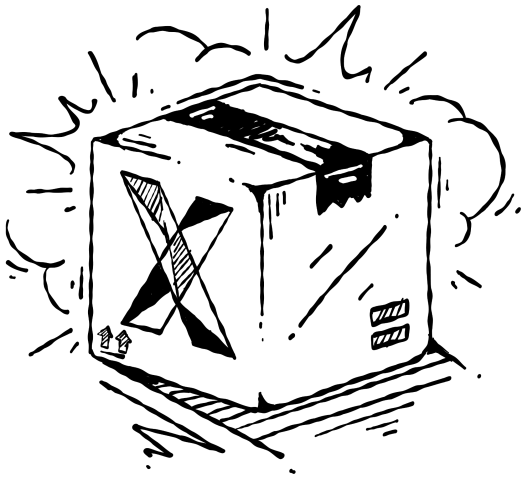


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Community Advocate Training

Core Content - Section 6

RESOURCE PLATFORM - NEIGHBORLINK

Module 6 — Individual → Another: NeighborLink

Why Some Needs Don't Need a Program

Many needs don't require a program at all. They require a person. A leaking faucet. A bathroom handrail. A lawn a neighbor can no longer keep up with. A porch light that's been burned out for months. These are neighbor-sized challenges that large systems were never built to solve — and yet small repairs like these often determine whether someone can remain safely and confidently in their own home.

NeighborLink was founded in 2003 on a simple mission — help neighbors, help neighbors — and has since completed more than 17,000 projects, served more than 7,000 homeowners, and mobilized more than 3,500 volunteers across 25 states. As Community Advocate, you sit right at the intersection of two realities: people who want to help but don't know how to start, and neighbors with needs that no formal program addresses. Closing that gap, on both sides, is your job.

Findhelp or NeighborLink? Knowing Which Tool Fits

Here's the simplest way to tell them apart: does the need require professional eligibility, funding, or documentation? That's Findhelp. Can a caring neighbor with time or a truck meet it directly, with no case management required? That's NeighborLink. Some needs genuinely call for both, and that's fine — the two tools were built to work together, not compete.

Your Two Real Contributions

You have exactly two core contributions to NeighborLink, and running the platform is not one of them — that belongs to your Resource Coordinators and Care Champion.

- Building the volunteer pipeline: recruiting individuals, small groups, churches, businesses, and civic organizations to register as NeighborLink volunteers.
- Neighbor awareness: making sure people with practical, neighbor-sized needs know they can submit a project by calling 888-INFO-CARE or visiting neighborlink.org.

You are not the platform operator. You are the reason the platform has anything to operate on in the first place.

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Recruiting Volunteers, Lane by Lane

Before you recruit anyone else, register yourself as a volunteer at neighborlink.org/volunteer, and if possible, shadow a Resource Coordinator for one shift. You cannot effectively recruit for an experience you haven't had yourself.

Then work each of the Four Lanes with a tailored ask, because a one-size pitch undersells the opportunity to most of them:

- Faith: show the Volunteer Deck and ask a small group to take on one project per quarter.
- Business: frame it as turnkey — zero administrative burden, real community impact. Skills-based volunteers (contractors, landscapers, handy people) are especially valuable here.
- Government: connect to existing city volunteer programs that are already seeking community-engagement hours.
- Nonprofit: cross-recruit with organizations serving seniors, veterans, people with disabilities, the homeless, and similar populations who may already want to serve practical needs.

In every case, the specific ask beats the vague one. "Would your small group be willing to take one NeighborLink project a month?" lands where "we need volunteers" simply does not. And always lead with a story before a URL — "a volunteer showed up with tools on a Saturday and built a wheelchair ramp" moves people far more than any platform description ever will.

How to Get Volunteers Added to NeighborLink

Policy: no Community Advocate may represent NeighborLink in the community without first completing orientation and registering as a volunteer. Here is the actual procedure, start to finish.

Step 1 — Register and Orient Yourself

- Register: sign up as a volunteer at neighborlink.org/volunteer and explore the platform as a new volunteer would. You cannot effectively recruit for something you haven't experienced.
- Review the Overview Kit: watch the Homeowner Experience videos (Amber's Story, Rita's Story, Art's Story, and others) — these are the stories you will tell — and the Volunteer Experience videos (The Neighborhood, Carpenter Sons, Gab & Go) — these are the stories that bring volunteers in.
- Review the Volunteer Deck: your primary group-recruiting presentation tool, available from your Care Champion.
- Review the infographic: available in English and Spanish, from the Overview Kit. This is your printable community leave-behind.

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The NeighborLink "Be a Good Neighbor" leave-behind, with QR code — print and carry these to every recruiting conversation and community event.

- Shadow a Resource Coordinator: for at least one shift, to understand what happens after a project is submitted. Context makes you a significantly better recruiter.

Step 2 — Make Your Ask, Lane by Lane

Bring the Volunteer Deck to a real meeting in each Lane, and close with a specific, dated commitment — not a general "let us know". Have neighborlink.org/volunteer ready on your phone at every event so people can sign up on the spot.

Step 3 — Use the 30-Second Pitch

Internalize a short version of the pitch for each audience, then add one local story to make it real:

- General audience: "NeighborLink is a free platform that makes it simple to help your neighbors with everyday, practical needs — an overgrown yard, a leaking faucet, a handrail that needs installing. You find the project, choose when you can help, and show up."

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- Faith audience: "Faith in action should be simple. NeighborLink gives you a clear next step: a real neighbor with a real need, right in your neighborhood, waiting for someone to show up."
- Business audience: "Your employees want to serve. NeighborLink is a proven platform — 20-plus years, 17,000 projects, 25 states — that makes employee volunteer days simple, with zero administrative burden on you."

Step 4 — Make Sure Neighbors Know How to Submit a Need

Recruiting volunteers is only half the job — neighbors with a need also have to know help is available. There are four ways a project gets submitted:

- Through a Resource Coordinator: the most common path — a participant mentions a need during a Resource Coordination conversation, and the RC submits on their behalf.
- Self-submission at neighborlink.org: neighbors can submit a project directly on the website.
- Self-submission by text: especially valuable for neighbors without smartphone apps or reliable internet access. Your Care Champion has the text number.
- Door hanger: NeighborLink produces a door hanger with submission information — perfect for block-by-block outreach or leaving at a home where you've met a neighbor in need. Ask your Care Champion for the print file.

Whichever channel someone uses, never leave a conversation without a handoff: if someone mentions a practical need — theirs or a neighbor's — give them the text number or URL before you part ways.

If You Personally Find a Need

If you personally come across a neighbor-sized need while you're out in the community, do not submit the project yourself — that's the Resource Coordinator's role, not yours. Collect basic information (name, contact, nature of the need), pass it to your Care Champion or a Resource Coordinator immediately, and follow up to confirm it was actually received.

Your NeighborLink Routine

- Before recruiting anyone: register yourself and shadow a Resource Coordinator for at least one shift.
- Weekly: check in with your Care Champion — share outreach contacts, meeting outcomes, stories gathered, and new volunteer sign-ups.
- After every meeting: submit a brief summary to your Care Champion within 48 hours: attendance, commitments made, follow-up needed.
- After every new volunteer sign-up: pass their contact information and organization affiliation to your Care Champion for tracking.

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- Ongoing: work each of the Four Lanes with its tailored ask, always ending with a specific, dated commitment — not a general "let us know."
- Any time you personally find a need: collect basic information only, hand it off the same day, and follow up within 48 hours to confirm it was logged.
- Monthly: review volunteer numbers with your Care Champion — who is newly active, who expressed interest but hasn't registered — and remember that keeping this recruiting pipeline full is one of your top ongoing priorities, not a side task.

One Last Thing

NeighborLink works because ordinary people are willing to show up for a stranger's small crisis. Your entire job in this module is to make that willingness easy to find and easy to act on — nothing more complicated than that.

Discussion Questions

- What kinds of needs in your community are best suited for a neighbor-to-neighbor match?
- What safety practices are non-negotiable at your site?
- How will you recruit and vet a growing pool of neighbor-helpers?
- Why does the module require the Advocate to personally register and shadow before recruiting others?
- How does the recruiting ask differ across the Four Lanes, and why does that matter?
- What should you do if you personally discover a neighbor-sized need, rather than hearing about it through a referral?

Check List: Before You Move to the Next Module

- ☐ Register yourself as a NeighborLink volunteer.
- ☐ Shadow a Resource Coordinator for at least one shift.
- ☐ Complete NeighborLink platform training.
- ☐ Identify three to five potential neighbor-helpers to invite onto the platform.
- ☐ Practice your 30-second recruiting pitch for at least one audience (Faith, Business, Government, or Nonprofit).
- ☐ Use that pitch in a real conversation this week.
- ☐ Confirm your process for handling a neighbor-sized need you personally discover (collect information, hand off same day, follow up in 48 hours).
- ☐ Set a monthly reminder to review volunteer numbers with your Care Champion.

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