

# RECRUIT YOUR MAYOR

A **CITIES OF SERVICE** BLUEPRINT

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# BACKGROUND

**Founded in New York City in 2009 by 17 mayors from across the United States, the Cities of Service coalition is a vibrant and growing network of municipal governments using innovative strategies to effectively leverage citizen service as a reliable tool to achieve measurable impact on pressing local challenges.**

**Cities of Service** builds on the work of the 108th Mayor of New York City, Michael R. Bloomberg, who created the nation's first high-impact service plan and appointed the nation's first municipal chief service officer.

Today, nearly 200 mayors are engaging citizens to address critical city needs through impact volunteering. Like the founding mayors, each coalition member is committed to working with other mayors around the country to advance service strategies in their own city by developing and implementing a high-impact service plan.

This step-by-step, how-to guide will give you the information you need to make a compelling case to your mayor to make your city a city of service.



# REQUIRED ELEMENTS

- 1 A group of city residents who would like to see your mayor join the coalition.
- 2 A letter to your mayor, signed by local residents, listing reasons why s/he should join **Cities of Service** (see **Cities of Service Benefits** box on page 10).
  - a The letter should inform your mayor of the requirements for joining: signing the **Declaration of Service**, pledging to create a high-impact service plan for your city, and sharing ideas and best practices with other coalition members.
  - b Note that there is no fee for membership in **Cities of Service**.
  - c Be sure to include the **Cities of Service** contact information: [info@citiesofservice.org](mailto:info@citiesofservice.org).
- 3 A meeting with your mayor, or, in larger cities, a key staff person with direct access to the mayor.
- 4 A copy of the **Declaration of Service** to share with your mayor (included within this Blueprint and available at <http://www.citiesofservice.org/content/declaration-of-service>).

# EXECUTING THE PLAN

- 1 Recruit others to join you.** Reach out to neighbors, family members, volunteer and civic groups, block clubs and neighborhood associations, schools and higher education institutions, foundations, philanthropists, local business leaders, and nonprofit leaders to show your mayor strong community support for joining **Cities of Service**.
- 2 Secure a meeting with your mayor.** In some cities, it may be fairly easy to get a meeting with your mayor. In other cities, request a meeting with a high-level city official who has access to the mayor (e.g., deputy mayor, city manager, chief of staff, council member, commissioner or department head, volunteer manager, etc.). It may be helpful to find someone who knows the mayor and/or a senior staff member who can request and attend the meeting with you.

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**3 Make your case to your mayor** (or his/her senior representative). Being a part of **Cities of Service** allows mayors to make measurable impact on pressing city needs, increase community engagement, and improve the city's civic health (check out your city's **Civic Health Score** at <http://www.ncoc.net/CHI>). Mayors have also joined the coalition because it enables them to bring positive recognition to their cities and to actively support residents who are helping to revitalize their own neighborhoods.

- a** Brainstorm ways that your city could benefit from directing volunteers in targeted initiatives that address key community problems. (See the **Cities of Service Blueprints** for ideas: <http://www.citiesofservice.org/resources/>.)
- b** Many mayors want to make use of every possible resource to advance their city. Leveraging volunteers has been shown to help cities move the needle against pressing challenges. Show your mayor that **Cities of Service** is a proven approach that is working in a variety of locales by printing out a list of cities in the coalition, including any in your state or region. (Go to <http://www.citiesofservice.org/coalition> for a complete list.)
- c** There is no cost to join the coalition, and joining gives the city many benefits. (See **Cities of Service Benefits** box on page 10.)

**4 Get a commitment from your mayor.** To join the coalition, the mayor must sign the **Declaration of Service**. Once s/he has signed the Declaration and filled out the contact information, the city government representative can email it to **Cities of Service** at [info@citiesofservice.org](mailto:info@citiesofservice.org).

# OPTIONAL ELEMENTS

- 1** Offer to help develop the high-impact service plan by hosting focus groups, conducting a landscape analysis, and identifying resources. (See the **Cities of Service Playbook** at <http://www.citiesofservice.org/content/playbook/> for details.)
  
- 2** Share examples of impact from other coalition members to get your mayor and city excited about the potential of impact volunteering to make real change for cities. Examples include:
  - a** Volunteers removed more than 1.8 million pounds of trash from city streets in Flint, Michigan.
  - b** With the support of volunteer tutors, elementary school students improved their reading fluency by 88% in Orlando, Florida.
  - c** Citizen volunteers coated more than 5.7 million square feet of rooftop in New York City to help reduce the city's carbon footprint by over 2.1 million pounds of carbon.
  - d** More than 14,500 Sacramento, California residents were trained in disaster preparedness to improve the city's ability to respond to major emergencies.

# MEASURING IMPACT

## Tracking the impact of this blueprint is simple:

- Did your mayor join the coalition?

## Additional metrics to be collected over time:

- Did the city create a high-impact service plan?
- How many impact volunteering initiatives have been launched?
- How many people have benefited from the impact volunteering initiatives?
- Did the city appoint a chief service officer?

# RESOURCES

Go to <http://www.citiesofservice.org> for additional resources and information on the work that cities are doing as part of the **Cities of Service** coalition.





THE CITIES OF SERVICE

# DECLARATION OF SERVICE



## TO JOIN CITIES OF SERVICE:

Please read and sign the Declaration of Service on the reverse side. Return the completed form to **Cities of Service** by email:

[info@citiesofservice.org](mailto:info@citiesofservice.org)



WHEREAS America has a proud tradition of service and volunteerism that dates back to the colonial era and today can be found in communities across the fifty states;

WHEREAS the bipartisan Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, signed into law by President Barack Obama on April 21, 2009 builds on this tradition, encouraging all Americans to serve their communities in new ways;

WHEREAS cities, home to many of the nation's most persistent challenges, are positioned to bring new leadership, facilitation, and innovation to the service movement;

WHEREAS the current need for public-spirited residents to help address increased hardship resulting from the global financial and housing crises is clear;

WHEREAS service enriches the lives of Americans of all ages, and each new generation of young Americans must be engaged to tackle emerging challenges;

NOW, THEREFORE, we resolve to develop a coalition of mayors from cities large and small to work together to harness and focus the energies of our citizens. **Cities of Service** coalition members will support efforts to increase service opportunities in our cities by:

Developing a comprehensive service plan and a coordinated strategy focused on matching volunteers and established community partners to the areas of greatest local need;

Working with other mayors and elected officials to advance strategies and best practices that accelerate the service movement and produce measurable results;

Encouraging other mayors to join this national effort to engage our citizens; and

Ensuring that the voice of cities is heard in federal legislative, policy, and program discussions related to service, which will help the country achieve the ambitious goals of the Serve America Act.

.....  
**MAYOR'S SIGNATURE**

.....  
**MAYOR'S NAME - PLEASE PRINT**

.....  
**MAYOR'S OFFICE ADDRESS**

.....  
**CITY, STATE, ZIP**

.....  
**MAYOR'S TELEPHONE**

.....  
**MAYOR'S EMAIL ADDRESS**

.....  
**STAFF CONTACT NAME**

.....  
**STAFF CONTACT TITLE**

.....  
**STAFF CONTACT TELEPHONE**

.....  
**STAFF CONTACT EMAIL ADDRESS**

# CITIES OF SERVICE BENEFITS

## **TRAINING:**

Annual in-person training sessions and coalition member gatherings.

## **COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE:**

Formal and informal best-practice sharing, problem-solving assistance from other cities, and ongoing networking opportunities.

## **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:**

Ongoing programmatic and logistical guidance.

## **FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:**

Opportunities to apply for funding. **Cities of Service** has given over \$6.5 million to coalition members since 2010 to support impact volunteering initiatives.

## **SUBSIDIZED VOLUNTEER-MATCHING WEBSITES:**

Award-winning, custom-designed websites that direct citizens to priority volunteer opportunities that align with a city's identified areas of high need.

## **PRINT AND ONLINE RESOURCES:**

Including the **Cities of Service Playbook**, a step-by-step guide to developing a comprehensive citywide service plan, and **Cities of Service Blueprints**, ready-to-use, customizable, high-impact service strategies targeting specific issue areas with proven volunteer engagement strategies.

## **ADDITIONAL BENEFITS:**

Recognition in national media and on the **Cities of Service** website; opportunities to represent **Cities of Service** and your city at regional, national, and international conferences and meetings; potential to receive Leadership City designation.



[www.citiesofservice.org](http://www.citiesofservice.org)