

# Unite Humanity Toolkit

A resource guide for planning and increasing public awareness for collaborative service projects

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## @Council on American-Islamic Relations

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CAIR is America's largest Muslim civil liberties and advocacy organization. Its mission is to enhance the understanding of Islam, encourage dialogue, protect civil liberties, empower American Muslims, and build coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding.

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## UNITE HUMANITY CAMPAIGN TOOLKIT

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## ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

Need help? CAIR staff has experience planning service projects and working with the media and are available for consultation and assistance.

- For advice on planning your event
  - Lauren Schreiber (CAIR-National Outreach & Events Manager)
    - Phone: 202-488-8787
    - Email: [events@cair.com](mailto:events@cair.com)
- For help engaging the media, personalized training, and a customized local media contact list
  - Ibrahim Hooper (CAIR-National Communications Director)
    - Phone: 202-488-8787
    - Email: [ihooper@cair.com](mailto:ihooper@cair.com)

## Unite Humanity Campaign Overview

In response to the work of Islamophobes and others to divide our communities along racial, religious and ethnic lines, the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) has developed this initiative to show, through positive action, that our collective national ideals of valuing diversity and uplifting our communities are more powerful than the voices calling for division.

The objective of CAIR's Unite Humanity campaign is to facilitate and raise awareness of interfaith and/or community-based partnerships between groups representing diverse beliefs and backgrounds by highlighting the service projects they are doing together. This will be primarily accomplished through a community calendar, a social media campaign, and a series of services CAIR will offer to help connect groups doing community service with each other and the media. Though this, we hope to increase public awareness of Muslims and their community partners and to assist communities in organizing and launching cooperative public service projects.

By bringing community partners together to overcome negative narratives, this campaign will help provide an alternative and collective voice rooted in service, showing that our communities are more united now than ever before.

### Campaign Chart

GOAL	CAMPAIGN COMPONENTS	HOW CAIR CAN HELP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>To encourage service-based partnerships</b> between Muslim organizations and other organizations in local communities</li><li>• <b>To increase public awareness</b> of these projects, both locally and nationally</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Toolkits</b> to help communities in planning, with focus on importance of marketing and public awareness</li><li>• <b>Media Trainings</b></li><li>• <b>Local media contact list</b> to be shared with Community</li><li>• <b>Event Promotion</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Your event will be featured on CAIR's 'Unite Humanity' calendar dedicated to promoting community events and project</li><li>• Projects will be included in CAIR emails</li><li>• CAIR National will promote/repost projects on social media</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Announce/promote projects to community</b></li><li>• <b>Offer media training</b> to help increase public awareness (webinar, video, some in-person if requested)</li><li>• <b>Connect local media to your events/projects</b> through social media and by leveraging our direct connections</li><li>• <b>Update campaign page</b> to highlight these projects</li></ul>

## Join the Movement and Share Your Project

### *Promote Your Collaborative Service Project:*

If you have scheduled a community service project in partnership with another organization or group, promote it by visiting [www.cair.com/unitehumanity](http://www.cair.com/unitehumanity) and select “Submit Service Project.” Then fill out the form and CAIR will:

- Add your event to CAIR’s Unite Humanity Calendar,
- Include your event in Unite Humanity Campaign Publicity,
- Share your project and photos in Emails and on Social Media, and
- Provide a list of local media contacts for you to send your event info to.

### *Get Additional Support for Your Service Projects*

This Toolkit contains some basic information to help you hold collaborative community service projects, as well as links to additional resources and organizations. If you’d like additional assistance or support, visit us at [www.cair.com/unitehumanity](http://www.cair.com/unitehumanity) and select “Join the Movement” for a link to toolkits and a form to request additional services, including:

- Review of press release for event,
- Creation of custom list of local and regional media,
- Guidance in developing a media outreach plan,
- Trainings on media relations, volunteer management or non-profit best practices.

## **Possible Service Projects**

Are you interested in starting a collaborative service project, or looking to improve or grow an existing one? Below are some possible service projects ideas, along with resources and organizations that can serve as partners or provide additional support. Remember, these are just a few of the many community service projects you can work on to demonstrate the unity of our American community. Other ideas for projects, and tips for execution, can be found by contacting the National Service Organizations attached here as Appendix A.

### **Organize a Food Drive**

Mosques, churches, and other faith and community groups can partner to support a local food bank. Faith and community centers can also serve as food pantry locations and provide volunteers to assist food banks with the sorting, packing and delivery of the collected food.

Before you organize a good drive, make sure you contact your local food bank to see what they currently need (collecting the wrong things can actually create more work for them). For additional info on holding a successful food drive, check out these sites from [Feeding America](#) and [Create the Good](#).

### **Collect School Supplies**

A local school district, PTA or non-profit is likely already collecting and distributing school supplies for lower income children. Reach out to them to participate and set up a collection drive in your house of worship or community organization. If there is not already a local program in your community, you can collect donations of school supplies and place in new backpacks and gift to a local homeless or women's shelter.

### **Host a Blood Drive**

Hosting a blood drive is a great way to save lives and connect with community. The blood donated is needed by local hospitals and the opportunity to donate blood brings in a broad group of community members. Different faith organizations can partner to host a series of blood drives at their centers, or to promote one at a central location. [Register with the Red Cross](#) for more information about hosting a collaborative blood drive.

### **Plan a Neighborhood Clean-Up Project**

Get your family and friends (along with their family and friends) out to a local park, beach, lake or neighborhood. Invite other institutions to join you and connect with your new community while beautifying and cleaning shared spaces. Local Boy Scout or Girl Scout troops may also be interested in helping. Be sure that someone is bringing trash bags, gloves and any other necessary supplies!

### **Raise Awareness by Participating**

Many important causes have walks, runs and other events designed to raise awareness and funds. Support these important causes by building an interfaith team to participate, you could even wear matching t-shirts with #UniteHumanity! Some groups which hold regional walks or runs include: [Aids Walk](#), [Autism Speaks](#), [Avon Walk for Break Cancer](#), [American Lung Association](#), [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#), and many, many others.

## **Organizing and Holding a Service Event – Best Practices**

Though a lot of the work you have to do to get ready will be specific to the type of service project you are holding, there are a few principles and tricks which will help ensure success.

### **Planning & Delegation**

Planning and preparation are of course essential to any successful effort, and our efforts at community growth require them. Sufficient planning requires thinking through each the entire event, identifying responsibilities and assigning those to a team member with a deadline. Attached to this Toolkit as Appendix B is a checklist you can use for assistance in planning and delegating tasks.

### **Pick the Right Date**

Setting the date for a collaborative event can be deceptively difficult. Make sure that you check in with potential community partners, to gauge their availability. Also, review community calendars to see if there are any events which could “compete” with yours – if so, try to support those and pick a different day. When dealing with our neighbors from different cultures and religions, it is also necessary to consider their holidays and religious practices – try not to schedule an interfaith event at a time when one community is engaging in practice which prevents, or makes difficult, their participation.

### **Engage Volunteers**

The great majority of work at events will be performed by volunteers, and managing volunteers is a unique and (sometimes) difficult challenge. Volunteers have a different set of objectives and expectations than employees, and to continue to engagements organizations must understand and help volunteers meet their objectives and expectations. Be sure to have someone assigned to recruit volunteers, and train and manage them the day of the event. Idealist.org has lots more helpful information at the [Volunteer Management Resource Center](#).

### **Evaluate and Get Better**

Lasting positive change doesn't come from one event, it takes a community systematically working towards a shared goal. Since efforts should be continuous and ongoing, it is important to evaluate and get better. Consider the type of service project you are holding and your goals. It is best if you can define SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound) and also identify key performance measurements (such as number of attendees or volunteers). The [Nonprofit Resource Center](#) and [Foundation Center's Grant Space](#) have numerous articles and resources to help develop an evaluation methodology to measure success and get even better.

## **Promoting Your Service Event – Media Best Practices**

### **Build a Media List**

Identify the key media—print, TV, radio and internet—in your state, be sure to include ethnic media and university media. Contact these outlets and get contact information for the gate keepers listed below.

Wire services are outlets such as the Associated Press and Reuters. They maintain daybooks about local events that reporters check regularly. Be sure any event you hold is listed in the local day book.

### **Media Gate Keepers**

Talk to and build relationships with the people in positions that actually give you access. These may not be the people you see on TV or whose name is on the top of the story. Some of these positions are:

- Television: News Assignment Editor and Talk Show/News Producer
- Print: City/Metro Editor, Photo Editor, Religion Reporter, Feature Editor, National/Foreign Desk Editor
- Radio: News Director and Talk Show Producer
- Wire Services, examples are Daybook Editor and Bureau Chief
- Bloggers

### **Press Conference Timing**

The best time to hold a press conference is between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. or in the evening, 7 – 8:30 p.m. The worst times to hold a press conference is 2 – 6 p.m. and especially avoid 4 – 5 p.m.

### **Press Release Best Practices**

A media advisory goes before a press conference or event. It lets editors know the key details about your event. A press or news release is longer, up to a page, and provides more detail. It goes after a press conference or when you simply need to get information to the media.

The below points apply to both types of release:

- Headline and Lead Sentence - Who, What, When, Where, Why
- A person reading your release should know the core issue and what you want after reading the first 150 words of your statement.
- Keep your paragraphs short.
- Try to stifle creativity. You are not writing poetry. Anything sent to the media should be concise.
- Be clear, concise and “active.” Eliminate all unnecessary words.
- Define all non-English terms. Put opinions in attributed quotes.
- Re-write. Re-write. Re-write. Triple check for accuracy.
- Include usable contact information. Anyone listed as a contact must answer their phone or e-mail promptly.
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## Appendix A: Resource List of National Service Organizations

Organization	Website	Email	Phone	Type of Events
United Way	<a href="http://www.unitedway.org/">http://www.unitedway.org/</a>	Use online contact form	703.836.7112	Help sponsor a variety of events for various causes
Boys and Girls Club of America	<a href="http://www.bgca.org/Pages/index.aspx">http://www.bgca.org/Pages/index.aspx</a>	<a href="mailto:info@bgca.org">info@bgca.org</a>	(404) 487-5700	Host a community picnic or an awareness panel on a variety of issues
AmeriCorps	<a href="http://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/ Americorps">http://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/ Americorps</a>	<a href="mailto:info@cns.gov">info@cns.gov</a>	(202) 606-5000	Co-sponsor afterschool tutoring, or work together to staff a soup kitchen
American Red Cross	<a href="http://www.redcross.org/">http://www.redcross.org/</a>	Use online contact form	(1-800-733-2767) or 202-303-4498	Blood drive or co-sponsor a health fair
March of Dimes	<a href="http://www.marchofdimes.org">http://www.marchofdimes.org</a>	Use online contact form	(914) 997-4488	Co-sponsor a walk/run or host a panel discussion
Salvation Army	<a href="http://www.salvationarmyusa.org/">http://www.salvationarmyusa.org/</a> <a href="http://virginiasalvationarmy.org/nca/c/">http://virginiasalvationarmy.org/nca/c/</a>	<a href="mailto:ray_jackson@uss.salvationarmy.org">ray_jackson@uss.salvationarmy.org</a>	202.829.0100	Co-sponsor a food, clothing, or shoe drive
Habitat for Humanity	<a href="http://www.habitat.org/">http://www.habitat.org/</a>	<a href="mailto:buildlouder@habitat.org">buildlouder@habitat.org</a> <a href="mailto:youthprograms@habitat.org">youthprograms@habitat.org</a>	1-229-924-6935	Partner to help rebuild the community i.e. homes, community centers, etc.
Girl Scouts of the USA	<a href="http://www.girlscouts.org/">http://www.girlscouts.org/</a>	<a href="mailto:info@gscnc.org">info@gscnc.org</a>	(212) 852-8000	Host a community car wash, or co-sponsor with a local hospital to have a community rummage sale
Boy Scouts of America	<a href="http://www.scouting.org/">http://www.scouting.org/</a>	<a href="mailto:don.durbin@scouting.org">don.durbin@scouting.org</a>	301-530-9360	Plant trees or host an afternoon of cleaning up the community
Feeding America	<a href="http://www.feedingamerica.org/">http://www.feedingamerica.org/</a>	Use online contact form	800.771.2303	Hold a local food drive
Food Corps	<a href="https://foodcorps.org/">https://foodcorps.org/</a>	<a href="mailto:info@foodcorps.org">info@foodcorps.org</a>	(212) 596-7045	Hold a local food drive
National Wildlife Federation	<a href="http://www.nwf.org/">http://www.nwf.org/</a>	Use online contact form	1-800-822-9919	Celebrate National wild life week by hosting outdoor community activities

**Appendix B – Event Planning Checklist**

STATUS	TASKS: Before	POINT PERSON	DEADLINE
	Form a planning committee/team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What service project will you do?</li> <li>• When will it happen?</li> <li>• Who will be responsible for what task?</li> <li>• What organization will you partner with?</li> <li>• What resources will you need?</li> <li>• How will you promote the event?</li> <li>• Who is in charge of contacting the media?</li> </ul>		
	Secure Partnership		
	Secure Funds		
	Secure Space		
	Design marketing materials		
	Market the event <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flyers/Posters</li> <li>• Facebook event page</li> <li>• Post on community calendars</li> <li>• Ads in local newspapers/publications</li> </ul>		
	Recruit volunteers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How many do you need?</li> <li>• What will they do?</li> <li>• Who will manage them?</li> </ul>		
	Logistics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What needs to happen the day-of?</li> <li>• Do you need any supplies/materials?</li> </ul>		
	Prepare a post-event evaluation plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will you gauge the success of your event?</li> <li>• How will you solicit feedback?                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Survey? Group meeting? Electronic?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Who will you solicit feedback from?                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Participants/volunteers/organizers?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		

STATUS	TASKS: The Day Of	POINT PERSON	DEADLINE
	Manage/orient volunteers		
	Set-Up		
	Take photos / video		

STATUS	TASKS: After	POINT PERSON	DEADLINE
	Clean-Up		
	Conduct an evaluation		

## Appendix C: Sample Press Release

The text below illustrates the basic elements of a press release / media advisory. Notes are included *in blue* to help you craft your own.

CAIR-MN to Host Free Monthly Legal Clinics

*[Note: Keep the headline both short and comprehensive. It is what prompts people to read further or ignore your release.]*

(MINNEAPOLIS, MN, 9/22/14) - On Wednesday, September 24, 2014, the Minnesota chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-MN) will host its third Free Brief Advice Legal Clinic. The monthly clinics provide free legal advice in areas such as civil rights, housing, family law, immigration, and employment.

*[Note: Keep paragraphs short. The goal is to get coverage of your event. All of the core details of your event should be in the first paragraph.]*

WHAT: Free Brief Advice Legal Clinic

WHEN: Wednesday, September 24, 2014 from 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. and Wednesday, October 29, 2014 from 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. Future dates to be announced.

WHERE: Dakota County Northern Service Center, 1 Mendota Road West, West St. Paul, MN, 55118, Room 520

*[Note: By this point in the advisory, an editor knows the Who, What, Where, When and Why of the event. This information is presented in a simple, easy to absorb fashion. The listed contacts must respond quickly, within twenty minutes, to calls or e-mails. The rest of the advisory simply adds detail to the above.]*

"It's important to give individuals access to attorneys so they can better understand and navigate through their legal issues," said CAIR-MN Civil Rights Attorney Ellen Longfellow. "We thank our partners the F.R. Bigelow Foundation, the Minnesota State Bar Foundation and the Hennepin County Bar Foundation for helping us better serve the community."

*[Note: Always include a quote that can be inserted into coverage of your release. Any opinion in your release should be in the form of a quote. The rest of the release should be comprised of facts.]*

Attorneys and law students interested in volunteering can contact CAIR-MN at [info@mn.cair.com](mailto:info@mn.cair.com) or 612-206-3360.

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CONTACT: CAIR-MN Civil Rights Attorney Ellen Longfellow, 612-206-3360, [elongfellow@cair.com](mailto:elongfellow@cair.com); CAIR National Communications Director Ibrahim Hooper, 202-744-7726, [ihooper@cair.com](mailto:ihooper@cair.com).

*[The listed contacts must respond quickly, within twenty minutes, to calls or e-mails. The rest of the advisory simply adds detail to the above.]*