

NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE DAY 2007

BEST PRACTICES 1999–2006

The following best practices were shared by your peers in the Job Corps community after participating in NYSD 1999–2006

Planning/Logistics

Staff Leadership/Involvement

- Request the Center Director to introduce the event at an all-center meeting.
- Have senior staff discuss and develop ideas about where the center would best be utilized in the community.
- Utilize the leadership of career technical staff in planning activities.
- Get various departments across your center to sponsor individual events.
- Involve career technical instructors in surveying the project site to determine the approach, set goals for what can be accomplished, and assess equipment needs and safety considerations.

Student Leadership/Involvement

- Engage the active leadership of student government officers in the decision-making.
- Determine clear goals for student participation.
- Designate a “student coordinator” for each NYSD project.
- Have the student government send invitations to media organizations.
- “Pre-train” students on activity requirements so they are ready upon arrival at the service sites.

Overall Planning

- Ask the mayor, civic groups, local businesses, Chamber of Commerce, and special interest groups about the needs in the community.
- Tap your Community Relations Council (CRC) members for ideas and support.
- Partner with local or national volunteer/youth agencies, community colleges, military recruiters, and workforce investment partners to help open doors to transitional and support services or work-based learning sites for our students—this helps distribute the workload and increase “volunteer power,” which means more people are helped by the service.
- When soliciting partners or other project assistance, provide as much information about Job Corps as possible. This may lead to other partnerships.
- Publish plans for each project for all volunteers to follow. Include maps, times, and events; this helps cultivate responsibility for and ownership of the project.
- Tour the project site in advance if possible.
- Make sure you have the necessary equipment/supplies to complete planned activities (e.g., rakes, paint, shovels) and support your volunteers (i.e., refreshments, lunch).



NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE DAY 2007

- Ask local businesses and community groups to donate equipment, supplies, food, drinks, or volunteers.
- Make sure local community leaders are aware of your center's project plans; invite them to participate.
- Create T-shirts that students can wear to promote Job Corps at the event.
- Always have a back-up plan.

Volunteer Recruitment and Engagement

- Make sure at least one student government officer is a part of every volunteer event to strengthen the connection between your students and the local community.
- Keep students involved throughout the planning process and enlist their help in recruiting more volunteers.
- Hold a kick-off assembly with outside community leaders addressing students on the value of community service.
- Post sign-up sheets all over the center.
- Send a speaker from classroom to classroom prior to the event to provide background on the plans, sign up volunteers, and explain that volunteer work can be used to show valuable experience in a resume.
- Hold dorm competitions—the dorm with the greatest number of participants gets a prize.
- During center assemblies, in center bulletins, and on dorm bulletin boards, recognize students who have signed up as volunteers.
- Incorporate “positives” on student evaluations for volunteering.
- Make sure students understand expectations and the importance of positive attitudes.
- Explain NYSD to student volunteers before the activity so they understand the significance and scale of this national event.

Activities/Ideas for Participation

- Hold the event over 2 or more days to increase the variety of projects and involve more students and staff.
- Cluster projects for multiple vocations at one site to simplify planning and organization, when possible.
- Hold a service-learning workshop for students and use it to come up with ideas for future projects.
- Brainstorm with students to come up with ideas that tie in with their personal interests—i.e., sports, cultural activities, crafts.
- Stay in constant contact with your city engineer to get updates on upcoming projects; this office provides a wealth of information.
- “Piggy-back” on city-wide community service projects to gain more credibility for our efforts and enhance the students' connection to the community as a result of their participation. This approach also increases the possibility of media coverage.
- Seek out interesting activities already in place at larger organizations and latch on to their agendas. This process makes it easier to create a greater experience for students. Also look for high-visibility events to raise awareness.



NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE DAY 2007

- Consider projects that link with Earth Day, Child Abuse Awareness Month, and other April events.
- Highlight an ongoing community project.
- Utilize some of the work performed as TAR-related training requirements.
- Develop linkages with a major corporation.

Day of Event

- Start the day with a guest speaker talking about community service.
- Use the day to recruit work-based learning partners.
- Post signs with the name of your Job Corps center/National Youth Service Day to make sure we get some recognition.

Follow-Up

- Ask students to write reflection essays about their community service activity. Reward them with NYSD T-shirts.
- Add community service experience to student resumes.
- Make certain all participants/volunteers are acknowledged (i.e., T-shirts, give-aways, thank you notes).
- Celebrate a job well done with a party, barbeque, door prizes, and/or awards ceremony.
- Ask students to write thank you letters to any partners who supported their projects.
- Provide letters of recognition to students for inclusion in their employment portfolios.
- Use connections you make during NYSD to set up local projects throughout the year.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of each project and any relationships that supported the project.

General

- Let students sell themselves—they are the best ambassadors for community support.
- Make sure students benefit from the activity by allowing time for reflection on what they learned, and make sure students get credit (from the community as well as the center) for their contributions.
- Obtain and demonstrate total support of the management team.
- Ensure open lines of communication among students, staff, and community members.
- Always maintain an open mind to suggestions.
- Remember, one person cannot do it all—enlist the support of other staff and students.

Be sure to provide your best practices from NYSD 2007 when you complete the Job Corps Activity Summary form so we can share them next year!

