

TAKE ROOT:



PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

Guidebook





# TAKE ROOT: Program Assessment

Dear Colleagues,

As a training and technical assistance provider for grantees of the Corporation for National and Community Service, Hands On Network is delighted to share with you this guidebook on Program Assessment. Hands On Network has developed a new generation of volunteer engagement techniques—tailored to today’s community service organization. These techniques make the Hands On Network training curriculum dynamic, innovative, impact oriented, and easily applicable to your program.

This guidebook was developed to help national service programs determine their organization’s capacity and readiness for project-based volunteer engagement. It is meant to be a user-friendly resource for developing partner relationships and planning your organizational capacity for partnership planning. This guide does not prescribe how your programs should be structured; it does, however, provide resources you can adapt to meet your local program needs.

The goal of this guidebook is to provide information that will help your program take root, leverage volunteers, and grow. To that end, the guidebook contains action-oriented sections to help you understand your program’s needs, assess potential partners, and build partnerships with community service organizations. In addition, each chapter includes an activities and templates section with tools to assist you in applying the guidebook content to your program.

If you are interested in further training or technical assistance, please contact us at [training@handsonnetwork.org](mailto:training@handsonnetwork.org). You can also access free eLearning courses and other valuable resources in the CNCS Resource Center at <http://www.nationalserviceresources.org>.

In Service,

Delores Druilhet Morton  
Director, Training and Leadership Development



# Table of Contents

<b>Chapter 1: Assessing Your Organization’s Readiness</b>	5
Defining Specific Goals	6
Understanding Your Organization’s Capacity	7
Assessing Your Needs	7
Assessing Your Needs through Resource Mapping	8
Identifying Potential Partners	9
Activities and Templates	11
Are You Ready to Form Partnerships? Activity	12
Readiness Assessment Worksheet	14
<b>Chapter 2: Assessing Potential Partnerships</b>	18
Factors to Consider	19
Project Parameters	20
Elements of a Successful Partnership	21
Activities and Templates	22
Ideal Partner Activity	23
Partnership Assessment Worksheet	24
Program Assessment Activity	27
<b>Chapter 3: Contacting Potential Partners</b>	30
Conducting an Initial Informational Interview	31
Conducting a Site Visit	32
Site Visit Checklist	34
Activities and Templates	36
Partnership Role Play Activity	37
<b>Summary</b>	38
<b>Additional Resource</b>	39



# CHAPTER I

## Assessing Your Organization's Readiness

### OVERVIEW

---

This chapter will help you assess your organization's readiness to take on community service organization (CSO) partners and volunteer-based projects. It will focus on how a national service program can create or expand its program to include volunteer-engagement projects.

### GOALS

---

- Identify issues to consider when assessing your program's potential for partner relationships

### CNCS RESOURCE CENTER — [WWW.NATIONALSERVICERESOURCES.ORG](http://www.NATIONALSERVICERESOURCES.ORG)

---

- Evaluating Your Organization's Volunteer Climate
- Developing Eight Core Competencies for Successful Volunteer Programs
- From the Top Down: The Executive Role in Volunteer Program Success
- Preparing Your Organization to Engage People with Disabilities



# PROGRAM ASSESSMENT Guidebook

As a national service program, your goal is to create projects that incorporate the key interests, needs, and priorities of your community and your volunteers. To do so, you must first assess the types of community projects your program can take on.

Like with any project, you need to have a framework. This chapter includes resources for developing/planning projects and understanding your organization's capacity to partner with another CSO to accomplish your program's goals. After reviewing this section, you should be able to determine the scope of your program (how big, how small, what kind), map a plan (setting forth goals and objectives), and begin assessing your partnership needs.

## DEFINING SPECIFIC GOALS – DETERMINING THE SCOPE OF YOUR PROGRAM

---

Because there are an endless variety of volunteer projects, it is important to define your scope. The scope of your program will dictate how large or small your projects are, and thus, the type of partnership you will need to accomplish those goals.

When selecting a project, pay close attention to:

- The time required to complete the project
- The overall scope of the project
- Diversity: Can a broad spectrum of community members participate?
- The overall cost of producing the project
- Weather impact
- Accessibility to building and facilities

Your program probably has an area of focus established (i.e., children and youth, the environment, homelessness, illiteracy, etc.); inasmuch, you should decide the types of projects for which you will need partners.



## UNDERSTANDING YOUR ORGANIZATION'S CAPACITY

---

Before considering a partnership with a particular community service organization, carefully consider what you want, what you need, and what you can offer.

- What resources do you have (i.e., volunteers, tools/materials, specialists, consultants, etc.)?
- What types of need would you be willing to respond to (i.e., operational, client services, grounds and building refurbishing, etc.)?
- What kind of impact do you need the project to have to feel like it's worth your investment of time?
- How will your volunteers experience the project?
- How can the partnership be developed for short- and long-term success?

## ASSESSING YOUR NEEDS

---

As you spell out your volunteer-engagement goals and objectives, consider how your program will evolve over time. You can do this by identifying and determining your needs.

### Volunteer Needs

Determining your volunteer needs is critical to managing a successful volunteer-engagement program. Determining the number of volunteers necessary to complete the work and deciding how long will it take them can be a challenge.

There are several variables to consider:

- Volunteer skill levels
- Volunteer age
- Duration of project
- Complexity of project
- Availability of supplies
- Ambient temperature
- Physical space available to perform the work



# PROGRAM ASSESSMENT Guidebook

## Tangible Needs

In addition to assessing your volunteer needs, you will also need to address your tangible resource needs. Determine what supplies, materials, goods, and services you need to complete your project and how to secure them.

## Financial Needs

Determine what funding you may receive and/or what monies you have to spend towards volunteer-based projects. You will need to address your financial resources needs, as tangible resources may be limited.

## ASSESSING NEEDS THROUGH RESOURCE MAPPING

---

Resource mapping (also known as asset mapping) is the process of identifying what is valuable in your community and developing strategies for mobilizing those resources.

Regardless of the nature of your program, resource mapping can support a variety of efforts, from identifying potential partners to finding meeting space and speakers.

This section will help you develop resources and obtain resources for your projects.

# PROGRAM ASSESSMENT Guidebook



There are valuable resources in every community. These resources include:

<b>Individuals</b>	<p>People and their time and energy are vital resources. By working with others, you can benefit from a multitude of relationships, experience, resources, and skills.</p> <p>Examples: Relatives, friends, neighborhoods, coworkers, associates, “labeled people” (seniors, disabled, youth, etc.)</p>
<b>Associations</b>	<p>Associations are groups of people who share common interests and come together to solve problems. Associations are often less formal, less dependent on paid staff, and have less structure (and bureaucracy).</p> <p>Examples: Neighborhood associations, walking clubs, mediation groups, professional organizations, fraternity and sorority groups, etc.</p>
<b>Institutions</b>	<p>Institutions are formal organizations of people who are usually paid for their work. Institutions often have more structure and bureaucracy, but often the most visible and formal parts of a community.</p> <p>Examples: Schools and school boards, businesses, government agencies, nonprofits, churches, news stations, newspapers, etc.</p>
<b>Corporations</b>	<p>Corporations often fund, host, sponsor, and/or provide volunteers for service throughout nearby communities. Corporations are an excellent community resource in that they provide community organizations the opportunity to participate in changing the community while forming lasting partnerships and/or sponsorships.</p>
<b>Money / In-kind Donations</b>	<p>There are several foundations, charitable organizations, corporations, governmental entities, individuals, and non-profit organizations that provide financial support, products, or services for community-based projects.</p>
<b>Physical Space</b>	<p>Land, buildings, and other spaces are also important resources that can support projects and programs.</p> <p>Examples: Parks, shopping malls, corner stores, libraries, etc.</p>

## IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL PARTNERS

There are several ways you can partner within your community. Grants, gifts, and in-kind donations are a great way to get support from individuals, corporations, and community organizations; networking and collaborative services are great ways to share resources and expertise.



# PROGRAM ASSESSMENT Guidebook

Below, you will find some basic ideas of how you can obtain program support and/or partnerships for your project(s).

## Businesses

- Corporate sponsorships
- In-kind donations (such as beverages, snacks, printing of course materials)
- Meeting space

## Colleges and Universities

- Community research
- Course presenters
- Interns to support program development, marketing and evaluation
- Meeting space

## Faith Groups

- Community research
- Course presenters
- In-kind donations
- Meeting space

## Foundations

- Grants to support staffing and operations
- Technical assistance for program development, marketing and evaluation
- Community research and presenters

## Neighborhood Associations/Civic Groups

- Community outreach and recruitment
- Course presenters
- In-kind donations (such as donated meeting space or presenters)

## Non-profit Organizations

- Community research
- Course presenters
- Community outreach and recruitment
- Meeting space



## Activities and Templates

The activities, tools and templates in this section will help you determine your program's capacity and readiness for partnerships. This section will help you effectively assess your program/project scope in specific detail. This section includes:

- Are You Ready to Form Partnerships? Activity
- Readiness Assessment Worksheet



# PROGRAM ASSESSMENT Guidebook

## ARE YOU READY TO FORM PARTNERSHIPS?

### Mapping Community Resources

**Instructions:** Use the diagram below to identify resources that can support your project(s). Do some brainstorming on the resources that could support your ideal project. How can these resources result in partnerships?

Associations



Physical Space

Institutions

Individuals

Money & In-kind  
Donations





# PROGRAM ASSESSMENT Guidebook

## READINESS WORKSHEET

---

To effectively assess your partnership needs, you must first plan out your program/project scope in specific detail. As you develop your program scope, and your readiness to take on CSO partners and volunteer-based projects, consider the following questions:

**Impact** — What organizational or community changes will your program support?

---

---

---

**Outcomes** — How will your program advance the knowledge, skills and behaviors of participants/volunteers?

---

---

---

**Products** — What courses, services or other resources will be provided through the partnership?

---

---

---

**Process** — What actions will be taken to achieve the impacts, outcomes and/or products you seek?

---

---

---



# PROGRAM ASSESSMENT Guidebook



**Resources** — What human, financial, and other resources will you need to accomplish your goals?

---

---

---

Next, determine what resources can help achieve your goals:

**Individuals** — What can individual people do? What tasks can individuals perform? What skills are necessary for those individuals to perform the necessary tasks? What training is necessary?

---

---

---

**Associations** — What can groups of people do? What tasks can teams perform? What skills are necessary? Will group training/development be necessary?

---

---

---

**Institutions** — What can formal organizations do? What products/services can be provided?

---

---

---

**Physical Spaces** — What spaces are available? Are the facilities safe for volunteers?

---

---

---





# PROGRAM ASSESSMENT Guidebook

**Money/In-kind** — What money/economic supports are needed? What products/services/materials can be donated? What in-kind donations can be solicited? Can volunteers provide any supports? How can money be obtained?

---

---

---

Before approaching a community organization, carefully consider what you want, what you need, and what you can offer. Consider the following questions:

Does the community organization serve the same geographic area that you have easy access to? If not, are you willing to expand/lessen your geographic area?

---

---

---

Is the community agency's mission linked to the core function and/or the mission of your organization?

---

---

---

What types of need would you be willing to respond (i.e., operational, client services, grounds and building refurbishing, etc.)?

---

---

---



# PROGRAM ASSESSMENT Guidebook



How can a CSO bring added value to your program? How can your program add value to a CSO?

---

---

---

Is the CSO diverse in thought and practice? Do they encourage culturally diverse ways of approaching community needs/issues?

---

---

---

How can the CSO bring added value to your program? How can your program add value to the CSO?

---

---

---





## CHAPTER 2

# Assessing Potential Partnerships

### OVERVIEW

---

This chapter addresses the assessment phase of community and community service organization (CSO) needs. It will focus on how a national service program can create or expand CSO partnerships, elements of good partnerships and projects, and the necessary steps to begin building relationships.

### GOALS

---

- Assess potential partnership relationships
- Identify issues to consider when assessing potential for partnerships

### CNCS RESOURCE CENTER — [WWW.NATIONALSERVICERESOURCES.ORG](http://WWW.NATIONALSERVICERESOURCES.ORG)

---

- Partnering with other service organizations
- Understanding key elements of barter and collaboration
- Thinking about sustainability and partnerships
- Collaborating to develop service programming to meet community needs
- Understanding twenty factors influencing successful collaboration
- Tips for Building Faith-Based Partnerships



If your organization is ready and willing to take on community service partners, you may find yourself seeking out work with other local non-profit organizations, for-profit partners, governmental agencies, and/or other non-governmental organizations. You will need to collaborate with potential partner agencies to determine the type and/or scope of your work, the types of events/projects to manage, the number of volunteers you wish to engage, and the community issue you wish to impact and/or tackle. Inasmuch, parameters will need to be set so that organizations can determine the scope and scale of their partnership/involvement.

## FACTORS TO CONSIDER

---

Your program may currently have some partner relationships already established within your local community. If pre-existing relationships are not present or if your program is looking to expand and/or create new partnerships, there are several important factors to consider.

### Types of Organizations

What types of organizations are you willing or able to establish a partnership with? Other non-profits, faith-based organizations (churches, synagogues, temples, mosques, etc), municipalities (such as neighborhood services, parks and recreation, city council, etc.), schools (consider free or reduced lunch percentage as an indicator of need), neighborhood associations and block watches, as well as other community-based organizations are all potential partners. It is important to know whether there any types of organizations your program will/will not work with and then be able to articulate that reason(s) to the public or potential partner.

In addition, verify that the prospective partner organization is a 501(c)(3) registered non-profit organization. 501(c)(3) is the status given to charitable organizations that are tax-exempt and can receive donations. You may need to record the Tax ID number of the nonprofit or school, so be sure to ask for the documentation prior to beginning any projects.

The community service organization (CSO) must have insurance, which covers your volunteers and the work being done.

### Issue Areas

What are the most pressing issues in your service area that currently require special attention? Which of these issues (i.e., homelessness, literacy, animal welfare, etc.) is your program willing or able to address utilizing volunteers? Are there specific issues or areas your program will not address, such as the arts or disease?



# PROGRAM ASSESSMENT Guidebook

## Resources

What resources does the CSO have to offer as a partner (i.e., volunteers, books, tools, project supplies, project management expertise, specialists, consultants, etc.)? In addition, resources may already exist in the community that could be utilized to strengthen partnerships, such as free city tool lending programs, emerging neighborhood leaders, or free how-to training programs.

## Volunteer Interest and Availability

Consider where volunteers are located and how far they would be willing to travel to serve. Are businesses, schools, or other potential sources for volunteers located within the areas being considered for service? Furthermore, are public transportation opportunities available within the area? Are volunteers going to be interested in the issues or geographical areas being addressed? Also, consider whether there are opportunities to engage specific demographics (youth, baby boomers, singles, etc.)

## Types of Need

What particular request(s) is your program willing to meet within the agency? For example, are you willing to meet operational needs, client services, building or refurbishment necessities? What types of needs will not be included (fundraising efforts, clerical, etc.)?

## Geographic Location

Within an issue area, are there specific neighborhoods or regions in the community that are in need of volunteer support? Reach out to information sources such as coalitions, community development corporations, local city officials or neighborhood associations to learn more about prevalent needs and/or targeted efforts within the community. This may be helpful in prioritizing where to begin partnership development.

## PROJECT PARAMETERS

---

As partnerships and project ideas develop, parameters must also be developed. Parameters should serve as general guidelines and outline the requirements of a partner's contribution. They may vary for recurring projects versus days of service projects or other program offerings. For example, the following is a list of guidelines for recurring projects that may

# PROGRAM ASSESSMENT Guidebook



be helpful in meeting project objectives and assuring a partner's expected contribution when collaborating on a project.

- Provide opportunities for weekend and evening projects
- Ensure projects are led by a trained Project Leader
- Allow for a different group of episodic volunteers at each project occurrence
- Engage a minimum and maximum number of volunteers for each project
- Establish a pre-determined start and end time for each project
- Ensure no pre-project fingerprinting or training is required

Clarify parameters for all projects and partnerships. As relationships and project opportunities develop, refer back to the parameters above.

The work you do each day could not be possible without your CSO partners. Understanding each organization's role in the community not only educates both program staff and the prospective partner, but is the key in determining how the two can work together. As your organization builds a solid structure and develops partnerships, you allow for continuity, clarity and efficiency; you create a quality experience for volunteers as they support national service programs and the CSO to meet the needs of their community.

To determine a prospective partner's potential, several factors must be taken into consideration. The checklist on the preceding page, entitled "Elements of a Successful Partner," is provided to help you assess the potential of a quality partner undertaking. The goal is to answer "yes" to all of criteria listed.

## ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIP

---

An answer of "YES" to the following questions will assist in evaluating the suitability of a potential partner.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Meeting a demonstrated need in the community
<input type="checkbox"/>	Committed staff contact available for the partnership
<input type="checkbox"/>	501(c)(3) status or demonstrated stability and sustainability in services
<input type="checkbox"/>	Consistently meets all established partnership parameters
<input type="checkbox"/>	Offers true collaboration working with the partner rather than being served by the partner



## Activities and Templates

The activities, tools, and templates enclosed will help you manage both the big picture and the small details of assessing a potential partner. This section includes:

- Ideal Partner Activity
- Partnership Assessment Worksheet
- Program Assessment Activity



## IDEAL PARTNER ACTIVITY

---

As a national service program, you will have the opportunity to interact with, partner with, and/or serve with dozens — maybe even hundreds — of non-profit partners. Who are your ideal partners? What, specifically, about their programs/services makes them your ideal partner? What would you like them to do and/or accomplish for your program?

---

---

---

---

---

What challenges might you have with this partner?

---

---

---

---

---

Name some ways in which you could overcome these challenges.

---

---

---

---

---





# PROGRAM ASSESSMENT Guidebook

## PARTNERSHIP ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

---

To effectively assess your partnership needs, answer the following questions:

**Type of Organization** — With what type of organization are you willing or able to establish a partnership?

---

---

---

---

---

**Issue Area** — What are the most pressing uses in your service that currently require special attention? Which of these issues is the potential partner willing and/or able to address utilizing volunteers? Are there any specific issues/areas the potential partner is not willing to address?

---

---

---

---

---

**Resources** — What resources does the potential partner have to offer? What money/economic supports are needed to support this partnership? What products/services/materials can be donated through the partnership? What in-kind donations can be solicited once in partnership? In addition, what resources could be utilized and/or leveraged to strengthen the partnership?

---

---

---

---

---



# PROGRAM ASSESSMENT Guidebook



**Volunteer Interest & Availability** — How does the potential partner solicit volunteers? Do they have ongoing volunteer programming? If so, would your program have access to their volunteer database? In addition, consider whether or not volunteers are going to be interested in the issues or geographical areas being addressed. Are there opportunities to engage in specific demographic-specific volunteering?

---

---

---

---

---

**Types of Need** — What particular request(s) is the prospective partner willing to meet within your program scope/model? To what types of need would you be willing to respond?

---

---

---

---

---

**Geographic Location** — Within an issue area, are there specific neighborhoods or regions in the community that are in need of volunteer support?

---

---

---

---

---







## PROGRAM ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY

---

Within your small groups, review the following information about a prospective partner:

Several people involved with your CNCS program have expressed interest in working with a literacy program. The county in which you serve has one of the highest illiteracy rates in the state. As a result, there is a high unemployment rate, and 84% of students participate in the free or reduced lunch program. Though the illiteracy rate is high throughout the county, the highest concentration of illiterate citizens is in the Weston neighborhood community, located near the south-western edge of the of the county.

The Literacy Council is a newly formed 501(c)(3) with the mission of increasing the literacy skills of adults and families in the state. The Literacy Council is currently seeking long-term volunteers to tutor small groups of teens and adults at least one night a week.

The county commission has offered the Community Center meeting rooms three nights a week for tutoring. The public library and the teacher's association have offered to train tutors and provide books.

Next, as a group, answer the following questions:

Is the Literacy Council a suitable partner for a national service program? Why or why not?

---

---

---

What information is missing?

---

---

---





# PROGRAM ASSESSMENT Guidebook

What might the challenges of this partnership be? How could you overcome these challenges?

---

---

---

What resources can your national service program offer?

---

---

---

What resources do you want the Literacy Council to offer?

---

---

---



# PROGRAM ASSESSMENT Guidebook



## NOTES

---



## CHAPTER 3

# Contacting Potential Partners

### OVERVIEW

---

This chapter addresses the beginning phases of partnership development. It will focus on the necessary steps to begin building relationships, assessing physical space, and exploring project ideas.

### GOALS

---

- Assess potential partnership relationships
- Contact potential CSO partners

### CNCS RESOURCE CENTER — [WWW.NATIONALSERVICERESOURCES.ORG](http://WWW.NATIONALSERVICERESOURCES.ORG)

---

- Steps to Building a Strong Partnership with Community Agencies
- Going Beyond Your Match
- Mapping Community Assets Workbook



## CONDUCT AN INITIAL INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

---

Once you have determined who, where, and how you want to serve, it is time to contact potential partners. Keep in mind, because the needs of the communities being served are likely to change, the types of projects and/or issue areas may change as well to accommodate community and volunteer needs. Remaining flexible, innovative and continually outreaching to potential partners is essential.

An initial conversation between you, the national service program manager, and the CSO should be a fact-finding mission for both parties to assess partnership potential and can be done over the phone to save time. You should provide a brief overview of the services your program is able to offer, as well as establish partnership parameters.

Likewise, the potential partner should be asked how volunteers are currently being utilized. If volunteers are being used, inquire about the hours of operation, whether volunteers can be accommodated on evenings and weekends, and what specific requirements are in place for volunteers. For instance, can episodic volunteers be utilized? Are rigid trainings or background investigation requirements necessary? If so, can these rigid requirements be modified or eliminated?

Initially, this conversation should be fairly brief to determine whether partnership opportunities may exist. If a CSO appears to meet the criteria of a potentially successful partner, the next step is to set up a meeting in person. The following recommendations are made for face-to-face meetings.

### Organize an Open House Orientation at Your Program's Site

This is helpful for CSO partners to gain a complete understanding of your programs and services and to meet program staff and/or volunteer leaders. The open house orientation should include a thorough overview of the program and program offerings, volunteer or project management tips, Partnership Agreement signing, and any other necessary paperwork for partnership creation.



# PROGRAM ASSESSMENT Guidebook

## Conduct a Site Visit at the Agency Partner's Facility

This should be done by the program staff in charge of CSO relations in order to obtain a full understanding of the range of services the organization offers to the community and its clients. The next section, *Conducting a Site Visit*, will provide more detail.

## CONDUCTING A SITE VISIT

---

Visiting the CSO's site is a great way to assess additional needs by observing the facilities, clients and various possibilities for a partnership. Always keep in mind the potential resources needed and possible parameters. Make note of directions to the site, as well as any unique instructions or guidelines related to finding or entering the facility.

### Get to Know the Community Service Organization's Mission and Vision

Get a good sense of what the organization does and how they do it; your program staff should have a complete understanding of the full scope of programming. This will aid in the creation and facilitation of projects, programs, and other opportunities within the partnership. As a partner's staff becomes better educated regarding organizations, the better they are able to serve the community. Detailed notes should be taken and kept on file, in addition to collateral gathered from the organization for future use.

**Clients** — Whom does the CSO serve, and what assistance do those clients directly or indirectly require? Do they need social, recreational, or educational projects for clients, meal preparation and/or meal service, or assistance with donation sorting, etc.? It is additionally important to ask if confidentiality issues are a factor.

**Staff Check** — The best partnerships are often determined by the reliability and availability of key contacts within an organization. Your program's staff and Project Leaders may primarily work with the volunteer coordinator on site. However, it is important to make connections with other staff as well. It is a good idea to meet the Executive Director or Director of Operations, as well as staff members in charge of client services and grounds maintenance. These people may possess a broader view of the organization's needs. Additionally, they are good informational contacts if the agency's



volunteer coordinator should happen to leave.

The CSO partner may have arranged countless volunteer projects in the past and have a strong volunteer department with an eye for volunteer projects. If not, this site visit is an opportunity to assist them. Be thorough, help point out project ideas, and foster the value of volunteers.

**Current Events** — Is the agency in need of assistance with projects or events in progress? What are the current gaps in volunteer needs? What would the organization like to see established? It may not be possible to meet all of these needs; however, this information will be beneficial in facilitating a plan for immediate and future action.

## Tour the Facility

**Space** — Make note of space availability within the site. Is there sufficient room for social or recreational group activities or adequate work space? There may be enough work for fifty volunteers but only enough space for ten. Furthermore, an organization may request an arts and crafts night for their clients but if adequate space is not available, alternate arrangements or plans may need to be made.

**Projects in Hiding** — Above and beyond the obvious peeling paint or donation heap, uncover potential projects by scouting out the entire facility. Drab hallways or rooms in need of brightening with color, a graffiti-ridden block wall waiting for a mural, a school playground in need of a USA map or hopscotch games, a large room ready for a children's party, a dirt lot thirsting for a community garden are all ways volunteers can be utilized and may not be projects a CSO had even thought about. Be creative — the possibilities are endless!

**Volunteer Friendliness** — While performing a site visit, it is essential to determine whether the site is a volunteer-friendly environment. Take into account safety hazards or the amount of training or skill level required of volunteers. Several questions need to be considered:

- What would volunteers arriving at this site for the first time think?
- Would they see or understand the need?
- Would they want to run away or wonder why they're being asked to serve in such a nice area?
- Would they want to commit to coming back time and time again because the need is obvious?



# PROGRAM ASSESSMENT Guidebook

It is equally important to recognize that any red flags that arise during a site visit must be addressed prior to developing volunteer projects.

## Actions Following the Site Visit

**Subsequent Steps** — After touring the facility and getting to know the CSO, put a plan in place for developing reoccurring projects, days of service, or referral listings. If no immediate action is necessary, but the partner has a great project possibility in the future, be sure to follow up.

**Record Information** — Information gathered from the site visit should be added to your database. Make notes regarding future communication and share information with program staff to provide education and understanding regarding community needs.

**Not a Good Fit** — If the project ideas are unrealistic, it may be determined after the site visit, that the CSO is not a good partner for your national service program. However, it is always a good idea to keep the organization on file for future reference. Events may change and new opportunities may arise that could possibly allow for partnerships in the future.

## SITE VISIT CHECKLIST

---

The purpose of a site visit is to plan prospective projects with a CSO representative. You should begin thinking about the types of projects you will host and begin to develop an understanding of how you will manage the project from one session to the next (if it is an ongoing project) or throughout the day of the event (if it is a one-day project).

Here is what you should accomplish during the site visit(s):



---

**Verify Directions** As you drive to your initial site visit, take note of the driving directions that were given to you. Make sure that they are accurate, as you may need to provide driving directions to your staff and/or volunteers.

---

**Learn about the Agency Needs** During the site visit, ask questions that will help you understand what the agency's greatest needs are and the ways that ongoing or one-time volunteer support can have the greatest impact.

---

**Start Planning** Discuss possible project opportunities with the CSO Representative. What projects can you work on together? What goals do you both wish to accomplish within the community?

---

**Identify Tools and Materials Needed** Brainstorm with the CSO about the types and amounts of materials that will be needed to complete prospective projects. Also, discuss how they've secured tools and materials in the past. Can the agency provide any of the materials needed? Do they currently have partnerships with that provide in-kind donations for project materials?

---

**Confirm Agency Involvement and Participation** Determine the type of participation you can expect from the CSO during projects. Will they have supervisors and potential agency / community volunteers to work with you at the project? What will their level of involvement be? Are they donating any materials, services, etc? Will they speak to volunteers before or after projects?  
In addition, discuss how they have recruited volunteers in the past and if your program will have access to their volunteers (and/or volunteer database).

---

**Create Backup Plans** Identify projects that can be expanded or reduced based on weather, volunteer attrition, and/or other unforeseen circumstances.

---

**Become Familiar with the Site and Its Amenities** Important details about the site should not be overlooked including accessibility to water (for cleanup, drinking, etc.), restroom facilities, adequate parking, first aid kits, and nearest hospital.

---



## Activities and Templates

The activities, tools, and templates enclosed will help you manage both the big picture and the small details of assessing a potential partner. This section includes:

- Partnership Role Play Activity



## PARTNERSHIP ROLE PLAY

---

Within your small groups, develop scenarios to simulate contacting the potential partner, the Literacy Council (taken from the examples listed on page 15). Be as creative as possible with your simulated agency contact. Have fun!





## Summary

By working in partnership with community service organizations, you can increase your capacity to offer services and meet needs in the community. Assess your organization's readiness for partners by defining goals, understanding your capacity, and assessing your needs. After identifying potential partners, assess their partnership potential by considering factors such as the resources they offer and volunteer interest; project parameters; and elements of a successful partnership. Finally, contact the potential partners to determine possible projects and if they are a good fit for your program. Then, build your partnership and work together to make a difference in your community.



## Additional Resources

Listed below are several on-line resources on volunteerism and volunteer development.

- Energize Inc.  
[www.energizeinc.com](http://www.energizeinc.com)
- ePhilanthropyFoundation.org  
[www.ephilanthropyfoundation.org](http://www.ephilanthropyfoundation.org)
- e-volunteerism.com  
[www.e-volunteerism.com](http://www.e-volunteerism.com)
- Hands On Network:  
[www.handsonnetwork.org](http://www.handsonnetwork.org)
- Idealist.org: Action Without Borders  
[www.idealist.org](http://www.idealist.org)
- Independent Sector  
[www.independentsector.org](http://www.independentsector.org)
- National & Global Youth Service Day  
<http://www.ysa.org/nysd/resource/planning.cfm>
- National Service Resource Center  
[www.nationalserviceresources.org](http://www.nationalserviceresources.org)
- Network for Good  
[www.networkforgood.org](http://www.networkforgood.org)
- Service Leader  
[www.serviceleader.org](http://www.serviceleader.org)
- ServeNet  
[www.servenet.org](http://www.servenet.org)
- Students in Service to America Guidebook  
<http://www.studentsinservicetoamerica.org/guidebook/index.html>



# PROGRAM ASSESSMENT Guidebook

**NOTES**

---

# PROGRAM ASSESSMENT Guidebook



## NOTES

---



# PROGRAM ASSESSMENT Guidebook

**NOTES**

---



To learn more about Hands On training opportunities, please contact: [training@handsonnetwork.org](mailto:training@handsonnetwork.org)

Or visit us at [www.handsonnetwork.org](http://www.handsonnetwork.org)



The Corporation for National and Community Service works to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering.

The Corporation provides opportunities for Americans of all ages and backgrounds to serve their communities and country through Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve America. Together with the USA Freedom Corps, the Corporation is helping build a culture of citizenship, service, and responsibility in America.



Hands On Network brings people together to strengthen communities through meaningful volunteer action. Hands On Network is a growing network of 58 volunteer organizations and a half million volunteers changing communities in and outside the United States.

Hands On Network creates and manages nearly 50,000 projects a year — from building wheelchair ramps in San Francisco, to teaching reading in Atlanta, to rebuilding homes and lives in the Gulf Coast communities. The Hands On approach equips volunteers, creates leaders, and changes lives.