



MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY OF SERVICE

Corporation for
**NATIONAL &
COMMUNITY
SERVICE** ★★ ★

Project: Train Neighbors to Prepare for Disasters

Unexpected events can turn an ordinary day into a life-threatening disaster. Most of us know we should plan for the inevitable, but very few of us do. By educating yourself and modeling what needs to be done, you can set a great example and pass information along to your neighbors. There are five key steps to complete a disaster preparation project.

- 1) Disasters are by nature unpredictable. However, past patterns do predict future events. Find out what kinds of weather-related events occur most where you live. Preparing for a flood requires a different approach than readying for an earthquake. If you know what to expect, you'll be better able to prepare adequately.
 - Once you understand your most likely sources of danger, investigate what you'll need beyond basic supplies to have on hand.
 - Hurricanes may require evacuation—and with it a plan to get you and your neighbors away from the storm.
 - Tornados generally call for waiting things out, in specific safer spaces.
 - In addition to investigating location-specific perils, also consider the kinds of disasters that strike anywhere: house fires, sustained blackouts, or water-related emergencies.
 - Nonprofit and government agencies such as the [Red Cross](#) and [FEMA](#) offer great information about what you need to have on hand for any and every disaster. Representatives from these or related organizations may even be available to speak to your group as part of your service event.
- 2) A successful group efforts require a motivated team whose members agree upon clearly defined tasks, set reachable goals, and act with inspiration and purpose.
 - Start off planning with folks you know, and ask them to tell others to join your efforts.
 - Meet regularly, especially as MLK Day approaches, and solicit input from everyone.
 - Assign concrete tasks to keep everyone motivated and on track. There are ways to include all ages in this work; the youngest volunteers can carry light objects, decorate preparedness kits, or serve refreshments to the adults hard at work.
 - Talk about the parallels and differences between your effort to make sure your neighbors can with stand together prepared in the face of disaster and those of Martin Luther King Jr.
 - Scout out a location for your community training on disaster preparedness. Make sure it offers plenty of room for the crowd you anticipate as well as the assembled supplies you may choose to give away.
 - Solicit funds from team members and/or others as well as in-kind donations from business for the supplies you'll need.
 - Once you've completed your research on what you need to prepare, decide how you'll provide these provisions. If it's impossible to obtain sufficient donations, perhaps you will need to give training and educational materials only so participants can purchase supplies on their own.



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- If you have the means to give away items, determine what supplies you will need and how you will obtain them. Typical supplies include nonperishable food, first aid kits, batteries, bottled water, access to photocopiers (for critical documents), flashlights, and hand tools.
 - Purchase the necessary supplies prior to the service day so they're ready to go on MLK Day.
 - Set goals for yourselves, such as number of people trained, kits supplied, and folks pledging to pass along what they've learned to others.
 - Record these goals and make sure you can meet them. If you need to revise, make sure you and your team choose goals you can all agree on.
 - Publicize your training so the whole neighborhood can attend. Post flyers on telephone poles and community bulletin boards, place free ads in local papers, ask area business to spread the word, make announcements at school, church, or civic groups.
 - [Post your project](#) on our site so that people in your area can join your efforts
- 3) Preparing and implementing your activity:
- Before conducting your community training, you'll need to make sure any handouts and/or supplies you intend to provide are ready. If the training is scheduled early in the day, this may require doing prep work the day before.
 - Make sure project leaders or coordinators are at the site early, ready to greet participants as they arrive.
 - Provide clear instructions and constructive corrections, if needed, as the service takes place.
 - Set up your supplies in an orderly fashion, accessible to all.
 - Make sure to provide clear information, allow time for questions, and create time and space for folks to meet and mingle.
- 4) After the project is completed, take some time to assess and reflect on it. Think about what went well and what could be improved.
- Host an official debriefing meeting for team members after the service day.
 - Examine the goals you set for yourselves and consider which ones you met, exceeded and didn't quite reach.
 - Who did your work impact? What did you accomplish? How did it feel?
 - Ask everyone for their honest assessment of what went well and how to improve for next time.
 - Consider what doing this work on MLK Day, in particular, meant to you.
- 5) We know you may not like to brag, but please do! You may inspire others to create or expand a community garden once they hear what you accomplished. [Share your service story](#). We're listening and want to know what you did and how you feel about it.