

RESIDENT EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM



**MODULE 7
PARTNERING WITH PALM BEACH COUNTY
AND GRANT FUNDERS**



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Introduction

Who is responsible for the collective good and wellbeing of your neighborhood? Every member of the community has a vital role in its wellbeing. Partnering with outside entities is critical to a community's health. Partnerships include individuals, government agencies, neighborhood institutions, churches and other entities that have a stake in the self-sufficiency and growth of the neighborhood.

Citizens' role in community health is critical. A strong and healthy neighborhood requires capacity building from within the community. It also requires that there be a strong sense of community ownership and hand-on responsibility for the transformation of the neighborhood. As a resident, your active participation is required to create a desirable quality of life and a community you are proud to call home. Your involvement can range from providing input on a proposed project to voting on important matters, advocating for changes, and taking a lead role in community organizing.

Government's role is also critical in community health and wellbeing. Government has the responsibility to protect the common good and ensure that the decisions that affect the public are carried out in an equitably and efficient manner. Government brings access to resources that can be used or redirected to address citizens' concerns.

While government provides many resources and services that neighborhoods need, it cannot do it all and alone. If you and your neighbors desire to implement community improvement programs and projects, you must first learn about how to collaborate, and familiarize yourself with the different County departments, the resources they provide, and their applicable regulations. Some of your initiatives may require reaching out to outside entities, such as foundations, financial institutions and private business or individuals, to procure the required resources to create desired change in your community.

An example of a community group that was able to tap into funding from both County government and outside entities is the Lake Worth West Resident Planning Group in the Lake Worth West CCRT area. With funding from Palm Beach County, the community group was able to open the Lake Worth West Community Center. The Children's Services Council provides the funding for the center's staff of six and the ongoing implementation of its successful educational, recreational, wellness and cultural programs.

This module will help you increase your knowledge about how County government works and how to effectively interact with its departments to improve the quality of life in your community. This module will also provide you with the tools to learn about how to advocate for your neighborhood and how to apply for grants and other financial resources.

Overview of Palm Beach County

Palm Beach County came into existence in 1909 after being carved out of Dade County, and becoming Florida's 47th county. At that time, the County included portions of Broward, Martin and Okeechobee counties and had approximately 5,800 residents. Today, Palm Beach County has a population of approximately 1.49 million residents, making it the third-largest county in the State. Not counting Lake Okeechobee, Palm Beach County is the second largest in the State in land area covering 1,971 square miles.

Additional interesting facts regarding Palm Beach County related to economics, geography, weather, colleges and universities, recreation, and entertainment and leisure can be found on the County's website at https://discover.pbcgov.org/Pages/pbc_facts.aspx

The County is governed by a seven-member Board of Commissioners elected from single-member districts to staggered four-year terms to represent the entire County. The Board serves as the legislative and policy-setting body for county government; enacts countywide laws and authorizes programs and all expenditures of county funds. They also act as the Child Care Facilities Board, the Solid Waste Authority Governing Board, the Environmental Control Board and the Zoning Board.

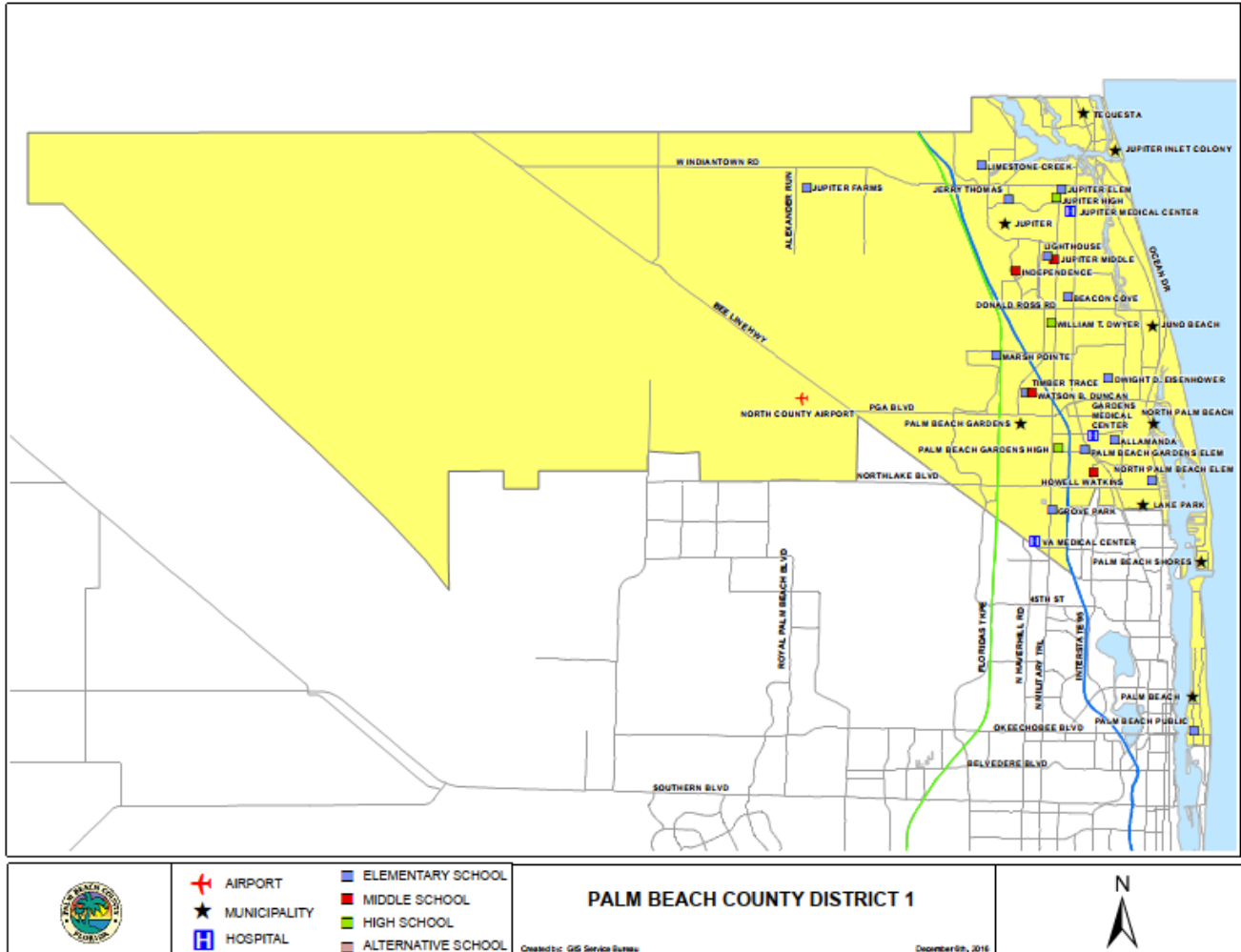
The Board of County Commissioners generally meets on the first and third Tuesday of each month for public hearings and regular agenda items. During the first meeting of the month, with the exception of January and August, citizens may offer comments on any issue or topic during Matters by the Public. Workshops are usually held on the fourth Tuesday of the month. All meetings are carried live on PBC-TV Channel 20.

The County Administrator has executive powers to implement the policies and procedures set forth by the Board of County Commissioners. The county administrator manages an annual budget of more than \$5 billion and oversees approximately 5,500 employees in more than 40 departments, divisions and offices. Together, they must work in concert to provide quality services, programs and information to the residents of Palm Beach County.

Supervising the day-to-day workings of one of the geographically largest counties in the nation is extremely challenging. That duty has been entrusted to Verdenia C. Baker, County Administrator.

Palm Beach County Commission Districts

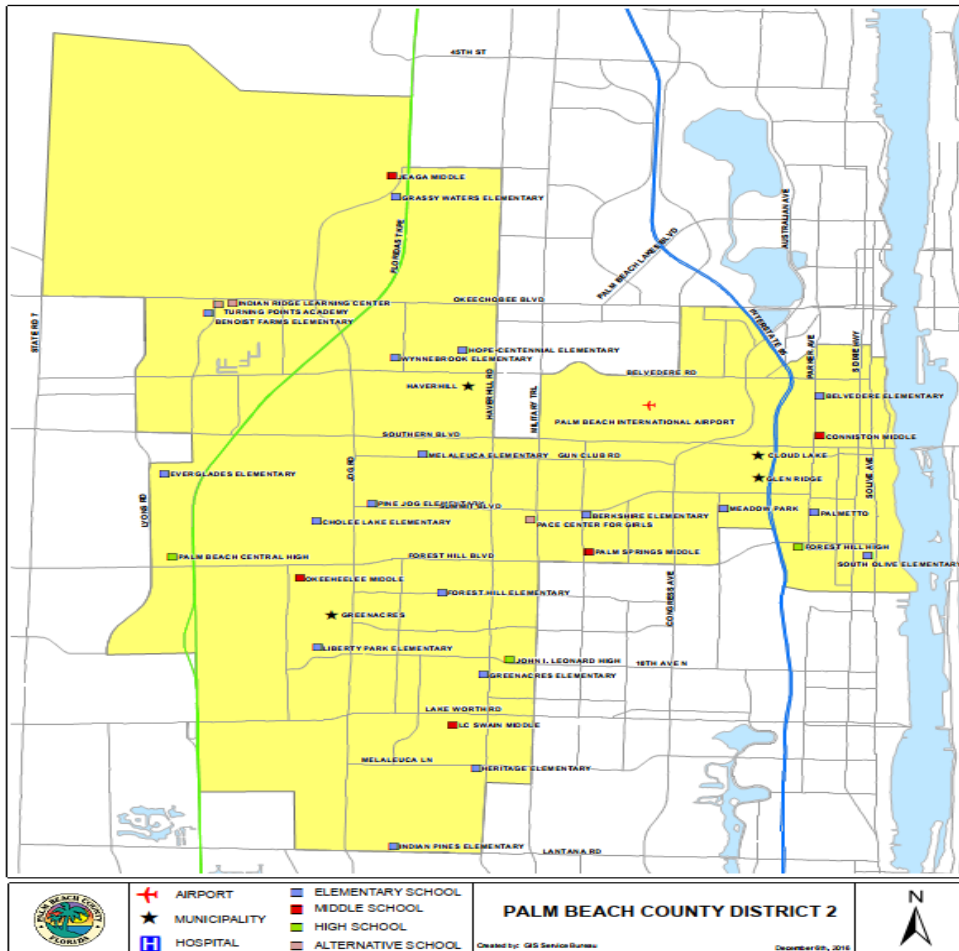
District 1



Maria G. Marino
 Elected 11/2020
 Term ends 11/2024

E-mail: MMarino@pbcgov.org
 Tele: 561-355-2201
 Fax: 561-355-6094

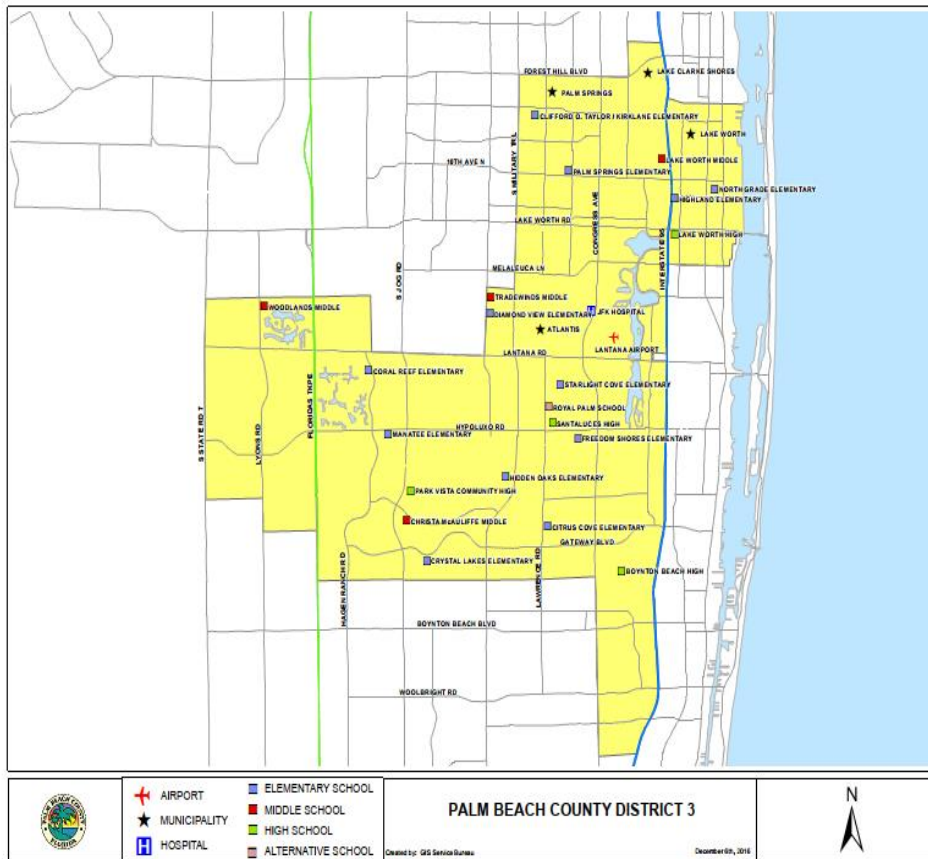
District 2



Gregg K. Weiss
 Elected 11/2018
 Term ends 11/2022

E-mail : Gweiss@pbcgov.org
 Tele: 561-355-2202

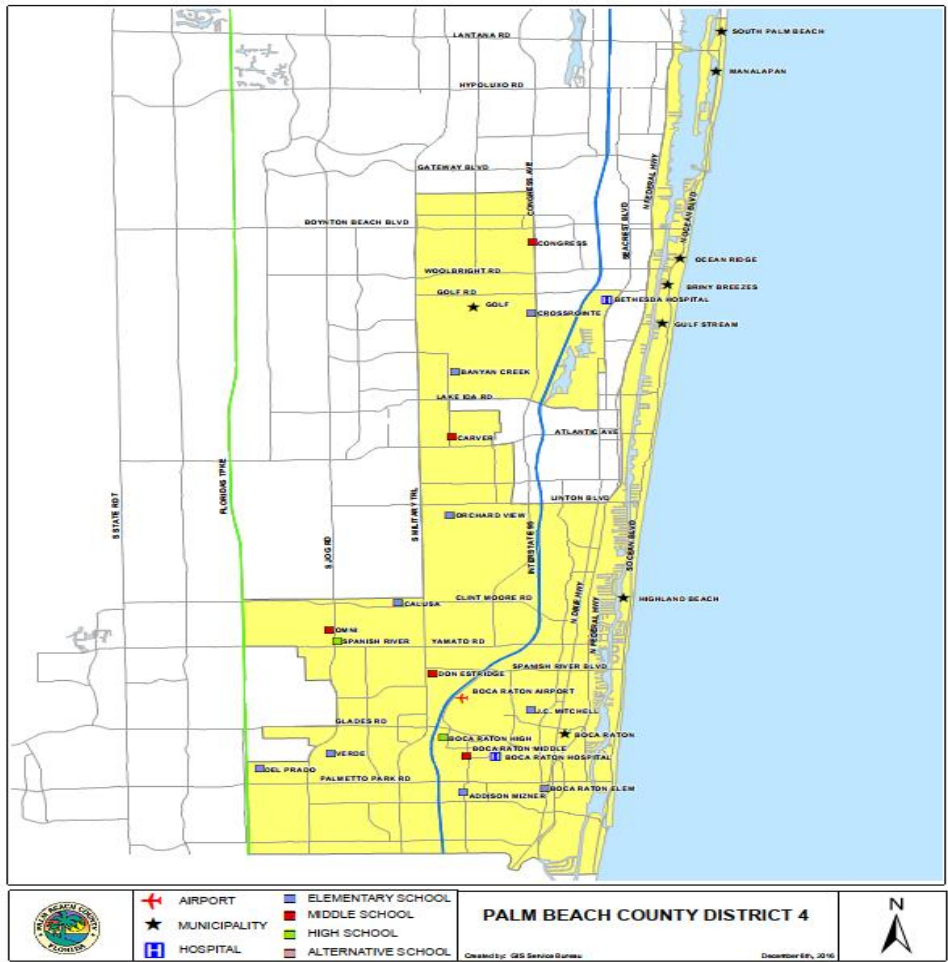
District 3



Dave Kerner
 Mayor
 Reelected 11/2020
 Term ends 11/2024

E-mail: DKerner@pbcgov.org
 Tele: 561-355-2203
 Fax: 561-355-6344

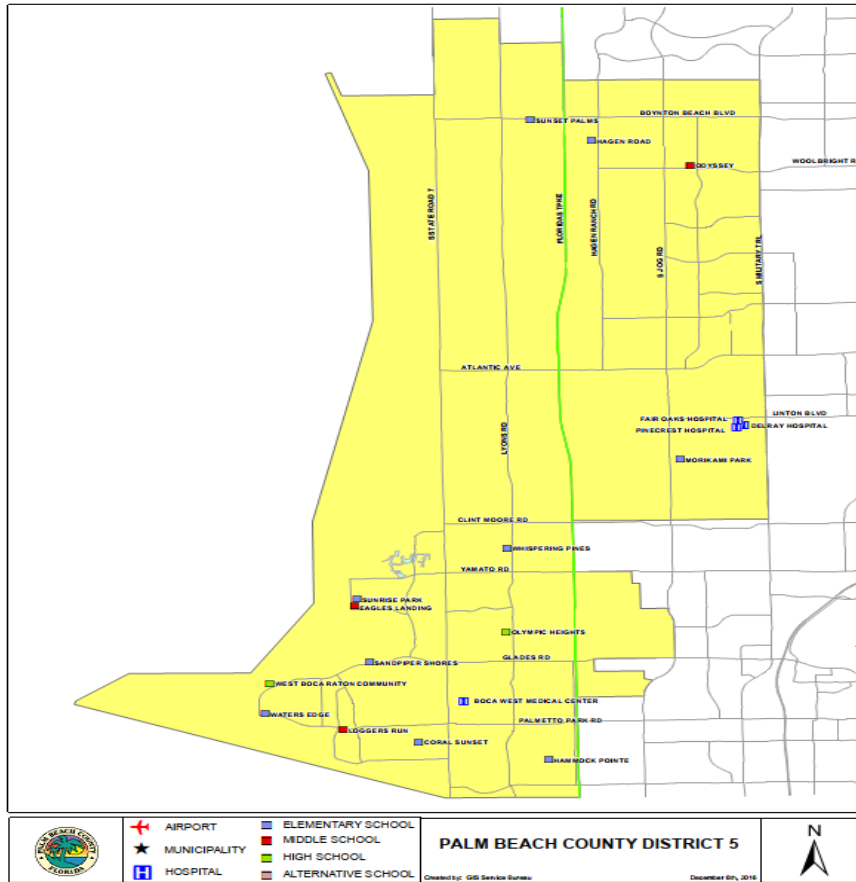
District 4



Robert S. Weinroth
 Vice Mayor
 Elected 11/2018
 Term ends 11/2022

E-mail: RWeinroth@pbcgov.org
 Tele: 561-355-2204
 S. County: 561-276-1220
 Fax: 561-355-4422

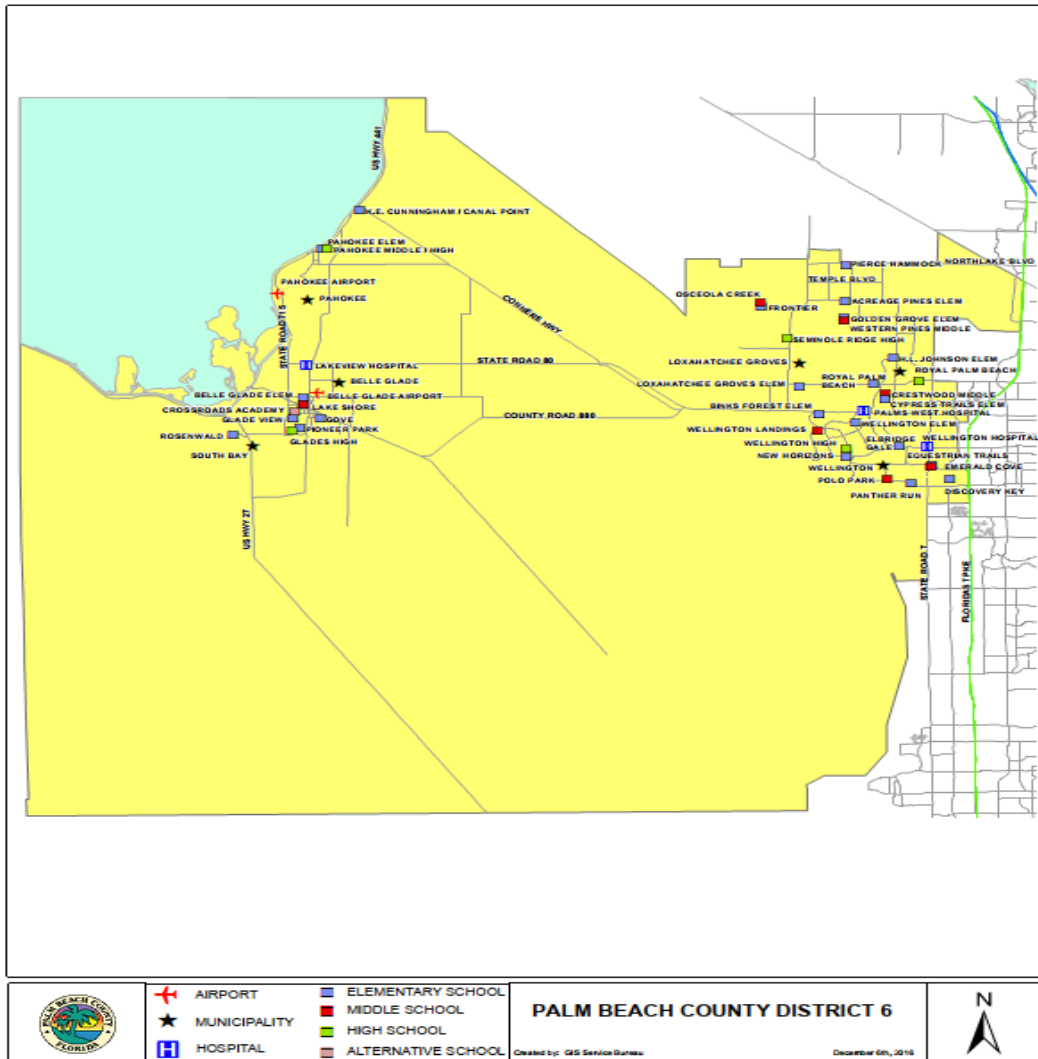
District 5



Maria Sachs
 Elected 11/2020
 Term ends 11/2024

E-mail: MSachs@pbcgov.org
 Tele: 561-355-2205

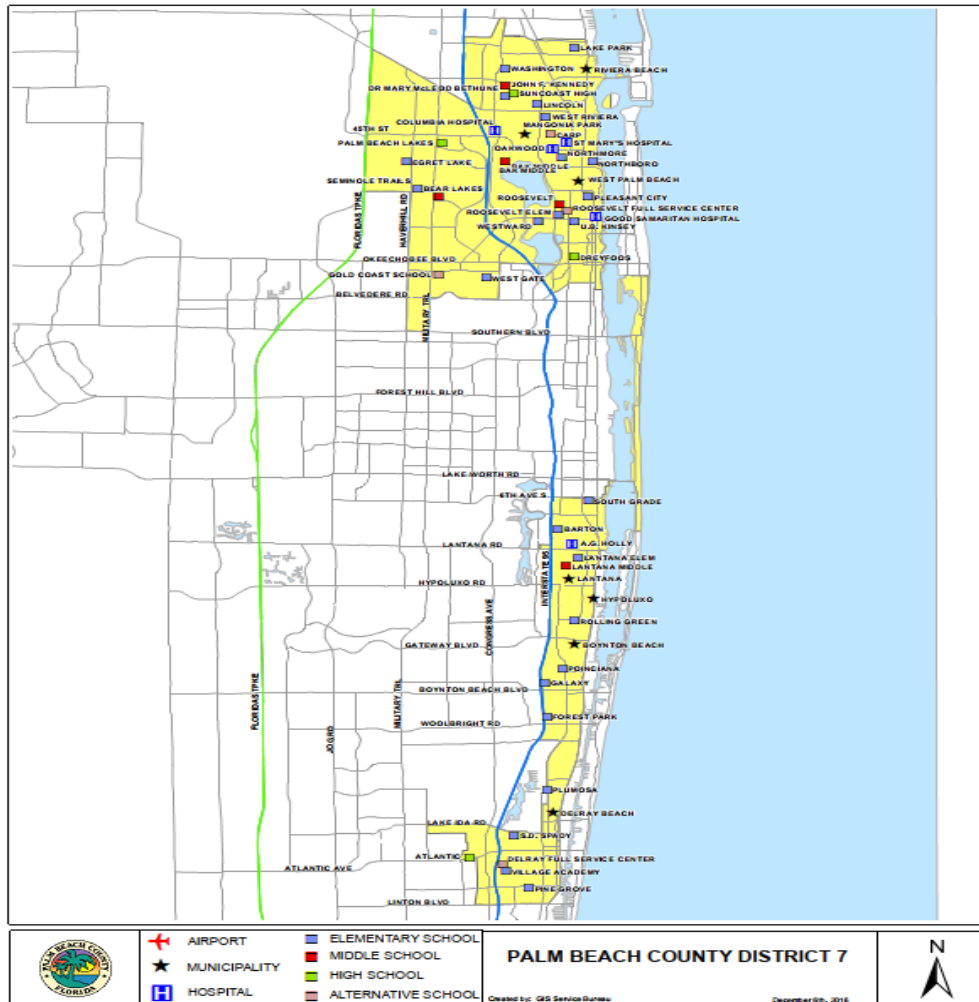
District 6



Melissa McKinlay
 Reelected 11/2018
 Term ends 11/2022

E-mail: MMcKinlay@pbcgov.org
 Tele: 561-355-2206

District 7



Mack Bernard
 Reelected 11/2020
 Term ends 11/2024

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 Tele: 561-355-2207
 S. County: 561-276-1350

The Office of Community Revitalization



Every community in Palm Beach County has a variety of issues and activities that are important to its residents. It could be a desire to improve the appearance of a neighborhood or to address community concerns regarding safety, speeding, lack of activities for area youth, or a proposed development. Palm Beach County's Office of Community Revitalization works to respond to these neighborhood concerns and to promote a strong partnership between the County and its residents.

Designed to provide neighborhoods with a link to County government, the OCR team assists neighborhood groups and residents in effectively accessing and using County services and other community resources to enhance the quality of life in Palm Beach County's neighborhoods. The OCR provides or supports the following services to Palm Beach County residents:

CCRT and GTAC Coordination

The OCR facilitates, and collaborates with other County Departments on, the Countywide Community Revitalization Team (CCRT) and the Glades Technical Advisory Committee (GTAC) created to coordinate revitalization activities in designated Palm Beach County neighborhoods. Regularly scheduled meetings allow County departments and residents to exchange information about what departments are doing, receive input from the residents, prevent duplication, concentrate efforts at the same time, and determine what is working and what is not. For more information on the CCRT, please contact William Wynn, Senior Planner, at [561-233-5618](tel:561-233-5618), and for GTAC, please contact Audley Reid, Senior Planner, at 561-233-5565.

Link to Local Government

OCR staff helps schedule meetings with neighborhood groups and organizations, other county staff and different governmental entities to seek input on community concerns and determine what assistance the County can provide. The OCR serves as the liaison office on behalf of Palm Beach County. OCR staff also presents information on available resources to neighborhoods, schools, and civic groups, and to educate citizens about Palm Beach County government, how to access resources, and how to be part of the decisions that affect their communities. For more information, contact the Houston L. Tate, OCR Director, at 561-233-5303 or Ruth Moguillansky, Principal Planner, at 561-233-5376.

Technical Assistance



OCR staff works closely with neighborhood leaders and groups to help organize and assist in maintaining healthy, growing neighborhood associations. OCR staff also assists developers and/or their agents in scheduling meetings with neighborhood groups to seek input on new projects and help mitigate their impact on the communities.

Education and Training



The OCR staff plays a critical role in educating neighborhood residents and organizations through workshops, seminars and individualized training. Specifically, OCR staff seeks to build neighborhood capacity to identify, prioritize and resolve neighborhood issues, and to increase residents' ability to organize around solutions and manage long-term results.

Speaking Engagements

The OCR makes presentations to neighborhood groups and civic organizations, schools, and homeowners' associations on a variety of topics, and coordinates with other organizations as needed. These speaking engagements are a great way for residents to learn about the many programs and services offered by the OCR and Palm Beach County.

OCR Programs

Abundant Community Initiative (ACI)



ACI is an initiative designed to support grassroots efforts to increase neighborhood wellness by focusing on developing communities from the inside out, identifying and mobilizing assets from within (residents' skills, abilities and gifts), and connecting them with one another. The overall goal of the program is to help communities to be places where people know their neighbors, watch out for each other, take pride in their community, and enjoy many opportunities for social, educational and recreational interaction.

For more information, contact Vivian Ryland, Senior Planner, at (561) 233-5318

Neighborhood Street Lighting (NSL) Program

The NSL Program was developed as a strategy to mitigate crime, as well as improve vehicular and pedestrian safety in designated CCRT areas. The program provides funding for the installation and maintenance of citizen petitioned streetlights at approved locations along County owned and maintained roadways within these specific areas. Roadways for consideration must experience above-average nighttime criminal activity as well as unsafe pedestrian and vehicular mobility conditions. Applicants for the program must reside within these areas and obtain signatures from at least 51% of residents on the streets where the lights will be installed for the project to move forward.

Eligible applicants include:

- Neighborhood organizations/groups of residents;
- Neighborhood associations with 501(c)(3) tax status;
- Formal Homeowners Associations.

For more information, contact William Wynn, Senior Planner, at (561) 233-5168.



The NSHP is a traffic calming program, developed as a strategy to enhance pedestrian and vehicular safety in designated CCRT areas. The program provides funding for the construction and maintenance of citizen petitioned speed humps on County owned, non-thoroughfare residential roadways within designated CCRT neighborhoods. The OCR, along with the Traffic Engineering Division, evaluate citizen requests based on criteria that includes roadway traffic volume, average vehicle speed, patterns of cut through traffic, and crash history. Sixty percent or more neighborhood consensus supporting the installation of the speed humps is required.

For more information, contact Dr. Audley Reid, Senior Planner, at (561) 233-5567

Neighborhood Engagement and Transformation (NEAT) Grant Program



The NEAT grant program provides funding to neighborhood based groups and/or organizations for small collaborative community projects located within unincorporated Palm Beach County and the Lake Region municipalities of South Bay, Belle Glade and Pahokee. Priority funding is given to projects proposed for designated CCRT areas. Grants of up to \$10,000 may be used for a wide variety of activities and projects, and resident groups are encouraged to think in new ways about what will work in their communities and with whom they might partner. NEAT grants are intended to build the skills and capacity of project leaders to transform their neighborhoods.

Some examples of projects implemented through this program include playground equipment, landscaping and clean-up projects, neighborhood banners and identification projects, community building events, food pantries, little free libraries, neighborhood organizing and sustainability projects, neighborhood outreach projects, public safety and crime prevention projects, community gardens and emergency preparedness projects and events.

For more information, contact Chrystal Mathews, Senior Planner, at (561) 233-5565

NEAT Projects



Back to School PBC!

This is an annual countywide event implemented by government in partnership with Palm Beach County nonprofits and community service organizations to provide low-income students with free backpacks filled with school supplies, free haircuts and school physicals, immunizations, dental and hygiene kits, books, uniforms, shoes and socks. Additionally, the event provides families with exposure to other services and community resources to help them on their road to self-sufficiency and improve their children's performance in the classroom.



To be eligible to participate, students must reside in one of the designated CCRT areas or mobile home parks in unincorporated Palm Beach County, and must be either entering Kindergarten or enrolled in grades 1 to 12 in the Palm Beach County public school system or a charter school in Palm Beach County. Students must be preregistered, and participation continues to be by invitation only to reduce duplication and ensure that only those students in need are served. The link to register can be found on the OCR's website at <https://discover.pbcgov.org/ocr>

For more information on Back to School PBC! contact Ruth C. Moguillansky, OCR Principal Planner, at (561) 233-5376 or at rmoguill@pbcgov.org

Resident Empowerment Program

The Resident Empowerment Program provides free training for residents desiring to become leaders in their communities. Participants will learn leadership skills, organizing, how to conduct events and work with the County and grant funders.

Other OCR Initiatives

The OCR responds to residents' needs through other special projects and initiatives. In addition, the OCR provides referrals to government programs and services, facilitates problem solving for neighborhood-identified issues, and coordinates as well as partners with other County departments and outside organizations to better serve the public. Highlights of OCR's recent partnerships include:

- Partnership with the Professional Fire Fighters-Paramedics of Palm Beach County for the distribution of Thanksgiving turkeys and other meal components to residents in CCRT communities every year;
- Collaboration with health care providers to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic by offering residents free COVID testing and vaccination;
- Partnership with the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office (PBSO), local restaurants and nonprofits to provide hot prepared meals, fruits, vegetables and other items to residents in need and to help address food insecurity due to job loss related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Thousands of meals and fresh food have been distributed since March of 2020.

COVID-19 Food Distribution



For more information on OCR programs and initiatives, please visit our website at <http://www.pbcgov.com/ocr> or email us at ocrnews@pbcgov.org

Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office (PBSO) – Community Policing

PBSO's Community Policing Unit is responsible for 25 sites throughout the County. Following the community policing philosophy, deputies work in partnership with residents to curtail criminal activity in the communities they serve. In addition, through their collaboration with other agencies, such as Code Enforcement, Building and Zoning, Fire Rescue, Animal Care and Control, the Solid Waste Authority, and many other entities, deputies help address other neighborhood concerns. This approach follows the Broken Windows Theory.

The Broken Windows Theory, by James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling basically state that if an area looks good, it sends a message that someone cares and crime tends to decrease. Should one window get broken and go un-repaired, other windows will probably get broken as well.¹

Community policing focuses on addressing the root of problems rather than the symptoms, and utilizes the SARA Model as the basis for training curricula and problem-solving efforts. The acronym SARA stands for the following:

- Scanning: Information is gathered to identify recurring problems of concern and their consequences, as well as prioritizing those problems;
- Analysis: The information is analyzed to understand the root of the problems;
- Response: A plan is outlined and implemented to address the identified problems; and
- Assessment: Determining whether the implemented plan was successful.

Community Policing Sites

- **District 1**
 - Indian Pines/Concept Homes
 - Dyson Circle
 - Lake Worth West
 - Casa Del Monte
 - Congress Park
- **District 3**
 - Plantation
 - Limestone Creek/Kennedy Estates
 - Westgate
 - Cabana colony
 - Gramercy Park
 - Stacey Street/Mobilair area
- **District 5**
 - Fremd Village
 - Padgett Circle
 - Okeechobee Center
- **District 6**
 - San Castle

¹ George L. Kelling and James Q. Wilson, Broken Windows, The Police and Neighborhood Safety, The Atlantic. March 1982. <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1982/03/broken-windows/304465/>

Homes at Lawrence
Seminole Manor
Sand and Sea

- **District 7**

Watergate Estates

- **District 9**

Cabana Colony

Gramercy Park

Kennedy Estates and Limestone Creek

Watergate Estates

- **District 10** – Lake Park

- **District 12** – Pahokee

Palm Beach County Code Enforcement Division

The Code Enforcement Division's mission is to uniformly and consistently enforce Palm Beach County Code of Ordinances and Land Development Regulations; and to promote and protect the health, safety, welfare, and quality of life for residents, businesses and tourists of Palm Beach County.

The Code Enforcement Division responds to complaints and monitors residential and commercial districts for code violations. The following information is provided as a homeowner's guide to Code Enforcement in Unincorporated Palm Beach County.

For most people, a home is the largest single investment they will ever make. One of the functions of the Code Enforcement Division is to protect this investment. By enforcing building standards and zoning codes, property values are protected, neighborhood appearances are maintained, and the safety of our citizens is assured.

Common code violations include but are not limited to the following:

- **Building without a Permit** - In Palm Beach County, most structures and improvements to structures require building permits. Improvements such as decks, fences, sheds, gazebos, patio slabs, satellite dishes, reroofing, room additions, concrete or asphalt driveways and any other structures such as gas, electrical, plumbing or mechanical systems also require permits. Permits are also needed to move, remove or demolish any structures. Before beginning any home improvement project, it is wise to contact the Building Division at **(561) 233-5120** to determine whether permits are required.
- **Building too close to property lines** - The Zoning Code requires minimum setbacks from property lines for all buildings according to the zoning of the property in question. Contact the Zoning Division office for specifics.
- **Overgrown lots** - Yard maintenance is the responsibility of every property owner. Grass height must not exceed 18", whether the property is developed or vacant. Hedges must be maintained no greater than 4' in the front yard and 8' in the side and rear yard areas. Garbage, trash and yard waste cannot be left in the yard, and must be properly disposed of. Residential garbage includes small kitchen, food and household discards, and is collected twice each week. It must be bagged or placed in a proper container and placed street-side for pick up. Trash includes bulk waste such as furniture, mattresses and yard trimmings. These items are collected once per week. White goods (refrigerators, stoves, water heaters, etc.) are collected twice per week. For information regarding collection, please call the Solid Waste Authority at (561) 697-2700.
- **Garbage Can Regulations** - County Ordinance 96-9 prohibits the placement of garbage cans and other refuse containers curbside for trash pickup prior to 3:00 p.m. the day before your regularly scheduled pickup. Additionally, the Ordinance requires that all refuse containers be removed from the pickup area the same day collection is made.
- **Inoperable/Unlicensed Motor Vehicles** - Inoperable vehicles may not be stored on residential property. Additionally, only one unlicensed vehicle may be kept on residential property, provided it is screened from the public view. Code Enforcement has the authority to tag inoperable vehicles on private property and have them towed from the premises. An inoperable vehicle is one that cannot be driven. Open storage of inoperable vehicles on residential property is prohibited. Any vehicle that does not operate must be in an enclosed structure, such as a garage or completely under a carport.

- **Outdoor Storage** - Outdoor storage of equipment, materials or furnishings is prohibited on residential property. Likewise, indoor furniture, household appliances, auto parts or building materials may not be stored outside.
- **Oversized Vehicles** - County codes do not allow the storing or parking of vehicles which have a carrying capacity in excess of one ton in residential areas; on side streets or private property.
- **Boats** - Boats are required to be parked on the side of, or in the rear of residential dwellings, and must be screened from surrounding property and streets with an opaque wall, fence or hedge a minimum of six feet in height.

Filing Complaints

If you wish to file a complaint, you may do so by phone, email or in person any weekday between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. The Code Enforcement Division offices are located at 2300 N. Jog Road, 2nd floor, West Palm Beach, FL 33411. The phone number is **(561) 233-5500**. The email address is pzbcode@pbcgov.com.

Like people, neighborhoods and structures in Palm Beach County require maintenance to stay in good condition as they age. Inevitably, structures and neighborhoods deteriorate when they are not properly maintained. Statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau indicate that abandoned or boarded-up buildings nearby can reduce the value of a home by 13%. Scattered trash in a neighborhood can reduce property values by 15%. Consequently, when property values fall, vandalism, graffiti and crime occur more frequently and neighborhood residents become uncomfortable.

There is a simple solution to maintaining good neighborhoods - property owner responsibility. Unfortunately, some people are not responsible property owners. To ensure that your home is in good repair, inspect the following on a regular basis:

- Exterior walls
- Roof structure, including rafters, soffits, fascia
- Roof covering
- Railings on stairs, elevated landings and porches
- Fences (should be in good repair and of legal height)
- Windows and screens
- Hedges in front yard need to be trimmed to a height of four feet or less and eight feet or less in the rear or side yards.
- Grass overgrowth in excess of 18" is a violation of the County's Lot Clearing Ordinance.
- Vehicles must be in an operable condition, able to move under their own power.
- The keeping of unregistered or unlicensed vehicles on residential property is prohibited. However, one vehicle may be kept on the premises, which is not currently registered or licensed, provided the vehicle is screened from view from adjacent roadways and lots.
- County regulations do not allow the parking or storage of vehicles in excess of one-ton carrying capacity in a residential district.
- Garage sales are permitted twice per year, each not exceeding 72 hours.
- Home businesses must be properly licensed. No traffic, outside display or storage may occur and the business must be clearly secondary to the use of the property as a home.

Repair:

- Rotted wood
- Broken or missing boards
- Broken or missing windows
- Deteriorated siding or shingles

Make sure that the exterior of the structure is weather tight and rodent-proof. Exteriors must be resistant to water and covered with paint, waterproof stain, siding, and brick or stone that is in good condition.

Palm Beach County Public Safety - Emergency Management

The mission of the Public Safety / Emergency Management Department is to minimize the impact of emergencies and disasters to our community through education, planning and response by coordinating information and resources.

The Department offers the following programs and services to residents.

- **ALERTPBC** - ALERTPBC is Palm Beach County's Emergency Notification System allowing you to opt in to receive notifications about potential safety or weather hazards via phone calls, text messaging, email, and more based on locations you care about. You can choose to receive notifications about events that may affect your home, workplace, family's schools, and more. You can register for this service at:

<https://member.everbridge.net/index/892807736726195#/signup>

When the County issues a notification about a potential safety hazard or concern, you will receive a message on the voice or text communication methods that you have registered. If requested for the notification, you can confirm that you have received the message and you will not be contacted by any subsequent methods regarding that particular notification. If you do not confirm, the system will continue to attempt to reach you at all of the contact paths that you have registered. ALERTPBC offers two types of notifications: weather and county/city alerts. All information provided will be kept strictly confidential.

- **Hurricane Shelters** - Palm Beach County currently operates hurricane evacuation shelters across the County. All hurricane evacuation shelters meet current American Red Cross design standards to withstand hurricane force winds, including window strength and protection, wind and debris exposure, and storm surge inundation.

A hurricane evacuation shelter is a refuge of last resort; a place to go if you can't stay at home or with a relative, friend, or co-worker or nearby hotel. Shelters provide simple meals and beverages; if you have special dietary needs or want snacks, you must bring your own. Shelters provide basic first aid only; cots and medical care are not provided.

- **Special Needs Shelters** - Palm Beach County has established a Special Needs Program to provide for citizens with certain medical problems during a major emergency. The Special Needs Shelter is a facility with physicians and nurses on staff. It has auxiliary electrical power, is wind resistant, and not flood-prone. The shelter is not a medical facility and provides limited services. The shelter does not provide medication, dialysis, oxygen or oxygen concentrators. In order to qualify for a special needs shelter, you must apply through the Departments website.
- **Hurricane Evacuation Zone Look-up Tool** - To find out if your home or neighborhood is in an evacuation zone, you can go to the department's website and put your address into the program. Go to <https://discover.pbcgov.org/publicsafety/dem/Pages/Hurricane.aspx#> and click on Know Your Zone Map.

- **Disaster Assistance** - Visit the department's website at <https://discover.pbcgov.org/publicsafety/dem/Pages/default.aspx> to obtain information on individual and business disaster assistance from FEMA and the SBA. The website also has a wealth of information and tools to help you prepare for an emergency.

Palm Beach County Community Services



The mission of Community Services is to promote independence and enhance the quality of life in Palm Beach County by providing effective and essential services to residents in need with the goal of making Palm Beach County a place where all residents have the resources and opportunities to achieve their full potential.

The Community Services Department is comprised of three divisions and several independent programs. It provides staff and administrative support for various health and human service boards and community initiatives.

The Board of County Commissioners awards some local match and operating funds to support local nonprofit agencies providing health and human services to County residents. The Department monitors the use of these funds and provides technical assistance to the agencies.

Programs

- Rental Assistance
- Utility Assistance
- Homeless Services - To assist individuals who are homeless in Palm Beach County through outreach, assessment, and housing. Services are prioritized to the most vulnerable homeless persons. Palm Beach County is transitioning services towards a Housing First philosophy in its practices.
- Training Programs
 - Family Self-Sufficiency - This program identifies the needs of at-risk families and delivers a coordinated set of services to facilitate self-sufficiency. It involves the entire community in developing solutions and mobilizing resources. Services may include housing, job training, childcare, literacy, education, budget and credit counseling, employment development and emergency services such as food and clothing.
 - Vocational Training – Training in a variety of trades is provided.
- Indigent Cremation Program
- Food and Nutrition -Community Action distributes non-perishable food items to low income families on a regular basis. Included are: rice, beans, applesauce, macaroni and canned fruits and vegetables. Surplus fresh fruits and vegetables are available during peak farming season.
- Income Tax Assistance – Provides free assistance preparing tax returns to low-income families.

- Securing Our Future - Is an initiative in partnership with Birth 22 United for Brighter Futures and the Citizens Advisory Committee on Health & Human Services (CAC/HHS) that seeks to create pathways for economic mobility for families with children ages 0-18 who are living below 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL) with a special emphasis on families that are 100% or below FPL and have the ability to work.

To find out about all of the programs offered by Community Services please visit their website at <https://discover.pbcgov.org/communityservices>

Accessing Grants and Other Resources

Depending on your goals for your community, government and resident resources may not be sufficient to help you achieve your goals and, in that case, you may need to consider seeking outside funding. The funding sources that your neighborhood may be eligible for, will be determined by where your neighborhood is in the organizing process – no formal leadership structure, formal leadership structure and formal organization with non-profit status.

1. **No Formal Leadership Structure** - This is where every neighborhood starts. A few dedicated residents get together to discuss how to improve the community. Through trial and error, these pioneers learn to navigate County departments, advocate for projects and programs, and apply for OCR grants. These type of groups can access the following resources:

- **OCR NEAT Grants** - If your neighborhood does not have a formal organization meaning there is no elected board, you can still apply for OCR's NEAT grant. OCR's funds \$150,000 per year under this grant program. Individual residents can apply for up to \$10,000 in grant funding for projects that benefit the neighborhood.

To apply for the NEAT grant, you will need to: 1) register for and attend a mandatory pre-application meeting; 2) submit a letter of intent that describes your proposed project, including the cost and identifying the source of the required matching funds or in-kind services; and submit a grant application. The NEAT grant application can be found on the OCR's website at: <https://discover.pbcgov.org/ocr/Pages/NEAT-Program.aspx>.

- **Donations from Local Businesses** - Another potential resource for neighborhoods that do not have a formal leadership structure are the local businesses that serve your community. They often donate goods, such as food for an event or gift cards for prizes, and are typically willing to give back to the community. For example, one CCRT neighborhood has worked with a local pizzeria to donate pizzas for their events.
 - **Fundraising** -Don't forget that fundraising within your neighborhood is a good way to raise funding for projects. One CCRT neighborhood held a pancake breakfast and asked for donations to the neighborhood. Another had a 50/50 raffle at their monthly meetings. If you get gift cards from local businesses, sell tickets to win them. Be creative!
 - **The Office of Community Revitalization** – The OCR can help your community with streetlights, speed humps and neighborhood parks at no cost to your neighborhood.
2. **Formal Leadership Structure Without Nonprofit Status** – This is the next phase in the growth of a neighborhood organization. There are several benefits of having formal leadership in your neighborhood. First, it brings legitimacy and accountability to decisions made on behalf of the

residents. Secondly, it carries greater weight with elected officials and local businesses. Lastly, it allows the organization to grow and learn new skills such as developing a project budget and identifying potential funding sources for community initiatives.

Generally, the first board of directors is a core group of residents committed to improving the neighborhood. As the organization grows, you can reach out to other residents to serve on the Board. At this level, neighborhoods can access all of the resources listed above but will not be able to apply for grants, except the ones offered by the OCR.

To have an accountable organization, you should plan on holding public elections for officers on an annual basis. Your organization should create a sub-committee for that purpose. The sub-committee will develop a slate of officers to be voted on at a regularly scheduled meeting. People other than the recommended slate of officers can put their name in for consideration at the meeting.

- 3. Formal Leadership Structure with Nonprofit Status** – The most effective and productive neighborhoods are the ones that have elected board members, have a bank account and are tax-exempt. These organizations are able to apply for grant funding from foundations, corporations and/or government. They may even start to hire employees. An example of a CCRT neighborhood that advanced to this level is Lake Worth West.

Group Discussion

Where is your neighborhood in the organizing process? _____

Have you considered taking the neighborhood to the next level? _____

Do you need technical assistance to move to the next level? _____

Organizational Growth and Development

Your neighborhood's ability to implement projects and programs is directly impacted by the quality of the neighborhood board. At the beginning of the organization's development, you may not have a lot of choice about who wants to serve on the board. However, as the board begins to gel, you will get an idea of who is there to work and who is there to complain. As the organization begins to develop and mature, your ability to attract more people who want to work towards the betterment of the community will grow. Once there is a core group of dedicated residents committed to improve your community, it is time to take the next steps to develop the organization.

- **File for Nonprofit Corporation** status with the State of Florida Division of Corporations. Furthermore, if your nonprofit decides to seek 501c3 tax exemption from the IRS, it is much easier if you are incorporated. Incorporation requires you to set up all the legal requirements such as bylaws that the IRS looks for when granting tax exemption.

A nonprofit is a form of business and is regulated by the State. There is no requirement that a nonprofit doing charitable work must become incorporated, but there are many advantages to doing so. The most significant advantage is that there is limited liability should anything go wrong. To begin the process go to the State of Florida Department of State Division of Corporations, please visit <https://dos.myflorida.com/sunbiz/start-business/efile/>.

Instructions to file for Articles of Incorporation for a Florida Nonprofit Organization are provided in the attached addendum. The total cost to file is \$87.50. The State of Florida requires filing an annual report between January 1 and May 1 to avoid late fees. Filing for incorporation and the annual report can be done online at Sunbiz.org.

- **Develop Organizational By-Laws** - Your organization's bylaws are both a legal document and a roadmap for your organization's actions. Bylaws are a form of agreement or a contract between the corporation and its owners to conduct itself in a certain way. While for a commercial business the owners are its shareholders, the ownership of a nonprofit corporation belongs to the public as represented by the nonprofit organization's governing body, the board of directors.
- **What Should Be in Your Nonprofit's Bylaws** - Bylaws vary according to the nature of your organization but consider them as the internal manual for how your organization will operate. The bylaws should address basic activities, such as:
 - Governance, such as whether the organization is controlled by a board or by its membership;
 - When and how board meetings will be held and conducted;
 - How board directors and officers will be appointed or elected;
 - Voting procedures, such as what constitutes a quorum so that your board can make a decision;
 - How committees are created and discontinued;

- Number of directors for your board, their required qualifications, and their terms of service;
- Language that affirms the requirements and prohibitions for nonprofit (501(c)(3) organizations as set out by the IRS;
- Rules that govern conflicts of interest; and
- How the bylaws can be changed or amended.

If your organization starts to fundraise to support its mission, you should consider opening a bank account under the name of the organization.

Applying for IRS Tax Exempt Status – Filing as a Florida non-profit corporation does not mean that your organization is a nonprofit as far as the IRS is concerned. In order to apply for foundation or corporate grants, or to receive tax-deductible charitable donations, your organization must have an IRS tax exemption.

You may have heard that this is a difficult process. However, the more organized your group is the easier and quicker the application process will be. The IRS has multiple publications to help you through this process. The IRS publication “Applying for 501(c)(3) Tax-Exempt Status” (included in the addendum) provides a good overview of the benefits and responsibilities of a tax-exempt charity.

Applying for Grants and Funding

Once you have your nonprofit status for your neighborhood group, you can start applying for grants or corporate donations. You should only apply for grants that align with the mission, goals and objectives of your organization. Here are some tips for grant writing:

- **Determine if your organization is ready to apply for, and implement grants.** Grant funding can be an effective tool to bring a needed program or service to life in your community. There are many foundations, charities, corporations, and government entities that are working to make our local communities happier and healthier places to live in, and that may be interested in providing financial support to your organization to help promote joint goals and vision for the community. However, before you begin researching and applying for grants, it is important to know the answers to some key questions:
 - Am I prepared to start writing grant proposals?
 - Are the programs I am applying for “grant-ready?”
 - How do I research grant opportunities?
 - What is typically involved in the grant writing process?
 - Is this program a good match for a particular funder?
 - Can we deliver on the reporting and outcomes a particular funder is looking for?
- **Look for funders with similar interests and priorities as those of your organization.** Using an internet search engine, type in a term that is relevant to your mission. For example, if your mission is to improve the economic condition of residents (improve job skills, etc.), you would search “grants for community development”. A list of community and economic development grants and foundations can be found at <https://fundsnet services.com/community-and-economic-development-grants-and-foundations>
- **Write an awesome grant proposal!** Getting funding for your ideas and projects isn’t easy. Oftentimes, even when you do find a funder with interests and priorities that are well-aligned with your own, the process for creating and submitting a grant application can be a daunting task. Your grant application will have a better chance of being funded if the following recommendations are followed:
 - Before you apply for a grant, first make sure you know everything you can find out about the grant funder. **The Foundation Center** is a great resource for this, but you can also do a Google search to see if they have a website with information on their priorities and the application process. **Guidestar.org** is also a good resource – a foundation’s form 990 will give you a good sense of what types of organizations they have funded in the past and the typical size of their grants.
 - If a funder gives clear guidelines for how they want the proposal to be structured, formatted, and submitted, make sure to stick to those guidelines rigidly. The worst thing would be to pour hours and hours into drafting a compelling proposal, only to have it

- rejected because you missed their deadline or didn't read the part of the guidelines where they said they wanted three copies signed in blue ink (it happens!).
- **Note the deadline to submit your proposal.** Make sure that you have sufficient time to write, review and gather the required documentation well in advance of the submittal date. Give yourself some time for things to go wrong (printer, e-mail, etc.)
 - **Respond to the issues that are important to the funder.** If the funder you are applying to says that their mission is to close the achievement gap, and you are seeking funding for a tutoring program for children in low-income communities, your proposal must illustrate how those things are connected. Even if you think the connection is obvious, the funder will appreciate your understanding of their priorities and your program's connection to the wider social landscape.
 - **Make sure your proposal is clear and structured.** While some funders with narrow interest areas may be familiar with industry jargon, most appreciate clarity and structure in the proposals they review. Use section headings to separate your key topics and bullet points to make lists clear and digestible. Some topics you should address include:
 - Organizational Background:** If this is your first time reaching out to a potential funder, provide some background information about who is applying, what your mission is, and what you have accomplished so far.
 - Need Statement:** This section addresses the "why" of your program – what problem does your program address?
 - Goals & Objectives:** What does your program aim to accomplish? Goals should be overarching, and objectives should be clear, specific, and measurable. Many funders will require that you report on your progress toward these goals/objectives if you are awarded a grant.
 - Activities:** A general description of the day-to-day activities of the program, including who participates, how participants are recruited, what services are provided, how often, and for how long. A project timeline is sometimes helpful in this section.
 - Evaluation:** How do you know if you are meeting your goals/objectives? Describe the measures you will use to track your progress and determine if you are successful.
 - **Proofread!** You wouldn't want to send your resume to a potential employer with a typo on it, and grant proposals are no different. Be sure to check your proposal carefully for grammar, spelling, and content, as well as whether you have followed all of their guidelines. You don't want to be the person whose proposal was rejected because you didn't use the correct font the foundation specified.
 - **Cut your teeth on a small grant program.** To get grant writing experience apply for the OCR's NEAT grant. The maximum amount of funding is \$10,000 for a neighborhood project. The required match can come in the form of community labor.
 - **Don't give up!** You may not win the first grant you apply for, but by submitting a proposal, the grant funder will get to know your organization and mission. You may even want to call the funder and ask what recommendations they have to improve your chances of getting funded next time.

