

DRAFT

## WHAT IS ONI?

The Office of Neighborhood Involvement (ONI) was established on the idea that Portland's neighborhoods are an essential part of what makes Portland a vibrant, inclusive and livable city. ONI's mission "is to promote a culture of civic engagement by connecting and supporting all Portlanders working together and with government to build inclusive, safe and livable neighborhoods and communities" (City of Portland, 2010). ONI's objective is to support neighborhoods on a variety of levels with the goal of encouraging civic involvement from all Portland citizens.

The neighborhood association system was formally established by the city council in 1974 and has undergone many changes over the years. As of today, Portland is host to ninety-five neighborhood associations that are supported by seven neighborhood coalitions. Of the seven coalition offices, five are independent nonprofits and two are directly managed by the city (de Morris and Leistner 47). As well as funding the seven neighborhood coalitions, ONI also supports Elders in Action, the Disability Program, Crime Prevention, Graffiti Abatement, Liquor License Notification, and Resolutions NW (mediation services).

Through SE Uplift and the six other neighborhood coalitions; ONI funding supports neighborhood associations with communications; small grants/fiscal sponsorship; liability insurance for neighborhood events; coalition staff who offer direct support to neighborhoods; coalition programs that increase the livability of neighborhoods and communities such as sustainability programs, land use and transportation, and outreach.

With ever-changing demographics, ONI strives to reach out to under-engaged groups in Portland and has created the Diversity and Civic Leadership Program (DCL) that focuses on building "leadership capacity and community organizing among people of color and immigrants and refugees" (51).

The Office of Neighborhood Involvement is unique to Portland and is a city bureau that is most certainly evolving with the times. With a goal of raising the quality of life for all Portlanders, the process of improvement is a slow and steady one. ONI offers citizens an opportunity to be heard at the government level all the while providing neighborhoods and community programs the support and guidance necessary to thrive.

If you would like to learn more about The Office of Neighborhood Involvement, please visit <http://www.portlandonline.com/oni/>.

## Works Cited

*de Morris/Fritz, City of Portland, Oregon – FY 2010 – 11 Requested Budget*

*de Morris/Leistner, From Neighborhood Association System to Participatory Democracy: Broadening and Deepening Public Involvement in Portland, OR, 2009*