

Environmental Clean-Up Project Toolkit

Choose the right project for your community and your employees

- Choose the geo area of focus for your neighborhood cleanup carefully.
- The right project is one that fixes an existing problem and inspires others to get involved located in an area that is accessible and has available easy parking.
- Know your employees' preferences; are they open to picking up debris, getting a little dirty etc.? If no, this type of project may not work for them!

Community cleanup ideas

- Trash and litter collection
- Beautification projects
- Flower planting
- Beach cleanups
- Waterway cleanups

Pre-Event Checklist

Once you've chosen the right way to clean up your community, it's important to make a specific plan for the event. This detailed plan will help you organize a neighborhood cleanup that is efficient and fun. Doing a site visit pre event will help you craft a better experience.

- Date and possible rain date, meeting location with access to restrooms for volunteers.
- Number of volunteers needed and initiatives to recruit them.
- Outline of all the work to be completed before the event and have a plan of attack.
- List of tools and supplies you will need for your specific project - and a plan to procure them.
- List of required permits or licenses needed if any.
- Schedule of events for the day of your community cleanup.
- Plan your post-event steps – such as how will you measure impact, get volunteer feedback, will you host a post event social etc.

Identify the Team Leader

Your neighborhood cleanup needs a project coordinator to be the go-to-person for all planning needs (maybe that's you!). The leader should have some event planning experience and be involved from the beginning. It's a great way to have a junior team member lead!

Possible Supplies & Tasks for a Community Cleanup:

- Trash bags
- Shovels
- Rakes
- Gloves
- Wheelbarrows
- Gardening materials, like plants and mulch (if beautification is part of the plan)
- Cleaning a specific street or block or point to point on a waterway
- Delivering water and snacks to other volunteers.
- Assisting with volunteer check-in.
- Taking pictures of the event.
- Separating garbage from recyclables during litter collection.

Pre-Event Checklist

- You will need to have a way to get rid of debris at your community cleanup. Whether your volunteers are picking up debris or planting flowers, there will be garbage. Locate the local dumpsters and or call your local authorities (park or government) and ask about options for scheduling a pickup for trash and recycling. If you expect to collect or create a lot waste, considering [renting a dumpster](#).
- Will you host a post event social? A post-cleanup party would be ideal. You could also use this opportunity to have a staff member from the nonprofit share issue education materials.

- Other ways to thank your volunteers include providing snacks, a t-shirt or simply sending handwritten thank-you notes. Showing your volunteers how important they are will encourage them to attend your next event.
- Check with your region's waste and recycling mandates, factoring the environmental effects into every step of the planning process will ultimately reduce your party footprint.
- No matter the size or type of event, be sure to work with vendors, caterers, and concessionaires to engage them in your eco-friendly efforts. [They can adopt proactive practices and reduce or avoid waste before it is generated or even brought into your event space.](#)
- If you're planning a community or public event, it's also a great idea to form partnerships with waste haulers, local government, and non-profit organizations. [Keep America Beautiful](#) or [Recycle Everywhere](#) are just a couple examples of the many organizations out there that focus on consulting with businesses and event spaces about their recycling programs and offer free funding for recycling .
- Garbage collection should be organized by type of refuse. Ideally there are well labeled refuse deposits that are bundled near one another. When garbage streams are separated, guests will use the most convenient bin rather than the correct one to toss their waste into. The wrong waste in the wrong bin will significantly impact stream contamination and your overall waste diversion goals.
- [Optimal bin placement](#) throughout your event will significantly affect whether guests and staff use the bins effectively. Determine the traffic flow of your event space and how people will move throughout the different areas. Different types of events will require different bins.
- Incorporating organic waste collection into your event planning is a good idea if you are looking to minimize how much waste is sent to landfill.
- Organic waste is a valuable resource that can be composted to produce soil fertilizers to enhance soil quality and reduce soil erosion. By choosing to separate organics for composting, you can lower your waste hauler fees, and make a positive impact on the environment
- It is essential to get the volunteer's buy-in for supporting and carrying out your recycling plan associated with clean up. Be clear on recycle instructions.
- [During the planning and lead up to the big day, tell everyone about your sustainability goals, where the bins will be located, and what items are recyclable and compostable.](#) Including this information online, in event programs, invites, promotional posters, on social media, etc. are just some of the many ways you can generate buzz about your eco-friendly initiatives and encourage people to participate on the day.
- Serve jugs of water instead of bottled water.
- Work with vendors and caterers to ditch plastic straws for drinks and bar service.
- Go paperless with invites
- Choose a location that's accessible by foot or public transportation.
- Provide snacks in line with the mission of the day – healthy, low waste, local etc.

Post-event Checklist

- Send a thank you to the nonprofit
- Send a thank you to the employees linking to a project evaluation. Sample evaluation [here](#). You can edit this to be event specific. Also offer employees ways to continue to contribute to this issue – other nonprofits looking for volunteers or other opportunities at the same nonprofit.
- [Gannett Foundation: Site's EOD Google Form for Volunteer Project](#)
- Be sure to have at least one open ended question to capture valuable feedback.
- Reflect on your project and make notes on how it went, what improvements could be made, whether supplies were adequate etc.
- Write up a quick blurb including outputs/outcomes and share it with the Gannett Foundation

Links to Resources:

[Gannett Foundation: Site's EOD Google Form for Volunteer Projects](#)

[Survey Form for Volunteers- Gannett Foundation Form](#)

<https://kab.org/>