

# For Neighborhood Leadership

## Key Roles:

### Neighbourhood Leadership

Leadership of ACI can come from anywhere within a neighbourhood. In Edmonton neighbourhoods, the Community association executive plays a key role in leadership of ACI. The Community association structure is well suited to host within it the ACI framework. The intention of ACI is to help extend the reach of a Community association (e.g. increased connection with more residents) and to build upon and enhance the existing community building efforts of the Community association and the neighbourhood, rather than be another program to add to the responsibilities of the volunteers. So while the ACI initiative often belongs to the neighbourhood through the Community association, it is not optimal for the Community association executive to operate the initiative directly, but rather, to have a *Support Team* work alongside the Community association.

**For the purposes of this guide, you will find the **BLUE** section(s) most relevant to you.**

### Support Team

In many neighbourhoods involved in the ACI initiative, a Support Team naturally forms and coordinates the initiative for the neighbourhood, endorsed by and in connection with the Community association. The Support Team often originates with early adopters meeting together to talk about community building where they live. Moving from these informal chats to launching the ACI initiative can be as simple as a Community association executive vote to pilot the initiative, to a more comprehensive arrangement with a Terms of Reference document laying out the details of the relationship between the executive of the Community association and the Support Team. The Support Team role is to lead the day to day operations of the ACI initiative in the neighbourhood and support the Neighbourhood Connector.

**For the purposes of this guide, you will find the **BLUE** section(s) most relevant to you.**

### Neighbourhood Connectors

A Neighbourhood Connector is a person from the neighbourhood who works with the Support Team and takes on the lead role of identifying, mobilizing and supporting the Block Connectors. They do this on behalf of and supported by the Support Team. On average this role can take 400 hours of dedicated work. In some neighbourhoods, the Neighbourhood Connector role is a temporary part-time paid position, coordinated by the Support Team and supported through the Community association executive.

**For the purposes of this guide, you will find the **RED** section(s) most relevant to you.**

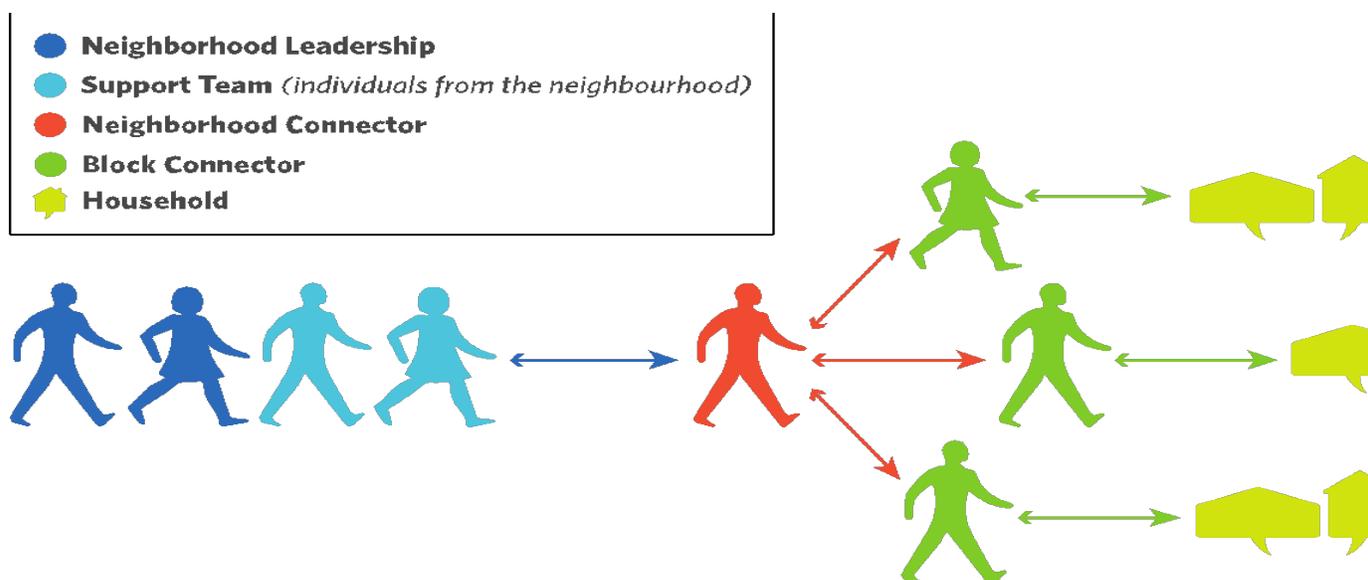
### Block Connectors

A Block Connector is a person or two on a block who initiates connections and conversations with and between their block neighbours. They take on the roles of:

1. **Point person** on the block, cul-de-sac or in an apartment/condo building (referred to as a *block* for the remainder of this guide), facilitating connection among neighbours.
2. **Party person** initiating the organizing of block parties and other neighbour gatherings or socials on the block.

3. **Listener** encouraging and modeling neighbourliness by getting to know their neighbours - their vision; interests and abilities; and their skills and gifts.

For the purposes of this guide, you will find the **DARK GREEN** section(s) most relevant to you.



## Overview

### The Vision

To enable neighbourly connections on the block and in the neighbourhood. This not only creates a supportive and caring community, but also helps the neighbourhood take collective action on things that are important to them. There is a movement afoot reimagining “the village” in city neighbourhoods and the ACI process provides a practical first step in making this happen.

### The Process

Block Connectors connect with the neighbours that live around them (approximately 20 households, but this will differ depending on the block). They introduce themselves and their three key roles: *Point Person*, *Party Person* and *Listener*. This introduction is often paired with an invitation to a block social (e.g. block party, bbq, etc.). These neighbourly connections over time lead to the listening element of the relationship and the documenting of the neighbours’ **vision for the neighbourhood, mutual interests and activities they may want to engage in together, and the skills, abilities and experiences they would like to share with their neighbours.**

Block Connectors use the *Connector Card* to facilitate conversations and to document what their neighbours share with them.

The conversation content collected is held in a database chosen by the Community association and the ACI Support Team (see the *Neighbourhood Database* section)The conversation content can be used to give direction to the Community association to create new relevant programs and to bring neighbours together in fun and supportive relationships. The information in the database is not confidential but “safe-guarded” in the same way that Community association membership information is.

Key conversation topics		Desired outcome
ONE	<b>Vision</b>	This helps the neighbourhood, the Community association and other neighbourhood leadership, to determine the wishes of the residents of the neighbourhood. This may inform decision making around programs, services and projects at the neighbourhood level.
TWO	<b>Activities and Interests</b>	An invitation to join existing neighbourhood groups or form new neighbourhood groups based on common interests and pastimes. The local element often removes existing barriers and has the potential to increase sense of belonging at the block and neighbourhood level.
THREE	<b>Skills, Abilities and Experiences</b>	Neighbours helping neighbours. Everyone is valuable and has something to offer neighbourhood life. The discovery of the skills, abilities and experiences of neighbours - the community assets - leads to a more engaged, connected and supportive community life in the neighbourhood.

## The Benefits

There are so many benefits that result from increased connection and neighbourliness at the block level. Over time a block and neighbourhood become a more engaged and connected community!

<p><b>Increased care of neighbours</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activation of the skills, abilities and experiences of residents - neighbours helping neighbours; everyone contributing to neighbourhood life according to their interests and abilities</li> <li>• A village for children to grow and play</li> <li>• Neighbours to look in on seniors and those who are ill</li> <li>• Better overall health through relationships</li> </ul>	<p><b>Increased social and cultural wellness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased sense of belonging to the block and neighbourhood (reduced social isolation)</li> <li>• Local and accessible companionship and friendship</li> <li>• More groups to join for fun, education and social time within the neighbourhood</li> <li>• Opportunity to know people from a wide variety of cultures, backgrounds, experiences and ages (opportunity for intergenerational relationships)</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Increased care of shared spaces - the environments we call home</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased block identity, pride and shared ownership and responsibility for the local commons</li> <li>• Alignment with the Local Movement - reduced environmental footprint</li> </ul>	<p><b>Increased safety</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased safety on the block and in the neighbourhood - quick help nearby when you really need it</li> <li>• “Stranger Danger” decreases as children learn the names of neighbours</li> </ul>
<p><b>Increased representation and growth opportunity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity to have a more united and representative voice in municipal affairs</li> <li>• An enhanced network of employment opportunities through relationships and connections in the neighbourhood</li> </ul>	<p><b>Activated and shared creativity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collective wisdom and guidance shared among neighbours</li> <li>• Ideas and innovation from broad perspectives shared among neighbours</li> </ul>

## Part 1:

### For Neighbourhood Leadership and the Support Team

*“Abundant Community Edmonton invigorates neighbourly relationships by providing Community associations with a simple way to nurture opportunities for supportive social connections that perhaps didn’t previously exist.”*

SUSAN PETRINA  
Community association Past President

## Getting Started

Blocks and neighbourhoods are important social units in society. We are seeing pACI-based community building in action through a person or two saying “Let’s get more connected in our neighbourhood!” The number of neighbourhoods making use of the ACI process and resources is steadily increasing - people hear about this neighbourliness initiative from others and decide to try it out in their neighbourhood.

## Key Functions of the Community Association

### Executive:

The Community association executive is comprised of volunteers who are busy tending to the day to day management of the league on behalf of the neighbourhood. The ACI framework is intended to support the work of the Community association by extending its reach to every block through the Block Connector network. Establishing the ACI framework depends on an additional commitment of residents from beyond the Community association executive.

**With this in mind the suggested role for the Community association executive includes:**

- **Support or identify** the people in the neighbourhood who have the excitement and time to explore the readiness of the neighbourhood for the ACI framework
- **Link** with other ACI neighbourhoods and City of Edmonton resources to learn about ACI
- **Decide** to move ahead with the initiative (sometimes this is accomplished with a vote at a Community association executive meeting)
- **Encourage and organize** a team of individuals who are excited about community development. These people may become Block Connectors and or the Support Team.
- **Define the area...** Some Community associations are responsible for multiple neighbourhoods, in which case they may want to choose one neighbourhood to start with. Some Community associations have a large population and may want to subdivide into neighbourhoods of approximately 1000 homes or less
- **Hiring a Neighbourhood Connector...** the role provides a one-year start-up salary for the Neighbourhood Connector – possible sources include the Community association, the CIP grant, or other fundraising activities

**Notes about optional payment of Neighbourhood Connectors**

- If and when a group decides to pay a Neighbour Connector these steps will help:
  1. Community association executive vote to set aside \$2,000 towards the one-year start-up salary for a Neighbourhood Connector (this salary can be based on a part-time role that involves approximately 200 to 400 hours of work at a suggested rate of \$25/hour)
  2. Apply for the Community Initiatives Program (CIP) Matching Grant. For more information on the CIP Grant, view [culture.alberta.ca/community/community-grants](http://culture.alberta.ca/community/community-grants) OR contact City staff by calling 311
  3. A formal selection and hiring process should be engaged in for the hiring of the Neighbourhood Connector. See resources at

- **Receive updates** from the Neighbourhood Connector and members of the Support Team
- **Share the ACI initiative on the neighbourhood or Community association website** by including a page that explains the initiative, and eventually, lists what is discovered through neighbour conversations (e.g. list of activities neighbours may want to engage in together, or skills and abilities being contributed to help neighbours)
- **Program** as much as possible from the “activities and interests” of neighbours discovered in the neighbourhood conversations
- **Make use of the data** as much as possible (e.g. the skills, abilities and experiences offered by neighbours, discovered in the neighbourhood conversations)
- **Consider integrating Community association membership** with information collected in neighbourhood conversations (choose a database to organize all information together)

- **Consider free Community association membership** for a year in order to include as many neighbours as possible in the database and to affirm that all residents belong to the neighbourhood regardless of whether they have purchased a Community association membership or not

## Key Functions of the Support Team

The Support Team is usually not the neighbourhood leadership (i.e. the Community association executive). However, members of the Community association executive or other neighbourhood leadership are sometimes part of the Support Team. Members of the Support Team often include those who first brought ACI to the neighbourhood, neighbours who support the idea, community development experts who live in the neighbourhood, or those who just want to get more connected with their neighbours.

The Support Team as a group can be nurtured and encouraged (by the community and/or City staff) to grow organically, as neighbours who are interested in taking on support roles become known through the neighbourhood conversation process initiated by Block Connectors.

### Here are some things the Support Team might do:

- **Host** regular neighbourhood information sessions to explain ACI to neighbours
- **Assist** the Community association with integration of the ACI framework into the Community association's website
- **Network** with City staff and other neighbourhoods who participate in ACI
- **Procure funds** when needed to pay for a Neighbourhood Connector
- **Recruit** and the Neighbourhood Connector and set them up for success by ensuring they have what they need to do the job well.
- **Support** and work alongside the Neighbourhood Connector to recruit, **celebrate** and **connect** Block Connectors.
- **Establish and support** the use of a database tool and its integration into the Community association website (see the *Database Options* section)
- **Identify and/or work with a "Program Director"** of the Community association executive to create programs or groups of shared interest and activity for the neighbourhood

**Identify and/or work with a "Volunteer Director"** of the Community association to match the discovered skills and abilities with other neighbours and the neighbourhood