

DEVELOPING A CLEARER VISION

MEMBERSHIP GROWTH & RETENTION



Why Should Your Members Participate in Community Service?

There are numerous benefits to participating in community service, both for your membership and others. Some of the most important benefits of volunteering:

- **Makes your chapter visible in your community.**
- Gives your members a way to help others.
- Helps improve your community.
- Can help strengthen your member's resume and college/job applications.
- Can be a way to meet new friends.
- Helps your chapter find others who share similar values.
- Gives your members a way to gain work experience and learn more about certain jobs.
- Helping others gives us a sense of purpose and satisfaction!
- Often results in personal growth.

How Should You Use This List?

This list of over one hundred community service examples is **organized by category**, so if you're particularly interested in working with, say, children or animals, you can easily find community service activities more related to your chapter interests.

In order to use this list most effectively, read through it and make note of any community service ideas that match your chapter's interests which your group may want to participate in. Some basic considerations to keep in mind as you peruse this list are:

Who would you like to help?

Is there a specific group of people or cause your chapter is passionate about? Look for projects that relate to your members passions and interests. Your chapter may also just want to perform particular community service activities that allow you to do hobbies you enjoy, like baking or acting, and that's fine too.

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Do you want a community service activity that is reoccurring or a one-time event?

Perhaps you don't have enough time to regularly devote to community service. In that case, it may be better to look for opportunities that only occur once or sporadically, such as planning special events or helping build a house.

What kind of impact do you want to have?

Some people prefer to participate in community service activities that have a **quantifiable impact**, for example, activities where you know the specific number of kids you tutored, dollars you raised, or cans of food you collected. This is in contrast to activities that don't have such clear numbers, such as creating a garden or serving as a volunteer lifeguard. Some people prefer quantifiable activities because they feel they **look stronger**, or because they simply enjoy knowing their exact impact on the community.

What skills would you like to gain?

Many community service activities can help you gain skills. These skills can range from teaching to construction and more. If there is a particular skill your group would like to learn for future classes, jobs, or just out of personal interest, you may want to see if there is a community service activity that helps you learn that skill.

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General Ideas

1. Donate or raise money for your local Red Cross.
2. Organize a community blood drive at your lodge.
3. Organize a Senior Tax services day in January with volunteers from a local tax business.
4. Send cards to soldiers serving overseas.
5. Hold a bake sale for your favorite charity.
6. Participate in a charity walk/race.
7. Organize an event or parade for Memorial Day
8. Volunteer to help at a charity auction
9. Participate in National Youth Service Day in April
10. Contact a tree farm about donating Christmas trees to nursing homes, hospitals, or to families who can't afford to buy their own
11. Collect unused makeup and perfume to donate to a center for abused women
12. Help register people to vote
13. Call your local high school and volunteer to host end of season club and sports banquets.

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Helping Children and Schools

1. Tutor children during or after school
2. Knit or crochet baby blankets to be donated to hospitals or homeless shelters
3. Collect baby clothes and supplies to donate to new parents
4. Organize a Special Olympics event for children and teenagers
5. Collect used sports equipment to donate to families and after-school programs
6. Volunteer at a summer camp for children who have lost a parent
7. Sponsor a child living in a foreign country, either on your own or as part of a group
8. Coach a youth sports team
9. Put on performances for children in hospitals
10. Give free music lessons to schoolchildren
11. Become a volunteer teen crisis counselor
12. Organize a summer reading program to encourage kids to read
13. Organize an Easter egg hunt for neighborhood children
14. Create a new game for children to play
15. Organize events to help new students make friends
16. Babysit children during a PTA meeting
17. Organize a reading hour for children at a local school or library
18. Donate used children's books to a school library
19. Work with the local [health](#) department to set up an immunization day or clinic to immunize children against childhood diseases
20. Volunteer to help with Vacation Bible School or other religious camps

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Helping Animals and the Environment

1. Take care of cats and dogs at an animal shelter
2. Clean up a local park
3. Raise money to provide a bulletproof vest for a police dog
4. Plant a tree for Arbor Day
5. Place a bird feeder and bird fountain in your backyard
6. Start a butterfly garden in your community
7. Sponsor a recycling contest
8. Grow flowers in your backyard then give bouquets to hospital patients or people who are housebound
9. Help create a new walking trail at a nature center or park
10. Update the signs along a nature trail
11. Adopt an acre of rainforest
12. Help train service dogs
13. Participate in the cleanup of a local river, pond, or lake
14. Foster animals that shelters don't have space for
15. Organize a spay and neuter your pet program
16. Care for a neighbor's pet while they are away
17. Sponsor an animal at your local zoo
18. Train your pet to be a therapy animal and bring it to hospitals or nursing homes
19. Build and set up a bird house
20. Organize a carpool to reduce car emissions
21. Campaign for more bike lanes in your town

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22. Volunteer at a nature camp and teach kids about the environment
23. Test the water quality of a lake or river near you
24. Plant native flowers or plants along highways

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Helping the Hungry and/or Homeless

1. Build a house with Habitat for Humanity
2. Donate your old clothes
3. Volunteer at a soup kitchen
4. Donate old eyeglasses to an organization that collects that and distributes them to people in need
5. Donate non-perishable food to a food bank
6. Donate blankets to a homeless shelter
7. Host a Thanksgiving dinner for people who may not be able to afford their own
8. Offer to babysit or nanny for a family in need
9. Make "care kits" with shampoo, toothbrushes, combs, etc. to donate to homeless shelters
10. Prepare a home-cooked meal for the residents of a nearby homeless shelter
11. Sponsor a family you know in need during the holidays.
 - a. Prepare 14 freezer meals for them by gathering donated groceries and assemble together into casseroles or ziplocs.
 - b. Collect items for Christmas dinner and arrange in a basket
 - c. Take donations to provide them with a \$100 gift card for Meijer's, Aldi's or Wal-mart.
12. Collect grocery coupons to give to a local food bank
13. Help repair or paint a local homeless shelter
14. Donate art supplies to kids in a homeless shelter
15. Help organize and sort donations at a homeless shelter
16. Babysit children while their parents look for jobs
17. Become a Big Buddy for children at a homeless shelter
18. Take homeless children on outings
19. Bake a batch of cookies or loaf of bread and deliver it to a soup kitchen
20. Build flower boxes for Habitat for Humanity houses

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21. Organize a winter clothes drive to collect coats, hats, scarves, and gloves to be donated
22. Make first aid kits for homeless shelters

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Reducing Crime and Promoting Safety

1. Volunteer at a police station or firehouse
2. Become a certified lifeguard and volunteer at a local pool or beach
3. Paint over graffiti in your neighborhood
4. Organize a self-defense workshop
5. Organize a drug-free campaign
6. Sponsor a drug-free post-prom event
7. Sponsor an Internet Safety course with warnings for Seniors
8. Start or join a neighborhood watch program
9. Create and distribute a list of hotlines for people who might need help
10. Teach a home-alone safety class for children
11. Create a TV or radio public service announcement against drug and alcohol use
12. Host a CPR certification course for your Chapter members
13. Volunteer as a crossing guard for an elementary school

Promoting Community Enhancement

1. Create free library stations from donated books.
2. Paint park benches
3. Donate used and new books to your local library
4. Become a tour guide at your local museum
5. Repaint community fences
6. Plant flowers in bare public areas
7. Organize a campaign to raise money to buy and install new playground equipment for a park
8. Participate in or help organize a community parade
9. Participate in or help organize a community fireworks
10. Participate in or help organize a community potluck dinner

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11. Participate in or help organize a free community holiday event for families
12. Clean up vacant lot
13. Produce a neighborhood newsletter
14. Create a neighborhood facebook page for volunteer matches, matching neighborhood talent with volunteer needs.
15. Walk/drive through your neighborhood as a group to monitor safety issues and then Campaign for more lighting along poorly lit streets.
16. Create a newcomers group in your neighborhood to help welcome new families
17. Petition your town leaders to build more drinking fountains and public restrooms
18. Volunteer to sponsor holiday decorations.
19. Help put up holiday decorations in your community and in your lodge.
20. Volunteer to clean up trash at a community event
21. Adopt a local highway or road and clean up trash along it
22. Help fix or raise funds to repair a run-down playground
23. Clean up after a natural disaster
24. Start seed projects for downtown planters

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Next Steps

Now that you know what your options are for community service, you can take the following steps to start getting involved:

- 1. Look over your interests:** Which activities seem most appealing to you? Were they mostly in one particular category, like children or the environment? If so, that's a good starting place for choosing specific organizations to contact.
- 2. Figure out how much time you can devote to community service:** Are you available for two hours every week? Are you not free on a regular basis but can volunteer for an entire weekend now and then? Think about transportation as well and how you'll be able to get to different locations. Knowing this information will help you choose which community service projects to pursue, and it's helpful information for volunteer coordinators to know.
- 3. Do some research to see what projects you can do in your community:** Check at your local schools, place of worship, or town hall for more information on volunteering. You can also contact the place where you'd like to perform your community service, such as a particular animal shelter or nursing home, and ask if they take volunteers.
- 4. Start volunteering!** This list ranges from small projects that you can complete on your own in a few hours, to much larger projects that will take more time and people. If you find a project you can start on your own, do it! If you want to do a project where you'll need more resources or people, check around your community to see if a similar program already exists that you can join. If not, don't be afraid to start your own! Many organizations welcome new volunteers and community service projects.