



Community Partners



Planning a Safe Neighborhood Walk

What is a neighborhood walk?

Safe & Sound Community Partners have organized community walks with great success in Milwaukee. A neighborhood walk is typically organized around a theme, covers a walk route of 8-10 blocks over a period of 45-60 minutes and involves a variety of participants. The objective of a particular walk may vary, but is typically an opportunity for people to reach out to the surrounding community, create a visible presence, and discuss specific topics of salience to the neighborhood along the way. Walks often include specific stops, such as taverns, convenience stores, or locations of actual crimes. Walks can also be directed to look for signs of disorder and involve appropriate law-enforcement, clergy or city services personnel. A great follow-up to a neighborhood walk is a gathering at a local restaurant, church, tavern or residents home to share snacks, stories and camaraderie.



How does the neighborhood walk work?

A walk takes careful planning and consideration. Finding an appropriate meeting location and core group is essential. Typical meeting locations are schools, churches, Safe Places, homes, taverns, restaurants etc. The organizer should consider the weather conditions and the possibility of cancellation and back-up plan for a brief meeting or discussion. Having committed residents is important and some locations will make this easier than others. Time of day is also important for participation. Quickly changing weather conditions after dark in the colder months and hot afternoons in the summer should figure into planning. Walks are a good opportunity for involvement of people from outside the neighborhood. Likewise, public officials, law-enforcement, clergy and city services have an opportunity to be seen interacting with residents and allows opportunities for extended informal interaction between them. Inclusiveness of *all* community stakeholders is the best way to build a strong community.

A theme is also an important consideration, for example a Walk Against Violence visited sites of past shootings or homicides and involved prayers for victims, law-enforcement and the community. A business walk took place in the colder months and involved the local BID and CDC representatives, as well as the Alderman, County Supervisor and Law Enforcement officials. A Walking Block Meeting can create a visible presence and recruit additional members for a resident group. A Safe Place youth walk is a great opportunity for residents to see young people in a positive light.



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Other tips and considerations:

- Walk the route beforehand to time it out and make note of busy intersections etc.
- Make an effort to inform individuals along the route beforehand with outreach
- Always begin and end with an officiation ceremony to welcome and thank the participants
- Provide water or refreshments before and after for participants
- Have someone who is unable to walk participate by staffing the meeting point
- Have a flyer to hand out on the route explaining the goals to residents you meet
- Designate a lead person to introduce the group once inside the business
- Have a future event or meeting date planned to allow people to get involved

Neighborhood walk with Community Partner Maria Sandoval, law enforcement and youth from the United Community Center Safe Place.

