



How to Partner with Schools to Incorporate Mission-related Projects

Schools are a great place to find help with mission-related projects. Most schools are willing to help in some way with organizations that help better the community.

First, brainstorm on what project you would like to collaborate with the school(s).

Make sure to think about every aspect of the project:

- With what do you want the schools help?
- Are there things that your unit should do ahead of time?
- Do you need to educate the school on the background of the project?
- Is this project going to be led by you in the schools (will it take instruction from someone) or by their teacher?
- When do you want the project to take place?
 - American Education Week (celebrated the week prior to the week of Thanksgiving) is a great time!

Make sure there are not events already taking place at the school, for example: standardized testing or holiday break. When you are planning to collaborate with a school, plan on contacting the school four to five weeks ahead of time, sometimes even farther out if you are expecting the school to do a lot. Keep in mind, there may be a group of students that need to fill community service hours. An example of this may be student government clubs like a student council, National Honor Society or a Key Club.

Contact the school or group

First, introduce yourself and familiarize the school with the American Legion Auxiliary and what our organization does. Make sure to say the American Legion Auxiliary is the largest women's patriotic service organization in the world.

Next, explain that you would like the schools help in a service project. Explain what the project is and what you want the school to do. When explaining details, include dates and times you would like the project to occur, and if the school would have to pay for anything or provide supplies. It is important to make sure the school knows what you expect from them, so they know if it is possible to help your unit or not. Do not expect them to let you know if they are able to help in the first conversation you have. Allow time for your contact to get back with you.

If the school or group gives you the answer of "No"

If the contact tells you the school is unable to help with the service project, thank them for their time. Send them a thank you letter, and explain that, in the future, you hope that a service project could take place. Make sure you leave the relationship on good terms.

If the school or group would like to help

If the school would like to help, the next step is to make sure you get all of your supplies, volunteers (if you will need more help) and funds. Make sure to notify your contact from the school three days ahead of the project date to make sure everything is still on schedule and to remind them that you will be coming to the school. Let them know if you are planning on being at the school early to set anything up.



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On the day of the project, sign in at the office of the school and have someone direct you to where you need to go. Make sure you are ready for when you need to start. Keep track of time, make sure you stay for the allotted time that the school gave you. After you have done the project, make sure to clean up the area where you were. Thank the contact person you worked with on the project. After that day, send a thank you card to the school for their help. Make sure to send it within a week after completing the project.

Take pictures during project to send to local newspaper

Show the success of the project to the local newspaper to help publicize your project and the American Legion Auxiliary. You can find sample press releases in the PR/Marketing Resources page in the Members Only section of www.ALforVeterans.org. Make sure to send the press release to your Unit President, your state Department and Department President.

Get permission to use photo

It is very important to get written permission to use a photo of a minor. When you are contacting the school, be sure to ask if it is OK to take pictures and ask about the procedure of how the school handles student's pictures being in the newspaper or other forms of media. The school may have a procedure put in place; make sure to follow this procedure. If there is not a procedure put in place, ask the school how they would like the situation handled.