

# Day of Service Planning Guide

Helping Companies Engage in Service



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Dear Human Resource Professional,

Planning a company-wide day of service gives your employees the unique opportunity to have an unforgettable volunteer experience that makes a difference in the community, while also experiencing the benefits of volunteerism. Companies that engage their employees in service report elevated workplace morale, enhanced relationships between departments, increased job satisfaction among staff and an improved corporate image in the community.

However, planning a company-wide volunteer event can be overwhelming. What agencies take volunteers? Do staff volunteer for an entire day, or just a few hours? How are projects selected? How many volunteers are needed? Who provides the supplies? What happens if no one signs up to help? What happens if it rains? Is it ok to call the media?

This Day of Service Planning Guide will answer all of those questions and more. This guide is a step-by-step roadmap for planning your company's day of service; getting you started, keeping you on track and seeing you through success. In addition, Helpline Center staff have over 35 years of volunteer project planning experience, and we are here to help anytime you need extra support.

So let's get started planning your company's day of service!

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3 Months Out	2 Months Out	1 Month Out	Week Before	Day Before	Day Of	Week After
Check Corporate Policies	Select A Project	Prepare Recruitment Materials	Reconfirm With Agency Partner	Reminder to Volunteers	Team Leaders Arrive Before Volunteers	Send Evaluations
Form A Committee	Contact Community Partner(s)	Recruit Team Leaders	Provide Required Training	Reconfirm With Partner	Set Up Project Supplies	Follow Up Report To Staff
Set A Goal(s)	Set A Date/ Schedule	Recruit Volunteers	Send Volunteer Reminder	Re-check Supplies	Set Up Check In	Hold Planning Committee Debriefing
Contact 211 To Find Project Options	Request Financial Support	Plan for PR	Assemble/ Distribute Supplies	Remind Media	Welcome Volunteers & Give Instructions	Plan For Future Events
					Host Any Press	
					Provide Food & Beverages As Needed	
					Notify Partner Of Project Status At End Of Event	
					Celebrate Success!	

**Step 1: Know Your Company's Policies**

*3 Months Out*

It's important to understand your company's rules about workplace volunteerism. Some companies have strictly defined parameters about employee volunteerism, including a list of acceptable sites for service, specific guidelines for promoting volunteer opportunities in-house and requirements for reporting service hours. Other businesses encourage their employees to volunteer, but don't have a formal employee volunteer program. Before you begin planning a day of service, be sure you fully understand your company's policies on employee volunteerism. There is nothing more frustrating than putting together a great service day plan, and then scrapping it because it violates your company's policies!

**Company Employee Volunteer Policies**

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_

*Contact the Helpline Center by dialing 2-1-1 and ask for an Employee Volunteer Program Planning Guide. This will help your business develop, or strengthen, your workplace volunteer policies. It's free and further consultation with Helpline Center staff is available upon request.*



**Step 2: Form A Planning Committee**

*3 Months Out*

Next, form a Planning Committee. Depending on your company's size, this could be two to 20 people. To get "buy in" from all areas of your company, invite representatives from each department. Outline the expectations of this committee to each person you recruit. The Planning Committee will be responsible for all aspects of planning for your day of service, including project selection, volunteer recruitment and hosting your event. You should meet every other week, and record minutes for every meeting.

**Committee Member:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Email:* \_\_\_\_\_

**Committee Member:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Email:* \_\_\_\_\_

**Committee Member:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Email:* \_\_\_\_\_

**Committee Member:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Email:* \_\_\_\_\_

**Committee Member:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Email:* \_\_\_\_\_

**Committee Member:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Email:* \_\_\_\_\_

**Committee Member:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Email:* \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 3: Set Goals**

*3 Months Out*

Clearly defining goals for your day of service will help your Planning Committee stay on task and on target. Setting goals will also help your committee determine if your day of service is a success. You should spend time as a group discussing why your company wants to have a day of service. Common reasons include: making a difference in the community, building teamwork among staff, building a positive corporate image, improving staff morale, providing leadership growth opportunities to middle management, improving relationships between departments, etc.

**Your goals should also include the following:**

Target number of employees engaged: \_\_\_\_\_

Target number of hours to be collectively volunteered: \_\_\_\_\_

Target impact area: \_\_\_\_\_

**Service Day Goals**

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**Step 4: Identify Project Options**

*3 Months Out*

Dial 2-1-1 or visit [www.helplinecenter.org](http://www.helplinecenter.org) to discover service day volunteer project options at over 150 non-profits in the Sioux Empire. Volunteer Solutions, the Helpline Center's on-line volunteer opportunity database, features over 350 ways to volunteer locally, including opportunities that are available to groups of all sizes. By dialing 2-1-1, you can get customized project planning assistance. Staff at the Helpline Center can meet with your committee and present service project ideas.

It's important to find a project(s) that will be both meaningful to the community and to your volunteers, and be in line with your company's community engagement philosophy. Consider surveying your staff to gauge their interests. Would they like to volunteer with children, adults, older adults or animals? Do they want to work with hunger, education, homelessness, environmental conservation or mentoring? Would they prefer to help at a community event, or participate in a project at a specific non-profit agency? It's difficult to find volunteer service projects for groups of more than 20. If your company plans to engage more than 20 employees in your day of service, you may need to plan multiple projects.

**Project Ideas**

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 5: Select A Project**

*2 Months Out*

Once you have explored all of your options, your committee needs to select a project based on your goals and staff input.

**Project(s) Selected**

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_

*If you need to plan multiple projects to accommodate all of your volunteers, consider selecting a theme for your service day. For example, perhaps all of your projects focus on agencies that serve children, or perhaps they all involve helping the elderly. That way, your employees will have different projects, but will have similar experiences in a specific impact area.*

**Step 6: Contact Your Agency Partner, Set Your Date**

*2 Months Out*

Once you have selected a project, call the agency where you want to volunteer and reserve your service date and time. Be sure to tell them how many volunteers will be participating. In addition, collect the following information:

Volunteer Coordinator Name:

Volunteer Coordinator Contact Information:

Goals For Project:

Tasks To Meet Goals:

Special Skills Needed:

Required Training:

Supplies Needed:

Who will provide supplies:

What to wear:

Where to park:

Will snacks/lunch be provided by agency:

Weather contingency plan for outdoor projects:



**Additional Project Details**

Volunteer Coordinator Name:

Volunteer Coordinator Contact Information:

Goals For Project:

Tasks To Meet Goals:

Special Skills Needed:

Required Training:

Supplies Needed:

Who will provide supplies:

What to wear:

Where to park:

Will snacks/lunch be provided by agency:

Weather contingency plan for outdoor projects:

**Step 7: Request Financial Assistance**

*Two Months Out*

If an agency can't provide all necessary supplies, your company may consider helping with financial assistance. If your company can't provide any financial assistance, be sure to only seek projects where no contribution is necessary.

### **Step 8: Prepare Recruitment Materials**

#### *One Month Out*

Put together at least three forms of recruitment materials and distribute to staff. This could include an email detailing your project, a flier posted in your break room, a notice posted on your company's intranet, a stuffer in paystubs or an event invitation left in each employee's mailbox. Be creative, but give all important details. Include the service day project description, date, time, location and specific instructions for volunteering. Also consider talking about your day of service at departmental meetings.

### **Step 9: Recruit Volunteers**

#### *One Month Out*

Distribute your recruitment materials to all employees once a week for three weeks, asking for volunteers. If you are having trouble recruiting volunteers, get your Planning Committee to make personal asks. If you have more volunteers than you need, consider creating multiple shifts for your project or adding additional projects. If you are hosting one service day volunteer project, it's best to have one key contact person responsible for registering all volunteers. If your service day includes multiple projects, a Team Leader should be assigned to each project. The Team Leader for each project is responsible for registering volunteers for his or her project. A "registration page" can be as simple as an Excel document that contains each volunteer's name and contact information organized by project and (if needed) shift.

### **Step 10: Plan For PR**

#### *One Month Out*

Tell the community about your day of service. Issue a press release to local media and ask them to cover your event. Highlight your day of service plans on your website and in your company newsletter. Consider sending a letter to clients telling them about your project and invite them to get involved by volunteering with you.

*Some non-profit agencies have media rules. For example, media may only be allowed with prior approval from the agency director. If you want to invite the media to your service day, call the agency's volunteer coordinator and see if the agency has specific guidelines regarding media coverage.*

### **Step 11: Provide Necessary Training**

*One Week Out*

Occasionally, non-profit agencies will require project training before a group of volunteers. If your company can't accommodate additional employee time for training, seek only projects that don't require advanced training. Or, consider inviting the agency in over lunch to provide necessary training to staff.

### **Step 12: Reconfirm With Agency Partner**

*One Week Out*

Call the non-profit(s) where you will be volunteering. Make sure they are still set to host your company for your day of service. Check to see if anything has changed since you last talked and finalize any plans.

### **Step 13: Send Reminder To Volunteers**

*One Week Out*

Email each employee to remind them of their volunteer commitment. Include the following details in that email: project description, project location, the date, the time they should arrive, the time they should be done, what to bring, what to wear, what to do in case of inclement weather, parking instructions, lunch/snack information. Below is a sample reminder template for you to use:

#### **DATE**

Dear Volunteer,

Thank you for participating in **COMPANY NAME** Day of Service! This is a reminder that you are signed up to volunteer on **DATE** at **LOCATION**.

Please arrive by **TIME**. You will be done by **TIME**. When you arrive, please park in **LOCATION**. Please wear **CLOTHING INSTRUCTIONS**. For lunches/breaks **FOOD INSTRUCTIONS**. In case of bad weather, **CONTINGENCY PLAN INFORMATION**. If you have any questions, contact **TEAM LEADER INFORMATION**. Please join us at the end of the day for **WRAP UP INFORMATION**. Thank you for volunteering!

*You may also want to send this same reminder email the day before the event.*

*It will increase your participation levels.*



### **Step 14: Assemble and Distribute Supplies**

*One Week Out*

If your company is providing supplies, gather everything you need at least one week in advance. If you are holding multiple projects, get the supplies to Team Leaders.

### **Step 15: Contact Media**

*One Week Out*

Remind the media of your event and invite them again to attend.

### **Step 16: Day Of Check List**

*Day of Event:* Complete the following check list on the day of your project.

- Team Leaders arrive 20 minutes before volunteers for set up
- Check in with volunteer coordinator and confirm day's activities
- Set up project supplies
- Set up check in
- Have each volunteer sign in and give out nametags
- Welcome volunteers and introduce volunteer coordinator
- Host press
- Provide comfort items for volunteers such as water & breaks
- Troubleshoot with volunteer coordinator as challenges occur
- Give project status updates to volunteer coordinator at end of day
- Celebrate successes with volunteers

### **Step 17: Evaluation**

*Week After Event*

It's important to allow staff to reflect on their experience. Send each volunteer an evaluation and ask for feedback. Gather your Planning Committee and review the results. Record key points for future efforts. Trumpet your successes to your staff and to the community! Tell them about the impact you made. This information can be from the agency you served, but also include testimonials from staff. Send this out in emails, in newsletters and put it on your website. Then decide when you might like to volunteer again! Days of service can happen annually, quarterly or even monthly.