

6 Tips to *Boost* Resident Engagement in Your Community

Residents tend to be happier – and associations more successful – when members of the community actively participate. But many boards struggle to come up with concrete ways to engage homeowners.



HERE ARE 6 SIMPLE STEPS TO BOOSTING RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT AT YOUR COMMUNITY:

1 Identify common values

As Yogi Berra said, “If you don't know where you are going – you might end up someplace else.”

The first step in establishing engaged homeowners is to identify shared values among them. Asking residents a simple question like, “what do you want your community to be?” will help your board identify the things that matter most to residents. Once a vision is clearly defined, it will inspire community members to work together to achieve it.

2 Encourage 2-way communication

Use your communication tools – community websites, social media, email, and newsletters – to solicit member feedback and input. Their ideas may surprise you – in a good way! Asking for input also creates a sense of ownership, which builds community spirit.



3 Create shared experiences

Residents who feel like they are an integral part of their community will be more interested in getting involved, and there's nothing like a community event to spark that feeling. Social events may look a little different in the age of COVID-19, but they still provide great opportunities for residents to get to know each other and discover common interests. Events such as cooking classes, book clubs and game nights are easily hosted online, and can help build a sense of community among residents.

4 Provide volunteer opportunities

Many residents feel they don't have much influence over the way their association is run. Encouraging residents to volunteer for a committee or special community project is a great way to empower them. Getting people involved in and around the community isn't easy, so make sure to keep at it, make invitations personal, and be generous with praise when people are contributing their time.

If you are planning volunteer projects or meetings in person, it's important to follow the recommendations for safety. Limit the number of people in attendance, observe social distancing, wear masks as needed or required by law, and clean and disinfect any meeting spaces before and after use.



5 Lead by example

Being part of a well-run community fosters pride, which fuels a desire to play a bigger role in the community. Ensure that your association is functioning well to encourage greater resident participation. When board members have a strong presence in the community, it resonates well with residents and prompts them to get involved.



6 Resolve conflict

While disagreements are bound to occur, it's arguments that are allowed to fester that can put a damper on community cohesion and prevent homeowner participation. Having tough conversations and resolving conflict fairly and early on can spare pain and frustration down the road, and keep your community on the path to high resident engagement.

“Many hands make light work,” as the saying goes, and that's especially true in a community that relies on resident involvement. Follow these proven tips, and don't forget to tap your property management partner for additional guidance on engaging your residents in a meaningful way. Before long, you'll find residents who not only participate, but take pride in building a better, stronger, more cohesive community.