



TOOLKIT

**“Everybody can be great, because
everybody can serve.”**

— Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



Corporation for
**NATIONAL &
COMMUNITY
SERVICE** 

The Corporation for National and Community Service

The Corporation for National and Community Service is a federal agency that provides opportunities for more than 1.6 million Americans of all ages and backgrounds to improve communities through service. Charged by Congress to promote service on MLK Day, the Corporation also supports service at the national, state, and local levels through three main programs: Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve America. For more information, visit www.nationalservice.gov or call 202-606-5000. Corporation for National and Community Service, 1201 New York Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20525.

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UPON REQUEST THIS MATERIAL WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE IN ALTERNATIVE FORMS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.



INTRODUCTION

On the third Monday in January, Americans across the country will celebrate the national holiday honoring the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. As they have since 1994, thousands of Americans will remember Dr. King by serving in their communities and making the holiday "a day on," not "a day off."

During his lifetime, Dr. King sought to forge common ground on which people from all walks of life could join together as equals to address important community issues. Service, he realized, was the great equalizer. As he once said, "Everybody can be great, because everybody can serve."

In recognition of that spirit, Congress in 1994 passed the King Holiday and Service Act.

Since then, the Corporation for National and Community Service, in collaboration with the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change, has taken the lead in helping to transform the King Holiday into a day of service to meet community needs.

As the third Monday in January approaches, you can join tens of thousands of volunteers nationwide by celebrating Dr. King's life and teachings through volunteer service.

This toolkit is intended to give you ideas for projects, help you plan and run a successful service event, connect with partners, promote your project to the media and the public, and manage volunteers effectively. Additional information and resources are available at www.mlkday.gov. If you have further questions, you can contact the Corporation for National and Community Service at 202-606-5000, or by email at mlkday@cns.gov.



WHY SERVE ON MILK DAY?

During his lifetime, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. worked tirelessly toward a dream of equality. He believed in a nation of freedom and justice for all, and encouraged all citizens to live up to the purpose and potential of America by uniting and taking action to make this country a better place to live.

STRENGTHEN COMMUNITIES

Dr. King recognized the power of service to strengthen communities and achieve common goals. Through his words and example, Dr. King challenged individuals to take action and lift up their neighbors and communities through service.

EMPOWER INDIVIDUALS

Dr. King believed each individual possessed the power to lift himself or herself up no matter what his or her circumstances — rich or poor, black or white, man or woman. Whether teaching literacy skills, helping an older adult surf the Web, or helping an individual build the skills they need to acquire a job, acts of service can help others improve their own lives.

BUILD BRIDGES

In his fight for civil rights, Dr. King inspired Americans to think beyond themselves, look past differences, and work toward equality. Serving side by side, community service builds bridges between people and teaches us that in the end, we are more alike than we are different.

These ideas of unity, purpose, and the great things that can happen when we work together toward a common goal are just some of the many reasons we honor Dr. King through service on this special holiday.



PROJECT IDEAS



Service projects come in all shapes and sizes. Some are sponsored by single organizations, while others involve wide-ranging partnerships of charities, communities of faith, government agencies, and businesses. Some take place at the most local level — a school or a street — while others are city-wide. Some are designed as single-day projects, while others continue long into the future. Whatever the project, each is connected to the life and teachings of Dr. King and his message to unite people around a common goal.

Project snapshots at the end of this booklet provide examples of how some communities have come together to celebrate the Day. They can help you think of project ideas and ways to incorporate Dr. King's teachings into your service project.

Other project ideas include:

- Hold a workshop or put on a play about Dr. King's life
- Organize an oral history project to document and trace community history
- Help prepare and serve meals at a homeless shelter
- Remove graffiti from a building, paint a mural, or clean up a public space
- Bring meals to homebound neighbors
- Make a public space accessible
- Build a playground or community garden
- Organize and participate in a neighborhood watch
- Collect clothing, canned goods, and other items for a local shelter
- Register bone marrow and organ donors
- Perform small chores and home maintenance projects for elderly neighbors
- Arrange a health fair
- Teach seniors how to surf the Internet
- Sponsor a legal clinic
- Devise craft projects for children in hospitals

The possibilities are endless!



GETTING STARTED



For volunteers, community organizations, and others, a one-day service project can be a fantastic and transforming experience — or it can fall well short of that goal. A lot has to do with the way the day is planned. Your job is to make it a positive experience for everyone. The following tips will help you succeed at that task:

START EARLY. Make sure that you allow ample time to develop, organize, and carry out your project. Come up with timelines and stick to them. Remember to take into account the breaks leading up to the King Holiday (Christmas, Hanukkah, New Year's), because people often are unavailable during those times. Make a checklist of everything you need to do. A sample checklist is located on page 20.

SET REALISTIC GOALS. Volunteers and partners feel better about giving their time and resources when they see results. Remember, quality counts more than quantity: a small service project that effectively gets things done is better than a poorly run, large-scale project.

BUILD PARTNERSHIPS. A service project is a great way to introduce your organization and your mission to potential partners and sponsors. Schools, area businesses, congregations, and local government agencies make natural partners. So do volunteer centers, national service programs, and local service clubs. By joining with others, you'll increase the size and impact of your project. For more information on building partnerships, see page 6.

INVOLVE YOUR PARTNERS. Partners, sponsors, and members of the community should be included in the planning and implementation of your project from the start. Don't just ask for their time, money, or products — seek their input. Make sure you clearly define responsibilities and roles. Spread the work and the fun among your partners.

BE INCLUSIVE. King Day service projects are a great way to reach out across neighborhoods and socioeconomic divides. Try to involve everyone in the community — young and old, rich and poor, people of differing faiths, races, and ethnic origin. Invite young people who are served by community programs to give back through service. Ask those in public housing and in shelters to lend a hand in their own communities.

ACTIVELY RECRUIT VOLUNTEERS.

Volunteers don't just show up — you need to put in the effort. Your partners are good sources of volunteers. So are local congregations, schools, businesses, and community groups. Be sure to sign people up in advance and to keep in touch with them. For more ideas on working with volunteers, see page 8.

CHOOSE PROJECTS CAREFULLY. Try to accomplish something meaningful to the community. If your project is important to your community, potential partners, volunteers and sponsors will want to help. Try to tackle projects that would not get done without the added energy of volunteers.

ANTICIPATE TRANSPORTATION NEEDS.

Transportation can be a logistical challenge, especially if you have to shuttle volunteers between sites. The kind of transportation you use — buses, vans, carpools, public transportation — will depend on several factors, including your budget, the number of volunteers, and the distance they need to travel. Be sure to ask local churches or schools if they will lend you their vans or buses, which may not be in use on the holiday.

BE FLEXIBLE. Choose a project that can easily be scaled up or down, depending on the number of volunteers you are able to attract. Have a contingency plan for a low volunteer turnout, and one for excess volunteers.

REACH OUT TO THE MEDIA. If you are planning a large project, advance coverage in local media outlets will draw attention to your event and attract additional volunteers. Media coverage the day of the event can heighten volunteer pride and ensure the success of future projects. More information on working with the media is available on page 12.

TELL US YOUR PLANS. E-mail us at mlkday@cns.gov to tell us about what you are doing. We will spread the word about your event and help draw national attention to those who serve in honor of Dr. King's life and teachings.

“We have an opportunity to make a better nation.”

— Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS



Service projects can be a great way to spread the word about your organization and to reach out across barriers to attract partners and sponsors. The more broadly you cast your net, the more you will reflect the teachings of Dr. King — and the greater your success will be. Here are a few examples of the kinds of groups you should approach:

GROUPS WITH SIMILAR MISSIONS. Groups that are involved in the same issues as your organization — the future of young people, homelessness, literacy, health care, the environment — are a good place to start. Look for organizations that have made a commitment to strengthening your community and whose expertise you may need.

CIVIL RIGHTS GROUPS AND KING HOLIDAY COMMISSIONS. Dr. King gave his life in the civil rights struggle, and many organizations today continue to reflect his beliefs and ideology. These groups would make excellent partners for your project, as would a wide variety of African-American organizations, especially African-American historical associations or religious groups. Dozens of cities and states have King Holiday commissions that plan ceremonies, lead observances, and promote Dr. King's vision of America on the holiday. Alliances with those organizations would help link your service project directly with Dr. King's legacy.

YOUTH-SERVING ORGANIZATIONS. Young people should be an important element of any service project. To get them involved, contact organizations such as America's Promise, Camp Fire USA, Boys and Girls Clubs, 4-H Councils, Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, YMCA and YWCA. A guide to involving young people is available at www.ASC-online.org.

CORPORATIONS, BUSINESSES, AND UNIONS. Invite corporations to join you early on as full partners. Ask companies in your community, especially those that have operations near a service site, to help with project planning and to pitch in with employee volunteers, as well as with funds and supplies. Trade unions are actively involved in community events and are a good source of volunteers with special skills.

SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES. Many school districts have a community service requirement and are looking for partnerships to help students reach their goals. Start by approaching service-learning or community service coordinators. If you are near a college or university, contact the local service-learning center, campus service organization or work-study office. Approach teachers, teachers associations, and sororities and fraternities.

NATIONAL SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS. The Corporation for National and Community Service administers several programs that would make excellent partners for your project. Contact your local AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve America, or Senior Corps program; your state service commission; or the Corporation office in your state. To find your local contact, visit www.nationalservice.gov/about.

FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS. Churches, synagogues, mosques, and other places of worship have been partners in the King Service Day since its inception, and many — if not most — are already providing valuable services in their communities. Many congregations have King Day memorials but do

not have special service projects on that day. Work with them to plan a combined day of reflection and service.

SPORTS TEAMS. Professional and semi-professional sports organizations are supporters of a wide range of community initiatives. Players often participate in service projects and lend their names and images to good causes. Team owners and managers can provide free tickets or run promotional ads on their scoreboards or in their programs.

MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS. Television and radio stations, newspapers, and cable networks typically are actively involved in community events or are willing to donate such services as placement of print ads and broadcasts of public service announcements. Media organizations can also help plan and support a public information campaign, produce materials for distribution, lend staff for the day — and even provide news coverage of your activities. Tips on using the media effectively can be found on page 12.

GOVERNMENT LEADERS. Don't be afraid to reach out to the elected leaders in your community; they can be extremely helpful in issuing a call to service and in getting partners on board. In the State of Washington, for example, former Governor Gary Locke included information about serving on King Day in two state payroll mailings leading up to the holiday. Better yet, invite your mayor, county executive or governor to serve. In past years, even the President of the United States has participated in a King Day service project!



WORKING WITH VOLUNTEERS



Most King Day projects rely on volunteers from the community to achieve their goals. How you manage your volunteers will play a large role in determining whether your project succeeds — and whether your organization will be able to build long-term relationships with a new group of volunteers. Here are some tips for managing volunteers effectively:

RECRUIT EARLY. Sign up volunteers in advance of your event so you can get a good sense of the scope of your project and the kinds of support staff, equipment, food, and other materials you will need. Contact the media, distribute fliers, and reach out to partners and other local institutions as part of your recruitment effort.

SEEK OUT DIVERSITY. Try to attract as large and varied a group of volunteers as possible. Youths, senior citizens, and people of all races, religions, and ethnic backgrounds ideally should be part of the mix. A diverse group will best reflect the spirit of Dr. King.

COLLECT CONTACT INFORMATION. Have potential volunteers fill out a basic sign-up sheet that includes their name, address, phone number(s), e-mail address, and any special skills they may have. Be sure to send out reminders to your volunteers about a week before the project. The quickest, easiest, and least expensive way is via e-mail; use a phone tree or get volunteers to make calls to those without e-mail.

USE TEAM LEADERS. Many projects benefit from having "team leaders" — specially trained staff members or volunteers who manage groups of about 10 to 15 volunteers each. In addition to managing the workday, team leaders often orient volunteers to the site, conduct reflections about the day of service, and distribute evaluations. Additional information on using team leaders is available at www.mlkday.gov.

TREAT YOUR VOLUNTEERS WELL. Food and entertainment at kickoff and closing ceremonies, giveaways of merchandise like T-shirts or hats, and volunteer award ceremonies are all good ways to build *esprit de corps* and a sense of involvement. Check in often to see how volunteers are doing. At the end of the day, distribute evaluation forms so the volunteers can give you feedback on how to improve their experience in the future. And don't forget to write thank-you notes!



ORGANIZING THE DAY



Now that you've planned your project, built partnerships, and recruited volunteers, it's time to focus on the details that will make sure the day runs smoothly. Here are some tips to help you organize your event:

WORK OUT A DETAILED SCHEDULE. Set up a detailed day-of-event schedule — and stick to it. A detailed schedule will help you coordinate transportation, security, entertainment, food, and supplies with volunteers and vendors. Be sure to allot times for lunch, breaks, cleanup, reflection, evaluations, and travel. A sample schedule can be found on page 11.

PAY ATTENTION TO LOGISTICS. Walk through the day from all angles. Can people get to the site? Are your service projects accessible to people with disabilities? Have you advertised that information? Do you have age limits for those serving? Are the sites "family friendly"? What are the transportation alternatives? Who is managing your project sites? Have they been adequately trained? Should participants bring their own food? If a building is normally closed on the holiday, will the facilities (like bathrooms) be open for use? What happens if it rains or snows? Do you need security? Assess liability issues for each project site and take appropriate action.

MAKE CHECKLISTS. Organize a list of who is responsible for what and how to contact them, and distribute it to team leaders, site managers, hosts, and volunteer coordinators. This will keep everyone informed and on the same page about expectations, roles, and responsibilities for the day. Checklists for individuals who are managing parts of the day, such as transportation or supplies, are also helpful.

PREPARE FOR THE UNEXPECTED. Know where the nearest emergency facilities are located. Make sure you have a first aid kit, and someone trained to use it, at each site. Have a plan for early or late arriving volunteers, low or high volunteer turnout, weather contingencies, and what to do if you don't complete your work. You can't be too prepared!

DOCUMENT YOUR PROJECT. Keep accurate records of your event. And don't forget to get quotes from project participants and visit www.mlkday.gov for photo tips. These records, quotes, and photos will come in handy as you plan and promote future service projects.

Every service project is unique, but successful events typically have the following elements in common:

REGISTRATION. Registration for volunteers can take place either at the project site or at a special kickoff site. Giving out T-shirts or hats at registration is a good way to build a sense of excitement and purpose among volunteers. Make sure to have a special check-in area for members of the media so you can keep track of who is covering the event and then follow up with them if necessary.

KICKOFF CEREMONY. A kickoff ceremony provides an excellent opportunity to educate volunteers about the life and teachings of Dr. King. It also is a great time to explain and showcase the work of your organization. Keep the program focused and short — generally, no more than fifteen or twenty minutes. If you choose to hold the ceremony at a special kick-off site, it should have the look of excitement and be decorated with banners, balloons, posters, and streamers. Invite a school or church choir to provide music, or consider asking a local civil rights leader to talk about Dr. King's life.

SITE ORIENTATION. At the project site, team leaders should take volunteers on a "walk-through" of the day and give them specific instructions concerning the project and its goals. Volunteers should be told when they will break for lunch, whom to contact in case of an emergency, and where to find restrooms, water, and supplies. The site orientation is also a good time for host agencies to talk about the services they offer and any ongoing volunteer needs they may have.

REFLECTION. Sometime during the day, it is important to encourage participants to reflect on the life and teachings of Dr. King, as well as on their own service experience. Team leaders at the project site can conduct the reflection during lunch, or it can be part of a larger group exercise at the kickoff or closing ceremony. Sometimes, a single question — What issues would concern Dr. King today? — is enough to get the conversation started. For reflection and service-learning resources, go to www.mlkday.org.

EVALUATION. Don't let your volunteers leave without soliciting their feedback on how they viewed their experience. Was the day rewarding? What were the most positive aspects? The least positive? What might have been done differently? The evaluation results will help you plan future events.

CLOSING CEREMONY. Most organizers choose to end the day with an event that enables volunteers to share experiences, relax, and have fun. Many closing events feature food and music. A festive atmosphere makes the day one to remember.

SAMPLE SCHEDULE

In this scenario, people arrive at a central location and are transported to service sites. You may choose to have people arrive at their service sites and gather together for a closing ceremony.

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|--------------------------|---|
| 7:15 - 8:00 a.m. | Volunteers arrive at registration, check in, receive T-shirts, and enjoy coffee and donuts. |
| 8:00 - 8:45 a.m. | Kickoff ceremony featuring welcoming remarks by event organizers, an introduction to Dr. King's life of service, and an overview of the day's activities. Instructions given about transportation to project sites. |
| 8:45 - 9:00 a.m. | Transportation to sites. |
| 9:20 - 9:30 a.m. | Volunteers regroup at project site. |
| 9:30 - 9:45 a.m. | Volunteers break into groups of 10-15, meet with team leaders, and receive a site orientation. Team leaders take groups to assigned areas and distribute materials. |
| 9:45 - Noon | Volunteers begin service activities. Site supervisors and team leaders monitor work and supplies and suggest appropriate breaks. |
| Noon - 12:45 p.m. | Lunch break. This is a good time for performances and remarks on the legacy of Dr. King. |
| 1:00 - 2:30 p.m. | Resume service project. |
| 2:30 - 3:00 p.m. | Clean up site and return supplies to central area. |
| 3:00 - 3:15 p.m. | Evaluation of service project experience by volunteers (forms to be distributed and collected by team leaders). |
| 3:15 - 3:30 p.m. | Board transportation and return to registration site. |
| 3:30 - 4:30 p.m. | Closing ceremony with reflection activities and music and food to celebrate successes, swap stories, and thank hosts and volunteers. |
| 4:30 p.m. | Team leaders and site supervisors make sure clean-up is complete and the site is ready for use. |



WORKING WITH THE MEDIA



Using the media effectively is an excellent way to promote your project and educate the public about your organization's mission. By putting effort into media outreach, you can reach thousands of people in an instant. That publicity can help you recruit new volunteers, attract potential funders, recognize hard-working volunteers, and develop media relationships that will help you in the future. The following tips will get you started:

DEVELOP A TIMELINE. The timing of your outreach effort depends in large part on the results you want to achieve. If you're depending on the media to recruit volunteers, you should start your media campaign as much as four to six weeks before your event. For inclusion in a community calendar, two to four weeks is necessary. TV and radio stations usually need several weeks' lead time to schedule an appearance on a talk show. One week's advance notice typically is sufficient if you're asking a reporter to cover the event itself. But remember: these are only guidelines. Be sure to check with the media outlets themselves to find out their deadlines.

COMPILE A MEDIA CONTACT LIST. The list should include local and regional newspapers and magazines; local television, cable TV, and radio stations; wire services such as Associated Press and Reuters; and special-interest media such as ethnic publications, college and community newspapers, church bulletins, and corporate and community newsletters. Most libraries have media directories that you can use; your state commission or state office also can be helpful. Keep up with your local TV and newspaper coverage to identify reporters who cover social and community issues, or columnists who might be interested in your efforts.

DEVELOP A PITCH. Think about a succinct message or "pitch" — a few words that will convince the media that your story is interesting, timely, and newsworthy. This message can be reinforced in your media advisory, press release, and any interviews you or other spokespeople may give.

WRITE A PSA. Radio Public Service Announcements, or PSAs, run at no cost to you and are a great way to recruit volunteers and to get the word out about your event. The message should be short but complete, and include a phone number to call for more information. Send the announcement to the radio station's public service director and allow plenty of lead time.

FAX A MEDIA ADVISORY. Five to seven days before the event, you should fax a media advisory to everyone on the press list. Keep it short and specific, including key information about the event — who, what, where, when, and why — and contact information. Be sure to fax the advisory to wire service "daybooks," which are the daily calendars of events that reporters use to plan their day. A sample media advisory is available at www.mlkday.gov.

WRITE A PRESS RELEASE. A press release gives a reporter a base for writing a story on your event. It's like a news article - except that you write it. Press releases can be written before the event, to attract advance notice or attention, or they can be written after the event, to inform the media about the day's accomplishments. Include quotes from organizers and participants, details of the project's goals and activities, background about your organization, and your contact information. A sample press release can be found at www.mlkday.gov.

WORK THE PHONES. Follow up public service announcements, media advisories, and press releases with telephone calls to remind reporters and editors of your event. When you call newspapers, ask for the city desk; when calling radio and TV stations, ask for an assignment editor in the newsroom. Point out "photo opportunities" - times when photographers would be able to find lively scenes to shoot — and suggest interesting volunteers whom reporters could interview.

WRITE AN OP-ED/ LETTER TO THE EDITOR.

The editorial page is always looking for material and is one of the most widely read sections of a newspaper. An opinion column or letter to the editor should explain how your project ties in with Dr. King's teachings and how the public can get involved.

ASSEMBLE A PRESS KIT. Each reporter at your event should receive a press kit that includes your press release, the day's agenda, fact sheets on the project and organizations involved, information on corporate sponsors and partners, background on Dr. King and the King Day of Service, and contact information. Make plenty of copies, and post the information on your website.

SELECT A SPOKESPERSON. Identify one or two individuals to articulate your message to the press. Condense your message and get it down cold.

GREET THE PRESS. Have a separate sign-in table for reporters and other members of the media. Also, make sure that a representative of your group is on hand to greet the press and to introduce reporters to the project's spokesperson or director.

CLIP STORIES. Make copies of all newspaper stories about your event and be sure to turn on the VCR to record any TV pieces that run. Collecting these materials will help you recruit for next year's project and thank your partners.

SAY THANKS. Be sure to thank reporters for good coverage. Like all of us, newspeople appreciate kudos for a job well done.

IS YOUR PROJECT NEWSWORTHY?

Although the King Holiday is generally a slow news day, other events will be competing for the media's attention. Here are some ways to make your project more newsworthy:

LOCAL INTEREST. Pick a project that is of great concern in your community. You have a better chance of making the news if you can show that your project will be of interest to local readers, viewers, and listeners.

DIRECT TIE-IN TO DR. KING. When you discuss your project with reporters or editors, emphasize how it ties in with Dr. King, stressing themes like justice, equality, and especially the concept of service.

TIMING. Timing is everything when it comes to attracting coverage, especially from TV. The best time to stage your events, or invite press to them, is between 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. The later it gets, the less chance there is that

stations will have time to roll a camera crew, edit the coverage, and get a story on the evening news. After 3:00 p.m., TV coverage is usually lost unless you have breaking news. Newspaper reporters also need time to research and write their stories.

CELEBRITIES. You are more likely to get media attention if you involve well-known people in your kick-off event or actual service project. Possibilities include local athletes, news anchors or weather reporters, elected officials, and business people.

INTERESTING VISUALS. For a TV reporter or a newspaper photographer, the "look" of your project is very important. TV cameras and newspaper photographers like sites where they see people in action. Anything that involves children usually makes for good visuals, but be sure to get permission from their parents ahead of time.

“The greatest birthday gift my husband could receive is if people of all racial and ethnic backgrounds celebrated the holiday by performing individual acts of kindness through service to others.”

— Coretta Scott King



FOLLOWING UP

Even after your event has ended, you still have a little more work to do. The tips below will help ensure that future events are even better than the one you just completed.

WRITE THANK-YOU NOTES. A successful service project requires the collective efforts of many people. Be sure to show your appreciation by writing thank-you notes to donors, partners, team leaders, volunteers, speakers, members of the media, and any others who may have contributed time, goods, or money to your service project.

DEBRIEF YOUR PARTNERS. Organizers, sponsors, and key participants should meet soon after the event to discuss the project's strengths and weaknesses. Be sure to seek input from the host site and to conduct a comprehensive review of the volunteers' service-day evaluations.

SPREAD THE WORD. Submit press releases, articles, photos, and other information about your completed event to your local newspaper and to the Corporation for National and Community Service. Be sure to post the information on your website and have it available for your partner organizations to post on theirs.

KEEP IN TOUCH. Send copies of news stories and video coverage to sponsors and partners. This will help illustrate the impact and exposure of your service project, and may encourage continued participation in King Day of Service and other community service events. Add your partners to your mailing list and keep in touch with them throughout the year.



PROJECT SNAPSHOTS



BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

Each year, the city of Bloomington, Indiana celebrates the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service by bringing community organizations together to plan and undertake service projects that address the city's diverse needs. Area schools, colleges and universities, social service agencies, communities of faith, and other organizations partner with the City to develop a range of service projects like graffiti removal, food preparation at local shelters, and facilities renovation in schools and community spaces.

In addition to assisting with project planning, the city of Bloomington helps partner organizations recruit volunteers by publicizing the Day's activities through public service announcements in local newspapers and publications, community fliers, and updates to the City's website. These partnerships not only ensure that the City's "A Day On! Not A Day Off!" activities are a success, but they strengthen the capacity of volunteer organizations by recruiting new volunteers to engage in community service opportunities throughout the year.

The MLK Day of Service is a great opportunity to partner with area schools, faith-based organizations and others to further common goals including volunteer recruitment and greater awareness of community needs. The tips below can help you think about partnership ideas and opportunities:

- Engage community partners who can assist with project planning, fundraising, publicity, and volunteer recruitment
- Schedule regular planning meetings or conference calls, and assign clear roles and responsibilities
- Recognize project partners and sponsors at service activities and in publicity leading up to the Day
- Reconvene following the Day to discuss successes and areas for improvement
- Thank project partners and sponsors

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES

Each year, the District of Columbia Jewish Community Center (DCJCC) brings together youth, families, and individuals of all faiths to celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr. Day through service projects that emphasize Dr. King's teachings about community. To celebrate the Day, volunteers of all ages are trained in carpentry and painting skills and are deployed throughout the city to help renovate and repair community shelters, schools, and low-income homes. Project leaders facilitate discussion on the causes of poverty and homelessness, the value of volunteer service, and the importance of coming together to help others. Service projects like job skills training and tutoring are also offered so that individuals who are unable to perform physically demanding tasks can take part in the Day of Service.

Dr. King believed in the power of individuals to work together to alleviate poverty and strengthen their communities. Service projects that bring individuals of all ages and backgrounds together to improve their communities are a great way to honor and share Dr. King's teachings. Consider the project ideas below:

- Work with a local Housing Authority or Parks and Recreation Services to identify homes and community spaces in need of renovation and repair
- Partner with local schools to identify improvement projects for students and families, such as painting or playground clean-up

- Offer job skills training sessions to help individuals prepare for interviews and entry into the workforce
- Organize a clothing drive to collect business attire for individuals in need

UNITING ACROSS FAITHS

Founded in 1995, Destiny Church is a non-denominational religious institution located in Chicago's northwest suburbs. An area rich with racial and religious diversity, Destiny Church observes the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday by bringing different faith communities together to celebrate and address Dr. King's vision. Each year, a community march kicks off the Day's activities, followed by service projects and discussion groups that engage individuals of all faiths in issues of tolerance and unity.

Recently, the church added a youth service component to the King celebration. With a goal to bring together youth across faiths, the church created a program to educate and more deeply engage area youth in the celebration of Dr. King's legacy through cross-denominational, multi-racial, and multi-ethnic youth service teams. During an eight-week period leading up to the King Holiday, these students meet after school for structured lessons and discussion around the life and teachings of Dr. King. Topics include racial diversity, religious tolerance, and the significance of community service. In addition, they organize service projects that take place on the King Holiday, and commit to an additional 100 hours of volunteer service throughout the year.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service is an opportune time to engage in community-wide discussions and service projects that address the racial, ethnic, and religious divides that persist in this country. Here are some ideas for your community:

- Hold a non-denominational prayer breakfast and invite area faith and other community leaders to speak followed by a service project
- Incorporate Dr. King's messages of tolerance and unity into sermons, and youth lessons and use them as the basis for planning a community project
- Partner with area churches and congregations to engage in "service after the service"
- Organize a service project, or provide information about service opportunities on MLK Day and throughout the year

BRIDGING BARRIERS

With more than 40,000 volunteers and 600 service projects in 2004, the Greater Philadelphia Martin Luther King Day of Service is the largest King Day of Service event in the nation. Launched in 1996, the event is organized each year through a partnership between The Citizenship Project, and the United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania. Together, these organizations work with schools, faith-based and community organizations, businesses,

AmeriCorps programs and many others in the seven county Philadelphia region to overcome barriers and meet community needs through service.

From school renovation to legal clinics and reading coach training, service projects are as diverse as the individuals and communities they serve. Service teams are organized to match volunteers with new people and places, so that individuals serve with others whom they may otherwise not interact. Working side-by-side to achieve and reflect on common goals, volunteers embrace Dr. King's teachings and make a positive impact on the community and each other. With sustainable citizen action as a goal, many projects launched on King Day continue throughout the year.

Below are tips on how to incorporate Dr. King's messages of diversity and tolerance into your service project:

- Identify activities that engage volunteers of all ages
- Organize service teams that bring together diverse organizations and individuals
- Incorporate educational activities that explore the life and teachings of Dr. King
- Lead meaningful team reflection following service projects

HELPING THOSE IN NEED

Keeping up with regular chores and house-keeping can be a challenge for elderly citizens living at home. For many, ordinary projects like mowing the lawn or trimming overgrown shrubs and tree branches are simply too difficult to do alone. For this reason, the Los Angeles Conservation Corps (LACC) celebrates the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service by assisting elderly residents with maintenance and housekeeping projects around their homes. While the LACC provides opportunities for youth to serve the community throughout the year, the MLK Holiday is an opportune time to recruit new volunteers and help neighbors in need.

MLK Day of Service events kick-off one week prior to the holiday with activities and education programs exploring Dr. King's life and the values he taught through example taking place throughout the week. On the King Holiday, volunteers are deployed in teams across the city to perform services such as lawn maintenance, tree trimming, and basic clean-up activities around the homes of needy elderly residents. At each site, teams discuss issues of social justice and reflect on the week's lessons.

Whether mowing the lawn, delivering groceries, or simply spending time together, service projects can make a big difference helping elderly neighbors in need. Consider the project ideas below:

- Work with a local Housing Authority to identify elderly residents in need of assistance with small maintenance or repair projects in or around their homes
- Partner with local home improvement or hardware stores that can provide supplies and expertise
- Visit with residents of local nursing homes or assisted living communities to offer companionship and activities
- Organize a neighborhood watch or visiting program to check-in on elderly neighbors



PROJECT CHECKLIST



- > Set specific goals
- > Build partnerships
- > Choose appropriate sites
- > Recruit volunteers and team leaders
- > Develop a media plan
- > Secure adequate transportation and supplies
- > Arrange for security if needed
- > Choose a kickoff site and design a kickoff event
- > Assign volunteers and team leaders to work sites
- > Confirm speakers, media, transportation, and security for the event
- > Evaluate the service project and volunteer service experience
- > Clean up the site
- > Celebrate your success
- > Conduct follow-up activities and send thank-you letters

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CELEBRATE THE MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
DAY OF SERVICE
VOLUNTEER



**"EVERYBODY CAN BE GREAT,
because everybody can serve."**
— Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

THINK ABOUT IT. Dr. King knew what makes a great American.
Doesn't matter if you're young or old. Doesn't matter where you live.
Doesn't matter how busy you are.
All that matters is what you do for others.




**HONOR THE DREAM.
BE GREAT.
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for the electronic version of this toolkit and...

- > King Day of Service logo
- > Media advisory template
- > Press release template
- > Reflection activity resources
- > Photo tips
- > Team leader tips
- > Service-learning tips
- > Accessibility information
- > Button, T-shirt, and banner order form
- > The latest updates on resources and partners for the King Day of Service



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