

LOVE VC PARTICIPATION GUIDE

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LOVING VENTURA COUNTY: WE'RE BETTER TOGETHER!

What happens when we come together to love Ventura County?

ACTION's Love VC is an annual event empowering businesses, churches, and agencies to volunteer together across Ventura County. ACTION finds needs through the community and matches volunteers to local projects. Each year, 2,000 volunteers served with us at mobile home parks, schools, homeless shelters and foster homes in their neighborhoods.

Our Mission

We serve the most vulnerable in our communities by **partnering** organizations, **empowering** neighbors, and **raising** awareness.

Our Vision

Communities changed by relationships that restore.

Love VC Purpose

Our purpose is to provide opportunities for people to participate in community service in an effective and substantial way. As we serve together, our actions will communicate love and truth to the people we serve, to those who serve with us, and to the community at large.

Characteristics of Love VC Projects

- *Meet critical needs in the community*
- *Connect people of all ages and stages*
- *Require varying levels of skill sets- from novices, to pros, all can serve*

ACTION: YOUR PARTNER IN SERVING

ACTION will walk alongside you in preparation for Love VC.

We offer resources and training in how to:

1. Develop service projects
2. Build a partnership between your group and the agency or school you wish to help out
3. Equip and train team leaders and volunteers
4. Connect with the neighbors you care for

Materials

ACTION will provide the following materials to you:

1. ACTION Liability Form
2. Mobile Home Parks Toolkit
3. Love VC Flyer
4. Business Sponsorship Form and Letter
5. T Shirts
6. Yard Signs

T-Shirts

Love VC shirts are available for purchase. While this is not mandatory, we encourage everyone to wear one to show our unity in our communities. Others in the community have said that they saw these logo shirts on people in numerous places all over the city and they wondered what was going on.

Yard Signs

ACTION has yard signs to be used at project sites that are visible to our community. We encourage the use of these so that the neighbors, people passing by, and others can be curious and ask what we are doing.

Kick-Off Event

Gather your team for a kickoff event on the morning of Love VC. While we don't intend for kick-offs to be a drawn out meeting, it is nice to rally your team in a neutral location before you head out to your site of service. It is also helpful to collect last minute liability forms before you begin the project. You can host an individual kick off at your project site, or connect with another church or business in the area.

KEY VOLUNTEER ROLES: LIAISON

*As the Liaison for your group you will hold the vision for Love VC.
To ensure that Love VC functions smoothly and to ensure that your group has a positive experience, there are several expectations that participating groups will need to anticipate, and your role is to champion these things with your volunteers.*

Work closely with ACTION

As the Liaison, you will have a close relationship with ACTION. We will help you with the registration process, keep you updated on new information, remind you of deadlines, and answer any questions that aren't answered in this packet or on the website.

Plan service projects

We encourage your group to join a service project within your sphere of influence to ensure that your projected number of Love VC participants will have enough opportunities to serve. For example, if you expect 50 people to participate in Love VC, you'll need enough spots to accommodate all 50 people. Love VC volunteers can participate in any service project on the day. ACTION will help you facilitate projects in your area if more are needed.

Confirm Project Details to ACTION

You are responsible for communicating your project information to the volunteers. ACTION will post the project(s) on our website, where volunteers can sign up. Be prepared to provide help your group with the following information:

- Project address (and city)
- Description of project
- Needed items that the volunteers will need to know (age restrictions, tools to bring)
- Number of these spots that are available (if appropriate)
- Organization contact information
- Project leader contact information

Promote Love VC

Promote Love VC in a way that is appropriate for your group to receive maximum participation. A promotional video and Flyer is available for your use, accessible through the ACTION website: www.ACTIONvc.org/resources

Organize the sign-up process

Beginning several weeks prior to Love VC, people will be able to sign up to serve at www.ACTIONvc.org/love-VC. Volunteers can sign up for any project in any city online, not just the projects that their group is sponsoring.

Recruit Project Leader to help you

As the Liaison for your group, you can also volunteer as a Project Leader to plan, lead and implement the respective project on Love VC. Or, you can recruit and empower a volunteer from your group. Either way, each site has at least one project leader. Leaders should be good at communication, enjoy working with people, and be detail oriented. Please see *Project Leader* section for more information.

Plan and implement follow-up events

Because Love VC is a half- day event, some of the projects may not be completed in the set time frame. Consider holding a follow-up day of service at your project site as a way to continue serving & developing a relationship with the organization/individual. This is a great way to facilitate greater community involvement!

KEY VOLUNTEER ROLES: PROJECT LEADER

The Project Team Leader will be responsible for all detailed aspects of the project including prior site visit, implementation, and the follow-up service project if there is to be one.

Establish your project

Let ACTION know what type of project or site you would like to lead on Love VC. Once you have an idea of where you want to serve, ACTION can help you make the initial contact.

Get all of the detailed information

Before the project is announced, it is essential that you get valid, up-to-date information for your project (main phone numbers, addresses, etc.). Also, be sure the client/agency knows who you are and that have a way to contact you before Love VC.

Plan the aspects of the service project

This will include:

- Confirming project details.
- Gathering needed supplies.
- Following up with volunteers who signed up for the project.
- Noting and communicating project attire (ex: closed toe shoes, painting clothes, sunscreen, etc.)
- Tracking expenses related to the service project. Many agencies will pay for needed items like paint if you supply the volunteers. Or, see if volunteers can bring something with them to contribute (ex: painting a fence, have everyone participating bring a brush or roller with them) Please let them know well in advance.

Volunteer Communication*

Contact volunteers the week(s) before Love VC.

- Where/when to show up for the kickoff
- What to wear
- What to bring
- To fill out and bring their liability forms (if they haven't signed up online)

**Automatic email reminders will be sent out to all volunteers!*

Pick Up a Yard Sign from ACTION

Let us know if a yard sign is appropriate for your project(s). For instance, if your project is visible from the street, a yard sign is a great way to spark conversation. We want people to ask us what we are doing!

Kickoff

We strongly encourage all Project Leaders and volunteers to meet at their city's kickoff before heading to the project site. This is where volunteers turn in liability waivers, connect with their group leader and team and get ready to serve together!

Prepare and Guide Volunteers

Contact the project site and make sure your serving location is ready for your participants before they arrive. **Be sure all participants have signed an ACTION liability release form before work begins.** Give an overview and directions of what you will be doing. Let them know where the restrooms, first aid kits and fire exits are located.

Let people know what to do if they have a question or are finished with their area. Remind them of specific guidelines (see *Volunteer Guide*) of volunteering. More communication is always good!

Tell the story

Take pictures of your team as they serve, and gather some thoughts about the project experience. Send your story in words and pictures to ACTION@ACTIONvc.org. We use these stories to encourage more groups across Ventura County to serve together!

Optional: Consider planning a follow-up project

If your service project cannot be completed in the half day time frame of Love VC, we encourage you to plan a follow up day of service. Or, if the Love VC project is going well, discuss returning to serve and develop a relationship with the organization/individual.

PROJECT PLANNING: STEP-BY-STEP

A timeline for the Project Team Leader(s):

Two -Three Months Ahead: Find Your Project

1. Confirm your project with ACTION. Projects are usually:
 - Helping seniors in mobile home parks (washing windows, cleaning gutters)
 - Beautification projects at agencies or schools
 - Trail clearing for the Parks and Recreation Department or the YMCA
 - Cookie Drive for local fire and police stations
 - Putting together care bags for foster children
 - Mural Paintings at local schools
2. Plan your project complete with time, location, supplies, etc.
3. Get to know your contact at the agency and familiarize yourself with the project site. Check out the organization's website, stop by their facility, and get to know who you are serving. This is a great way to establish a relationship with the community.

One - Two Months Out: Finalize and Post Your Project

1. Contact the agency/individual/community partner you are serving to confirm the:
 - Site Address
 - Site Contact Phone Number
 - Project Date and Time
 - Project Directions
 - Project Details (attire, rules, etc.)
 - Project Needs & Supplies
2. Compile your list of supplies for volunteers to bring.
3. Compile your list of supplies for you to purchase.
4. Keep ACTION updated with any changes to the project.
5. Recruit volunteers and co-leaders if you need them.

One Month Out: Communicate

1. Let ACTION know of any difficulties or challenges with your project.
2. Contact all registered volunteers for your project.
 - Thank them for signing up!
 - Remind them: what to bring, what to anticipate, and where to meet on Love VC.
 - Tell them about rules & needs of your project.
 - Ask them to fill out and submit a liability form.

Post: Thank You & Follow Up

1. Thank all the volunteers. (phone call, email, letter, church service, etc.) Let them know how important they were to the project and the results from their efforts.
2. Thank your community partner organization & contact.
3. Plan and communicate about any follow up events.

HOW TO PROMOTE LOVE VC

The promotion of Love VC is critical to engage a good group of people.

Here are some ideas that we've found to be helpful in years past:

Tell people to "Save the Date"

In your bulletin, newsletter, email updates, and website, encourage your group to set aside the date for Love VC.

Facilitate the sign-up process

Plan to advertise Love VC a month before, if not sooner. We encourage you to point volunteers toward the website www.ACTIONvc.org to sign up. If you are a church, have laptops and leaders assist in Sunday morning volunteer signups.

Use Love VC Flyer

The Love VC Flyer is available for you to download and utilize for your bulletin, newsletter, email updates, website, and digital announcement slides. We also have a digital flyer on our website.

Use the promotional video

A promotional video is available for your use at services, small groups, website and Facebook pages, and beyond.

Plan a Sunday sermon or sermon series on serving & get up front time

Prior to Love VC, your church may want to plan a specific morning or an entire series to rally people around the value of serving the local community. If you can, have testimonies from people in your church or in the community that were impacted by prior Love VC events. Stories are powerful. If you would like a representative from ACTION to come and speak, call the ACTION office and let us know when!

Have an ACTION Patio Table/Information Booth

Have a centralized place for people to ask questions, sign up, and get involved on your church patio/lobby after weekend services. If you have access to a few computers to allow online registration right there, go for it!



DOS AND DON'TS OF VOLUNTEERING

Helpful guidelines for volunteering in your community with ACTION:

- DO give out ACTION's or your organization's phone number
- Do NOT give out your personal phone number
- DO go in pairs or more
- Do NOT go into someone's home alone
- DO take photos after getting a release form signed
- DO forward photos on to ACTION!
- Do NOT take photos without permission
- DO pray for them and with them if they give you permission
- Do NOT pray with the person without asking permission
- DO give them reasonable expectations and be sure to follow-through with what you say
- Do NOT make promises that you may not be able to keep
- DO forward on donations received to ACTION, or your team leader for materials
- Do NOT take any "monetary tips" from a client for volunteering!

Please read our Volunteer Guide for more tips on serving at ACTIONvc.org/resources



DO Have Fun... DON'T eat paint 😊

YOU HAVE QUESTIONS? WE HAVE ANSWERS!

We've provided answers to some of the Frequently Asked Questions for Love VC.

Why just a one-day event?

The vision of ACTION is to see volunteers from churches, businesses, and agencies serving together to impact our communities with hope. Love VCs reflect this. It is a great opportunity for us to care for our communities on a large scale by serving together. However, Love VC does live on beyond the one-day event. We facilitate Love Local Days that empower families, and small groups to get out and meet needs on their schedule throughout the year. Visit our webpage for more info!

Our group has never done anything like this before. Where do I start?

No problem at all – don't be intimidated. We will be here to help you every step of the way. Contact ACTION, and we will walk you through the process and provide you with resources to get started.

Is training volunteers necessary?

Many of you have done this for years and are very comfortable in your roles. However, we ask all volunteers to read our Volunteer Training Manual for our updated "best practices" for volunteering in any situation.

What about kids? Can we bring them along?

Kids make a great addition to serving, provided the projects match their maturity and skills. If you're patient and have a little creativity, you can involve your child in any of the "Family Friendly" projects. You'll know best what project will be a good fit for your family. As a team, you may decide to designate someone to stay with very young children, so everyone else can be free to serve.

Why are participating groups encouraged to plan a follow-up service project at each location?

In years past, we have found that planning a follow-up project can help solidify a relationship between your group and the organization you are serving. It also lets the participants see that the value is in regular service – not just a once a year event.

When do participants get t-shirts?

Order forms are available on the ACTION website for you to order shirts. If your group has not pre-ordered you may be able to purchase a shirt at one of the kick-off events or contact the ACTION office 805-987-0300.

Can people from my group sign up for any service project?

Yes! Anyone can sign up for any service project. It is fun to meet people from different groups and work alongside them for the common goal of serving our community.

What do we say when interacting with those we serve?

It can be startling for someone to do a deed of kindness with no apparent strings attached. It's only natural for people to ask, "Why are you doing this?" Explain to them why you care about them. Try not to "bible thump" any one, but be open about your faith if they are receptive to it.

What if things go wrong during our service project?

A few things may go haywire when many people are involved. It's best to have a flexible, teachable attitude when you serve. And don't forget to practice smiling as you do it! **If there is a medical emergency on Love VC, contact 9-1-1 before you contact ACTION or any other party!** THEN submit the ACTION Incident Report Form, found at ACTIONvc.org/resources after all injured/affected parties are taken care of. If there is a less urgent situation, please contact ACTION or a church representative and someone will assist you.