

Sample Timeline for Planning Your Project

This sample timeline can help guide your project planning process.

6-8 Weeks before the Project

- Identify potential community partner agencies and potential projects.
- Check project options/opportunities with potential agency partners.
- Contact potential agency partners, introduce yourself (if necessary), and schedule a face-to-face or phone meeting to discuss a project idea. If they are interested, determine the next steps.
- Make an initial project planning site visit to the partner agency site.
- The purpose an initial site visit is to plan the project with the agency/school representative. At the site visit, determine that the date, Saturday, April 10, 2010 is convenient and also arrange a time that the project will be held and begin to develop an understanding of how to manage the project throughout the day of the event.
- Use the Site Visit Checklist to guide your visit. You can find the checklist in the Project Planning Kit or download it from our website (www.odk.org).
- Begin planning your project with using the Project Planning Worksheet.

4-6 Weeks before the Project

- Complete your project plans using the Project Planning Worksheet. It can be found in the Project Planning Kit or downloaded from our website (www.odk.org).
- Use the Project Supply List to identify the tools and materials the project will require and how it will be secured (donated or purchased).
- Recruit other volunteers to serve as Task Leaders to lead small groups of volunteers during your project.
- Confirm agency/school involvement. Make sure a representative from the agency/school will be at the project to thank and welcome volunteers and explain the importance of the project to the agency/school.
- Brief other project leaders on all aspects of the project and involve them in any further planning and preparation.
- Begin volunteer recruitment.
- Create the first draft of the your Project Agenda. Use the Sample Project Agenda in the Project Planning Kit or you can download it from our website
- Craft a PR/media plan to handle publicity for your event.
- Discuss documentation (photos, video) of your event. Appoint one of your Circle members to be in charge of documenting the event and submitting the photos, videos and stories to the Omicron Delta Kappa National Headquarters.
- Order event t-shirts, signage or other collateral as needed.
- Plan any transportation, catering or other logistics as needed. Be sure you communicate with volunteers if they are expected to bring their own refreshments.
- Outline a safety/emergency plan. Assign a safety point person for the day of the project and know the location of the nearest first-aid kit and hospital. Be sure you have a phone and the physical address of the service site in case you need to call 911.

2-4 Weeks before the Project

- Make an additional site visit. Address any remaining questions and concerns.
- Secure needed tools and materials.
- Secure volunteers (with appropriate skills as necessary).
- Reserve heavy equipment as needed.
- Plan your service project evaluation activities. Download the Project Evaluation Form at our website (www.odk.org).
- Secure attendance of all volunteers as needed for the day's agenda.
- Brief volunteers, task leaders, and agency/school partners on the agenda and solicit feedback.
- Finalize the Project Planning Worksheet. Make sure that all the project leaders are comfortable with the scope of the project.
- Establish contingency plans in case of inclement weather, too few or too many volunteers, and any other problems that can be anticipated.
- Communicate details with volunteers. Use the information on the Project Information Form for Volunteers to communicate the appropriate information to your Circle members and volunteers.

1-2 Weeks before the Project

- Confirm all final project details.
- Create a contact list. Exchange cell phone numbers with all key contacts. Make a contact list to carry with you during the project.
- Check to make sure there will be ample trash containers and recycle bins with bin liners.
- Make sure you will have tables and chairs for all project stations (registration, refreshments, media center, etc.).
- Review contingency plans and safety/emergency plans.
- Check, double check, and triple check all project details!
- Finalize the run of show and talking points.
- Confirm that all tools and materials are on site.
- Conduct final communication with volunteers.
- Pack a Volunteer Leader "project kit" to include things such as:
 1. first aid kit
 2. sign-in sheets
 3. waivers
 4. evaluation sheets/surveys
 5. signage
 6. banners
 7. name tags
 8. pens
 9. markers
 10. tape
 11. poster board
 12. rope/bungee cords
 13. extra paper/card stock/poster board
 14. clipboards

- 15. handouts or flyers about the next project or opportunity
- 16. CD player or music to create a fun, energizing atmosphere
- 17. sun block
- 18. bug spray
- 19. camera

1-3 hours before the Project

- Wear your project T-shirt (if you had them made).
- Review the day's activities. Confirm your task and project priority list.
- Deliver any final supplies and materials to the site.
- Arrive at the project site at least one hour early to prepare. Volunteers often arrive early and may throw off your set-up plans!
- Meet your contacts at the project site and make sure they are prepared to give a brief overview of their organization and how the project will benefit the agency/school and community.
- Unpack supplies and make sure tools are ready and accounted for.
- Have all tools and materials ready and waiting at the location where a particular task will take place.
- Take "before" photos.
- Arrange any handouts, nametags, and volunteer sign-in sheets.
- Post any necessary signs, such as those to welcome and direct volunteers.
- Designate stations for tools, refreshments, etc.

Start the Project

- Welcome volunteers.
 - Ask volunteers to sign in, fill out any necessary forms (such as liability waivers) and take a nametag.
 - Gather volunteers together to thank them for participating and introduce yourself and project partners.
 - Welcome and introduce volunteers.
 - Give a brief orientation, including an overview of the project and its importance.
 - As the agency/school contact to spend a few moments talking about the mission and history of the organization and how the project will affect the community, agency/school, and the people you are serving.
- Go over the agenda for the day, discussing the schedule and tasks and reminding volunteers that you will have a brief time for reflection and evaluation at the end of the project.
- Review safety procedures
 - Set a goal for the first half of the project.
 - Assign tasks. Describe the task to be completed. Introduce the task leader (or assign leaders if necessary). Assign volunteers to the different work areas, making sure that each task has the correct number of volunteers and that each volunteer feels comfortable and prepared to complete the task.
 - Distribute tools and supplies. Remind volunteers of the safety procedures.

Throughout the Project

- Be a leader!
- Know your outcome and convey it to the volunteers.

- Be organized and delegate work to volunteers. Keep the project on schedule.
- HAVE FUN and encourage volunteers to enjoy the service, too.
- Give positive reinforcement.
- Be a public relations agent for your project with volunteers, agency/school contact, and the community.
- Take pictures.
- If the volunteers take a lunch/snack break, encourage volunteers to interact with each other, especially people they may not know. Take this time to give an update on the day's progress and go over the schedule for the rest of the day.
- Thank volunteers.

Before the End of the Project

- Be sure to start clean-up efforts at least 30 minutes before the scheduled end of the project. Encourage volunteers to help with cleaning up the area.
- Lead a reflection activity or discussion with all volunteers. Encourage everyone to examine their service and what it meant to them personally.
- Ask volunteers and/or partners to complete an evaluation.
- Thank volunteers.
- CELEBRATE!

Before You Leave the Project Site

- Take “after” photos.
- Have a final debrief with the agency/school contact.
- Survey the site to make sure you are leaving it better than you found it. Make sure all the trash is picked up, lights are turned off, etc.
- Assess any follow-up work that is needed.

Immediately after the Project

- Set a follow-up meeting with project leaders for the next week.
- Assess work completed.
- Complete an evaluation as the Volunteer Leader.
- Review results from the evaluations collected at the project.
- Remember to gather and record any anecdotal evaluation (i.e., stories shared during reflection, observations made during the project).
- Confirm project attendance and calculate total volunteer hours contributed.
- Determine if the needs of the agency/school were met. If there are any unmet needs, discuss how and when they will be addressed.
- Identify how to improve the project next time.
- Send follow-up correspondence to volunteers and/or host a recognition event for them.