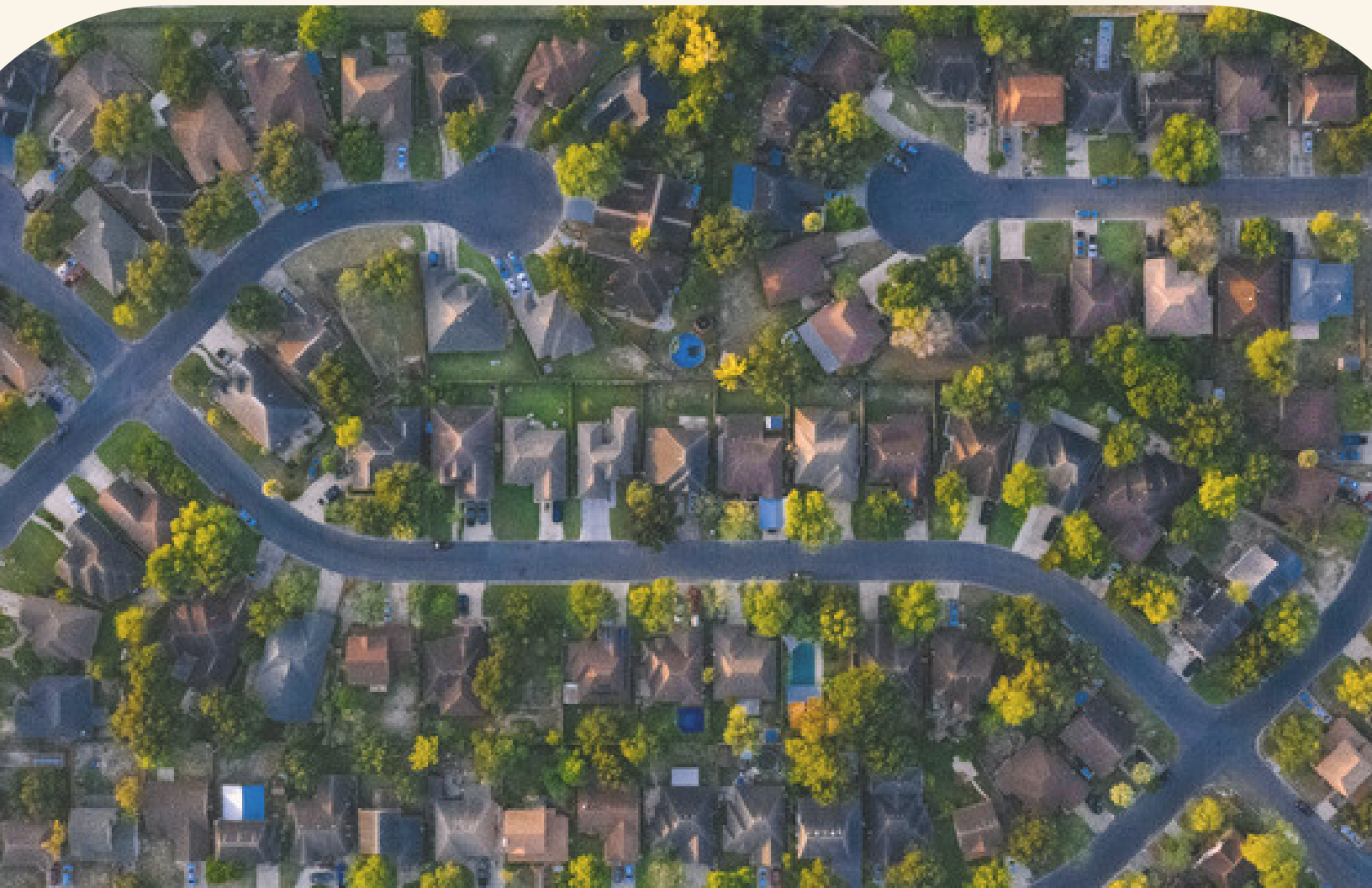# COMMUNICATION PLAN
FOR BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

MAY 2023

Communication Plan
for Community Resilience

May 2023

This document is a version of a communications plan originally created for the Brookwood Subdivision in Jackson, Mississippi.

C2P2

COMMUNITY & COLLEGE PARTNERS PROGRAM

and

Columbia University

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CONTENTS

LETTER OF INTENT

The Communication Plan for Community Resilience was adapted from the Communication Plan created for the Jackson, Mississippi community by a team of Columbia University students from the Climate School. The Plan has been tailored to be an effective tool for any community seeking to build resilience.

The team of students from Columbia University was first introduced to the communities in Jackson, Mississippi by the Community and College Partners Program (C2P2). This non-profit organization connects university partners with underserved communities to support their self-identified needs. University groups aim to support community resilience by providing technical assistance to solve the issues that communities face. Our team consists of undergraduate students studying Sustainable Development with specialities ranging from public health, community engagement, and environmental justice.

Strong communication channels makes a community more resilient and empowered to tackle a variety of challenges by providing a method of educating, empowering, and mobilizing the community. In order to improve community communication and cohesion, our student team created a Communication Plan to outline the steps needed to form strong pathways of engagement and strategic community outreach.

The goal of the Communication Plan is to be a tool for community members to use to expand engagement. This toolkit aims to show how channels of communication that most people already use can be used to connect with larger communities. The descriptions and "how-tos" of each channel of communication are meant to make using the tools easy and straightforward for those who want to engage with the community at large, and for the communication plan to be one that can easily be transferred to people who want to get involved in the future.

To fully understand how strong communication fits into the larger mission of solving issues in communities, the report includes visual representation of the Pathway of Community Action. Once a strong communication plan is implemented, communities will be better equipped to tackle the issues as a united force. This Communication Plan is meant to be a long-term adaptable and editable resource.

The completion of the original project from which this Plan was adapted could not have been possible without the support, feedback, and hope for change from the Jackson, Mississippi community. A sincere thank you to everyone who contributed to the planning, creation, and editing of this report.

The 2023 Columbia University Sustainable Development Student Team

PATHWAY FOR COMMUNITY ACTION

The following framework diagram for community action is designed to bridge the gap in communications between and within neighborhoods facing similar issues. This framework consists of five steps, with the first being the identification of the community and its representatives, followed by the identification of a broad issue to focus on, the use of a strong communication network to inform residents, the holding of a listening session to hear concerns and ideas, and finally, action planning.
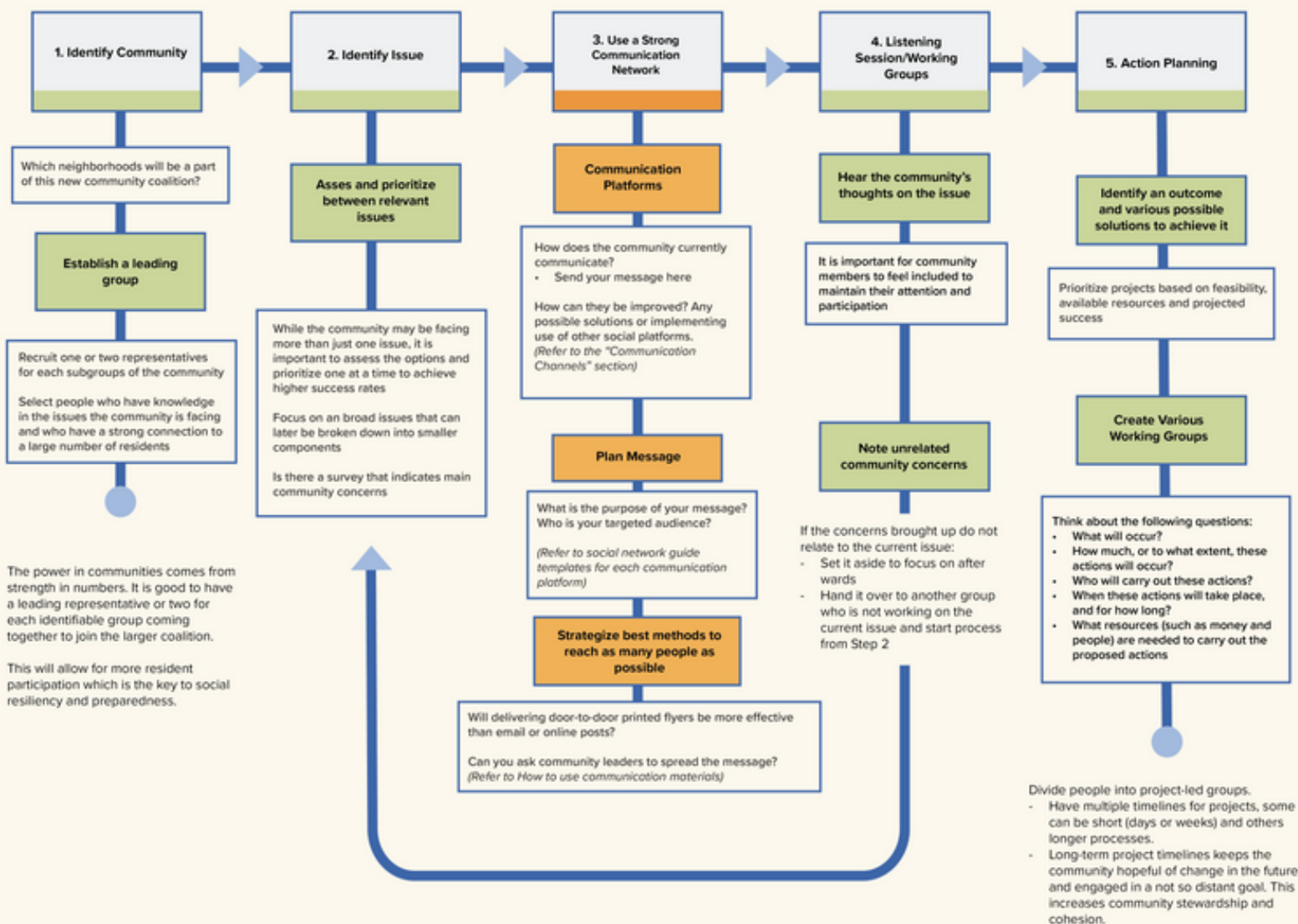
The focus of this framework is on step three, which is creating a strong communication network. In this part, we lay out a few simple steps that can be useful when establishing a communication network and we have compiled resources that explain best communication practices, how-to guides, and templates that can be adapted for various needs.

A strong communication network is a key component of community resilience as it is a key first step that will lay a foundation for the community coalition. It creates a space for community members to develop a further understanding of the current and projected environmental hazards they face, and the actions they can take to both plan for and respond to an event. Increased knowledge, trust, and a feeling of community enable participants to cultivate the confidence and hope to take part in generating solutions on small and large scales. This is key for communities to demand and achieve change. We intend this general framework to be a stepping stone that should be adjusted based on the results of carrying it out.

What is a framework?

An action framework:

- Provides a structured plan for achieving a specific goal
- Outlines necessary steps and resources needed
- Ensures that everyone involved is working towards a common goal
- Provides clarity on what needs to be done, by whom, and by when, making it easier to measure progress and make adjustments
- Serves as a guide for decision-making and can help to identify potential roadblocks or challenges that may arise during the process.

1. Identify Community

Which neighborhoods will be a part of this new community coalition?

Establish a leading group

Recruit one or two representatives for each subgroups of the community

Select people who have knowledge in the issues the community is facing and who have a strong connection to a large number of residents

The power in communities comes from strength in numbers. It is good to have a leading representative or two for each identifiable group coming together to join the larger coalition.

This will allow for more resident participation which is the key to social resiliency and preparedness.

2. Identify Issue

Asses and prioritize between relevant issues

While the community may be facing more than just one issue, it is important to assess the options and prioritize one at a time to achieve higher success rates

Focus on an broad issues that can later be broken down into smaller components

Is there a survey that indicates main community concerns

3. Use a Strong Communication Network

Communication Platforms

How does the community currently communicate?
- Send your message here

How can they be improved? Any possible solutions or implementing use of other social platforms. (Refer to the "Communication Channels" section)

Plan Message

What is the purpose of your message? Who is your targeted audience?

(Refer to social network guide templates for each communication platform)

Strategize best methods to reach as many people as possible

Will delivering door-to-door printed flyers be more effective than email or online posts?

Can you ask community leaders to spread the message? (Refer to How to use communication materials)

4. Listening Session/Working Groups

Hear the community's thoughts on the issue

It is important for community members to feel included to maintain their attention and participation

Note unrelated community concerns

If the concerns brought up do not relate to the current issue:
- Set it aside to focus on after wards
- Hand it over to another group who is not working on the current issue and start process from Step 2

5. Action Planning

Identify an outcome and various possible solutions to achieve it

Prioritize projects based on feasibility, available resources and projected success

Create Various Working Groups

Think about the following questions:
- What will occur?
- How much, or to what extent, these actions will occur?
- Who will carry out these actions?
- When these actions will take place, and for how long?
- What resources (such as money and people) are needed to carry out the proposed actions

Divide people into project-led groups.
- Have multiple timelines for projects, some can be short (days or weeks) and others longer processes.
- Long-term project timelines keeps the community hopeful of change in the future and engaged in a not so distant goal. This increases community stewardship and cohesion.

EXAMPLE USE OF PATHWAY

Issue: Flooding in Jackson, Mississipi within the Brookwood subdivision

1 **Identify Community**
- The Brookwood coalition would be made up of the following 3 neighborhoods:
  - McLeod Neighborhood
    - Leading representative(s)
      - Email + phone number(s)
  - Parkway Neighborhood
    - Leading representative(s)
      - Email + phone number(s)
  - Canton Club Neighborhood
    - Leading representative(s)
      - Email + phone number(s)

2 **Identify Issue**
- a. Narrowed down area of focus: Flooding Issue
  - i. This prevalent issue affects many residents across the three neighborhoods and is broad enough to be broken up into smaller areas

3 **Use a Strong Communication Network to Get Residents Involved**

Goal: let the community know the issue is being tackled, inform about initial listening sessions and creation of working groups

- Communication Platforms
  - Current platforms in use:
    - Facebook Groups
    - Nextdoor
    - Emails
    - Flyers
  - Possible additions that would be beneficial:
    - Radio announcement
    - Aside from posting on these platforms for initial recruitment, further Facebook or Nextdoor pages can be made for people who are interested to receive only flooding project-related announcements
1. Plan Message
   a. Draft a general message that can then be adapted to each communication platform for distribution. While writing this text, ideally a paragraph long, make sure the text addresses:
      i. The purpose of your message
      ii. How can you get people's attention or interest
      iii. Do we need to book a room if we are inviting people to come together? Or do this in our usual meeting time?

2. Strategize best methods for distribution
    a. Use best practices as outlined on the toolkit:
    b. Decide two or three methods to spread information depending on the time and availability of the coalition leadership group
        i. To address flooding, we will use the Facebook groups and send an initial message out to the various pages within the group
        ii. It would also be a good idea to use email to send a visual with information to people who consistently show up to meetings or who have expressed interest in project participation.
        iii. If this is one of the first projects, we can set up flyers either door to door or on doors or bulletin boards in grocery stores, community centers, churches and commonly visited areas.
    c. First we can identify the communities that get flooded most often and who are closer to the Pearl River or its tributaries. Then we can post flyers on their doors or ask the neighborhood association to send them out on their email newsletter.
    d. Once the purpose and objective have been decided, we can create the deliverables needed using the templates in the Toolkit
        1. One visual Email/Printable Flyer
        2. Adapt the message written in part B to post on Facebook and Nextdoor
    e. Finally, post and send deliverables referring to best practices for each platform

4 Listening Session/Working Groups

- Hold a listening session meeting where people can talk about their knowledge and experiences related to flooding
    - If other concerns besides flooding come up, for example trash build up, note them down to expand upon later and continue with the topic of flooding.

5 Action Planning

    a. Example: Outcome: increase knowledge about flooding
        i. Projects to get there: Hold information workshops or distribute booklets, get in contact with local schools and teachers and post Flooding FAQ flyers around the community.
        ii. Working Groups: workshop managers, school presentation leaders, and flyer creators/distributors
    b. Outcome: Provide easily accessible and retrievable sandbags to the community.
        i. Projects to get there: Contact your local gardening center or hardware store for options, distribute flyers on correct sandbag use, search for funding opportunities to make sandbags free to those who need it the most.
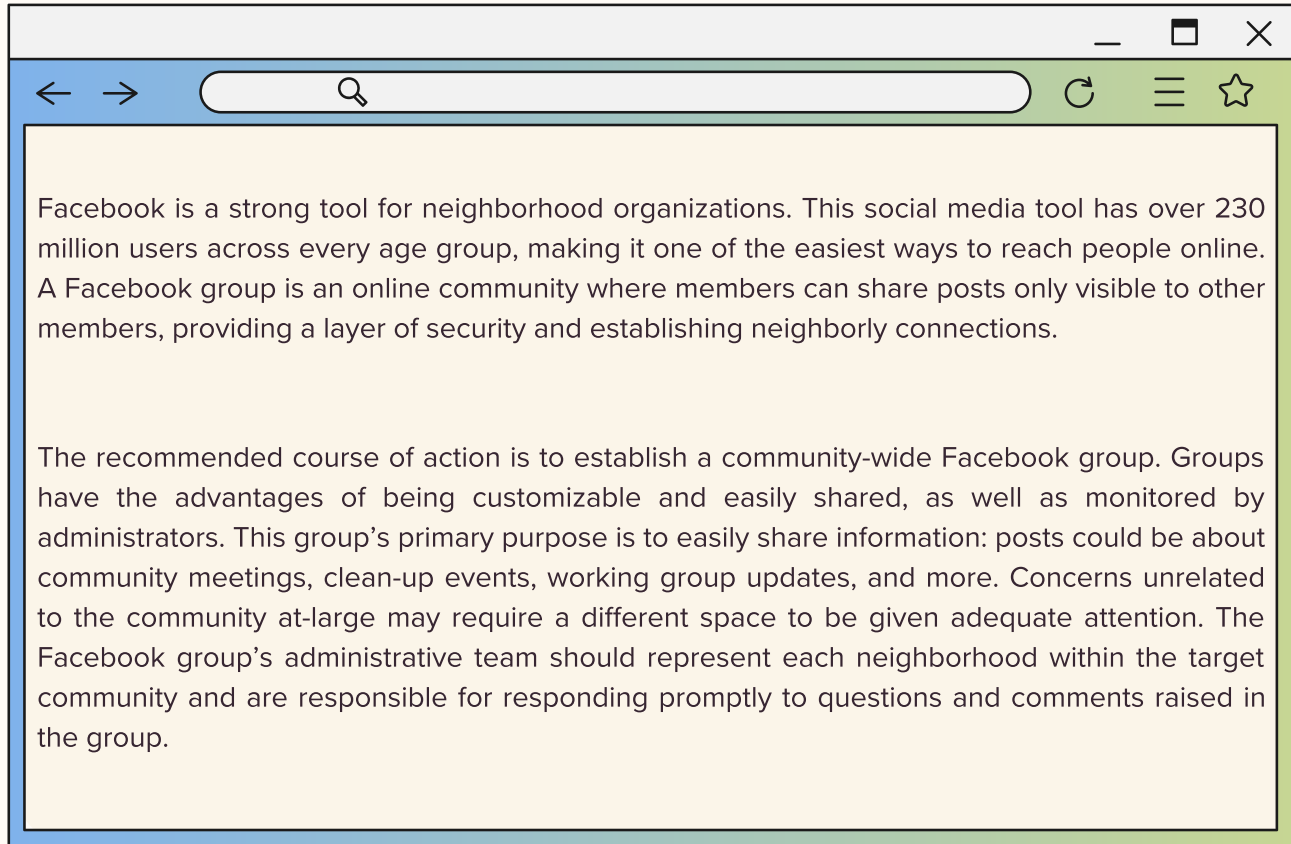   ii. Working Groups: community sourcers, funding researchers and how-to flyer creators/distributors

Example Message:

Dear members of our community,

As you may be aware, our community has been experiencing flooding issues in recent years. We believe that it's time to take action to address this issue and create a safer and more resilient community for everyone.

We want to involve all community members who are interested or have experience, tips, concerns, research, solution ideas, or helpful connections that could help us tackle this issue. We believe that everyone's input is valuable and essential to achieve change and justice.

*To start, we will be holding a community meeting on **[date and time]** to discuss the flooding issue and gather ideas and suggestions from all interested parties. We encourage everyone to attend and share their thoughts.*

*If you are unable to attend the meeting, you can still contribute by sending us your ideas, research, concerns, and tips via email **[insert email address]** or through our social media channels [insert social media handles]. We will collect and consider all submissions.*

Together, we can make a difference and create a safer and more resilient community. Thank you for your support, and we look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Brookwood Community Association

COMMUNICATIONS SUMMARY TABLE

	When to Use:	Target Audience:	Benefits:	Limitations:
Facebook	Progress updates, Meeting/ Community Outreach pictures, Event details, individual-to-community communication	Older Generations	Promotes inclusive community engagement as all individuals can post as well as group admin.	Most complex platform and therefore would need a lot of management.
Instagram	Progress updates, Meeting/ Community Outreach pictures, Event details	Younger Generations	Visual representations of community engagement resonates and builds appreciation.	Followers can only comment on posts, which limits community conversation.
Nextdoor	Personal anecdotes of neighborhood conditions, individual-to-community communication	Older Generations	Provides a place for neighborhood condition updates, including improvements and potential damages.	Fewer tools available to manage groups. Can lead to a place of unrelated and unproductive discussion if not managed properly by the admin.
Emails	Monthly or weekly updates, meeting reminders	Everyone	Simple way to keep individuals up-to-date with community events and information. A landing page can grow subscribers quickly.	Mass emails can be overlooked, unopened, or end up in junk mail. Effectiveness relies on the quality of the email list collected.
QR Codes	Post on flyers or in emails, Facebook/Instagram posts, etc	Younger Generations	Quick and easy way to get to websites. Can be photographed and used later.	Many may not yet know their function or how to use QR codes.
Flyers	To encourage new members to join meetings	Everyone	Easy to understand and if made eye-catching can be very effective.	Can be overlooked, destroyed, or taken down. Only as effective as the amount distributed, as well as location of placements.
Radio	Multi-Community Events, Large Scale Outreach	Everyone	Offers the largest scale of distribution of information.	Only residents that drive or are passengers in cars will hear. Many choose to play their own music instead of tuning into a radio station.
Text Blast	Same-day Reminders, quick-contact	Everyone	Simple way to contact individuals as fast as possible.	Mass texts can be muted, unopened or unsubscribed from if used too frequently. Effectiveness relies on the number of people subscribed.
Polls	Feedback requests, RSVP, sign-up forms	Everyone	Great way to gauge community interest and feedback.	If it is too long, respondents might be discouraged to respond.

FACEBOOK

Presentation of Tool

Facebook is a strong tool for neighborhood organizations. This social media tool has over 230 million users across every age group, making it one of the easiest ways to reach people online. A Facebook group is an online community where members can share posts only visible to other members, providing a layer of security and establishing neighborly connections.

The recommended course of action is to establish a community-wide Facebook group. Groups have the advantages of being customizable and easily shared, as well as monitored by administrators. This group's primary purpose is to easily share information: posts could be about community meetings, clean-up events, working group updates, and more. Concerns unrelated to the community at-large may require a different space to be given adequate attention. The Facebook group's administrative team should represent each neighborhood within the target community and are responsible for responding promptly to questions and comments raised in the group.

To get the most out of this platform, consider the following best practices. Share events and scheduled opportunities one to two weeks in advance, in order to give people time to view the post. Facebook runs on a "personalized ranking" algorithm, meaning that content on one's Home page is shown in a ranked order rather than chronologically. To ensure your post reaches more viewers, post early and concisely to the group, and encourage engagement from community members. At the same time, be aware of privacy concerns that may bar members from joining the group. Facebook is a widespread social media website, and group posts may be seen by a member's network of friends and family. If material is sensitive or controversial, consider sharing it privately, whether that is to one person or a privatized Facebook group.

FACEBOOK
When to Use

Identify Current Use

- Search for any existing community groups/pages
  - If found, contact admin of group/page to coordinate consolidation of multiple groups into one official source

What Could be Done

- A public or private (but searchable) group needs to be established
- Add members from previously existing groups, and use word of mouth/flyers to advertise to new members
- This group's primary purpose is to share information – community meetings, working groups, successes, and challenges
  - Other information (crime, lost dogs, etc.) may need a different space to be given adequate attention
- The administrative team should represent all neighborhoods and respond promptly to questions or concerns raised in the group

Best Practices

- Share events, meetings, and opportunities 1-2 weeks in advance – post a reminder 1-2 days before
- Set a team of administrators, and divide responsibilities
- Be mindful of privacy concerns – Facebook is widespread, and group posts may be seen by a member's personal network

FACEBOOK
How-To Guide

Creating a Facebook Account

1. Go to facebook.com and click **Create New Account**
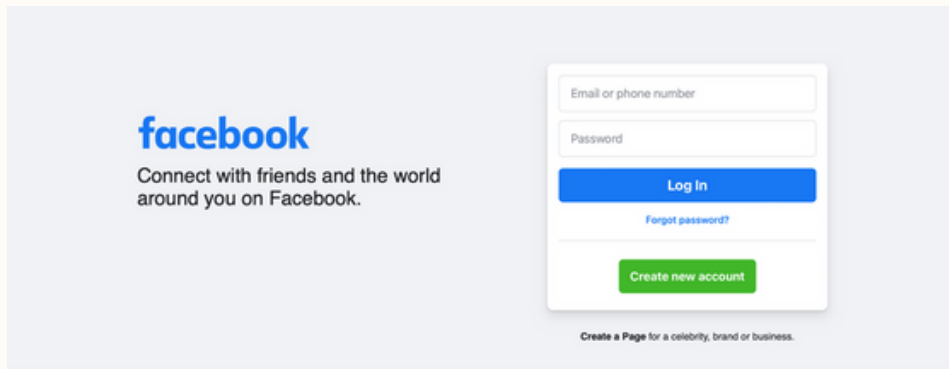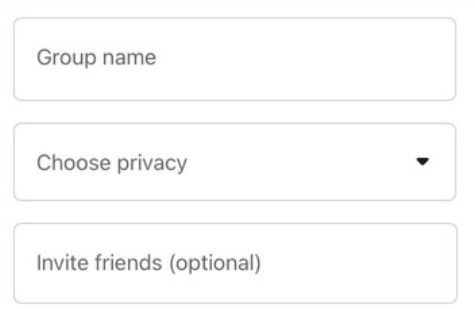
2. Enter your name, email or mobile phone number, password, date of birth and gender.
3. Click Sign Up.
4. To finish creating your account, you need to confirm your email or mobile phone number.

How to Create a Facebook Group

1. Once logged in, refer to the guide in the top left corner. Select the **Groups** tab.

2. Now you are in the Groups tab. Click on the **Create new group** button at the bottom.
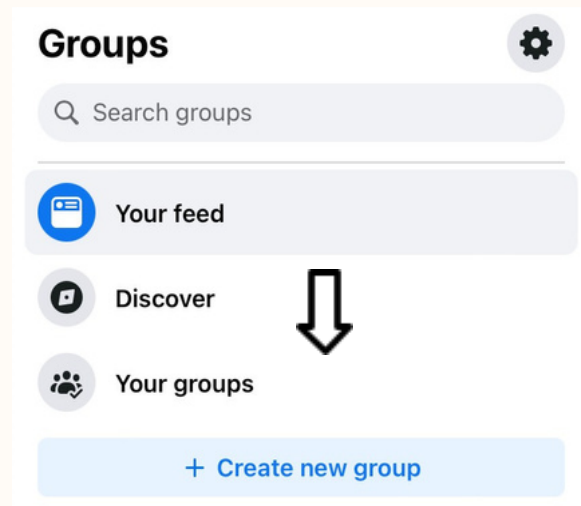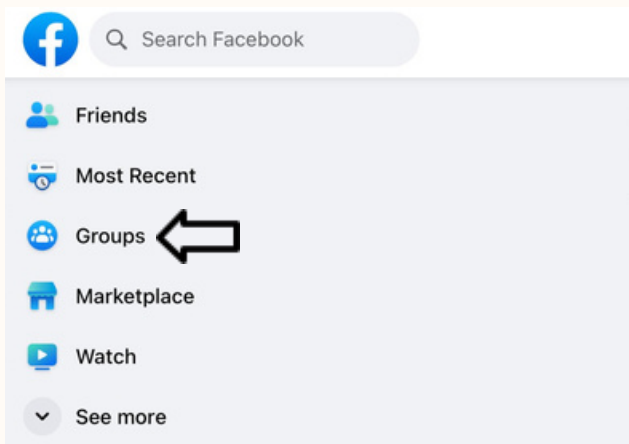
3. In order to proceed with the creation of the group, add a group name, privacy setting (public or private members only), and invite friends. Inviting friends is optional as people can either join or request admittance after the creation of the group.

Group name

Choose privacy ▼

Invite friends (optional)

4. Tap **Create** at the bottom of the page.

How to Create an Event in a Facebook Group

1. Once in your group, click on the **Browse** subtab. In this tab click on **Events**.

New Group
⊕ Public group · 1 member

+ Invite ...

⇨ Browse   Manage

⌂ Community home
⊞ Rooms
⊞ Events
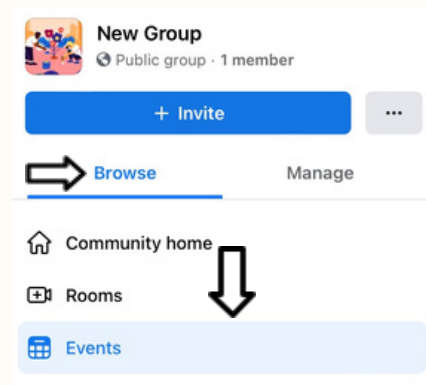
2. Now you are in the Upcoming events tab. Click on the **Create event** button.

Upcoming events   Find events   Create event

No upcoming events.
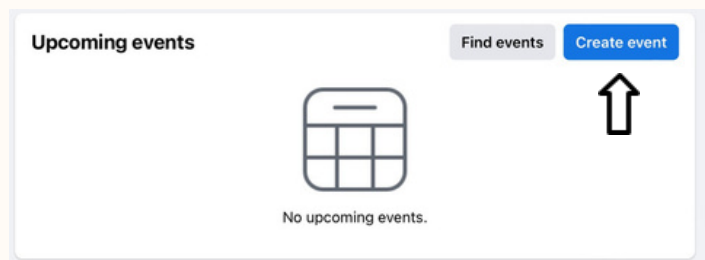
3. Here you can input group event settings, this includes:

- *Event Name*
- *Start Date and Start Time*
- *In person or virtual*
  - *If choosing in person, add a location using a zip code address.*
  - *If choosing virtual choose either: messenger rooms (chat option), Facebook Live (viewing only) or external link (Zoom or Teams meeting links could potentially be added here)*
- *Choose whether or not to invite all team members*
- *Add a co-host who can help to manage the event*
- *Add repeat settings for recurring meetings (daily, weekly) including an End date and End time.*

4. Once the group event settings are updated, click **Create event.**

Facebook Admin Tools are essential to ensuring the success of your facebook group. These tools allow you to manage community events, posts, and meetings and ensure that the Group page is a safe space. These tools can be found on the left hand side of the opening page of your group

1.
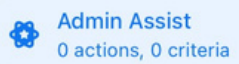
    Admin Assist allows you to manage people, posts and comments. This tool should be used when a Group has a large number of members, in order to filter who is allowed to add and ensure any spam is filtered out. By setting these rules, Facebook automatically filters based on an admin's preferences and removes the burden of needing to closely monitor the Group page.
    - **Managing People**
        - Suspend a person for 1 day if...
            - Repeat Offender: temporarily mutes a person if an admin removed posts/comments X amount of times in the past 24 hours
    - **Manage Posts**
        - *Decline incoming post if...*
            - Spam posts, posts from fake accounts, posts that violate group rules, posts with profanity, etc.
        - *Mark as potential spam if...*
        - *Remove published post if...*
            - Posts with conflict, contentious posts or posts with harmful content
        - *Turn off commenting if...*
            - Posts with conflict, contentious posts or posts with harmful content
        - *Move post to review if...*
            - Post includes false information
    - **Manage Comments**
        - *Decline incoming comment if...*
            - Spam comments or comments from people with past violations

2.

    Group rules help to set the tone of the Group and prevent member conflict. This tool allows up to 10 rules to be created. Some examples of rules include:

    - *No promotions or spam*
    - *No hate speech or bullying*
    - *Respect everyone's privacy*
    - *Be kind and courteous*

    To write your own rules include a title and a description. For community groups, rules such as a limited number of posts per day or required attendance to at least one monthly meeting is suggested.

3. **Group settings**
    Manage discussions, permissions and roles
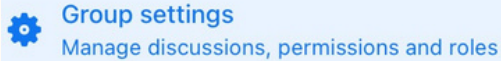
Group settings are where Admin can manage discussions, permissions, and roles. This is the suggested first step of an admin in making a Group on Facebook. Setting up the Group allows for smooth introduction and encourages members to join. Within the group settings tab Admin can choose:

- **Set up Group**
    - Name and Description allows you to rename your Group and add a description of what your Group is about
    - Include a New Member Intro message that new members will see the first time they visit the Group page
    - Privacy settings to make the Group public or private
    - Hide group makes it so only members can find the Group
    - Location adds a specific geographic location to the Group
- **Customize Group**
    - Web address allows for a more recognizable domain name
    - Choose a Group color that accents buttons, headers and backgrounds
    - Badges can be earned by people within a Group and are displayed by their profile names
        - Some badges include: Admin, Moderator, Group expert etc.
    - Group affiliation allows you to show that a specific person or organization is an admin of the group
- **Participation**
    - Participant approval allows you to choose if a person can post and comment with or without admin or moderator approval
    - Indicating who can participate in the group allows you to let only profiles or profiles and pages to participate
- **Manage discussion**
    - Anonymous posting allows posts to appear without the author's name or profile photo
    - Require post approval when on requires posts to be approved by an admin or moderator
    - Approve edits when on requires edited posts to be approved by an admin or moderator
    - Choose to Sort posts by most relevant, newest activity or new posts
    - Choose to Sort comments by top comments, most recent, or all comments
- **Added to group**
    - Post formats are many different features that add capabilities to your Group
        - Formats include Events, Files, GIF, Live Videos, Polls, Reels, Rooms

INSTAGRAM
Presentation of Tool

Instagram is a social media platform that is largely photo-based, and is more popular with younger audiences than Facebook. Instagram is also owned by Meta, the parent company of Facebook, meaning that information shared on Facebook can be cross-posted to Instagram (and vice versa). This function makes Instagram an easy tool to use, since all posts from Facebook can be automatically shared to an Instagram account.

We recommend creating a Instagram page, ideally with a similar name to the Facebook group. These accounts should be linked in order to allow cross-posting. Using Instagram will make sharing flyers, posters, and important information with community members easier. This platform is a great place to share photos from town halls, clean-up events, or other gathering spaces. Best practices for Instagram include using high-quality images, and using the "caption" section to share written information. Hashtags are another useful tool: marked by the pound (#) symbol, these tags allow posts to be grouped together by topic and searched by any Instagram user. Use targeted hashtags sparingly to promote content, like #JacksonMS or #BrookwoodSubdivision.

Finally, when using Instagram, keep in mind that the platform is not based on conversation. Thus, you may not see much visible engagement with your content. Instagram is a visual-based app, and the algorithm and user culture both reflect this. Engagement on Instagram is not always indicative of in-person interactions and interest.

INSTAGRAM

When to Use

Identify Current Use

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- Be mindful of privacy concerns – Facebook is widespread, and group posts may be seen by a member's personal network

INSTAGRAM

How-To Guide

Creating an Instagram Account

1. Go to instagram.com and click either Log in with Facebook or Sign up. Insert your Mobile Number or email address, Full Name, Username, and Password.

2. Add your Birthday and click **Next**.
3. Confirm your account with the 6-digit code sent to your device. Click **Next.**

4. Click on the empty profile icon and click **Edit profile.** Here you can update your name and username, as well as, insert a website link, create a short bio about yourself and pick a profile picture.

Linking Facebook and Instagram

Using your Instagram Account

1. On Instagram click on your profile picture.

2. Click on the settings button

3. At the bottom, click on **Accounts Center.**

Meta

Accounts Center

Control settings for connected experiences across Instagram, the Facebook app and Messenger, including story and post sharing and logging in.

4. On your Accounts & profiles page, click on **Add accounts.**
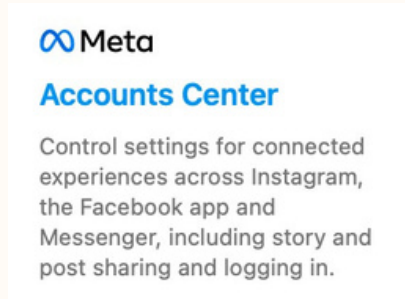
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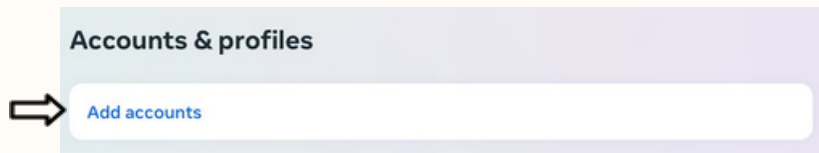
Add accounts

5. Select **Add Facebook account.**

Select the account you want to add

Add Facebook account >

Add Instagram account >
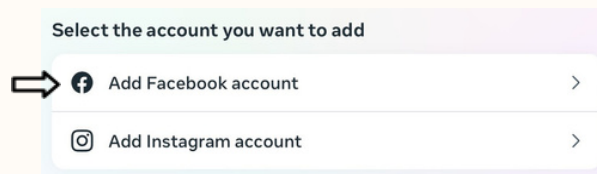
Using your Facebook Account

1. On **Facebook** click on your profile picture.

2. Click on the **Settings & privacy** button.

3. Click on **Settings.**

Settings & privacy

← **Settings & privacy**

Settings

Privacy Checkup

Privacy Center
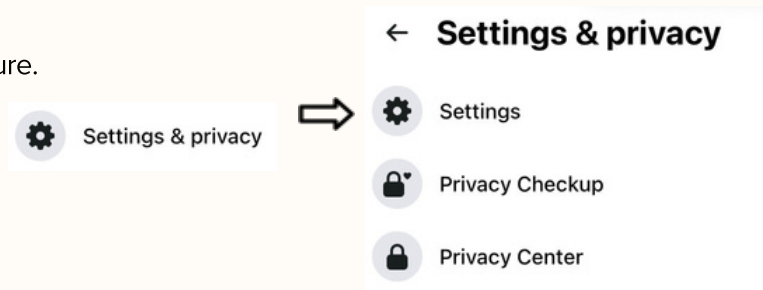
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Meta

Accounts Center

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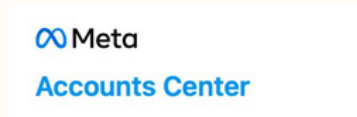
Accounts & profiles

Add accounts
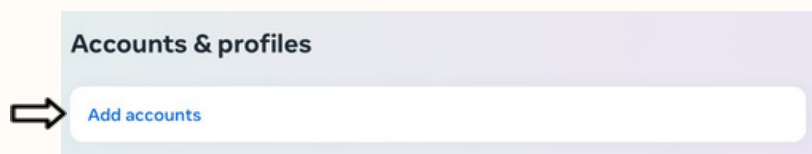
6. Select **Add Instagram account.**

Select the account you want to add

Add Facebook account >

Add Instagram account >
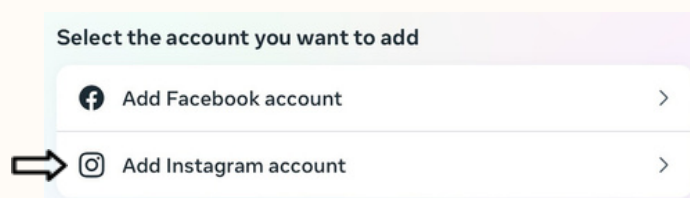
A logo will contribute to a visual identity that community members can associate with the Brookwood Neighborhood

BROOKWOOD SUBDIVISION

EVENT NAME

QR codes are a great way to direct community members to links

DESCRIPTION

Make sure critical information like location, date, and time are emphasized

📍 **LOCATION**
📅 **DATE**
🕐 **TIME**

SCAN QR CODE ABOVE OR CONTACT BELOW FOR MORE INFORMATION

Multiple avenues of communication will maximize accessibility to these events

📞 123-456-7890   ✉ contact@example.com

Editable Link

NEXTDOOR

Presentation of Tool

Nextdoor is a location-based app used to connect people with their neighbors. Users join by providing their names and addresses to view posts from people in their neighborhood. A user can also create a neighborhood group in order to make communication between working groups or committees easier. These groups provide an organized way to view and engage with posts on the app, and a more direct way to share information with group members.

The recommended course of action is to establish a public neighborhood group. Much like Facebook, groups have the advantage of being easily shared; a Nextdoor group has the added benefit of filtering out irrelevant posts on the app, so members can focus on the information being shared within the group. A common complaint about Nextdoor is the amount of information available due to all posts being public – information overload can be avoided by using the platform as a way to disseminate information, rather than a space for extensive conversations to be held.

Consider creating a welcome message for new group members. This could include information on attending meetings or joining committees, as well as contact information for local leaders. A welcome message informs the new member of the important information.

NEXTDOOR

When to Use

Identify Current Use
- Search for any existing community groups/pages
  - If found, contact admin of group/page to coordinate consolidation of multiple groups into one official source

What Could be Done
- Create a public neighborhood group
- Use as an outreach tool focused on disseminating info rather than facilitating full conversations

Best Practices
- Create a welcome message for new members, including necessary info for joining working groups and/or finding community meetings
- Use Nextdoor for sharing information and gathering feedback – a different platform may be more suitable for two-way conversations [See Facebook] for an alternative channel.

NEXTDOOR
How-To Guide

Creating a Nextdoor Account

1. Go to nextdoor.com and continue with Google, Facebook or Apple or enter an email address and password.
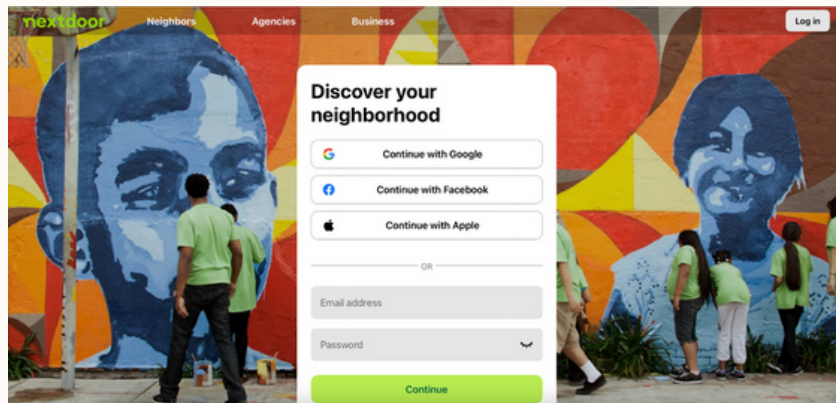
2. Enter your First and Last name and click **Continue.**
3. Enter your Street address and Apt, suite, unit, etc. and click **Continue.** OR click on **Have an invite code?** and use an invite and zip code and click **Continue.**.
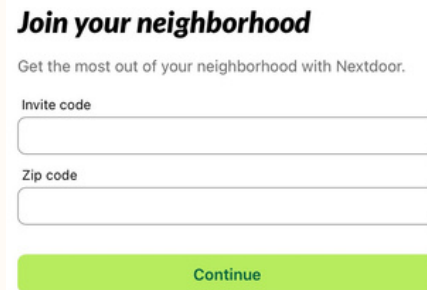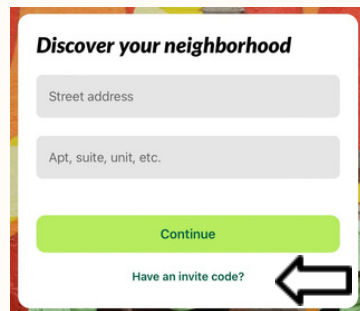
4. Enter your phone number to verify your account. Click on **Text me a code.** Enter the 4-digit code.

5. Download the Nextdoor app to your phone or device.

6. Click on your Profile icon in the top right corner and hit **View Profile.** Here you can see what neighborhood your address has automatically affiliated you with.
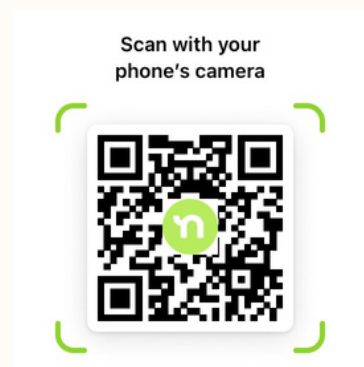
1. Once logged in, refer to the guide in the top left corner.
   Select the **Discover** tab.

2. Here you can scroll through Upcoming events, Nearby groups
   you might like, Neighbors you might know, and Nearby
   Business Recommendations. Under **Nearby groups you might
   like** click on **Discover more groups**
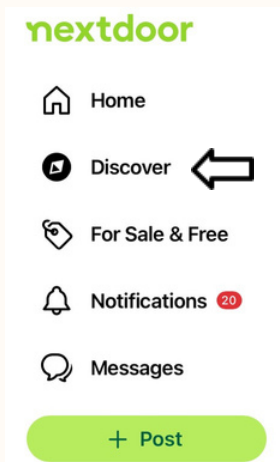
3. Now you are on the Groups page, which shows you all the
   Groups near you. Click on **Create** in the top right corner.

4. Choose a Group Name. Click **Next.**
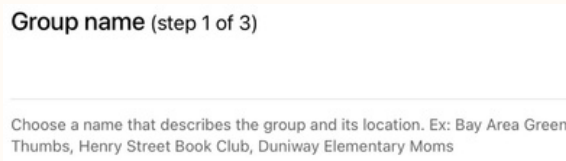
5. Choose your Group location from the choices below. Click **Next.**
   1. Just your neighborhood.
   2. Your neighborhood + nearby [you can choose]
   3. All of the city.
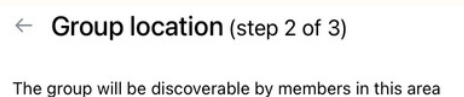
6. Choose the Privacy settings of your group. Click **Next.**
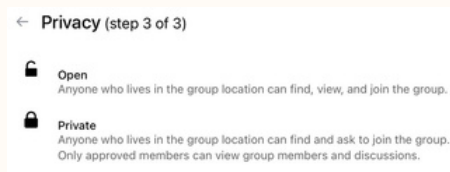
7. You can now choose to **Write a post** or click **Skip.**
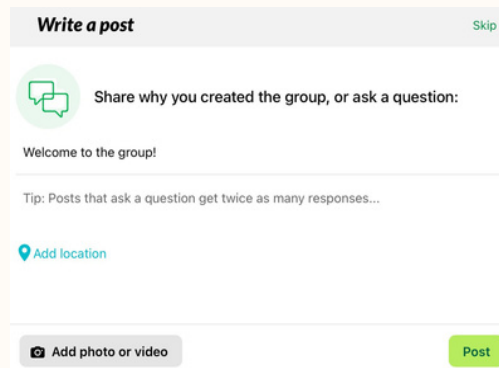
Nextdoor Admin Tools to Prioritize for Your Group

Nextdoor Admin Tools are essential to ensuring the success of your Nextdoor group. These tools allow you to manage community events, posts, and meetings and ensure that the Group page is a safe space.

Manage members should be used to get a better understanding of who is in your group, has requested to be in your group, who's been invited and who is an admin. The following tabs are available:
- Requests
- Invites
  - Here you can search by name or invite anyone by email.
- Members
- Admins

Edit group name and description should be used to provide the incoming and current members with an accurate description of your group's goals, upcoming events, or event links to other platforms.
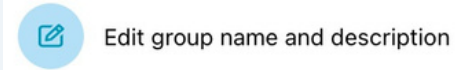
Turn off notifications is essential for admin as each post results in a notification which may become tedious.
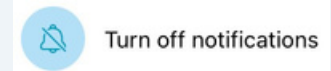
Nextdoor Templates

On Nextdoor, photos must have an image ratio of 16 x 9, with a maximum file size of 7 MB
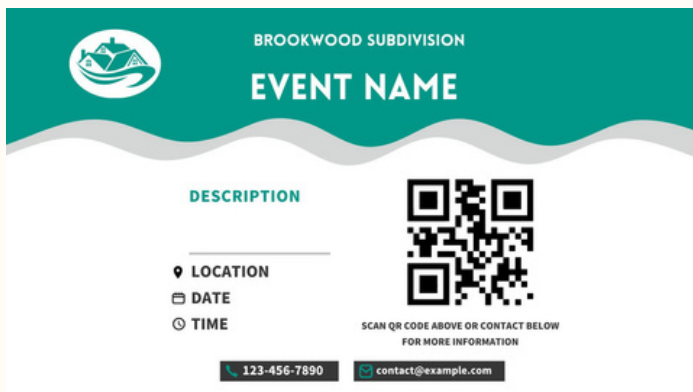
Editable Link
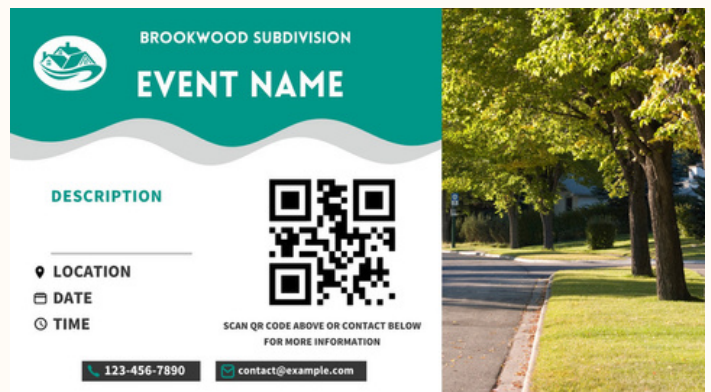
Editable Link

EMAILS

Presentation of Tool

Emails are a great tool to reach a wide audience, since most residents will have a personal email account regardless of their age. Through email, organizers can also directly engage with the community, since email recipients can respond and create a dialogue with the event or action group organizers.

The recommended course of action is to set up an email list for the Community as a whole. This will be integral to building community identity, with a common source of information, events, and engagement coming from a community-wide email list. Mailchimp is a helpful resource for organizing email lists.

It is important to recognize that mass email lists are also easily drowned out by spam or ignored by recipients, so to get the most out of email make sure to make the emails consistently engaging through a variety of best practices. Keeping a good balance of visual and textual information will keep materials approachable. Make sure multiple avenues of communication are given for any contact information. The subject line of any email is the first impression, so keep subject lines short, to the point, and containing all critical information.

Newsletters:
Newsletters are printed or electronic reports that are distributed on a regular basis (monthly or biannually) as a communication tool to inform the community of past and upcoming events while creating a sense of pride and accomplishment for the community.

These newsletters can be short with a couple of pages or can have numerous pages. They can be electronically sent via an email or Eblast. Mailchimp has tools to create newsletters that can be electronically distributed. Newsletters can be designed using Canva, a free design tool that can be printed and distributed among the community.

EMAILS

Identify Current Use
- Determine if an email address specific to the community is already being used as the point of contact
  - If so, reach out to its owner to request access or consolidate
- Search for any existing community email lists
  - If found, contact admin of group/page to coordinate consolidation of multiple groups into one official source

What Can be Done
- Set up an Email List: It's a group of people who communicate by email with one another through one single email address.
- Communicating via a Mass email list or E-blast is different from creating small lists of email addresses from the personal contacts list. In a regular mass email sent from a personal email address, like (Gmail, Yahoo or Hotmail) it will have all receivers visible.
- Using e-blast sites such as Mailchimp would be helpful in sending simple, quick, well-designed emails to large groups of people without sharing the receiver's email address with everyone on the email list.

Best Practices
- Use the community email account to send all types of communication including signing up for any community social media group such as Facebook, Nextdoor and Instagram accounts.
- Use the community email account to keep track of any purchases made on behalf of the community.
- When writing email messages, keep them concise.
- Always provide the contact information of the organization at the bottom of every email.
- Provide the designation and contact information of the person sending the email.
- Always send out information about upcoming events way in advance as possible.
- Send a reminder about the event a day before the scheduled date. These reminders should be shorter than the original event information email.
- Always provide as much of the information as possible in the body of the email, even if a flyer of the event is included in the email.
- Always proofread content and errors.
- In newsletters, make sure that there is a balance of both photos and textual information.
- Keep the newsletter stylistically uniform to look professional.
- Keep newsletter release/distribution dates consistent (monthly, semi-annually).
- Avoid leaving the subject area blank.
- Avoid leaving the email unsigned.

EMAIL CAMPAIGN USING MAILCHIMP

How-To Guide

Creating a Mailchimp Account

1. Go to mailchimp.com and click **Start Free Trial**
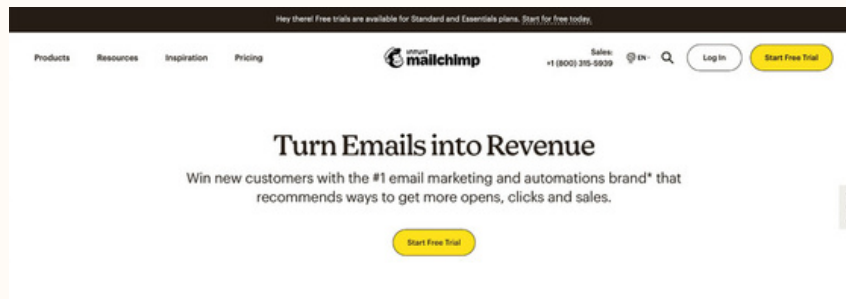
2. Mailchimp allows for a Free account. Under the Free column choose **Sign Up Free**. Enter your email, new username and password. Click **Sign up**.
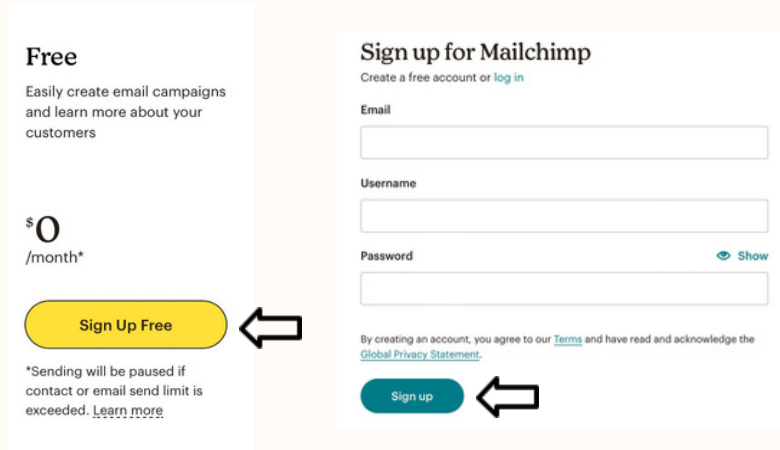
3. Check your email as a link will be sent to
4. Activate your account.
   Enter your First and Last name, Business name [community/subdivision name] and phone number. Click **Next.**
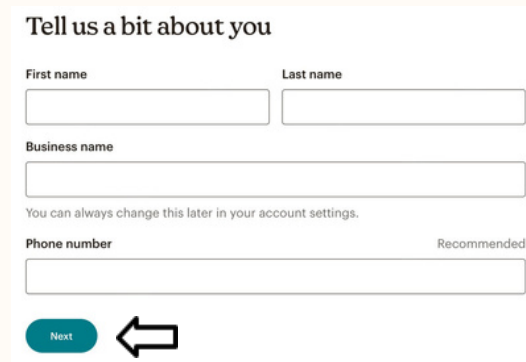
5. In order to abide by anti-spam laws, you need to provide an email address where mail can be sent. *This address will be in the footer of every email you send using Mailchimp so be sure to use an address that you are comfortable sharing, if not a P.O. Box is another viable option.*

6. Provide your top goal with Mailchimp. For community engagement, this would most likely be either **Grow my list of email subscribers** or **send emails people find helpful or entertaining**. Click **Next.**

7. In order to grow community engagement, **Signup forms** would be a great option for what to choose to explore first. Click **Next.**

8. You would likely click **None yet, I'm just getting started** for the number of email subscribers as this method of communication is new.

Creating a Landing Page to Encourage Email Subscription

1. Once logged in, refer to the guide in the top left corner. Click **Landing Page.**
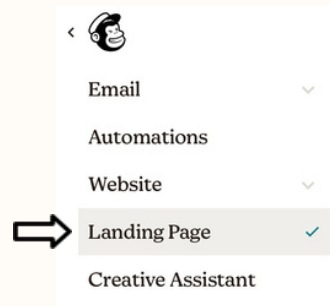
2. If the goal is to gain subscribers to promote community engagement, a simple landing page name such as **Community Engagement** can be used. Click **begin**.

3. Again, as the goal is to gain subscribers to promote community engagement, click on the **Grow Your list** template.
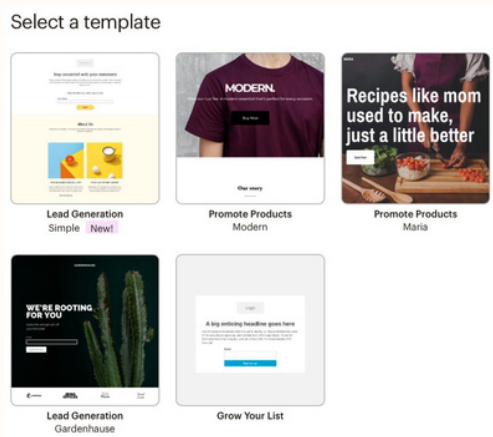
4. The template allows you to add your **Logo** as well as a **Headline** and **Description** of what people are signing up for.
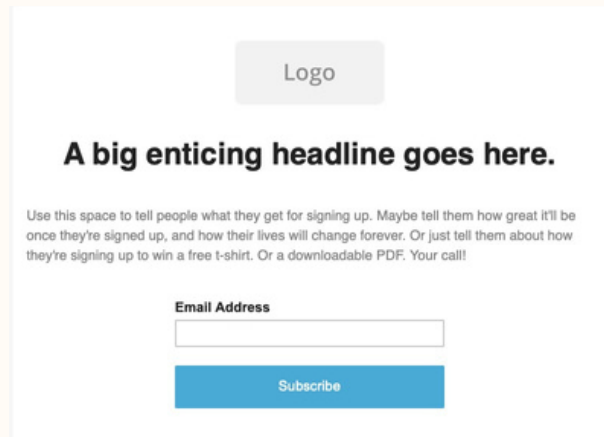
5. On the right-hand side there is a sidebar. Some additional items that would be beneficial to add your Landing Page are an **Image** as well as **Social Follow** options. These allow you to provide more context as well as promote further community connections.

6. Click **Save & Close** in the bottom right corner.

7. In the top right-hand corner, click **Publish.**

8. Now your Landing page is live. The link given can be sent, posted to social media or even made into a QR code [see QR code section]. Each subscriber will now be added to your email list and receive all future correspondences.

Email Newsletter Template
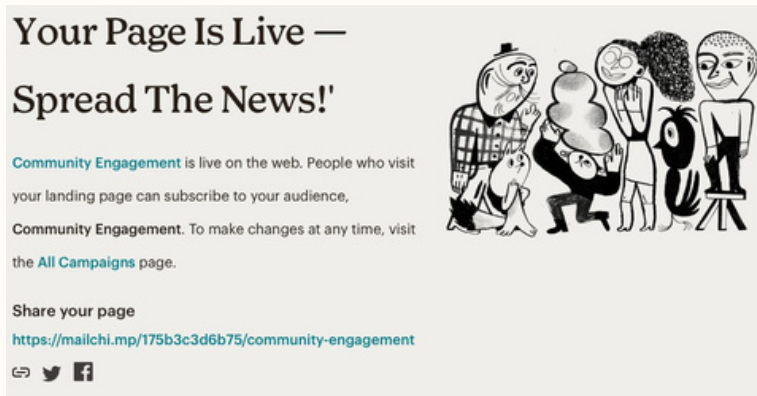
BROOKWOOD SUBDIVISION — www.brookwoodsite.com

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

ANNOUNCEMENT

DESCRIPTION

EVENT NAME

DESCRIPTION

📍 LOCATION
📅 DATE
🕐 TIME

EVENT NAME

DESCRIPTION

📍 LOCATION
📅 DATE
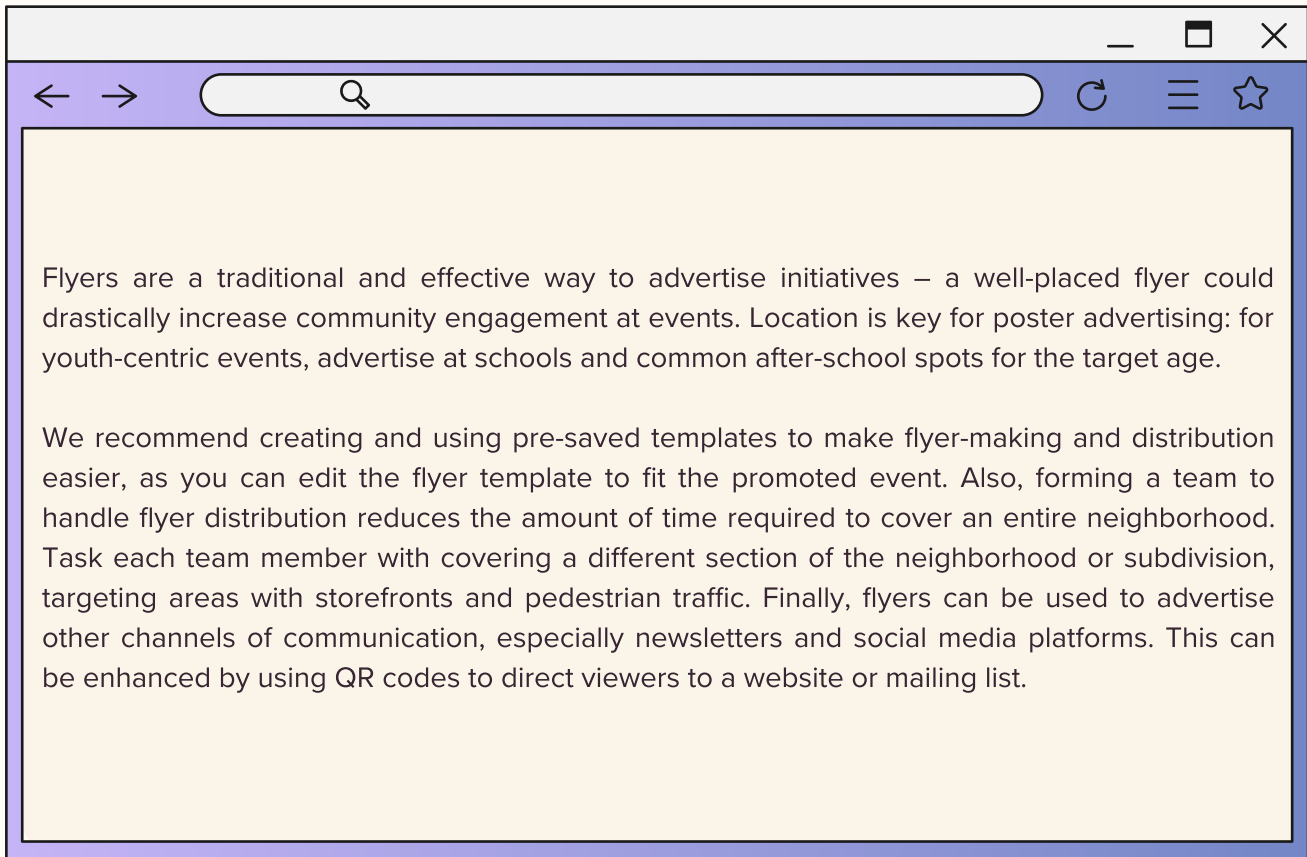🕐 TIME

SCAN FOR MORE INFORMATION

📞 123-456-7890   ✉ contact@example.com

Editable Link

FLYERS

Presentation of Tool

Flyers are a traditional and effective way to advertise initiatives – a well-placed flyer could drastically increase community engagement at events. Location is key for poster advertising: for youth-centric events, advertise at schools and common after-school spots for the target age.

We recommend creating and using pre-saved templates to make flyer-making and distribution easier, as you can edit the flyer template to fit the promoted event. Also, forming a team to handle flyer distribution reduces the amount of time required to cover an entire neighborhood. Task each team member with covering a different section of the neighborhood or subdivision, targeting areas with storefronts and pedestrian traffic. Finally, flyers can be used to advertise other channels of communication, especially newsletters and social media platforms. This can be enhanced by using QR codes to direct viewers to a website or mailing list.

To make your flyers stand out, consider the following best practices. Use contrasting colors and large text, so writing is visible to viewers from a distance. Include a form of contact information on a flyer, like an interest form or survey. When distributing flyers one-on-one, connect with the recipient and gauge their interest.
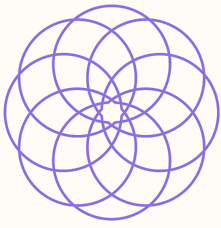
FLYERS

Identifying Current Use
- Locate areas where flyers are typically posted. Check your local library, parks, city buildings, and coffee shops.

What Could be Done
- Create flyer templates that can be easily changed for any advertisement
- Designate a team for printing and posting flyers around each neighborhood
- Post QR codes on flyers to make websites and mailing lists easily accessible to viewers
- Use flyers to advertise other channels of communication, especially newsletters and social media platforms

Best Practices
- Use contrasting colors, so text is readable from a distance
- Post flyers in areas with heavy foot traffic, especially for the target demographic: if you're promoting an event to keep kids occupied, consider advertising in schools and child-friendly businesses
- Canva is a great tool for designing flyers and posters
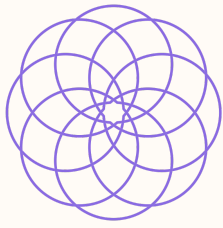
FLYERS
How-To Guide

1. **Determine your target audience, message, and budget.**
   - Decide whom you want to reach and what you want to tell them. Create a rough draft on paper or on your computer. This will help you decide on the design and wording of your flyer. Prices on average are: **50 Flyers:** $20 to $70, **100 Flyers:** $30 to $100, **500 Flyers:** $100 to$400, **1000 Flyers:** $150 to $800

2. **Create your flyer**
   - You can use a word processing program like Microsoft Word or Google Docs or a graphic design program like Canva or Adobe Photoshop. Link to the Canva website here: Canva Click the "Sign up for free" button and follow the directions to create your flyer. Include interesting images and clear, concise text.

Creating and Using a Canva Account

1. Click the "Sign up for free" button:
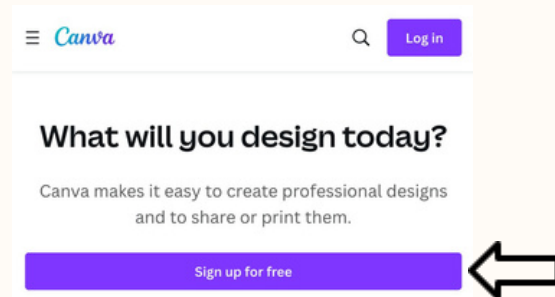
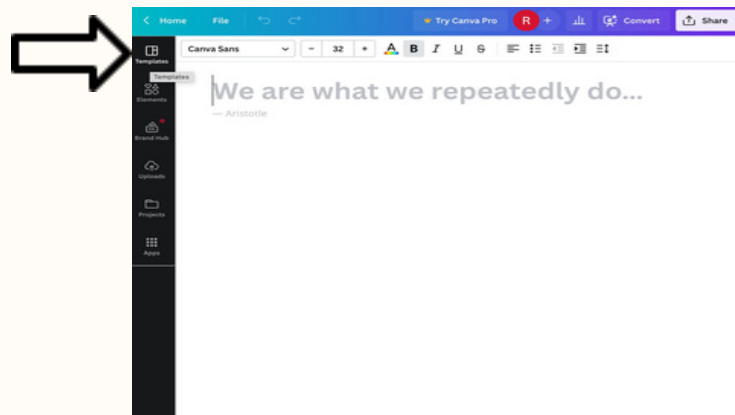

2. Click the "Continue with email" button.
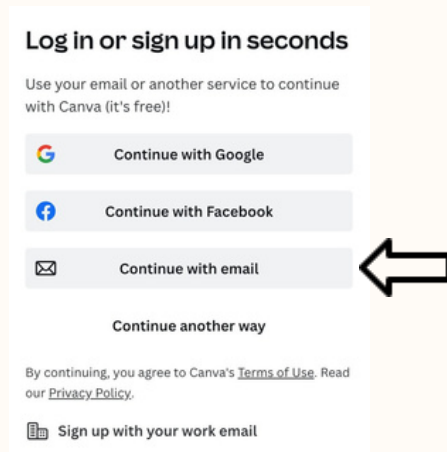
**3. Enter your email address and then click "continue"**
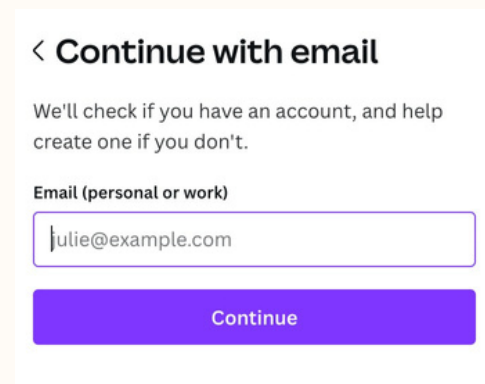
4. Check your email and retrieve the code that Canva sent you and enter the code and click "continue". Click on the "Doc" icon.
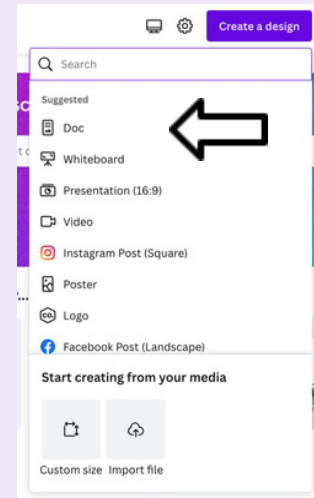
5. Click on the "Templates" tab in the top left corner. Several options will appear. Choose a template that best presents your message.

6. After you have finished designing your flyer, click the "Share" button in the top right hand corner and click "download" to save the file to your computer. Use a unique file name and make sure you remember where you save it.
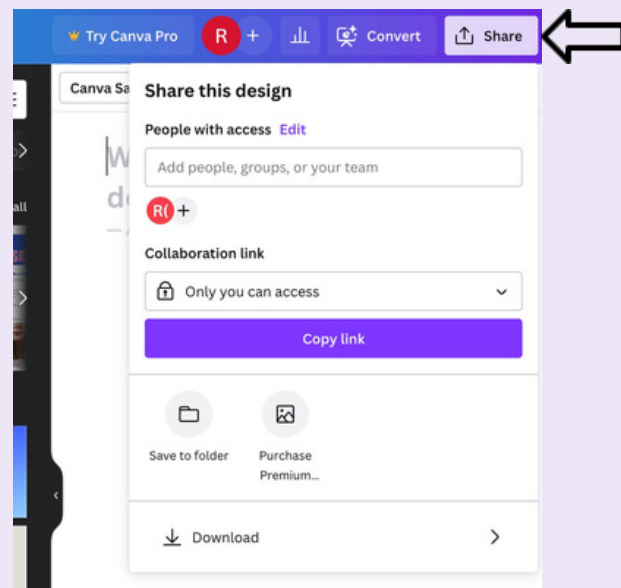
Distribution of Flyers

1.

    Print your flyers. You can print the flyers at home on your home printer or at a local print shop. Be sure to print enough copies to distribute to your entire target audience.

        a) Office Supply Stores: You can check out office supply stores such as UPS, Office Depot, and FedEx. These stores often provide online ordering options and discounts for bulk orders.

        b) Online Printing Services: Several online printing services offer affordable and convenient options for printing flyers. Some popular options include Vistaprint or Overnight Prints

        c) Local Libraries: Some local libraries offer printing services at a low cost.

2. **Decide where to distribute your flyers.** Some ideas include local businesses, community centers, schools, and public bulletin boards. Be sure to ask for permission before posting your flyers. Below are some options for methods of distribution.

        a) Door-to-Door: One of the most traditional ways to distribute flyers is by going door-to-door in the neighborhood. This can be time-consuming but effective, as you can interact with residents and answer any questions they may have. Move in pairs for safety, and always respect traffic laws and people's private property.

        b) Direct Mail: Mail the flyers directly to residents' homes. This can be done through a bulk mail service or by purchasing a mailing list for the area. You can purchase mailing lists from companies like, Experian- Direct Mailing Lists from Experian.com) or (Sales Genie- Build aTargeted Mailing List | Direct Mail | Data Axle Genie)

        c) Local Businesses: You can also distribute flyers at local businesses in the area, such as supermarkets, coffee shops, and restaurants. This can be an effective way to reach many people in a short amount of time.

        d) Community Centers: Consider contacting community centers or other organizations in the area.

        e) Online: You can also distribute flyers through your social media accounts, mass email blasts, or local through your local community websites or forums. This can be a cost-effective way to reach many people quickly.

3. **Follow up.** After you've distributed your flyers, check back to see if they've been removed or if people have responded to your message. This can help you gauge the effectiveness of your flyer campaign.

BROOKWOOD SUBDIVISION

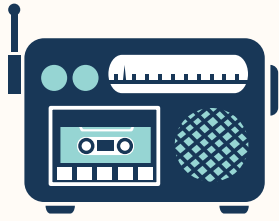# EVENT NAME

DESCRIPTION

📍 LOCATION

📅 DATE

🕐 TIME

SCAN QR CODE ABOVE OR CONTACT
BELOW FOR MORE INFORMATION

📞 123-456-7890   ✉ contact@example.com

[Editable Link]

RADIO / PSA
Presentation of Tool

Radio advertising is a simple way to connect with hundreds of people locally, typically for low costs. Though radio is often seen as a medium used by older generations, people of all ages may listen to a radio show during their commute or while at work or at home. Radio is one of the quickest ways to advertise through a third party, often taking a couple of weeks versus the months of production required for a written or televised ad.

The recommended course of action is to purchase a radio advertisement with a station that covers the area. This time could be used to promote town hall meetings, community gatherings, the community Facebook page, or anything else related to community engagement. For example, radio announcements could also be used to address a flooding crisis, promote safety tips or highlight relief centers during emergencies. The first step to this goal would be to contact radio stations to ask about advertising rates and requirements. We also recommend considering an interview between a radio show host and a member of the community organizing team to spread awareness of community identity and increase neighbor involvement.

When advertising through radio, consider the following questions. What radio stations do your target audience listen to, and what times of day see the most listeners? How far is the station's reach, and how will people outside the community borders engage with your message? Is the advertisement clear and straightforward, but inviting?
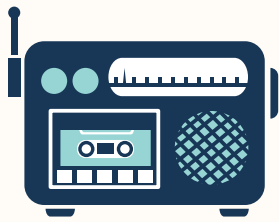
RADIO / PSA
## When to Use

Identify Current Use
- Determine if there are any announcements that are being spread through radio
- Determine the most popular radio stations

What Could be Done
- Advertise meetings, town halls
- Set up an interview with a radio show host to spread awareness about community issues
- Reach out to stations to request their advertising rates and requirements
- Record a voice-based ad

Best Practices
- Choose your station wisely – is your target audience listening to the station you choose? What time are most people listening to the radio?
- Consider the radio station's reach. Their coverage area may extend outside the community – how do you want to be seen by other neighborhoods? This could be an opportunity to connect with leaders in other communities.
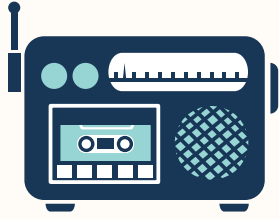
RADIO / PSA
How-To Guide

Preparing Your Message

1) Decide which radio stations you want to contact. Consider the station's format (e.g., music, talk, news), audience demographics, and design your message to fit their programming.

2) Prepare your message. Be clear and concise about what you want to say, and be prepared to provide all necessary details. See template below for further guidance.

3) Call the radio station. Use Google to find others that you think will be of use. Be polite and professional when speaking with the station's representative.

4) Follow up. If you are still waiting to hear back from the station within a few days, try calling again and emailing.

Radio Template

Example Script: Hello friends of the Brookwood Subdivision! Mark your calendars for our upcoming [Event Name]! Come join us at [Time], [Date] at [Location] to [Event Description]. Come make a difference in our neighborhood and connect with other members of the Brookwood Subdivision. Again, we will be hosting a [Event Name] at [Time], [Date] at [Location], we look forward to seeing you there!

TEXT BLASTS
Presentation of Tool

A 'text blast' is an SMS text message (a normal text message) sent from a single source to a large group of people simultaneously. It is best used for small messages and reminders of events happening in the community. Because it requires no technical ability on the end of the receiver, it is a good tool to reach all demographics, without having a technological barrier to information. Everyone gets text messages!

Current Use
- Talk with established official or nonofficial community leaders to determine if text blasts exist.

What Could be Done
Text blasts are a good tool to remind everyone of events happening in the community. They would be particularly useful to make sure no one is forgetting about an upcoming community meeting. This would help boost community engagement.

Best Practices

- Get Permission: Make sure that you have permission to send text blasts to your audience. You can do this by having them opt-in to your text list or by getting their permission in another way.
- Keep it Concise: Keep your message short and to the point. Make sure that your message is easy to read and understand.
- Consider Timing: Avoid sending messages early in the morning or late at night, when people are less likely to be paying attention to their phones.
- Create a Sense of Urgency and Importance: Make sure that your messages are concise and pertinent to your audience.
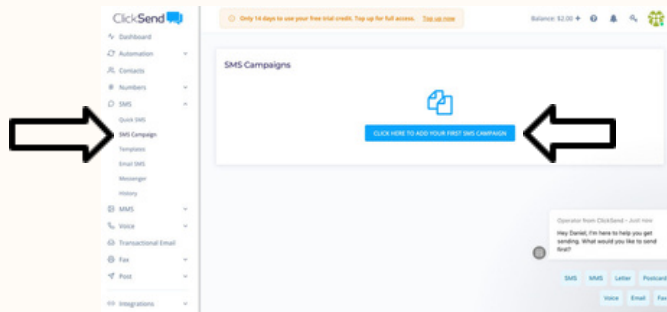
TEXT BLASTS
How-To Guide
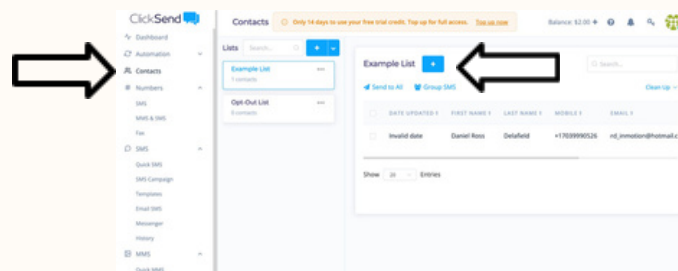
Using ClickSend for Text Blasts

1. Click on the "Start Free Trial Button.

2. Click on the "SMS Campaign" button and then click the "Click here to start your first SMS campaign" button.

3. Then, click on the "Contacts" button and begin to enter the contacts that you previously gathered.

4. Add each contact individually by clicking the "Add" button after each entry.

5. Once you have created the list of people you want to send your message to, select the appropriate list and click the "Send Now" button.

Text Blast Template
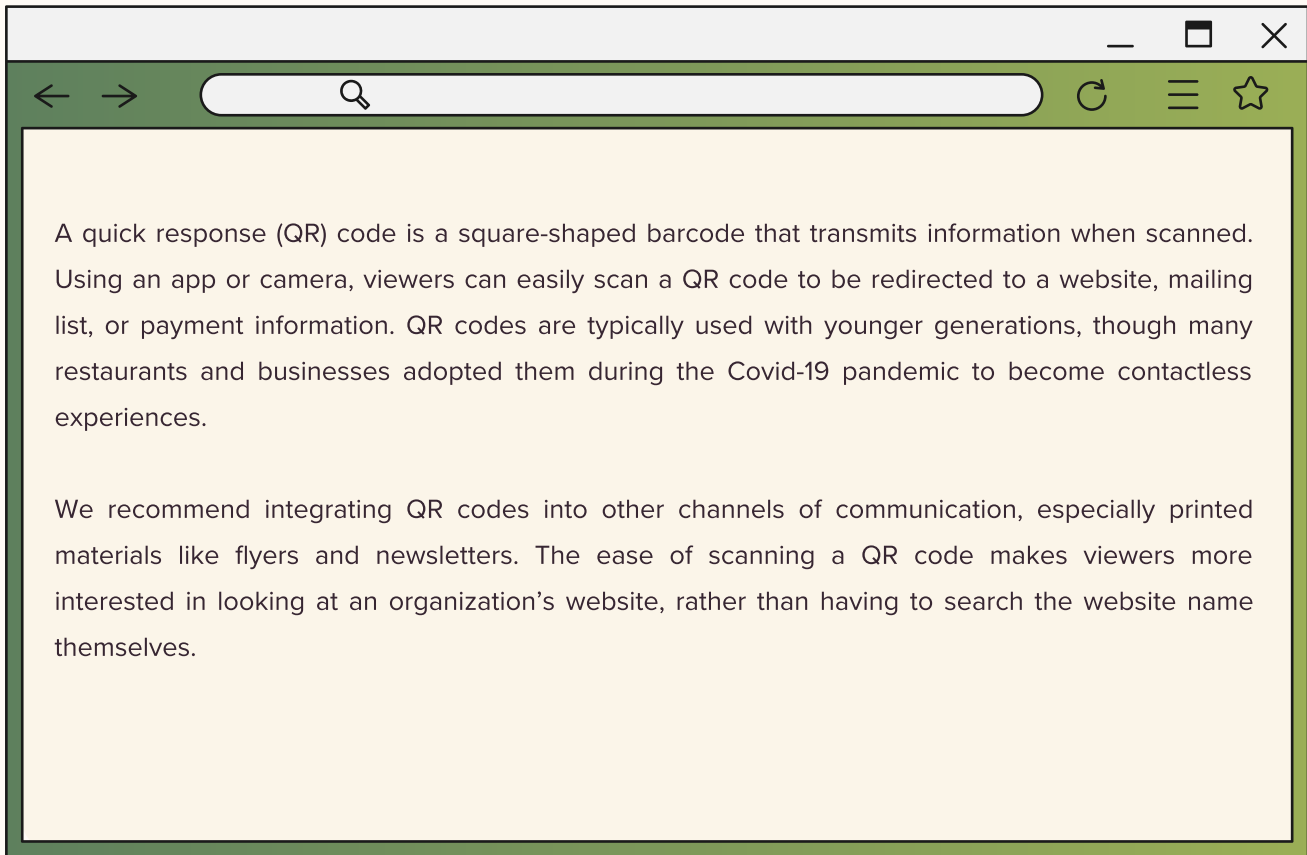
Example Script:

Hi Neighbors,

We are happy to announce that the Brookwood Subdivision is hosting a
[Event Name]
on [Time], [Date]
at [Location]!

Join us as we [Event Description]. Hope to see you there, and for more event details
follow this link: www.examplelink.com
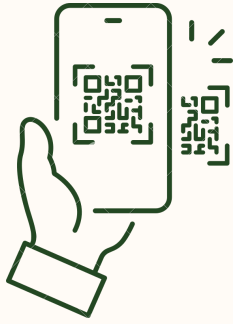
QR CODES

Presentation of Tool

A quick response (QR) code is a square-shaped barcode that transmits information when scanned. Using an app or camera, viewers can easily scan a QR code to be redirected to a website, mailing list, or payment information. QR codes are typically used with younger generations, though many restaurants and businesses adopted them during the Covid-19 pandemic to become contactless experiences.

We recommend integrating QR codes into other channels of communication, especially printed materials like flyers and newsletters. The ease of scanning a QR code makes viewers more interested in looking at an organization's website, rather than having to search the website name themselves.

This alternative to using hyperlinks or pasting a website URL increases the accessibility of online materials, building trust and engagement in a community, while also saving viewers the difficulties of navigating an unfamiliar website. QR codes can typically be used wherever you would write the name of a website or app.
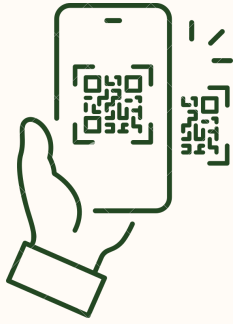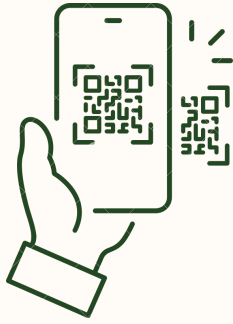
QR CODES
When to Use

What Could be Done
- Set up an account and familiarize yourself with using QR codes
- Explain to residents at meetings what QR codes are and how you will be using them
- Use them to advertise meetings, take attendance at meetings, distribute forms or surveys
- Use in meetings or events to give people information without needing to print out several copies which can be costly, time-consuming and wasteful

Best Practices
- Ensure that codes are high-quality and clear, so they can be scanned by phones with various camera qualities.
- When adding QR codes to flyers, make sure that the code will be large enough to scan when printed
- Codes can also be useful for digital mediums: consider integrating them into newsletters, emails, and posts on Facebook or Nextdoor.
- Since communication is key to building trust in a community and increasing participation, making communication easier and more accessible is very important.
- QR codes are a great alternative to adding hyperlinks when information is being printed on flyers, since it allows people to quickly access the link without having to copy the long link address into their phone.
- QR codes are usually most useful on printed distribution materials, but they can also be useful in social media posts or in emails where an important link may get lost in the text.
- Adding a QR code increases the importance of the link, making it more likely for people to scan it and access the information.
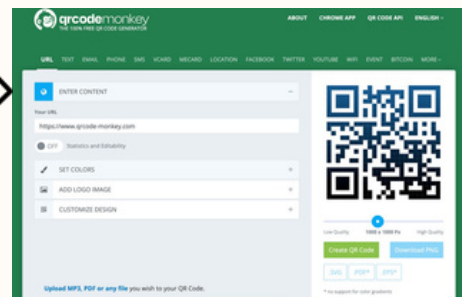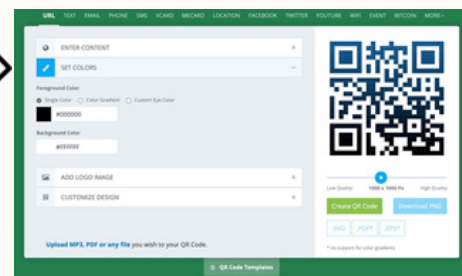
QR CODES
How-To Guide

1) Choose a QR code generator. Many free online QR code generators are available, such as QR Code Monkey [QRCode Monkey](#) or [QR Code Generator](#)

2) Decide what you want the QR code to link to. This could be a website, social media profile, or downloadable file.

3) Generate your QR code. Enter the URL or other information you want the QR code to contain, and the generator will create an image file that you can download and use.
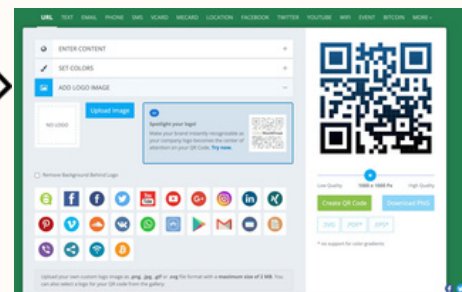
a. Click on the "Enter Content" button and enter your content.

b. Click on the "Set Colors" button and select your colors.

c. Click on the "Add Image or Logo" button and add image of applicable.

**d. Click on the "Customize Design" if you want
to make additional edits to your design.**

4) Test your QR code. Use a smartphone or tablet with a QR code reader app to scan the code and ensure it works correctly.
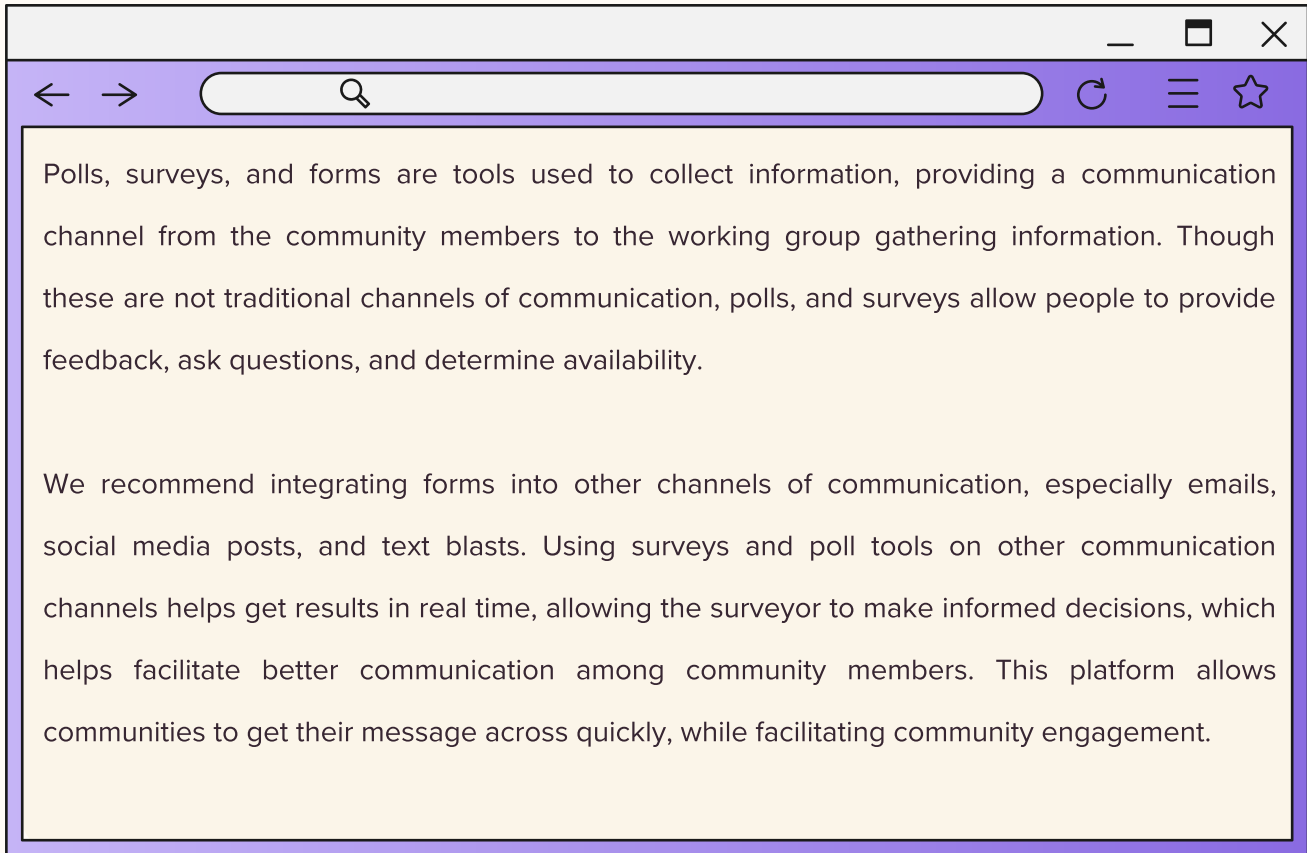
5) Decide where to display your QR code. Some ideas include business cards, posters, flyers, or digital screens.

6) Display your QR code. Make sure it is visible and easy to scan. Using a QR code tracking tool, you can track how many people watch your code and where they are located.

POLLS, SURVEYS, AND FORMS

Presentation of Tool

Polls, surveys, and forms are tools used to collect information, providing a communication channel from the community members to the working group gathering information. Though these are not traditional channels of communication, polls, and surveys allow people to provide feedback, ask questions, and determine availability.

We recommend integrating forms into other channels of communication, especially emails, social media posts, and text blasts. Using surveys and poll tools on other communication channels helps get results in real time, allowing the surveyor to make informed decisions, which helps facilitate better communication among community members. This platform allows communities to get their message across quickly, while facilitating community engagement.

POLLS, SURVEYS, AND FORMS
When to Use

What Could be Done

- Polls, surveys, and forms are an excellent way to communicate community member availability, such as day, time, and location for meeting by conducting polls. Surveymonkey is a good online resource that can be used to design polls and surveys in minutes, and the feedback is in real time. These polls can be sent out to every member via mass email/text, or they can also be sent directly to member cellphones.
- Surveys can also be used to determine what are urgent situations that are unique to different areas in the three communities.
- Jotform and Google Forms are good free online platforms that can be used to create forms.

Best Practices

- Ask simple questions, avoid open-ended questions
- Keep a balanced set of answer choices. For example:
  - If you have the following options:
    - Extremely helpful
    - Very helpful
    - Helpful
  - You must also have:
    - Neither helpful nor unhelpful
    - Not helpful
    - Very unhelpful
- If asking a respondent to rate something, do not ask for two things at once, separate them into two questions.
- Let most of the questions be optional to answer
- Leave an open-ended question at the bottom for feedback or comments
- Do a test drive of the survey to ensure it performs the way you would like before sending it out
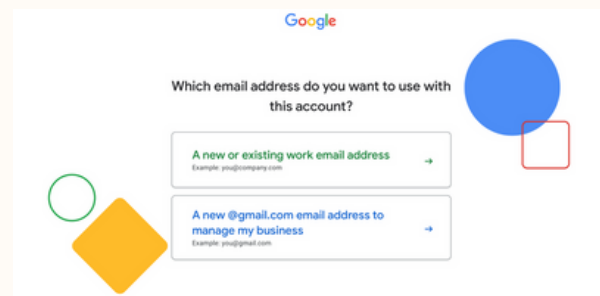
POLLS, SURVEYS, AND FORMS

How-To Guide

Creating a Google Forms Account

1) Go to Google Forms. Click on **Sign up for free.** Choose **For work or my business** in the dropdown menu.
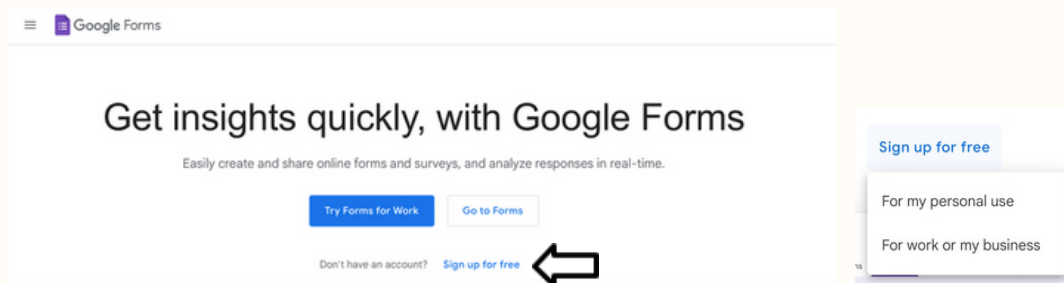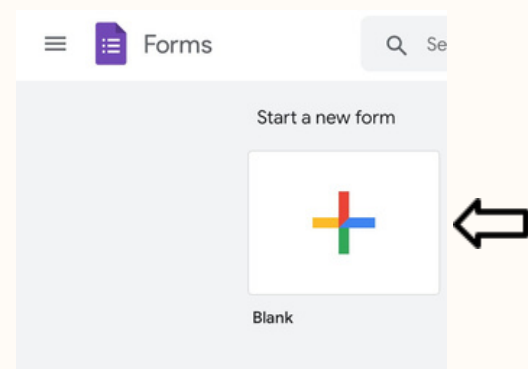

2) Choose which email address you want to use with the account [use the same email that manages all other modes of communication i.e. Facebook, Nextdoor etc.]
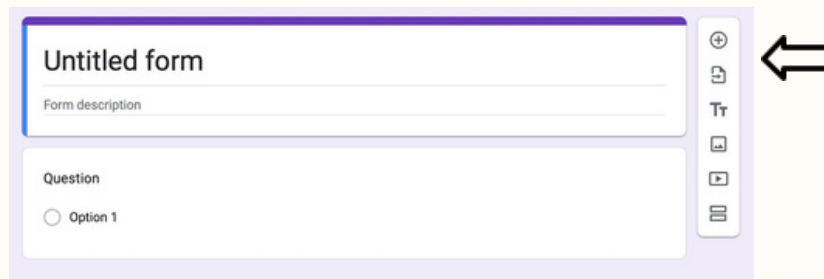

Creating a Poll, Survey, or Form

1) Once logged in, under **Start a new form,** click on **Blank.**

**2)** Add a form **title** and **description.**

3) Refer to the tool kit on the right-hand side of the blank form.

Toolkit functions:

Add Question

Import Questions

Add title and description

Add image

Add video

Add section

4) Once you have added all your questions, click on the **paper plane / arrow icon** to get a link to send to respondents. You can then view all responses in the **Responses** tab.
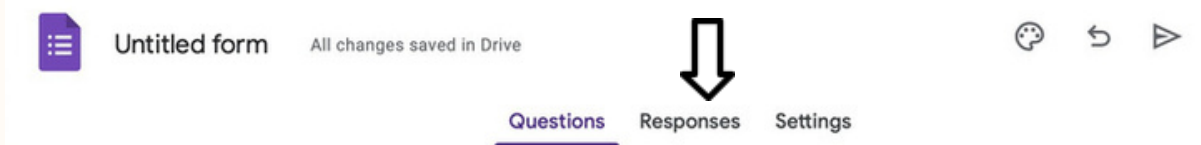
Google Forms' Tools to Prioritize for Your Polls, Surveys, and Forms

Google Forms' tools allow you to create the proper poll, survey, or form for specific types of correspondences such as event rsvp, feedback request etc.

Template gallery

Template gallery provides general templates that are used frequently in the categories of education, personal, and work. Some template you could use for community outreach are:
- *Contact Information*: name, email, address, and phone numbers
- *Find a Time*: Location, email, availability, and items to discuss
- *Event RSVP:* attendance (yes/no), names of people attending, and how you heard about the event
- *Event Registration*: name, email, organization, and days you will attend
- *Event Feedback:* satisfaction rating, key takeaways, logistics rating (communication, transportation, activities etc.), sessions you felt most relevant, additional comments, and relevant feedback

Individual form **Settings** allow you to manage the specific qualifications of each form. These include:

- *Make this a Quiz*: assign point values, set answers and provide automatic feedback
- *Responses:* collect email address (yes/no), send responders a copy of their response, allow response editing, and limit to 1 response
- *Presentation:* show progress bar, shuffle question order, send confirmation message, view summary results and disable autosave
- *Form defaults:* collect emails by default
- *Question defaults:* make questions required by default
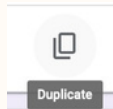
The **Duplicate icon** comes in handy when creating a long poll, survey, or form and questions and answers are similar. It can be found in the bottom left corner next to the delete trashcan icon of every question in your form.

Making a question **Required** ensures that respondents have to respond to the question in order to submit the form. It is essential to mark questions required when seeking to make decisions based on quantitative community data. Open-ended questions can be made unrequired as data is qualitative.

NEXT STEPS

While building strong communication is an important part of community resilience, it is only one step in the process. The Communication Plan for Community Resilience should be viewed as a tool to build community resilience. A strong system of communication and community cohesion is crucial for facing challenges and enacting change. The next step is using the systems of communication to engage with community members and empower one another to identify and solve problems. The graphic at the beginning of this resource, *A Pathway for Community Action,* illustrates one way to mobilize community members for specific issues, using a series of communication tools, listening sessions, and working groups to strategize solutions.

The following are different topics that can be tackled to improve the community's overall resiliency. There are two types of further actions. The first addresses the development of the problem-solving methodology within the community, as well as capturing the initial state of the community (from resource mapping and demographics to common concerns that need to be addressed). The second type of "next steps" identifies some topic issues that have been raised by the community and that need to be addressed.

Developing and improving the methodology:
- Develop a survey to get a better understanding of the different issues the community is facing.
- Use GIS to map out the state of the community: demographics, flooding impacts, income, resource mapping, etc
- Develop a toolkit for working groups:
    - How does a working group function?
    - Which tools can a working group use?
    - How to lead a working group effectively?
- Develop a website

Examples of issues of concern to tackle in the community:
- Adaptation to flooding and increased resilience to recurrent flooding
- Increase knowledge about available resources like flood insurance and opportunities to advocate for change
- Address the water quality issue
- Delays or skips in trash pick up in neighborhoods

Most importantly, the Communication Plan is only a tool. In order to strengthen community cohesion to enact change, the Plan must be put into action. This resource is not static and should be adapted to meet the needs of each unique community.