



UNITED WAY OF EAST CENTRAL IOWA  
**VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT**

**Day of Caring - Project Leader Guide**

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## Introduction/Overview

Thank you for participating in United Way of East Central Iowa's (UWECI) Day of Caring! Your partnership in volunteerism with United Way helps create a cohesive community where volunteers get the most out of their work, and you get the best volunteers for your project. To ensure this partnership is effective in giving you the best volunteers, we created this toolkit of best practices for working with volunteers in an episodic capacity.

Day of Caring is an event where volunteers from around the region join local nonprofit agencies to work on one-time service projects. Participating nonprofit agencies host volunteers from the community and local businesses who give their time and services in an effort to impact our communities' needs.

Again, thank you for your commitment to volunteerism and our community needs in East Central Iowa.

## Participants

**Agencies:** All participating nonprofit agencies must be located in the East Central Iowa region. Agencies must register, or agree to register, as an agency with UWECI's Volunteer Now site.

**Volunteers:** UWECI will recruit volunteers from local businesses and organizations. Each participating company or organization will provide a volunteer project leader to lead a volunteer team.

## Contact Information

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# Policies and Procedures

## Mission Statement

Day of Caring (DOC) is an event supporting UWECI's Volunteer Engagement mission to mobilize resources to address the community's most pressing needs. Specifically, DOC is a day when local businesses partner with nonprofit agencies to make a difference in our communities.

## Responsibilities of UWECI

- Fundraising/Sponsorships for DOC
- Planning, administration, and evaluation function for DOC
- Training agencies, company coordinators, and volunteers
- Recruiting companies and volunteers
- Providing best practices and other resources

## Requirements for participating nonprofit agencies

- Agencies must register, or agree to register, as an agency with UWECI's Volunteer Now site
- Provide snacks and water to volunteers when possible
- Provide necessary materials to complete project(s)
- Meet with volunteer Project Leader(s) prior to the event
- Report volunteer hours

## Requirements for participating Companies

- Designate a project leader(s)
- Register volunteer teams
- Ensure volunteers sign up through Volunteer Now
- Project leader should meet with agency representative prior to the event
- **Volunteers must be older than age 18**
- **Submit t-shirt sizes by deadline**

## Half-Day Projects

Typical shifts are 8 a.m.–12 p.m. or 1 p.m.–4 p.m. Lunch is optional, but team leaders should discuss with the volunteers. Volunteers, when possible, should try to be flexible in their time commitment in the event that a project runs long.

## Project Approval

Projects are accepted at the sole discretion of UWECI. UWECI reserves the right to exclude a project.

## Waivers & Hours Reporting

Team leaders are required, as part of the sign in process on DOC, to sign a liability and photo release waiver. The waiver is located and viewed when signing up through the online system. Team leaders are also responsible for collecting sign-in/sign-out sheet with hours of work completed. **Leaders must email copies of volunteer hours to [unitedway.volunteer@uweci.org](mailto:unitedway.volunteer@uweci.org) or fax to 319-398-5381, attn. Sue Driscoll.**

## **Inclement Weather Plans**

Each agency is responsible for making its own plans in case of inclement weather on DOC. UWECI will not cancel DOC due to bad weather. Project plans may need alterations. It is imperative to communicate bad weather plans ahead of time. On DOC, it is the responsibility of the nonprofit agency representative and volunteer team leader(s) to communicate directly with each other regarding any changes in plans.

# Responsibilities: Volunteer Project Leader

- **You are responsible for communication with your team.** You are the DOC connection to your group. This means everything they know about the project will come through you. To transfer information to your members and ensure members receive the information, keep them informed, interested, and invested:
  - Informed
    - The basic premise of communication. People need to know when the volunteer project is, as well as when the meetings are, what to do when they are at the project or meeting, and other basic pieces of information.
    - Never assume your members know the details about the project. Reminding someone one extra time is better than not knowing where to go or what to do.
  - Interested
    - Everything goes more smoothly when you engage people.
    - Give people information that will excite them about the project so they are interested about what you are telling them.
  - Invested
    - Once people are excited, make sure **everyone** is included in projects and work.
    - Obviously people can have different levels of involvement (from you having the most involvement and others only getting involved on project day), but even if someone has a small job, make sure they are at least doing something. Suggested jobs include:
      - Carpool planner
      - Supplies provider
      - Parking navigator
      - Project clean-up crew
      - Water distributor
      - Evaluation collector
      - Inner-office volunteer recruiter
      - Inner-office volunteer marketing manager
      - And many more!
- **You are responsible for communicating with the agency.** You are your group's connection to the agency you are volunteering with. This means everything the agency knows about your group usually comes through you. To ensure the project runs smoothly, both you and the agency are responsible for the service project. Essentially this means:
  - You are responsible for staying current with the agency's responsibilities and your responsibilities
    - Do not simply rely on the fact the agency will eventually tell you where to park, what to bring, how to dress, when to arrive, etc.
    - Instead, proactively discuss with the agency these topics and work together to have a project that runs efficiently and gives both the agency and volunteers the greatest impact.
  - You are responsible for knowing what to do and where to go during the project
    - Please do not arrive the day of the project assuming an agency staff member will give you all of the details. Inevitably, plans change, there will be miscommunication, and you and the agency will be waiting for each other at different entrances.
    - Maintain occasional communication with the agency and confirm the details of the project before the day of the project.
- **These responsibilities are the agency's responsibilities, as well.** Most agencies will be contacting you regarding this information before you do. That said, email complications, loss of information, and other technicalities occur. By providing dual responsibilities for communication, we ensure both you and the agency know what is going on.

# General Safety Guidelines

We recognize the potential for serious injury and liability problems associated with Day of Caring, as we do each time any volunteer offers his/her services. To help avoid the potential pitfalls and hazards that can occur during an event of this nature, please take the time to review the safety guidelines below to ensure Day of Caring is both a rewarding and safe experience for everyone involved.

Below are some actions if an accident does happen:

- **Prior to doing any work**, ensure each team leader has emergency contacts for every member of their team.
  - Bring the company volunteer team roster with you on DOC in case you need to get in touch with any volunteer's household or emergency contact.
- Know the location of a first-aid kit.
- Stay calm. Have other volunteers stop working if there is any reason to believe the work is unsafe, or if the volunteers simply cannot focus sufficiently on the project's task. Be sensitive to the mood and needs of the volunteers.
- Designate someone else to oversee volunteers so you can focus on the injured volunteer.
- Try to determine the seriousness of the accident. See if there is a volunteer trained to assist the injured individual (e.g., a doctor, nurse, or EMT).
- If the person has a serious injury, call 911 immediately. Then, call a friend or family member of the injured person, if appropriate, and UWECI's office at 319-398-5372.
- If the person has a minor cut or scrape, administer first aid, fill out an accident report, and notify UWECI's office.
- Ensure all appropriate company and agency representatives are aware of the injury.

## Safety Suggestions for Volunteers

While agencies are usually safety conscious and are prepared to work with volunteers in a safe and careful manner, volunteers should also be aware of safety concerns. Much like communication, dual responsibilities for safety will prevent anyone from getting sick or injured. Here are a few helpful safety suggestions:

- Protect your eyes from dust and debris by wearing safety glasses/goggles.
- Wear closed-toe leather shoes (or better yet, work boots) when doing any manual work.
- Protect your hands with the correct type of gloves: heavy cotton or leather to avoid cuts and scratches, rubber gloves for chemicals or paint.
- Read directions carefully before using any chemicals including household cleaners. Never mix chemicals such as bleach or ammonia based cleaners!
- Use ladders with care. Make sure the ladder is sturdy with solid rungs and cross members. Never stand on the top rung of a stepladder or on the cross bracing.
- Get help to lift heavy objects. Hold the object as close to your body as possible. Use your legs, rather than your back, to rise to a full upright position.
- Before you mow, walk the area to spot and remove hazards such as large stones, glass, etc. Always stop to disable mowers or other power tools before attempting to remove jams/debris.
- Take frequent work breaks, especially with manual work like weeding, painting, lifting, etc.
- Promptly clean and cover even minor injuries such as scratches.

## Simple Safety Suggestions

To help avoid accidents, the chart below suggests safety plans each agency representative and volunteer team leader should be aware of prior to Day of Caring.

Task	Potential Hazards	Safety Plan
<b>Landscaping</b>	Feet (cuts, abrasions)	Boots, closed shoe
	Hands (cuts, abrasions)	Work gloves
	Legs (cuts, abrasions)	Long pants
	Sunburn	Wear sunscreen
	Bug bites	Bring bug spray
<b>Clearing Trails</b>	*Chainsaws	Hard-toed boots Ear plugs or muffs Chaps for legs Gloves, long sleeves Safety glasses, goggles
<b>Painting (Interior or Exterior)</b>	Eyes	Safety glasses
	Hands	Gloves (latex or work)
	Ladders (use scaffolding when necessary)	Waist never above top of ladder Never reach past arm length
<b>Carpentry/Renovation</b>	Eyes	Safety glasses, goggles
	Feet	Hard-toed boot
	Hands	Gloves
	Falls	Approved ladders or scaffolding
	*Power tools	All guards in place Extension cords with GFCIs

*\*Volunteers should not operate power tools unless trained to do so.*

## Risk Assessment/Overall Safety

- Adequate beverages are available to volunteers. This ensures proper hydration to eliminate heat stress exposure.
- Adequate breaks will be part of any projects, especially in very warm conditions.
- Fully stocked first-aid kit is available and readily accessible at all project sites.
- Agency personnel and volunteers know the location(s) of first aid kit.
- List of emergency numbers is available and readily accessible at each work site.
- Working phone is available at each work site.
- Personal protective equipment is available for each task, as applicable (e.g., safety glasses, hearing protection, gloves, hard hats, respirators, etc.).
- Staff will ensure volunteers are dressed properly for the task prior to the start of activities



# Getting the Job Done

## Getting Started

- Develop a plan
  - Gather interest around the workplace.
    - Place flyers around the office.
    - Mention service at meetings.
    - Use general “word of mouth” techniques to generate excitement about service.
  - Note: Many corporations also have an official service project system—this will make the process much easier.
- Scheduling
  - To assign deadlines logically, work backwards from the final product and assign times that you would like things done.
- Sticking to the schedule and plan
  - Actively use your plan to organize your work.
  - Constantly refer back to your plan and schedule to make sure everything is accounted for
    - More than likely, most people will forget the schedule.
    - Send periodic reminders to team members of upcoming deadlines, events, etc.
- Keeping momentum
  - Some volunteers get excited and join quickly, then are not retained due to loss of interest or scheduling conflicts.
    - Try to keep the date fresh in their minds so they do not schedule during the project or any important meetings.
    - Mention project date in emails leading up to project.
  - Suggest carpools
    - Some projects are not next to your home or office, so carpooling is a great way to save on gas and build relationships among the team.

# Checklists

## Prior to DOC

- Set up meeting with agency to discuss project details
  - Confirm location of project sites and times
  - Confirm the number of volunteers and arrival time
  - Confirm who will provide the needed supplies/materials
  - Confirm what tools volunteers should bring
  - Confirm how volunteers should dress
  - Discuss lunch, water, and snacks
  - Discuss other items volunteers should bring (e.g., repellent, sunscreen, safety glasses, etc.)
- Meet with your team to go through DOC details
  - Confirm team members know who to report to
  - Confirm team members supply emergency contact information to team leader
  - Make sure team members sign appropriate forms

## Day of Checklist

- Arrive at project location on time and ready to begin work
- Monitor safety
- Ensure time is set aside for volunteers to clean up project site and themselves
- Ensure team members fill out volunteer hours log
- Ask agency staff to inform team of future volunteer opportunities



## Dates to Remember

February 25	Agency submit project form
March 2	Agency final project review
<b>Week of March 2</b>	<b>Company registration opens up</b>
April 3	Logo submitted for sponsorship
April 3	Shirt size deadline
By May 1	Site visits
May 14	Day of Caring
By May 21	Submit volunteer hours
By May 21	Employees and project leads complete survey

## Day of Caring Notes

**For questions regarding Day of Caring, contact:**

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**United Way  
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*Information in this guide taken in part from United Way of the Greater Seacoast ([uwgs.org](http://uwgs.org))*