a caterer for a more formal option, with neighbours pitching in to share the cost.
- **Progressive Supper:** Start with appetizers at one home, move to the next for the main course, and finish with dessert at another location.
- **Chili Cook-Off:** Host a friendly competition where neighbours bring their best chili for everyone to sample.
- **Baked Goods Exchange:** Have neighbours bake their favourite treats, a wonderful way to welcome newcomers to the neighbourhood.
- **Food Truck:** Hire a food truck to provide food for the event.
 - Note: food trucks on public property must be approved by the City of Kelowna and a permit may be required

Provide multiple garbage and recycling bins for easy cleanup.

Be mindful of food allergies. Encourage neighbours to bring their recipes-it is not only helpful for those with allergies but also adds a fun recipe exchange element!

A Food Service Permit may be required, depending on the nature of the event. For more information, please refer to the: [Temporary Food Service Guideline](#).

If you plan to include alcohol at your event, please contact Event Services for guidance. For more information, visit: [Plan an outdoor event | City of Kelowna](#).

Reminder: The City of Kelowna prohibits alcohol consumption on City property, including most parks, sidewalks, and roads. If your event is at a City facility or involves serving alcohol, you may need to obtain a liquor license.



Vendor and Supplier Booking (if applicable)

Secure services such as entertainment, audio-visual equipment, and decorators. Confirm their availability and negotiate contracts.

Insurance

Secure comprehensive General Liability Insurance for events held on public property. The City of Kelowna can facilitate the request and payment to Markel Canada as a service to the event organizer. Please note, the City is not an insurance agent, broker, or representative of Markel Canada. Insurance rates are based on the number of attendees, and coverage can also be purchased independently.

Get the Word Out

Give your neighbours at least 2 weeks' notice about the Neighbourhood Event. Invitations are a great way to share event details, including the date, time, location, and any requests (e.g., bring lawn chairs, food, cutlery, or small games). You can also use invitation templates from the City of Kelowna's [Strong Neighbourhoods page](#) or [Canva: Visual Suite for Everyone](#).

Other ways to spread the word:

- Drop a flyer or invitation in your neighbours' mailbox or on the doorstep.
- Put up a poster on local bulletin boards.
- Share details on your neighbourhood's Facebook page.
- Distribute door hanger invites.
- Place lawn signs to advertise the event.

If there are newcomers to Canada in your neighbourhood, consider personally inviting them, as they may not be familiar with the concept of a Neighbourhood Event.

Plan for All Ages

If kids are attending, consider setting up a face painting station, lawn games, or a sports match to keep them entertained. Adults can join in the fun too with activities like makeshift mini-golf, ball tournaments, bocce, or croquet - great ways to stay active and socialize together!



Activity Ideas

Activities or games are a good option to keep all ages entertained. Below is a list of activities to consider organizing to help keep your guests engaged and having a good time!

- Soccer match
- Sidewalk chalk art
- Scavenger hunt
- DIY mini golf
- Carnival games
- Classic yard games
- Face painting station
- Bingo
- Kick the can
- Fun contests
- Badminton tournament
- Balloon animals or crafts
- Ring toss or horseshoes
- Painting rocks or bird houses



Use Strong Neighbourhoods Resources found on the City of Kelowna's [Strong Neighbourhoods page](#)

- [Conversation Starters](#)
- [Neighbour Bingo](#)

Collect information on an idea board:

- What neighbours would like to see in the neighbourhood.
- What their favourite parts of the neighbourhood are.
- Strengths and assets your neighbours could offer.

During the Event

Coordinate a Setup Crew

You will need help with setting up tables, chairs, food, garbage bins, and activities. Ask neighbours and local youth for assistance ahead of time to ensure everything runs smoothly on the day.

Ensure Supplies Are Stocked

Make sure you have extra plates, cutlery, cups, and napkins based on the type of food being served, so you are well-prepared for the event.



Create a Neighbourhood Contact List

Encourage attendees to sign in or provide their contact information, helping neighbours stay connected year-round.

Be a Host

Welcome guests, facilitate connections, and make sure everyone knows they can come to you with any questions. Name tags are a fantastic way to remember neighbours. See Name Tag Templates on the City of Kelowna's [Strong Neighbourhoods page](#).

Coordinate Activities

Find a neighbour who can help lead games or activities, ensuring everyone stays engaged and has fun!

Post Event

Clean Up the Area

Enlist neighbours to help with takedown and cleanup. The more hands, the quicker the process! Ensure all trash and recyclables are properly disposed of and leave the space in better condition than you found it.

Gather Feedback

Collect feedback to improve future events, gain insight into what types of activities neighbours enjoy, and ensure each event is even better than the last.

Return Borrowed Equipment

Make sure to promptly return any rented or borrowed items used for the event.

Take Notes

Jot down what worked well and what could be improved to help make future events run more smoothly.

Send Thank You Cards

Show your appreciation by sending thank you cards to neighbours who went beyond to help.





Need some guidance?

Strong Neighbourhoods | kelowna.ca/neighbourhoods | neighbourhoods@kelowna.ca |

