

"LIFE'S MOST PERSISTENT  
AND URGENT QUESTION IS:

**WHAT  
ARE YOU  
DOING FOR  
OTHERS?"**

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR



**Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service | January 18, 2016**  
**Virginia National Service Toolkit**

Virginia Office on Volunteerism & Community Service  
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[vaservice.org](http://vaservice.org)





# How will you serve?

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. federal holiday is a perfect opportunity for Americans to honor Dr. King's legacy through service. The MLK Day of Service empowers individuals, strengthens communities, bridges barriers, creates solutions to social problems, and moves us closer to Dr. King's vision of a beloved community.

After a long struggle, legislation was signed in 1983 creating a federal holiday marking the birthday of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In 1994, Congress designated the Martin Luther King Jr. Federal Holiday as a national day of service and charged the Corporation for National and Community Service with leading this effort. Taking place each year on the third Monday in January, the MLK Day of Service is the only federal holiday observed as a national day of service – a "day on, not a day off." The MLK Day of Service is a part of United We Serve, the President's national call to service initiative. It calls for Americans from all walks of life to work together to provide solutions to our most pressing national problems. The MLK Day of Service empowers individuals, strengthens communities, bridges barriers, creates solutions to social problems, and moves us closer to Dr. King's vision of a "Beloved Community."

## **This year's key message is: Engaging Americans in Creating Economic Opportunity.**

Dr. King worked hard to fight for the rights and freedoms for Americans to have a better life. This MLK Day, as you are thinking of service projects for your program, you may want to consider projects which provide training, services, or messaging for things like financial literacy, tax assistance, employment opportunities, civic engagement, and more.


Other major initiatives of the Corporation for National and Community Service include working to help families and individuals sign up for the **Affordable Care Act**. Americans without healthcare coverage is at an all-time low, however, this means that those still without coverage are even harder to reach and assist. Your organization might want to consider having a sign-up event or provide information on the Affordable Care Act at another event.

Finally, the White House has recently launched a special initiative to reach out to **Rural Communities** -- many of which are experiencing joblessness and poverty. If your program serves a rural community, you may consider teaming up with other organizations and programs to plan a large-scale project for greatest impact.

This toolkit will provide your program with everything it needs to get started planning for this year's MLK Day of Service. Once you begin planning your event, don't forget to register your project on <http://www.nationalservice.gov/mlkday> by December 15, 2015 (instructions on Page 3)! If you have any questions or need additional assistance, contact Gail Doyle at [patricia.doyle@dss.virginia.gov](mailto:patricia.doyle@dss.virginia.gov).



# MLK Day Planning Calendar

- 
- Oct-Nov Begin planning your MLK Day of Service activities.
- Oct-Dec Identify and contact potential partners
- Dec 15 Register your project on <http://www.nationalservice.gov/mlkday> on both CNCS & AllforGood (Instructions p.3)
- Dec-Jan 17 Invite government officials and leaders to your event
- Dec-Jan 18 Promote your event on your website and on social media
- Jan 15-17 Send out media advisory
- Jan 18 It's MLK Day, HOST YOUR EVENT! Remember to share stories on social media & use hash tag #MLKDay
- Jan 19 Highlight your success on social media and send press release on results. (Amplify your results by sending to [mlk@cns.gov](mailto:mlk@cns.gov).)
- Jan 19-22 Report the results of your service project on OnCorps MLK Reporting Tool
- Jan 19-22 Remember to thank your supporters, partners & volunteers!**

## MLK Day Historical Timeline

**April 8, 1968**

Legislation introduced for federal holiday commemorating Dr. King.

**1983**

Congress passes & Pres Reagan signs legislation creating MLK Day as a national holiday

**Jan 20, 1986**

First national celebration of the MLK holiday takes place.

**1994**

Coretta Scott King goes before Congress, quotes 1968 sermon "The Drum Major Instinct," & requests that MLK Day be official national day of service. Congress approves.

# Getting Started

When you're planning your event, be sure to consider how you are connecting to: 1) Dr. King's legacy; 2) improving economic opportunity for all Americans; and 3) promoting year-round service opportunities. For the 2016 MLK Day of Service, CNCS encourages organizations to carry out projects which advance economic opportunities, support rural communities, encourage enrollment in the Affordable Care Act, support veterans and military families, promote education, and help communities prepare for or recover from disasters.

## **Economic Advancement/**

### **Financial Literacy**

- Host a tax preparation clinic.
- Organize a free financial literacy/savings workshop.
- Host a kids and money workshop event.

### **Poverty**

- Organize a canned food drive for your local shelter or food bank.
- Organize a drive for blankets, gloves, etc. the homeless in your community.
- Host an Affordable Care Act Sign-Up Event
- Organize a toy drive to provide less fortunate children in the community with toys and games.

### **Education**

- Organize a school supply or book drive.
- Host a story time event reading from books about Dr. King and his legacy.
- Organize a mural project at a school, library or community center

## **Military/Veterans**

- Assemble care packages for military members overseas.
- Identify military families in need of yard sprucing, home repairs, etc. and organize a day of work at their home.

## **Disaster Preparedness**

- Conduct a house-to-house smoke alarm check.
- Organize a drive for preparedness supplies to donate to local churches, community centers, etc.
- Offer CPR & Preparedness Basics training.

## **More resources**

- [CNCS MLK Focus Area Toolkits](#)
- [HandsOn Self Organizing MLK Day Project Ideas](#)
- [Points of Light MLK Marketing Toolkit](#)
- [366 Community Service Ideas](#)
- [YSA Service Project Ideas](#)

## How to Register Your Project

1. As soon as you have details on your project, register it on [www.nationalservice.gov/mlkday](http://www.nationalservice.gov/mlkday) by December 15, 2015.
2. Click on Register on NationalService.gov. Fill out online form and click on Submit.
3. Go back to [www.nationalservice.gov/mlkday](http://www.nationalservice.gov/mlkday), and Click on Register on AllforGood.org. Fill out online form and click on Submit. You must register your project on BOTH sites!
4. You are ready to go!

# Partnerships

As you begin planning your service projects for MLK Day 2016, think of potential partners in your community and statewide who might be able to make your efforts even more successful.

## Potential Partners

- Other National Service programs in your community (or across Virginia) with a similar focus area.
- Nonprofits, community service organizations, or government agencies in your community with a similar focus area.
- Corporations or businesses looking for outreach projects in the community.

# Working with Government Officials

Once you have some details on your event, we encourage you to reach out to local./state/federal officials and leaders. These individuals can be valuable resources to your organization and can become an important partner in accomplishing your goals. Officials can be invited to:

- Attend your event (or send staff to attend)
- Write a Proclamation in your community.
- Make keynote remarks at your event.
- Create a video greeting if they cannot be there in person.
- Write a letter of congratulations to your volunteers and organization.
- Post information about your event on their social media channels.
- Once you've contacted your officials, reach out to Megan Blanco at [mblanco@cns.gov](mailto:mblanco@cns.gov) or 202-606-6622, and she will be happy to send a follow-up communication to help you get the support you need.



# Promoting MLK Day

## Overall Theme

“Engaging Americans in Creating Economic Opportunity”

## Key Messages

- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once said, “Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, ‘What are you doing for others?’” Against what seemed like impossible odds, Dr. King and scores of his fellow citizens of all races came together and, ultimately, helped bend the moral arc of the universe toward justice.
- In recognition of Dr. King’s incredible legacy of service to all, Congress designated the Martin Luther King Jr. Federal Holiday as a national day of service in 1994, and charged the Corporation for National and Community Service with leading this effort.
- Taking place each year on the third Monday in January, the MLK Day of Service is the only federal holiday observed as a national day of service – a “day on, not a day off.”
- The upcoming commemoration of the MLK Day of Service on Monday, January 18th is an opportunity to remember that history and re-commit ourselves as citizens by volunteering in service to one another. It is also a time to consider how much work still remains to fulfill Dr. King’s dream. Service is a powerful tool for strengthening our communities, but it is only a start.
- As we work together, we will create economic opportunities by improving education, strengthening health care services, and improving financial literacy. These are central to making our economy work for every American.
- An appropriate way to honor Dr. King is through service and volunteering in our communities. Dr. King devoted his life to advancing equality, social justice, and economic opportunity for all. He challenged us to build a more perfect union and taught us that everyone has a role to play. Five decades later, we still have work to do to realize Dr. King’s dream.



# Template Media Advisory

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

[ORGANIZATION LOGO]

January XX, 2016

**CONTACT:**

[YOUR NAME] [PHONE, EMAIL]

**MEDIA ADVISORY: [NAME OF ORGANIZATION]**

**Mobilizes Area Residents to Serve on King Holiday**

*Volunteers [DESCRIBE LOCAL PROJECT] as part of National Day of Service*

[CITY, STATE]— [HUNDREDS, THOUSANDS] of [CITY] residents will step up to serve as volunteers on the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday. Volunteers will [INSERT SHORT DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT], joining hundreds of thousands of Americans across the country in volunteer service.

[ORGANIZATION] has planned a day of service that will leverage the strength of local citizens to help tackle local problems and advance Dr. King's dream of opportunity for all. [DESCRIBE EVENTS].

The annual event honors Dr. King's legacy and is an opportunity for Americans to renew their own personal vows of citizenship through service to others and engage in conversations to advance community goals.

**WHO:** [LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS, NATIONAL SERVICE PARTICIPANTS, COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS, etc.]

**WHAT:** [NAME OF EVENT/ACTIVITY]

**WHERE:** [ADDRESS WHERE EVENT WILL TAKE PLACE]

**WHEN:** [DATE, START & END TIME FOR EVENT]

The Corporation for National and Community Service is a federal agency that leads the annual MLK Day of Service, working with the King Center in Atlanta and thousands of nonprofit groups, faith-based organizations, schools, and businesses nationwide. For further information about the MLK Day of Service and what's taking place across the country, visit [MLKDay.gov](http://MLKDay.gov).

###

[ORGANIZATION BOILERPLATE]

The MLK Day of Service is led by the Corporation for National and Community Service, a federal agency that engages more than five million Americans in service through its AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, Social Innovation Fund, and Volunteer Generation Fund programs, and leads the President's national call to service initiative, United We Serve. For more information, visit [NationalService.gov](http://NationalService.gov).

# Template Press Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

[ORGANIZATION LOGO]

January XX, 2016

**CONTACT:**

[YOUR NAME] [PHONE, EMAIL]

## **[CITY/COMMUNITY] Puts Citizenship and Service in Action**

Volunteers [DESCRIBE LOCAL PROJECT (for example: paint/muck/plant trees)]  
as part of MLK Day

[CITY, STATE] – [NAME OF ORGANIZATION] today led [NUMBER] [CITY] residents in [BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT] in volunteer service to honor Dr. Martin Luther King’s legacy. [CITY NAME] residents were joined by hundreds of thousands of volunteers across the country on this national day of service.

“Today we answer Dr. King’s call to serve and are making a difference in the lives of [COMMUNITY] residents,” said [ORGANIZER NAME], the [TITLE] of [ORGANIZATION.] “A resourceful way to meet local needs, volunteer service is a powerful tool that builds strong communities. We are putting the core American principles of citizenship and service into action.”

[PROJECT-SPECIFIC INFORMATION].

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) is a federal agency that leads the annual MLK Day of Service, working with the King Center in Atlanta and thousands of nonprofit groups, faith-based organizations, schools, and businesses nationwide. These projects include delivering meals, refurbishing schools and community centers, collecting food and clothing, signing up mentors, reading to children, promoting nonviolence, and more.

The MLK Day of Service shines a spotlight on service as a powerful force to bridge economic and social divides – today and throughout the year. Many communities will also engage in dialogue to explore ways they can address important issues. National Days of Service provide each of us with an opportunity to join neighbors and local leaders to tackle community challenges and strengthen the nation.

###

[ORGANIZATION BOILERPLATE]

The MLK Day of Service is led by the Corporation for National and Community Service, a federal agency that engages more than five million Americans in service through its AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, Social Innovation Fund, and Volunteer Generation Fund programs, and leads the President’s national call to service initiative, United We Serve. For more information, visit [NationalService.gov](http://NationalService.gov).



# Share Your MLK Day Plans & Stories on Social Media

OVCS wants to help you get the word out about your projects and share your success stories!

- Share information with OVCS on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)!
- Share with CNCS at [pressoffice@cns.gov](mailto:pressoffice@cns.gov) and [MLKday@cns.gov](mailto:MLKday@cns.gov).
- Follow [@MLKDay](#) on Twitter and MLK Day on [Facebook](#).

## Twitter (Sample Tweets)

- Did you know #MLKDay is a day of service? Learn more about how to volunteer at [mlkday.gov](http://mlkday.gov). #vaservice
- MLK Day service projects are taking place all over Virginia. Learn more at [mlkday.gov](http://mlkday.gov). #vaservice
- MLK said: "Everyone can be great because everyone can serve." Where will you serve this #MLKDay?
- Check out these interviews about MLK Day & the civil rights movement. #MLKDay luminaries. <http://go.usa.gov/zCYB>
- A few great #MLKDay resources for teachers. [scholastic.com/mlkday](http://scholastic.com/mlkday) #vaservice
- Make a commitment to serve on [mlkday.gov](http://mlkday.gov). #MLKDay #vaservice
- Watch the [@MLKDay](#) Twitter feed for more tweets to share about the MLK Day Holiday.

## Facebook (Sample Posts)

- Dr. King once said, "Everyone can be great because everyone can serve." Where will you serve on #MLKDay?
- How has Martin Luther King Jr. inspired you to serve on [TAG: MLKDAY] and beyond? Share your story!
- Need a place to #volunteer this #MLKDay? Find a project in your area: <http://mlkday.gov>
- \_\_\_\_\_ days until #MLKDay! Make it a day on... not a day off. Find a place to #volunteer near you. <http://mlkday.gov/serve/find.php>
- I serve on [TAG: MLKDAY] because \_\_\_\_\_.
- Visit the [MLK Day Facebook](#) page for more messages to share with your friends and followers.

# Share Your MLK Day Plans & Stories on Social Media (cont.)

## **Social Media Downloadable Graphics**

- [General MLK Day Twitter and Facebook graphic](#)
- [How Will You Serve? Twitter and Facebook graphic](#)

## **Additional Resources**

CNCS also has a number of digital and printed resources available for use by grantees and project organizers. Below are just a few that may be helpful in your communications efforts.

- [Project Toolkits](#)
- [Logos](#)
- [Web Banners](#)
- [Radio and TV PSAs](#)
- [MLK Day Legacy of Service Videos](#)
- [Promotional Materials](#)

# MLK Day 2016

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