servePGH

A Blueprint for Promoting Citizen Service as a Strategy to Impact Local Challenges

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CITY OF
PITTSBURGH
"AMERICA'S MOST LIVABLE CITY"

LUKE RAVENSTAHL, MAYOR

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"The City of Pittsburgh has a rich culture of neighbors-helping-neighbors and in these difficult economic times, service is more important than ever. The viability of our City depends upon engaging citizens to work hand-in-hand with local government to address the needs of Pittsburgh neighborhoods and residents."

-Mayor Luke Ravenstahl

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Message from Our Mayor

Dear Neighbors,

When President Obama signed the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act into law on April 21, 2009 and rallied the nation to service, he spoke of being "possessed by the most American of ideas, that people who love this country can change it."

Similarly, we have long known that the answers to Pittsburgh's most pressing challenges cannot come from government alone. Throughout our City's history, volunteers have played a critical role in providing essential services to residents, and building leadership and capacity among citizens to address community concerns. I am proud of Pittsburgh's strong tradition of neighbors-helping-neighbors.

ServePGH builds on our City's rich history of service. It is a comprehensive, citywide blueprint for using impact volunteerism to achieve measurable progress on pressing local challenges. Within servePGH are a number of service initiatives that were created to meaningfully impact Pittsburgh neighborhoods and the lives of Pittsburgh youth. But as ambitious as this plan may be, it will only take us so far. It will take citizens who are willing to step up to the plate and invest their time, skills, and energies for the betterment of our City.

I have no doubt that Pittsburghers are up to the task. Time and again, I have been inspired by the generosity of residents who volunteer their time to build playgrounds, coach little league, mentor and read to children, serve on boards and commissions, and the list goes on.

Like President Obama, I believe that "people who love this country can change it." People who love this City can make a difference.

Sincerely,

Luke Ravenstahl

Luke Ravenstahl
Mayor, City of Pittsburgh

Executive Summary

On September 10, 2009, Mayor Luke Ravenstahl pledged that the City of Pittsburgh would help the country achieve the goals of the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act by joining Mayor Bloomberg and 15 other mayors from across our nation to launch the Cities of Service coalition. By signing the Declaration of Service, Mayor Ravenstahl committed to develop a coordinated effort to utilize impact volunteerism as a significant municipal strategy to address local challenges.

The City of Pittsburgh's service blueprint, servePGH, seeks to leverage local human capital through impact volunteerism directed towards two of Mayor Ravenstahl's top priorities: neighborhood development and youth. Through an intensive landscape analysis process, a number of specific challenges facing our city were identified, and initiatives that engage citizens in the solution were developed to address them.

These initiatives capitalize on the city's already strong service infrastructure. Each one is supported by a dynamic coalition of partners committed to cross-sector collaboration. To learn more and sign-up to participate, check out **servepgh.pittsburghpa.gov,** a new website created to connect volunteers with the high impact service initiatives described within servePGH.

Love Your Block

Love Your Block is a new block revitalization program created to provide resources for volunteers to reduce blight and instill neighborhood cohesion and pride. Neighborhood groups from across the City will be invited to propose volunteer-led projects to transform up to 20 blocks a year with a small grant and the support of key City departments.

Redd Up Zone

Redd Up Zone is a new initiative that engages volunteers in enhancing Pittsburgh's quality of life and reducing blight through coordinated litter clean-up efforts. Businesses and organizations recruit volunteers to remove litter from a designated area, a 'Redd Up Zone', and coordinate year-round opportunities to enhance the appearance, safety and cleanliness of Pittsburgh's streets.

Snow Angels

Snow Angels is a new referral program through which willing volunteers will be matched with individuals in need of assistance with shoveling their sidewalk throughout the winter, thereby building social capital and developing a culture of neighbors-helping-neighbors.

Mayor's Mentoring Initiative

Through the Mayor's Mentoring Initiative, Mayor Ravenstahl made a commitment to Pittsburgh's youths by enabling City employees to serve as middle-school mentors during the work week and encouraging local institutions to develop similar mentorship opportunities. This initiative was launched in partnership with Be A 6th Grade Mentor, the largest mentoring recruitment effort in our region's history, initiated by the leadership of the Youth Futures Commission, and developed through the collaboration of United Way of Allegheny County, Pittsburgh Public Schools, and the Mentoring Partnership of Southwestern Pennsylvania. The ultimate goal of the initiative is to dramatically increase the number of mentors and thereby increase participating students' engagement in school.

Civic Leadership Academy

In the City of Pittsburgh, many residents participate in neighborhood revitalization by joining community groups, starting block watches, stewarding community gardens, and much more. The vast majority of these efforts are carried out by volunteers. The Civic Leadership Academy, a 10-week course about local government, aims to support these efforts by fostering informed, effective and inspired community and civic leadership. At the end of the course, participants develop and implement one or more service projects based upon their experience in the program. Courses are offered three times a year, with a summer session open to high-school aged youth.

CITIES OF SERVICE

CITIESOFSERVICE.ORG

Founded in New York City on September 10, 2009 by 17 mayors from cities around the nation, Cities of Service is a bipartisan coalition of mayors who have committed to work together to engage citizens in a multi-year effort to address pressing city needs through impact volunteerism. The coalition has rapidly grown since its inception and now includes more than 100 mayors, representing more than 49 million Americans across the nation.

American cities face serious challenges, and many mayors want to take advantage of every resource available to them – including the time and energy of public-spirited residents — to address those challenges. However in cities across America , citizen service is often an under utilized or inefficiently utilized strategy by municipal governments. Cities of Service supports mayors to leverage citizen service strategies, address local needs and make government more effective.

All Cities of Service efforts are characterized by a concept called "impact volunteering" – volunteer strategies that target community needs, use best practices, and set clear outcomes and measures to gauge progress.

In June of 2010, the City of Pittsburgh was one of ten cities to receive a Cities of Service Leadership Grant. Funded jointly by Bloomberg Philanthropies and the Rockefeller Foundation, the two-year grants enable cities to hire Chief Service Officers responsible for developing and implementing high-impact service plans.

Cities of Service Methodology

In addition to funding, all Cities of Service Leadership Grant recipients receive technical assistance and support from Cities of Service to develop high-impact service plans. Much of this support follows a methodology outlined in the Cities of Service Playbook. [1]

Like all Cities of Service Leadership Grant recipients, the City of Pittsburgh first conducted a landscape analysis to identify both the specific challenges the City would address through service and the resources and opportunities available to support the effort. This landscape analysis included:

- Focus groups with key stakeholders, including representatives from city agencies, nonprofit organizations, colleges and universities, local businesses, and foundations;
- Surveys of volunteer-using nonprofit organizations, city agencies, and K-12 schools; and
- Expert interviews with local and national leaders, including Chief Service Officers from cities across the nation.

After completing the landscape analysis, the City of Pittsburgh developed a unique set of Cities of Service initiatives: "Impact Service Initiatives" to address specific challenges in the City's priority need areas and "Infrastructure Initiatives" to address cross-cutting service challenges. Next, metrics were developed to gauge the progress of each initiative and operational plans for implementation.

Special thanks to the following

Mayor's Service Advisory Council - Duquesne University/Southwestern Pennsylvania Regional Network for the Growth of Service-Learning (SPRING Network), Forbes Funds, Mentoring Partnership of Southwestern Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh Cares, Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group, Pittsburgh Interfaith Impact Network, Pittsburgh Public Schools, The Pittsburgh Promise, United Way of Allegheny County, Urban League and WESCO – for graciously guiding the development of servePGH and committing to see it through to success.

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and NYC Service for their vision.

The Rockefeller Foundation, Bloomberg Philanthropies, and Cities of Service for supporting the City of Pittsburgh in utilizing volunteerism and service as a change strategy.

McKinsey & Company and Sagawa/Jospin for their guidance and inspiration during the planning process.

The Corporation for National and Community Service for their dedication of AmeriCorps VISTA resources to support servePGH.

The Home Depot Foundation for its investment in Love Your Block and its national commitment to vibrant and sustainable communities.

And to all of the many non profits, philanthropies, corporations, and faith communities for the amazing work they do every day to empower community and to affect social change.

Endnotes/References

1. The Cities of Service Playbook is available for download at citiesofservice.org
2. http://www.volunteeringinamerica.gov/PA/Pittsburgh

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Initiatives At a Glance

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Priority Need Area	Specific Challenge	Initiative	Description	Impact Metrics	Participation Metrics	Initiative Lead	Start Date
Neighborhood Development	Blight reduction in Pittsburgh neighborhoods	Love Your Block	Love Your Block is a new block revitalization program created to provide resources for volunteers to reduce blight and instill neighborhood cohesion and pride. Neighborhood groups from across the City will be invited to propose volunteer-led projects to transform up to 20 blocks a year with a small grant and the support of key City departments.	# of blocks revitalized, # of green spaces/gardens created, # of trees planted, amount of litter collected	# of volunteers	Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Initiatives	Spring 2011
		Redd Up Zone	Redd Up Zone is a new initiative that engages volunteers in enhancing Pittsburgh's quality of life and reducing blight through coordinated litter clean-up efforts. Businesses and organizations recruit volunteers to remove litter from a designated area, a 'Redd Up Zone', and coordinate year-round opportunities to enhance the appearance, safety and cleanliness of Pittsburgh's streets.	# of designated Redd Up Zones, # of cleanups, # of blocks maintained	# of volunteers	Department of Public Works	Fall 2011
	Developing culture of neighbors-helping-neighbors to meet the needs of all Pittsburgh residents	Snow Angels	Snow Angels is a new referral program through which willing volunteers will be matched with individuals in need of assistance with shoveling their sidewalk throughout the winter, thereby building social capital and developing a culture of neighbors-helping-neighbors.	# of program recipients with a committed volunteer	# of volunteers	Mayor's 311 Response Line	Fall 2011
Youth	Additional support needed for students at critical transition points	Mayor's Mentoring Initiative	Through the Mayor's Mentoring Initiative, Mayor Ravenstahl made a commitment to Pittsburgh's youths by enabling City employees to serve as middle-school mentors during the work week and encouraging local institutions to develop similar mentorship opportunities. This initiative was launched in partnership with Be A 6th Grade Mentor, the largest mentoring recruitment effort in our region's history, initiated by the leadership of the Youth Futures Commission and developed through the collaboration of United Way of Allegheny County, Pittsburgh Public Schools, and the Mentoring Partnership of Southwestern Pennsylvania. The ultimate goal of the initiative is to dramatically increase the number of mentors and thereby increase participating students' engagement in school.	# of 6th grade students with a mentor, # of students identifying mentors as trusted resources, # of students with increased engagement in school, knowledge of the Pittsburgh Promise Scholarship Program and its eligibility criteria	# of volunteers	United Way of Allegheny County	Spring 2011
Cross-Cutting Challenge		**Initiative**	**Description**	**Metrics**		**Initiative Lead**	**Start Date**
While Mayor Ravenstahl consistently emphasizes the importance of civic engagement and volunteerism, there is no specific call to action to which all Pittsburgh residents can respond		Civic Leadership Academy	In the City of Pittsburgh, many residents participate in neighborhood revitalization by joining community groups, starting block watches, stewarding community gardens, and much more. The vast majority of these efforts are carried out by volunteers. The Civic Leadership Academy, a 10-week course about local government, aims to support these efforts by fostering informed, effective and inspired community and civic leadership. At the end of the course, participants develop and implement one or more service projects based upon their experience in the program. Courses are offered three times a year, with a summer session open to high-school aged youth.	# of graduates, # of service projects, impact of service projects		Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Initiatives	Spring 2011

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The full servePGH report can be downloaded at servepgh.pittsburghpa.gov

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