



Service Project Planning

A legacy of meaningful service projects is the mark of a quality unit

There is a natural fit between the BSA and other community organizations, and service learning is an integral part of the Scouting program. Units have been demonstrating this for over 100 years. As part of the new Journey to Excellence initiative, a unit's dedication to service will be formally recognized as a sign of excellence. This guide will assist in selecting, planning and recording projects to give them the best chance of success.

Who

All Scouting groups are encouraged to participate in this service project initiative.

What

This is a time for all Scouting groups to conduct meaningful, visible service projects of their choice in their communities. You are encouraged to discuss and choose your projects with the help of your Scouts, committee, and chartered organization.

Where

Service projects can be done for your chartered organization or for the cause of your choice. Projects done in collaboration with other organizations are highly recommended.

When

Projects may be conducted at any time.

Why

Scouting was founded on the premise of doing a Good Turn daily. Community service is very important in the character-building process and, as Scouts, we have made the commitment to give back to our communities.

How

You should select a service project coordinator. After making the commitment to participate, your Scouts and committee should decide on and begin planning the project.



Planning a Service Project

The Scout Oath includes the phrase “to help other people at all times,” which reminds us to always be of service to others. Begin planning your project by discussing various service ideas with your Scouts. Adult leaders, your chartered organization, and the local government are also good resources for ideas. Projects will be more meaningful and fun if they are well-planned.

Your project should...

Be significant

The project should be something important. When it’s done, everyone should be able to look back with satisfaction on an effort that has made a difference in your community.

Be democratic

Scouts are more likely to buy into the project if they have taken an active part in selecting, planning, and organizing it.

Be clearly defined

A project must have definite beginning and end points, with logical steps in between. A clear goal allows everyone to measure the progress along the way, and increases everyone’s sense of participation and pride in a job well done.

Be well-prepared

This begins long before the project starts. Ask these questions: What is the project’s purpose? Who should be contacted as resources? How many Scouts must be involved to complete the work in the allotted time? What tools or resources are needed? What safety issues must be addressed?

Be promoted

Promote your project within your community. This will not only provide additional workers, but will increase the visibility of Scouting and the impact it has on your community. Create a yard sign that says “Pack/Troop/Team/Post/Group No. ___ Service Project” or “Scouting Supports Our Community.”

Include reflection and recognition

When the project is complete, spend 10 or 15 minutes discussing it.

Involving Parents in Planning and Implementing Service Projects

Participating in a Journey to Excellence service project is easy, exciting, and meaningful. To begin, your unit should recruit a unit service project coordinator, who should do the following:

- Share this information with your unit committee, and get their approval and commitment to participate.



- Promote the service project within the unit.
- Coordinate the service project throughout the unit.
- Involve Scouts and unit committee members in researching and deciding on a service project. Involve Scouts in all phases of planning the project.
- Recruit enough people to plan, conduct, and promote the project.
- Incorporate at least four service projects into the unit's annual program plans.
- Enter service project data into www.scouting.org/Awards/JourneyToExcellence.
- Coordinate with district and council committees to promote events and report successes.
- Conduct an evaluation and discussion with Scouts.

Project Planning Homework

Be prepared! Before you begin your project you should make sure it is well defined and that all prerequisites are completed. On a blank piece of paper write a clear description of your project then answer the following questions.

- What organization is the project for, or who or what will the project benefit?
- What materials are needed to complete the project?
- How long will the project take?
- Are there any costs involved?
- Is there any special permission needed?
- Is the project age-appropriate?
- Are there any safety concerns for participants? (Consult the Guide for Safe Scouting.)
- Is the project manageable within the time frame and the number of volunteers involved?

Reflection and Group Discussion Guide

At the end of your project, a discussion will help make the experience meaningful to all of those involved. This last step is important to help the Scouts realize the impact they can have in the world by volunteering and participating in community service projects.

Topics may include:

- What impact did the project have on other people or the environment?
- How could the effort be improved if it were to be repeated?
- What changes would have enabled the group to work together more effectively?
- Why it is important to give back to our community.
- How the efforts made each Scout feel.



Recognition for service won't always involve badges or awards. The greatest reward can simply be an individual's heartfelt gratitude for the cheerful, unselfish service that all Scouts are honor-bound to give, and the positive feelings one feels after helping someone else.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Good Turn?

A service project is a special Good Turn that puts Scout spirit into action.

—The Boy Scout Handbook, 12th Edition, page 84

As stated in the Boy Scout Handbook, some Good Turns are big—saving a life, helping out after floods or other disasters, recycling community trash, or working with others on conservation projects. But Good Turns are often small, thoughtful acts—helping a child cross a busy street, going to the store for an elderly neighbor, cutting back brush that is blocking a sign, doing something special for a brother or sister, or welcoming a new student to your school.

How does a Journey to Excellence service project benefit the community?

Meeting the substantial needs of every community is dependent on its citizens to answer the call of volunteerism. There is a natural fit between the Boy Scouts of America and other community organizations, and service learning is an integral part of the Scouting program. As a result, youth and adults seek opportunities to volunteer. Community organizations need volunteers to help them fulfill their missions, and working with these organizations creates a win/win situation for everyone.

Do volunteers have to be a member of the Boy Scouts of America to participate in the service project?

No. In order to fight hunger, provide shelter, and teach the habits of healthy living, we need the assistance of everyone in the community.

How is this different from Scouting for Food?

Scouting for Food is a once-a-year effort focusing on one area of need. Good Journey to Excellence service projects should be conducted year-round.

Will Supply Group sell recognition items?

No. Councils will need to design their own recognition items if they choose to offer them.

