

# **The PhillyBlocks Manual**

**Neighborhood Transformation: Block by Block**



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## Background

The **PhillyBlocks Manual** has been nearly a decade in the making.

An earlier version—created with support from the Barra Foundation—grew out of the development of the “Block Club Social Contract” that the Institute for the Study of Civic Values negotiated in 1994 with neighborhood leaders throughout Philadelphia. The Block Club Social Contract set forth a comprehensive agenda for improving the physical appearance, safety, economic stability, and educational environment Philadelphia’s neighborhoods and defined how community organizations, businesses, and government could work together to achieve them. It provided a broad framework for revitalization that could be adapted to meet the needs of individual neighborhoods throughout the City.

As a result, the Institute’s Social Contract Project was included in Philadelphia’s Empowerment Zone application to the federal government in 1994. In 1997 we were awarded a contract by the American Street Empowerment Zone to conduct a year-long block leadership seminar called the “**Block Club 100 Project**,” since our aim was to reach activists on at least 100 blocks in the Zone.

In 2000, we were awarded a second contract in the Empowerment Zone, for what was called the “**Block Club 20 Project**.” This time we were asked to focus on just 20 blocks where we could implement a comprehensive neighborhood agenda based on the Block Club Social Contract. Soon, we distilled the Social Contract into a ten-point **PhillyBlocks Pledge** that became the framework for the program.

For the past year, under this program, representatives from more than 30 American Street blocks have been meeting with City departments to address problems related to blight, crime, and kids. The Institute has also created a Community Conservation Corps under a separate contract with the Philadelphia Workforce Development Corporation, whereby a sizeable group of TANF recipients meet their work requirements under welfare reform by performing 20 hours of community service in the Zone. The **PhillyBlocks Manual** grows directly out of what we have learned from these programs.

Now—through **PhillyBlocks**—the Institute to extend this process throughout the City. Mayor Street’s **Neighborhood Transformation Initiative** pledges to “reinvigorate, strengthen, and expand Philadelphia’s network of block captains.” That is precisely what we are doing through PhillyBlocks. We are using the Internet in this effort, and if you’re online you can join our email list at <http://phillyblocks.org>. But if you’re not online, this Manual is meant for you.

We are indebted to the Rita Lederer and Sister Carol Keck from the American Street Empowerment Zone whose support made this program possible. We also extend our gratitude to Eva Gladstein and Tim Clair from the Empowerment Zone staff whose advice was consistently useful throughout the year.

Above all, we thank Rafael Feliciano, Gretchen Ortiz, Kelly Green and the block activists of American Street—who have shown us once again what people can do when we start to work together. This Manual is dedicated to you.

Ed Schwartz, Institute for the Study of Civic Values

## Introduction

# Building Strong Blocks

### **Organizing Blocks**

This manual is for people in Philadelphia who believe that the best foundation for strong neighborhoods is organized blocks. Over 3,000 blocks participate in the City's Clean Blocks Program every summer. More than 12,000 people are active in Town Watch. Block associations sponsor social events, housing rehabilitation, and 'people-to-people' services for people with serious problems. This manual covers all of this—and more.

### **Working Together**

There are two keys to improving blocks: building participation on the block and creating partnerships with government. If neighbors don't work together, we won't unite around common goals. If government won't respond to us, then we will never get the resources we need to solve difficult problems like blight and drugs. To succeed, we need active blocks working with government over time to achieve common goals.

### **Setting Goals**

It's important to create a clear agenda for block improvement. We all want to live in neighborhoods that are clean, safe, economically strong, and decent places to raise our children. Those are goals we should set for our blocks—making them clean, safe, economically viable, and decent places to raise our children. We can achieve some of these goals on the block. We need to go beyond the block to the entire neighborhood to do the rest. But these goals need to clear.

### **Creating an Agenda**

What do we need to do to improve block appearance? How can we make the block and the neighborhood safer? How can we help insure that our neighborhood businesses are thriving and that neighborhood residents can meet their economic needs? How can we help our children achieve in school and feel safe and supported in the neighborhood? Every block needs a specific agenda that answers these questions and that defines what we do together over time.

## Getting the Block Together

### Use the City

The best way to get a block together is to use programs run by the City. **Philadelphia More Beautiful**—which coordinates block cleanups from April through September—is the best known. To become an official PMBC block, you need a petition signed by at least 50% of the residents designating a block captain. You call the PMBC Clean Block Officer in your District for the petition. **Town Watch** will also work with you if you have at least 6 households that are willing to look out for crimes on the block.

### Share the Work

No matter what you decide to do, residents must be willing to share in the work. If people on the block are going to make it clean, safe, economically viable, and a decent place to raise our children, it's not likely that one person can take responsibility everything. The Clean Blocks' Captain, the Town Watch Coordinator, and the person who plans block parties should be different, if you can find the people. You may find people on the block doing valuable work in the neighborhood—as part of after-school program, as an example. Try to convince them to share what they're doing with the block. It can only help.

### Keep it Simple

Unless you live on a block where a significant number of residents are prepared to devote considerable time, the key to organizing a successful block group is to keep it simple. There may be a chairperson or a “captain,” a treasurer to handle dues (if you have them), and someone to handle correspondence with the City. Be certain that the goals you set for the block require even this level of organization before getting this involved. It may take much more effort than anyone really wants to devote to the block. A strong block has many “captains.”

### Make it Fun

Whatever you do on the block, make it fun. Most of us see our homes and our neighborhoods as places to escape from work, not to add to it. If we're expected to maintain our own property and the area immediately around it, we'll comply. If there's a crisis—a crime wave, an environmental hazard, a development that threatens our quality of life—we'll respond to the threat. If people are going to stay involved over time, it's got to be fun. Block parties over the summer may do more to build solidarity than a hundred meetings aimed at addressing block problems, especially if the problems themselves are not all that serious.

## Neighborhood Transformation

### **Block Appearance**

How do you begin? Start with making the block look better. This doesn't transform the block by itself but it helps a lot. Block cleanups are a first step. Getting L&I to demolish long-term vacant buildings and insuring that the newly created vacant lots are cleaned—and remain clean—is critical. Fighting graffiti, vandalism, and trash dumping must become ongoing block activities. And if residents can upgrade their own properties and create community gardens, so much the better.

### **Block Safety**

Even if the block looks good, people will move if they aren't safe. Drug trafficking by itself can bring down a block, even if only one or two houses are involved. So-called "quality of life" crimes hurt badly as well. How many people want to stay on a block where people can play loud music all night long and vandalism goes unpunished? Getting the neighbors to sign a pledge that they will not tolerate this behavior in itself can give residents a sense of security. Establishing a Town Watch on the block can build a strong partnership with the police, which you can strengthen through meetings with the District Captain.

### **Economic Stability**

Often, the problems you don't see right away are the ones that destroy a block. Are people falling behind in their mortgage payments, to the point where they face outright foreclosure? There were more than 1,000 foreclosures in West Oak Lane in the early 1990's and the effects were felt for the entire decade. Is there an apartment building whose owner can no longer afford to maintain it? Are there welfare recipients at risk of losing all their income under welfare reform? It's not always possible to detect these problems before they develop, but keeping all residents informed of sources of economic support can help prevent them.

### **Families and Children**

Are families willing to raise their children on the block? Would you let your kids play outside and in the evening, especially during the summer? Are there recreation facilities and community centers nearby? Would you send your children to the neighborhood schools, or would you have to move to give them a quality education? We all know that these are serious problems, but are people on your block trying to address them? If kids are missing school during the day and breaking the curfew at night, are you doing anything about it? Are you trying to improve the schools—or to organize after-school programs that provide additional educational support? If not, it won't matter how clean the block is—families will move.

# The PhillyBlocks Pledge

## **A Social Contract**

The PhillyBlocks Pledge was developed by the Institute for the Study of Civic Values to set forth specific goals for block and neighborhood improvement. It's a social contract, in that people on the block agree to work together to achieve these goals. But it's not enough just for block residents to endorse the pledge. Elected representatives, City departments, area organizations and businesses need to support it as well. That's the only way it can work.

## **Using the Pledge**

How can block leaders and residents use the PhillyBlocks Pledge?

First—it can help you create the block agenda. The 10 points of the pledge can help you identify the main problems on the block that you all need to solve.

Second—signing the pledge can help unite the block.

Third—The pledge can provide a basis for demanding results from City departments and elected officials.

## **Getting Results**

Obviously, just getting everyone on a block to sign the pledge won't matter if you never get any results. This is where dealing with public agencies and departments early and often really matters. L&I needs to crack down on irresponsible owners of buildings and lots. The Streets Department needs to deal with trash and the Police have to make progress in the war on drugs. Housing counseling agencies and other supportive services have to be there to help people in need. And we all need to get together to improve our schools.

## **Making Progress**

Most important, you can use the PhillyBlocks pledge both to make and measure progress. Does the block look better over time? Have you been able to get buildings demolished and lots cleaned? Is the neighborhood safer? Are people better able to maintain their homes and support their families? Are the schools doing more for our children and are our children doing better in school? The PhillyBlocks Pledge can help us make progress—and measure it.

## **Use the Pledge**

**To create the Block Agenda...**

**To unite the Block...**

**To get Results...**

**To Make and Measure Progress**

**PhillyBlocks Pledge**  
**"To Promote the General Welfare"**  
**Institute for the Study of Civic Values**

We, the residents of Philadelphia's neighborhoods-block leaders, neighborhood activists, and participants in the organizations and agencies that support them-pledge to work together to build communities that are attractive, safe, economically viable, and decent places in which to live and raise children.

As 'we the people' of our city and the country, we will work to promote harmony, responsibility, and cooperation among all residents of our blocks and our neighborhoods.

To 'secure the blessings of liberty,' we commit ourselves to uphold the highest possible standards of appearance, safety, and community in the neighborhoods and in the City as a whole.

To this end we pledge the following:

1. To support the Clean Blocks Program, the Anti-Graffiti Network, and other efforts to improve block appearance.
2. To encourage residents to keep sidewalks and curbs clean, avoid littering, and to remove snow and ice from sidewalks during the winter.
3. To insure that neighbors handle the disposal of trash and the maintenance of blocks in compliance with City codes.
4. To work with homeowners, landlords, tenants, PHA, and the City to insure that properties and vacant lots in our neighborhoods are properly maintained.
5. To strengthen neighborhood safety programs like Town Watch.
6. To support neighborhood campaigns to eliminate drug trafficking and the demand for illegal drugs and to protect our residents from drug dealers and users.
7. To work with schools to insure student attendance and promote positive attitudes toward learning.
8. To help families on the block work together to provide quality child care and after-school activities for our children and youth, both through informal arrangements as well as through established programs.
9. To provide ongoing opportunities for young people to contribute to the overall quality of community life.
10. To offer the support of block residents to area groups advocating economic opportunity, affordable housing, and quality education in Philadelphia, so that all residents can live in freedom and dignity as responsible members of our community.

## PhillyBlocks Online

If you can access the Internet, you can take advantage of a powerful set of tools that the Institute for the Study of Civic Values has developed specifically for people in Philadelphia working on their blocks to improve our neighborhoods.

Check out the PhillyBlocks web site at <http://phillyblocks.org>. Or if you're interested in resources and programs that go beyond the block, go to Philly-Neighborhoods at <http://phillyneighborhoods.org>.

Either way, you will gain quick access to the City Departments that you need most—the Streets Department for block cleanups and trash removal; Licenses & Inspections for code enforcement and building demolition; the Office of Housing and Community Development for housing counseling, home repair, and weatherization; the Police Department for neighborhood safety; the School District, the Free Library, and the Recreation Department for programs that help our kids. And as the City's online services improve, we make sure that block leaders know how to take advantage of them.

As important—maybe even more important—you can join the “PhillyBlocks” email list. Right now, block activists from all sections of Philadelphia are using email to share information on how to solve their problems. Someone will ask, “how do I get tires removed from the neighborhood?” and by the end of the day, there will be at least three or four answers. Representatives from City Departments like the Streets Department monitor the list as well—and use it to make sure that block activists are kept informed of their latest programs. As the Neighborhood Transformation Initiative takes shape, the PhillyBlocks email list will be the best source of information on new developments in every aspect of the program..

The PhillyBlocks email list is only one of a number of email lists you can join. . There's a list called 'neighbors-online,' for people involved in civic groups and cdc's; a list called, 'phillyschools,' for people involved in improving education; and a list called “FAN”—Family Advocates Network—for organizations involved in welfare-to-work programs. You can join any or all of them from our website.

What do these online services cost? Nothing. Just go to [Phillyblocks.org](http://Phillyblocks.org) or [Phillyneighborhoods.org](http://Phillyneighborhoods.org) and it's all there. Thanks to support from the City of Philadelphia and companies like First Union and Comcast and foundations like the William Penn Foundation, the Philadelphia Foundation, and the Connelly Foundation, we're able to do all this without cost to you.

## **Implementing the PhillyBlocks Pledge—Ten Steps**

- 1. Become a Philadelphia More Beautiful (PMBC) Block. (p. 12)**
- 2. Have at least one resident join the PhillyBlocks email list. (p.9)**
- 3. Meet with City Departments monthly, with clear goals for progress. (p. 7)**
- 4. Collect building code violations and report them to L&I. (p. 15)**
- 5. Develop a plan to maintain vacant lots. (p. 16)**
- 6. Make neighbors aware of home repair programs. (p. 18)**
- 7. Work with your Police District to combat crime and drugs. (p. 20).**
- 8. Help neighborhood families overcome economic hardships. (p. 25, 26)**
- 9. Support young people and involve them in the neighborhood. (p. 27. 28)**
- 10. Establish neighborhood programs to help kids in school. (p. 29)**



## **'We the People'**

### **PhillyBlocks Pledge**

**“As 'we the people' of our city and the country, we will work to promote harmony, responsibility, and cooperation among all residents of our blocks and our neighborhoods.”**

### **Respecting One Another**

Every block resident is part of “we the people.” When America’s framers began the Constitution with these three words over 200 years ago, they may not have meant African-Americans or women, but everyone is included today. Nor does the Preamble say “We the homeowners,” or “we the people who can fend for ourselves.” It says, “We the people”—meaning rich and poor, homeowners and tenants. Being part of “we the people” means that while we all may not love one another, we all must respect each other—as neighbors, citizens, and as human beings. Many of the most serious problems on blocks develop when neighbors who simply cease to respect one another.

### **Fair Housing**

Respecting one another is not merely a moral principle—it’s the law. The Fair Housing Act forbids discrimination in housing “on the basis of race, color, religious creed, ancestry, national origin, age, handicap, sex or sexual orientation.” Realtors, or landlords who discriminate on this basis are subject to serious penalties. The Fair Housing Act of 1990 extended fair housing protection to people with disabilities as well. **The Philadelphia Human Relations Commission enforces Fair Housing in Philadelphia and works to solve problems between people and groups in neighborhoods throughout the City.**

### **Resolving Conflicts**

The Dispute Resolution Program of the Philadelphia Human Relations Commission is a major source of assistance in resolving racial and ethnic conflicts. PCHR may be notified either by the police or by a neighborhood group to intervene in a particular situation. After staff assesses the problem, the Commission can offer both mediation and conciliation services aimed at resolving the problem without burdening the courts. PCHR handles between 900 and 1,000 such conflicts each year.

**For Additional Help.... Philadelphia Human Relations—686-4670**

## Clean Blocks

### PhillyBlocks Pledge

*We pledge to support the Clean Blocks Program, the Anti-Graffiti Network, and other efforts to improve block appearance.*

### Philadelphia More Beautiful

Maintaining clean blocks has been a major priority for the City for many years. The **Philadelphia More Beautiful Committee (PMBC)** under the Streets Department manages the program. In fact, most people who become block captains do so under this program. PMBC insists that 51% of the residents of a block meet and sign a petition designating a block captain and a co-captain in order to register with the Committee. From that point, the block can work with the Committee to organize Saturday clean-ups in which residents dispose of their trash and sanitation trucks pick it up at the end of the day.

### Building Pride

Sponsoring clean-ups is only part of the work of PMBC. Its central mission is to use clean-ups to build community pride. It has established a **Junior Block Captain Program** that calls upon young people to take personal responsibility for improving the environment. PMBC sponsors a **Clean Blocks Contest** every year in which hundreds of clubs compete.

### Removing Graffiti

The Managing Director's Office will provide free paint to homeowners, businesses, and community groups to remove graffiti from painted surfaces. Graffiti Abatement Teams will provide community organizations, businesses and homeowners with free power-wash services to combat graffiti vandalism in the neighborhood.

### For Help Contact....

**Philadelphia More Beautiful—685-3981**  
**Clean Block Officers (see next page)**  
**Anti-Graffiti Hotline Network—685-9556**  
**Paint and Supply voucher—686-2024**

## PMBC: Clean Block Officers

<b>Clean Block Officer</b>	<b>Police District</b>	<b>Telephone #</b>
John Barnett	17th	215-685-3976
Mildred Collier	35th - East of Broad	215-685-3987
Santa Conix	14th	215-685-3982
Not Represented	25th	215-685-3986
Wanda Jones	19th	215-685-3984
Denise Ladson	12th, 16th	215-685-3992
Lawrence Martin	1st, 3rd, 4th	215-685-3993
Sandra Miranda	2nd, 7th, 8th, 15th	215-685-3985
Pamela Phillips	22nd	215-685-3980
Mario Soto	24th, 26th	215-685-3988
Not Represented	5th, 39th	215-685-3991
William Stern	6th, 9th, 23rd	215-685-3989
Yvonne Tyler	35th - West of Broad	215-685-3973
Cassandra Whitters	18th	215-685-3975

### **Philadelphia More Beautiful Committee's first place winners in the Annual Clean Block Awards Contest**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>ADDRESS</b>
<b>2000</b>	<b>5800 Rodman Street</b>
<b>1999</b>	<b>400 Dickinson Street</b>
<b>1998</b>	<b>6100 N. Marshall Street</b>
<b>1997</b>	<b>2500 N. Marston Street</b>
<b>1996</b>	<b>2400 W. Sharswood Street</b>
<b>1995</b>	<b>1100 Brill Street</b>

**Approximately 95,831 volunteers, including Block Captains and their neighbors, community groups and their units, and other volunteers, filled 118,768 bags during their cleaning activities in 1998.**

## Sidewalks, Trash, and Streets

### PhillyBlocks Pledge

*We pledge to encourage residents to keep sidewalks and curbs clean, avoid littering, and to remove snow and ice from sidewalks during the winter.*

### Sidewalks Alleys and Inlets

The streets are the City's responsibility. To get a pothole or plumbers' ditch filled, your best bet is to call your District Councilperson. The sidewalk in front of a person's property is their responsibility. That means keeping it clean during the summer and removing snow during the winter. The Streets Department still repairs alley lights. The Water Department cleans inlets. Numbers are listed below.

### Trash Pickup, Illegal Dumping

The City is responsible for picking up trash. A person with large items like stoves or sofas can leave them out on regular trash days, but it makes good sense to call the Streets Department before doing this.

To report illegal dumping, get the license number and a description of the car. Call 911 or the Environmental Police at 686-3082 from Monday-Friday between 8:00 and 5:00 PM.

### Recycling

Philadelphia's recycling program has now moved city-wide, but participation remains uneven. Pickups are now bi-weekly and include newspapers, aluminum food cans, glass bottles, and empty paint and aerosol cans. People must supply their own 12 gallon buckets, but the City will provide a recycling bin. The Streets Department also sponsors a composting program and encourages grass and Christmas Tree recycling. For more information call customer service at 686--5560.

### For Additional Help....

**Pothole, Street Repair—686-5560**  
**Trash & Garbage— 686-5560**  
**Illegal Dumping—911, or 686-3082**  
**Defective Street Lights (night)-686-5610**  
**Get a Recycling Bin-215-685-7329**

## Abandoned Buildings

### PhillyBlocks Pledge

*We pledge to work with homeowners, landlords, tenants, City Departments and PHA to insure that properties and vacant lots in our neighborhoods are properly maintained.*

### Grounds for Demolition

Under Mayor Street's "Neighborhood Transformation Initiative," the City will undertake the demolition of thousands of vacant buildings over the next two years. Until City Council approves a bond Issue to support this program, however, L&I will still respond primarily to complaints that a property is imminently dangerous. Organized blocks and community groups need to keep the pressure on L&I, however, since it has many more complaints than it can handle. Here, especially, 'the squeaky wheel gets the grease.' L&I projects that it can demolish 3,000 buildings annually over the next year or two with the resources at its disposal. There are between 11,000 and 13,000 vacant buildings in the City presently characterized as 'dangerous.'

### Dealing With L&I

How does a neighborhood group deal with L&I? To register a complaint about a particular property, call the L&I Complaint number listed below. Within two weeks, depending on the time of year, L&I will send out an inspector to determine if the building is imminently dangerous—meaning, that it might collapse. If this judgment is made, then the building will be demolished. Most cdc's with long-term development plans have established relationships with L&I that permit them some involvement in these decisions.

### Clean and Seal

Vacant properties on largely occupied blocks have a chance to be clean and sealed by L&I, using mortar. Here, too, a group must call the Services and Operations Line to register a complaint. L&I will make its decision on the basis of the condition of both the house and the block. It helps to have support from elected officials in making the request.

### For Help, Contact...

**L&I, Complaint—686-2463. (don't use the automated system so you can get a tracking number to check the status of your complaint in the future.)**

**L&I Do-It-Yourself Clean & Seal—686-2881**

## Vacant Lots, Land, and Automobiles

### PhillyBlocks Pledge

*We pledge to work with homeowners, landlords, tenants, PHA, and the City to insure that properties and vacant lots in our neighborhoods are properly maintained.*

### Maintaining and Acquiring Vacant Lots

From July, 2001 through June, 2002, the City is cleaning more than 31,000 lots. A critical question remains as to how these lots will be maintained. Under a "Community Partnership" program run out of the Managing Director's Office, neighbors can borrow rakes, brooms, and shovels, but these must be returned within a week. Unless the City invests more resources to lot maintenance, they are likely to revert to their previous condition. Acquiring a vacant lot is not easy either. The City might take it to Sheriff's Sale or turn it over to a block under a Small Vacant Lot Program. But there are already many more requests than the City can handle. This, too, remains a serious problem.

### Community Gardens

The Community Gardens created on many blocks with the help of the Philadelphia Horticultural Society's Philadelphia Green Program have become a major resource for our neighborhoods. Unfortunately, Philadelphia Green cannot afford to develop gardens on every block that wants one. They can only provide training and technical assistance. Under a 'garden tenders' program, they offer an eight-session course twice year. At least 3 members from a group must sign up for the group to participate.

### Abandoned Cars

The Street administration's abandoned car removal program has proven to be a big success. Thousands of cars were removed from blocks and neighborhoods between 2000-2001 and the Managing Director's Office continues to respond quickly to these requests. The administration sees this as a prototype for what can also happen in dealing with vacant lots once the bond issue is approved

### For Additional Help....

**Phila.Green Garden Tenders-988-8800**  
**Abandoned Cars—683-2277**  
**Vacant Lot Cleaning Problems 686-9004**  
**Vacant Lot Maintenance-686-7098**

## **Abandoned Houses, Rehabilitation**

### **PhillyBlocks Pledge**

*We pledge to work with homeowners, landlords, tenants, City Departments and PHA to insure that properties and vacant lots in our neighborhoods are properly maintained.*

### **Designating Houses for Rehabilitation**

People who want to see houses rehabilitated rather than torn down often wonder how this can happen. Is there a City agency that makes these decisions on a house-by-house basis? The answer is, basically, “no.” The City’s Office of Housing and Community Development receives federal and state funds to support the rehabilitation of vacant buildings, but it allocates them in response to proposals from the community. Non-profit community development corporations receive special consideration from the City now, but private developers and the Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation rehab houses as well. In most cases, though, it is the cdc, or the developer who selects the houses to be rehabbed.

### **Acquiring Vacant Property**

Acquiring vacant houses through the City is difficult but not impossible. Central Intake for the City’s housing programs at 1234 Market St., 4th floor can tell you who owns a property, but it takes 6 to 8 weeks to find out if it’s tax delinquent and if anyone else wants it. If it’s City owned, an individual with resources to rehab it for homeownership might get it in eight months. If it’s privately owned, moving a house to sheriff sale can take as much as two years.

### **Financing Rehabilitation**

The primary source of financing for housing rehabilitation are the Community Development Block Grant and the HOME Program administered by the Office of Housing. While most of the funds support projects sponsored by non-profit, profit, and public sector developers, the Philadelphia Rehab Plan (PRP) and the Action Loans Program of the Redevelopment Authority help individuals directly.

### **For Additional Help....**

**Housing, Central Intake—448-2160**  
**Office of Housing—686-9723**  
**Redevelopment Authority—854-6500**  
**Phila.Housing Devel.Corp.—448-3000**

## Repairing and Maintaining Houses

### PhillyBlocks Pledge

*We pledge to work with homeowners, landlords, tenants, City Departments and PHA to insure that properties and vacant lots in our neighborhoods are properly maintained.*

### Emergency Repairs

The Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation (PHDC) provides Basic System Repairs to homeowners with income no more than 150% of poverty. The problem must pose a serious threat to health and safety. These include plumbing (sewage in the floor); heating (no heat); electrical (exposed wires); and roofing (leaks threatening electrical systems). A call reporting a serious problem brings a mechanic to all income eligible homes. 70% of repairs costing less than \$1,600 occur within 5 days. Serious problems costing up to \$10,000 take longer. If there's structural damage (up to \$25,000), there are long delays. PHDC repairs 4,500 homes annually under this program. A Heater Hotline services 3,000 heaters in the winter on a similar basis.

### Weatherization

Emergency repairs will include needed weatherization, but there's still two distinct weatherization programs—one run by PHDC; the other, by PGW working with the Energy Coordinating Agency. Both provide an energy audit of the home to determine where heat is escaping. Follow-up includes retrofitting furnaces, window and door insulation, sealing the building shell, up to \$1,800. Income eligibility is also up to 150% of poverty. There's a six month waiting list for these programs.

### Low Income Home Improvement Loans

The Redevelopment Authority sponsors a low-interest home improvement loan program for low income homeowners. Also available is the PhilLoan program offered by First Union-973-3885; PNC Bank at 1800-256-1978, Mellon-PFSS (now Citizen) at 215-553-0157; and Summit/Fleet Bank at 1-800-227-4996.

### For Additional Help....

**Emergency Repair (Owners)—448-2160**  
**Weatherization—448-2137; 448-3154**  
**Housing Counseling Agencies-686-9721**

## Public Housing and Section 8

### PhillyBlocks Pledge

*We pledge to work with homeowners, landlords, tenants, City Departments and PHA to insure that properties and vacant lots in our neighborhoods are properly maintained.*

### PHA Scattered Sites

The Philadelphia Housing Authority manages over 7,000 “scattered site” properties, mostly concentrated in North Philadelphia. Here, residents are renting single-family homes from PHA, instead of living in a large development like Raymond Rosen. Residents are responsible for keeping up the property like anyone else on the block. PHA is responsible for maintenance and repairs like any other landlord. PHA tenants should be welcomed at block meetings, and PHA can be held accountable by everyone for its role as a landlord. The Friends Neighborhood Guild, for example, has organized block associations in East Poplar, for example, involving PHA and non-PHA residents in efforts to improve their blocks. This can and should happen throughout the City.

### Section 8 Properties

PHA also administers the Section 8 Program. Here, the Authority does not own the property, but it determines whether landlords will be eligible to receive tenants with Section 8 certificates and vouchers entitling them to federal housing subsidies. There are over 8,000 Section 8 Properties in Philadelphia. A block club having problems with a Section 8 landlord can contact PHA for help in having them addressed. PHA does have the authority to deny Section 8 tenants to a landlord, at considerable cost to them. PHA is quite willing to work with blocks on this.

### Major PHA Developments

People within the public housing community no longer use the term “projects.” These are just “developments,” made affordable for the poor. information. In the past decade, PHA has made a strong commitment to work with neighborhoods, to “mainstream” tenants, and to accept applications from working families to create mixed income housing in the neighborhoods. Contact PHA for information

For Additional Help....

**Phil.Housing Authority—684-4000**

## Neighborhood Security

### **PhillyBlocks Pledge**

*We pledge to strengthen neighborhood safety programs like Town Watch and to support neighborhood campaigns to eliminate drug trafficking and the demand for illegal drugs and to protect our residents from drug dealers and users.*

### **Town Watch**

Town Watch organizations operate throughout the City and are almost as important to block organizing as the Clean Blocks' Program. To start a block watch known as "eyes and ears," you must have at least 7 neighbors willing to participate. To create a "patrolling group," there must be approximately 12 residents covering 2 square blocks. Town watch provides training, certification, and ongoing support and resources.

To join an existing local Town Watch, call the Trainer or Recruiter for your area, listed on the page that follows.

### **Police District Community Advisory Committee**

A Police District Community Advisory Committee now exists in every Police District. It involves leading organizations within the neighborhood who meet regularly to develop strategies to reduce crime. For information about the PDAC nearest you, contact your local Police District.

### **Mayor's Office of Drug Control Policy**

The Mayor's Office of Drug Control Policy is a multi-faceted department that promotes, organizes, and implements solutions in intervention and prevention. They assist citizens of Philadelphia in the fight against drug abuse, child abuse and family problems that result from drug use.

### **For Additional Help....**

**Police Community Relations Officer-  
(See District Numbers)  
Town Watch-686-1459  
Drug Control Policy Office-686-4591**

## **TOWN WATCH DISTRICT TRAINER/RECRUITERS**

### **Chad Enos**

7th, 8th, 12th, 14th and 35th Police Districts

215 686-1454

### **Doug Evans**

6th, 16th, 18th, 22nd, 23rd, 26th and 39th Police Districts

215 686-1453

### **Nasser Fattah**

West Philadelphia Empowerment Zone

(parts of the 18th and 19th Police Districts)

215 686-1453

### **Alicia Hernandez-Mette**

North Philadelphia Empowerment Zone

215 686-1453

### **Joanne Petroski**

2nd, 15th, 24th and 25th Police Districts

215 686-1449

### **Art Potts**

1st, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 9th and 17th Police Districts

215 686-1452

## **PROGRAM COORDINATORS**

### **Tara E. Smith**

Safe Corridor Program, citywide

215 686-1453

### **Allan Turner**

Junior Town Watch Program, citywide

215 686-1453

## **Dealing With the DA and the Courts**

### **PhillyBlocks Pledge**

**We pledge to strengthen neighborhood safety programs like Town Watch.**

### **Contacting the District Attorney**

Once the Police arrest an offender, the District Attorney's office handles relations between the victims and the courts. If a case affects the entire community—as happens with drug dealers and repeat offenders—then the neighborhood association can get involved. Working with the DA, residents can show up in court, make their presence known to the judge, and even be brought to testify at the point of sentencing if the DA feels is important to help a judge understand the impact of the crime on the neighborhood. Representatives from the DA's office are happy to speak at community meetings to explain procedures.

### **Appearing in Common Pleas Court**

As difficult as it can be given the problem of missing work, neighborhood residents can and should appear in court on cases where the crime does affect the entire community. Judges are human; they are evaluating the impact of a possible crime on the security of the city as a whole. There is no better way to understand the stakes than seeing a full complement of community leaders and residents in the courtroom determined to prevent the offender from returning to the neighborhood with no more than a slap on the wrist. Here, too, the District Attorney is the place to call.

### **Juvenile Crime**

While the Juvenile Court has authority over serious juvenile crime, Youth Aid Panels run by the District Attorney have the authority to impose sentences on first-time juvenile offenders. The DA makes the decision as to which cases will be assigned to a Panel, which meet monthly..Volunteers devote 3 hours per night twice a month. Recidivism under this system low and volunteer participation is strong.

### **For Additional Help....**

**District Attorney's Office-686-8000  
Youth Aid Panels-686-6305 or 6310  
Common Pleas Court-686-7932  
Family Court-686-4000**

## Helping Victims, Rehabilitating Offenders

### PhillyBlocks Pledge

We pledge to strengthen neighborhood safety programs like Town Watch.

### Victim Support

The Victim Support System is among the strongest in the criminal justice system. Beyond victim support agencies in every section of the City, the District Attorney provides victim support as well. The office will help victims file for compensation for medical treatment and wages lost because of court appearances. The office will initiate legal action to protect victims from threats and work with them to prepare for trials. The Action Alliance for Senior Citizens sponsors a special program for victims over 60, and there is a Victim Support group that works with the families of murder victims. Groups like Northwest Victims' Services work help victims deal with the criminal justice system itself.

### Probation System

While the media understandably focuses attention on horrific crimes like murder and rape, it is burglaries and street crime that preys most on neighborhoods. Many first offenders end up on probation. In fact, there are roughly 32,000 adults on probation in Philadelphia reporting to probation officers anywhere from 3-4 times a week to monthly, depending on the crime. An average probation officer's caseload is about 170. A block club that wants to learn more about probation should call the Department directly for information.

### Parole System

Prisoners are often released on parole—roughly 10,000 under Common Pleas Court; over 9,500 under the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The Commonwealth oversees people serving over 23 months. Here, caseloads of 240 per officer are prohibitive (50 is the recommended number) but an intensive Drug Offenders program still sees people several times per month.

### For Additional Help....

**DA, Victim Services, Adult—686-8026**  
**DA, Victim Services, Juvenile-686-4094**  
**Common Pleas Crt., Probation—686-9497**  
**State Parole Office-560-2452**

## **Non Profit Victim Services in Philadelphia County**

Action Alliance Research & Education Program  
35 S. 4th St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19107 215-574-8520

Anti-Violence Partnership  
633 Rittenhouse St, C-4, Philadelphia, Pa. 19144, 215-438-9070

CARIE  
1315 Walnut St, Suite 100, Philadelphia, Pa. 19107 215-545-5728

Children's Advocacy Center  
4000 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19104, 215-387-9500

Congreso De Latinos Unidos  
719 W. Girard Ave, Philadelphia, Pa. 19123 215-763-8870

Grief Assistance Program,  
321 University Ave., Philadelphia, Pa. 19107 215-685-7448

Lutheran Settlement  
1340 Frankford Ave., Philadelphia, Pa 19125 215-545-5728

MADD-Philadelphia Chapter  
PO Box 15374, Philadelphia, Pa. 19111, 215-332-7177

Child Advocates Support Ctr.  
801 Arch St., Suite 608, Philadelphia, Pa. 19107 215-925-1913

Women Against Abuse, Inc.  
1600 Arch St., 11th Floor, Philadelphia, Pa. 19103, 215-686-7086

Women Organized Against Rape  
1233 Locust St., Suite 202, Philadelphia, Pa. 19107 215-985-3315

## Economic Support

### PhillyBlocks Pledge

We pledge to offer the support of block residents to area groups advocating economic opportunity, affordable housing, and quality education in Philadelphia, so that all residents can live in freedom and dignity.

### Housing Counseling

The Office of Housing and Community Development has helped build a network of organizations throughout the City that can provide housing counseling to low and moderate income residents facing problems either as homeowners or tenants. The organizations have been performing these services without cost for several years and represent an invaluable resource for people in trouble. They also administer OHCD's Settlement Grant program, through which qualified first-time homebuyers can receive direct grants covering settlement costs in purchasing a home. Finally, housing counseling agencies are now the main source of advice and assistance in combating predatory lending. The list of these agencies is long, but you can call the OHCD information office at 686-9723 to find the group nearest you.

### Emergency Fuel and Energy Assistance

The Energy Coordinating Agency is the main organization providing fuel assistance to low and moderate income residents in Philadelphia. They also help households save money through heating and water conservation, energy usage reduction, and weatherization. They support a heater hotline to repair heaters in the winter and an emergency cooling program in the summer. ECA works through 9 community groups to provide these services. Call them at 988-0919 or 988-0929 for the group serving your neighborhood.

### First Call for Help

The most comprehensive number to call for one-stop-shopping in meeting a wide range of problems is the United Way's "First Call for Help" at 215-568-3750. You can gain fast access to agencies providing home and health care, emergency food and clothing, transportation assistance, senior services, and a wide range of counseling and social service—in English and in Spanish.

For Additional Help....

**OHCD Housing Counseling-686-9723**  
**Phila.Neigh.Energy Centers—988-0919,29**  
**United Way First Call for Help—568-3750**

## **Economic Opportunity**

### **PhillyBlocks Pledge**

**We pledge to offer the support of block residents to area groups advocating economic opportunity, affordable housing, and quality education in Philadelphia, so that all residents can live in freedom and dignity.**

### **Adult Literacy**

The Mayor's Commission on Literacy is a support system for organizations providing adult literacy programs to Philadelphia residents seeking to learn how to read. Support is provided for Adult Basic Literacy programs that merely strengthen reading levels to G.E.D. preparatory classes. The Mayor's Commission also recruits and trains volunteers people to tutor in these programs.

### **Job Training**

The Philadelphia Workforce Development Corporation (PWDC) is the agency in Philadelphia administers federal funds for job training. PWDC itself handles intake for all programs through its own intake center at 1617 JFK Boulevard, 13th Floor. Training is provided by profit and non-profit training agencies under contract with agency. Training providers must secure placement for at least 70% of their trainees, or risk losing support in the succeeding year. A large part of the PWDC is now devoted to welfare-to-work programs, but they also administer federally funded job training programs for displaced workers as well. Contact PWDC at 215-963-2100.

### **Community Service Jobs**

The Institute for the Study of Civic Values itself is now the major sponsor of community service jobs, under the "Work Opportunities Program" supported by PWDC and the Pennsylvania Welfare Department. Under the program, TANF recipients meet their work requirements through 20 hours of community service, combined with 10 hours of 'wraparound' devoted to job searches and additional education and training. More than 100 organizations are now placing TANF recipients in community jobs through this program.

### **For Additional Help....**

**PWDC (Job Training)—963-2100  
Mayors' Commission on Literacy—686-4400  
Instit. for the Study of Civic Values-238-1434**

## **Child Care and After-School Programs**

### **PhillyBlocks Pledge**

We pledge to help families on the block work together to provide quality child care and after-school activities for our children and youth, both through informal arrangements as well as through established programs.

### **Child Care**

Public funding for child care is available to children from low and moderate income households through the Department of Public Welfare. Philadelphia Child Care Resources is organization that administers these funds, with centers throughout the City. They can provide information about child care facilities that offer full-time, part-time, after-school, overnight care or summer camp programs. They also give you information on the various types of child care such as Family Day Care Homes, Group Day Care Homes, Child Care Centers, and other options. Contact their child care hotline at 1-888-461-KIDS (5437).

### **After-School Programs**

There is no one center for after-school programs, but the Philadelphia Citizens for Children and Youth lists several in its, "Guide for Philadelphia's Families and Children," including the Free Library, the Recreation Dept., the Boys' and Girls Clubs, the Y's, the Police Athletic League, the Federation of Settlements, and a growing number of programs sponsored by human service agencies in the neighborhoods. The PCCY Guide is a valuable resource here.

### **Recreation**

Block leaders seeking to have their streets closed for block parties in the summer need to call the Streets Department at 215-686-5560. The obvious source of information about recreation programs for young people is the City's Recreation Department at 683-3600. From this number, you can be directed to the Recreation District serving your area.

### **For Additional Help....**

**Phila. Child Care Resources-1-888-461-KIDS**  
**PCCY After-Schools Guide-563-5848**  
**Block Parties-686-5650**  
**Recreation Department 683-3600**

## Child Health and Welfare

### PhillyBlocks Pledge

We pledge to help families on the block work together to provide quality child care and after-school activities for our children and youth, both through informal arrangements as well as through established programs.

### Child Health

Philadelphia Citizens for Children Youth sponsors a Child Health Watch program to help families connect with services most appropriate to meeting the health care needs of their children. The City's Health Centers will provide immunizations for children, as well as dental care, family planning, and maternity services for parents. These services are provided free. Parents with children under 5 may be eligible for WIC, the supplemental food program for women, infants, and children. WIC gives eligible parents food vouchers for certain healthy foods every two months at one of their 37 sites throughout Philadelphia. PCCY's Guide for Philadelphia's Families and Children lists these sites.

### Child Welfare

Helping families cope with problems that they appear to be having with their children is among the most sensitive areas in which block and neighborhood groups can get involved, but it can be extremely important. A gentle offer of assistance to a troubled family may reveal problems that the block club is in a position to handle. Block leaders should become familiar with nearby settlement houses and family service agencies for added support. The School District is also developing family centers throughout the City to reinforce community efforts in this area.

### Child Abuse

If you suspect that a child on the block is being abused by parents, you can call Childline at 1-800-932-0313. Childline is based in Harrisburg, and reports these complaints to the Philadelphia Dept. of Human Services. To trigger an investigation, you must have evidence of physical or medical injury to the child, and you must give a specific address of the home. You are not required to identify yourself.

### For Additional Help....

**Phila.Citiz. for Children and Youth—563-5848**  
**DHS/School Family Centers—299-7823**  
**Childline—1-800-932-0313**  
**Dept.Human Services, Child Abuse-686-6100**

## **Working with Schools**

### **PhillyBlocks Pledge**

**We pledge to work with schools to insure student attendance and promote positive attitudes toward learning.**

### **Home and School Councils**

Home and School Councils are the organizations created by the School District to encourage parental involvement in the school. Councils vary in effectiveness from school to school, but when properly run, they can be an invaluable resource. As the School District reaches out to the entire Philadelphia community for support, block clubs may find it useful to collaborate with the Home and School Council on programs to support the neighborhood school. To get in touch with a particular Home and School Council, call the particular school. The Family Resource Network supported by the School District can provide additional information on how people on your block can become school volunteers and perform additional services for schools in your area. Call 299-7211

### **Helping with Homework**

To determine whether there's a service in your area to help kids with their homework, call the School District's Family Resource Network at 299-7461, The Free Library of Philadelphia, the Recreation Department, and after-school programs sponsored by human service agencies and community groups, and Family Literacy programs loosely coordinated by the Mayors' Commission on Literacy can provide additional information on programs in your area.

### **Philadelphia Reads**

PHILADELPHIA READS mobilizes people and groups to provide time, materials, books and other resources for in-school, after-school and summer programs. Sponsored by the City of Philadelphia, it is making a major effort to collect books from neighborhoods for use in area schools and libraries. Contact them at 686-4450.

### **For Additional Help....**

**School Dist.,Home-School Cncl.-299-7211  
Schools, Community Involvement-299-7461  
Free Library, Childrens' Div.-686-5369  
Philadelphia Reads-686-4450.  
PCCY-563-5848**