



# MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY OF SERVICE

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

## Project: Bring Learning to any Service You Do

When you really understand why you're doing the service you've selected, your achievements have greater meaning and it becomes easier to overcome obstacles or setbacks. The more you uncover about the challenges you're seeking to address, the more inspired you'll be to do more. There are five key steps used in planning a project that can guide you as you work toward bringing learning into the service you do.

- 1) Whether your project is obviously educational or you're having trouble seeing the learning component in it, there's plenty to discover both about what you're doing and how it ties to what Martin Luther King aimed for and achieved. Start by digging deeper. Why are the conditions where you'll be serving the way they are? Which decisions, policies, programs, rules, or circumstances have made them that way?

Here is one example to illustrate just what you might try to figure out, based on the particular project you've selected:

- You're going to create a community garden because you've noticed that where you live, an apple costs more than a double cheeseburger and Coke. So find out:
  - What are the grocery options in your area? Draw them on a map and estimate how far your neighbors would need to go for produce.
  - What's fresh food availability like in other parts of town? Add large supermarkets, farmer's markets and other fresh food vendors to the map. Notice where the options to buy food are plentiful and where there are "food deserts." Is there some pattern you detect?
  - Find out how prices for produce differ from store to store and neighborhood to neighborhood. What's the difference between a head of lettuce at the corner store and the supermarket? How about at the exact same chain in different locations? Again, is there some pattern here?
- 2) You've decided what kind of project you're doing and made some decisions about location of service or intended recipients. While you start planning learn and help your team learn more about service and Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. This isn't just any random day of service; it falls deliberately on the day we honor Dr. King. His is the only day we reserve for a single individual; delve into his history, goals, and legacy to figure out why. Your local library is a great place to find biographical information as well as historical accounts of the civil rights era in which King lived.
  - You can also tailor your efforts to learn more about the project you are working to design. Here is an example:
    - You're putting on a fun-filled fitness day and have scouted a site and started advertising. Find out more about the benefits of specific exercises and recommendations of how often we should do each kind. What are the differences between aerobic and anaerobic activities? How do the benefits of each differ? How much should we be doing of each kind of activity?
- 3) On the day itself, take advantage of opportunities to learn from others and share the knowledge you've gained. Build moments of reflection into your planned activities. Share stories and words from Dr. King and



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about any insights you've gained so far. Ask participants questions like: "How do you feel about what you're doing? Why did you elect to participate? What problems do you hope to address with this work? Why do you think these problems exist in these forms, in this location?"

- 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. Go back to your initial investigation into the local problems you elected to help tackle and ask more questions. For example:
  - If you decided to write letters to soldiers because you feel strongly about supporting our troops, what can you do to offer more aid for a longer time period? Are there local veteran and military family service organizations that accept volunteers?
- 5) In addition to [sharing your service story](#) with us, please add in details about what you learned before, during and since the service happened. We're listening and want to know what you did and how you feel about it. Also, continue and build on the work you've started this day!