

DAY OF ACTION 2026

Tuesday, September 15

Project Planning Guide for Nonprofit Organizations

Overview

The day will be powerful and uplifting. As we begin to come back together, we are planning events for hundreds of volunteers throughout central Iowa.

We match participating nonprofit organizations with skilled and motivated volunteers from local employers who dedicate their time and services to improve our community.

Guidelines

Project Planning

Day of Action is an incredible opportunity to tackle large and small projects at your organization that otherwise may not get accomplished.

Below are some guidelines to better help you plan. The answers you give to these questions will help you assess the appropriateness and scale of your Day of Action projects and will help the volunteers better respond to your needs.

1. Can the project be substantially completed in the allotted working time (9:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m.) with non-professional workers, allowing time for a welcome, set-up, break down, agency briefing, lunch/breaks, and thanks?
2. Is the size and complexity of the project appropriate, considering the volunteers' skills and allotted time?
3. Can you articulate to volunteers the importance of the project in terms of alignment with funding received by United Way of Central Iowa?
4. What is the human power requirement, taking into account space limitations?

5. Does the project require specific skill levels? For example, would you need someone comfortable doing DIY projects versus a licensed contractor?
6. What is the need vs. the availability of tools and equipment? What tools can you provide, and what tools do you need the volunteers to provide?
7. Is the project too hazardous for the volunteers? Does the work require climbing a tall ladder? Is an outdoor work area close to a heavily trafficked street without protective barriers? Is there a potential fire hazard, e.g., the use of a propane torch? (Consider potential liability exposure)
8. Can your organization provide someone to organize and/or oversee the work being performed? (It is required that each organization designate a point of contact that is available most of the day, even if the designated person does not work with the volunteers all the time).
9. Does your organization have the ability to accomplish the necessary preparatory work in advance of Day of Action, e.g., purchasing necessary materials and preparing instructions and staff, or installing foundations for a new structure and obtaining municipal permits, etc.?
10. Are there smaller projects that volunteers can work on if they finish the main project early?

Register your nonprofit's project

To submit a request for Day of Action volunteers, log in to United Way's Central Iowa Volunteer Hub volunteer portal at <https://volunteer.unitedwaydm.org> and enter your opportunities under the "Advanced Events" tab.

- Use this [link](#) to login into your account (If you do not have an account, you can register for one [here](#))
- Choose your agency from the "My Organization" Tab at the top
- Choose the "Advanced Events" tab in the center of the page
- Choose the "2025 Day of Action" opportunity

- If you participated in Day of Action last year, you will see your past opportunities. Please be thoughtful in these opportunities. Did they work well? What might you change this year? Or would you like to do something different or in addition?
 - You can review these, edit any information that has changed, and update the date to September 9.
 - If you don't plan on doing this specific opportunity again this year you can simply delete it.
- Choose “Add New Opportunity” – Please fill out all fields. Highlighted below are a few tips for creating an opportunity:
 - Choose a title that is engaging and briefly describes the opportunity.
 - Select as many “Interests & Abilities” that apply.
 - The “Registration Closed Date” will not allow volunteers to sign up after your selected date.
 - Hours - If you are adding opportunities with more than one shift (e.g. 8 a.m. – Noon and 1 – 4 p.m.) please create the opportunities separately. You can use the *Clone Opportunity* feature to save some time. **(Don't forget to remove “Copy” from the title!)**
 - Enter a specific number of volunteers you need.
 - Select YES to allow team registration. This will allow the company project lead to register multiple volunteers.
 - Be specific, descriptive, and brief. **If background checks or other screening is required please state that here.** Volunteers should be able to gain an understanding of what to expect from the description.

Policies and Procedures

Requirements for participating Day of Action nonprofit partners:

- Participating nonprofits must be United Way funded organizations.
- Projects are accepted at the sole discretion of United Way of Central Iowa, and United Way of Central Iowa has the right to exclude a project.

- Materials needed to complete Day of Action projects are the responsibility of the organization.
- Organizations must meet/visit with Company Project Team Leaders prior to the event.

Requirements for Day of Action company/business partners:

- Company must designate a Project Team Leader.
- Company Project Team Leader is responsible for recruiting the confirmed number of volunteers.
- Company Project Team Leaders must visit with their assigned organization prior to the event.

Once all Day of Action projects have been registered and published by United Way, you will be able to view groups or individuals that have selected your projects as well as make any edits to your listing.

Bad Weather Plans

Each nonprofit partner is responsible for making arrangements in case of inclement weather. Day of Action is not automatically canceled due to bad weather; however, you may have changes to your project plans. When you register your projects, you will be asked to identify your plans in case of bad weather, whether you choose to cancel, reschedule, or modify your project. Please communicate your plans so the volunteers are aware ahead of time. On Day of Action, the nonprofit partners and business partner leaders will communicate directly with each other regarding any changes in plans.

Cancelling Your Opportunity

There may come an occasion where you need to cancel an opportunity due to staffing, lack of resources, or other reason. Please DO NOT CANCEL the opportunity, or make major changes, without connecting with us first. If an opportunity is deleted, we have no way of retrieving any information, including volunteers' information. Please contact Sarah Underwood, United Way of Central Iowa's Volunteer Engagement Manager, at sarah.underwood@unitedwaydm.org to cancel an opportunity. We will remove it once we've obtained any pertinent information.

For questions regarding Day of Action

If you feel you need some assistance in planning your projects, United Way of Central Iowa can visit with you to evaluate the feasibility of the project(s) you have in mind. Please contact Joy Talmon, United Way of Central Iowa's Volunteer Engagement Officer, at joy.talmon@unitedwaydm.org.