

Unit Tips for Success

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 Sheet

General project description _____

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?

Discuss why it is important to give back to our community.

Have an open discussion or share 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.