

What is a Civic League?

At its core, a Civic League is a non-profit, neighborhood organization whose primary goal and interest is the improvement and quality of life in the neighborhood. It allows citizens to find a voice in local government and issues in areas that go outside the vote. Civic Leagues are organizations that work on behalf of neighborhood residents to coordinate infrastructure activities with city agencies. It might be potholes, over-grown trees or bushes, criminal activity, or just an idea that a new stop sign is needed at a particular intersection.

Civic Leagues provide city agencies a point-of-contact within a neighborhood to work on issues, projects and disseminate information. Running a city is a difficult and complex task, and many things are overlooked even though city agencies are more than happy to do needed work to maintain neighborhoods. A Civic League gives residents and citizens of a neighborhood someone to talk to about the pothole or needed stop sign. Civic League members will maintain contact information within different agencies, they will know who to call, who to talk to and who to write letters to get work done. Civic Leagues act on behalf of the neighborhood and help assist in simply getting things done.

The Civic League as a Neighborhood Organizer

In many cases, members of a Civic League will organize community events. These might include picnics or cookouts, cleanup days, community yard sales, parades, sport games or more. They create events to help create community and improve the quality of life. These events serve as a way for neighbors to meet and enjoy each other's company. In a time where many people are increasingly disassociated with their neighbors because of jobs, families and other commitments, Civic League organized events provide a neighborhood meeting place for old friends and neighbors to reconnect.

How is a Civic League made?

Generally, a Civic League has members who pay dues. These dues help cover the costs of organizing events, paying for neighborhood beautification projects, and covering the costs of running a small organization (printing costs, website costs, etc.). The members of a Civic League elect a Board of Directors who are tasked with the management of the Leagues activities, write, and maintain the By-Laws, organize meetings and are often the individuals who function as a point-of-contact for the various city agencies.

While informal, meetings tend to be well organized, with votes following parliamentary procedures, giving a democratic process to proceedings and decisions. Different Civic Leagues have different practices at meetings. Some might be a forum for public debate about the future of a crime-ridden neighborhood, others offer a place for political discussion, some try to invite guest speakers to speak on topics of interest to members and public.

In sum, a Civic League is a group of neighbors, organized together to work toward improving neighborhoods, encouraging neighbors to engage each other, and seeking to improve overall quality of life.