



REQUEST FOR SERVICE-LEARNING/SKILL- BASED PROJECT PROPOSALS

What is a Request for Volunteer Project Proposals? A Request for Volunteer Project Proposals is a strategy that Pittsburgh Cares is using to generate a better understanding of regional nonprofit needs and wish list projects so that we can leverage appropriate volunteer, financial, and material resources for the nonprofit sector.

What is Service-Learning? Service-learning occurs when both service and learning components are fused: structured service is integrated into organized education to provide a hands-on learning experience for the student that simultaneously benefits the community. Service-learning projects typically are on-going, skill-based projects that take place throughout a class one semester in length. Pittsburgh Cares can aid in facilitating a partnership between both our agencies and education partners in order to develop potential service-learning and skill-based projects. For example, if it helps to meet the course learning objectives, students may support an annual fundraising event benefiting your organization, design a new website, conduct a program evaluation, collect and analyze soil samples within a creek bed currently being renovated, or reorganize your organization's billing system.

Who is eligible to submit a proposal? Any registered 501c3 nonprofit organization is eligible to submit a proposal to Pittsburgh Cares. Multiple volunteer project proposals from a single nonprofit organization are welcome. Project proposals are accepted year round. Projects proposed should not be restricted to a specific date; projects needing volunteer support for a specific date should be registered through the Pittsburgh Cares' Community Connections program by contacting Jackie Donahue at jdonahue@pittsburghcares.org or 412-471-2114.

Why submit a proposal? When Pittsburgh Cares is aware of regional nonprofit needs and wish list skill-based projects, we can increase our efficiency in addressing your organizational needs when mobilizing volunteer, financial and material resources. Over the past 4 years, Pittsburgh Cares has increased the number of volunteer projects it has coordinated by over 400% advancing from 318 projects in 2004 to 1,334 projects in 2008. Last year, Pittsburgh Cares filled 10,931 volunteer spots throughout the region supporting close to 250 nonprofit organizations. The majority of Pittsburgh Cares funding is directed to volunteer project management, project supplies, and volunteer logistics such as food service and transportation.

What should be included in the proposal?

- A summary of the volunteer project (500 words or less)
- Contact information for nonprofit staff member responsible for the proposed project
- An overview of the need that the volunteer project addresses
- The desired timeline for the project to be completed (i.e. between April and June, any weekday, weekends only)
- An overview of volunteer engagement at the nonprofit
- A full description of the volunteer project
 - Number of volunteers needed
 - Number of volunteer hours
 - Specific skills needed to complete the project
 - Breakdown of volunteer tasks and estimated number of volunteers per task
 - Project supplies needed by task and estimated costs
 - Special instructions for volunteers (i.e. parking limitations, dress code)
- Project limitations (i.e. clients cannot be photographed)
- An overview of how project impact will be measured and evaluated

What happens after a proposal is submitted? Submitted proposals are reviewed by Pittsburgh Cares to identify potential sources of volunteers and financial / material donations. Site visits are conducted when necessary. All projects will be posted on the Pittsburgh Cares Online Skill Bank, a resource used to promote potential service opportunities with our partners in higher education. When a potential match of volunteers and donations has been identified, Pittsburgh Cares will contact the nonprofit and develop a final project implementation plan. Throughout the implementation plan, Pittsburgh Cares staff will assist with the project management, communications, and evaluation.

What should I do if I have additional questions? Please contact Alexa New at anew@pittsburghcares.org or 412-471-2114.