

Identifying Local Resources

For Your Community Service Project

*A Guide for National Service
Programs*

*Produced by the
Maine Commission for Community Service*



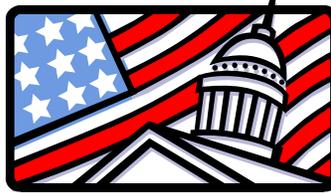
This publication is based on a work produced by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory entitled “Identifying Local Resources for your Literacy Program.” A version of this publication can be found online at <http://www.nwrel.org/learns>. We gratefully acknowledge the enthusiastic support of the NWREL for the adaptation of this publication for a general audience.

National Service participants (AmeriCorps, VISTA, Learn and Serve and Senior Corps) moving to a new community will find this publication useful in establishing links in the local community and in building relationships with those who share interests and commitments to strengthen the community by building social capital.

This project is funded through a grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service.

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Civic Engagement Lexicon

- ✧ **Putnam, Robert. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000.**

Bowling Alone, by Robert Putnam, is one of the definitive works on the importance of civic engagement in our society. It explores the ways in which Americans have become increasingly disconnected from family, friends, neighbors, and our democratic structures—and how we may reconnect. Putnam warns that our stock of social capital has plummeted. Putnam draws on extensive research over the last quarter century to show that we sign fewer petitions, belong to fewer organizations that meet, know our neighbors less, meet with friends less frequently, and even socialize with our families less often. Putnam shows how changes in work, family structure, age, suburban life, television, computers, women's roles and other factors have contributed to this decline.

- ✧ **Civic engagement, civic participation**

Individual and collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern. Civic engagement can take many forms, from individual voluntarism to organizational involvement to electoral participation. It can include efforts to directly address an issue, work with others in a community to solve a problem or interact with the institutions of representative democracy. Civic engagement encompasses a range of specific activities such as working in a soup kitchen, serving on a neighborhood association or voting. An engaged citizen should have the ability, agency and opportunity to move comfortably among these various types of civic acts.

- ✧ **Service-learning**

An educational method by which participants learn and develop through active participation in service that is conducted in and meets the needs of a community; is coordinated with a school or community service program and with the community; is integrated into and enhances the lifelong learning of a participant; and includes structured time for the participants to reflect on the service experience.

- ✧ **Social Capital**

The central premise of social capital is that social networks have value. A growing body of research shows that communities with high social capital, or social networks based on mutual respect, trust and reciprocity, are likely to have higher educational achievement, better performing government institutions and less violence and crime. The key indicators of social capital include social relations, formal and informal social networks, group membership, trust, reciprocity and civic engagement.



Using This Guide

This guide for locating local resources to support your community service project is designed to help you identify partners and stakeholders in your community—ones you may not have considered resources.

First, a word about resources. In the context of this guide, resources refers to any organization, initiative, or individual who supports national service programs by sharing materials and information, collaborating on joint projects, or providing monetary or in-kind contributions, client or constituent referrals, or volunteers.

The guide is organized around the typical needs of program coordinators. You will find topics such as “Volunteer Training” and “Technical Assistance” under the *If You Need...* heading, followed by the types of organizations and individuals who may be able to help meet that need. For each need, you’ll read about:

- *What Others Have Done*; ways that other service projects in Maine have connected with similar resources in their communities.
- *Building Reciprocity*; which shows how national service programs and members have in turn been valuable, responsive partners to schools, community organizations, and others.
- *Research Hints*; give suggestions on how to identify and make initial contact with organizations, offices, or individuals who could be important allies for your own program.



Robert Putnam, in his book *Bowling Alone*, identifies the importance of “bridging social capital,” which unites dissimilar groups toward community goals. Oftentimes different groups in a community may be working on similar projects but are unaware of the potential for collaboration. Strong, sustainable programs cultivate relationships with many different partners; these relationships are based on how groups can assist each other in understanding the entire community’s needs, providing quality resources, and delivering effective services.

This guide will help you connect with people and organizations to create equally powerful partnerships that link national service to your local community.

Do not wait for leaders; do it alone, person to person.

~Mother Teresa

If You Need...

Knowledge of National Service Peers

The Corporation for National and Community Service connects Americans with opportunities to give back to their communities and their nation in the Corporation's three main programs: *AmeriCorps*, *Learn & Serve* and *Senior Corps*.

Try Looking Here:

- ❖ **Corporation for National and Community Service, National Headquarters**
- ❖ **Corporation for National and Community Service State Office for ME, NH and VT, Concord NH**
- ❖ **The Maine Commission for Community Service**
- ❖ **Learn & Serve director, Maine Department of Education**
- ❖ **Listservs associated with national service**
- ❖ **National Service Resource Center Web Site**

What Others Have Done

• State level offices are instrumental in linking projects across state borders. The Maine Commission for Community Service works with the federal Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), and the Maine Department of Education to distribute federal funding to communities.

• A listserv is an electronic discussion group that meets over e-mail. Listservs provide a place to ask questions, post information, and share ideas and resources with peers. Once subscribed to a list, messages can be sent through the list server to all the other subscribers. The National Service Resource Center website provides a listing of many service-oriented listservs available at <http://www.etr.org/nsrc/listserv.html>.

Building Reciprocity: The Red Cross AmeriCorps program collaborated with RSVP to increase the number of senior volunteers who are trained to help in an emergency. The AmeriCorps members provided the training while the RSVP group provided the volunteers.

Research Hint

The Maine Commission for Community Service publishes an annual listing of **Volunteer Opportunities Across Maine**. Check this Program Directory for other national service projects near you. Explore the possibility of joint events, collaborate on volunteer recruitment, and share resources with other national service staff. To obtain this Directory, contact the MCCS office, 287-5313.

If You Need...

Books and Materials

Try Looking Here:

- ✧ **Public library**
- ✧ **Literacy Volunteers of America Chapters**
- ✧ **Local businesses**
 - Chain Stores
 - New and used bookstores
 - Office supply stores
- ✧ **Local nonprofit and other organizations**
 - Goodwill stores
 - Salvation Army stores
- ✧ **Local and state literacy councils**
 - Maine Family Literacy Initiative, Department of Education
- ✧ **Parents and community members**
- ✧ **Professional organizations**
- ✧ **School resources**
- ✧ **Maine Association of Nonprofits**
- ✧ **National Council of Nonprofit Associations**

What Others Have Done

• The *Born to Read* program, a partnership between RSVP and the Maine Humanities Council, enlisted volunteers to read to children in day care and Head Start Centers. Each child received a book to take home, and each childcare facility received three new books for their library. Book donations came from members of professional, alumni, and youth groups, and community book drops at businesses.

• *Read with ME*, a project led by an AmeriCorps Promise Fellow, received book donations and RSVP volunteers distributed book bags to schools. Every kindergarten student in Maine received one of these bags with copies of *One Morning In Maine* and *Read With Your Bunny* as well as materials for parents about the importance of reading with their children.

Building Reciprocity: The National Service Resource Center has created a library of resources that can be used by any national service group. Service groups can also post materials and submit examples of best practices to the library. Many publications can be downloaded for free.

Research Hint

By joining professional and other organizations, you can expand your access to resources. Many organizations have useful publications that keep you current on news, research, and events. These publications and events can enhance your knowledge and practice.

If You Need...

Space

Try Looking Here:

- ✧ Churches
- ✧ Civic organizations
- ✧ Corporate board rooms
- ✧ Banks and local businesses
- ✧ Colleges, universities and technical colleges
 - Adult basic education or GED preparation programs
 - Department or college of education
 - Student services
 - Tutoring or learning centers
- ✧ Neighborhood centers
- ✧ Other tutoring programs in the community
- ✧ Parks and recreation office
- ✧ Public library
- ✧ Professional organizations
- ✧ Schools and after-school programs
- ✧ Summer camps
- ✧ Retreat centers
- ✧ Maine Association of Nonprofits resource list

What Others Have Done

- For an AmeriCorps training event, the Maine Commission for Community Service rented a church hall and had a local caterer provide the food.
 - A Martin Luther King Day grant review team used a community room in a Fleet Bank.
 - An AmeriCorps program was located in a building owned by a local entrepreneur while he looked for funds to renovate the building.
- Building Reciprocity:** An AmeriCorps orientation was held at a summer camp where a VISTA had previously developed a youth community service project.
- The Maine Conservation Corps is often granted the use of space in exchange for a work project at the site.

Research Hint

Is there an after-school program in your school or in a nearby organization such as the YMCA or Boys and Girls Club? Are the public or local college libraries willing to lend rooms for your project? How about a church, local neighborhood or parks and recreation center? There's only one way to find out: Look around and ask. And when you approach a potential partner, think about what you can offer them. Be ready to give as well as to receive.

If You Need...

Volunteers

Try Looking Here:

- ✧ Churches
- ✧ Volunteer Maine ●
- ✧ Civic organizations
 - Kiwanis
 - Lions Club
 - Rotary Club
 - Elks Club
 - Jaycees
 - Optimists
 - Junior League
- ✧ Colleges, universities and technical colleges ●
- ✧ Local corporations and small business associations
- ✧ Local United Way
- ✧ Volunteers of America
- ✧ Blaine House Conference on Volunteerism
- ✧ Neighborhood associations
- ✧ Public radio and television stations
- ✧ Schools
- ✧ Senior Centers
- ✧ Retirement communities
- ✧ Institute for Civic Leadership
- ✧ State and local Chamber of Commerce
- ✧ Local newspapers

What Others Have Done

- Volunteer Maine is a partnership led by the Maine Commission for Community Service, the Maine Philanthropy Center, and the Maine Association of Nonprofits. Its goal is to link citizens with volunteer opportunities. The first product of the partnership is www.volunteermaine.org where citizens can find volunteer opportunities.
- Kennebec Valley Technical College student volunteers put together “KidPacks” for children going into foster care, using additional student volunteers from the campus community. The packs were then distributed to children in need through the Department of Human Services.

Building Reciprocity: Volunteers collaborated to build a permanent handicap accessible washing facility at Wolfe’s Neck Farm. AmeriCorps members and area youth worked together under the supervision of a professional builder who donated his time to supervise the teams.

Research Hint

Most United Way affiliates can help with volunteer recruitment. Their offices may send out press releases advertising your project’s need for volunteers. Civic organizations offer luncheon and breakfast opportunities to speak about volunteer needs. Local papers may feature a regular volunteer opportunities section. Large corporations often have employee volunteer coordinators that funnel contacts. You may also be able to advertise your volunteer opportunity in a company or organization’s employee newsletter.

If You Need...

Training for Volunteers

Try Looking Here:

- ❖ **Maine Society for Training and Development**
- ❖ **Technical college or university faculty**
 - Continuing education department of local college
- ❖ **Local expert consultants**
- ❖ **Local government agencies**
- ❖ **National service resources**
 - Maine Commission for Community Service (MCCS)
 - National training and technical assistance providers
- ❖ **Retired teachers**
- ❖ **School personnel**
- ❖ **Blaine House Conference on Volunteerism**
- ❖ **Maine Women's Fund**
- ❖ **Habitat for Humanity**
- ❖ **Local United Way**
- ❖ **Local hospital**
- ❖ **Local mental health agency**

What Others Have Done

- The University of Maine Cooperative Extension office provided leadership materials for use by AmeriCorps members.
 - The National Guard provided training for the Coastal Enterprises Inc. (CEI) AmeriCorps in team building and an outdoor ropes course.
- Building Reciprocity:** The CEI Program in Bangor is collaborating in housing rehabilitation for people with disabilities. The people with disabilities provided training about disabilities and the AmeriCorps volunteers provided information on building maintenance.
- A local Red Cross chapter provided volunteer training for AmeriCorps members, and the Red Cross AmeriCorps members trained other volunteers in disaster response skills.

Research Hint

Find out from the MCCS office about other projects in your area. Collaborating on training events conserves costs, and working with other streams of service can be an enlightening experience. Keep and share your contact information on good trainers.

If You Need...

Community Involvement

Try Looking Here:

- ✧ Civic organizations and benevolent associations
- ✧ Childcare or parenting organizations
- ✧ Churches
- ✧ Community centers
- ✧ Boys and Girls Club/United Way/YMCA and YWCA
- ✧ Parks and recreation programs
- ✧ Faith-based programs
- ✧ Immigrant outreach programs
- ✧ Government officials and offices
- ✧ Hospitals
- ✧ Local businesses
- ✧ Neighborhood associations
- ✧ Neighborhood newsletters or newspapers
- ✧ Organized community events
- ✧ Parent-student associations
- ✧ Parent-teacher associations
- ✧ Public library
- ✧ School districts and school boards
- ✧ Social service agencies
- ✧ Boys Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4-H Clubs

What Others Have Done

•AmeriCorps*ACT leaders organized a Violent Toy Swap at the Children's Discovery Museum in Augusta. Children turned in their violent toys and reconstructed them into a peace sculpture to encourage youth to take a stand against violence.

Building Reciprocity: The TeachME AmeriCorps program created an after-school program for immigrant families in a public housing project. They later recruited youth for an environmental summer camp.

•Maine Conservation Corps members worked on Mackworth Island Trails through a partnership with the Bureau of Parks and Lands. In exchange for their work they received contributions of cash, tools and lodging.

Research Hint

Get to know community members who have a stake in the success of your program. Connecting with the broader community will expand your network of peers and resources. It's also a good way to gain exposure and support. Explore ways you can become a part of the community at large. Look for opportunities to volunteer at blood drives, walk-a-thons, neighborhood clean-ups, and other events that will help you build relationships and reciprocity.

If You Need...

Special Projects Assistance and Community Collaboration

Try Looking Here:

- ✧ Civic organizations
- ✧ Local businesses
- ✧ Maine Humanities Council
- ✧ State and local arts and humanities councils
- ✧ Make a Difference Day
- ✧ Martin Luther King Day ●
- ✧ National Youth Service Day
- ✧ United Way Days of Caring
- ✧ National Volunteer Week
- ✧ Maine Historical Society
- ✧ Public library
- ✧ Schools
- ✧ Service-learning educators and programs
- ✧ Maine Campus Compact
- ✧ KIDS Consortium

What Others Have Done

●The Maine Service Corps sponsored the “*Break the Barriers Concert*” on Martin Luther King Day as a way to educate people about the issues of non-violence and social justice. The Mid-Coast AmeriCorps crew joined with the Wiscasset Community Center and the Civil Rights team from Wiscasset High School to put together this event. Dr. King’s “I Have a Dream” and “Faith in America” speeches were part of the concert.

●The Points of Light Foundation has created a Seasons of Service Calendar, listing volunteer opportunities throughout the year. Check it out on the web at http://www.pointsoflight.org/programs/progr_ams_seasons.html.

Building Reciprocity: DownEast Community Health Corps conducted a Martin Luther King Day project where they worked with the Red Cross to run a blood drive. The AmeriCorps members shared information about the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Research Hint

Become aware of local organizations that might serve as partners or advisors on events. Think about those who have a vested interest in the project (e.g. local businesses often donate paint for murals in high graffiti areas. Local artists donate time to gain exposure.) Consult the community pages of your newspaper with an eye toward how your program might be able to participate in already planned events. Many towns also have web sites with a listing of upcoming events.

If You Need...

Technical Assistance

Try Looking Here:

- ❖ **Maine Society for Training and Development (MSTD)**
- ❖ **College or university staff and programs, technical college or continuing education department**
- ❖ **Career Centers**
- ❖ **Local United Way**
- ❖ **Volunteer centers**
- ❖ **Local school districts and staff**
- ❖ **Local nonprofit organizations**
- ❖ **National service resources**
 - **Maine Commission for Community Service**
 - **National training and technical assistance providers**
- ❖ **Peers in national service**
- ❖ **State education agency staff and programs**
- ❖ **Maine Association of Nonprofits**
- ❖ **Chamber of Commerce**
- ❖ **Economic Development Councils**
- ❖ **Maine Centers for Women, Work and Community**

What Others Have Done

- The Center for Community Inclusion at the University of Maine conducted a workshop on Adolescent Development for AmeriCorps members at spring training.

- Maine AmeriCorps members attend the annual Blaine House Conference on Volunteerism where they have the opportunity to participate in workshops on volunteer management.

- The Maine Conservation Corps worked with The Friends of Casco Bay in South Portland. They provided a daylong workshop on quality control and quality assurance in regards to water quality monitoring, pointing out to do's and don't of monitoring to maintain the integrity of the water samples.

Building Reciprocity: In exchange for work service at the Burnt Island Lighthouse, CEI AmeriCorps members received docent training about the lighthouse's history and aspects of the 1950s lifestyle on the island.

Research Hint

Contact your State Commission to get a list of the national training and technical assistance providers. Or download them from the internet at <http://www.etr.org/nsrc>. Ask state staff for their recommendations of local or regional trainers. Explore peer consultations with other national service program staff and local schools, and seek out their recommendations of local consultants.

If You Need...

Funding

Try Looking Here:

- ❖ **Service Clubs: Rotary, Elks, Kiwanis, etc.**
- ❖ **Local businesses and local branches of national corporations**
- ❖ **Local or national nonprofit or regional organizations**
- ❖ **Local, state or regional foundations**
- ❖ **National, state and local arts and humanities associations**
- ❖ **Other federal funding agencies**
- ❖ **Public libraries**
- ❖ **Maine Philanthropy Center**
- ❖ **Maine Community Foundation**
- ❖ **Small Business Administration Center**
- ❖ **SCORE—Service Corps of Retired Executives**
- ❖ **United Way**
- ❖ **MaineShare**
- ❖ **Maine Initiatives**

What Others Have Done

- The AmeriCorps Celebration of Service event solicited food donations from local supermarkets and beverage suppliers.
- The Maine Conservation Corps, while working to create a local clothing shelter, received an inkind donation of a dehumidifier from a local resident.
- The Maine Arts Commission helped identify groups that were willing to provide entertainment for a modest fee at an AmeriCorps celebration.

Research Hint

Listserve, newsletters, public libraries and the internet are good resources for grant announcements and other funding opportunities. Always research an organization to find out their criteria for awarding grants and any limitations on awards. Understanding how your program's work aligns with the funding organizations mission will also help you make a strong, intelligent proposal.

If You Need...

Web Resources

Using the Internet effectively can provide a valuable resource for your community service project. Below is a listing of useful links to many of the resources listed in this booklet.

✧ National Service

AmeriCorps
www.americorps.org

Corporation for National and Community Service
www.nationalservice.org, www.cns.gov

Learn & Serve
<http://www.state.me.us/education/lisa/homepage.htm>

Senior Corps
www.seniorcorps.org

Maine Commission for Community Service
<http://www.MaineServiceCommission.gov>

✧ Partner Organizations

Maine Campus Compact
<http://www.bates.edu/mcc>

KIDS Consortium
<http://www.kidsconsortium.org>

National Service Resource Center
<http://www.etr.org/nsrc/>

✧ Statewide Community Organizations

Maine Association of Nonprofits
<http://www.nonprofitmaine.org/>

Maine Centers for Women, Work and Community
<http://www.uma.maine.edu/organizations/mainecentersforwomenworkandcommunity/>

Maine Historical Society
<http://www.mainehistory.org>

Maine Humanities Council
<http://www.mainehumanities.org>

Maine Society for Training and Development
<http://www.maineastd.org/>

Maine State Chamber of Commerce
<http://www.mainechamber.org/>

Maine State Department of Education
<http://www.state.me.us/education/>

Maine Town Websites
<http://www.maine.gov/portal/living/cities/index.html>

✧ National Organizations

Habitat for Humanity
<http://www.habitat.org>

National Council of Nonprofit Associations
<http://www.ncna.org/>

Nonprofit Risk Management Center
<http://www.nonprofitrisk.org>

United Way of America
www.unitedway.org

✧ Funding Organizations

Maine Community Foundation
www.mainecef.org

Maine Initiatives
www.maineinitiatives.org

Maine Philanthropy Center
www.megrants.org

Maine Share
www.maineshare.org

Maine Women's Fund
<http://www.maine womensfund.org>

✧ Volunteer Organizations

Volunteer Maine Partnership
<http://www.volunteermaine.org>

National Volunteer Week
<http://www.pointsoflight.org>

SERVENet
<http://www.servenet.org>

Youth Service America
<http://www.ysa.org/>