



Best Practices For Organizing A Great Massachusetts Litter Cleanup Event



Congratulations on taking the first step toward organizing a litter cleanup in your community. We appreciate your efforts to Keep Massachusetts Beautiful!

FOLLOW THE STEPS BELOW TO ORGANIZE A SUCCESSFUL LITTER CLEANUP EVENT:

Step 1

GET THE FACTS

Strong organizational skills and attention to detail are required. As you begin the planning process, consider these suggestions:

- Form a steering committee of people who are passionate about cleaning up your community. Try to include people with communications, fundraising, and organizational skills, as well as local municipal and business leaders.
- At your first meeting, lay out your vision for the cleanup event and agree on a date. Be sure to get buy-in and support from your local Department of Public Works.
- Conduct a community appearance survey to observe the litter in your community, record your findings, and prioritize the areas most in need of litter cleanup.



Step 2

USE COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS TO INVOLVE AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE

To attract volunteers, sponsors, and donors, you will need to create some “buzz” about your event:

- Distribute a press release to your local newspapers that explains the rationale for your event and where people can go for more information.
- Get on the agenda for a Board of Selectmen’s meeting or other public forum to share your vision and let people know how they can get involved.
- Create a Facebook page and/or a Twitter feed to provide an easy way for people to get updated information about your event. You may even want to create a simple website or blog.
- Create flyers or posters that can be posted around town and in local schools and businesses.
- Host a show or create a brief announcement on your local cable access TV station to

publicize your event.

- Post information about your event on local school websites or distribute a flyer to students and administrators.
- List your event on local newspaper websites, such as wickedlocal.com or patch.com.
- Be sure to take lots of before and after photos that you can later share with the media and on Facebook.

Step 3

CREATE A DETAILED PLAN FOR YOUR CLEANUP EVENT

Here is where the rubber hits the road. Think about the scope of your event and how ambitious you want to be. Anticipate how many volunteers you will have, how long they will work, and then develop a plan to match your resources against the job at hand:

- Map out your cleanup routes. Refer to your community appearance survey (see step 1) to prioritize areas most in need of a cleanup. Then estimate how many volunteers you need and assign people accordingly.
- Appoint “precinct captains” who are responsible for supervising volunteers within an assigned area. Precinct captains can also distribute extra supplies and ensure that volunteers follow safety guidelines.
- Create a plan to measure your accomplishments. For example, use a tally sheet to count how many bags of trash you collect or weigh the amount of trash collected.
- Determine where volunteers will meet and how you will distribute supplies and instructions. If you expect a large turnout, a decentralized approach may work better than having everyone report to the same location at the same time.
- Develop a plan to remove trash bags and large items, such as tires and appliances. In some cases, local DPW workers may volunteer their time. In other cases, the local waste hauler may volunteer trucks and personnel.

Step 4

FUNDRAISING AND EXPENSES

You may need to raise some funds to cover expenses related to volunteer tee shirts, supplies, and other miscellaneous expenses:

- Estimate your costs. Since you will be relying on volunteers, your costs should be low. However, you may incur expenses for trash bags, gloves, volunteer tee shirts, and other miscellaneous items. If you plan to host a post-cleanup celebration, factor in those costs too. If your municipality will not cover any expenses, consider forming a separate sub-committee that focuses on fundraising.
- Reach out to local business owners for cash donations. Explain that your cleanup will enhance the appearance of the community and make it a more attractive place to conduct business. Offer business donors the opportunity to list their names on volunteer tee shirts, on your website, and on social media channels.
- Set up a dedicated account with your municipal government or at a local bank and appoint a treasurer to manage and record all financial transactions.

RECRUIT AND MANAGE VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are the lifeblood of your cleanup event. To ensure you get the help you need and make the most of your volunteers' time:

- Develop a volunteer recruitment plan. Contact local community groups, such as scouts, civic groups, religious organizations, and youth sports leagues to encourage participation.
- Contact local schools to publicize the opportunity to earn community service hours.
- Reach out to local business owners and position the cleanup event as a great team-building exercise.
- Make it easy for volunteers to register for your event by using Google Drive or other online event registration tools, such as Constant Contact or Cvent.
- Create a clear set of safety instructions and share this information with all volunteers. Consider having volunteers sign a waiver that exempts the organizers of the event from any liability in case of any injuries.

PROVIDE POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT

Now comes the fun part. It's important to thank your volunteers, donors, and anyone else who had a hand in your cleanup event. Here are ways you can recognize everyone's efforts:

- Host a post-cleanup celebration. See if a local business or school will donate space for a volunteer luncheon. Contact local supermarkets, pizza shops, and other food purveyors to see if they are willing to donate to your event.
- Thank your supporters through the media. Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper to thank volunteers and donors. Thank your volunteers through your social media channels and link back to business donors' websites.
- Send personal letters of appreciation to financial donors. A handwritten note can go a long way toward building a long-lasting relationship with your donors.

KEEP THE POSITIVE MOMENTUM GOING!

Once you have one successful cleanup event under your belt, why stop there? Consider organizing regularly scheduled, smaller-scale litter cleanups throughout the year. You may also want to expand into other areas to further improve the appearance of your community, such as community greening projects and recycling events.

To create a more vibrant and beautiful community, consider forming a Keep Massachusetts Beautiful affiliate. You can learn more about the process and benefits of organizing an affiliate at www.keepmassbeautiful.org.

How Your Community Benefits From the Great Massachusetts Litter Cleanup

- 1 A cleaner, greener environment
- 2 A more attractive place to run a business and shop
- 3 Enhanced community pride
- 4 Litter cleanups often inspire additional improvements
- 5 Little or no cost to taxpayers

