

BUILDING A BLOCK PARTY

AN APPRECIATE PEORIA GUIDE



...BUT WHY HAVE A NEIGHBORHOOD BLOCK PARTY??

A neighborhood block party is the perfect opportunity for neighbors to get together, meet each other, have fun, and work together to improve the community.

8 REASONS TO HAVE A BLOCK PARTY

- To get to know your neighbors.
- To establish long lasting friendships.
- To increase your sense of belonging to a community.
- To learn who might need a little extra help from time to time.
- To encourage neighbors to take pride in the neighborhood.
- To spot and prevent crime by learning who lives where and to understand your neighbor's daily routines.
- To meet some of the long-term residents and learn about your neighborhood's history.
- To have fun – no excuses or reasons are needed to celebrate!



10 STEPS TO HAVING A SUCCESSFUL BLOCK PARTY

Step 1 - Initial Organizing

It's a good idea to find 1 or 2 neighbors to help you with the event. One can take the "Lone Ranger" approach, and it can be a great event. However, it may make it more difficult to find someone else to help organize it next year.

Step 2 - Create an Organizing Committee

If you've decided to include other neighbors in helping to organize the event, it is important to include everyone in any decisions made. It's beneficial to enlist as many neighbors as you can to help out.

What role does the organizing committee play?

- Make decisions about the set up.
- Introduce new neighbors and help them make connections.
- Act as a greeter at the event.

Step 3 – Figure Out the Type of Block Party

Before you think too far ahead into specific details about the event, decide which type of block party will work best in your neighborhood.

Try not to go overboard, it can make people feel the event is too much work...it's always best to keep it simple!

Types of Block Parties:

- Barbeques (organizers purchase all that is needed and neighbors provide the money).
- Picnics (everyone brings their own meal).
- Pot luck (everyone brings one dish).
- Catered (everyone shares the cost and the food is purchased).

Decide whether everyone will bring their own tables, chairs, plates, cutlery, cups, beverages, etc., or if the organizing committee will coordinate to provide the basics for the block party.

If you decide to have a barbeque, decide early on who will bring them to the event and who will operate the grills.

Step 4 – Determine the Size of Your Block Party

In selecting who to invite, use natural neighborhood boundaries where possible (i.e. end of the block). If you are planning a street or cul-de-sac party, you should invite everyone from that area.

Excluding certain neighbors transforms your neighborhood block party into a private, exclusive event and can lead to conflicts with excluded neighbors down the road.

Decide early and make it clear in your flyer if this will be a block party restricted to those on the street/block or whether people can invite friends/relatives (if yes, how many).

Step 5 - Timing Is Key

For a first time block party, distribute the first flyer requesting an RSVP 4-5 weeks before the event. Check-in with other neighbors to make sure that there are no conflicting block parties. Keep in mind that all block parties must end by 10 PM per City ordinance.

Once you have a list of neighbors who have RSVP'd, send out a reminder of the finalized date 2-3 weeks from the block party. Be sure to include an alternate date in case of bad weather!

From yard work to cook outs and bike rides, summer is the most active time of year in most neighborhoods. For this reason, the majority of block parties take place between mid-May and late August.

Lastly, keep in mind who lives in the neighborhood when setting the hours for the party (ie: young couples with children, retirees, adults with no children, etc.)

Step 6 – Find the Perfect Location

Potential Block Party locations:

- A neighbor's backyard.
- House.
- Garage (rainout).
- Alley. ***
- Street. ***
- Park. ***

*** Because these locations are on public lands, an application or permit may be required. Safety needs to always be an important factor in planning. See below!!!***



Step 7 – City Of Peoria Applications and Permits

If you want to hold your Block Party in a public location, the City of Peoria requires you to fill out a Block Party Application.

If this is the first year for your event and you'd like to close a road, you must obtain approval from all residents and businesses that will be affected by the closure of the street.

Annual block parties must apply for a permit each year, but events held for *consecutive years in the same location* are only required to obtain signatures every four years.

Organizers are responsible for picking up all barricades, properly putting them in place, and returning them. Additional information is provided in the Block Party Application, which can be found by following this link [HERE!](#)

Organizers are responsible for making sure that all trash is picked up, no fireworks are used, no alcohol is being sold, alcohol is not consumed by minors, and that the Block Party ends by 10:00 P.M.

Step 8 – Advertising Your Block Party

One of the best ways to encourage attendance is through advertising. Ways to do this include:

- Posting flyers.
- Using social media.*
- Sending emails.*
- Making phone calls.
- Going door-to-door.

Remember that not all neighbors check email or are on social media

Step 9 – Setting Up Day-Of the Block Party

Set up a sign-in book for all attendees to list their name, address, email, and phone number. This will help you to create a directory of neighbors to contact for the many block parties to come.

Nametags can be a great help when making introductions. Decide what you want neighbors to write on their name tags (first and last names, house numbers, etc.).

Line up tables for the food and have a few garbage cans available. Decide whether you will coordinate or everyone will bring their own tables and chairs, plates, cutlery and cups, beverages, etc. If using barbeques, who will bring them?

Step 10 – Activities during the Event

What should we do during the event?

- Visit and eat.
- Games for kids (some organized, some they can plan themselves).
- Take time to introduce one another and point to one's house. This can be done in a game format.
- Encourage the talent in your neighborhood to come forward such as musicians and magicians.