

Community Association Fundamentals

Even though we live in an association, you might be surprised how many of our neighbors—owners and renters alike—do not really understand the fundamental nature of common-interest communities. In addition, we know that many others, including the media and government officials, lack a true understanding of the community association (or condominium) concept.

Community Associations Institute (CAI), a national membership organization that represents the best interests of common-interest communities like ours, developed 10 basic principles that answer three essential questions: What is the basic function of a community association? What are the essential obligations and expectations of homeowners? What are the core principles that should guide association leaders?

We are confident you will recognize our community while reading these principles.

1. Associations ensure that the collective rights and interests of homeowners are respected and preserved.
2. Associations are the local form of representative democracy, with leaders elected by their neighbors to govern in the best interest 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 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