

Routes to employee volunteering

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Companies engage their employees in meaningful volunteer opportunities in a variety of ways. Some encourage their employees to participate in personal volunteering in their communities, others create long term or yearly partnerships with a single charity, while others engage in one off team opportunities. If you are looking to learn more about how best to engage your employees in volunteering, we invite you to join one of Volunteer Ireland's weekly coffee and chat sessions. Each week we bring a new team of companies together to discuss employee volunteering, share experiences and learn about the dos and don'ts of corporate volunteering. If you'd like to join us, contact terri@volunteer.ie.

Individual Employee Volunteering – I-VOL

Support your employees to engage in individual volunteering. I-VOL, the national volunteering database, has hundreds of volunteer opportunities: board roles, drivers, painters, job coaching with refugees, clean ups, translation, citizen science, conversational English tutors, youth leaders and many more. Remember, many of these opportunities are regular, on-going opportunities that take place on the evenings and weekends. If your employees receive 2 volunteer days annually you could give them a day in lieu to support their personal, regular volunteering. This is a great way to recognise the volunteering your staff are already doing and goes a long way towards building a company culture of volunteering. To search individual volunteering opportunities go to <https://www.i-vol.ie/> or contact your local Volunteer Centre here: <https://www.volunteer.ie/your-local-volunteer-centre/>

Creating Sustainable Partnerships

With escalating economic costs and rising client demand, charities are turning to the development of long-term corporate partnerships to sustain their organisations and provide support to communities and clients. Along with making a measurable impact on communities, increasing organisational sustainability, and gaining insights into the work and challenges facing our communities, there is the potential for these partnerships to provide educational and volunteering opportunities for employees. Many charities, particularly larger charities, are pros at developing these company partnerships and provide a range of educational and volunteering opportunities for partner employees. While smaller charities may need more assistance to manage a partnership, your support of local, grassroots community initiatives can bring huge benefits and rewards.

Large Scale Corporate Partnerships with Volunteer Ireland

Volunteer Ireland's corporate programme collaborates with companies on large scale partnerships engaging hundreds of employee volunteers in community projects. Activities run the gamut – providing business advice to charities; hands on painting and gardening projects; delivering science activities to primary schools; social activities with refugees

and the elderly; mapping wheelchair accessibility in communities; assembling essential care kits for the homeless, creating craft kits for underprivileged children and play packs for children in hospital. Whatever the project, our team focuses on engaging employees in volunteering that has a positive and measurable impact on the community.

For example, Volunteer Ireland partners with a company to plan and deliver an annual week-long programme of volunteer activities. Via this global volunteer week, that company alone engaged over 1,100 employee volunteers, contributing 3,000+ volunteer hours in 5 locations around the country in support of 8 community organisations.

For more information on partnerships with VI contact terri@volunteer.ie.

Community Volunteers

Community Volunteers provides a unique opportunity for individuals to get involved locally – supporting events, projects and urgent needs as they arise e.g. COVID-19 and the Ukrainian crisis. The programme allows people to volunteer as often or as little as they like. Opportunities are varied and could include volunteering as a Welcome Ambassador at a local event or festival, grocery shopping for the elderly or acting as a race steward at a local fun run. For more information go to: <https://www.volunteer.ie/community-volunteers/>

One-off Team Volunteering

One-off, team volunteering opportunities are always very popular. Things to keep in mind when looking for one-off opportunities:

- If you have a specific date in mind, give yourself plenty of time to plan well in advance. Try to be flexible in terms of when suits the community organisation
- Tap into your employee's *local knowledge*...is there a school, community garden, sports club, community centre they know of that is in need of support?
- When contacting groups let them know you are making an initial enquiry, make no promises at this stage, don't get their hopes up
- Remember, not all community groups are familiar with the concept of employee volunteering
- Don't just say you want to do an "employee volunteering day" with them – be specific about the things your group can offer whether that is practical hands-on help or sharing skills/advice
- To spark interest, share potential project ideas e.g. repainting playground markings, clearing a garden, painting a geometric mural, mentoring youth, providing advice around a business topic e.g. data analysis, document control, strategy development
- Provide a budget for materials along with a donation for the organisations' time
- Ensure your project, programme or activity meets an identified need within the non-profit and is completed to the highest standard