



## Organize a School Supply Drive

### Overview

In these tough economic times, many American families struggle to purchase school supplies for their children. We all know that kids need adequate supplies to be successful in school. Help support kids in your local community by organizing a school supply drive to ensure that kids have the tools and resources they need to thrive.

### Suggested Age Group(s)

- Adults, teens, and children

### Suggested Skill Level

- Moderate

### Project Supplies

- Collection Boxes
- Possible Donation Supplies
  - 3-ring binder
  - Backpacks
  - Colored pencils
  - Colored pens
  - Erasers
  - Glue sticks
  - Notebook paper
  - Graph paper
  - Hand sanitizer
  - Highlighters
  - Markers
  - Organizer/planner
  - Paper clips
  - Pens/pencils
  - USB flash drives
  - Books
  - Calculators



## Project Instructions

### 1. Recruit Project Leaders

- Contact your friends, family (don't forget to involve your kids) and coworkers, and ask if anyone would be interested in helping plan and implement such a project.

### 2. Identify Partners

- Contact your local schools and let them know about your efforts. It is always good to inform them of your project and make sure it aligns with their needs as well as to schedule drop off for donations etc. They may even be able to support you by helping to post flyers or recruit volunteers.

### 3. Define a Project Plan and a Timeline

- When will you begin and end the project? What are your milestones in between? What are all the tasks that must be completed along the way? How will you measure success? Give yourself enough time to plan and organize the project, as well as clean up and recognize those involved.

### 4. Recruit Other Volunteers and Establish Roles

- You have already identified your leaders. Now it's time to maximize your volunteers' skills and interests and put them to work! Identify people to fill the following roles:
  - Manage marketing and communications
  - Design and create fliers
  - Obtain and distribute large containers to serve as donation bins
  - Manage donation pickup, sorting, and dropoff to the partner
  - Recruit support (faith- based organizations, other community-based organizations, businesses, etc.)

Lead reflection and recognition efforts with the volunteers

### 5. Request Appropriate School Supplies

- Don't assume people know the most needed and most useful items. Make it easy and explicit, provide a list of requested items on all promotional materials and make sure your volunteers are aware of these items as they are communicating with the public. Below is a sample list. Make sure and ask the school what types of supplies they need and make sure your materials has those items listed.



- 3-ring binder
- Backpacks
- Colored pencils
- Colored pens
- Erasers
- Glue sticks
- Notebook paper
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#### **6. Set-up and Disseminate Your Collection Containers**

- Obtain collection containers (plastic bins, heavy cardboard boxes, etc.), label them properly and strategically place them in convenient and targeted locations to make it easy for people to donate.

#### **7. Promote!**

- You may want to print fliers, publish information in the newspaper, send emails and use social media to mobilize your networks. Use whatever medium you can to get the word out and engage people in the effort.

#### **8. Hit the Streets**

- Contact your local colleges and universities, places of worship, clubs and associations. Talk to people in your community and ask them to support the cause. After all, you are giving them a gift – an opportunity to give to others.

#### **9. Sort and Transport Donations to the Drop-off Site**

- It is easy to forget that a big part of organizing a drive is sorting the goods and transporting the products to the site. Don't forget to ensure that all containers are collected and dropped off at the appropriate site.



## 10. Reflect

- After your volunteer project, it is important to reflect on the experience and think about the impact of the project on the community as well as what you learned about yourself and others. Here are some suggested activities:
  - Tell your family and friends about something you learned and how you will continue to help others.
  - Blog, draw a picture, write a poem, submit a letter to the editor.
  - Write about your experience on your Facebook account, or Twitter feed.
  - If you are working with a group of volunteers to do this project, lead a group discussion with questions such as:
    - Why did you volunteer today?
    - What did you learn about your community?
    - What is the one thing that you will remember most about this service activity?
    - How can you continue to make a difference in our community?

## 11. Recognize

Everyone likes to be recognized for his or her hard work and achievements, especially volunteers. Show your volunteers how much you appreciate them and they are more likely to fully participate and return in following years. The following are some suggestions on how you can recognize your volunteers.

- Verbally recognize your volunteers' efforts, but also send a personalized note thanking them.
- Plan to recognize your volunteers at your next special event.
- Provide your team with a camera to take before and after pictures. Post the pictures in a visible, public area.
- Recognize volunteer efforts through the media. Submit a press release and photo or write a letter to the local newspaper.
- Have a celebration recognizing the accomplishments of the volunteers.
- Give each volunteer a small token of your appreciation.
- Ask people who were particularly enthusiastic or helpful to join next year's planning committee.



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### Additional Resource

- VolunteerSpot - A free resource to help schedule and organize volunteer activities  
<http://www.volunteerspot.com>
- Do Something.org  
<http://www.dosomething.org/dosomething101/home>
- Service Leader Toolkit  
<http://www.handsonnetwork.org/volunteers/gethandson/toolkits>
- HandsOn Action Centers  
<http://www.handsonnetwork.org/actioncenters/map>