WELCOME

Introduction to the Neighborhood Toolkit

The City of Des Moines serves more than 217,000 residents throughout 52 neighborhoods.

This toolkit was created to help Des Moines neighborhood leaders and community members easily find the information and municipal services they’re looking for. From ways to stay informed about changes within the City to ways to keep your neighbors informed, this toolkit aims to provide an overview of how to stay engaged with Des Moines government.

The City of Des Moines website is now easily accessible for desktop, tablet and mobile users.
ABOUT US

Introduction to the Neighborhood Services Department

With the newly adopted comprehensive plan, zoning code, and design code for the City, there has been a shift in staffing duties in the Community Development Department.

To achieve the new goals set, the City reorganized three departments into two creating the Neighborhood Services and Development Services Departments.

The Neighborhood Services Department will have a more focused approach to serving the City of Des Moines neighborhoods. Included in this department will be:

**Neighborhood Development**
Helping connect residents with local neighborhood associations and community groups

**Neighborhood Conservation Services**
Preserving existing and creating new housing as well as neighborhood revitalization

**Neighborhood Inspections**
Debris, rental inspections, impounds, and more

**Housing Services Division**

Des Moines Municipal Housing Agency

Neighborhood Services staff will work more closely with neighborhood associations to meet their goals including:

- working on revitalization plans
- working to provide services in an equitable way to every neighborhood
- increasing efforts for affordable housing
- property improvement guidelines fulfillment

The department’s mission has also changed to be more focused on services to the residents but has kept the objective of “maintaining Des Moines’ social, physical, and business environments”. We wanted to create a more streamlined approach to helping residents so they don’t feel as though they have to contact multiple departments.
# Des Moines Neighborhoods

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Find your neighborhood at findneighborhoods.DSM.city
Whether you’re speaking with a new resident or a current one who isn’t familiar with the City’s website, here are six of the more popular pages people search for.

**Garbage, Recycling, and Yard Waste**

DSM.city/publicworks

Under the Department of Public Works, information about solid waste collection can be found on our website.

Find collection schedules, guidelines for recycling and yard waste, and learn about the annual Spring Cleanup to Reduce Urban Blight (aka SCRUB) event series.

- Garbage Collection
- Recycling Collection
- Yard Waste Collection
- Holiday Collection Schedule
- SCRUB Events and Guidelines
- Adopt-a-Street Program

**Permits and Inspections**

DSM.city/pdc

Many residents don’t realize the permits needed for work they do to their home including:

- Adding a Deck
- Remodels
- Repairs
- Installing Fencing
- Sidewalks and Driveways

Find applications and make payments online. There are also calculators to help estimate the cost of a permit for electrical, mechanical, and plumbing work.

- Permit Application Forms
- Search for Permits
- Residential Info
- Commercial Info
- Construction Codes
- Tax Abatement Info

**Neighborhood Associations**

DSM.city/neighborhoods

Through the newly formed Neighborhood Services Department, residents can search for their local neighborhood association.

This is done through the Find Neighborhoods page (See “Find Neighborhoods” section).

- Neighborhood Search
- Neighborhood Plans
- Revitalization Program
- Community Groups
- Neighborhood Recognition Policy and Application Packet
VISIT OUR WEBSITE:

DSM.city

City Government

DSM.city/government

It’s important that residents know their City Officials. On the Government page of the website, learn about the Mayor and City Council members.

Use a clickable map to find out who represents you.

Find out when City Council meetings are held and view upcoming agendas.

Learn about appointed staff members and the designated leadership for each City department.

- Email the Mayor and City Council
- Request Mayor Appearance
- Request a Proclamation
- Contact a Department Director

Police Department

DSM.city/dmpd

As one of the top 10 viewed pages on our new website, the Des Moines Police Department webpage provides in-depth information about public safety services.

Frequently called numbers are included to help residents in non-emergency situations reach:
- Animal Control
- G&S and Crow Tow for Police & Zoning Impounds
- Non-Emergency Communication Center
- Polk County Jail
- Public Information Office

- Frequently Called Numbers
- Police Forms/Documents
- Office of Professional Standards

Parks & Recreation Department

DSM.city/parks

For residents looking to explore the 75 parks within Des Moines, the Parks & Recreation Department webpage provides valuable information.

Search the Parks Directory to locate parks near you and discover the amenities available at each location.

Browse and register for the numerous recreational programs held each year.

Apply for permits and make reservations to host weddings, picnics or other events at a public park.

- Parks Directory
- Trail Maps
- Permits and Reservations
- Recreation Programs
- Volunteer Opportunities
Currently, there are 52 active neighborhood associations and eight community groups partnered with the City of Des Moines.

Using the Find Neighborhoods search from the Neighborhoods Association page, residents can enter their address and find:

- Boundaries and maps of the association
- Links to neighborhood association’s website (if one has been created)
- The board members of the neighborhood association and their contact info
- Neighborhood association status (Recognized, Designated, or Chartered)
- Neighborhood association meeting dates, times, and location
- Membership rates (if applicable)

findneighborhoods.DSM.city
Show Me My House helps residents find relevant information based on where exactly in Des Moines they live.

By entering a City of Des Moines address, learn specifics about your property including:

- Garbage, Recycling, and Yard Waste
- Wards and Elected Officials
- Snow Ordinances and Routes
- Neighborhood Based Service Delivery (NBSD) Officers

Residents also have a link to their home on the Polk County Assessor website to discover more about their building and property assessment.

You can also find specific contact information for your assigned permit inspectors, assigned neighborhood police officer, as well as your City Council representation.

showmemyhouse.DSM.city
STAY CONNECTED

Ways to Keep Residents Informed

The City of Des Moines has a variety of outlets to communicate with its residents.

Social Media

Currently, we have a Facebook page, Twitter account, LinkedIn page, and YouTube channel.

On both Facebook and Twitter, we promote city events and information from different departments as well as from various organizations in the metro.

LinkedIn is more focused on employment and currently promotes job opportunities available.

Our YouTube channel streams City Council meetings as well as Board of Adjustments and Zoning Committee meetings. These are broadcast through our TV channel DMTV 7 which can also be found on Mediacom Channel 7 and streaming live on our website.

Our Communications Office also posts updates, events, and other important information residents need to know on the Nextdoor App.

- facebook.com/DesMoinesGov
- twitter.com/DesMoinesGov
- youtube.com/CityofDesMoinesIowa

Mobile App

The City’s app, myDSMmobile, is a way for residents to communicate with the City.

You can request service or report popular issues such as:
- Graffiti
- Potholes
- Storm Water or Sanitary Sewer Problems
- Street Light Outages
- Traffic Signal Problems

myDSMmobile also provides access to the City’s Show Me My House web app to keep household information handy.

- Visit DSM.city/myDSMmobile
- In your app store, search “myDSMmobile”
Email Notifications

Residents can sign up to have a variety of informational emails sent to their inbox by subscribing to the City’s email list. They can be:

- Alerts, notifications, and press releases
- Newsletters and publications
- Road closures and construction
- City Council information
- Boards and Commissions information
- City activities and events
- Meeting agendas
- Civil and Human Rights information
- Bids and Requests for Proposals for the City

Sign up at subscribe.DSM.city

Website

Our website will always have the most information for residents. They are able to look through the City calendar to see events, meetings, and program registration dates. They can also visit the News and More News sections to see the latest updates.

If they visit the Communications Office page, they’ll find links to connect with the City on social media, places they can watch DMTV and its schedule, and download the latest City Source quarterly newsletter.

Visit us at DSM.city
STAY INVOLVED
Ways to Be Involved In Government

With your experience as a leader in Des Moines, your perspective and knowledge is needed to help guide the decision makers serving on City Council and our Boards & Commissions.

Contact City Council

If you have an idea for a solution to improve your neighborhood, we encourage you to start a discussion with your elected officials. For 2021, these are your City Council representatives:

**MAYOR**
T.M. Franklin Cownie
fcownie@dmgov.org
(515) 283-4944

**AT LARGE**
Carl Voss
carlvoss@dmgov.org
(515) 210-0237

**AT LARGE**
Connie Boesen
connieboesen@dmgov.org
(515) 240-7929

**WARD 1**
Bill Gray
billgray@dmgov.org
(515) 273-1623

**WARD 2**
Linda Westergaard
lindaw@dmgov.org
(515) 988-4288

**WARD 3**
Josh Mandelbaum
joshmandelbaum@dmgov.org
(515) 250-3384

**WARD 4**
Joe Gatto
joegatto@dmgov.org
(515) 402-2626

Request to Speak at a City Council Meeting

Any resident may request to have an item placed on the agenda for regular City Council meetings by filing a request in writing with the City Clerk prior to 5 p.m. on the Tuesday preceding the meeting.

You can submit your request by visiting [DSM.city/government](http://DSM.city/government) or contacting cityclerk@dmgov.org.

An administrative committee will review received requests and contact you if yours is approved.

As described in the Procedural Rules of Des Moines City Council, approved requests are placed under a single agenda item in the order they are received. That item is allocated 30 minutes during the meeting. Any request not addressed within the allocated half-hour will be moved to the next agenda, with new requests added to the end of the queue.

To allow as many public speakers as possible in a meeting, each request is allocated up to three minutes or the same amount of time as the presiding officer determines by dividing thirty minutes by the number of speakers, whichever is less.
Apply to Serve on a Board or Commission

Your elected officials rely on the expertise of established Boards and Commissions to make informed policy decisions. Appointments by City Council are made to Boards and Commissions each month as terms expire or as vacancies occur.

As openings occur on boards and commissions, we feel fortunate to be able to draw upon the expertise and dedication of our residents. Once submitted, your application will be considered and remain on file for three years.

You can submit your application and up to five Boards and Commissions you would be interested serving on by visiting DSM.city/government/boards_and_commissions/.

If you have any questions about the process, please contact the City Clerk’s Office at (515) 283-4209 or cityclerk@dmgov.org.

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STAY ENGAGED
Ways to Keep Residents Active

To continue to see growth in your neighborhood association, you’ll need to make sure you’re communicating with your residents in the best ways possible.

How Best to Communicate as a Neighborhood Leader

Consistency is key - If residents know when to expect to hear from you, they’re more likely to pay attention. For example: a newsletter sent the 3rd week one month should be sent at the same for the coming months.

Have something important or interesting to say - Your communications schedule depends on how often you’ll have updates and new information. Don’t send a weekly email if you have nothing new each week. Consider sending a bi-monthly or monthly update instead.

Be engaging, make connections and build relationships - Don’t just talk at your neighbors, create a conversation with them. Encourage them to share stories, give feedback, and tag/mention your association on social media.

Direct Mail

To help you reach residents in your neighborhood that may not be members of your association, the United States Postal Service provides the Every Door Direct Mail® (EDDM) program. This program allows you to send flyers, postcards and other flat mail up to 3.3 ounces at a low price. No address information is needed, simply select which mail routes you would like your direct mail to be delivered to.

Use the online tool at USPS.com/business/every-door-direct-mail.htm or visit your local post office for more information.

Traditional to Digital Communications

Don’t depend on traditional communication alone. A majority of people get information from digital sources - here are some easy comparables between traditional and digital platforms:

- **Flyers**: Try putting the same information on social media, specifically Facebook and Twitter posts.
- **In-Person Meetings**: Utilize a platform like Zoom, Microsoft Teams (both can connect to a digital calendar), or Google Meet if you’re a Gmail user.
- **Mailings**: In addition to mailing printed newsletters and postcards, convert those messages to an email campaign or scheduled e-newsletter to help make your information easier to share with others.
- **Website**: If you don’t have a website created, make it your top priority. It’s a central location for all information that you’ve put out as well as additional details.
Building Websites and Blogs

A website doesn’t need to be complicated to create or manage. Here are three easy-to-use platforms:

- **Weebly**: Offers a free option for “Basic Use” with paid plans starting at $6/month
- **Wix**: A popular website builder with paid plans starting at $14/month
- **SquareSpace**: Create a beautiful looking website with paid plans starting at $12/month

Don’t go by price alone - compare the features offered from each to see which will best fit what you need and ease of use.

All three options also offer some form of a blog. Blogging is a great way to share the personality, thoughts, and ideas of the neighborhood association as well as keep fresh content on your site (important to help residents find you on Google).

Email Campaigns

The first activity many people do in the morning is checking their email. People are usually more willing to give out their email address than any other form of contact because they have more control over the communication.

Here are three easy-to-use platforms:

- **MailChimp**: Offers a free option
- **HubSpot**: Offers a free option
- **Constant Contact**: Starts at $20/month with a 60-day free trial

Platforms to Use

Don’t be intimidated by all the various social media platforms out there - not every platform will be useful for your association. If you aren’t already on social media, consider starting with these platforms:

- **Facebook**: You can create a group for your neighborhood helping to make a more personalized connection with your residents. You can connect the group to a page, but keep the group just for residents.
- **Twitter**: This platform is definitely made for news so make sure to utilize it for updates, news of the area, and other quick snippets of information.
- **Nextdoor**: A platform that’s not as well known, but was made for neighborhoods. You can see what residents are talking about and post about the neighborhood as well, knowing you’re reaching your residents specifically.
Our Mission
To partner with the residents of our community to provide outstanding services to our neighborhoods while maintaining Des Moines social, physical, and business environments.

For general assistance contact us at (515) 283-4046.