

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

DAY OF SERVICE, JANUARY 21, 2013

Corporation for
NATIONAL &
COMMUNITY
SERVICE



“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is: What are you doing for others?”

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. devoted his life to equality, social justice, economic advancement, and opportunity for all. He challenged us to build a more perfect union and taught us that everyone has a role to play in making America what it ought to be. With his leadership, our nation made great strides toward increased civil rights.

More than 40 years after his death, Dr. King’s example can continue to guide us in addressing our most critical issues. Each of us can contribute to strengthening our own communities by serving in Dr. King’s honor not only on the King Holiday, but throughout the year. By making service part of our daily lives, we can help realize Dr. King’s dream. Together, we can create and sustain opportunities for Americans to strengthen their own and other’s economic opportunity, ensure that more young people graduate from high school, support our military families and veterans, and help communities prepare for and recover from disaster.

What Is the MLK Day of Service?

After a long struggle, legislation was signed in 1983 creating a federal holiday marking the birthday of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The federal holiday was first observed in 1986. In 1994, Congress designated the holiday as a national day of service and charged the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) with leading this effort. Taking place each third Monday in January, the MLK Day of Service is the only federal holiday observed as a national day of service – a “day on, not a day off.” The MLK Day of Service empowers individuals, strengthens communities, bridges barriers, addresses social problems, and moves us closer to Dr. King’s vision of a “Beloved Community.”

Why Serve on MLK Day?

Dr. King recognized the power of service to strengthen communities and achieve common goals. The MLK Day of Service is a way to transform Dr. King’s life and teachings into community action that helps meet national challenges on issues such as increasing economic opportunity, education, supporting veterans and military families, and help communities prepare for and recover from disaster.

In addition to helping solve serious problems, service brings together people from different backgrounds and benefits those who serve. On MLK Day, it is especially fitting that Americans come together in service that not only honors Dr. King, but builds lasting change in communities.

What Types of Service Are Encouraged?

All types of service are encouraged, particularly projects that connect participants to ongoing service throughout the year, have a lasting impact and build the capacity of an organization to launch new projects, mobilize volunteers, or generate resources. The most successful projects connect to the life and teachings of Dr. King and include time to reflect on his teachings. For the 2013 MLK Day of Service, CNCS encourages organizations to carry out projects which advance economic opportunities, support veterans and military families, promote education, and help communities prepare for or recover from disasters.

Who Can Participate in the MLK Day of Service?

People of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities are encouraged to serve on King Day, and to make the day the beginning of an ongoing commitment to a cause that is meaningful to them and addresses a need in their communities.

Recognize MLK Drum Majors for Service

MLK Day Drum Majors for Service are those volunteers who perform extraordinary everyday acts of service, but who seldom receive recognition. You can recognize these outstanding volunteers with the Presidents Volunteer Service Award. Drum Major awardees will receive a pin, certificate of achievement, and a letter from the President of the United States. For more information visit MLKDay.gov/awards.

How Can I Continue to Serve After MLK Day?

Start by connecting your MLK Day activities to the work you are doing year round. The Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service is an opportunity to shine a spotlight on the great work that is already happening in your community and kick-off a year of service. As part of his United We Serve initiative, President Obama has called upon all Americans to make service a part of their daily lives. Where and how you serve is up to you – the important thing is to get involved. Visit MLKDay.gov to find a volunteer opportunity in your community and for ideas on planning your own project.

2012 Highlights

On January 16, 2012, hundreds of thousands of Americans of all ages and backgrounds demonstrated their greatness by joining in volunteer service projects across the country to honor Dr. King on the 2012 Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service. President Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama joined cabinet secretaries, governors, mayors, nonprofit and business leaders, students, families, and

others in honoring Dr. King's legacy through service projects addressing a multitude of pressing social issues from poverty and illiteracy to hunger to homelessness.

MLK Day of Service Leaders and Network

CNCS and The King Center lead the MLK Day of Service in partnership with numerous national nonprofit organizations, faith-based and community groups, state service commissions, and other government agencies. In addition, each year CNCS awards grants to organizations to develop and coordinate service projects on the MLK Day of Service. MLK Day of Service Leaders (grantees) for 2013 are Cesar Chavez Foundation, HOPE worldwide, Points of Light, Service for Peace, Wisconsin Campus Compact, and Youth Service America. For a complete list of organizations in the MLK Service Network, visit MLKDay.gov.

Other Resources

A wide variety of free MLK Day resources for individuals and organizations are available at MLKDay.gov.

These include:

- ★ Tool to register your MLK Day project
- ★ Tool to find a MLK Day project
- ★ Action Guides with step-by-step instructions for planning a project that will have lasting impact
- ★ Resources: project ideas, needs assessment, community partnerships, involving children, newsworthy projects
- ★ Webinars
- ★ Weekly newsletter

To register your 2013 MLK Day project, go to MLKDay.gov and click “register your project.”

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For More Information, visit MLKDay.gov or e-mail MLKDay@cns.gov.