



United Way
of the Greater Seacoast

Volunteer Checklist - Preparing for your Day of Caring Project

Please review this checklist to be sure that your volunteers (and the agency your group is working with) get the most out of your time together.

Once the project has been selected

Arrange for an on-site visit.

After signing up for your specific projects, each volunteer team leader is responsible for scheduling a visit to the appropriate nonprofit agency prior to the Day of Caring. The purpose of the visit ensures that:

- The requirements and scope of the project(s) are understood
- Any questions are answered prior to the Day of Caring
- Supply issues can be addressed
- Start and end times as well as ideas for lunch are discussed
- Volunteer Team leaders have a better idea of how to delegate work to their team
- Volunteer Team Leaders obtain specific task information to communicate to their teams
- Everyone knows what to expect

Gather input from the nonprofit agency

Discuss plans with the nonprofit agency contact.

- Share your group's goals so that they know what you are trying to achieve. They may be able to suggest creative ways to accomplish your goals.
- Review with the agency contact any specific requests they may have of your group for donations, skills, etc. While visiting the site, you may develop your own ideas of what you can offer.
- Discuss the nonprofit agencies policies on photographing their site, clients, etc. Make sure your plans don't conflict with any agency rules.
- Utilize the project plan form to gather contact information, arrival times, restrictions, policies as well as specific requests.

❑ **Walk through each part of the project.**

Try to anticipate all of your needs (for supplies, for your volunteer team, for the nonprofit agency). Some typical needs are:

- Directions to the location
- Time for an agency tour
- Appropriate attire
- Cameras, film and cellular phones
- Meals, snacks, water
- Restroom accessibility
- Vans or trucks (to transport supplies or volunteers)
- Agency capacity for refreshments, food (refrigerator space, tables and chairs)
- Tools and Equipment – What can the agency supply? What might volunteers bring?

❑ **Consider the risks.**

Every project probably contains a certain amount of risk, even if it's just dust in the eyes. Consider what precautions need to be made to protect the volunteers, staff, and/or clients involved in the project. Take time to identify, minimize, and eliminate the risks. For example:

- Make sure you have the necessary supplies, such as work or rubber gloves, dust masks, goggles, safety vests, etc.
- Block off a sidewalk that runs past an open swimming pool near the work area.
- Prepare for possible weather conditions—extra water if it's hot, ponchos if it's raining, breaks inside if it's cold.

❑ **Organize the day's activities.**

Assume that your volunteers will need training on the project when they arrive at the work site. Allow time for an agency overview, a tour of the facility, and an orientation to the work site (for restroom locations, etc.).

Work with the nonprofit agency contact to make contingency plans:

- Design different jobs and schedules to avoid bottlenecks or boredom. (e.g., at a painting project, someone must tape and paint the trim before the walls.)
- Develop a back-up list of activities in case the volunteer team finishes early.
- Determine back-up plans or a back-up date if inclement weather will prohibit completing an outdoor project.

Generate interest

❑ Publicize the project.

The more excited you are about the project, the more excited others will become.

Inform your Community or Public Affairs department about the project. Advertise the project through your communications (flyers, e-mail, voice mail, newsletters, word-of-mouth, table tents, etc.).

Two days before the project

❑ Finalize your plans.

- Review all plans with the nonprofit agency contact.
- Confirm who from the agency will be available to your group in case of questions or problems.
- Finalize your list of volunteers.
- Review everything with your volunteers:
 - Directions, lunch arrangements, time frames, etc.
 - Advise them to dress in work clothes appropriate to the project.
 - Ask them to bring work tools from home, if necessary.

After the project

❑ Evaluate the project and celebrate your accomplishments.

- Recognize and thank the volunteers. If applicable, post pictures of the event in a prominent place.
- Get feedback -- evaluate the project and its effect on the volunteers, the organization, and the agency.