



How to Get Started

Purpose

Thank you for your interest in Rebuilding Together. This document is designed to help you understand the organization of Rebuilding Together, our expectations, and the way this program can fit into your community.

Organizational Steps for Getting Started

1. Build your confidence and your knowledge of Rebuilding Together.
2. Build your knowledge of the needs and resources of your community.
3. Meet with as many people in the community as possible.
4. Form a steering committee made up of a broad-based, diverse group of people who have the time and commitment to make Rebuilding Together happen.
5. Determine the best geographic area to serve as the affiliate's service area.
6. Have a preliminary discussion among the entire steering committee regarding budget, fundraising sources and strategy.

1. Build your confidence and your knowledge of Rebuilding Together

- Become intimately familiar with the Rebuilding Together mission statement, statistics, and the "who," "what," "when," and "why" of Rebuilding Together.
- Stay in touch with Rebuilding Together's National Office and share your progress in order to maintain a relationship that supports you with developing and expanding your program.
- View the National video and any videos from nearby affiliates. Read as much of the Rebuilding Together National literature and that of other local programs as possible.
- Call with other local housing and elderly programs in your geographic area and discuss Rebuilding Together.
- Visit other Rebuilding Together affiliates and/or attend their board meeting(s), if possible.
- Attend the National Conference, set for November 2009 in Washington, DC. It's an investment in the future success and excellence of your affiliate. Make it a priority to send key stakeholders to this event.

2. Engage your community.

By building your knowledge of the needs and resources within your community by reviewing:

- Your municipality, county and/or state consolidated plan.
- Your state or local executive summary
- Your United Way report
- Your Association of Nonprofits reports

Complete the *Community Needs Survey* that is part of the affiliation process. Learn the facts and figures for your community and share them when recruiting your steering committee, board members, sponsors, volunteers and advocates

3. Meet with as many people in the community as possible.

Why it's important to make presentations to key community leaders:

- **To securing funding.** Find a *Founding Partner* (\$10,000-25,000). Begin lining up your *House Sponsors* (\$3,500-5,000), and gather *In-kind Donations* (skilled labor, materials, office supplies). Actual funding levels may vary from location to location.
- **To build community awareness** of Rebuilding Together.
- **To build your board.** Give presentations with board-building in mind.

Presentation materials are available from Rebuilding Together's National Office. Use the Speaker Guidelines provided by Rebuilding Together to frame your presentation:

- National video
- Presentation Packet
- National Brochure (can be localized with an address sticker)
- Rebuilding Together Annual Report and newsletters

*Rebuilding Together also has a variety of materials and supplies for sale, such as t-shirts, lapel pins, bumper stickers and nametags. (Ask for a Materials & Supplies price list for additional information.)

Target your Groups

Begin meeting with corporations and small businesses, faith-based organizations, and banks—particularly Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) officers (all banks must meet the statutory obligations of the Community Reinvestment Act). Talk to service organizations (Junior League, Rotary, Kiwanis, Jaycees, Lions, Elks, service sororities and fraternities, etc.). Meet with local government representatives, including the City Council member representing your target area, Mayor, Governor, Representatives, Senators, etc. At the very least, let them know that you're starting a Rebuilding Together affiliate.

Meet with other non-profits and governmental departments that serve your target area and population, such as the local Administration on Aging and housing services groups. Other important groups to contact are: labor organizations; building and contracting companies; real estate, insurance and related housing industry groups; the local Chamber of Commerce; and, of course, your personal contacts.

Presentation Packets

Develop a presentation packet. This packet will initially rely on the strength and reputation of Rebuilding Together as a national organization. You also may want to have a section entitled *Sample City* in which you pick a city that relates in proximity or size to yours and show who sponsored the affiliate in that city, their growth, etc. A section like this will show that there has been a successful program launched “next door” or in a town “just like yours” (the necessary information can be supplied by Rebuilding Together). The packet can detail your goals (e.g. to incorporate, to establish your non-profit status, to focus on a specific neighborhood grassroots organization, to become an incubator for other local programs, etc.). Include the budget, timetable, committee responsibilities, and guidelines for sponsoring a house or rehab project.

As your program enlists steering committee members and sponsors, you can delete the *Sample City* section and build a section on your region. This might include quotations from locally recognized citizens, a list of collaborating groups, sponsors, accomplishments, and a copy of your 501(c)(3) letter.

Following-up

Good communication with community contacts is an important part of building your affiliate’s presence in the community. Always be sure to follow up on any correspondence or meeting. Here are a few great ways to keep the channels of communication open:

- Phone calls following introductory letters,
- Thank-you letters or cards following presentations, and
- Monthly or quarterly updates sent to your developing mailing list.

****Make sure you begin compiling a database of potential donors, sponsors, partners and volunteers, using Microsoft Access or a similar database program, from the start!****

4. Form a steering committee made up of a broad-based, diverse group of people who have the time and commitment to make Rebuilding Together happen

Steering Committee

The individuals selected for your Steering Committee will help to form your affiliate. The Steering Committee will be the heart and backbone of the program. When you incorporate, they may become your board of directors.

Below are a few suggestions to take into account when seeking individuals to serve on your Steering Committee:

- Choose someone who is sold on the program and has “pull” in his/her company and community but is not so busy that s/he can’t give the committee the focus and energy it needs.
- Committee size is recommended to be 20-25 members are recommended, but 12-30 members are fine.
- Have committee assignments in mind as you recruit. .

- Build a broad base by making membership diverse, including a mix of people with corporate, civic, Non-profit, labor, and religious backgrounds. Look at diversity of race, religion, gender, age, and ethnicity right from the start.
- Remember that the Steering Committee may eventually become your board of directors, so be sure to recruit individuals from a broad range of skills and backgrounds from the outset.
- Seek pro-bono legal counsel from a community-minded law firm in your area.
- Seek accounting help--you'll benefit greatly from someone familiar with numbers and budgets, not to mention IRS reporting requirements, etc.

Advisory Board

The individuals selected for your Advisory Board will provide enhanced recognition and connection to the business, government and community leaders in your area. Below are a few suggestions to take into account when seeking individuals to serve on your Advisory Board:

- Choose a high-profile person who believes in the program, but is too busy to serve on the Steering Committee.
 - Possible candidates: Mayor, President of major corporation, etc.
 - If you get a major company committed, see if your contact there can talk to the CEO for you about being on the Advisory Board. Let them know that their commitment is almost entirely *honorary*; be specific about your expectations and strongly urge them to participate in (or at minimum visit) an annual rebuilding event. Ask for the right to seek counsel from time to time, to obtain quotes, and to write a letter of endorsement.
 - Well-known "good person" in the community. This should be someone who is trusted because he/she has no personal agenda that conflicts with the goals of the Rebuilding Together program, has a history of selfless dedication to the needy, and has the ability to open doors for you.
 - Well-respected figure in the field of housing or elderly services. This is the person that everyone goes to with issues related to housing or elderly services. This person knows all the players in the housing community and people listen when he/she speaks.
 - President of a group involved in the industry. Call on a representative of Rebuilding Together's partner associations or consider leaders from the American Institute of Architects, Associated Builders and Contractors, or any big, well-known construction company or home builder.

5. Determine the best geographic area to serve as the affiliate's service area

When choosing your geographic area, consider the following questions:

- Does the name make sense in terms of an identifiable geographical area? (i.e. "East Miami", "Miami", "Greater Miami" or "Dade County")
 - Can you adequately serve the area specified?
 - Is there sufficient need in the area?
 - Are there adequate resources to sustain a program?
 - Is there sufficient leadership to sustain a program?

6. Have a preliminary discussion among the entire Steering Committee regarding budget, fundraising sources and strategy

Carefully consider and reconsider the number of houses you undertake your first year. While you don't want to underutilize your resources, it is extremely important to establish and maintain a reputation for being well-organized and professional at all levels of your program. Many first-year affiliates start with five projects for their first rebuild event.

Develop a tentative budget. Having a tentative budget is extremely important to understanding the financial responsibility you will have in developing this program. A sample budget can be provided by the National Office at your request.