

SSSIO – USA

Community Service Guidelines



The core message of Sathya Sai Baba is to Love All, Serve All. As with all of Sathya Sai Baba's teachings, the main goal of performing service is for spiritual awakening. Every aspect of life should be permeated with the thought of placing love into action in the form of service. This includes service to one's mind and body, service to the family, service to the community, service to our country, service to the world including all of nature.

The core of the spiritual discipline of selfless service is to see everyone as yourself and yourself in everyone. – Sathya Sai Baba, 14 November 1975

Service is a lifetime program; it knows no rest or respite. This body has been given to you so that you may devote its strength and skills to the service of brother-man. Serve humanity until you see God in all people; then, what you do will be elevated to worship. – Sathya Sai Baba, 14 June 1975

Service to the community lies at the heart and soul of Sathya Sai Baba centers. The service activities include providing food, clothing, school supplies, and daily provisions to the needy; building and repairing homes and community buildings; visiting old-age homes, prisons, and convalescent hospitals; mentoring needy students and providing values education to the community; and providing humanitarian relief to the victims of natural disasters such as hurricanes, floods, and earthquakes.

The following are tips and guidelines that are helpful for members to refer to when engaging in service to their community:

OVERVIEW

1. Remember to keep in mind the true purpose of serving is for our own spiritual transformation by developing empathy, reducing our self-centeredness, and ultimately seeing the oneness and unity of all.
 - *Feel that you are serving yourself, that you are curbing your own ego. Otherwise service heightens your self-esteem and develops a sense of superiority, which are both harmful spiritually. Apr 21, 1967.*
 - *Service will also impress the unity of all mankind on the person doing service. – Sathya Sai Baba, 28 August 1976*
2. Love is the integral aspect of any service endeavor:
 - *Any little service performed with love is enough. If you give a glass of water to a thirsty person with genuine love, it is more than enough. 22 July 2002*
 - *Love more and more people. Love them more and more intensely. Transform the love into service, transform the service into worship. That is the highest spiritual practice." SSS Vol. 5, Ch. 17*
3. Quality is more important than quantity:
 - *In whatever service you do, it is the quality that counts, not the quantity. No act of service should be considered trivial or debasing. SSS Veda Vani p 333*

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- *It is not the quantity of service you do that matters; nor is the variety. It is the inner joy, the love that you radiate that is important. May 19, 1969*

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

1. Identify areas in your community that have the most need for assistance. Talking with neighbors, community officials and other non-profit groups in your area can help identify areas with the greatest need.
2. Research the needs and issues involved including the history of the problem, root causes, existing and prior assistance provided.
3. Identify the resources that are needed to fulfill the needs for the project

RESOURCE ASSESSMENT

4. Identify the needed various skill sets of volunteers available and the number of hours each can contribute.
5. Identify resources currently available and those that will need to be procured

DEVELOP PLAN

1. Have long term as well as short term specific goals that are to be achieved. Start with modest goals that can be expanded as experience with the project develops.
2. Set timeline for starting and completing the commitment along with frequency of engagement.
3. Remember to adhere to the local laws and rules of both governmental bodies and groups you are working with. Assess whether any liability exists and whether it needs to be addressed.
4. Safety of both volunteers and community members is of utmost importance.

IMPLEMENTATION

1. Identify volunteer group lead who will communicate with community you are engaging during the event.
2. Have an orientation with volunteers at onset of the project to review goals and steps. Reminder of using soft, loving speech and to treat all as you would treat God.
3. Obtain permission if participants are to be interviewed or photographed
4. Ensure cleanliness of space upon completion
5. Express gratitude to all involved for opportunity to serve

REVIEW

1. Obtain feedback from all parties involved to further improve the project
2. Write up a summary of the project including relevant media files to serve as education and inspiration for others who may want to perform a similar project.