

TOOLKITS

Community Renewal: Starting a Clothing Drive Team

Starting a Clothing Drive Team

THE FACTS

In the face of a national economic and housing crisis, it is crucial for all citizens to participate in rebuilding their communities and helping to bolster families and neighborhoods struck by adversity. Whether chronically homeless, recently homeless, facing a home foreclosure, or struggling in the aftermath of disasters that have damaged or destroyed their homes, many families across the country find themselves in transition and could use your help to meet their most immediate needs.

Commit yourself and a team of your friends and neighbors to help serve those most in need and join United We Serve. This tool kit will give you the basics to run a clothing drive, organize your group, and make an impact this summer.

GETTING STARTED

While no two projects will be the same, successful projects will share a few common practices. We encourage you to incorporate the following elements into your service project:

- Create a team with your friends and neighbors to share the effort;
- Set outcome-based goals and track your progress to those goals;
- Celebrate your successes together.

The Challenge: Many community-based organizations do not have enough capacity to manage a large number of volunteers, so they need you to organize yourself in coordination with them. This tool kit is designed to either help you organize a group and be a positive addition to a community-based organization, or, if such an organization does not exist, to be a well-organized independently-run group that fills a needed gap in the community.

A step by step guide to getting started and executing service activities follows. Please let us know how your project goes and what you learn by telling your story at Serve.gov.

STEP ONE: IDENTIFY LOCAL PARTNERS

Check out the organizations already doing good work in your area. Many existing service groups have identified community needs and built the expertise to provide solutions. Plug in here!

- Find the local chapter of national organizations like the [Salvation Army](#) and [Goodwill](#) and ask them what their needs are.
- [Get a guide to finding local partners](#)

- Search [The National Coalition for the Homeless](#) and/or [The National Coalition for Homeless Veterans](#) to identify homeless service organizations within your community. You can also contact your local faith group.
- Be sure to ask the organization for items they might need.

STEP TWO: BUILD A TEAM

Teams can help share the work, motivate members and hold each other accountable. Teams build community. Ask your family, friends, colleagues, and faith group members to serve with you.

- Host a house meeting or potluck to choose a project, set goals, recruit volunteers and plan next steps.
- [Get a guide for hosting a house meeting](#)
- Post your service activity on Serve.gov to recruit new volunteers.

STEP THREE: SET A GOAL

Set a service goal for June 22 – September 11 and hold yourself accountable. Commit as an individual and as a team to collecting a specific number of boxes and reaching out to a specific number of people. Set your goals high to stretch yourself. Then keep track of how you are doing and designate someone to be responsible for updating the group on how you are progressing toward your goals. You'll be surprised at how much you can do when you commit, focus, and follow through.

- [Get a goal-setting guide](#)

STEP FOUR: SERVE YOUR COMMUNITY

The key to effective service is planning. Organize your materials, make confirmation calls and, if you have time, read supplemental materials before you volunteer.

- [Get a tip sheet for your service activity](#)
- CharityGuide.org offers specific [tips](#) on organizing a drive on a [college campus](#) or at a [business](#).

STEP FIVE: REPORT AND CELEBRATE SUCCESSES

Your team members, the community, and the President want to know about your successes and hear your stories. Share your accomplishments by reporting your results. We will highlight the best stories throughout the summer. Tell us about your successes and what you have learned, or just tell your story of service at [Serve.gov](#)

FOLLOW UP

SPREAD THE SERVICE

- After every event, thank your volunteers and sign them up for the next event.

FINDING LOCAL PARTNERS: CLOTHING DRIVES

Check out the organizations already doing good work in your community. Many existing service groups have identified community needs and built the expertise to provide solutions. Get plugged in with them!

It will be helpful to provide background on the local service landscape to the attendees of your house meeting. A few phone calls can produce all the information you need to know your options.

- o Search [The National Coalition for the Homeless](#) and/or [The National Coalition for Homeless Veterans](#) to identify homeless service organizations within your community. You can also contact your local faith group.
- o Once you've identified the appropriate community-based organizations, give them a call to see how you can help.

PHONE SCRIPT:

- Hi, my name is _____ and I'm interested in supporting the great work your organization is doing in the community. Some friends and I would like to organize a clothing (and/or housewares) drive. Would you be interested in accepting donated clothing or household items?
- Do you have restrictions on the kind of items you accept?
- Do you accept used clothing as well as new clothing?
- Do you have a clothing (and/or housewares) wish list—are there any items in particular your clients might need?
- Do you need clothes that target a specific age group?
- If we create a flyer for our clothing (and/or housewares) drive, can we use your organization's name and/or logo?
- Are you the person I should contact at this organization?

<p>The organization my team will send clothing and/or household items to is: _____</p> <p>The contact at the organization is: _____</p> <p>The organization accepts <u>new/used</u> clothing for <u>adults/children</u> ages ____ to ____.</p> <p>The organization has a list of recommended items <u>yes/no</u>.</p>

House Meetings

Purpose:

House meetings are a valuable tactic for recruiting volunteers and building a team. House meetings allow community members to share their concerns and join together to work for progress. Within the room, you already have all the tools you need to enact change on a local level. Every attendee can contribute time or resources or leadership abilities.

Your house meeting will help you identify your leadership team. The people that are committed enough to come to your house meeting should be considered potential leaders of the initiatives being implemented in their communities.

As a house meeting host, invite people from your social network to participate in a discussion about your community, pressing needs, and potential solutions. House meetings often engage people new to service and unclear about next steps. Serving with the support of a team will increase the ease and comfort of many new volunteers.

Building community through house meetings is a critical step toward the President's ultimate goal, which is to support everyday Americans in a grassroots effort to improve lives and strengthen communities.

A House Meeting

Goals

- Choose and plan a service project for the summer.
- Set measurable group and personal goals for your United We Serve project.
- Identify 5 attendees to be team leaders.
- Plan the next meeting of the leadership team and identify next steps for each leader.
- Obtain commitments from all attendees to volunteer on a regular basis from June 22 – September 11.

Host Duties

- Before
 - To have **20** people attend, you will need to invite **50**. Brainstorm a list of **50** people to invite. Include your friends, family, members of your faith group, colleagues, book club attendees, etc.
 - Make calls to the **50** people on your list to invite them to your house meeting. Remember that phone calls are much more effective than a mass email.
 - Post your house meeting on Serve.gov and invite local residents interested in volunteering to attend.
 - Browse Serve.gov to see what needs in your community aren't being met and which organizations you might be able to partner with. Take some preliminary steps to identify local partners already working in the community.
 - Prepare necessary materials.

- During
 - Be prepared to give a short explanation of why you became involved/what inspired you to serve.
 - Consider how you most want to serve your community. President Obama has identified four target areas for summer service: health, education, community renewal, and energy and environment. What does your community most need?

- After
 - Thank attendees and get their pledge to serve this summer.
 - Organize a follow-up volunteer leadership meeting with your new team to take next steps.

House Meeting Planner

Use this brainstorm sheet to think of those you want to invite, including those who have never volunteered before or may be new to Untied We Serve.

Name	Phone #	Invited (Y/N)	Committed (Y/N)	Confirmed (Y/N)	Notes
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Name: Please print the invitee’s full name.

Invite: Please mark **yes, no, maybe** or **left message (LM)**. This will help you track who you need to contact and who you should be calling for confirmation. The only real invitations are when you speak with someone directly.

Commit: Please mark **yes, no** or **maybe**.

Confirm: Please mark **yes, no** or **left message (LM)**. You’ll need to call every invitee who said yes or maybe, and every invitee who only got a left message. Please do not assume that **anybody** will come without a confirmation the day before your meeting. It can’t hurt to give people a quick reminder, and you need to know how many people will be at your meeting to make that meeting as effective and enjoyable as possible.

House Meeting Agenda

*****Before starting the meeting, have everyone sign in and appoint a timekeeper who will keep each section running on time.*****

0:00-0:10 Host welcome and introduction

- Host of the meeting introduces themselves and welcomes attendees.
- Host shares why (s)he was inspired to organize the house meeting and the purpose of the meeting.

0:10-0:25 Attendee introductions

- Go around the room and ask each person to introduce themselves and share their reason for wanting to serve this summer.

0:25-0:45 Choose a project

- Host introduces three or four project ideas and opens up the room for discussion.
- Discuss what projects will work best in your community.
- Group votes on project choice.

0:45-0:55 Set goals and identify leadership

- Ask which attendees are interested in being volunteer leaders – they should stay after the meeting for 15 minutes and commit to a weekly planning meeting from June 22 - September 11.
- Ask each attendee to consider personal summer goals and make a realistic but ambitious summer commitment.

0:55-1:00 Conclusion

- At the end of the meeting, the group should have:
 - At least one project to commit to for the summer.
 - A leadership team.
 - Pledges from each attendee to participate.

1:00-1:15 Leadership team meeting

- Meet with volunteer leaders to set weekly meeting and divide responsibilities.
- Fill out attached worksheets.

Leadership Team Worksheet

The members of my team include:

Name	Phone Number	Email

Our weekly leadership meetings occur every _____ at _____.

Who are 5 other friends and family members who you will call to enlist in your group’s project? Make these calls during the leadership team meeting, if possible:

Name	Phone Number	Email

Setting Goals and Tracking Progress

Breaking Down Your Goal

What is your group's project?

Who are your local partners?

What is your group's goal? (ie, how many lbs of donated food will you secure, how many hours will you spend reading to kids, how many homes will you audit?)

How many weeks do you have until the National Day of Service and Remembrance on September 11th?

What will you have to average per week between now and September 11th to reach your goal?

How many volunteers will you have to recruit on average per week to reach that goal? How many hours would you guess they have to work? If it's not clear at first, you should be ambitious and then adjust your recruitment goal as you go.

Tracking Progress to Goals

Our team will report progress to goals every _____ to _____.

_____ will share our progress to goals with all team members by email/phone calls every _____.

We will also share our story and accomplishments at serve.gov.

SETTING GOALS: CLOTHING DRIVES

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SET CONCRETE GOALS

Setting goals helps you be accountable to yourself and also increases accountability within a group. Clear goals at the beginning of a project will also help you determine how your project will work and what role group members can play. Once goals are set, you can track your progress, compare your results with other group members, and figure out what works best so everyone can meet (or exceed) their goals.

Set a service goal for June 22 – September 11 and hold yourself accountable. Commit as an individual and as a team to help serve those most in need this summer. Then keep your commitment. Let's see what we can do together!

- As an individual, I will secure _____ dollars worth of donated clothing this summer.
- As a team we will secure _____ dollars worth of donated clothing this summer.
- As an individual, I will ask _____ friends, family members, colleagues to donate clothing this summer.
- I will run _____ clothing drive locations this summer.
- As a team we will run _____ clothing drive locations this summer.

TRACK PROGRESS TOWARD GOALS

- Set a weekly or biweekly deadline to report progress. For example, "Our team will report progress every Friday. The person responsible for reporting results for your team is _____."
- Make sure every group member is in the loop. Designate a group member to track and share the results. For example, "Our team will share our progress with all members by email/phone calls every week. The person responsible for sharing progress is _____."
- Keep track of your progress. Score sheets like the one below can be helpful.
- Use the Salvation Army convertor to calculate your achievements.

Week	\$worth of clothing donated	# of clothing drive sites	# individuals who donated
June 22			
June 29			
July 6			
July 13			
July 20			
July 27			
August 3			
August 10			
August 17			
August 24			
August 31			
September 7			
Total			

The most meaningful moment of my service was:_____.

The story follows:

TIPS: ORGANIZING A SUCCESSFUL CLOTHING (and/or HOMEWARES) DRIVE:**Before your clothing (and/or housewares) drive begins:**

- **Build a network:** Decide where your team will collect clothing and/or household items. Good locations include the office, small retail businesses, and local schools. Each team member can choose one location to target. At each location ask for approval (see attached letter) and locate boxes in a highly visible area.
- **Select items to be collected:** Often, people donate household items that an organization may not have a use for or children's clothing to an organization that only serves adults. The organization(s) you're serving may have specific guidelines about the clothing and household items they do and do not accept. Be sure to check in with them before starting your collection. Decide in consultation with your local services organization(s) which items will be collected and try to steer your contributions towards these goals. For example, if professional clothing for job interviews is particularly useful, try to encourage the donation of these articles.
- **Organize logistics:** A good clothing (and/or housewares) drive lasts about 2-3 weeks. The materials you will need include boxes, storage space for collected items and flyers.
- **Plan a Kick-Off event:** Kick-off your clothing (and/or housewares) drive with an event! You can host a party and ask each attendee to bring an item for donation. You can partner with your faith group to request clothing and/or household items at service. Consider alerting local media.

During your clothing/housewares drive:

- **Consider incentives:** Motivate your friends and co-workers to donate by creating a competition or organizing a raffle. Keep track of which location gathers the most items. Record which individual contributes the most items. Recognize the donors with certificates or awards.
- **Spread the word:** Decide how people will be encouraged to participate. The most successful way to gather clothing or household items is to ask your personal network to contribute. These requests will be most successful when made in person or by phone. Flyers and emails are useful, but less successful.

After your clothing/housewares drive ends:

- **Sort your items:** Go through your collections and sort the items according to the organization's guidelines. Count the number of boxes full of clothes and/or household items you've collected.
- **Celebrate:** Share the total number of boxes you collected with all of your participants. Thank your participants. Consider how you could do it better next time. Plan your next drive!

OTHER RESOURCES

National organizations and resources:

- The National Coalition for the Homeless is a great [resource](#) for what kinds of goods are generally useful to collect and contribute.
- Many homeless service organizations accept donations. Search for your [local service organization](#).
- The National Coalition for Homeless Veterans also provides [contact information](#) for local community-based veterans' service organizations that might be accepting clothing/housewares donations.

Some tips to get you started:

- New or gently used clothing, new toiletries/personal hygiene items or home furnishings are useful for the clients of homeless service organizations.
- Service providers themselves may find items such as kitchen utensils, furniture, books, toys, games, stuffed animals, dolls, diapers, etc. useful.
- Remember: the best way to organize a successful drive is to first contact your local service organization and find out what types of items they need and have the capacity to accept.

CELEBRATE YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Your work this summer matters and should be celebrated. Remember to go to [Serve.gov](https://www.serve.gov) and tell us your summer story of service.

Also, be sure to keep track of what worked for you this summer and what could be improved. You can learn from this service project when you organize your next service project!