

Community Association Fundamentals

Each common-interest community has its own history, personality, attributes and challenges, but all associations share common characteristics and core principles. CAI developed the Community Association Fundamentals to foster a better conceptual understanding of how associations function and the roles of residents and association leaders.

We hope this primer will help people understand and appreciate the core principles at the heart of the community association model and, even more importantly, inspire effective, enlightened leadership and responsible, engaged citizenship.

1. Associations ensure that the collective rights and interests of homeowners are respected and preserved.
2. Associations are the most local form of representative democracy, with leaders elected by their neighbors to govern in the best interests of all residents.
3. Associations provide services and amenities to residents, protect property values and meet the established expectations of homeowners.
4. Associations succeed when they cultivate a true sense of community, active homeowner involvement and a culture of building consensus.
5. Association homeowners have the right to elect their community leaders and to use the democratic process to determine the policies that will protect their investments.
6. Association homeowners choose where to live and accept a contractual and ethical responsibility to abide by established policies and meet their financial obligations to the association.
7. Association leaders protect the community's financial health by using established management practices and sound business principles.
8. Association leaders have a legal and ethical obligation to adhere to the association's governing documents and abide by all applicable laws.
9. Association leaders seek an effective balance between the preferences of individual residents and the collective rights of homeowners.
10. Association leaders and residents should be reasonable, flexible and open to the possibility—and benefits—of compromise, especially when faced with divergent views.