

# Welcoming new neighbours



Great neighbourhoods start with you.



# How to reach us

## EMAIL AND PHONE

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☎ 519.747.8772

☎ 1.866.786.3941 (TTY)

## E-NEWS UPDATES

Visit [waterloo.ca/subscribe](http://waterloo.ca/subscribe) and sign up to receive updates on all things neighbourhoods.

Waterloo Neighbourhoods e-newsletter includes information about neighbourhood projects, grants, ideas, and what's happening.

## ACCESSIBLE FORMATS

This material is available in alternative accessible formats upon request.

Please contact us a minimum of 3-5 business days before it is required.

# About this guide

It is easier to feel a sense of belonging when residents form connections with each other. This guide provides tips for welcoming new neighbours and promoting a sense of belonging and connection to their new neighbourhood.

If you have any questions about welcoming new neighbours, reach out to the neighbourhood's team by emailing [neighbourhoods@waterloo.ca](mailto:neighbourhoods@waterloo.ca).

## Ways to welcome new neighbours

There are a number of ways to welcome new neighbours to your community. Below is some inspiration to help you get started.

### **SPEND TIME OUTSIDE**

A great way to meet new neighbours is to spend time outside! Whether you are going for a walk or hanging out in your front yard, being outside helps you develop new neighbourly connections. Say hello, introduce yourself, and exchange contact information if you are comfortable.

### **WAVE AND SAY HELLO**

All relationships start with a hello! Make an effort to wave when you see neighbours around the neighbourhood and say hello when you see them out and about. Simple greetings can help people to feel at home in their new space.

### **WRITE A WELCOME LETTER**

A personalized letter or card is a nice way to introduce yourself and provide new neighbours with important information. To save time and welcome all new neighbours in your space, consider creating a basic letter template to use. When a new neighbour is moving in, you can personalize your template and add a few custom details. When creating your welcome letter, consider the following tips:

- Include a direct and enthusiastic welcome statement! (Example – “Hi, neighbour! We are so excited to welcome you to our community.”)

- Introduce yourself (and other members of your household) and personalize the letter by adding some details about you! Consider adding details about some of your interests and letting your neighbours know if you have kids or pets. Providing some personal information can help you and your neighbours build strong connections and determine what you may have in common.
- Offer to provide assistance and support that you are able and willing to give. For example, if you are a great bike mechanic and are open to helping neighbours fix their bikes, let new neighbours know you are here to help.
- Express desire for a strong, cooperative, neighbourly relationship.
- Include contact information if you are comfortable. This will allow new neighbours to follow up if they are interested.
- Add recommendations for local sights and bites. Consider providing tips on local trails, parks, museums, shops, restaurants, farmers markets, and cafés.



When preparing your letter, do not assume traditional family structures or gender pronouns. Instead of addressing your new neighbours as a couple, family, or a specific gender, opt for an inclusive greeting like “Hi neighbour(s)!”

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## DROP OFF A SMALL GIFT

Welcome your new neighbour with a small housewarming present. No matter the size, the thought and effort are what really matter. Here are some ideas to help your brainstorm small welcome gifts:

- A homemade treat. When preparing the dish, make sure to consider allergies and dietary restrictions – include a small note with the ingredients just to be safe.
- A potted flower or plant. New neighbours can use this gift to beautify their new home.
- Herbs or other items from your garden. Certain herb plants can be easily separated and transplanted for neighbours to plant in their new garden. Consider sharing some of your plants with new neighbours if they are interested. Also, if you are harvesting lots of fresh produce from your garden, consider sharing some fruits and vegetables
- A small gift certificate to a local restaurant or café. Before your neighbours have had a chance to unpack and get settled, cooking can be out of the question. Your recommendation to a great local spot and a small gift certificate can help them find a delicious meal.
- An activity kit (with a board game, craft, etc.) for neighbours and their families to enjoy.

- A goodie bag for their pet. If you notice that your new neighbours have a pet, consider dropping off a treat or toy.
- Develop a building information guide. If you live in a multi-unit building, consider working with fellow neighbours to create a quick guide to your building. Think about including details about things like garbage pick-up days, accessing mail and packages, laundry facilities, common spaces (like gyms), or details on how to access certain amenities (like patios and party rooms). This information can help new neighbours get settled in the building.
- If your new neighbours are post-secondary students, consider providing them with some helpful information about Waterloo. The neighbourhood's team has prepared a New Students Guide that features important information about living, working, and having fun in Waterloo. To access the guide, visit the [neighbourhoods website](#).



When selecting a small gift to drop off, think about how you can be inclusive to all neighbours. For example, a bottle of alcohol may not be enjoyed by all neighbours. Similarly, if you are dropping off food related items, be conscious of people's different dietary needs and include a list of ingredients.

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## REFER NEW RESIDENTS TO IMPORTANT RESOURCES

Moving to a new city, province, or country, comes with many changes. Consider referring new neighbours to the City of Waterloo's New to Waterloo guide on the [neighbourhoods website](#). This guide provides new residents with important information to help them settled in their new city.

## INVITE NEW NEIGHBOURS TO JOIN ONLINE COMMUNITIES

If your community or neighbourhood has a page on social media, an email/text group, or a newsletter, provide new neighbours with the details and encourage them to join. Online communities help new neighbours access important information and build connections.

## HOST A NEIGHBOURHOOD GET-TOGETHER

Parties and social events are wonderful opportunities to meet new neighbours and develop connections. Organize a neighbourhood event, like a BBQ or block party, and encourage new neighbours to attend. For more information on planning events for neighbours, check out the [neighbourhoods website](#).

Also, consider welcoming new neighbours by inviting them over for a meal or asking them to join you at a local restaurant. This can be a nice opportunity to connect with your new neighbours and start building positive relationships.

### DEVELOP A WELCOMING COMMITTEE

Connect with local residents to form a group to welcome new neighbours. This group can keep each other informed about when new neighbours move in and share the responsibility of welcoming them to the space. If you are already a member of a neighbourhood group or association in your space, encourage the group to create a special welcoming committee.

## Other helpful tips

In addition to the welcoming ideas listed above, keep these helpful tips in mind when greeting new neighbours:

- Foster open and honest communication. Often, neighbourhood conflict emerges from uncertainty, loss of control, and miscommunication. When new neighbours move in, make an effort to keep them informed about things that are going on at your property. If you are planning a renovation that may be noisy or disruptive, let them know. If you are hosting a backyard party, keep them in the loop. Communicating can help foster a positive relationship. For more information on neighbourhood conflict, check out the Preventing and Working through Neighbourhood Conflict guide on the [neighbourhoods website](#).
- Be kind and considerate. New neighbours may not be familiar with Waterloo's bylaws, and rules around certain things like parking. If you notice a neighbour is not following a bylaw or rule, reach out, chat about the issue, and explain your concern in a positive and helpful way.
- Be friendly, but not intrusive. Recognize that moving can be stressful! When greeting your new neighbours be conscious of this and give your new neighbours privacy and time to settle in and adjust to their new space.
- Connect early and develop a relationship with new neighbours. Establishing a positive relationship can help mitigate future conflict.

# Resources

This section compiles community resources that may be helpful for new residents in Waterloo. Feel free to share this information with new residents to help them settled in their new City.

- [Explore Waterloo Region](#) – This site provides information on fun attractions and things to do throughout the Waterloo Region. Check out this guide for details on great local patios, museums, shopping, and more!
- [City of Waterloo](#) – The City of Waterloo Website features helpful information about city events, recreation opportunities, parks and other amenities, bylaws, urban planning, and more! Encourage neighbours to visit this website for important city related items
- [Region of Waterloo](#) – The Region of Waterloo website provides important information on things like public health, waste collection and recycling, and public transit.
- [New to Waterloo Guide](#) – The City of Waterloo has developed a New to Waterloo guide with important information for new neighbours. Greet new neighbours and share this helpful document in a welcome package.
- [The neighbourhoods website](#) – This website provides information on ways to connect with neighbours, how to host neighbourhood events, and outlines different ways for residents to participate in their communities.
- Social media – Refer new neighbours to the City of Waterloo's social media channels. Lots of important updates and helpful information are shared on these channels. Here are the links to the City's [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#) pages.
- [Uptown Waterloo BIA](#) – This website provides information on shops, restaurants, and things to do in Uptown Waterloo.