

Building Partnerships for 4-H Service-Learning Projects

Communities can be seen as a web of relationships that exist between local people and organizations. Social capital is the “currency” that builds communities that are safe, healthy, productive, and viable. By reaching out and working with community groups on your project, you can add to this web of relationships, building a stronger community!

Partnerships with community organizations, agencies and businesses can help your 4-H group: 1) learn more about the issue or topic you have chosen; 2) gain insights and guidance on how to do your project; 3) secure money, materials, equipment, expertise, volunteers, or other forms of support; and 4) become connected to other community resources for your project.

- 1. The first step is to identify and narrow down a list of possible community partners for your project. Look at community directories, websites, newspapers, social media, and other sources to locate organizations/agencies/businesses and what they do.**
 - Why does the organization/agency/business exist?
 - How has the organization/agency/business been involved in the community?
 - What specific resources does the organization/agency/business have to offer?
- 2. The next step is to determine what you are seeking from a partnership with the organization/agency/business. Also determine how your service project can offer something in return that is valuable to that agency/organization/business!**
- 3. The final step is to contact the organization/agency/business about a partnership, and make the ask!**
 - Who is the appropriate person to contact with that agency/organization/business?
 - How will you visit with them? Meeting in-person is best. Offer to go to them as a group.
 - What will group members share during the meeting? Be ready to introduce yourselves, explain why you are doing your project, what you see it can do for them, and the goal you would like to accomplish. Ask for what you need in specific terms, and what you will do to ensure a successful partnership. Always follow up with thanks. Good luck!



(Source: Youth Service America)