

# Becoming a NORC Ambassador



Great neighbourhoods start with you.



# How to reach us

## EMAIL AND PHONE

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## NEIGHBOURHOODS WEBSITE

Check out the [neighbourhoods website](#) to find more how-to guides, find your neighbourhood, and subscribe to the e-newsletter.

## ACCESSIBLE FORMATS

This material is available in alternative accessible format upon request. Please contact us a minimum of 3-5 business days before is required.

## GUIDE VERSION

This guide was last updated February 2026.

# What is a NORC Ambassador?

Many older adults want to stay in their homes as long as they can. They often need help and benefit from caring neighbours. This help can be simple, like taking out the garbage or picking up something from the store. It can also mean creating chances to spend time together. Helping neighbours age in place can look many ways! As a Naturally Occurring Retirement Community (NORC) Ambassador, you can work with people of all ages in your building, with support from the neighbourhoods team, to make your building a friendly and healthy place to live.

A NORC Ambassador is:

- A person who lives in a NORC building in the City of Waterloo
- A volunteer who brings neighbours together and supports older adults in their building
- A neighbour who cares about helping older adults age in place
- A leader who plans fun and helpful activities for health, safety, and social connection
- A link between residents and the City of Waterloo, helping to identify needs, get resources, and create programs
- A community builder who encourages neighbours to help each other, share information, and feel like they belong

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

NORC Ambassadors support neighbours by:

- **Connecting:** being a primary contact and information source
- **Listening:** collecting information to build community with the ideas, talents, and experiences of those you connect with
- **Organizing:** community activities that support aging and community wellbeing at least two times per year

## WHAT ACTIVITIES CAN YOU DO?

Activities will depend on the individual needs and desires of each community. You chose the activities! Here are some ideas:

- **Health and wellness:** group meals, workshops on health topics such as pain management or supporting a loved one with dementia
- **Social Activities:** book clubs, movie nights, coffee socials
- **Recreational:** walking groups, music events, arts session
- **Safety and emergency preparedness planning:** safety talks, emergency resources to have at home

The goal is to develop activities that will:

- support older adults to stay healthy and connected
- improve sense of community belonging
- involve a little fun along the way!

## Why become a NORC Ambassador?

Becoming a NORC Ambassador is a meaningful way to make a positive impact on your community and support older adults in your building!

- **Make a Difference**
  - Help older adults stay connected, healthy, and safe in their homes
  - Create a sense of belonging and reduce social isolation
- **Build Community**
  - Encourage neighbours to help each other and share resources
  - Strengthen relationships and create a more caring, vibrant building community
  - Increased community pride, sense of shared responsibility for building common areas, amenities and shared spaces
- **Grow Personally**
  - Gain new skills in facilitation, communication, and community building
  - Learn from others and contribute your own talent and ideas
- **Be a Voice**
  - Be a connection between your building's residents and the City of Waterloo
  - Help identify needs and coordinate programs that help your building
  - Connected residents are more likely to express thoughts/opinions/ ideas, come together for collective action that makes their neighbourhood a better place to live
- **Access Support**
  - Receive support from the neighbourhoods team
  - Apply for funding to run programs and cover costs
- **Join a Network**
  - Connect with others who are working to improve life for older adults
  - Collaborate with local health and social service agencies

## Apply to become a NORC Ambassador

On an ongoing basis the City of Waterloo is recruiting residents to become aging in place leaders as NORC Ambassadors. The NORC Ambassador program aims to create groups of residents from NORC buildings who work together to help residents in their building age in community.

## WHO CAN BE A NORC AMBASSADOR?

- Live in one of the NORC buildings in Waterloo; [NORC Map](#)
- Want to build connections in their building and help older adults age in place
- Value diversity and relationship building
- Are neighbourly and help grow building community
- Plan at least 2 NORC events each year for your building

# How to get started

## 1. Check if you live in a NORC building

Check out the [City of Waterloo NORC Map](#)

## 2. Connect with your community

Connect with other people in your building who have a common interest in developing community relationships and aging in place. Here are a couple resources to get you started!

- [Starting a NORC guide](#)
- [Building a NORC Team guide](#)
- [Planning a Neighbourhood Event guide](#)
- [Creating Connections in a Multi-unit Building guide](#)

## 3. Connect or reconnect with the City of Waterloo neighbourhoods team

Make sure to connect with and stay in contact with City staff while starting and developing the NORC program in your building. The neighbourhoods team has access to resources and templates that can help your group along their journey.

## 4. Fill out an application

If you are interested in becoming a NORC Ambassador, you can fill out the [application form](#).

## 5. Complete an orientation

After submitting your application, a member of the neighbourhoods team will reach out to talk about your interest and provide you with training details. There will be a training session to go over important information, and a handbook will be provided with important information for you to take home.

## **6. Next steps and continued support**

Once your training is complete, you are now a NORC Ambassador. You will continue to work with the neighbourhoods team and members of your NORC group to set up and maintain NORC Programs in your building.

Now it is time to plan events, activities and resources for your building! As a NORC Ambassador, you will have access to the neighbourhoods team, who can help support and guide you. The team can help connect you with other NORC Ambassadors, provide resources, and work alongside you to develop and maintain a NORC program in your building.

# Resources

Want to learn more about supporting a vibrant, caring, and connected neighbourhood?

Check out these:

- Funds
  - [Neighbourhood Matching Fund](#)
  - [Mini grants](#)
  - [Operating Grant Fund](#)
- Toolkits
  - [Starting a NORC Program](#)
  - [Building a NORC Team](#)
  - [Creating Connections in a Multi-unit Building](#)
  - [Being Neighbourly](#)
  - [Supporting and Encourage an Inclusive Community](#)
  - [Planning a Neighbourhood Event](#)