

## Advice From the Experienced

Experience is the greatest teacher. Here are some pointers from people who have run their own Neighborhood Watch activities:

- **Keep things simple:** Stick to the quickest and most obvious route to get things done.
- **Get as many people involved as possible:** People will often volunteer if asked, and more may come along with each person asked.
- **Follow through:** Keep all promises that are made. If an official promises something, then stay on it and go higher up if necessary.
- **Start with success:** A quick and easy goal is a good way to boost confidence and interest in taking on tougher problems.
- **Say thanks:** Congratulate each other for any progress made. Taking before and after pictures is a good way of seeing results from your efforts. Be sure to acknowledge officials and other groups that have helped out.
- **Build leaders:** One volunteer "leader" should not be permanent. One person who is always in control is bad for the group and the leader. The Neighborhood Watch is a group effort and a good way to make use of everyone's unique talents.
- **Build links:** Focus on concerns that local government and officials are working on. Establishing trust can lead to strong partnerships that will help your neighborhood.
- **Keep in touch regularly, clearly and in different formats:** Frequent, concise communication helps people stay informed so that people stay involved. Put out a newsletter, use local media or start a telephone network of members working to stay in touch.
- **Check your progress:** Be sure you know what your goals are and where you are going. Set up check points along the way and evaluate whether or not you're headed in the right direction.

## Low-Cost Resources

Preventing crime doesn't mean that you have to dig into your own pockets. Four out of five Neighborhood Watches rely on volunteers. These no-cost (or low-cost) programs work very well and residents say their communities are safer than the ones without a Watch.

Even when you have a project that requires skills and resources that you think may cost money—take a closer look at your volunteers. Someone may be able to help. There is always the possibility that you could trade services to get the job done, too.

If you do have something that is going to require a lot of cash, research your local foundations and corporations. They frequently donate special funds to local groups. Also check with community action departments like drug prevention, public safety, public housing, or economic development. In addition, your local library will have information on funding resources in your community. A program such as VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) may offer "free" staff.



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L.A.W. Publication 15000 E. Bellwood Parkway, Addison, TX 75001  
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# Neighborhood Watch

## Getting Together to Fight Crime

