

Pre-Project Checklist

If you plan your service event well beforehand, you can expect things to run pretty smoothly during the actual day of service. But we all know that sometimes things don't go as expected. Here is a checklist to help you manage logistics for your service event:

Logistics

There are several logistical concerns leading up to the day of the project. Be ready to address the following questions:

- Do you know where the trash containers are located? Make sure there will be ample trashcans and recycling bins with bin liners.
- Have you thought about how you will create a fun environment? Do you have your CD player ready? Think about how you are going to provide an energizing atmosphere. One fun idea would be to have a local radio station broadcast live from the site, thus providing music and promotion for the event.
- Are there questions and concerns that still need to be addressed? If you do not think a project/task is feasible or if you have questions or concerns, be sure to discuss any changes that you feel need to be made with your team and partners.
- Have you finalized the project plan? Have you shared it with all necessary parties? If necessary, make additional visits to the service site in order to finalize the task matrix and to ensure that you are prepared to run a successful project. Be sure to stay in contact with your partners about details for the project.
- Have you met with project leaders? Meet with the staff and volunteers who will be leading the project to make sure that everyone is comfortable with the scope of the project and understands the plan. Leaders should also be familiar with the layout of the site and emergency procedures. Utilize your leaders to delegate tasks within the groups.
- Have you started to implement a PR and media plan (if necessary)? If PR and media attention are important to the project, begin working with communications contacts early so that they can develop and implement a strategy to seek coverage for your project. You will want to make sure you've assigned a media spokesperson to be at the service site and that he/she is armed with media kits and talking points.
- Have you addressed documentation of the event? Ask a staff person or volunteer to take pictures of the project. You should make a list of the types of pictures you want, such as close-up shots of people, volunteers in action or team photos.
- Did you confirm all tools and materials? Confirm that all tools and materials have been picked up and are on the site. Obtain any overlooked items. Make sure that you've thought through all of the cleaning supplies you might need. Extra work gloves and trash bags are always a good idea!
- Do you have your project kit packed? Pack a kit with materials that you will need to facilitate the project, including: sign-in sheets, evaluations, pens, markers, tape, poster board, rope/bungee cords, paper, clipboards and nametags. You will need these things for registration, to take notes, to make signs (directions to water, bathrooms, etc.), to hang banners and to handle little details of the day. You may also want to bring handouts about the next volunteer opportunity.
- Have you checked, double-checked and triple-checked? Don't leave anything to chance. It's better to confirm a detail twice than to assume that someone else will do it. Ask your project leaders to review details. If someone agrees to be responsible for any materials, follow up with an e-mail. Stay in touch with partners and donors who are providing financial or in-kind resources to make sure that you have everything you need before the day of the project.
- Have you organized final planning meetings? Meet with your project leaders to ensure that everyone is confident about all project details.

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- Did you create a “call list”? Exchange cell phone numbers with all key contacts if you have not already done so. You may also want to secure walkie-talkies for the day of the project.
- Have you made your final calls? Make any final calls to project-specific contacts, such as landscapers or media contacts.
- Do you need to identify a bilingual speaker? You want all volunteers to have a meaningful experience, so make sure that you have the language capabilities to communicate with each volunteer.
- Have you thought about how you will take care of VIPs if any are attending the project? Decide how you want to greet them and give them a tour of the site and the work taking place.

Scheduling

- Do you have a printed schedule for the event, and have you reviewed it? Discuss the time the facility needs to be opened on the day of the event. If the facility isn’t usually open on that day, get the name and contact information for the person who will give you access.
- Have you assigned volunteers to serve as task leaders to work with specific parts of the event?
- Has time been allotted for set up, breaks, lunch, proper clean up, reflection and evaluation?
- Are volunteers aware of their scheduled volunteer time?

Access to Event Site

- Do volunteers have directions to the event?
- Is the project site accessible to people with disabilities?
- If the site is normally closed or secured, who will be available to provide access to the facilities?
- Is there a place where can volunteers put personal belongings?
- Do you know where should volunteers park?
- Do you have a way to tell volunteers where to park (sign, other volunteers to direct traffic, etc.)?

Registration

- Has an area been designated for volunteer check-in?
- Have registration forms been created and printed?
- Do you have writing utensils?
- Do you have volunteer nametags?
- Do you have volunteers to manage registration?
- Have they been trained on how to register the volunteers?
- Do volunteers know whom to contact in case of a cancellation or emergency?

Weather and Attire

- Have you made contingency plans in the event of bad weather?
- Do volunteers know how to find out about a change in plans?
- Do you have a way to contact volunteers in case of an emergency?
- Do volunteers know how they should dress for the project?

Safety

- Are there first aid kits, a water station, phones and volunteer safety accessories on-site?
- Are there any special safety concerns for the use of special tools or supplies being used? Do you have instructional handouts for any tools being utilized?
- Do you have a plan for monitoring the site if there are construction tools being used?
- Do you know how you can encourage everyone to be safe and have fun?

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Food, Beverages and Breaks

- Do you have a food or beverage station?
- Do you know if there is a specific place for volunteers to eat or drink or if refreshments can be anywhere on site?
- Do you have a volunteer who will help distribute the food and drinks?
- Do you have a plan to ensure that volunteers get a break?
- Do you have a volunteer who will monitor food and beverages and refurbish supplies if necessary?

Evaluation and Feedback

- Has an evaluation form been developed and printed?
- Has a feedback form been developed and printed?
- Do you have a volunteer to manage evaluations?
- Do you have pens and extra evaluation forms?

Reflection

- Do you have a reflection activity planned?
- Have you prepared a few take-a-ways to provide your volunteers to encourage continued thought and action around this particular issue?

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