



## 2026 AGENCY MANUAL



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## UNITED WAY OF THE EASTERN PANHANDLE DAY OF CARING

Join us for the 32<sup>nd</sup> annual Day of Caring on Tuesday, September 15, 2026! We anticipate an interest in our local volunteers to participate in this annual event. They may want to paint walls, read to children, stuff envelopes, plant trees and more. Read further to learn how your organization can benefit from the skilled and enthusiastic volunteers available on the Day of Caring.

Project registration will take place in June.

### Overview

Day of Caring is a day of service when individuals and volunteer teams of all sizes tackle meaningful projects at locations throughout our tri-county community.

The Day of Caring promotes the spirit and value of volunteerism, increases the awareness of local non-profit organizations, and demonstrates what people working together for the community's good can accomplish.

### Participants

**Agencies:** All participating non-profit agencies must be located in the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia in Jefferson, Berkeley or Morgan Counties. Project sponsor must be a non-profit 501 (c)(3), school, or government entity. Projects to benefit individuals (such as home repairs for an elderly resident) must be submitted by an agency representative through a sponsoring agency. Project sponsors, such as a for-profit assisted living facility, may submit projects so long as such projects benefit the client. Agencies must submit projects through the United Way.

**Volunteers:** Volunteers will be recruited from local businesses and organizations by the United Way of the Eastern Panhandle and project sponsors. Each participating company or organization will provide a volunteer team leader to coordinate a volunteer team, select a project and communicate with an agency representative. All volunteers must complete a Volunteer Registration form and a Confidentiality and Liability Waiver form.

### Contact Information

For questions regarding Day of Caring, please contact:

The United Way of the Eastern Panhandle  
24 District Way, Suite 201, Martinsburg, WV 25404  
**Phone:** 304-263-0603 Ext. 124 / **Fax:** 304-263-0614  
[pporter@uwayep.org](mailto:pporter@uwayep.org)



## **Policies and Procedures**

### **Purpose Statement:**

Day of Caring is an event supporting the United Way's mission to inspire and mobilize our community to create change. Specifically, Day of Caring is a day when individuals, local businesses and organizations partner with non-profit agencies to make a difference and improve our communities.

### **Responsibilities of the United Way:**

- Planning, administration and evaluation functions for Day of Caring
- Media coverage
- Recruiting volunteers
- Providing best practices and other resources
- Connecting volunteers with agency projects

### **Requirements for participating non-profit agencies:**

- Provide lunch, snacks and water to all volunteers.
- Provide all necessary materials and equipment needed to complete project(s). Remove any trash upon project completion.
- Meet with volunteer team leader(s) prior to the event.
- Obtain photo releases from all volunteers, as needed.
- Assign project coordinator to attend Day of Caring meetings and to be on site for Day of Caring.
- Confirm team leader has submitted all volunteer forms and confidentiality and liability waiver forms for every participating volunteer.
- Keep track of all in-kind donations and report those to United Way of the Eastern Panhandle (UWEP).
- Report actual number of volunteers and hours worked following project.
- Alert UWEP staff immediately of any accidents that happen on site for Day of Caring project.

### **Requirements for Day of Caring team leader:**

- Confirm selected project with UWEP staff.
- Collect completed forms from each member of the volunteer team and return to UWEP before Day of Caring. Each volunteer must complete both the Volunteer Registration form and the Confidentiality and Liability Waiver form.
- Pick up T-shirts for team and distribute to volunteers prior to Day of Caring.
- Meet with project coordinator from selected project site to review plans prior to Day of Caring.
- Alert UWEP staff immediately regarding any accidents that happen on site for Day of Caring project.



### **Requirements for Day of Caring volunteers:**

- Complete Volunteer Registration form.
- Complete Confidentiality and Liability Waiver form.
- Report to Day of Caring project site.
- Have fun!

### **Project Length:**

Half-day projects will be considered for inclusion in the Day of Caring. Typical shifts for half-day projects are 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. or 1 p.m. – 4 p.m. Agencies will need to ensure a project is truly a half-day as volunteers may sign up for a morning and afternoon project. Full-day projects are typically 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. and should keep volunteers busy that whole time.

### **Project Approval:**

Projects are accepted at the sole discretion of the United Way of the Eastern Panhandle which reserves the right to exclude a project.

## **DAY OF CARING PROJECT PLANNING**

### **Project Planning Guidelines**

Day of Caring is an incredible opportunity to tackle large and small projects at your agency that otherwise may not get accomplished. Given the unique opportunity, try to plan creative, worthwhile projects that volunteers will enjoy and that will make an impact on your services.

Below are some guidelines to better help you plan. The answers you give to these questions will help you assess the appropriateness and scale of your Day of Caring projects and will help the volunteers better respond to your needs.

### **Project Assessment Criteria: Questions to Ask:**

- Who can submit Day of Caring projects? Agencies with 501 (c)(3) status, government offices, schools, for-profits if benefitting clients, and client homes if through an agency.
- Can the project be substantially completed in the allotted working time with non-professional workers, allowing time for set-up, breakdown, agency briefing and lunch?
- Is the size and complexity of the project appropriate, considering the volunteers' skills and allotted time?
- What is the manpower requirement, taking into account space limitations?



- Does the project require specific skill levels? For example, would you need an electrician or skilled carpenter?
- What is the need vs. availability of tools and equipment, including those provided by the agency and by the volunteers? What tools can you provide, and what tools do you need the volunteers to bring from home?
- Is the project too hazardous for the volunteers? Does the work require climbing a tall ladder? Is an outdoor work area close to a heavily trafficked street without protective barriers? Is there a potential fire hazard, e.g., use of propane torch? (Consider potential liability exposure.)
- Will the agency clients be present? Are young children or elderly persons likely to be around the work area while the work is in progress? Does the performance of work need to be coordinated with the clients' schedules?
- Will the agency provide someone to organize and/or oversee the work being performed? (It is essential that each agency designate a point of contact that is available most of the day, even if the designated person does not work with the volunteers all the time.)
- Does the agency have the ability to accomplish the necessary preparatory work in advance of Day of Caring, e.g., purchasing necessary materials, installing foundations for a new structure, obtaining municipal permits, etc.?

### **Planning Details for Your Project**

- Assign an alternate staff member or regular volunteer to be the project manager in the event the project coordinator or assigned person cannot carry out their responsibility.
- If your event is weather dependent, have an alternate plan. The Day of Caring does not have a "rain date" because many projects are indoors and not affected by the weather. It is up to the agency and team to decide on an alternate date in the event of inclement weather.
- Have a contingency plan if too many or too few volunteers show up or if the project takes more or less time than you estimated.
- Prepare name tags for your Day of Caring volunteers and staff working with them, using the list of names that will be provided to you prior to the Day of Caring.
- Assign staff members to greet volunteers, provide orientation, conduct a tour, take pictures and assist the media.



- Be prepared for the media by having photo release forms and/or waiver liability forms for Day of Caring volunteers and clients ready/signed. Photo release forms will be particularly important for children and other agency clients. It is up to each agency or school to determine whether or not to use additional photo release and waiver liability forms for your individual agency. **All** volunteers must sign the UWEP forms.
- Make sure sufficient supplies and equipment are available and ready to use.
- Create a task list or instruction sheet for volunteers so that the project is as clear as possible, and you'll have fewer questions to answer.
- Plan ahead to provide water or other refreshments for your volunteers.
- Plan how you will interact, supervise and work with your volunteers.
- Remind clients and staff of the day's activities. Be certain everyone is aware of the plans to avoid unpleasant surprises.
- Post important phone numbers (fire, police, rescue squads) at the site.
- Have a First Aid Kit on site (including a bee sting kit, band-aids, aspirin and ice packs)
- Provide PPE (masks, gloves, sanitizer) for anyone that may request it.
- Have an AED on site if available.

### **Determine Permit Requirements**

Some of your best project ideas may require a permit from the city, state or town.

Below are some guidelines to help you determine whether a permit is required. The guidelines provided are general and do not necessarily reflect the rules associated with your city.

Therefore, in all cases, you should check with your local inspection department or code official to help determine your permit need.

In addition to your local code official, some board members, skilled staff, current volunteers, and licensed professionals are knowledgeable resources who can help you evaluate project needs and scope.



Some examples of renovation work that may require building permits are:

- Building addition of any size.
- Demolition of all or part of a structure.
- Changing exits or exit components in any way, especially in public buildings including commercial and institutional occupancies.
- New structures including sheds, gazebos and awnings.
- Structural changes or repairs.
- Renovations that will add or significantly alter plumbing or electrical installations.
- Enlarging existing rooms or spaces if the work involves altering the structural supports.
- Adding a dormer or otherwise modifying the roof structure.

## **DAY OF CARING SAFETY PLAN**

### **General Safety Guidelines**

We recognize the potential for serious injury and liability problems associated with Day of Caring, just as we do each time any volunteer offers his/her services. To help avoid the potential pitfalls and hazards that can occur during an event of this nature, please take the time to review the safety guidelines below to help ensure that the Day of Caring is both a rewarding and safe experience for everyone involved.

Below are some actions to think about if an accident does happen:

- Prior to any work being done, ensure that you have emergency contacts for every volunteer.
- Stay calm. Have all of the other volunteers stop working if there is any reason to believe that the work is unsafe, or if the volunteers simply cannot focus sufficiently on the project's task. Be sensitive to the mood and needs of the volunteers.
- Designate someone else to oversee the other volunteers so that you can focus on the injured volunteer.
- Try to determine the seriousness of the accident. See if there is a volunteer who may have some training to assist the injured individual (e.g., a doctor, nurse or EMT).



- If the person has a serious injury, call 911 immediately. Then call a friend or family member of the injured person, if appropriate, and the United Way of the Eastern Panhandle office number at 304-263-0603 x121.
- If the person has a minor cut or scrape, administer first aid and then fill out an accident report as required by your agency.
- Ensure that all appropriate agency representatives are aware of the injury.
- Day of Caring volunteers fall liable under the participating project agency and not the United Way of the Eastern Panhandle.

**Simple Safety Suggestions**

Be prepared. To help avoid safety incidents, the below chart suggests safety plans that you may want to communicate to your volunteers prior to Day of Caring.

<b>Task</b>	<b>Potential Hazards</b>	<b>Requested Safety Equipment</b>
Landscaping	Foot (Cuts, Abrasions)	Boots, Closed Shoes
	Hands (Cuts, Abrasions)	Work Gloves
	Legs (Cuts, Abrasions)	Long Pants
	Sunburn	Wear Sunscreen
	Bug Bites	Bring Bug Spray
Clearing Trails	*Chain Saw Use	Hard-Toe Boots
		Ear Plugs or Muffs
		Chaps for Legs
		Gloves, Long Sleeves
		Safety Glasses, Goggles
Painting (Interior and/or Exterior)	Eyes	Safety Glasses, Goggles
	Hands	Gloves (Latex or Work)
	Ladder Use (Use Scaffolding When Necessary)	Waist Never Above Top of Ladder; Never Reach Past Arm's Length
Carpentry	Eyes	Safety Glasses, Goggles
	Foot	Hard-Toe Boots
	Hands	Gloves
	Falls	Approved Ladders or Scaffolding; Extension Cords with GFCIs

**\*Volunteers should not operate power tools unless they are trained to do so. Any use of power tools MUST be approved on the project form prior to the Day of Caring.**



## **Risk Assessment Checklist**

The following risk assessment checklist will help ensure that your Day of Caring project, staff, and volunteers will be as safe as possible. The checklist should be completed for each project and/or project site.

### **Overall Safety:**

- Adequate liquids are available to volunteers to ensure proper hydration to eliminate heat stress exposure.
- Adequate breaks will be made part of any project, especially in very warm conditions.
- Fully stocked first-aid kit is available and readily accessible at all project sites.
- Agency personnel and volunteers know the location(s) of first-aid kit.
- Individual trained in first aid/CPR available at each work site.
- List of emergency numbers is available and readily available at each work site.
- Working phone is available at each work site.
- No volunteer will work alone at sites.
- Volunteers will work in larger groups in areas identified by law enforcement as high-crime areas or will be provided with local security.
- Power tools/equipment will be checked for safety by a qualified tradesperson prior to use by volunteers.
- No volunteer will operate power tools or equipment without prior authorization.
- Volunteers will be assessed to ascertain particular allergies to plants, insect bites, respiratory sensitivity, sensitivity to chemical vapors and other personal health issues prior to beginning project.
- Personal protective equipment is available for each task, as applicable. (Safety glasses, hearing protection, gloves, hard hats, respirators, etc.)
- Staff will ensure that volunteers are properly dressed for the task prior to the start of activities.



## **Safety Consideration for Specific Projects**

### **Clean-Up Projects (trash and waste removal, general housekeeping):**

- Volunteers will be encouraged to use gloves; watch for sharp items, biohazards, puncture hazards, etc. Volunteers are NOT to pick up needles or syringes. Project coordinator must notify someone else trained in such disposal.
- Volunteers will be supervised to ensure safe operation of power equipment.
- Only experienced volunteers will operate power equipment.
- Personal safety equipment will be available for use by all volunteers.
- Proper gloves will be used.
- Lightening safety will be practiced in the event of thunderstorms.

### **Painting and Preparation:**

- Potential hazard exposure determined by reading safety data and warning labels on all paints, solvents and thinners.
- Water-based paints used wherever possible.
- Dust masks and respirators are available and will be used by volunteers involved in sanding, scraping or in areas of poor ventilation.
- Ladder and scaffolding safety will be practiced.
- Ensure safe use of any electrical painting equipment.

### **Construction:**

- Ground fault protection used for tools outside or in bathrooms or other wet areas.
- Safety glasses and hearing protection will be available and used.
- Volunteers will wear proper footwear (no athletic shoes).



### **Cleaning Animal Pens:**

- Advise volunteers to use caution to avoid slipping on animal waste, holes or other uneven surfaces.
- Dust masks/respirators will be used when adding or removing bedding material.
- Proper personal hygiene will be stressed.
- Volunteers will be alerted to animal habits and behaviors.
- Behaviorally challenged animals that could become aggressive will be kept away from volunteers.
- Smoking will be prohibited.
- Hand protection will be used.
- Caution will be stressed to volunteers working with or around sharp pointed tools such as pitchforks and rakes.

### **Child Care or Elder Care:**

- Agency representatives will be present during all interactions between volunteers and children/elderly to guard against any behaviors that could endanger the child/elderly or be potentially harmful to the volunteer.
- If appropriate and necessary, have volunteers sign a disclosure statement and/or confidentiality statement prior to event.

### **ON THE DAY OF CARING**

#### **Showcase Your Agency**

The Day of Caring is a “ready-made” marketing opportunity for your agency! Don’t miss this opportunity to show off your agency to the media, potential donors, volunteers and clients. Be creative and get the message out about what your agency does.

- Welcome your volunteers with a banner and make them feel at home at your agency.



- Feature your volunteer team in your agency member/donor newsletter to report your success to the community. Other communication tools might include your website, blog, and Letters to the Editor (to thank your volunteers). Update Facebook and Twitter during the day to “toot their horn”. Please share any published items or photos with the United Way.
- Generate ideas to recognize your volunteer team while they are at your agency. It is one of the best ways to ensure they will return one day to help again.
- Prepare an information packet about your agency for your Day of Caring volunteers.
- Give the volunteers a brief tour of your agency and a short orientation to your programs. Remember, they will be anxious to get started on their project!
- Invite the volunteers back later in the year (to see the blooming daffodils that they planted, or to participate in an activity at the recreation center they painted).
- Find ways to possibly engage your volunteers in your agency’s programming.
- Invite board members to the Day of Caring to eat lunch with volunteers.

### **Communicating With Your Volunteer Team**

This is perhaps the most important aspect of a successful Day of Caring project. Once your project is chosen, it is entirely up to the agency and team to communicate about the details. Follow these helpful hints to make sure you and the team coordinator have covered everything.

- Confirm volunteer arrival time.
- Encourage the Team Leaders to visit the site so that the team is prepared on the day.
- Verify the number of people participating.
- Confirm the supplies that the volunteers will bring and inform the team of the plan you have to secure other needed materials.
- Describe what the volunteer team’s duties will be that day.
- Inform them if there is any heaving lifting or moving of objects.
- Inform them if they should bring a change of clothes.



- Discuss a rain plan and how to contact the volunteers the morning of the Day of Caring with the alternate plan. There is no rain date.
- Be prepared to provide lunch, snacks, drinks and water. (The schedule is designed to allow the noon hour for volunteers to have a lunch break.)
- Is there ample parking for your volunteers? If not, make alternate plans. Suggest car-pooling to the teams or long-term parking is available at the rally location.
- Remind team coordinators to leave the agency and project site phone numbers with their coworkers in the event that an emergency arises and they need to be contacted during the day.

### **Things to do on the Day of Caring**

- Allow time for setup and cleanup. Make sure that someone from your agency will be ready when the volunteers arrive.
- Register your Day of Caring volunteers when they arrive at your site by signing them in on the sheet you will receive prior to the Day of Caring. Ask volunteers to sign their names if present, make changes if needed, and legibly add names of volunteers not on the list. The sign-in sheets will be returned to the United Way for recognition, follow-up and to gather statistics.
- Give each volunteer a name tag and thank them for participating.
- Give your volunteers a brief orientation and tour of your agency/program:
  - Introduce your staff to Day of Caring volunteers.
  - Describe your agency's clients and services.
  - If you serve a particularly difficult or sensitive client population and they are not directly involved in the project, help the volunteers understand why.
  - Explain any necessary confidentiality issues.
  - Explain how your partnership with United Way helps your agency and its clients.



- Give volunteers a tour of your agency.
- Please keep this as brief as possible; your volunteers will be excited and ready to work.
- Connect your project to the overall mission of your organization. Why is the mowing or a manicured yard important?
- Review project details with your volunteer team:
  - Introduce the agency project coordinator.
  - Explain what needs to be done.
  - Explain why it is needed.
  - Explain who the volunteers will be serving/helping.
  - Explain how the volunteers' efforts will help the agency make a difference in someone's life or enhance the agency.
  - Review expected results.
  - Review any necessary time restraints and limitations.
  - Inform your volunteers where the bathrooms and drinks are located and when lunch will be provided.
  - Provide any necessary training or orientation.
- Be accessible to volunteers and answer questions as necessary.
- Arrange for a break and eating area for volunteers. Make sure they know where it is.
- If possible and appropriate, you could invite volunteers to eat lunch or have a snack break with staff, board members and/or clients. Talk with them about the project and thank them for being there.
- Have cold refreshments, including cups, available throughout the day, especially if you have an outdoor event.



- Have trash facilities available.
- Have extras of things you will need the most (hammers, scissors, masking tape, etc.)  
Review the supply list.
- As in past years, a United Way staff or board member will visit most project sites to thank volunteers.

**MOST OF ALL HAVE FUN!**