

Additional Project Ideas

Back to School Supply Drive

This project has an anti-poverty and education focus, and can be done with limited resources. One option is to set up collection sites at various partner organizations. Depending on your volunteer and time resources, you can take on most of the work yourself (similar to the Food Drive Project on page 21) or partner with other agencies to have them do the drive (similar to the Military Care Packages Project on page 38).

Clothing Drive

Works similarly to the book drive - create one or more collection sites for community members to drop off gently used clothing, then collect, sort and distribute the clothes to a homeless shelter or other social service site. This project has wide appeal as the clothing can be donated for many purposes: warm clothes for winter, work clothes for Dress for Success, kids' clothes for back to school.

College Application/FAFSA Day

Help clients at partner organizations complete college and FAFSA applications. This may require some volunteer training before the day of the event, and you will need to market effectively to ensure that there are enough clients to utilize the number of volunteers you expect.

Community Dinner

Host a dinner for local veterans/police/firefighters. This is a great opportunity to strengthen your community partnerships. Collect donations from local businesses, partner with a local agency for a venue, and recruit volunteers to help set up the event, to make the food, and to clean everything afterwards.

Community Garden Day/Food Bank Garden Day

More and more food banks have their own community gardens (or get fresh produce from gardens in their community). Often they can use an extra hand, especially around harvest time. This is a great service project as it often requires very little prep work - the food banks should provide all the tools necessary for the day.

Emergency Kits for the Homeless

Local Red Cross chapters may already have a team that does this so be sure to contact them first. You may bring a group of volunteers for the day to collect supplies and assemble them as a team. This project can be run similarly to the Military Care Packages Project (pg. 38). By having community partners collect the supplies, you can focus on the kit assembly.

Free Dental/Medical Day

Work with local dentists/clinics to have a day where they offer basic services (checkups, cleaning, fillings etc.) for free or reduced cost. Because transportation can be a barrier for those in poverty, you might look into providing transportation to the service sites.

Free Legal Aid Day

Partner up with a legal aid office, public defender, or even a large local law firm to offer free legal one-on-one sessions. You may choose to set topics such as wills, child custody, landlord/tenant issues, etc. in advance. This way the lawyers know what to expect (and it makes it easier to recruit them for the Service Day.)

Host a Small Benefit

Host a site related event, such as brown bag lunch sessions where community members can come learn about different topics related to your organization. The sessions can be free, but you may ask for donations or ask that attendees bring a canned food item.

Multi-Site Service Day

Connect with multiple nonprofits in your area to host projects for 10-20 members. This is a great opportunity to mix all of our AmeriCorps programs at different sites and provide new networking opportunities for your VISTAs. You may want to reach out to sites like the Salvation Army, local parks or cemeteries for clean-up, housing that may need painting, etc.

Paint a Mural

The possibilities for this project are truly endless. You could team up with a local after school program to paint a small mural with the kids, or you could recruit volunteers to paint a mural on the side of your organizations building, etc.

Toiletries/Cleaning Products Drive

Food drives happen all of the time, but other essentials (especially things like toilet paper, soap, toothpaste, and toothbrushes) are just as vital and can't be purchased with food stamps. This project would be similar to the Food Drive Project (pg. 21) Instead of partnering with food banks or pantries, try partnering with homeless shelters, teen centers (such as Boys and Girls Clubs), public schools, etc.