Community Service Project Engagement Guide

TOGETHER we see a world where ***PEOPLE*** unite and take action to ***CREATE*** lasting ***CHANGE*** across the globe in our communities and in ourselves.

Community service is vital to local communities as it not only addresses specific needs but also strengthens social bonds, empowers individuals, and contributes to the overall well-being and resilience of the community. It is a fundamental aspect of building thriving and sustainable local environments. With the EPIC Day of Service, it is important to truly identify a project that will serve your community, draw in community volunteers that could be potential members and have an EPIC impact.

The project team for the EPIC Day of Service has put together a resource guide for you.

How To Identify a Quality Service Project:

Identifying a need in your community for community service involves a systematic approach of observation, research, and engagement. Here are steps you can take to identify and understand the needs of your community:

- o 1. Conduct Community Assessments
    - ▪ Surveys and Questionnaires: Develop surveys or questionnaires to collect information from community members and club membership about their perceived needs, challenges, and priorities.
    - ▪ Interviews: Conduct one-on-one interviews with community leaders, residents, and local non-profit organizations to gain insights into specific issues.
- o 2. Engage with Local Leadership:
    - ▪ Community Meetings: Attend town hall meetings, community gatherings, and local events to interact with residents and understand their concerns.
        - ● Reach out to school principals, senior centers, city council, mayor etc.
    - ▪ Collaborate with Local Organizations: Partner with local nonprofit organizations, schools, and community groups to leverage their knowledge and insights into community needs.
- o 3. Analyze Existing Data:
    - ▪ Review reports and publications from local government agencies, non-profit agencies and news publications that might outline community needs and priorities.
    - ▪ Health and Social Indicators: Examine health, education, and social indicators to identify potential areas of concern.
- o 4. Community Walks and Observations:
    - ▪ Physical Environment: Conduct community walks to observe the physical environment. Note any issues related to infrastructure, safety, cleanliness, or accessibility.
- o 5. Identify Trends and Patterns:
    - ▪ Demographic Analysis: Analyze demographic data to identify trends in population growth, age distribution, and socioeconomic factors that may indicate specific needs.

- Economic Trends: Understand economic trends in the community, such as unemployment rates or income disparities, that might highlight areas of concern.
  - o 6. Connect with Local Schools:
    - School Outreach: Collaborate with local schools to understand the needs of students and families. Schools often serve as hubs for community information.
      - If choosing to do a project involving minors or protected classes, please be aware of Rotary International's Youth Protection Policy. Use this link for more information:
        - o https://my.rotary.org/en/knowledge-and-resources/resources-and-reference/youth-protection
        - o The Rotary Youth Protection Guide can be found in additional documents.
  - o 7. Social Media and Online Platforms:
    - Community Forums: Participate in local community forums and social media groups to gain insights into the issues residents are discussing. The app Next Door can be a useful tool.
    - Surveys and Polls: Use online platforms to conduct surveys or polls to gather input from a broader audience.
    - Facebook and Instagram can be useful tools to learn about specific communities or non-profit organizations.
  - o 8. Environmental Scan:
    - Business and Economic Development: Assess the business landscape and economic development in the community. Identify areas where support is needed for local businesses.
  - o 9. Consider Special Populations:
    - Vulnerable Populations: Pay attention to the needs of vulnerable populations, such as the elderly, children, people with disabilities, or minority groups.
  - o 10. Prioritize Needs:
    - Impact and Feasibility: Prioritize identified needs based on their potential impact and feasibility for community service projects. Consider issues that align with the resources and expertise of your group.
  - o 11. Volunteer and Community Member impact:
    - How many individual lives will be directly affected by the service project identified.
    - How many club member volunteers and community member volunteers will it take to make your project a success?
    - Get detailed feedback from all parties involved.

How To Find Service Organizations:

Cause IQ :
https://www.causeiq.com/directory/denver-aurora-lakewood-co-metro/#search_section

Great Nonprofits: Denver, CO Nonprofits and Charities | Donate, Volunteer, Review | GreatNonprofits

The United Way 211 directory: https://unitedwaydenver.org/get-help/

Colorado Nonprofit Association: https://coloradononprofits.org/

Just Serve: https://www.justserve.org/

Rotary Club Member Engagement:

- Creating and executing a successful service project depends on the participation and engagement of individuals within each club.
    - 1. Send out a survey to your club members to learn about what they are passionate about.
        - Ask them to list their top 3 interests.
        - Give them an opportunity to identify local organizations they want to support.
        - Ask how many hands-on service projects members would be willing to engage in annually (1 a month, 1 a quarter etc.)
        - Is there interest in weekly opportunities within your membership (i.e. reading to children, working in food pantries etc.) These would be opportunities that organizations always need a handful of volunteers to fill on a regular basis.
    - 2. Once the data is collected use it to do the following:
        - Narrow the list down to the top priorities in the club. The number would depend on the following:
            - How frequently will the club be doing projects?
            - Does the club want to support an organization multiple times throughout the year or just 1-2 times per year? (This does not relate to scholarships or financial contributions)
    - 3. Many organizations have predefined service opportunities that may or may not fit the needs of your club and membership.
        - If an organization has a predefined service opportunity that is ideal for your club and can accommodate your interested membership, then align with them and get your members to sign up.
        - If not, this is a great opportunity for your club to identify a club champion that can create and champion a project on behalf of the chosen organization.
    - 4. Championing a service project on behalf of the chosen organization:
        - Have the club champion meet with the volunteer coordinator and director of the organization to see what the needs of the organization are.
        - Once a need is identified, determine how you will execute the project on behalf of the organization.
            - Ask the partner organization to help promote your event.
            - Use the club website and social media for community interest.
            - Ask a representative from the organization to attend to help communicate with the community or attendees on the mission of the organization.
            - Try to incorporate community members in addition to your members for the volunteer opportunities.
                - This will give your club more visibility in the community.
    - 5. Service projects identified for the **EPIC day**:
        - When considering a project for the EPIC Day consider the following things:
            - Is it PR worthy?
                - The EPIC team is working hard to get news coverage for the EPIC Day. It is important to consider if your project is "Newsworthy"?
                - Work on getting your own PR coverage. We have a PR team ready to help you.
            - Consider partnering with another club to have a greater impact.
                - The idea of the EPIC day is to have the greatest impact on our communities as possible.
            - Invite community members to join to learn more about what Rotary is.
                - Community involvement can help with the overall image of Rotary and show what Rotarians do.

- Contact local small and large businesses to see if they want to participate in your service project or sponsor you club.
- Have an effective marketing strategy:
    - Promote your project on social media and your club website.
    - Make sure to consistently post beginning well in advance of the date.
- Partnering with other service minded organizations:
    - Kiwanis, Lions Clubs etc. use their membership for volunteers and their database for promoting your service project.
    - Also, youth organizations like Girls Scouts, Boy Scouts, Future Leaders of America etc.
        - The additional benefit to this approach is you also have the opportunity to include the parents of the youth.
- Set goals for the EPIC day and share it with your club up front:
    - What percentage of club participation does your club expect.
    - How many lives will your project impact.
    - What is your target goal for fundraising?
    - How many community member volunteers do you want to participate?
    - Is this a project that will be intended to be repeated annually?
    - These goals will help you measure the success at the end of the EPIC day.

Growing Membership Through Community Service:

- Including friends and family in the EPIC Day:
    - Including friends and family can do the following:
        - Increase the visibility of Rotary in your own community.
        - Increase the impact of the service project.
        - Allow people to have a better understanding of what Rotarians do all year long.
        - Increases the potential for a PR worthy project again increasing the visibility of your club in the community. The more people serving with your club outside of Rotarians can create a greater interest for tv news and publications.

How to fund your service project:

- Rotary District Grants: https://my.rotary.org/en/take-action/apply-grants/district-grants
    - District matching funds can be instrumental in making your project a success. Use the link to learn more about submitting a qualifying grant.
- Fundraising before your service project.
- Find corporate and private sponsors.
    - Our EPIC Day Project Team has a sponsorship committee, and they are here to help you with resources and identifying and targeting appropriate sponsors.
- Partnering with other larger clubs that have a larger foundation or service budget can be a great source of funding.
- Online crowdsource fundraising.
- Choose a non-profit that has the funds but not the volunteer support.