COLLECTION III — LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Community Boards in New York City

For NYC residents: how community boards work and how to get involved.

By Daniel P. Devine · Civest Sphere · November 2026

What community boards are

New York City is divided into **59 community districts**, each with a **community board**. Boards are the most local level of city government and the first stop for many neighborhood issues.

Who serves

Each board has up to 50 unpaid volunteer members who live, work or have another significant interest in the district. Members are appointed by the borough president, half of them nominated by the district's City Council members. Each board also has a paid district manager and small staff.

What they do

Community boards are **advisory**, but their recommendations carry weight. They:

- review land use and zoning applications, including through the city's Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP);
- comment on liquor licenses, sidewalk cafés and street changes;
- identify neighborhood needs and make budget requests to the city each year;
- help residents resolve problems with city services.

How to get involved

1. **Find your board.** Look up your community district on the city's website.
2. **Attend a meeting.** Full board and committee meetings are open to the public, with time for public comment.
3. **Join a committee.** Many boards let residents serve as public members of committees without being full board members.
4. **Apply to join the board.** Applications go through your borough president's office, usually once a year.

Why it matters

Community boards are where many decisions about what gets built in a neighborhood start. Showing up early, before projects reach the City Council, gives residents the most influence.

Outside New York City, the closest equivalents are town planning boards, zoning boards of appeals and civic associations. See *How Local Government Works in New York*.

> OFFICIAL SOURCES
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> - NYC Community Boards (https://www.nyc.gov/site/cau/community-boards/community-boards.page)

Last reviewed November 2026. This guide is general information, not legal advice. Laws, deadlines and procedures change, so confirm details with the official source before you act.

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