

Who's Who in Community Associations

While living in an HOA community has many benefits, learning the terminology and getting to know all the key players involved can be challenging. Luckily, we're here to help you discover who's who in your neighborhood so you can make the most of your community living experience.

Developer/Declarant

The declarant is the entity that establishes the HOA, creates the legal documents needed to operate, and appoints the first board of directors. The declarant remains in control of the association until a predetermined number of homeowners occupy the community and can elect their own board of directors.

Builder

The builder is the entity or person who built the homes in the association. If your home is brand new, you can contact the builder for certain warranty items and information specific to the design of your home. In some cases, the declarant and builder are the same.

HOA

HOA is short for homeowners' association. They're established as non-profit organizations to help manage, run, and maintain a community. While HOA is the most common organization name, you may hear others, including property owners' association (POA).

Homeowners

Homeowners comprise the HOA and are responsible for electing a board of directors. HOA membership is mandatory and begins when you **[purchase your property within the association](#)**. Homeowners are required to pay yearly or monthly dues and follow all HOA rules and regulations.

Board of Directors

To function correctly, an HOA needs to have a board that's authorized to act on a community's behalf, create and enforce community guidelines, and maintain shared spaces. Boards consist of community volunteers who are elected by other members of the association. These are the roles and responsibilities of an HOA board:

PRESIDENT

The HOA board president leads the board, handles procedural duties, and is the main point of contact for management partners. This office should be the authority on the rules and laws that govern the board and should take the lead on calling and running all board meetings, which includes managing the agenda. The president should also call for any votes and announce the results.

VICE PRESIDENT

The vice president should support the president and be able to act in their place if necessary. They should be familiar with the same community documents as the president and be able to perform the same duties. A good vice president will help

ensure meetings run smoothly, and that order is always maintained. Typically, they'll also chair larger committees.

TREASURER

The treasurer is responsible for the association funds and maintaining all the board's financial records. From billing and collections to disbursement of funds, the treasurer will oversee all things financial. They can do these on their own, but more commonly, they can also outsource them to an accounting partner. Either way, they should ensure everything is done according to the association bylaws and should lead the efforts on the board's annual budget plans.

SECRETARY

The secretary is responsible for keeping the official records of the board. These responsibilities include **taking meeting notes** and making sure homeowners get notified of all meetings. They should ensure all board documents are well-maintained and accessible to the appropriate parties. They should also ensure that the legal requirements of the board are being met with annual filings and any other required paperwork.

Committee

A committee is a small group of people focused on specific community aspects that may require additional oversight, planning, and execution. Committees allow homeowners to get involved and **help reduce the workload of the board**. Types of committees we recommend starting include:

- Architectural Control Committee
- Neighborhood Welcome Committee
- Social & Event Committee
- Landscape Committee
- Homeowner Education Committee
- Neighborhood Watch Committee
- Finance & Budget Committee
- Contract Review Committee

Management Company

A community association management company, or HOA management company, is often contracted by the board to help fulfill duties the volunteer board members are unable to carry out. Often, these companies will help support maintenance, accounting, and other community efforts depending on the association's needs.

Community Manager

The community association manager (CAM) is the face, and an employee, of the HOA management company. You may see CAMs around the community, at meetings, or when you pay your HOA fees. They're responsible for the overall operations of the association and **advising the board**.

Property Manager

While community managers are responsible for the overall operations of a community, property managers are responsible for overseeing the physical property. Property managers typically focus on rental units and properties and work directly with tenants and owners to help ensure the property is well-maintained.

Professional Advisors

Your association needs the expertise of professional advisors to ensure the community is protected and prepared for the future. The following are professional advisors your community will need to partner with:

ATTORNEY

The association attorney acts as an advisor and advocate for your community. They can recommend action, review policies and contracts, and represent you in legal proceedings.

INSURANCE AGENT

Community association insurance isn't one-size-fits-all. Your community needs a qualified association insurance agent they can consult to help protect the association.

CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT (CPA)

Many associations are legally required to engage the services of a CPA. A CPA will help conduct audits and prepare tax returns and annual financial reports.

Service Providers

A successfully-run HOA also needs multiple **vendors you can rely on** to help maintain and enhance the community. While needs vary by community type and amenity, most communities need service providers for:

- Landscaping
- Pool Services
- Maintenance & Repairs
- Fire Prevention
- Restoration & Construction