



eVOLve

technical assistance for
leveraging volunteers

Quick Links

Welcome to **eVOLve: technical assistance for leveraging volunteers**. In this electronic technical assistance (eTA) brief, you will find tips and tools to help you leverage volunteers in your community. It is sponsored by HandsOn Network, a training and technical assistance provider for the Corporation for National and Community Service.

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This Month's Quote

Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice.
Justice at its best is love correcting everything that stands against love.

Martin Luther King, Jr., *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?* 1967

Dear HandsOn,

Can you provide great tips on how to plan a successful MLK Day Project that reflects Dr. King's legacy of service?

Ask Us

Do you have a question about working with volunteers? Send it to HandsOn Network at:

training@handsonnetwork.org

The Answer Corner

The MLK Day of Service provides an opportunity to translate Dr. King's legacy into community service and honest dialogue, leading to real change. According to the 2008 Corporation for National Service Fact Sheet, over 500,000 Americans honored Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. by serving on the January 21, 2008 King Holiday. This historic turnout is the



largest ever in the 13 years since Congress encouraged Americans to observe the King Holiday as a national day of service. Many Americans will continue working toward King's dream by participating in ongoing activities such as building homes, delivering meals, refurbishing schools and reading to children. January 19, 2009 gives the nation another opportunity to create innovative projects for change and social justice. Here are great tips to assist you in organizing community projects that meets the needs and reflect on Dr. King's legacy of service and commitment to human justice.

The C.I.R.S. Factor

Civic Involvement, reflection, and service learning (C.I.R.S.) are critical factors to implement in your planning process and actual activity. Applying these critical factors will help people understand and apply Dr. King's teachings to affect social change in their communities.

- **Civic Involvement**

Develop an activity that promotes ongoing participation, responsibility, and commitment and citizenship in your community beyond MLK Day. As you build this activity, explore your own path for deeper civic involvement. Remember when representing a national service program, there are limits to the types of civic activities programs funded by CNCS can serve. Please check the provisions governing your program to ensure program compliance.

- **Reflection**

Meaningful volunteer service coupled with reflection can lead to further civic action. Make sure you ask volunteers three important questions:

- What? Ask volunteers to report out on what happened on the MLK Day project and what was accomplished.
- So what? Ask volunteers what they learned from Dr. King's legacy as it relates to his values, his commitment to service, and community. Discuss how Dr. King's legacy relates to current issues such as education, poverty, diversity and race relations.
- What's next? Ask volunteers how the MLK Day project experience will shape their future action and what next steps they can take to further address the issues uncovered through their service.

- **Service Learning**

MLK Day is an excellent opportunity to incorporate service-learning into your project. Service-learning combines service objectives with learning objectives with the intent that the activity changes both the recipient and the provider of the service. This is accomplished by combining service tasks with structured opportunities that link the task to self-reflection, self-discovery, and the acquisition and comprehension of values, skills, and knowledge content.

Brainstorm

Identify activities that provide the most meaningful impact. Determine the strengths in your community and build on those resources available. Think about positive ways to develop solutions. Bring your community partners to the table to help you develop your project.

Establish Goals

At the heart of each MLK Day activity, should be solid goals and objectives. Once you have identified your activity, determine your project goals. Again, bring your community partners to the table to identify clear goals and objectives. Your goals may shift as you connect with other partners, but getting clear on them will help you attract others to your cause.

Map Resources

Once you have decided what you want to impact, determine what resources will help you achieve your goals:

- * **Individuals** - What can individual people do?
- * **Associations** - What can groups of people do?

- * **Institutions**- What can formal organizations do?
- * **Physical Spaces** - What spaces are needed?
- * **Economy**- What can money/economic supports do?

Build Partnerships

Partnerships are vital to the project success. MLK Day provides an excellent opportunity to reach out to a diverse community and attract new partners and sponsors. Do not reinvent the wheel when planning your MLK Day activities. Tap into resources right in your organization and community. Attend events which will allow you to network with others who are addressing your concerns. This will help you connect with people who share your concerns and who may already be addressing them.

Engage Volunteers

As you develop your activity, maintain good systems for your volunteers. Reflect on your first volunteer experience? Did the organization initiate and maintain effective communication with you. Here is your opportunity to make a good impression on volunteers by making their first inquiry a positive experience.

- **Maintain Strong Volunteer Communication** - Develop a communications checklist to include: Welcome, introduction, activity description, background, service descriptions, appropriate clothing to wear, alternate instructions for bad weather, and your contact information.
- **Stay Connected from Start to Finish** - As you build support for your activity, keep the energy flowing through email, newsletters, flyers, bulletin boards or other communications. Regular updates will keep volunteers in the loop and attract additional support.
- **Train Volunteers** - Develop a volunteer engagement checklist to include: schedule, access to event site, weather and dress, registration, reflection, and evaluation

Be Flexible

Be ready to listen, respond and even shift your goals as you develop your activity. Keep an open mind to learn something innovative. Remember, partners and volunteers can provide many skills, abilities, and talents to your project. You can always learn something new to implement for your next MLK Day project.

Click [here](#) to learn more about basic project development and management for your MLK Day activity.

Resources

The Resource Center offers tools and resources to address these new findings and strengthen volunteer management. [New materials are available](#) on the topics of volunteer retention, recruitment, human capital strategies, and cost-effective volunteering.

Other Resources:

Visit [The Resource Center](#) to learn more about working with volunteers. Find resources such as:

- Online learning courses
 - Volunteer Management
 - Working with Diverse Volunteers
 - Project Development

Also check out Volunteering in America (2008) for comprehensive data on volunteering trends and retention - all at a new interactive website: www.volunteeringinAmerica.gov.

HandsOn Network Training Opportunities

As a Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service grantee of the Corporation for National and Community Service, HandsOn is pleased to present a webinar series to help HandsOn Action Centers and other organizations prepare to celebrate the MLK Day of Service in January 2009. Click [here](#) to register for these free webinars. All sessions are at 3:00 Eastern.

- Thursday, November 20: **Project Management** - facilitated by Katie Stearns of Chicago Cares and Candi Williams of Hands On Birmingham
- Tuesday, December 2: **Volunteer Leadership and Grassroots Engagement** - facilitated by Gigi Rolles of Hands On Macon
- Week of December 8 (date TBD): **Civic Engagement** - facilitated by Malukah Berry
- Wednesday, December 17: **Evaluation** - facilitated by Brandee Menoher of HandsOn Network
- Tuesday, January 13: **Troubleshooting and Technical Assistance**

Download the recording from the first session, **Project Development: Scoping the Project**, [here](#).

If you have any questions, please [contact us](#).

2009 National Conference on Volunteering and Service:

Workshop Proposal Deadline Extended to December 1st!

The deadline is extended! Visit the conference website <http://www.volunteeringandservice.org> to submit your proposal for the 2009 National Conference on Volunteering and Service. Those who have already made submitted workshops, but want to make changes, can do so on the website until December 1st. They are given a log in when the originally submit a workshop. They will just need that log in and can make changes without having to submit the entire workshop twice. Note: We will only accept online submissions.

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