



MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY OF SERVICE

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

Project: Organize a Fitness Event

You don't need to look hard to find news about America's weighty obesity epidemic. One great way to motivate yourself and your neighbors is by organizing a community-wide day of fitness. There are five key steps to putting together a neighborhood event that offers fun and fitness.

- 1) Remember the summers you spent running around town with your friends? For most of us, this was the best exercise we ever got and it was fun. You can infuse your MLK Day with a healthy dose of fun and fitness by organizing a community-wide games and fitness day. School yards and parks are excellent choices for your day of activities.
 - Be sure, however, to get permission with the owners or managers of the space and involve members of that organization in your efforts. You'll need to secure the site and establish a formal agreement for its use that includes a liability waiver.
 - This activity is especially great for children. In fact, young people in your neighborhood are ideal candidates to plan, recruit participants, and lead activities. They are often in better physical shape than adults, and many have a natural enthusiasm that can motivate everyone to keep going.

- 2) A neighborhood fitness day will connect you to your community and start you on a path to better health. To do it right, you need to plan, prepare, and promote. A successful group effort requires a motivated team that agrees upon clearly defined tasks, sets reachable goals, and acts 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.
 - Talk about the parallels and differences between your effort to strengthen your bodies while forging community connections and those of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
 - Brainstorm over the kinds of activities you want to do. Think about Capture the Flag, T-Ball, three-legged and sack races, track and field events, soccer, obstacle courses, etc.
 - Determine what kinds of supplies you will need for the activities you seek to do. Include in this list healthy snacks and beverages such as water, fresh fruit, and veggies.
 - Decide how you will amplify your voices, if needed, to issue instructions to participants and animate the crowd.
 - Solicit funds from team members and/or others as well as in-kind donations from business for the supplies you'll need.
 - Purchase the necessary supplies before the service day and have them ready to go. Be sure to store any perishables in appropriate places.
 - Advertise the event through posters, word-of-mouth, letters in school and online networks. Libraries, schools, community centers, churches, and grocery stores often have community bulletin boards that are perfect for spreading the word about your event.
 - Set goals for yourselves, such as number of people attending, age groups represented, and number of people staying the whole time.
 - Record these goals and make sure you can meet them. If your initial assessment turns out to be too



MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY OF SERVICE

Corporation for
**NATIONAL &
COMMUNITY
SERVICE** 

ambitious or too meager, revise the goals so the whole team will feel great about what you accomplish.

- [Post your project](#) on our site so that people in your area can join your efforts

3) On the day of your activity:

- Make sure project leaders or coordinators are at the site early, ready to greet team members and participants as they arrive.
- Officially welcome everyone and talk about the purpose of the day – strengthening our bodies, our communities, and our commitment to serve each other in honor of Martin Luther King Jr.
- Organize volunteers into different work crews. Have different people leading games, handing out refreshments, and answering questions.
- Conduct your planned activities, offering continuous encouragement to all participants.

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 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 might not like to brag, but please do! You may inspire others to organize a fitness event 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.