

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.
- 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.

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.



CITIES OF SERVICE

DECLARATION OF SERVICE

WHEREAS Cities of Service brings together and supports mayors and city leaders to harness and focus the energies of our citizens to solve pressing public problems and build stronger communities;

WHEREAS cities, home to many of the world's most persistent challenges, are well-positioned to bring leadership, energy and innovation to tackle pressing public problems;

WHEREAS local government works better when it is open to the ideas and talents of citizens and engages them to help identify and solve public problems;

WHEREAS citizen contributions can take many forms, from defining and prioritizing problems to generating ideas and volunteering their time, creativity, and expertise;

WHEREAS citizens have deep expertise in their own lives and in what's best for their families and communities — and this expertise can be leveraged to deliver better services and solve public problems;

NOW, THEREFORE, we resolve to advance a coalition of mayors and city leaders from cities large and small to harness and focus the energies of our citizens. Cities of Service coalition members work together to increase authentic and robust opportunities for citizens to take action in our cities by:

- Developing comprehensive strategies focused on engaging citizens and established community partners to the areas of greatest local need to help create safer, healthier, thriving cities;
- Working with mayors and city leaders in other cities to spread best practices that accelerate citizen engagement, produce real and measurable results, and improve quality of life; and
- Calling on other mayors and city leaders to join this global movement to build stronger cities by changing the way local government and citizens work together.

Citizens are residents who actively participate in their community and who see themselves as integral partners in tackling emerging challenges and creating better places to live, work, and play.

MAYOR'S SIGNATURE

MAYOR'S NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

TODAY'S DATE

MAYOR'S OFFICE ADDRESS

CITY, STATE, ZIP

MAYOR'S EMAIL ADDRESS

MAYOR'S TELEPHONE

STAFF CONTACT NAME

STAFF CONTACT TITLE

STAFF CONTACT EMAIL ADDRESS

STAFF CONTACT TELEPHONE



TO JOIN CITIES OF SERVICE

Please read and sign the Declaration of Service. Return the completed form to Cities of Service by email or fax: info@citiesofservice.org / (888) 335-3886

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.

