



Nine Steps Toward Performing a Successful Community Service Project

Now that we know the important elements of an effective community service project for youth, youth and adults can work together as a group to make it a success. Below are nine steps toward performing a successful community service project.

1. Determine the *needs* in your community.
 - Ask members and parents to identify needs they see.
 - Ask other community groups.
 - Ask community leaders.
 - Ask Extension staff what other clubs/groups have done.
2. Determine what *type* of activities your members have an interest in or the ability to do.
 - Consider the size of your group and the age of the members.
 - Consider the skills and interests of members.
 - Determine how much time you want to devote to the community service project.
 - Determine how much parental support you have for the project.
3. *List* all of the activities/projects/needs that have been suggested and *choose* one.
 - With the help of parents, junior leaders or a committee, narrow the list down to two or three ideas.
 - Present the ideas to your group with an explanation of the need and/or project.
 - Based on the presentations, the group can then choose a project to conduct.
4. Develop a *plan* to conduct your project
 - Review the risk management information provided to you by 4-H and use the resources available to you throughout this step.
 - Your plan should include:
 - goals of the project
 - tasks involved
 - time commitment
 - permissions that need to be obtained
 - budget (if necessary)
 - insurance (if necessary)
 - equipment and supplies
 - publicity
 - additional adult help, and
 - a process for evaluation and reflection.
5. *Prepare* the youth for the community service project and the tasks to be accomplished
 - Go over the tasks to be accomplished in a positive manner.
 - Review safety precautions and provide any specific training that may be needed.
 - This may be the first time that some of your members are doing a job, so assure them that it's okay to ask questions or ask for assistance.
 - This is a good opportunity to talk about societal needs and issues.

6. *Carry out* the project
 - The project should be hands on, if possible.
 - Involve members in following through with the project, for example rather than donating money to buy toys for a child care center, take the members shopping to purchase the toys themselves and deliver them to the care center.

7. *Document* your group's efforts with pictures, videos, or written articles
 - Take pictures of youth involved in the project.
 - Write an article and submit it along with a picture to local media.

8. Plan for a *reflection* and *application* period
 - This can either be at the end of the community service activity or at your next group meeting.
 - Let members share their thoughts about their experience.
 - You may need to ask questions to get them talking. Some sample questions might include:
 - Reflect:**
 - Describe what happened at our community service project.
 - What did you like about this community service project?
 - How did you feel about this project?
 - What did you notice about the people who were helped by this project?
 - Apply:**
 - What might we do differently if we do this project again?
 - How else might we help in the future?
 - How can we use what we learned from this project?

9. *Summarize* your group's efforts
 - Share a brief project description with the Extension office to go into the county newsletter, submit an article with a picture to your local newspaper, or send a letter with a picture to your local town, township, county, or state official to highlight your efforts.
 - "4-H is a community of young people across America who are learning leadership, citizenship, and life skills." Participating in community service is one way to continue to help youth learn those life skills and become productive and contributing members of their own communities.

Adapted from "Implementing Effective Community Service Projects Fact Sheet" developed by University of Illinois Extension.



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