

TEN STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL SERVICE PROJECTS

1. Research your project.

Choose an issue that concerns you and then come up with a project related to that issue. Consider these questions:

- What would I like to do?
- What might benefit the most people?
- What might make the biggest difference?
- What can I afford (in terms of time)?
- What is really possible for me to do?

2. Form a team.

If you don't want to go it alone, or if the problem seems to complicated for one person, invite others to join you.

- Choose people who share your interest in the project and who are likely to stay with you until it is completed.
- Look to your friends, family, school, neighborhood, or community for help.
- Don't limit your group to people your own age or grade. Invite others to help. See if college students or senior citizens in your area are willing to help you.

3. Find a sponsor.

Ask a responsible adult (teacher, parent, neighbor, youth leader) to act as your sponsor. This can give your project credibility with other adults whose help and/or permission you may need.

4. Make a plan.

- Decide when and where to meet. You will want to meet often to discuss your project, decide who is doing what, identify any problems, and report on progress.
- Define your goal. What do you hope to achieve?
- Set a schedule. How long will the project take? How much time will you spend each week? What is the date you want to finish your project?
- Estimate costs. How much money, if any, will you need? Make a list of everything you may need that will cost money. What about transportation? Materials? Equipment? Postage? What else?
- Think hard about your project. Is it realistic? Is it too complicated? Too simple? How could you improve it?

5. Consider the recipient(s).

Make sure that the people you plan to serve really want your help. What is the best way to do this? Ask! Then find out as much about their needs as you can. For example:

- What are their needs? (They may be different than you think and you may need to revise your plan accordingly.)
- When are they available? During what hours and on what days?
- Are there any limitations or restrictions? What about special diets? Physical limitations? Allergies? Other health issues?

6. Decide where you will perform your service.

Will you go to the people you plan to serve? Will they come to you?

- If you go to them, be sure to visit the location ahead of time. Is there enough room to do what you want/need to do? Does the location have everything you need? If not, what will you have to bring? How will you get it there? Will you have a place to store it if needed?
- If they come to you, make sure your location has what they need.

7. Get any permissions you need to move forward.

Depending on your project, you might need permission from:

- Your principal
- Your teacher
- School district personnel
- Youth leader
- Parents
- Neighbors
- Community organizations
- Owners of any facilities you want/need to use
- Anyone else?

8. Advertise.

Let other people know about your project.

- Make a one-page flyer
- Make a public service announcement
- Send out a press release

9. Fundraise (if necessary).

Do you need start-up money for your project? Will you need to buy equipment or supplies? If you need to print 150 flyers, who will pay for the printing? If your project will cost anything beyond time and pocket change, you will probably need to do a little fundraising. (Talk with your facilitator if this is the case.)

10. Evaluate.

When your project has ended, reflect on your experience. Discuss it with your team, family, teacher, friends, and neighbors. Talk it over with the people you served. Describe it in a journal or a blog. Make a video or audio recording. Try to address questions like:

- What did you learn?
- What did you accomplish?
- What were your feelings, fears, joys?
- Would you do it again?
- **How could you improve it?** (Always address this question!)
- Will you repeat it? When? How soon?