

10 Steps Toward Performing a Successful Community Service Project

Community service can play an important role in 4-H Clubs. A community service project can take many forms depending on your club. Whatever is decided, the community as well as 4-H members benefit. Following are some hints in making your 4-H Club community service project both successful and fun.

A Planning Guide for 4-H Club Leaders

- 1.** Determine what is needed in your community/county.
 - Ask club members and families.
 - Ask other community groups.
 - Talk with community officials.
 - Find out what types of projects have and have not been done in the recent past.
 - Ask the Extension staff.

- 2.** Determine what types of activities your members have interest in and abilities to do.
 - Consider the size of your club and ages of members.
 - Consider the skills possessed by club members and their families.
 - Determine how much time your club would like to devote to community service activities. (Would members rather do a long-term, ongoing community service project or a short-term one-time activity?)

- 3.** List all of the activities that have been suggested.

- 4.** Ask your club to rank the activities in order of importance and interest, based on what was considered in steps 1 and 2. Reach consensus or use a vote by majority rule to determine the activity your club will do. If this isn't practical (especially if your club is large), consider forming a committee to develop priorities. Then, the club can simply accept or vote on the committee's recommendations.

5. After your club has decided upon their community service project, develop a plan. Your members will learn organizational skills in developing such a plan. A plan doesn't have to be overly detailed and formal, but should include the following:
 - overall goal
 - tasks involved
 - time commitment
 - permission
 - budget
 - insurance
 - equipment and supplies
 - risk management analysis
 - volunteers and duties
 - publicity
 - evaluation
6. Carry out the project as planned!
7. Document your club's efforts with photos, videotape, or written notes.
8. As you work on this project, monitor the activities taking place and make adjustments as needed. Especially when the project has been completed, allow time for your club to discuss the successes and shortcomings of the project and ideas for improvement. This reinforces the learning experience.
9. Develop a summary report of your club's experience when the project has been completed. Share it with mass media representatives and the Extension staff. A scrapbook is a nice way to present the project's success. Include a written description, photos, and news clippings. Such activities might be assigned to the club reporter, secretary, vice-president, chair of the project or other club member.
10. Feel good about your club's contribution to the community and members' positive learning experience. Be sure to take time to process your club's experience. Do this by asking participants to share their thoughts and feelings as well as helping them to think about how they might relate this experience to other situations in the future. This is a part of the experiential learning process.

Other reminders

Remember that planning, conducting, and evaluating a community service project is a great opportunity for 4-H members to **learn by doing**. Therefore, **do** encourage members to get involved in all phases of the project, including planning. **Don't** do it all for them.

Remember that 4-Hers learn from their mistakes as well as their successes.

The role of the club leader and other adults working with the club is to guide members in the right direction and provide needed support and encouragement.

Make It Fun!

-- This fact sheet was adapted from materials by Keith G. Diem, Somerset County, New Jersey

Project Planning Sheet

Club: **Coordinator:**

Project: **Date:**

Goal:

Tasks: **Who?** **When?**

Planning:

Preparations

Permission:

Budget:

Funding:

Insurance:

**Risk
Management
Analysis:**

Equipment:

Supplies:

**Volunteers
Involvement**

Tasks:

Time:

Publicity:

Follow Up

Evaluation:

Thank You:

Project Evaluation

Club:

Project:

Date:

Goal:

Accomplishments:

Involvement by Members:

Areas for Improvement:

Notes for next time:

Risk Management Plan

Activity or Event: *Sample Community Service Project*

Date:

Risk Management Steps

General Operations

Date Completed	Person in Charge	Description
_____	_____	Age-appropriate activities and assignments have been identified for this event.
_____	_____	Risks analyzed for this event, strategies identified to address these risks and a risk management plan written and shared with staff, volunteers, and youth.
_____	_____	Accident/Medical Insurance taken out on all participants.
_____	_____	First Aid Kit, Cellular Phone, and List of Emergency Numbers Available During Event.
_____	_____	Certificate of insurance secured from the University of Illinois Office of Risk Management. <i>(if needed)</i>
_____	_____	Cooperating organizations have liability insurance. <i>(if needed)</i>
_____	_____	Emergency action plan is written.

Risk to Personnel

Date Completed	Person in Charge	Description
_____	_____	Role descriptions written and shared with adults and youth in leadership roles.
_____	_____	Guidelines for event are written and shared with staff, volunteers, and youth.
_____	_____	Volunteer applications and the screening process completed on all new volunteers.
_____	_____	Orientation provided for staff, volunteers, and youth.
_____	_____	Adequate number of volunteers secured to chaperon this event. 1:10 (or lower) ratio of adults to youth.

Risks to Participants

Date Completed	Person in Charge	Description
_____	_____	Role descriptions written and shared with participants.
_____	_____	Code of Conduct and Behavior Guidelines shared. Parental Permission/Informed Consent forms are completed for each participant.
_____	_____	Publicity sent to local media to inform public that youth will be conducting this event and to be on the alert for them.
_____	_____	Training provided on the use of equipment and tools. Proficiency of skills by youth has been considered.
_____	_____	If individual youth will be featured in publicity, media release forms are completed by all youth and signed by parents for those under the age of 18.
_____	_____	Medical release or health forms completed by youth participants.
_____	_____	Orientation provided volunteers and youth.
_____	_____	Transportation will be provided only by parents or by screened volunteers who have insurance and a valid license. Insurance and license should be verified. Youth under the age of 18 will not provide transportation.

Risks to Public

Date Completed	Person in Charge	Description
_____	_____	Publicity sent to local media to alert public that this event will be occurring.

Risks to Property/Buildings/Equipment

Date Completed	Person in Charge	Description
_____	_____	Site Review has been completed prior to the activity. Concerns have been addressed and information shared with volunteers.
_____	_____	Equipment and tools for the event have been secured, checked for safety measures, and instructions provided. Adequate insurance to cover damage to major equipment is provided.

Risks to Perpetuation

Date Completed	Person in Charge	Description
_____	_____	A risk management plan is in place to help protect the image and perpetuation of the 4-H program.
_____	_____	Extension staff is informed of community service activity.