How Do I Plan a Service Trip?

Does your group want to travel and volunteer? Think about a service trip that can take you to a new community. This guide will help you plan your trip from start to finish.

Getting Started Steps

1. **Research communities, organizations, and projects** – Find out where you can go and what you can do to volunteer. Contact organizations early to find partnerships where you are going.

2. **Plan the trip** – Organize your trip using a program planning guide from OVP to document all accommodations, travel, food, supplies, and your trip itinerary.

3. **Recruit trip participants** – Who is this trip for? Who can all go? How many people can go? Is it open to all students or just your RSO?

4. **Hold Pre-trip meetings** – Gather all participants to inform and discuss trip-related topics—dates of trip, packing list, and fundraising initiatives. This is a great way for participants to help with the planning process and to break the ice!

5. **Depart for the trip** – Have all planning set, meet at your departure location, and take off! Have fun!

6. **Hold a Post-Trip Meeting** – You did it! Reconvene after the trip to get feedback, discuss any follow-up activities, and to celebrate! If the group decides to do another trip, decide who will be on the planning committee.

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WHAT ELSE SHOULD BE THOUGHT ABOUT?

WHAT CAN BE DONE ON SERVICE TRIPS?

Any type of project can be completed on service trips. The most important thing is to make connections in the community you are going to. On the trip, plan to spend time exploring the city. This could include trying the local cuisine, visiting historical sites, and allowing participants to buy souvenirs.

HOW WILL YOUR GROUP PAY FOR THE TRIP?

All trips have a cost to them. Once you decide where you are going, create a budget and think about how participants will help pay for the trip. There are many creative fundraising methods along with allowing participants to pay out of pocket. Look for scholarships and other funding opportunities such as SORF to off-set some of the costs.

HOW SAFE ARE SERVICE TRIPS?

There is always risk when there is travel and work involved in a trip. Make sure to have a sound plan for the trip, ask participants for allergy and health concerns, and communicate with your partner community organizations on how to handle issues that may come up. The more you plan ahead and think about potential issues, the less likely these issues will occur. Participants may need to complete a waiver and health forms to travel and volunteer.

WHO ELSE PLANS SERVICE TRIPS?

RSOs such as Alternative Seasonal Breaks and Habitat for Humanity

To assist with your service RSO:
Office of Volunteer Programs
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