

Planning a Community Service Event

You've decided to organize a one-time community service project for your group
....now what?

Identify a project. What type of community issue would you like to address? The Volunteer & Service Center can assist through its various community partnerships and resources.

Determine your group's level of interest and choose possible dates. Make sure your group is excited about the project they will be doing! It will be important that they commit to participating so that you can follow-through with your commitment to the agency.

Contact the agency's volunteer coordinator. Community agencies are often small, overwhelmed with work, and have high turnover. Even if you have a contact name, that person may have moved on, so be sure to ask for the volunteer coordinator and explain why you are calling. Be patient but persistent! You may not hear back right away, but also be sure to follow-up and leave professional messages with your full name, purpose, your affiliation with Cal State Fullerton, your phone number, and the best time to reach you.

Develop a plan that will be mutually beneficial. Your project should fit your group's needs and be educational, fun, and rewarding – but it also should meet an identified community need as articulated by the agency. Be sure to listen to what the agency needs! If your ideas do not mesh or scheduling conflicts arise, it is alright to tell the agency that the project will not work out. Be sure to communicate this clearly and with advance notice.

Arrange for an orientation. When your group arrives for the project, a critical component of your service will be learning more about the mission and goals of the organization. Why and how did the agency develop? What are its current successes and challenges? How will the project you work on contribute to the overall mission of the organization?

Finalize the plan and get commitment from your group. Be sure to include enough time for travel, orientation, the service project, clean-up, and reflection. Communicate to your group that the agency is counting on you for your help, and provide effective reminders (flyer, email, voicemail).

Organize transportation. Transportation options include: carpooling, renting a van from Enterprise or meeting there.

Arrive early, energetic, and prepared. Be sure your group is wearing proper clothes for the project and that any prerequisite qualifications or forms have been addressed.

Enjoy the project and make a difference! Have fun and stay on task. Be sure everybody is involved in the project and ask for more guidance if you need it.

Allow time for reflection. Reflection allows your group time to think about their experience in broader terms: How did this affect me? Did I make a difference today? How did my expectations compare with my experience? How might I get more involved in this issue?

Say "thank you". Thank your volunteers via letter, card, or a simple email, and be sure to ask for feedback. You should also send a thank you note to the agency and ask for feedback on your volunteers.

Evaluate the project for the Volunteer & Service Center files. Your feedback of the agency, its staff, its projects, etc., will help future groups develop effective projects.



Hey, it's
your world...
CHANGE IT!

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