

Virtual Volunteering Toolkit



Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Introduction | 2 |
| Understanding Volunteering | 3 |
| Challenges when Volunteering Virtually | 4 |
| Tips for Having an Effective Discussion around COVID-19 | 5 |
| Building Your Virtual Volunteering Plan | 6 |
| Appendix | 10 |

A Note From KPMG

Through volunteering, dedicating their time and skills, people can tackle the world's greatest challenges and drive positive change in their communities. As the COVID-19 crisis impacts communities everywhere, people coming together to make an impact through volunteering is more crucial than ever, as is finding ways to volunteer that prioritize health and wellbeing. KPMG has long been committed to serving and strengthening communities in tangible ways. KPMG is excited to sponsor this toolkit, with resources to support volunteers and teen leaders who are working together to build the world we want. Together. For Better.

Introduction

In early 2020, many communities began practicing social distancing to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Many in-person activities were put on hold or changed format, including volunteering.

While some communities are beginning to meet in person, other groups and organizations will still practice social distancing.

This toolkit is for educators, youth development professionals, parents and teen leaders to help you design, implement and reflect on volunteer projects that can be done at home, also known as virtual volunteer projects.

What do we want to accomplish?

- Help youth understand when and why home-based volunteering is the best option.
- Give youth the tools to design and implement their own projects.
- Emphasize the importance of staying engaged and continuing to support their communities through these uncertain times.



Understanding Virtual Volunteering

Volunteering means spending some of your free time helping others. You may volunteer to help other people, such as the families who lost their homes after a natural disaster. But you can also volunteer to protect animals or the environment, or to support any other cause that you care about.

Another benefit of volunteering is that it can help the volunteer, too. For example, if you're upset about something that's happened — like a hurricane or witnessing food insecurity — doing something about it can be a great way to cope with your feelings.

Virtual volunteering doesn't involve high-tech virtual reality equipment as the name might imply, but simply means volunteering from a distance. It's a way to still support your community when you're not able to connect with other volunteers in-person or directly with the people or environment you wish to positively impact.

Before Beginning Your Project

Before beginning your project, think about why you want to complete a virtual volunteer project. Some reasons may include:

- To protect the people that you would like to serve (like elderly people)
- Government or organizational social distancing mandates
- It works best for your schedule or lifestyle

There may be many reasons why it's best to not volunteer directly with the people or environments we wish to positively impact. Perhaps the people we want to help are too far away, like people in another country, or perhaps they are ill and it's better we not come in physical contact to protect their health. We can even do projects that support our environment from our home. For example, changing our habits around using water, or composting and recycling in our own homes can have impacts on the world around us.





During this pandemic, it is critical that we, as the next generation of changemakers, continue to make a difference when we are needed the most. From virtual school visits, a drive-thru drive, writing thank you notes to those on the front lines in our communities, or doing what you feel comfortable with during this difficult time, virtual volunteering is necessary now more than ever!"



Eleanor Schoenbrun

Points of Light Youth Council Member 2020

Challenges when Volunteering Virtually

While there are some challenges that may come up, especially when volunteering with a group, there are a number of ways to address these challenges.

Challenge 1: Not Feeling Connected

Use Zoom, FaceTime, or other video conferencing services to connect and work on your project together. For example, if you're making thank-you cards for healthcare workers, make it a virtual party by having everyone on video making them together. You can discuss what you're making, why it's important to thank people or even play trivia games while you work.

Challenge 2: Not Seeing the Impact

Think about how you'll measure the impact before you begin the project. For example, if you're making cards, perhaps take a picture of all of the completed cards together or count them and share the total with the entire group to show how much you accomplished. You can also share stories of how the recipients of cards have been so grateful and how such gestures can lift their spirits.

Challenge 3: Decrease in Engagement

It's true that not meeting in person means more people may not participate in your virtual volunteering project. Find ways to keep people engaged either through social media, mobile text and email updates with fun facts and updates about the work you'll complete.

What are other challenges that you anticipate? What will you do to address them?





Virtual volunteering— whether that be through virtually tutoring someone, making care packages from the comfort of your own homes, or donating online to your favorite charity— is easy, fun, and extremely rewarding. Especially in times like the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important, now more than ever, to band together and use technology for good!



Shreyaa and Esha Venkat

The George H. W. Bush Points of Light Awards Honoree 2020

Tips for Having an Effective Discussion around COVID-19

The Centers for Disease Control has a host of tips for discussing and explaining COVID-19. In addition to these tips, here are others for discussing difficult topics:

Be age appropriate

Think of the age group of your volunteers and what they'll be able to comprehend.

Explain facts calmly and simply

Referring to sites such as CDC.gov can help with the language needed to explain facts.

Don't avoid difficult questions

Calmly talk through the answers and look for information that is truthful and appropriate.

Respect Feelings

Depending on the topic, there may be varying feelings based on personal experiences. Leave space for these feelings without challenging them.

Remind them they can be part of the solution

By volunteering, they can help those in need.





The concept of virtual volunteering can sometimes be tough, but it allows a better reach to the public who might feel more comfortable donating or physically volunteering with the comfort of their own home.



Sanya Pirani

Points of Light Youth Council Member 2020

Founder, Sanya's Hope for Children

Building Your Virtual Volunteering Plan

This next section will take you through building your virtual volunteer plan. You can start a group chat to discuss each section and decide how you'd like to design your project.

I. Understanding Different Ways to Volunteer

There are different options for volunteering virtually. Here are a few types:

a. Awareness Campaigns

The purpose of an awareness campaign is to educate and share information. The goal is to teach others about a particular topic and to positively change people's behaviors. One example could be teaching people in your community about the importance of recycling and how to recycle.

b. Being of Service

Volunteering your creativity, time and talent to directly meet a need in your community can be a great way to have a positive impact on your community. For example, you could plan a community garden for the entire community to enjoy.

c. Advocacy

To advocate means to speak out and persuade policy makers to change policies and laws. For example, you could start a letter writing campaign to an elected official about getting a new park in your neighborhood.

d. Collect and Donate

Sometimes collecting and donating funds or supplies that are needed for a cause is the best way to support. For example, you can raise money for a local food bank through an online platform.



“Although virtual volunteering is not something we expected, it has proven to be an extremely efficient practice. In an unprecedented time, our communities are unified by the opportunity to convene online to support families impacted adversely by COVID-19.”

Adom Appiah
Points of Light Youth Council Member 2020
Founder, Ball for Good

II. Type Of Impact You'd Like To Make On Volunteering

Based on the description above, what type of virtual volunteering speaks to you the most? Also consider the following questions:

- What does volunteering mean to me?
- Why is volunteering important?
- How can I, with the skills I have, make the greatest impact?



“Don't let your age stop you from what you want to do. Your age will not determine your impact.”

Khloe Thompson

*The George H. W. Bush Points of Light Awards Honoree 2019
Points of Light Youth Council Member 2020*

III. Understanding Community Needs

Now that you know what type of volunteering you'd like to complete, think through what your community needs. A few things to consider:

- a. Understand the community's history and demographics
- b. Identify the challenges faced by community members
- c. Education opportunities
- d. Unemployment rates
- e. Access to food
- f. Pollution

IV. Build Your Plan

- a. Ask yourself “What would I like to see improved in my community and why? Who will benefit? How?”
- b. Complete a project plan worksheet (see appendix)
- c. Get others involved (publicize your work!)
 - i. Use social media to showcase your work and let others know how they can volunteer
 - ii. Partner with other youth or organizations to get the word out

V. Reflection

- a. Discuss your project, what went well, opportunities for change and ways you can volunteer in the future



My Service Project Plan Worksheet

Instructions: It's important to think through all of the steps and materials needed for your service project. Think about two goals that you would like to achieve with your project. List the different tasks you need to complete for the project. After thinking of all the different tasks, organize them in chronological order and assign due dates.

Project Goal #1 _____

Project Goal #2 _____

| TASK | DUE DATE | MATERIALS | EXPENSES | LEADER |
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Appendix

Community Mapping

A community map highlights people, physical structures, organizations, and institutions that can be utilized to create a meaningful volunteer project. It can also help you understand what type of project would be most helpful to your community. In mapping you want to understand:

- Who is in your community? (Consider income levels, races/ethnicities, number of youth)
- What services are available and to whom?
- Who are the leaders in your community? What issues are important to them?
- What do residents see as priorities for the community?
- What are the gaps in service to people in the community?

To answer these questions, look to your community resources. Community resources include:

- People – Everyone has a connection to someone! They can help connect you with:
 - Neighbors
 - Family and friends
 - Teachers and other school staff
- Organizations, such as nonprofits or other places that are of service to the community. They can provide:
 - Services
 - Expertise
- Community institutions – that make life better for everyone in the community, such as:
 - Libraries
 - Museums and cultural organizations



Tree Mind Mapping

Tree mind mapping is a way to discuss and dissect a social issue. You can look at an issue as an actual tree like in the diagram below:

How to Do Your Tree Mind Map

- 1) Draw a tree and write your selected social issue on the trunk. A social issue is an issue that impacts many people in a community or society.
- 2) What are the root causes of the social issue? For example, if the issue is poor health and nutrition, a root cause can be limited access to affordable and healthy food. Root causes will be listed in the tree's roots.
- 3) Where can you find more information about the issue? Write those answers above the tree. Refer to your community map for ideas on who has the “bird’s-eye view” above the tree.

