

TAKE ROOT:



PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Guidebook



TAKE ROOT: Project Development

Dear Colleagues,

As a training and technical assistance provider for grantees of the Corporation for National and Community Service, Hands On Network is delighted to share with you this guidebook on Project Development. Hands On Network has developed a new generation of volunteer engagement techniques—tailored to today’s community service organization. These techniques make the Hands On Network training curriculum dynamic, innovative, impact oriented, and easily applicable to your program.

This guide was developed for national service programs to learn how to create high-impact, well-managed projects that will help you sustain volunteers while increasing your program’s capacity to deliver services. It is meant to be a user-friendly resource for developing high-quality service projects. This guide does not prescribe how your program should be structured; it does, however, provide pointers and resources you can adapt to meet your local program needs.

The goal of this guidebook is to provide information that will help your program take root, leverage volunteers, and grow. To that end, the guidebook contains action-oriented sections to help you work with the community to meet needs, effectively plan and manage projects, and develop a framework for projects. In addition, each chapter includes an activities and templates section with tools to assist you in applying the guidebook content to your program.

If you are interested in further training or technical assistance, please contact us at training@handsonnetwork.org. You can also access free eLearning courses and other valuable resources in the CNCS Resource Center at <http://www.nationalserviceresources.org>.

In Service,

Delores Druilhet Morton
Director, Training and Leadership Development



Table of Contents

Step 1: Focus on Your Community	6
Community Needs Assessment	7
Identifying Potential Projects	8
Activities and Templates	9
My Ideal Community Activity	10
Step 2: Narrow Your Scope	12
Researching the Issue	13
Partnering with a CSO	13
Conducting a Site Visit	13
Deciding on a Project	16
Activities and Templates	17
Project Ideas Activity	18
Step 3: Map the Project	28
Creating a Task List	29
Project Mapping	29
Planning for Reflection and Evaluation	31
Activities and Templates	33
Project Information Report	34
Project Task List	36
Project Supply List	37



Table of Contents

Step 4: Secure Resources	40
Recruiting Volunteers	41
Funding, Products, and Services	41
Orientation and Training	43
Activities and Templates	44
The Ask Activity	45
Step 5: Finalize Your Project Plan	46
Completing the Project Plan	47
Volunteer Communication	49
Safety	50
Contingency Planning	50
Day of Project Checklist	51
Activities and Templates	52
When It Rains, It Pours Activity	53
Day of Project Checklist	53
Volunteer Project Information Form	54
Summary	56
Additional Resources	57



STEP I

Focus on Your Community

OVERVIEW

When you start to plan a service project, it is important to involve the community from the very beginning. What are the social issues that the community is facing? What are the needs of local non-profits, schools, parks, or other community areas? By working with community members, national service programs can identify projects that will make a true impact. This chapter will help you discover ways to focus on the community to identify true needs.

GOALS

- Work with community to identify community issues/needs
- Discover avenues for finding a project

CNCS RESOURCE CENTER — [WWW.NATIONALSERVICERESOURCES.ORG](http://www.NATIONALSERVICERESOURCES.ORG)

- Designing a Service-learning Program in Ten Steps
- Service Learning Project Plan



COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Your national service program may already focus service efforts on a particular issue, such as education. However, community needs assessment is still an important part of designing any service project.

Assessing community needs can be as simple as taking a walk through your neighborhood or as complex as surveying the entire city. The important thing is to focus on the community when identifying what is needed. By working together with community members, you will build community awareness and help ensure community buy-in and support for your service efforts.

Programs can use a variety of methods to assess community needs. You should select one that fits the program's capacity and the scope of the volunteer effort. For a one-day project, you may want to choose an assessment technique that is less time-consuming. If you are committing to a long-term project, you will want to conduct an in-depth assessment to ensure that you are effectively utilizing your resources.

Described below are some ideas for conducting a community needs assessment:

Brainstorm

Gather program staff, volunteers, and/or other community members to brainstorm community issues/needs. As a group, examine the causes and effects of the issue and then brainstorm potential projects to address the needs identified.

Community Dreams

As you meet and mingle with people living in the community you're working with, ask them about the changes they would like to see happen. If they had unlimited resources, what would they like to change? How would they go about changing it?

Community Walk

Hold a forum to collect information from community members about issues/needs. Ask them to offer suggestions for potential projects.



PROJECT DEVELOPMENT Guidebook

Survey

Conduct a formal or informal survey of community members to identify issues/needs. Surveys might include questions such as:

- What problems do you see in the community?
- What are the most pressing issues in the community right now?
- What types of service projects would be most beneficial for the community?
- List two things you want to change in the community.

IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL PROJECTS

In addition to the ideas outlined above, your national service program may have projects or partnerships with specific CSO's already in mind. You can discover and develop potential volunteer projects through these methods:

Request for Projects (RFP)

Putting out an RFP can be a great way to solicit projects for large-scale service events. This will help streamline project development processes by outlining all details of the potential project upfront.

Make Targeted Requests

Most projects have parameters such as timeframes, types of volunteers, issue areas impacted, or geography that will help narrow down project possibilities. As a result, not all CSO's will be able to host all projects. Therefore, it is best to make personal, targeted requests to partners who are known to meet your project's parameters.

Respond to Volunteer Interests

Volunteers may express interests in particular types of volunteer tasks such as painting, reading with children, or affecting particular issue areas such as hunger, homelessness or HIV/AIDS.

At the end of the assessment process, you will probably have a long list of community issues, needs, and potential projects. Working with staff, community members, and others, determine which ones will be the focus of your service efforts. Chapter two will help you narrow your focus and choose your final project.



Activities and Templates

The training and implementation tools in this section will help you begin the project development process by focusing on your community. This section includes:

- My Ideal Community Activity



STEP 2

Narrow Your Scope

OVERVIEW

In your community needs assessment, you identified a community issue on which you want to focus. This chapter will help you narrow your scope so you can develop a project that is effective and manageable.

GOALS

- Research the community issue
- Identify a CSO as a project partner
- Visit the potential service site(s)
- Decide on a project

CNCS RESOURCE CENTER — WWW.NATIONALSERVICERESOURCES.ORG

- Civic Action Guide
- Kids as Planners



RESEARCHING THE ISSUE

The first step in narrowing your focus is to learn more about the issue or issues you identified in the community needs assessment. You need to find some statistics about the issue in your community, the background and underlying causes, and some ideas for projects to address the need. Research what groups—nonprofits, religious groups, neighborhood associations, etc.—are already working around this area. Are they meeting all the needs? If so, you may want to focus your efforts on another issue. However, it is more likely that they would be an ideal partner for your project

PARTNERING WITH A CSO

Once you know what groups in your community are working in a particular issue area, you can approach them about partnering for a project. They may already be one of your program partners, in which case you should have a good understanding of how your organizations will work together and the resources that each brings to the project. If they are a new partner, determine if they are a good fit for your program by reviewing their mission, the resources they offer to their partners, and the services they offer the community.

CONDUCTING A SITE VISIT

Take time to visit the potential project site to determine the greatest needs. Whether you are working at a shelter, a park, or a CSO facility, a site visit will help you identify potential projects.

Schedule a time to visit the project site with at least one representative from your CSO partner. If possible, you should visit with key stakeholders and decision makers such as the volunteer coordinator and/or maintenance staff. This will ensure that critical decisions that can affect the project development process can be made quickly. Also, by involving key stakeholders in the project planning process as early as possible, it is more likely that the CSO representative will be able to garner support for the project as well as increase the likelihood of obtaining resources they would not have been able to otherwise obtain. If a project has well-rounded community support, your program can more effectively apply resources toward its success.



PROJECT DEVELOPMENT Guidebook

During the visit, ask questions that help you understand what the agency's greatest needs are and the ways that ongoing or one-time volunteer support can have the greatest impact. While touring the site to review potential projects, keep in mind the following elements of a successful project:

- Does the project build upon and promote positive relationships within the community?
- Will the work completed make a difference to the organization, clients, or community?
- Will clients/community members benefit directly or indirectly?
- Is it a project the community genuinely wants?
- Will the project generate or save money for the organization?
- Is the project volunteer friendly?
- Will volunteers be utilized effectively during the project?
- Are special skills required? If so, are there opportunities to be trained in new skills?
- Are volunteer leadership opportunities available?
- Will volunteers feel as though they have completed something worthwhile when they are done? Can they see some result from their efforts (clients' smiling faces, cleaner yard/park, freshly painted walls, etc)?

You might be hoping to organize a large event for many volunteers and find yourself with a project that seemingly can't provide enough work for everyone. During the site visit, you can explore ways to expand the project. Walk around the project site and view all areas that might not initially seem to be feasible project task areas. You may find a room that needs painting or a great place for landscaping. You can also discuss the needs, wants, and dreams of the CSO staff. As you listen to their responses you will begin to see possible project ideas that can be developed. You should write down any ideas that you have and discuss them with your team and project partners.

Be sure that you manage the expectations of the CSO contact person. Help him/her to see both the possibilities and limitations of working with volunteers on the project. Also, be clear about budget and time constraints for tools and materials. Do not "over promise" as you expand the project. If you have a question regarding the feasibility of any project task (i.e., scope of task, tools and materials needed, volunteer limitations, time constraints), clearly communicate to the CSO representative that you will get back to him/her with a decision on the expansion. Promising more than you can deliver can hinder your ability to develop the best possible project. Be realistic in what you can deliver.



Here are a few logistical things to discover during your site visit:

Verify directions

As you drive to your initial site visit, take note of the driving directions that were given to you. Make sure that they are accurate. You will later need to provide driving directions to your volunteers and you won't want them to get lost!

Become familiar with the site and its amenities

Important details about the site should not be overlooked, including accessibility to water (for cleanup, drinking, etc.), restroom facilities, adequate parking, first aid kits, and nearest hospital.

Locate storage

Locate a secure place to store all your tools and materials prior to the project. Any tools or materials missing on the morning of the event will make it difficult to complete a successful project. Make sure the tools and materials will be easily accessible on the day of the event.

Locate a secure area to place your volunteer belongings the day of the project

Many volunteers will come with jackets, purses, and/or other personal items that may need to be placed somewhere away from the activities.



PROJECT DEVELOPMENT Guidebook

DECIDING ON A PROJECT

Once you have assessed the needs of the community, researched the issue, contacted CSO partners, and visited the prospective service site, it's time to decide on the project. There is a great variety among kinds of volunteer projects, so it is important to define your scope. The scope will dictate how large or small it is, the intended impact, the duration, and the general theme of the project.

When selecting a project, pay close attention to:

- Required time/days to complete the project
- Overall project scope: Can the project be scaled up or down as needed?
- Diversity: Can a broad spectrum of community members participate?
- Overall cost of producing the project
- Weather impact: What happens in case of inclement weather?
- Accessibility to building and facilities
- Amount and type of skilled labor needed

In addition, you should decide whether to plan a one-time, special-event project; an ongoing series of projects; or a combination. A one-day event could be a large project involving hundreds of people or it could be small group of volunteers working together on a service project for a day. Ongoing projects engage volunteers on a consistent basis, providing the opportunity to go beyond a one-time experience and have a sustained experience on the community.

Now that you have selected the project, is time to develop the plan for how you will implement and manage the service event. Chapter three will walk you through the project mapping process.



Activities and Templates

The training and implementation tools in this section will help you continue developing your project by narrowing your scope. This section includes:

- Project Ideas Activity



PROJECT DEVELOPMENT Guidebook

PROJECT IDEAS ACTIVITY

Working with your small group, use the Elements of a Successful Project to review one of the project ideas outlined below. Will the project be successful? What information is still needed? Can you alter the project to achieve the elements of success? Is this a project your national service program would undertake?

Elements of a Successful Project

- Does the project build upon and promote positive relationships within the community?

- Will the work completed make a difference to the organization, clients, or community?

- Will clients/community members benefit directly or indirectly?

- Is it a project the community genuinely wants?

- Will the project generate or save money for the organization?

- Is the project volunteer friendly?

- Will volunteers be utilized effectively during the project?





- Are special skills required? If so, are there opportunities to be trained in new skills?

- Are volunteer leadership opportunities available?

- Will volunteers feel as though they have completed something worthwhile when they are done? Can they see results from their efforts (clients' smiling faces, a cleaner yard/park, freshly painted walls, etc.)?

1. Painting Project

Description:

Painting is a relatively easy way to engage many volunteers while assisting a community organization with renovations. Simple painting projects to consider are walls (interior or exterior), school classrooms or cafeterias, bedrooms or other living areas at a shelter or group home, park or neighborhood block wall fences, and many others. Having one maintenance person paint a room may take many long hours or even days, but with a group of volunteers it can be easily conquered in as little as 3 or 4 hours! This is a good activity for a day of service or a one-time group project which requires little or no predetermined skill level from volunteers. Volunteers will work alongside kids to paint a wall mural.

Community Partner:

The partner for this project is the Baldwin County Arts Center, an organization that offers after-school and summer arts classes to elementary and middle school students in the immediate vicinity of the arts center. Most of the students enrolled in the after-school program are also participants in the county's free lunch program. The Baldwin County Arts Center has been a part of the community for 16 years and has seen a steady decline in county funds for its support. As a result, repairs and upgrades have been delayed in order to maintain programs and services.





PROJECT DEVELOPMENT Guidebook

Targeted Outcomes:

- Support organization with labor intensive painting needs
- Revitalize the peeling paint, or other dilapidated conditions
- Change the look and feel of a dark room with a lighter, brighter color, or give character and warmth to a stark atmosphere and eliminate blight

2. Curbside Address Painting Project

Description:

Painting addresses on curbsides is a relatively easy way to engage volunteers while assisting partner organizations with simple neighborhood renovations. Such painting projects not only bring uniformity to a community but can also help emergency personnel easily locate residents in need of assistance.

There is a substantial quantity of homes in need of painted curbside addresses. As a result, this project can accommodate almost any size group of volunteers. Volunteers can be placed in groups of two to four people, with each group dispersed to different areas around the neighborhood in need of painted curbside addresses. This allows for various teams of volunteers to work simultaneously to complete a project.

Community Partner:

The partner for this project is the East Side Neighborhood Association. The neighborhood was built during the 1950's and many of the families have lived in the area since that time. A large percentage of the residents are senior citizens with limited incomes. The goal of the association is to maintain the beauty and safety of the neighborhood for all residents.

Targeted Outcomes:

- Engage volunteers of various skill levels in hands-on service
- Support organizations with specific painting needs
- Bring uniformity to a community
- Assist emergency personnel with easy and accurate identification of homes





3. Playground Games Project

Description:

Providing playground games (or touching them up) for service organizations and schools is a relatively easy and volunteer-friendly project. Playground games include: a USA map, world map, basketball lines, Hopscotch, Four Square. This project is a great way to provide volunteers with an instant sense of accomplishment and service organizations with a sense of community through these educational and recreational activities for youth. Volunteers can choose to create one playground game, multiple playground games, or multiple versions of one playground game, depending on the need and wish of the partner organization and the number of volunteers available.

Community Partner:

The partner for this project is Oak Lawn School, a private school in an upscale neighborhood. The Oak Lawn Parents' Association built three playground games a few months ago. Current volunteers can touch up scuff marks on the paint and draw plans for new game, to be presented for approval at the next association meeting.

Targeted Outcomes:

- Provide children with a fun, educational and recreational outlet
- Provide volunteers with a meaningful way to have a positive influence on children
- Brighten up a playground
- Support shelters and school programs with additional resources

4. Landscape Cleanup Project

Description:

Landscape cleanup projects are an effective and efficient way to utilize groups of unskilled or semi-skilled volunteers. This project involves weeding, pruning, raking, trimming, mowing (if necessary) and the general detailing of overgrown landscape.





PROJECT DEVELOPMENT Guidebook

Community Partner:

The partner for this project is the Adams Historical Society. Adams is a quaint town with a long and rich history. Several historical figures, including authors, statesmen, and early pioneers, are buried in the Adams Cemetery. The cemetery is in a residential neighborhood, whose residents use the paths through the cemetery for exercise. Due to budget constraints, the city cannot support the upkeep of the cemetery. The cemetery is now overgrown with weeds, wild bushes and large trees. The Historical Society wants to clean up the cemetery as a way to preserve the history of the town and provide a safe place for residents to exercise.

Targeted Outcomes:

- Improve the look of a neighborhood and promote community pride
- Provide a cost-effective improvement
- Engage a large group of volunteers

5. School or Community Garden Project

Description:

Community or school garden projects are an effective and rewarding way to use a combination of unskilled and semi-skilled volunteers. The volunteers will plan, create, and maintain a garden for a school, neighborhood, or community service organization. This project involves developing a garden plan, ground preparation, and planting and maintaining multiple types of gardens.

Community Partner:

The partner for this project is the Community Food Bank. The Food Bank is going to work with the residents of a community to plant and maintain a vegetable garden in a vacant lot in the neighborhood. Many of the residents receive food assistance from the Community Food Bank; the residents are excited about growing their own food close to home, but they have no tools or expertise in how to make the project happen.





Targeted Outcomes:

- Provide an educational opportunity for those who plant and maintain a garden
- Improve the look of a school or neighborhood
- Provide a variety of year-round volunteer opportunities
- Engage a large group of volunteers
- Create a harvest of vegetables, flowers, herbs and/or flowers

6. Kids Arts & Crafts Night Project

Description:

An arts and crafts night (or day!) is one of the easiest projects to organize and one of the most rewarding for children, partner organizations, and volunteers. This project offers project leaders a great deal of flexibility with resources, volunteers needed, time required, and partner organization involvement.

Community Partner:

The partner for this project is the “Kidz Court” youth center at the John Lee Homes, a public housing development. Kidz Court has one part-time staff member and a budget that covers only the most basic supplies for after-school activities. The center has a small meeting room with three tables, a TV room, and restroom facilities.

Targeted Outcomes:

- Provide children with positive adult role model interaction
- Provide children with a positive creative outlet
- Provide volunteers with a meaningful way to interact with and have a positive influence on children
- Support organizations such as shelters and after-school programs with additional resources and support





PROJECT DEVELOPMENT Guidebook

7. Neighborhood Cleanup Project

Description:

Neighborhood cleanups are an easy way to engage large numbers of volunteers to complete a sizeable amount of work on a limited budget in a comparatively short amount of time. There are many resources available in planning a neighborhood cleanup and it can be a great way to engage city officials and local residents in a meaningful way.

Community Partner:

The partner for this project is the Inter-faith Coalition, a group composed of several local churches with a focus on making the city a safer, healthier, and more beautiful place. The Inter-faith Coalition's current mission is to clean up the trash and graffiti on Henderson Avenue, a street that connects a low-income community with a park. The coalition cleaned up this street last year but their results were short-lived.

Targeted Outcomes:

- Reduce litter and improve the appearance of a neighborhood
- Create a sense of community and pride among neighborhood residents
- Increase community awareness
- Lay the groundwork for maintaining a clean neighborhood over time

8. House Exterior Painting Project

Description:

Painting projects are one of the most effective and efficient ways to utilize large groups of unskilled or semi-skilled volunteers.

Community Partner:

The partner for this project is the Porter Children's Society. The society sponsors several group homes for abused and neglected children. The home on Spruce Street was damaged in a recent storm. The Society funded repairs to the roof and walls but was unable to hire painters to finish the work. Residents of this home include the parents, two teens, three elementary-aged children and an infant.





Targeted Outcomes:

- Improve the look of a neighborhood and promote community pride
- Cover graffiti
- Engage a large group of volunteers
- Assist a low-income senior or family in need

9. Recreation Day Project

Description:

Recreation Day is a day of fun outdoor activities geared toward elementary and middle school-aged children. These activities are very easy to put together, oversee, and run. This project can serve as an independent event or as part of a larger children's fair or day of service. Virtually every activity can be modified or improvised as the number of children or volunteers increases or decreases. This project not only brightens the lives of the children being served, but it is incredibly rewarding for the volunteers as well.

Community Partner:

The partner for this project is the Chamber of Commerce, the sponsor of the annual Spring Fling. The event is held on the courthouse square and is well attended by residents from throughout the town. The Spring Fling includes storytellers, vendors with "freebies" as well as merchandise to sell, a talent competition, an antique car show, speeches by the mayor and other officials, and a pot luck dinner provided by the Ladies Auxiliary. This year the Chamber of Commerce would also like additional volunteers to organize activities for children such as a cake walk, face painting, and a coloring contest.

Targeted Outcomes:

- Provide children with a creative and constructive means to release their energy
- Provide children with positive and meaningful interactions with adults
- Support organizations such as schools and shelters by bringing recreational activities to the children being served





PROJECT DEVELOPMENT Guidebook

10. Themed Fair Project

Description:

A themed fair is an excellent way to bring education and information to a community or neighborhood in a fun and entertaining way for children and families. It is a scaleable project that can engage a small or large number of children and volunteers. A themed fair includes a variety of fun and educational “stations” manned by volunteers, where children can play or learn information related to the concept of the fair.

Community Partner:

The partner for this project is the International Student Association at the local college. They want to work with community volunteers to sponsor an international fair where children can learn about culture, games, and food from different countries. They can reserve space, tents, tables, and chairs from the college, but they need volunteers to help with planning, marketing, and conducting the event.

Targeted Outcomes:

- Provide children with positive adult interaction
- Present children with a fun, educational, and creative way of learning
- Assist community organizations, such as schools and shelters, with additional resources and support
- Educate and inform children members on an important topic or subject (i.e., Martin Luther King, Jr., Cesar Chavez, health, reading)



PROJECT DEVELOPMENT Guidebook



NOTES



STEP 3

Map the Project

OVERVIEW

As you narrow the scope of your project and determine what you are going to do, you will need to formulate ideas for how you can achieve your goals. In order to have a successful service project, you have to plan well. You need to prepare for every detail from the number of volunteers to the method of reflection. This chapter will help you map out your project so that you work effectively, meet your goals, and make an impact on the community.

GOALS

- Create a task list
- Design a project map
- Plan for reflection and evaluation

CNCS RESOURCE CENTER — [WWW.NATIONALSERVICERESOURCES.ORG](http://www.NATIONALSERVICERESOURCES.ORG)

- Outlining Steps for Planning, Implementing, and Assessing a Service-learning Project
- Using the PARE Model in Service-learning



CREATING A TASK LIST

Part of the planning process is determining the tasks involved in completing the project. Consider what you want to accomplish and the tasks needed. Then, create a comprehensive list of the assignments and the number of volunteers needed for each task. If there are multiple goals, prioritize them according to each task's importance. This list will guide you as you recruit volunteers and plan the details of the day.

PROJECT MAPPING

An important part of the project development process is determining the resources you need to complete the project, including human, material and financial, and educational. The project mapping tool in the activity book will help you work through each of these areas.

Human Resources

You have already created a task list; now, determine the number of volunteers you need to complete these tasks. Establishing volunteer needs can be a challenge. Consider these variables:

Volunteer skill levels — Is the work appropriate for beginners or do you need more skilled volunteers?

Volunteer age — What is the age limit for the project?

Duration of project — What is the time commitment required?

Availability of supplies — Will you have enough supplies so that every volunteer has the necessary tools to be occupied throughout the project?

Physical space available to perform the work — How large is the service site? How many people can comfortably work there?

Material and Financial Resources

In addition to assessing your volunteer needs, you will also need to address your tangible resource needs. Determine what supplies, materials, goods, and services you need in order to complete your project. With your project partners, strategize about the types and amounts of resources that are needed. Make your list as comprehensive as possible, including resources for every aspect of the project from nametags and refreshments for



PROJECT DEVELOPMENT Guidebook

volunteers to tools and restroom facilities.

You will be able to work with your project partners as well as your national service program partners to secure many of the resources at no cost. In addition, think about businesses, community members, and other organizations. What resources can they offer to help you carry out the project? Consider things such as supplies, meeting space for volunteer orientation, printing of marketing materials, and consulting/professional services.

While in-kind contributions will help you complete the project, some items will require financial resources. As you list the supplies and materials needed for the project, note the ones that you will need to pay for. How many financial resources will you need to cover these expenses?

Educational Resources

You will need to consider how you will orient and train the volunteers working on the project. In order for your volunteers to be an effective part of the project, they need to understand the issue that the project addresses and the impact it will make on the community. Volunteer orientation can be conducted prior to the project or included as part of the events on the actual day of service.

Orientation should include a brief overview of the CSO's mission and services and how volunteer support is contributing to that mission. To incorporate service learning into the project, discuss the community issue that is being addressed by the agency and/or the project. A brief history of the issue, current statistics, current events related to the issue area (e.g., legislation activity), and other civic engagement opportunities linked to this issue (advocacy training, future service projects) are all extremely helpful in educating volunteers. Orientation should also include an outline of the project and what volunteers will be doing during the project, so that everyone knows what to expect and what is expected of them.

The orientation and education portion of the project has many positive impacts on volunteers. It allows them to:

- See the impact they are having on the agency and its clients
- Feel a greater part of a whole, when they see all the services the agency provides
- Better understand the critical needs of the community
- Better understand how to effect change within the issue area being addressed



In addition to orientation, you may need to train volunteers for the work they will be doing. You may recruit volunteers who already have the necessary skills; however, many volunteers will need some instruction. If volunteers are prepared for the project, they will feel more comfortable with the work, the project will run more smoothly, and your team is more likely to achieve its goals for the project.

Plan for what resources you need in order to orient and train the volunteers to the project. Consider these things:

Time — When will you conduct the orientation and training? How much time will you need? Will you need to conduct more than one training session?

Location — Will orientation and training be held at the service site or another location? Do you need a large space, chairs, tables, electricity?

Facilitators — Can staff lead orientation and training or will you need another trainer with project-specific skills? Is on-site training required and, if so, who will lead it? In addition, you will need someone from the partner agency to speak to volunteers about the mission of the CSO, challenges they are facing, how the project will impact the organization, and how volunteers can become involved on an on-going basis.

Instructional materials — Will you need printed materials, a PowerPoint presentation, or on-line training?

PLANNING FOR REFLECTION AND EVALUATION

Reflection and evaluation are an important part of a service project. Reflection is a process through which volunteers think about their personal experiences. Evaluation is intended to assess the project. You should take time before the project to plan how you will incorporate these steps into the overall service activity.

Reflection

Throughout the project, provide structured time for volunteers to think and talk about their service experience. This time of reflection can create a stronger sense of accomplishment, establish a deeper connection to the community, deepen volunteers' understanding of the social issue your project addresses, and increase their commitment to service.



PROJECT DEVELOPMENT Guidebook

Reflection is designed to encourage volunteers to examine the project in terms of what they did, what they learned, how it affected them, and their next steps. Reflection can take many forms. Volunteers can have a group discussion, write about their experience, create a photo-journal of the project, or respond to quotes about service. When planning your project, decide which form of reflection you will use. Tailor the reflection activity to the project; for example, if volunteers are assisting with arts and crafts classes at a day care, they can create simple art project about their service experience.

Evaluation

National service programs should always evaluate their service efforts with staff, volunteers, and community members. In addition to providing data for grant reporting requirements, evaluation will give you valuable information to show the impact of the project on the program and the community. Evaluation will also help you in planning, managing, and implementing your next project.

As part of your project development, plan how you will evaluate the project, whom you will involve, and how you will use the results. You can consider three types of evaluation:

- Goal-based: Did you meet the goals of the project?
- Process-based: Was the project planned, managed, and implemented effectively?
- Outcome-based: Did you achieve the objectives of the project?

Now you have determined what you need for the project, from volunteers to supplies. In the next chapter you will explore ways to acquire the resources you need.



Activities and Templates

You can map your project by using the training and implementation tools in this section. This section includes:

- Project Information Report
- Project Task List
- Project Supply List



PROJECT DEVELOPMENT Guidebook

PROJECT INFORMATION REPORT

Agency: _____ Project Address: _____
Project Date: _____ Project Time: _____

Contacts

	National Service Program	Agency	Volunteer Leader
Name:	_____	_____	_____
Phone:	_____	_____	_____
E-mail:	_____	_____	_____

Project Details

Briefly describe the project: _____

Is prep work needed? Yes: _____ No: _____
If yes, what is needed? _____
Who will do the prep work? _____

Contingency Plans

Briefly describe the back-up projects: _____

How can this project (or parts of the project) proceed in the event of rain? _____

Are other events or projects occurring on-site that day? Yes: _____ No: _____
If yes, what is the impact on this project? _____



PROJECT DEVELOPMENT Guidebook



Safety

Emergency Contact: _____ Phone: _____

Briefly describe safety/emergency plan: _____

Volunteer Information

Volunteers needed: _____ Minimum age: _____

Things to bring or wear: _____

Are food and beverages provided? Yes: _____ No: _____

If yes, who will provide? _____

Does the project have restroom facilities? Yes: _____ No: _____

If no, describe alternative: _____

Is the project site accessible for persons with disabilities? Yes: _____ No: _____

How will volunteers pre-register? _____

Whom should volunteers contact with questions before the event? _____

Provide detailed driving/public transit directions to the project site: _____

What time should volunteers arrive? _____

Where should volunteers park? _____



PROJECT DEVELOPMENT Guidebook



NOTES



STEP 4

Secure Resources

OVERVIEW

You have selected your project and identified the resources needed to complete it. How will you secure the items that you need? Recruiting volunteers is key to the success of the project. Without the right volunteers filling the right roles, your project won't get very far! You also need to make sure that you have enough material and financial resources to accomplish your goals. In this chapter, you will learn ways to acquire these resources.

GOALS

- Recruit volunteers
- Acquire funding, products, and services
- Design volunteer orientation and training

CNCS RESOURCE CENTER — [WWW.NATIONALSERVICERESOURCES.ORG](http://www.NATIONALSERVICERESOURCES.ORG)

- Asking for Donations
- Writing a Powerful Statement of Need



RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS

To successfully complete your project, you will need volunteers. If you have too few participants, the project will likely go unfinished. If you have too many volunteers, some will have little to do and might feel that their time was ill spent. You have already created a task matrix and determined the number of volunteers you need to fill specific positions. Now it's time to recruit them!

When recruiting volunteers, remember that the personal ask is always the most compelling! Consider using volunteers from a partner agency or approach other groups such as unions, sororities/fraternities, civic organizations, teacher's associations, or independent living homes. You can also display recruitment information through the internet, newspapers, local fairs, schools, community bulletin boards, restaurants, and other interesting places.

Volunteers come in all shapes and sizes: male or female, child or adult, disabled or able bodied, various races, religions, sexual orientations, and income brackets. Not all volunteers look the same! Not all types of volunteering will appeal to all people, so have diverse volunteering opportunities available and target recruitment in ways that will appeal to different groups.

FUNDING, PRODUCTS, AND SERVICES

You can obtain funding, products, and/or services for your project in several ways. Grants, gifts, and in-kind donations are a great way to get support from individuals, corporations, and community organizations. Contact businesses in your neighborhood or companies that already have a connection to your clients or mission, etc. Whom do you know?

Below you will find some basic ideas of how you can obtain various resources/support for your service project(s).

Businesses

- Corporate sponsorships to support staffing and operations
- In-kind donations (like beverages, snacks, printing of course materials)
- Meeting space



PROJECT DEVELOPMENT Guidebook

Colleges and Universities

- Community research
- Course Presenters
- Interns to support program development, marketing and evaluation
- Meeting space

Faith Groups

- Community research
- Course presenters
- In-kind donations
- Meeting space

Foundations

- Grants to support staffing and operations
- Technical assistance for program development, marketing and evaluation
- Community research and presenters

Neighborhood Associations/Civic Groups

- Community outreach and recruitment
- In-kind donations

Non-profits

- Grants to support staffing and operations
- Community research
- Course presenters
- Community outreach and recruitment
- Meeting space

Develop a strategy for approaching a group or business about donating money, services, or in-kind goods. Identify the correct people to contact and make a targeted request that appeals to their needs/wants. Map out a case for support that expresses why the project is important, the impact it will create, your team's ability to complete the project, and how the group/business can be a part of the effort. Be specific about what you need from them, whether it is funds to purchase a certain item, three hours of consulting time on

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT Guidebook



a particular topic, or contacts to other like-minded organizations that might want to be involved. Prepare your strategy and then ASK!

Make connections that count! Here are some tips:

- Start with people you know (family, friends, neighbors, co-workers).
- Ask people you know to engage their friends to support your project.
- Partner with associations and institutions in your community. Businesses, non-profits, community centers, colleges, and neighborhood associations can help you recruit participants, secure donations, obtain meeting space, etc.
- Talk personally with people to “sell” your project and get their support.
- Know what you need and ask people how they can contribute.
- Create and post fliers in your community. Be sure to include e-mail and phone contacts.
- Publicize your project in local newspapers, websites, and newsletters.

Don’t be afraid to “tap” people’s emotions (happiness, anger, fear, passion) and incite them to get involved.

Try creative outreach, such as posting flyers or hosting outreach stations at local corner stores, bus stops, fast food spots, or other informal gathering places.

ORIENTATION AND TRAINING

During the project mapping phase you planned your orientation and training and identified the resources you need. Look at the list of partners and potential partners and determine what resources they can offer for orientation and training. Consider asking for meeting space, printing of materials, or experts to facilitate training. Don’t forget to include representatives from the CSO to share about the agency and the impact the project will have on the community.

You have planned your project and identified and secured the resources you need to complete your project. As the day of the project approaches, it’s time to finalize your plans. The next chapter will help you take care of the final details so that your project is a success.



Activities and Templates

By using the training and implementation tools in this section, you can prepare to secure the resources you need for your project. This section includes:

- The Ask Activity



STEP 5

Finalize Your Project Plan

OVERVIEW

Have you ever planned a service project, arrived at the site, and realized that you forgot something important? It may have seemed like a minor detail early in the planning process and so you decided to take care of it later . . . but later never came. Instead of discovering what's missing on the day of the project, take time to carefully review your plans to make sure everything is taken care of ahead of time. This chapter will provide you with an idea of the types of details you should watch for.

GOALS

- Complete the project plan
- Communicate with volunteers
- Plan for safety
- Create contingency plans
- Prepare for day of project checklist

CNCS RESOURCE CENTER — WWW.NATIONALSERVICERESOURCES.ORG

- Communicating Effectively with the Media
- Incorporating Creative Reflection Activities



COMPLETING THE PROJECT PLAN

In the weeks before the event, you will need to iron out any kinks and confirm that all aspects of the project are ready to go.

Address questions and concerns — If you do not think a project/task is feasible or if you have questions or concerns, be sure to discuss any changes that you feel need to be made with your team and partners.

Finalize the project plan — If necessary, make additional visits to the service site in order to finalize the task matrix and to ensure that you are prepared to run a successful project. Be sure to stay in contact with your partners about details for the project.

Meet with project leaders — Meet with the staff and volunteers who will be leading the project to make sure everyone is comfortable with the scope of the project and understands the plan. Leaders should also be familiar with the layout of the site and emergency procedures. Utilize your leaders to delegate tasks within the groups.

Review the schedule — Review the project schedule with the staff at the service site. Discuss the time the facility needs to be opened on the day of the event. If the facility isn't usually open on that day, get the name and contact information for the person who will let you in.

Implement a PR and media plan (if necessary) — If PR and media attention are important to the project, begin working with communications contacts early so they can develop and implement a strategy to seek coverage for your project. You will want to make sure you've assigned a media spokesperson to be at the service site and that he/she is armed with media kits and talking points.

Discuss documentation of the event — Ask a staff person or volunteer to take pictures of the project. You should make a list of the types of pictures you want, such as close-ups of people, volunteers in action, or team photos.

Confirm all tools and materials — Confirm that all tools and materials



PROJECT DEVELOPMENT Guidebook

have been picked up and are onsite. Obtain any over-looked items. Make sure you've thought through all the cleaning supplies you might need. Extra work gloves and trash bags are always a good idea!

Plan a reflection experience — Confirm the plans for reflection you made during step three. Make sure that you have scheduled time for reflection and have the necessary information to lead an engaging, thought-provoking discussion about the issue or CSO. Be sure to include a challenge to be involved on an ongoing basis with the CSO.

Provide food and beverages — Confirm plans for ample refreshments at the project site. Don't forget to plan for plates, napkins, cups, utensils, ice, etc.

Check, double-check, and triple-check! — Don't leave anything to chance. It's better to confirm a detail twice than to assume someone else will do it. Ask your project leaders to review details. If someone agrees to be responsible for any materials, follow up with an e-mail. Stay in touch with partners/donors who are providing financial or in-kind resources to make sure you have everything you need before the day of the project.

Organize final planning meetings — Meet with your project leaders to ensure everyone is confident about all project details.

Create a "call list" — Exchange cell phone numbers with all key contacts if you have not already done so. You may also want to secure walkie-talkies for the day of the project.

Make final calls — Make any final calls to project-specific contacts, such as landscapers, media contacts, etc.

Identify a bilingual speaker (if necessary) — You want all volunteers to have a meaningful experience, so make sure you have the language capabilities to communicate with each volunteer.

Take care of VIPs (if any are attending the project) — Decide how you want to greet them and give them a tour of the site and the work taking place.

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT Guidebook



Set up project stations — Make sure you will have table and chairs for a volunteer registration area at the service site so volunteers can sign in. You may also want to have a water/refreshment station, a first aid station, and/or a media desk.

Pack a project kit — Pack a kit with materials you will need to facilitate the project: sign-in sheets, evaluations, pens, markers, tape, poster board, rope/bungee cords, paper, clipboards, and nametags. You will need these things for registration, to take notes, to make signs (directions to water, bathrooms, etc.), to hang banners, and to handle little details of the day. You may also want to bring handouts about the next volunteer opportunity.

Check on trash containers — Make sure there will be ample trashcans and recycling bins with bin liners.

Create a fun atmosphere — Consider bringing a CD player to play music and create a fun, energizing atmosphere. One fun idea would be to have a local radio station broadcast live from the site, thus providing music and promotion for the event.

VOLUNTEER COMMUNICATION

You have created a recruitment strategy and enlisted volunteers for your project. It is a good idea to pre-register volunteers. Pre-registration can be as simple as providing a contact name, number, and/or e-mail address where volunteers can sign up. If volunteers pre-register, you will be able to contact them about project details and also discuss with them the skills, supplies, or friends they might also bring to the project.

Prior to the event, check with volunteers and make sure that all special needs (medical or otherwise) have been addressed and/or met. Also, keep the commitments you make. People will not support you if you don't provide information requested, address issues they bring up, and/or miss scheduled appointments.

Continue to be in contact with your team. Keeping volunteers motivated and excited about your project is the best guarantee for success! The more contact you provide, the more engaged your volunteers will be, and the more motivated they will be when they arrive. Also, respond to people's inquiries in a timely and thorough manner.



PROJECT DEVELOPMENT Guidebook

Make sure to confirm project details with them. Contact volunteers with a phone call or e-mail that:

- Introduces you (or another staff person, partner, or volunteer) as the project leader
- Thanks them for volunteering
- Provides the date and time of the project, service site address, directions, and parking information
- Describes what will occur at the project
- Lets volunteers know what to wear or not wear to the project
- Encourages volunteers to bring supplies they may have
- Tells volunteers whom to contact if they have a change in plans

On the day of the project, designate an area for volunteers to “check in.” This will allow you to better manage volunteers that attend the project and effectively track their volunteer hours.

SAFETY

Ensuring the safety of life and property is critical. By reviewing the project for possible hazards and educating volunteers about safety, program staff will reduce the chance of someone getting hurt.

Review the safety/emergency plan with your project leaders. Know of all nearby emergency exits, first-aid kits, and/or automated external defibrillators (AED's). Assign a safety point person for the day of the event. Always have a first aid kit on hand and a phone to call 911 if necessary.

CONTINGENCY PLANNING

Always think through the worst-case scenarios. Play devil's advocate as you analyze the possibilities of what could go wrong. Record the strategy to handle the problems. When you plan ahead for a problem, you can handle it with minimal disruption and cost. The key point here is to not only think about what to do before you need to do it, but to also know whom you need to contact and have their phone numbers readily available.

Create contingency plans for weather (rain, extreme heat or cold, etc.) and other problems

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Guidebook



that can be anticipated. Another problem could be varying numbers of volunteers. What will you do if you have too many or too few volunteers for the project you planned? During step two when you visited the service site, you made a list of all the potential projects. Later, you created a task list and prioritized the jobs to be done. If you have fewer volunteers than you anticipated, use this list to determine which tasks are the most important and can be finished by a small group so that the volunteers have a sense of accomplishment at the end of the project. If you have more volunteers than you planned for, look farther down the list for more tasks to be completed.

DAY OF PROJECT CHECKLIST

Below are a few helpful hints on managing the execution of a volunteer project:

- Arrive early to set up and greet volunteers.
- Verify all materials and tasks are ready prior to volunteers arriving.
- Welcome and register all volunteers.
- Have volunteers sign waiver of liability.
- Have nametags for all staff and volunteers.
- Present brief organization/project overview, including the impact of the project.
- Motivate and manage volunteers; make sure each volunteer has a task to complete.
- Manage the volunteers' time for effective service.
- At the half-way point, ask if there is too much or not enough to do.
- Prioritize tasks; complete the most important jobs first.
- Have back-up projects available for extra work.
- Monitor safety.
- Don't get wrapped up in doing the work; be available for answering questions and troubleshooting.
- If possible, take photos.
- Clean up.
- Reflect and evaluate.
- Thank volunteers and inform them of future volunteer opportunities.



Activities and Templates

The training and implementation tools in this section will help you finalize your project plans. This section includes:

- When It Rains, It Pours Activity
- Day of Project Checklist
- Volunteer Project Information Form



WHEN IT RAINS, IT POURS ACTIVITY

With your small group, discuss past projects in which something went wrong. Did you have a contingency plan and, if so, how did it work? What could you do differently next time you face this problem?

If time permits, review the Day of Project Checklist. Share examples of how you have handled these items and offer ideas for others important tasks on the day of the project.



DAY OF PROJECT CHECKLIST

- Arrive early to set up and greet volunteers.
- Verify all materials and tasks are ready prior to volunteers arriving.
- Welcome and register all volunteers.
- Have volunteers sign waiver of liability.
- Have nametags for all staff and volunteers.
- Present brief organization/project overview, including the impact of the project.
- Motivate and manage volunteers; make sure each volunteer has a task to complete.
- Manage the volunteers' time for effective service.
- At the half-way point, ask if there is too much or not enough to do.
- Prioritize tasks; complete the most important jobs first.
- Have back-up projects available for extra work.
- Monitor safety.
- Don't get wrapped up in doing the work; be available for answering questions and troubleshooting.
- If possible, take photos.
- Clean up.
- Reflect and evaluate.
- Thank volunteers and inform them of future volunteer opportunities.





PROJECT DEVELOPMENT Guidebook

VOLUNTEER PROJECT INFORMATION FORM

Thank you for volunteering for our upcoming service project. We have a wonderful project planned! Below are the details for the project. Please review the following information and contact us if you have any questions. We look forward to seeing you!

Project: _____ Date: _____

Location: _____ Time: _____

Project Leader: _____ Phone: _____

Day of event phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Agency we are assisting: _____

What will we be doing: _____

What you should wear: _____

What you should bring: _____

Project site address: _____

Directions: _____

Where you should park: _____

If you have questions prior to the day of the project, please contact the project leader at the phone number or e-mail listed above. Plan to arrive at the project site prior to the start time. Check in at the volunteer registration area, where a team leader will greet you, answer any questions, and get you started.

Timeline of Activity

_____ Volunteer check-in and registration

_____ Orientation to agency and project

_____ Serve!

_____ Clean-up

_____ Wrap-up, reflection, and evaluation



PROJECT DEVELOPMENT Guidebook



NOTES



Summary

Careful planning is critical to the success of your service project. By working with the community instead of for the community, you will identify true needs and issues to address through service. Thorough research of the issue will lead you to community partners and a service project that can make a strong impact. After mapping out the details and the resources needed for the project, you will be able to work with individuals, groups, and businesses to recruit volunteers and secure the other resources. Then, examine the tiny details that make a real difference to the project, gather for the service event, and work to change your community.



Additional Resources

Listed below are several on-line resources on volunteerism and volunteer development.

- Energize Inc.
www.energizeinc.com
- ePhilanthropyFoundation.org
www.ephilanthropyfoundation.org
- e-volunteerism.com
www.e-volunteerism.com
- Hands On Network
www.handsonnetwork.org
- Idealist.org
Action Without Borders www.idealist.org
- Independent Sector
www.independentsector.org
- National & Global Youth Service Day
<http://www.ysa.org/nysd/resource/planning.cfm>
- National Service Resource Center
www.nationalserviceresources.org
- Network for Good
www.networkforgood.org
- Service Leader
www.serviceleader.org
- ServeNet
ww.servenet.org
- Students in Service to America Guidebook
<http://www.studentsinservicetoamerica.org/guidebook/index.html>



PROJECT DEVELOPMENT Guidebook

NOTES

To learn more about Hands On training opportunities, please contact:
training@handsonnetwork.org

Or visit us at www.handsonnetwork.org



The Corporation for National and Community Service works to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering.

The Corporation provides opportunities for Americans of all ages and backgrounds to serve their communities and country through Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve America. Together with the USA Freedom Corps, the Corporation is helping build a culture of citizenship, service, and responsibility in America.



Hands On Network brings people together to strengthen communities through meaningful volunteer action. Hands On Network is a growing network of 58 volunteer organizations and a half million volunteers changing communities in and outside the United States.

Hands On Network creates and manages nearly 50,000 projects a year — from building wheelchair ramps in San Francisco, to teaching reading in Atlanta, to rebuilding homes and lives in the Gulf Coast communities. The Hands On approach equips volunteers, creates leaders, and changes lives.