



How to Form Your Hometown Pride Committee

Includes Fill-in-the-blank Committee Guidelines

The first step to starting your Hometown Pride program is to gather a team of people who care about your town and want to work together for the good of the community. *(Please note: These guidelines are for towns who have already been accepted to Hometown Pride and hired a “coach.”)*

1. Start with a “Champion”

The Hometown Pride coach will work with a local “champion(s)” to recruit individuals to join the committee, complete the visioning process, and get to work. Identify a champion (or two) who:

- Is passionate about starting the Hometown Pride program
- Is well connected in the community
- Is respected by their fellow residents

2. Recruit Potential Committee Members

- The Coach and Champion will recruit at least 4-5 potential committee members to a kick-off meeting, with the aim of working up to 5-10 members in the first 3 months.
 - Resource: [Publicity materials for new Hometown Pride committees](#)
- Identify your City liaison (required)
 - Hometown Pride projects often overlap with City duties and/or impact public spaces. Your committee needs to include a city staff member or elected official.
- Recruit beyond the “usual suspects” (look beyond your existing prominent volunteers).
- [Create a vision and action plan](#), then recruit again
 - After you’ve established [an action plan](#), share specifics of what you’ll be working on – you’ll attract more volunteers who are passionate about your plan

3. Hold a Kick-Off Meeting

The coach and champion will host a meeting for anyone who wants to learn about Hometown Pride. The coach will lead a simple visioning process to help the group [make an action plan](#). Allow people to come and share their ideas without requiring a commitment to join in advance.

4. Elect Officers to Lead

At your first or second meeting, elect committee officers: Chair, Secretary & Treasurer. The officers will take charge of leading the group forward, with support from the coach. Officers should be:

- Positive and welcoming
- Willing to work with others, delegate, and be open to new ideas (besides their own)
- Able to discuss concerns or disagreements constructively
- Committed to the mission of the organization and the success of the town

Refer to the committee guidelines (next page) for explanation of duties and terms for each role.

Types of Committees

Before you start, you'll want to have an idea of what type of committee you intend to create. We recommend starting with #1 and later moving on to #2 if/when you feel ready to do so.

1. *Informal committee*

Most Hometown Pride committees start as an informal group without any official legal status. They often partner with an existing organization or the City to manage their finances.

- *Benefits:* Simple - all you need is a group of willing volunteers who want to get to work
- *Drawbacks:* Limitations on the types of funding you can receive (see next bullet)

2. *Nonprofit organization (501(c)3)*

Many committees choose to become a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, which requires them to file articles of incorporation with the State of Iowa and then file for tax-exempt status with the IRS. This process can take up to a year.

- *Benefits:* Eligibility for more grant funding; gifts to your organization are tax deductible
- *Drawbacks:* Incorporation filing fees; annual tax filing requirements
 - o [Secretary of State website: Forming a Nonprofit](#)
 - o [IRS website: How to apply for 501\(c\)\(3\) status](#)

3. *City commission*

This is the least common type and the least preferred by Hometown Pride. City commissions are part of city government. Members are appointed by the council/mayor.

- *Benefits:* Strong partnership with City
- *Drawbacks:* Required to follow city regulations (e.g. posting agendas, etc.); more difficult to add new members (since they must be appointed and commit up front)

Suggested Committee Guidelines

On the following page are suggested committee guidelines that could work well for the first 6-18 months of a new committee. Beyond this time frame, the committee may want to consider becoming a 501c3 (see above) and/or creating bylaws with more details on how the group will operate. Feel free to modify this to fit your needs.



[_____] **Hometown Pride**

Suggested Committee Guidelines

Name: This committee will be named “[_____ town name _____] Hometown Pride.” It is part of the state-wide Hometown Pride program, run by Keep Iowa Beautiful.

Purpose: [_____ town name _____] Hometown Pride exists to advance the following goals in our town: 1) Enhance civic pride; 2) Add new community amenities; 3) Foster more local leaders; 4) Increase the economic and cultural vitality of [_____ town name _____].

Members: [_____ town name _____] *Hometown Pride* will have 5 or more committee members, which must include a liaison from city government, such as a city council member or city staff member. Members will serve 2 year terms and may be reappointed to future terms.

Officers: [_____ town name _____] *Hometown Pride* will have the following officers:

- Chair or Co-Chairs:
 - o Sets meeting agendas; ensures the committee meets regularly; facilitates meetings
 - o Ensures the committee is making progress on their goals and responsibilities.
- Secretary:
 - o Takes minutes at committee meetings
 - o Sends out meeting minutes and meeting reminders
- Treasurer:
 - o Tracks committee expenses/revenue and reports monthly to the committee
 - o Manages bank account; Pays committee bills; receives donations or payments
- Optional: Vice Chair - supports the chair and serves in their place when the chair is absent

Officers will be elected by a vote of the committee every November for the following calendar year. They will serve a 1 year term and may be re-elected to a second term.

Officers will not serve more than two consecutive terms in the same position (to ensure that the committee is not over-reliant on one individual and that others have the opportunity to serve).

Meetings: The committee will meet regularly, preferably monthly (no fewer than 8 times per year).

Record Keeping and Reporting: The committee will keep written meeting minutes and transparent records of finances. They will provide regular updates to city council (at least annually).

Community Coach: The committee will work with their Hometown Pride “community coach,” who serves as an advisor and non-voting committee member. The coach reports to Keep Iowa Beautiful.