

Partnership Tool Kit

Secondary and Postsecondary Students' Guide to Creating Service Projects

Created by Aurelia Spaulding based on the *Five Points of Partnership*

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Introduction

The Western Kentucky University ALIVE Center for Community Partnerships promotes community development across central Kentucky through campus and community partnerships. The ALIVE (A Local Information and Volunteer Exchange) Center opened in 2003 as a central location for nonprofit resources and volunteerism. Because of the integral role the Center plays in connecting individuals to resources and service opportunities, Western Kentucky University designated the ALIVE Center as the hub of the University's Regional Stewardship mission in 2007. The name changed to the Western Kentucky University ALIVE Center for Community Partnerships (ALIVE CCP) to reflect the Center's expanded mission to promote community development across central Kentucky through campus and community partnerships.

The ALIVE Center seeks to partner individuals and organizations throughout a 27-county region with WKU faculty, staff, and students in order to fulfill the Regional Stewardship mission, which is for regional universities in the state of Kentucky to partner with communities to improve the quality of life throughout the Commonwealth. Through a series of regional forums, the ALIVE Center developed four regional stewardship priority areas: economic development, education, health, and nurturing communities. With these priority areas in mind, the ALIVE Center has developed specific programs and opportunities to connect and serve throughout the region.

The Community Partnership Incentive Awards program provides funding for campus and community partnership projects, such as College Bound Communities, Homeless Rights and Resources Guide, and G.E.D. Español classes. The Center also facilitates stewardship efforts through The \$100 Solution™ program, demonstrating how sustainable solutions can be achieved with very small amounts of money. More and more, the ALIVE Center staff finds that individuals and groups interested in service simply want to know "how" to make a difference. With that in mind, the Partnership Toolkit was developed.

The purpose of this Partnership Tool Kit is to provide useful information and helpful tools to create a service project through effective partnerships. We believe that working together and combining resources to achieve mutual goals is at the heart of successful community development and service. Students in secondary and post-secondary levels of education may use the Partnership Tool Kit to organize service efforts. We hope you find the Toolkit useful, and we look forward to hearing about the ways in which you made the world a better place!

"Be the change you want to see in the world." ~ Mahatma Ghandi

Questions for Potential Volunteers

When an individual is interested in getting involved in public service, there are a few basic questions to be answered:

1. Do you want to create your own project, join an existing project, or volunteer for an organization?
2. What are your interests?
3. Do you want to get involved in an ongoing or short-term opportunity?
4. What is the overall goal?
5. How many people are involved?
6. How much time can each person involved commit to the project?

If you want to join an existing project, contact the ALIVE Center to find out about the many opportunities available.

Do you want to create your own project or volunteer for an organization?

Before moving any further in thinking about providing a public service, determine whether you want to create a project from scratch or if you would like to volunteer with an existing program. Occasionally, the service that you would like to provide is already supplied in the area, and you may be better served by assisting the organization already administering the service. At the same time, some students or organizations already know that they would like to make a project their own. Either approach to public service is good, but the first step is deciding.

What are your interests?

Take the time to list your passions, energies, and areas of interest for you and your group. Some groups are already formed around a common interest such as a health, business, animals, or foreign language clubs. With topic-specific organizations, it is important to consider the organizations' and members' interests when creating projects. Therefore, please keep in mind that individuals are more likely to stay actively involved in programs of interest to them.

Feel free to list your interests below or use a separate sheet for longer lists.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Do you want to get involved in an ongoing or short-term opportunity?

Some service opportunities may be one-time events or annual projects, such as a walk for a cause, run for a cure, or food/clothing drive. On the other hand, many projects are set up as ongoing. Projects performed over extended lengths of time tend to be more sustainable

programs that continue for years. Examples of these projects may include mentoring programs, educational trainings, building homes, or creating gardens.

What is the overall goal?

The Partnership Tool Kit is designed to be a tool for identifying and meeting community needs. The tool kit gives students a guide to develop projects that improve the community and make a difference in people’s lives. With that in mind, the overall goal of your project should benefit a cause or need important to you or your group. Think about what you would like to accomplish in the end. Write it down and keep it in mind through the implementation process.

Write your goal in the area below:

How many people are involved?

After you have identified your interests and the type of project you would like to create or volunteer with, determine how many people are involved. Will you be the only person working on this service endeavor or will it be a group project? For example, if there are 50 people in your group, how many will have a role in planning? How many individuals will have an active role in the implementation?

Planning Group/Committee:

Implementation Group/Committee:

How much time can each person involved commit to the project?

When you think about the services you would like to provide, the amount of time you can commit is important. If you cannot commit more than a few hours monthly, that may limit the size of the project, how often the project can take place, or how far in the future the date should be set. Take into consideration each participant’s time commitment so that time-related duties are distributed evenly.

Individual names:

Time commitment or availability:

I (We) answered the questions, now what?

Now that you've answered these six questions, you are ready to begin the process of planning your project. The following sections are derived from the Five Points of Partnership workshops developed by the ALIVE Center and the Institute for Citizenship & Social Responsibility at WKU. Below are the five essential points:

1. Identify the needs...and assets
2. Identify partners...create partnerships
3. Develop ideas...not individual agendas
4. Pool resources from the community
5. Implement, assess, and celebrate

Identify the Needs...and Assets

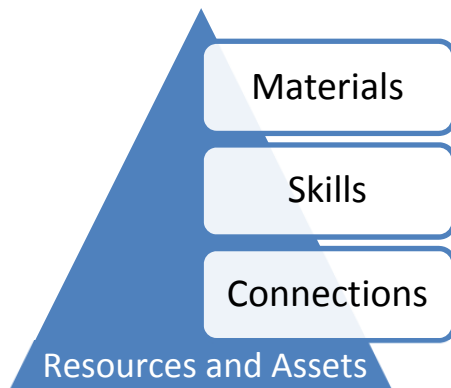
Oftentimes, students or groups begin the road to public service with a community need in mind. There are times when a group already knows what they would like to do and who they would like to do it with. Other times, students just want to help out wherever help is needed. If you do not have any previous service ideas in mind, begin to think about the community needs you may know about. Ask others what they perceive to be the most pressing needs in a particular community. Examples of needs may include food, shelter, or education. The priority need areas that have been identified in WKU's 27-county region include economic development, healthcare, education, and nurturing communities. There are also multiple needs assessments available through organizations such as United Way, Community Action, or the district health department. As an alternative to using a needs assessment, you can find a community or group of people you want to serve and identify their needs.

Whatever need you are ready to address, make it the center of attention. Keep the focus of the project on the need rather than the individuals or organizations working together to address the need. For example, if you are creating a mentoring program, the focus of your efforts should be what will ultimately best serve the potential mentors and mentees.

When you decide the need you would like to address, take the time to research what is causing the problem and what has been done or is currently being done about it. Researching national efforts may involve searching through online databases, library resources, and publications. Researching previous local efforts may involve searching through local newspapers and consulting community leaders in the related fields. The WKU ALIVE Center maintains a list of public service projects and issues that have been written about in local and campus newspapers and publications.

After identifying the needs in the community, identify the assets. What skills, talents, and areas of knowledge do the people you want to serve already have that they may use in order to help them solve their own problems? What assets can you and your group bring to the project? Most students will have a particular skill or talent that could serve as an asset for the project. At the same time, the organizations/groups you partner with will also have assets, as will the population identified as having the need. Individual assets may include abilities like singing or dancing, or they may include books, bicycles, or vehicles. For example, if you were planning a book drive, some already-existing assets may be boxes, signs, or transportation.

Useful ways to identify needs and assets might include asset mapping, focus groups, interviews, and surveys.



Invite Partners...Build Relationships

"Campus-community partnerships are too often rooted in charity rather than justice. Charity occurs when resources and surplus are given from one community to another community, whereas justice is demonstrated when resources are considered as mutual resources and shared among members of the same community" (Morton, 1995).

Partnerships play a key role in successful projects. Many times an organization will coordinate a project for an organization or community without any involvement on their part. However, when at least two organizations can work together on a common goal, it opens the door for more opportunities and resources, and those being served have a voice and a role.

- Partnerships form to serve a specific purpose and may take on new goals over time.

- Partners have agreed upon mission, values, goals, measurable outcomes, and accountability for the partnership.
- Partnerships should be "participatory, cooperative, and democratic."
- Partnerships should be sustainable, keeping in mind future needs, long-term issues, leadership continuity, and ways to build upon and increase everyone's capacities.

Partnership Examples

Each year, the Run for Autism is held in Bowling Green to raise awareness and funds for the Kelly Autism Program at Western Kentucky University. To meet this need in the community, three organizations partner on the cause: LifeSkills, Bowling Green Kiwanis Club, and the Kelly Autism Program met regularly to plan and execute the event which brought out 700 participants in 2010.

Potential Partners

Who are some of the potential partners that could help you meet the needs you earlier identified? List a few below:

_____	_____
_____	_____

How to establish communication with partners

After formulating the list of potential organizations and individuals in the community that you will partner with, you need to establish communication. Communication is a connection between people and is essential for your project in developing and gaining support. When first establishing communication, according to "Mind Tools; Essential Tools for an Excellent Career," there are a few things to consider for your initial meeting:

- **Be on time.** Plan to arrive a few minutes early and allow flexibility for possible delays in traffic or taking a wrong turn. Arriving early is much better than arriving late and is the first step in creating a great first impression.
- **Be yourself. Be at ease.** Keep your individuality, remember to smile, and let them know you are comfortable, which will put them at ease.
- **Present yourself appropriately.** Physical appearance isn't everything, but it is important because it will be the first impression they have of you. Dress appropriately for the occasion.
- **Be open and confident.** Body language can speak volumes. Stand tall, smile, make eye contact, and greet with a firm handshake. All of these will help you project confidence and encourage both you and the other person to feel more comfortable.
- **Be courteous and attentive.** Active listening will go a long way. Be ready to listen and acknowledge the ideas and thoughts of the other person. Repeat what they have said

and ask open-ended questions. People will be willing to help and partner with you if they know you truly care and are interested in what they do and how they can help.

- **Be positive.** A positive attitude is important. Even if there is criticism or you are nervous, project a positive attitude and strive to learn from them and contribute appropriately.
- **Come prepared.** Have your thoughts ready and have answers for questions you think could arise. Let them know that you are responsible and dependable by being very thorough and attentive to details. Everyone is busy, so make sure that you have your ideas organized in a logical way. Don't waste their time; be prepared.
- **Don't burn bridges.** Even if they are not able to partner with you, be respectful of them and/or their organization. Thank them for their time, and be courteous because you may be able to partner with them in the future, or they may be able to help in another way.
- **Beware of institutional and cultural issues.** Partners should make clear and open communication an ongoing priority by striving to understand each other's needs and self-interests, and by developing a common language. For example, someone in community development may use the term "community assets" or "individual capacities," while a faith-based leader may refer to them as "spiritual gifts."

Communication is an integral part of establishing the relationship with those you will partner with. Make sure you remain professional and respectful and appreciative to those who give you their time. These partnerships will help your project develop and grow.

Develop Ideas...Not Individual Agendas

Once partners are identified and communication has been established, it's time to begin developing ideas for accomplishing your goal.

The relationship between partners is characterized by mutual trust, respect, genuineness, and commitment. Partnership builds upon identified strengths and assets but also works to address needs and increase capacity of all partners. Principles and processes for the partnership are established with the input and agreement of all partners, especially for decision-making and conflict resolution. Having individual agendas are a reality: identify them, be open and honest about them, and make sure partners can have their needs met as well.

Steps to Brainstorming Ideas

In the brainstorming process, the group leader should ensure that each person is heard. Someone in the group should take notes in an area visible to everyone. Many times meeting in a different location can help bring about different ideas.

Susan Reese describes four steps in the brainstorming process in the article, "Leading a Brainstorming Session." These steps are provided below:

1. Try to come up with as many ideas as possible. This is a time in which quantity matters.
2. There should be no criticism of ideas.
3. No idea is too unusual, and unusual ideas should be welcomed.
4. Combine, improve, and build upon ideas to form one good idea.

Shared Vision

Develop a common vision of what you are trying to achieve. Here are some questions to consider:

- What is the specific goal we are trying to accomplish?
- What are the methods we are going to use to accomplish it?
- How will we know that it has been accomplished and what will be the measurable outcomes?
- How is each person's self-interest fulfilled while allowing for the need to still be the center of the collaboration?

Shared Ownership

The group should establish its principles and agree on the way things will be done with input from all partners. Everyone should have a say in decision making. Everyone's input should be sought and valued when resolving any conflicts that may arise.

Pool Resources...From the Community

Merriam-Webster's Dictionary describes a resource as "a source of supply or support." When finding resources, your first step is to answer the question "what do we need to supply or support our project?" After you define your needs, finding resources is much easier.

Where should you begin when looking for resources? Start with who you know. Figure out who in your organization knows people in the Bowling Green/Warren County community, in the surrounding area, or in your various hometowns who can potentially help your cause. An organization is more likely to donate money, in-kind gifts, or even time if they have a personal connection to your organization.

After identifying what organizations or individuals you have personal connections with, you should look to the community around you. What organizations/individuals are known for their philanthropy? What companies are prominent in local communities? Remember that you must be able to "sell" your event when contacting them. Therefore, know what your organization is

doing, why you are doing the project, what you need in general, what you would like for them to do for you, and what is in it for them (how they can benefit).

Do your research on the organization. Maybe they have a corporate philanthropy that supports similar projects, or maybe the CEO has a personal interest in your cause. Donations can be presented as contributing partners with their information displayed on any publicity or promotional materials.

Think outside the box. Contact small businesses, young start-up companies, and prominent individuals, even if you do not think they will donate anything. Contact university departments and campus or professional organizations. You never know what someone is willing to do for a good cause.

Possible community resources: artists, community-based organizations, schools, police stations, parks, churches, large corporations, businesses, restaurants, individuals, social service agencies, attorney offices, banks, media, and more.

For projects that involve service-learning or campus and community partnerships, individuals may seek funding through The \$100 Solution™ program or Community Partnership Incentive Awards (CPIA) at the WKU ALIVE Center. The \$100 Solution™ utilizes the five principles of service-learning to answer a central question: “With this \$100 bill, what can I do to enhance quality of life?” It teaches students to ask how they can partner with a community to co-teach and co-learn through service. The program also demonstrates that many social problems that exist can be solved with small amounts of money, and it empowers them to make a difference in their community.

The Community Partnership Incentive Awards program funds projects that produce the following outcomes:

- Stimulate engagement and partnership efforts across or within academic departments as well as with the broader community
- Address wide variety of concerns—community issues and priorities
- Expand and improve understanding of partnership
- Link university and community assets
- Facilitate empowering, sustainable solutions for public problems

CPIAs must have a WKU employee serve as the financial coordinator.

For more information on The \$100 Solution™ program and Community Partnership Incentive Awards, call the ALIVE Center at 270-782-0082 or visit www.wkualivecenter.com.

Implement, Assess, and Celebrate

Implementation

1. **Determine a name for the project/program.** If you are interested in your service endeavor becoming an ongoing activity, then the name of the project, program, or initiative is important. This may be what it is called for years to come.
2. **Select the best dates for the project.** By this point, you have identified how much time you or your group can put into the project. Using that information, choose two or three dates that work best for the group. Ensure that there are no other major activities going on during any of those tentative dates. Having a project the same time as other larger events such as football games or festivals may cause decreased participation.
3. **List potential locations for the project and reserve space.** List all potential locations for your project. Keep in mind the amount of space you need, and also take into consideration your accessibility needs.
4. **List detailed plans for the project.**
 - a. **Assign committees or leaders for specific tasks.** Depending on the project, committees may be ideal for coordinating sponsorship or donations, marketing/promotion, volunteer recruitment, or arrangements.
 - b. **Identify volunteer needs and seek ways to recruit volunteers.** At this point in the planning, it is important to note any activity/position that may need volunteers. Think about the project, and talk it through from beginning to end with details. As you discuss the details of how you would like the project to unfold, note every time a volunteer is required.
 - c. **Plan and begin publicity (if needed).** For projects that need marketing, such as a fundraiser for a charity, publicity plays a key role in the success of the project. Keep your audience in mind, and list every way to reach them. Some forms of publicity may include social networks such as twitter and facebook, newspapers, television, radio, or online calendars and advertisements.
 - d. **Create promotional materials (if necessary).** Flyers, banners, handbills, new releases, radio PSA, texts, email, and social networks (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube) are all great promotional materials to consider creating.
5. **Incorporate all of your plans on the project day.** On the day that your project begins, everything should be prepared to produce the project. All supplies and materials should be at the project location, and coordinators should be clear about their roles and responsibilities during the project. Organizing a checklist, sign-in sheets, job description

lists, signs, and any other materials in advance can help make your project go even more smoothly.

"Successful campus-community partnerships must find ways to preserve the integrity of each partner and, at the same time, honor the purpose of the relationship and the growth of each party" (R. Bringle and J. Hatcher).

- Identify what the aforementioned goals mean for your particular service group & how your team members, in particular, play a key role in achieving your combined goals.
- Strategize with team members (ask for suggestions, feedback on process) on successes and challenges for each member
- Give all team members the opportunity to make meaningful decisions in determining future goals or the possibility of any ongoing partnership endeavors.

Assessment

Evaluating your project will help you assess the success of your hard work and gather information you can share with interested parties – and even possible future funders and supporters! It can also provide helpful information for future projects and make them more effective.

Before

In order to do this effectively, it is always helpful to gather initial data on the issue you're addressing before you begin your project so that you will be able to compare it to the data you collect after your project.

During

Keep track of numbers while you are doing your project, such as hours worked, number of participants, number of people served, items collected or donated, money spent, media coverage, services provided, etc. Measuring your progress is particularly important for long-term projects!

After

Here are some ways to assess the success of your project after it is completed:

- Results: Gather team members and try to answer the following central question: Have we met the goals and specific objectives we stated during the planning process? Use numbers and specific measurements whenever they are available! If your goal was to increase availability of items, modify a behavior, or change a policy, try to obtain specific data on whether or the change you aimed for took place.

- **Benefits:** Use anonymous surveys, interviews, or a focus group to assess how those who were to benefit from your project feel about its success. You may want to ask if their problem was solved or if their needs were met. You might also want to ask more specific questions that will help you improve in the future, such as whether the entire project or particular elements of it were useful, accessible, done at the right time/date, and if they would like to repeat it, etc. Always ask for suggestions to improve and leave space for open feedback. You can also use this information to figure out whether your project was beneficial to particular groups within the community you served and why or why not. For example, maybe there was a language barrier, or maybe you were not able to reach all the age groups you wanted to.
- Use anonymous surveys to assess the level of satisfaction of the participants from your own group. Use measurements such as what they learned, how they would improve it, would they like to repeat it, and if there were any leadership issues, etc. Ask them for feedback, not just on the outcomes of your project, but also what they think about the planning and implementation process as well as suggestions for improvement.
- Ask outsiders and experts to evaluate your project and give their opinion.
- Do a report of strengths and weaknesses of the project using all the information you gathered.

Remember to **always include the community** you served in the evaluation process – they know better than anybody whether your project was successful and how it could be improved!

After you have completed your project, take some time to think about what goals you have achieved and what remains to be done. Consider whether your group would like to develop a follow-up project to continue working on the same issue, or maybe on something else you identified during the process. Even if your group cannot undertake follow-up work at that time, identifying the needs and sharing them may be valuable to the group you are serving so that they themselves or some other interested group may continue the work.

THE 3 KEY QUESTIONS

When you conduct an evaluation, have a discussion, write a reflection, document your project, or create a report or even multimedia piece to share your work, try to include answers to the following questions:

WHAT?

(What was your project about? What was the problem or issue you tackled? What causes it? What did you do?)

SO WHAT?

(Why does it matter? How was it significant? Who did it help and why? What did you gain from it and what did those you served gain from it?)

NOW WHAT?

(What is the situation like now? What else could be done? What's the next step? What are the long-term repercussions of your work? Who else could get involved and how?)

Celebrate Success

Share your findings with others, especially those who supported you or who may be interested in the issue! Maybe you can talk about it, put it on your website, or make a PowerPoint presentation or a video about your project! Share your successes as well as the difficulties you found so that others may learn from your experience and findings!

Students at Western Kentucky University can share their experiences through our Engage & Exchange Challenge or talk to the Center's staff about highlighting the project on the Spirit of Engagement blog or "Progression Through Partnerships" newsletter. The Engage & Exchange Challenge allows students the opportunity to submit information regarding their project in the form of still photography, writing, or multi-media. By documenting your project and sharing it with the Center, you can be eligible to win prizes ranging from \$100 - \$300. For details regarding the Engage & Exchange Challenge or ALIVE Center tools for highlighting public service, visit www.wku.edu/alive.

Collaborative Service-Learning

Besides fulfilling a community need, service-learning is focused on what students learn in the process of serving. Service-learning can be curricular (be part of a class) or co-curricular (learning outside the classroom). It is tied to student's academic disciplines and intellectual development. Collaborative service-learning meets a community-determined need and partners with the community to find and implement solutions.

We encourage you to create and get involved with service-learning projects that follow these principles:

1. **PARTNERSHIP:** The service-learners and the community participate in determining the needs, planning and implementing solutions, and evaluating efforts. Everyone has an appreciated role. Don't work *for* the community in a one-way charity model. Instead, work *with* the community: Utilize and value their assets, knowledge, and resources.
2. **RECIPROCITY:** The service-learners and the community both benefit from the project, although in different ways. Both groups can teach and learn from each other.
3. **CAPACITY BUILDING:** The knowledge and abilities of individuals and organizations are strengthened. The community develops its capacity towards self-sufficiency.
4. **SUSTAINABILITY:** Immediate and future needs and consequences are taken into consideration. Focus on long-term solutions that can be continued, rather than on short-term fixes without resources for continuation.
5. **REFLECTION:** Continued reflection allows for better awareness, deeper understanding, analyzing, and interpretation of experiences in order to foster meaningful learning.

Appendix



PROJECT EVALUATION
1906 College Heights Blvd. #21096
Bowling Green, KY 42101
270-782-0082 – www.wku.edu/alive

Basic Information	
Name of Project/Event:	
Date(s) held:	
Location held:	
Chairperson:	
Project Details	
Project description:	
Name of cooperating groups, agencies, or individuals (include contact info):	
Number of individuals participating in the project:	
Production Details	
Special equipment utilized (specify costs):	
Time spent planning project:	
Number of individuals involved in planning (hours served by each):	
Finances	
Materials needed:	
Admission or entry costs:	
Recommendations	
Should this project be continued? Why?	
If repeated, how could this project be more successful?	
Reflection	

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