



Action (Civic) Projects

(for volunteer recruitment)

Definition: Action projects are small community (civic) service projects that appeal to values like conservation or “helping others.” They create opportunities to meet new people away from political meetings or events. People who participate generally share the same value with you.

Short-term goal: Increase the number of **NEW** people you meet in your community in 2023 through mini action projects designed to appeal to progressive values (e.g., conservation, education, senior citizens, fair trade, housing, and child care).

Long-term (2024) activity: Local progressives work with campaign organizers to recruit these “new people” to the 2024 campaign.

Project Characteristics-These are common:

- A. Connect projects to values, not politics.
- B. Small scope (1-4 hours or 5-15 people).
- C. Easy to frame the concept.
- D. Easy to plan.
- E. Easy to publicize (community value not politics).
- F. Meet and then act.
- G. Include fun and fellowship at an event.
- H. People feel good-“they made a difference.”
- I. Get data: names, telephone #, and email address (for use in 2023 and 2024).
- J. Benefit: Use these projects to network. (Meet new people-they will get to “know and trust” you).
- K. Plan 1 to 3 projects during 2019 and spring of 2020.



Note: 2023 events “set the stage” for spring & fall 2024 volunteer recruiting related to electoral campaigns.

Examples of Action Projects:

(These are ways for volunteers to get to “know you” and “trust” you and accomplish something (community (civic) service). Meeting new people = more power for you!).

1. Develop and toss prairie seed balls. Learn more: <http://bit.ly/3YeL03i>.
2. Create Monarch Butterfly waystations (10’ by 10’ plots).
3. Remove buckthorn trees or plant preferred trees (Check out the Arbor Foundation for info.).
4. Build gardens: rain (low areas) or pollinator types.
5. Collect donations for a local food pantry.
6. Build and maintain a local food pantry garden (Raised bed type of garden or in-ground plot).
7. Clean up a senior citizen’s yard (Spring or Fall); or neighborhood parking (vacant) lot.
8. Paint a senior citizen’s house.
9. Collect prairie seeds (Late August through mid-October). Inquire at a local parks department.
10. Hold town halls on women issues (March is National Women’s Month) or Earth Day in April).



Note: Assess Your community. Then select an action project. Build on prior action projects.

Assumptions

Note: Use mini-action project(s) to meet new people. Use these events to “get to know” new people. This strategy can be used in off-election periods or during campaigns. It shouldn’t conflict with Get Out the Vote activities.

- A. People who won’t come to a political meeting, will participate in a civic event focused on a topic (value) they care about.
- B. People are more easily influenced by others they know and trust. Civic projects create trust between people. You are the messenger. The messenger matters!!
- C. The theory behind “relationship organizing” is simple. Later when it is time to campaign (house parties, canvassing, and/or phone banks), a campaign volunteer reaching out to someone they already know is more effective than reaching out to strangers.
- D. It will take some time and multiple contacts before people “open up” to you, your ideas, and persuasion (by progressives).
- E. Mini action (civic) projects appeal to millennials and baby boomers alike. Many high school students need “community service hours.”
- F. Mini action projects use “pull” strategies to draw people to you. “Push” strategies (e.g. hard-sell by used car salespeople or email blasts) have limited appeal and impact in our current culture.
- G. Many churches, scout troops, and businesses are looking for community service projects. You are meeting their need.
- H. Mini action projects are easy and fun to do. Some projects will create a “long term” legacy in your community. (Example: Monarch gardens)
- I. You can create a “doubler” effect by connecting multiple groups to your “progressive” organized project. Example: Connect a scout troop and church group to your milk weed planting project (monarch butterflies).
- J. Do some “listening” to learn what topics or issues are important to your community.
- K. Create a large “before” and “after” public relations campaign (articles for newspapers and organization newsletters, press releases, flyers, posters, post cards). This will help “brand” your organization as concerned about community needs. No focus on campaigns or candidates. It is important to do this in conjunction with the action project.

More information available at <https://www.badgerlearningcenter.org>