



COMMUNITY BUILDER

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The Role of Core Values in Community Associations

At the heart of any organization are core values. They represent an organization's highest priorities and are often the fundamental driving force behind every decision and action taken by those in the position of leadership and management. The Board of Directors of a community association should identify their own set of core values, not only for their team but for the community as a whole.



In the world of community associations, board members are chosen by their peers to be an advocate for their community and to make the best decisions possible in their role. These selected individuals are tasked with a voluntary and often thankless job while being gracious enough to give up their time and devotion to the community they serve.

Balancing the oversight of the community takes a team approach which will include all board members. Each board member offers unique strengths, knowledge, and integrity, and every decision the board makes must be made with the community's best interest in mind. As board members, you will collaborate and need to have compassion and respect for each other and all members of your community. You will constantly strategize about the following steps and which goal or project you will work on first.

Defining Core Values for The Community

So how should a board go about defining core values for the community? The first step is for each board member to review a list of shared core values, which will help spark the idea of which values align for each board member. Some examples are professionalism, transparency, honesty, kindness, excellence, collaboration, caring, service, open-mindedness, and many more.

Next, the board should come together to settle on a list of three to five core values to act as the guide for every decision made and action taken by the board. As the board enters the

discussion, some things to consider may be the qualities of well-known role models and defining experiences each member has had while living in a community.

Since each board member has likely brought a personal list to the table, it may be helpful to group values into related groups. After dividing into groups, select one word from each group that best represents that group. At this point, the board will likely start to see a central theme. Now is the time to rank each value in the order of importance.

The Impact of Core Values

Now that the core values of the community have been defined, the board must work actively to apply them in every decision and action taken. Doing this well will encourage the following:

- Solidifying the purpose – part of the core value exercise is loosely defining the purpose of the board and the association. The core values being enacted in every action will continuously reinforce the purpose.
- Influencing behavior – keeping a close grasp on the core values means the board and community are reminded frequently of the kind of organization they want to be and the results they want to achieve.
- Guiding decisions – when the board is facing a decision, especially one that may be difficult, they can lean back on the core values to ensure the actions align with the values.
- Increasing confidence – consistently adhering to the core values will instill confidence in the board's work in the community.

Core values are not reserved for corporations or individuals, and community associations can significantly benefit from the practice of adopting core values. As the new year approaches and boards change with new faces, now is the perfect time to begin identifying your organization's core values.

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