



## Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service – Food Drive Tip Sheet January 19, 2009

The King Day of Service (**January 19, 2009**) is a great way to transform Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s life and teachings into community service that helps find solutions to local issues. **In Iowa, we have seen an increased use of our community food banks due to the natural disasters in 2008 and the continuing economic crisis. Demand at food banks is up 10% from a year ago as more Iowans find it difficult to balance their needs with shrinking family budgets.** A food drive is an great way to make A BIG IMPACT in your community. By following these simple steps below, you'll be on your way to conducting an impactful service project in celebration of Dr. King's memory.

**Step 1:** Contact your local food pantry to inform them of your interest in helping them with a food drive. Assess the food bank's needs to target your collections to meet the shortfall.

**Step 2:** Contact local businesses/owners of popular public spaces and ask them if you can put out a box for donations. (i.e. banks, department stores, libraries, churches) They might even be willing to partner with you by providing resources for your effort.

**Step 3:** Distribute boxes around town at designated sites.

**Step 4:** Promote the food drive through local media outlets, flyers, social/faith organizations, etc.

**Step 5:** Pick up food, count the number of items collected, and deliver it to the local food pantry

**Step 6:** Contact the Iowa State Office to tell us about your event. You can reach us at [ia@cns.gov](mailto:ia@cns.gov) or (515) 284-4816.

For more information about creating a successful volunteer opportunity, visit:  
<http://mlkday.gov/resources/tips/index.asp>

If a food drive doesn't fit for your organization, consider one of these great suggestions:

- Hold a workshop on Dr. King's life and examine current issues in your community
- Make and distribute disaster kits
- Bring meals to homebound neighbors
- Serve meals at a homeless shelter
- Remove graffiti from a building and paint a mural
- Hold a clothing drive

**Also, remember to begin thinking soon about MLK Day 2010. Even if you're unable to hold a service project this year, we still welcome your participation as we bring people together next year. Make sure you have a place at the table by contacting us about your interest!**

*Contact the Iowa State Office for more information. We'll help you publicize your event and offer suggestions from event planning experts. You can reach us at (515) 284-4816 or at [ia@cns.gov](mailto:ia@cns.gov)*



# MLK Day Q & A

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**1. My organization is closed on MLK Day (January 19, 2009). Can I do an activity on an alternate day?**

Yes. We encourage you to hold activities as close to January 19, 2009 as possible. However, you're welcome to honor Dr. King's call to service on the most convenient day for your organization.

**2. My organization is interested in participating but none of the activities suggested above work for us. What other activities can we do?**

We suggest visiting [www.mlkday.gov](http://www.mlkday.gov) to view the opportunities that have already been listed. Maybe you can 'piggy-back' an already existing idea or you might be able to partner with one of the groups you find.

If you're still unable to find something that suites you, contact the Iowa State Office at (515) 284-4816. We'll be happy to assist you as you think about your options.

**3. Our organization is interested in holding an activity to honor Dr. King's call to service. What should we do next?**

1. Register your event on [www.mlkday.gov](http://www.mlkday.gov) – This process takes just a few minutes and is a great way to publicize your activity. You can also order advertising materials (posters, flyers, etc.) for free on this website.
2. Contact local partners to see how they might be able to assist you in your planning efforts
3. Recruit volunteers to help with your activity. Remember, people can register to volunteer at your event on [www.mlkday.gov](http://www.mlkday.gov).
4. Plan how you can measure the impact of your work. For instance, consider counting the number of people served, the number of items collected, etc.
5. Hold your event on or around January 19, 2009
6. After the event, contact the Iowa State Office to tell us about your event. You can reach us at [ia@cns.gov](mailto:ia@cns.gov) or at (515) 284-4816.

**4. How can I recruit volunteers for my activity?**

Remember that by registering your event on [www.mlkday.gov](http://www.mlkday.gov), potential volunteers can find and register for your activity.

Also, consider contacting volunteer organizations in your community like the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), Schools, businesses, and local community service groups are also great sources of dedicated community members and volunteers.

**5. What is the Corporation for National and Community Service?**

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) is a federal agency charged with overseeing a variety of volunteer programs including AmeriCorps, AmeriCorps VISTA, Senior Corps, and Learn and Serve America. The Iowa State Office is the field office in Iowa (located in the Des Moines Federal Building) that supports national service and volunteerism in our state.

For more information, visit [www.nationalservice.gov](http://www.nationalservice.gov)