

## Identifying volunteer activities in your area

Your next step is to find good volunteer activities in your area.

There are a wide variety of ways to go about this.

First, look for non-profit organizations in your area that might be in need of volunteers. If you are a member of a Church, ask if they are in need of volunteers for any activities.

Some ideas that can be found simply through a Google search are:

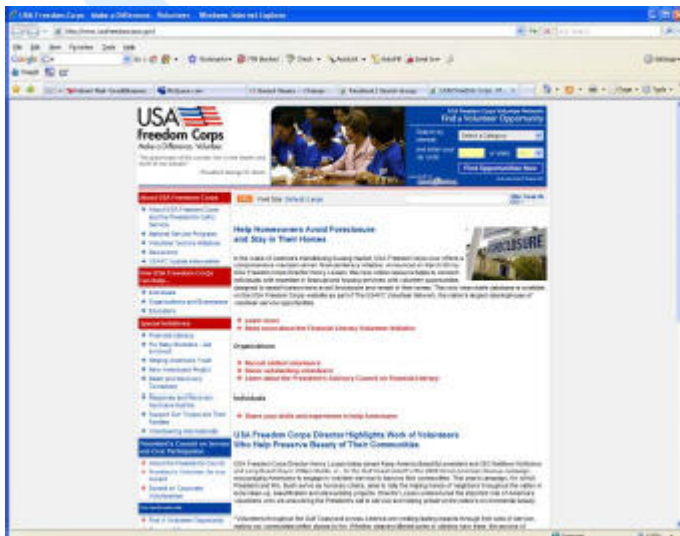
Local food bank - Google food bank and your city.

Local soup kitchens – many are sponsored by Churches. Try contacting your local Catholic church as Catholic charities often have wide-reaching volunteer programs that are nondenominational.

Habitat for Humanity – volunteering on-site building a home, or in their warehouse constructing wall structures to be used in homes.

American Red Cross – this organization is committed to helping those in need.

A terrific resource that can be used to locate volunteer activities in your area is <http://www.usafreedomcorps.gov/>. This website possesses a searchable database set-up by zip code, state and category of interest. It is a wonderful resource for tracking down great organizations and groups that are in need of volunteers.



[WWW.USAFREEDOMCORPS.GOV](http://WWW.USAFREEDOMCORPS.GOV)

In addition to searching out other organizations that are in need of your CORPS' assistance, you can also organize your own event to improve your community.

We have set-up a calendar of monthly holidays and events that often times can be used to give you ideas for particular activities during particular months of the year. While we are sure there are other observances that might not be on this list, this is just to give you an idea.

JANUARY – New Years Day, Martin Luther King’s Birthday

FEBRUARY – Black History Month, President’s Day

MAY – Memorial Day

JULY – Independence Day

SEPTEMBER – Labor Day

OCTOBER – Breast Cancer Awareness Month

NOVEMBER – Veterans Day, Thanksgiving

DECEMBER – Christmas Day

For example, in May you could organize a Military Care Package drive, where you ask the community to donate goods to put together care packages to our brave men and women serving our country. In addition, hand-written letters of support and thanks can be included.

A Pennsylvania-based volunteer group, Obama Works, took it upon themselves to create *Obama Sweeps*. These events take place all over Philadelphia and recruit an army of volunteers to get out and clean-up the streets of their neighborhoods. An event like this is interchangeable with almost any city you live in. Go to <http://www.whyobamaworks.com> and take a look at the resources they provide to help you set-up your own local clean sweep.



[WWW.WHYOBAMAWORKS.COM](http://WWW.WHYOBAMAWORKS.COM)

An easy way to break down where your efforts might be needed is just to think about the area that you live in. We have all seen that local park that is starting to show signs of wear and tear and neglect. We have all seen that street corner covered in trash or graffiti in need of being cleaned up – there is no limit to what your group can do if you just think about what is needed

where you live. It is, after all, about making change from the bottom-up, start small and it can create a snowball effect.

Change Corps is also organizing events that coordinate with the Obama/Biden Administration's policy positions on various issues. This can be used to help you come up with volunteer events as well. Think of an important policy issue, take healthcare for example. You can come up with a volunteer event based on that, like putting together care baskets for hospice patients or organizing a toy drive for a children's hospital. For the environment, you can organize a recycling drive, collecting cans and newspapers, etc. For the economy you can volunteer at your local food bank to help those people who are being hurt by the economic downturn and may need assistance from local food pantries.

Remember to stay positive and be ready to talk to people you encounter about why you are out devoting your time to help improve your community. The bottom-up theory of change is a valid one that has been proven effective by the election of Barack Obama as President. You are out proving that individuals can make a difference in your community.

