



Community Service Project Overview

While a COLT class member, you will be required to work as part of a small group to plan, develop, and show leadership to others in a community service project. This project may benefit a non-profit organization, religious institution, school, or your community (further known as the “beneficiary organization”). A project proposal must be approved by the beneficiary organization and the COLT Director before you start.

Project Purpose

In addition to providing service to the Danville area community, the primary purposes of the COLT Community Service Project are to demonstrate, hone, learn, and develop leadership skills. Related to these are important lessons in project management and taking responsibility for a significant accomplishment. Your team can use its passions and skills to seriously impact a beneficiary organization with a project that may otherwise not be achievable.

Steps for Success

- Meet your Team, and Select your Group Leader
- Gain Insight from the Community (Visit non-profit Board meetings)
- Choose a Project
- Write a Project Proposal (Note restrictions)
- Gain Project Approval (by beneficiary organization and the COLT Director)
- Complete Your Project Plan (Adjust based on deadlines, outside factors)
- Keep the Beneficiary Organization Informed Throughout the Project
- Present Project

COLT Community Service Project Step-by-Step Guide

Requirement: Complete, in collaboration with your team and a beneficiary organization, the COLT Community Service Project. This project will culminate with a presentation to peers.

Your project should meet the following criteria:

1. It should be a group effort involving all members of your project team.
2. The project should be completed by the COLT's final session in September.
3. Your project should have an element of sustainability for the beneficiary organization.

Meet Your Team, Select Your Project Mentor, and Select Your Group Leader

At the second COLT session, you will meet with your project group to brainstorm both community needs and the nonprofit organizations with whom you may work. You should prioritize the exchange of group members' information, set-up at least one meeting time, and make plans to regularly communicate with each other about the project (group text, email, etc.). Then, select a team leader who will give regular progress updates to the COLT Director.

Gain Insight from the Community

Many COLT participants join without much knowledge of area non-profits. To grow in familiarity, the COLT program will help you meet community members and nonprofits.

Write a Project Proposal

This project is not designed to benefit any one individual, but to match the talents of your project group with the needs of local community organizations. Write an executive summary of your project (3 paragraphs maximum), including any relevant timelines, necessary resources, and S.M.A.R.T. goals that you wish to achieve. Before acting, you must present your project proposal to the COLT Director and have the endorsement of the beneficiary organization to proceed. This should be completed before the May program session.

Restrictions

Routine labor is not normally appropriate for a project. This might be defined as a job or service you may provide as part of your daily life, or a routine maintenance job normally done by the beneficiary organization (for example, pulling weeds on the football field at a school, or hosting an annual fundraiser.)

Projects may not be designed to benefit a for-profit business, but this does not disallow work for community institutions such as museums and service agencies (like homes for the elderly, for example), which would otherwise be acceptable. Some aspect of a business operation provided as a community service may also be considered.

A project may not be a fundraiser. In other words, it may not be an effort that primarily collects money, even for a worthy charity. Fundraising is permitted only for securing materials and facilitating the small group project, and it must be approved by the COLT Director as a COLT fundraising project. You are not to fundraise through COLT for Geisinger, or on Geisinger's behalf. Said another way, fundraising is personal, as is philanthropy. COLT will not require

anyone to raise funds who may have a conflict of interest, or who may be uncomfortable with such an endeavor. Further discussion on fundraising may be had with the COLT Director. Funding has often been secured for projects through COLT and Chamber Foundation resources.

Project Proposal Approval

For your proposal to be approved, it must demonstrate the following:

1. You must show that **planning, development, and leadership** will take place. You must show how these three factors will benefit the organization you selected.
2. You have **approval from the beneficiary organization** to proceed with the project.
3. **It is feasible**. You must show that the project is realistic for your given deadlines.
4. **Safety** issues (if any) will be addressed. You must show you understand what must be done to guard against injury, and what will be done if someone does get hurt. If for example you are hosting an event, make certain that the proper insurances are in place. Check with the project's beneficiary organization as well as the COLT Director.
5. **Action steps** for further detailed planning are included. You must make a list of the key steps you will take to make sure your plan has enough details to be carried out successfully.
6. You are on the right track with a **reasonable expectation** of a positive experience. Your proposal needs to be detailed enough to show that you can meet the tests above.

Remember, do not begin any work, raise any money, or obtain any materials until your project proposal has been approved by both the beneficiary organization and the COLT Director.

If Fundraising Is Required to Execute Your Project Plan

Some previous project groups have required financial resources to complete the vision for their project plan. If your project funding is derived solely from contributions made from the beneficiary organization, or yourselves individually, then gaining approval for fundraising is not necessary. If you will be obtaining money or materials from any other sources, you must gain approval from the COLT Director.

Complete Your Project Plan

Once your project proposal has been approved (May), you may now execute your plan. This will mean regular meetings and a division of labor. The insight of the COLT Director may be helpful, and you may invite them to attend group project meetings as necessary. No plan is perfect. You should expect to adjust and adapt during the execution of your project. Do your best to stick to the project proposal as approved and document any necessary changes. These documented changes will make excellent presentation points at the conclusion of the program.

Use of the facilities at the Columbia Montour Chamber of Commerce during business hours, if suitable, may be arranged through the Foundation.

Presenting to the Beneficiary Organization

Your project group should keep the beneficiary organization in-the-loop throughout the program year on the progress of the project. Towards the project's conclusion, you may make a summary presentation to the beneficiary organization. It is recommended that if you have a tangible

product (like a marketing plan or a publication), this summary presentation is an opportunity to pass that product on to the organization. Many groups find that this summary presentation to the beneficiary organization serves as an excellent dry run for the final project presentation.

The Project Presentation

As a project group, you will make a final presentation of your completed project to a breadth of community members which may include COLT alumni, your employer, and your peers. This presentation will be between five and ten minutes and should show the various steps you took to plan, execute, and adjust your project. It should outline the challenges, opportunities, and barriers to your project's success, and demonstrate how the project may be sustainable. The presentation may show measurable achievement for the beneficiary organization and should allow you an opportunity to articulate the work you have accomplished.

Successful Past COLT Projects

1. **“Residents with Residents”** – Senior citizen nursing home companion project.
2. **“Mental Health First Aid”** – Training and support for expanded opportunity for adult to adult, adult to youth, and youth peer-to-peer programming. The starting goal was to “facilitate earlier detection of mental health disorders in adolescents and offer community-based support until connections with a mental health provider can be reliably established.” This program began as Mental Health First Aid, and quickly became the “Danville Iron Kids Mental Health Initiative”. Iron Kids Mental Health connected educators with the COPE2THRIVE, physician approved content, for a pilot program in the Danville Middle School, facilitated by the guidance department

The pilot was so successful, the program was passed to a second year of COLT participants, who through Foundation-secured grants, are continuing the pilot and expanding it to Central Columbia School District.

3. **“Addressing Disparities in Nutrition”** – Poor nutrition leads to morbidity and mortality. Partnering with the Good Samaritan Mission, the Backpack Program at Danville School District, and the Culinary Medicine Department/Fresh Food Farmacy, the group sought to understand the community need for better nutrition, to conduct an assessment of existing programs, and to create easy-to-understand material for multiple age groups, such as an online platform, a brochure and magnet called, “Eat the Rainbow”, and a mechanism to continue the programming through social media.
4. **“LIFT”** – A partnership between Geisinger and Advance Central PA to prevent Adverse Childhood Events, (ACES), the project was to promote youth mentorship in the community. This was done especially through Advance Central PA’s “Bridges to the Future” and “YES to the Future” programs, exposure of at-risk youth to a variety of career paths as well as provision of successful adult role models to aid and guide youth in career choices. Geisinger employees work as mentors, Advance Central PA (formerly CPWDC) facilitates the programming. The group helped to streamline the application process, and worked with Human Resources, Development and Learning, Wellness at Geisinger, and Communications to discuss the initiative, and recruited the first pool of mentors.