



NEIGHBORS WEST-NORTHWEST

Coalition of Central Westside Neighborhoods

Arlington Heights · Goose Hollow · Forest Park · Hillside · Linnton · Northwest Industrial · Northwest Heights
Northwest District · Old Town-Chinatown · Pearl District · Portland Downtown · Sylvan-Highlands

Big Picture: Organizing a Neighborhood Clean-Up

Each neighborhood has its own needs and the type of clean up and clean up scope will differ by the needs of the area.

Clean ups are a great way to increase neighborhood pride, promote neighborliness, and to introduce people to the neighborhood association and other activities you do.

Clean Ups can be used as fundraisers, community service events, or can be combined with other events.

Identifying the Project

The very first thing to think about is what type of project you would like to lead.

These are some questions you will want to answer as you are thinking about leading an event:

- 1) Who are we targeting/ what is our service area?
- 2) What is the event?
- 3) When is the event?
- 4) Where will the event take place?
- 5) Why is it happening?
- 6) How much money will it require?

You probably could already answer several of these questions. The following sections will guide you towards answers to the other questions.

Target Area

Clean Ups can occur in an individual neighborhood, in an area that extends through multiple neighborhoods, as a coalition-wide event, or as a smaller event such as a street clean up that concentrates on several blocks. You decide how large of an event you have and who will benefit from this event. If it is your first time leading a clean up it may be easier to choose a small-scale event unless you are feeling very ambitious and have free time. The work won't all be left to you, so ambition is a good thing! It also isn't good to get so specific that your project fails for lack of volunteer support.

What is the event?

Choosing the type of event for your clean up is about identifying what type of clean up activity you would like to focus on. You may also want to think about whether you'd like to combine your clean up event with a fundraising event, a speaker, or another neighborhood activity.

Some of the events that may qualify as clean ups include:

- Litter Pick Ups (On streets, In Parks, Vacant Land)
- Bulky Waste Removal
- Graffiti Clean Ups
- Invasive Species Removal (Garlic Mustard, Ivy, Blackberry, etc)

Picking a date

When choosing the date for your event you want to consider other events happening in the area. You don't want to plan your event on a holiday weekend. You may want to think about earth day as a possibility because people are used to having clean ups and environmental events on earth day, but you may also want to consider that it will be harder to get a hauler for your event on that day and your event will be competing with the other events happening in Portland.

You also want to think about the time commitment you are making when you pick the date. It hurts everyone when the coordinator cancels an event for personal reasons. So, plan away from your birthday, family vacation, etc and everyone will be happy.

Site Selection

Location is everything when planning a neighborhood clean up. You should not wait to choose your site until the last minute.

Parking lots make ideal sites for meeting and greeting people or for holding a bulky waste clean up. Bulky waste clean ups require large parking lots that can hold multiple dumpsters and accommodate traffic.

Parking lots for businesses, schools, parks, churches and other places that are mostly empty on Saturdays are a good choice.

Consider these things:

- Maneuverability
- Two separate entries (an entrance and an exit)
- Paved surfaces for dumpsters
- Visibility (You want to be seen as people drive by)

Permits may be required to use a lot, so contact the responsible party as soon as possible to make sure you have filled out the necessary paperwork. You will have event insurance through NWNW.

Other events will require different types of spaces. For instance, some events will mostly be walking around events that just require a spot to meet and greet at the beginning and thank people at the end.

Whatever your project, you should pick a spot that suits your needs without leading to a cramped situation if the event is more popular than foreseen; you also don't want to have a space that is so big that you can't be heard when making an announcement.

Why is it Happening?

Be sure to remember the goal(s) of your project. You may want to continue building neighborhood capacity after the event. For example, if you hope to get more people involved in other neighborhood activities, remember to bring additional volunteer opportunities to your event and capture contact information (especially email) so you can update people in the future.