

South Uptown Neighborhood Association

2026–2028 Equitable Engagement Plan

Neighborhood: South Uptown

Years: 2026–2028

Work Summary

South Uptown Neighborhood Association will continue to prioritize equitable engagement efforts with a focus on two key demographic groups: renters and people of color. Renters make up a significant majority of the neighborhood’s population and are already engaged in Board, committee, and event participation at meaningful levels. Building on this progress, the organization will work to sustain and deepen renter involvement by strengthening outreach through pop-up events, partnerships with apartment management companies, and accessible communications. The Board Explorer Series will provide clear pathways for renters to learn about leadership opportunities, with the goal of increasing both participation and representation in decision-making roles.

At the same time, the organization recognizes the ongoing need to better engage residents of color, who remain underrepresented in neighborhood activities and leadership. Engagement efforts will focus on relationship-building, trust, and visibility, rather than formal data collection. This includes partnering with trusted community connectors, increasing representation in outreach materials, and ensuring events feel welcoming to all residents.

Across all strategies, the organization will take a layered and consistent approach, integrating equity considerations into its existing programs and events rather than treating them as separate efforts. Annual reflection, community feedback, and Board leadership development will guide adjustments over time, with the ultimate goal of ensuring that the organization reflects and serves the full diversity of the South Uptown community.

Targeted Demographic Group #1: Renters

Numbers/ Percentage:

- 67.8% of resident households
- 70% of residents (approximately 4,480 residents)

Program: Renter Outreach

Progress and Context

Since 2023, South Uptown has made significant progress in engaging renters—especially through increased representation on the Board and Committees and stronger participation in meetings and events. For example, the Board of Directors membership includes eight renters out of the eleven total (73%). These gains show that renters are increasingly aware of and connected to the neighborhood association.

Barriers

- High turnover among renters results in a constantly changing population.

- Security access to many buildings limits direct outreach through door-knocking, and many volunteers have expressed they are uncomfortable with the concept of door-knocking.
- Renters often work evenings or weekends, conflicting with meeting and event schedules.
- Some renters remain unaware of the neighborhood association's role or benefits.
- South Uptown is a small, volunteer-led organization with limited capacity, making it challenging to sustain outreach initiatives over time.

Engagement Strategies

- Continue to host annual South Uptown events like the Luminary Skating Party, Chili Fest, Happy Hours, Garden Tour and Bryant Square Park Concert Series and engage renters.
- Host mobile pop-up events near apartment complexes (coffee & donuts in winter, ice cream socials in summer).
- Partner with property managers to include South Uptown materials in new resident welcome packets.
- Continue to offer hybrid meeting options to make participation easier for renters.
- Empower the Livability & Engagement Committee to engage renters and tailor the work of the organization to meet their needs and address concerns.
- Maintain a strong social media presence, focusing on renter-friendly topics (affordable fun, local highlights, events).
- Collaborate with local nonprofits such as Homeline or Renter Unions on renter rights education sessions.
- Launch the Board Explorer Series providing stipends to renters to engage with the organization and potentially run for the South Uptown Board.

Resources

- Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP)
- Neighborhoods 2020: City of Minneapolis Equitable Engagement Fund
- Fundraised resources

Partners

- Apartment owners and management companies
- Minneapolis Parks (Bryant Square Park)
- South Uptown Board of Directors
- Livability & Engagement Committee
- Homeline and renter advocacy nonprofits

Responsible Parties

- Executive Coordinator
- South Uptown Board of Directors
- Livability & Engagement Committee

Quantitative Goals

- Maintain or increase strong renter representation on the Board and Committees.
- Host a minimum of at least 3 focused pop-up events each year.
- Launch the Board Explorer Series in 2026.

Qualitative Goals

- Build a stronger neighborhood identity among renters.
 - Foster awareness of South Uptown as an accessible, relevant, and welcoming organization.
 - Ensure renters see themselves reflected in leadership roles and the organization's activities.
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Targeted Demographic Group #2: People of Color

Numbers/ Percentages:

28.6% of South Uptown residents (approx. 1,800 people)

- 6.7% African American, 429
- 10.6% Latinx, 678
- 4.6% Asian, 293
- 5.9% Multiracial, 380

Program: Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI)

Barriers

- Participation has historically been made up mostly of white residents, so the organization may not always feel like a welcoming space for people of color.
- People of Color live throughout the neighborhood with no clear geographic concentration.
- About 70% of residents are renters, many of whom live in the neighborhood for short periods.
- South Uptown is a small, volunteer-led organization with limited time and capacity to launch and sustain engagement initiatives, especially amid volunteer turnover.
- Census data shows that fewer than 1% of residents speak a language other than English at home, so language access is not a major barrier but also limits opportunities for multilingual engagement.

Engagement Strategies

- Build partnerships with cultural organizations and community groups in nearby neighborhoods (e.g., Lyndale, Whittier) that serve diverse populations.
- Collaborate with local businesses owned by People of Color for co-hosted events, sponsorships, or joint promotions.
- Feature diverse residents and stories on social media and the website to reflect the community's range of backgrounds.
- Continue DEI training for Board members, emphasizing action and accountability.
- Recruit new leaders through personal outreach and partnerships, rather than just formal calls for volunteers alone.
- Collaborate with renter engagement efforts, since many People of Color in South Uptown are also renters.

Resources

- Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP)
- Neighborhoods 2020: City of Minneapolis Equitable Engagement Program
- Fundraised Resources
- Local cultural nonprofits and business associations

Partners

- South Uptown Board and Committees
- Local businesses owned or led by People of Color
- Minneapolis Parks/ Bryant Square Park
- Area nonprofits and community groups

Responsible Parties

- Executive Coordinator
- Board of Directors and DEI Officer

Quantitative Goals

- Increase participation by people of color at South Uptown meetings, events and activities.
- Increase the number of people of color serving on the South Uptown Board through the 2026- 2028 time period.
- Build and sustain at least three partnerships with trusted community partners including business owners, community leaders and nonprofits.

Qualitative Goals

- Build relationships and trust with more People of Color who live and work in South Uptown
 - Increase cultural representation through partnerships, visuals, and leadership
 - Strengthen the perception of South Uptown as a welcoming and inclusive neighborhood organization
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Implementation and Evaluation

The South Uptown Board, in coordination with the DEI Officer, will oversee implementation and review progress annually. Because demographic tracking at events is not practical or appropriate, evaluation will rely on qualitative feedback, partnership tracking, and observed participation trends.

Updates and reflections will be shared in an annual review, and the Equitable Engagement Plan will be reassessed in 2028 for renewal.

2026 Timeline

January – March

- Finalize the 2026 event calendar, social media plan, and communication strategy with a focus on reaching renters and people of color.
- Update and distribute the 2026 South Uptown brochure, highlighting diversity and accessibility.
- Launch and promote the Board Explorer Series, offering renters and people of color a low-barrier way to learn about Board service.
- Partner with trusted community members and organizations to share invitations to South Uptown activities through informal networks.
- Host the Luminary Skating Party, Chili Fest, and Happy Hour events as early engagement opportunities for underrepresented groups.

April – May

- Host the Earth Day Clean Up and additional Happy Hour events to connect with renters and people of color.
- Organize mobile pop-up engagement events in high-renter-density areas scheduled at varied times and locations to reach people with different work and life schedules.
- Build connections with property managers and community partners to reach more renters and people of color directly.
- Host Board Explorer Series workshops designed to welcome renters and residents of color curious about Board and Committee service.

June – August

- Host the Bryant Square Park Concert Series, Garden Tour, and neighborhood Happy Hour events with engagement of underrepresented groups as a core focus.
- Continue pop-up engagement with some events co-hosted or promoted through trusted community partners.
- Host Board Explorer Series workshops designed to welcome renters and residents of color who are curious about Board or Committee service.
- Conduct targeted Board recruitment outreach, prioritizing diverse voices and perspectives.

September – October

- Conduct targeted outreach efforts prioritizing diversity in lived experience and perspectives.
- Host the Annual Meeting, ensuring it is accessible, welcoming, and intentionally designed to encourage participation from underrepresented groups.
- Orient new Board members on equitable engagement strategies and discuss ways to build and sustain renter participation.
- Host the Fall Clean Up and Happy Hour events to sustain momentum.
- Review participation data and feedback to adjust outreach efforts, including the Board explorer Series, and then develop the 2027 Equitable Engagement Timeline..

November – December

- Host a Board Retreat reflecting on 2026 engagement efforts and setting direction for 2027.
- Conduct a year-end renter engagement assessment, incorporating feedback from renters and partners.
- Recognize and celebrate contributions from renters, residents of color and community members who participated in engagement activities.