

TOOLKITS

Energy and Environment: Audit Your Home

Energy Efficiency**THE FACTS**

Every year, more than \$13 billion worth of energy leaks from houses through small holes and cracks. That's more than \$150 per family!

A compact fluorescent light bulb uses 75 percent less energy than a regular bulb – and it can last up to four years.

Across America, home refrigerators use the electricity of 25 large power plants every year.

Some new refrigerators are so energy-smart they use less electricity than a light bulb!

A hot water faucet that leaks one drop per second can add up to 165 gallons a month. That's more than one person uses in two weeks.

An energy-smart clothes washer can save more water in one year than one person drinks in an entire lifetime!

A crack as small as 1/16th of an inch around a window frame can let in as much cold air as leaving the window open three inches!

An automatic dishwasher uses less hot water than doing dishes by hand - an average of six gallons less, or more than 2,000 gallons per year.

This summer, commit yourself and a team of your friends, family, and neighbors to help save energy in your home and to help others do so, too. Join United We Serve. This tool kit will give you the basics to start reducing your carbon footprint, recruit a team, 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.

- Call or visit the websites of national and local energy and environmental groups and ask how volunteers can contribute. Examples could be your [state's energy office](#), your local utility company, The [Alliance to Save Energy](#), The [Department of Energy](#), and the [Sierra Club](#).
- [Get a guide to finding local partners](#)
- If no environmental organizations exist in your community, you have all the tools needed to start an auditing team. Information on how to perform an audit can be found at the [Department of Energy's website](#).
- If you want to learn more about saving energy, a simple internet search on energy efficiency will bring tons of resources and information on how you can save energy.
- You can also contact your local home improvement store to find out about information and products they offer to help you save money in your home.

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, faith group members, book club devotees to serve with you.

- Host a house meeting or pot luck to choose a project, set goals, recruit volunteers and plan next steps.
- [Get a guide for hosting a house meeting](#)
- Register your service activities on www.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 individuals and as a team to reducing carbon emissions by a certain amount and audit a certain number of homes. 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.

- Reach out to your neighbors and colleagues to reduce carbon footprints.
- [Get a tip sheet for your service activity](#)

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: HOUSEHOLD AUDITS

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.

- Search for local organizations working in energy conservation like your state energy office, local chapter of the Sierra Club or Public Interest Research Group (PIRG), local home improvement stores, and local utility company.
- Identify organizations within your own community and find out how you can serve their needs:
 - ***What kind of groups should be contacted for expertise?***
 - ***What kind of groups should be tapped for volunteer base/audience (sample phone script below).***
 - ***Ask how you can help them make more people aware about saving energy.***

SAMPLE 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 volunteer to support energy conservation and efficiency. Is there an area in which a group of dedicated volunteers willing to work a few hours each week could help?
- ***What is the best way to reduce energy consumption in homes in our community?***
- ***Do you have information on do it yourself home energy savings and audits?***
- ***Do you provide any training or materials for energy saving in the home?***
- ***Do you have any groups I can join? What are our local needs in our community?***
- ***Is there literature and information on energy conservation that I can help distribute?***
- ***Are you the best person for me to contact?***

Remember to keep track of who you have contacted so you can follow up as necessary. You can use the chart below or create one that fits your project.

Group name	Contact name	Contact number	Volunteer activities	# of vols needed

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: ENERGY CONSERVATION

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Across America, home refrigerators use the electricity of 25 large power plants every year.

A hot water faucet that leaks one drop per second can add up to 165 gallons a month. That's more than one person uses in two weeks.

A crack as small as 1/16th of an inch around a window frame can let in as much cold air as leaving the window open three inches!

Every year, more than \$13 billion worth of energy leaks from houses through small holes and cracks. That's more than \$150 per family!

What will you do to help reduce our carbon footprint?

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 conserve energy and reduce your carbon footprint this summer. Then keep your commitment. Let's see what we can do together!

- ***As an individual I will replace ____ number of light bulbs with CFLs in the homes of friends and family.***
- ***I will pledge to turn off all the lights in any room and any electrical appliances like TV's, DVD players, and stereos that are not being used.***
- ***I will turn my water heater down to 120 degrees.***
- ***I will educate my friends, family, and co-workers on saving energy.***
- ***As an individual, I will ask _____ friends, family members, colleagues to join me in service 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. You can convert your daily energy saving activities into amount of carbon saved by using this carbon calculator. http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/emissions/ind_calculator.html

Activity	Me	Neighbor/Friend 1	Neighbor/Friend 2	Neighbor/Friend 3
# of light bulbs changed				
Unplugging unused appliances and turning off lights				
Degrees water heater turned down				
# of appliances replaces with energy star appliances				
# ceiling fans installed				
# of window leaks sealed				
# trees planted for shade				

# of times washed clothes in cool water				
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TIPS: REDUCE YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT

Twelve simple things to check around the house

What kind of light bulbs do you use?

- Compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) with the ENERGY STAR® label provide bright, warm light and use about 75% less energy than standard lighting. Each bulb produces 75% less heat, lasts up to 10 times longer, and can save you \$30 or more per bulb over the bulb's lifetime. There are CFLs for both indoor and outdoor use.
- Read about other ways to save energy with efficient [lighting](#).

Do you use a power strip to save energy on home appliances?

- Plug home electronics, such as TVs and DVD players, into power strips; turn the power strips off when the equipment is not in use (TVs and DVDs in standby mode still use several watts of power).
- Find more ways to make your [home electronics](#) more energy efficient.

What is the temperature on your hot water heater?

- Check the thermostat on your water heater. Water heaters sometimes come from the factory with high temperature settings, but a setting of 120°F provides comfortable hot water for most uses.
- Find out additional strategies for energy efficient [water heating](#).

What is the temperature of your refrigerator and freezer?

- To check refrigerator temperature, place an appliance thermometer in a glass of water in the center of the refrigerator. Read it after 24 hours. To check the freezer temperature, place a thermometer between frozen packages. Read it after 24 hours. Recommended temperatures are 37° to 40°F for the fresh food compartment of the refrigerator and 5°F for the freezer section. If you have a separate freezer for long-term storage, it should be kept at 0°F.
- Find more energy saving tips for [refrigerators and freezers](#).

Are your refrigerator and freezer leaking cold air?

- Make sure your refrigerator door seals are airtight. Test them by closing the door over a piece of paper or a dollar bill so it is half in and half out of the refrigerator. If you can pull the paper or bill out easily, the latch may need adjustment, the seal may need replacing, or you might consider buying a new unit.
- Find more energy saving tips for [refrigerators and freezers](#).

Are your appliances making your air conditioner run overtime?

- Avoid placing lamps or TV sets near your room air-conditioning thermostat. The thermostat senses heat from these appliances, which can cause the air conditioner to run longer than necessary.
- Learn additional tips for operating a [room air conditioner](#) efficiently.

- Do you use window shades to keep your home cool in the summer?**
 - Keeping window coverings closed during the day will reduce solar gain. In particular, white window shades, drapes, or blinds will help reflect heat away from the house.
 - Learn about [window treatments and coverings](#) that improve energy efficiency.

- Do you use a ceiling fan?**
 - If you use air conditioning, a ceiling fan will allow you to raise the thermostat setting about 4°F with no reduction in comfort.
 - Learn more about [using a ceiling fan](#) and [other ways](#) to increase cooling efficiency.

- What setting do you use for laundry?**
 - Wash your clothes in cold water using cold-water detergents whenever possible. About 90% of the energy used for washing clothes in a conventional top-load washer is for heating the water. Switching your temperature setting from hot to warm can cut a load's energy use in half. Learn more about efficient [laundry](#).

- Do you air dry dishes?**
 - Let your dishes air dry. If you don't have an automatic air-dry switch, turn off the control knob after the final rinse and prop the door open slightly so the dishes will dry faster. Learn more about efficient [dishwashing](#).

- Do you have a programmable thermostat?**
 - You can install a programmable thermostat to keep your house comfortably warm in the winter and comfortably cool in the summer. You can save as much as 10% a year on your heating and cooling bills by simply turning your thermostat back 10% to 15% for 8 hours, for example by turning down air conditioning when you are at work.
 - Find more information on how to [operate your thermostat](#) for maximum energy savings. Watch [ENERGY STAR's June 5, 2008, podcast](#) for video instructions on operating your programmable thermostat.

- Are you planning to buy a new appliance this summer?**
 - Look for the ENERGY STAR label on home appliances and products. ENERGY STAR products meet strict efficiency guidelines set by the U.S. Department of Energy and the Environmental Protection Agency.
 - Make sure to check the [major appliance shopping guide](#).

Want to do more?

- Find more ways to save energy and money at home**
 - Visit <http://energysavers.gov/seasonal/> for more ways to save energy this summer.
 - Download this simple do-it-yourself [Energy Savers booklet](#) and find more tips at <http://energysavers.gov> such as how to [find and seal air leaks](#).
 - Calculate your home energy use, by using the [Home Energy Saver tool](#).

- Conduct a home energy audit**

- Find out if you qualify for [DOE's Weatherization Assistance Program](#).
- Find out about [getting a professional energy audit or doing your own](#).

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!