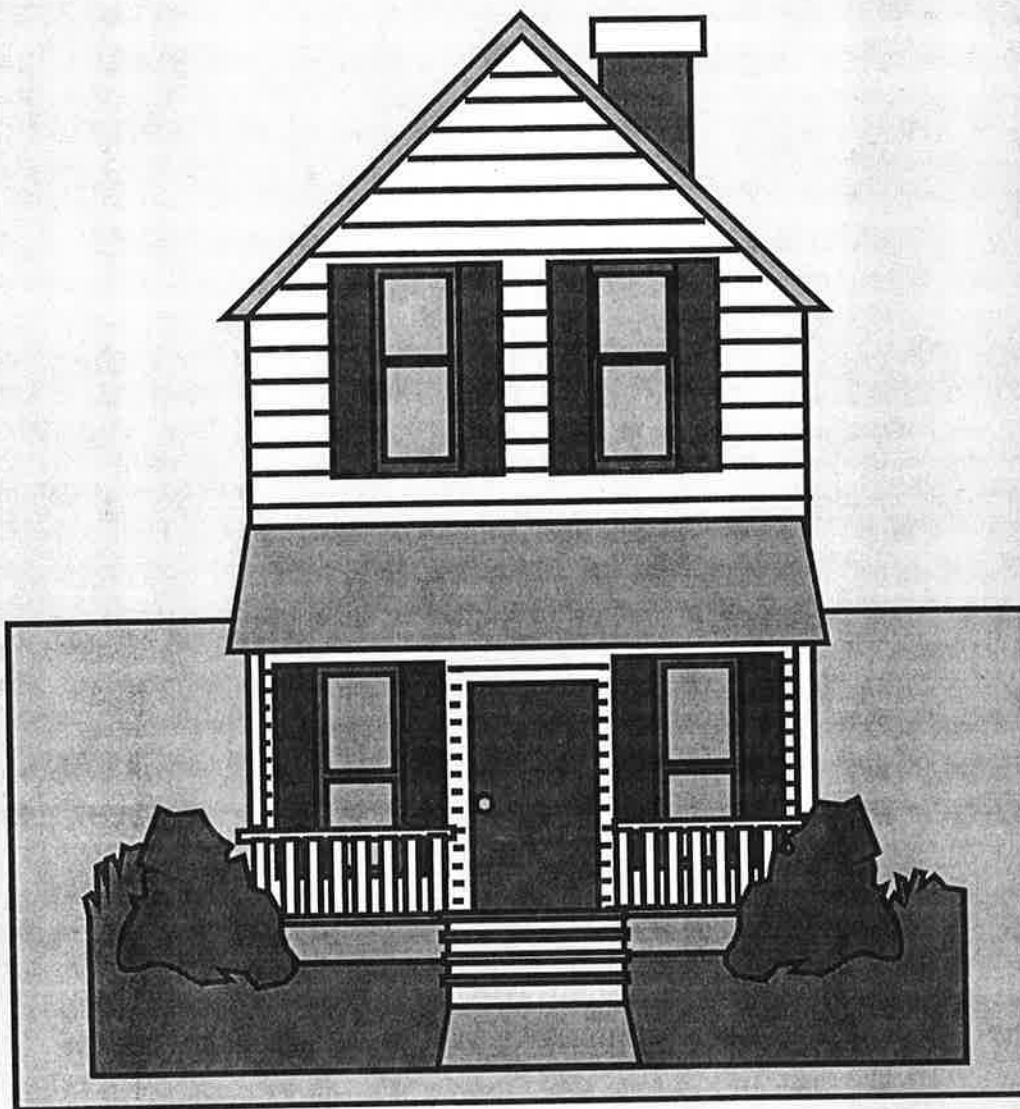


# CITY OF GAINESVILLE

00395--

## Code Enforcement Division Neighborhood Volunteer Program



*306 NE 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
P.O. Box 490  
Gainesville, FL 3260  
352-334-5030*



# **POSTCARD ADMINISTRATION**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The trend toward volunteerism, public/private partnerships and sensitivity to community needs is prevalent in code enforcement today. In the face of greater awareness of code enforcement issues and interest shown by the City of Gainesville citizens, the City of Gainesville wishes to enlist volunteers.

Last year the Code Enforcement Division handled approximately 6,500 cases, many of which were for nuisance violations (such as overgrown lots, junk cars, run-down houses, yard parking violations) A significant compliance rate was achieved after the first inspection and notification to the property owner of the existence of the violation. The first inspection and notification process requires several hours of staff time plus costs associated with property ownership research.

It is the objective of this program to allow properly trained volunteers an opportunity to assist in correcting code violations before turning complaints over to the City of Gainesville. It is not the goal of the program to divert or ignore complaints, but rather to utilize volunteers as the eyes and ears of the community, helping to protect and enhance our neighborhoods.

## **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

The Staff of the Code Enforcement Division will meet with each interested organization or individual to give a detailed educational presentation on what "code enforcement" means. We will explain the concept of mutual interest and involvement regarding neighborhood preservation issues. A volunteer will be selected to serve as a citizen liaison who is responsible for identifying code violations and reporting them to the Code Enforcement Division. At a mutually agreeable time, the inspection staff and the selected volunteer will meet for a training session. Periodic meetings will be scheduled to evaluate the results of this partnership.

The volunteer will serve as a concerned citizen by observing and requesting correction or elimination of code violations. The volunteer has no authorized or implied trespass rights and should only observe violations from the public road right-of-way, or from adjacent properties with the adjacent property owner's consent. Property conditions which are not readily visible and are only observable by unusual measures, such as looking over fences, should not be addressed. This program is not designed to respond to violations of homeowner's associations' restrictive deeds and covenants. Although some restrictions may be similar to the regulations contained in the City Code, the City has no authority to enforce such restrictions.

## **PROGRAM OBJECTIVES**

- To form a partnership with homeowner's associations, neighborhoods and individual residents, that will maintain and enhance the neighborhoods' environment by working together.
- To educate the community on code enforcement issues; to ensure safe, decent neighborhoods for all of the citizens of Gainesville.
- To encourage community involvement; to enlist the assistance of homeowner/neighborhood associations and residents.
- To provide for participation, where nuisance type violations are involved, by the parties with the greatest interest--the residents of the community.
- To direct Code Enforcement Division staff to violations of continuing concern to the community.

## **PROGRAM BENEFITS**

The demands on the City's resources are lessened by:

1. Reducing the number of incoming complaint calls.
2. More efficient use of Code Enforcement Officers' time.
3. Correction of many code violations without City intervention.
4. Quicker response time to neighborhood problems.



## **PARTICIPANT REQUIREMENTS**

1. Devote adequate time to this responsibility to support the program
2. Ensure fair and equal application of this responsibility throughout their assigned neighborhood area.
3. Go on a mobile tour of their area with a Code Enforcement Officer to observe the elements of various code violation situations, first hand.
4. It is expected that periodic personal meetings will take place between the volunteers and the Code Enforcement staff member, to evaluate the effectiveness of efforts in their area and to exchange ideas.
5. Volunteers are invited, but not required, to attend Code Enforcement Board meetings on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month in the City Commission chamber, to observe that aspect of the code enforcement process, or to follow the progress of any case of interest to them.

## **PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION**

The City retains the right to discontinue participation in the Neighborhood Volunteer Program where enforcement liaison participation problems arise that would jeopardize the cooperative and citizen-partnering spirit intended by this program.

# PROGRAM OPERATION

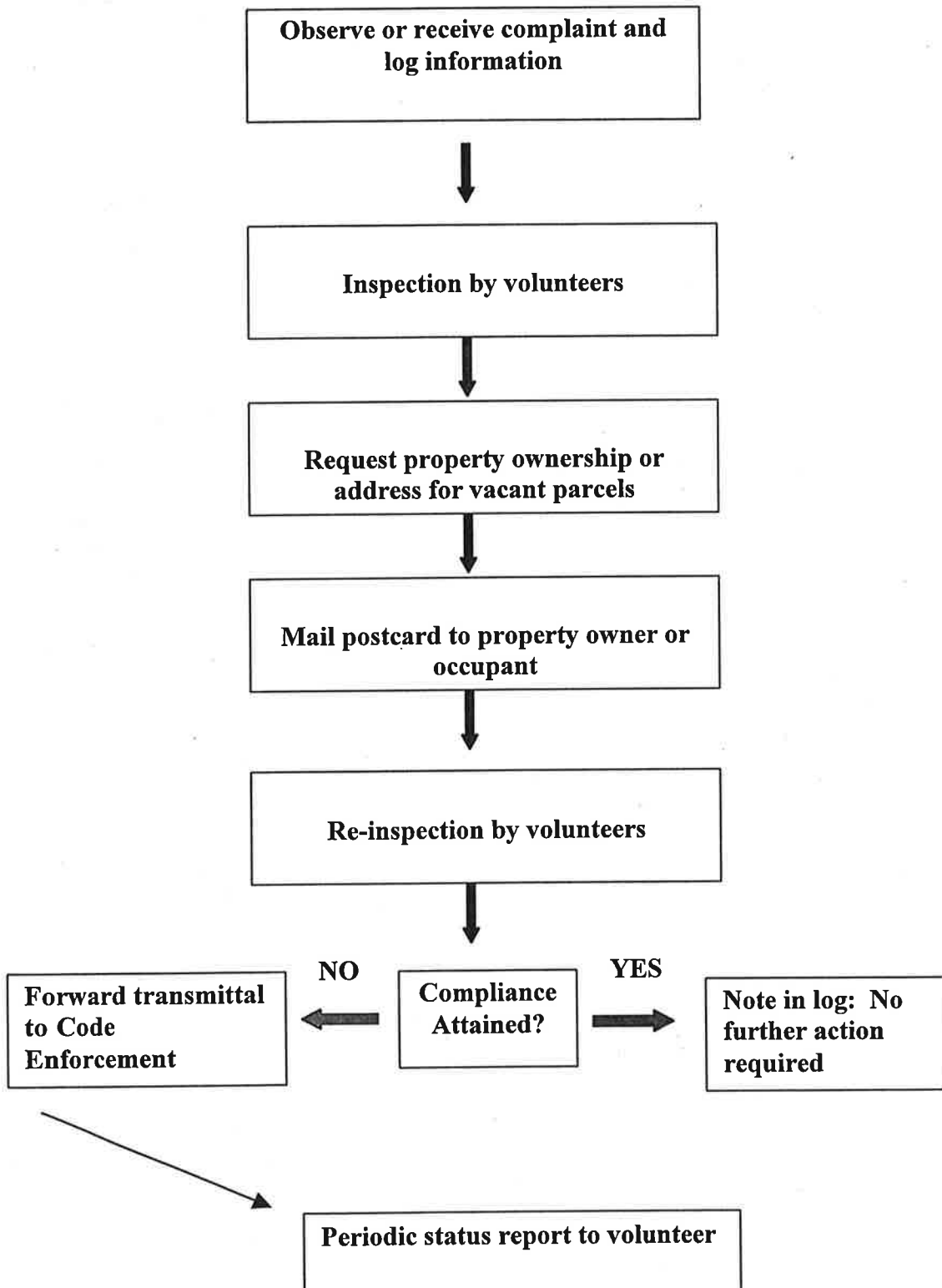
## Neighborhood Volunteer Code Enforcement Program

### COMPLAINT TRACKING PROCESS

The Code Enforcement Division has initiated a program to support the involvement of neighborhood association volunteers in processing nuisance-related complaints. In general, the process works as follows:

1. Citizen volunteers travel through neighborhoods noting violations on the postcard and the date a re-inspection will occur.
2. A postcard is mailed to the owner or occupant of the property by the volunteer informing the property owner or tenant of the problem, requesting his/her cooperation in correcting it, stating that a re-inspection will occur and that it will be referred to the City for possible code enforcement action if not corrected. If the property address of a location cannot be determined by the volunteer, address information can be obtained by supplying an exact location and description of the property to the Code Enforcement representative, telephone 334-5030.
3. The volunteer rechecks the problem 10 days later.
4. If the violation is:
  - Corrected, a notation is made in the logbook and no further action is required;
  - Not corrected, notify the City by utilizing one of the following options. You may mail or hand-deliver the Violation Referral Form to the assigned Code Enforcement representative at the Thomas Center, 306 NE 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, or the information may be called into the Code Enforcement Division between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. at 334-5030 or e-mailed to [codes@ci.gainesville.fl.us](mailto:codes@ci.gainesville.fl.us).

# ACTIVITIES FLOWCHART








# Postcards

The notification postcards are in the following form:

COURTESY NOTICE	
	
Date ___ / ___ / ___	Location _____
<p>Clean, well-kept residences instill pride and are a signal to others that we care about what goes on in our neighborhood. Studies show this can be a major factor in reducing crime and increasing property values. As part of the Neighborhood Volunteer Program, residents are working with the city government to identify problems that violate city code. The following violation(s) has been observed to exist at the above location:</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Accumulation of trash/debris	<input type="checkbox"/> Debris improperly placed at curbside
<input type="checkbox"/> More than 3 unrelated adults	<input type="checkbox"/> Construction without a permit
<input type="checkbox"/> Overgrown vegetation	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-operational vehicle/expired tag
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	
_____	
_____	
<p>Please take the necessary actions to help bring your property into compliance within the next 10 days. If the problem still exists, we will refer it to the Code Enforcement Division of the City of Gainesville as a violation of the City Code. If you have any questions, please call Code Enforcement 334-5030, Monday through Friday, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.</p>	

The reverse side of the postcard is for the violation address shown on the log form.

1. Write the date mailed
2. Write in the property address or location.
3. Next, mark the appropriate violations.
4. Mail the card, note the date mailed on the corresponding log entry and remember to re-inspect the property in ten (10) days.

