

## Great American Cleanup 2017 "Clean Your Block Party"

### Volunteer Program Guide



The Great American Cleanup is the country's largest community improvement program that kicks off in more than 20,000 communities each spring. This national program engages more than 5 million volunteers and participants who take action in their communities every year to create positive change and lasting impact.

This year's Great American Cleanup theme — "Clean Your Block Party" — encourages all volunteers and participants to take what you've learned from experiencing a public space Great American Cleanup event and bring it home to organize an event in your neighborhood, on your own block. Below is our online toolkit and activity ideas. Once you've conducted your event, we encourage you to celebrate your hard work and accomplishments with neighbors, friends and family.

#### Project Ideas

1. Litter cleanup
2. Plant trees, shrubs and gardens
3. Revitalize your local park

#### Cleanup Event Steps

1. Define the purpose of your project
2. Gather a team
3. Set a date
4. Layout a plan including: tools and materials needed, budget and day-of event instructions
5. Execute and have fun
6. Celebrate
7. Share your results with Keep America Beautiful [[gac@kab.org](mailto:gac@kab.org)]

#### Results

The goal of your project should be to take the knowledge learned at your local Great American Cleanup event and apply it to your neighborhood. Focus on results with immediate impact. (e.g., number of trees planted, pounds of litter collected, yards of fence painted)



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## Resources

For more information about hosting a "Clean Your Block Party," visit our website or contact your local affiliate for tools and resources available in your community.

## LITTER CLEANUP

### Before the Event

- > Organize a cleanup committee of family, friends and neighbors who share your passion for the cause
- > Visit the area you are planning to clean
- > Determine areas to target and set boundaries
- > Take "before" photos
- > Register your event by emailing [gac@kab.org](mailto:gac@kab.org)
- > Contact your local sanitation/public works department to see if they advise you to use any special trash bags/receptacles you may need, or can provide hauling services for bulk items
- > Prepare equipment you'll need (bags, gloves, litter pickers, rakes or shovels); permissions required; and make volunteers aware of additional equipment needed and appropriate clothing they should wear

### Day of Event

- > Set up an assembly area for volunteers to gather prior to and after the cleanup
- > Ensure you have all materials (e.g., trash bags, gloves)
- > Arrange collection locations for filled litter bags and bulky items
- > Conduct a safety talk at the beginning of the activity so volunteers know how to safely pick up litter
- > Assign volunteers with specific responsibilities
- > Have a first-aid kit on hand, and provide access to water
- > Take "during" photos
- > Record your results (i.e. pounds of litter)
- > Take "after" photos

### Tips for bagging litter/bulky items

- > Make sure you have identified receptacles for litter vs. recyclables
  - o Recyclable items: paper, cards, cardboard, glass bottles and jars, metal tins, can and aerosols, plastic bottles, pots, tubs and trays (Check with your local trash hauler for local recycling standards.)
  - o Non-recyclable items: Food waste, wood, electronics and cables, clothes/textiles
- > Separate non-recyclable items such as electronics for distribution to a proper disposal area after the event

### **Safety tips**

- > Wear gloves; thick-soled, closed shoes; long pants; and long-sleeve shirts
- > Wear sunscreen and bug repellent
- > Be aware of your surroundings and on the lookout for potential hazards
- > Wash hands with antibacterial soap after the cleanup

## Plant Trees, Shrubs and Gardens

### **Before the event**

- > Organize a cleanup committee of family, friends and neighbors who share your passion for the cause
- > Visit the planting site, determine areas to be planted
- > Take "before" photos
- > Register your event by emailing [gac@kab.org](mailto:gac@kab.org)
- > Set goals such as number of trees planted
- > Research any trees and plants that you are thinking of planting
  - o Consider using plants native to your area
  - o Make sure you have enough space for your plant to grow
- > Draw up your design
- > Prepare with equipment you'll need; any permissions required; and make volunteers aware of equipment needed and appropriate clothing

### **Day of Event**

- > Set up an assembly area for volunteers to gather prior to and after the event
- > Ensure you have all materials (e.g., gardening gloves, tools, shovels, rakes)
- > Arrange collection locations for filled litter bags and bulky items
- > Assign volunteer responsibilities
- > Have a first-aid kit on hand
- > Apply any necessary safety parameters i.e.: signage on roadways to make passing vehicles aware of planting
- > Take "during" photos
- > Record results (e.g., number of trees/plants planted)
- > Take "after" photos

## Tips for planting

### Trees

- > Dig your hole a couple of inches deeper than the bottom wrapped part of the tree that contains the roots and twice as wide
- > Place the tree in your hole and fill the area around the root ball with soil
- > Build the soil up in a mound around the tree's trunk, slightly higher than the level ground
- > Water the tree once you're done to thoroughly drench the roots
- > Water regularly until established

### Flowers

- > Set plants atop the ground and space them evenly
- > Soak the plants while they are still in their original pots
- > Gently pry apart matted roots so they'll spread in the soil (If available) add slow-release flower food into each hole and mix into soil
- > Place flower plant in soil, cover with dirt, and water thoroughly
- > Water regularly, as needed

### Plants (Look for native plants)

- > Dig a hole slightly bigger than the size of the pot the plant is currently growing
- > Use a tool (garden fork) to loosen the base of the hole and add additional compost
- > Soak the roots of the plant in a bucket of water prior to planting then invert the pot and gently take the plant out
- > Place the plant in the hole
- > Fill the root of the plant with additional soil Water plant to drench roots
- > Water regularly, as needed

## PARK REVITALIZATION

### Before the Event

- > Determine what you want to accomplish; event ideas:
  - o Equipment/fence painting, graffiti removal, surface replenishment, etc. Meet with any local park/council reps to share ideas/get approvals
- > Organize a cleanup committee of family, friends and neighbors who share your passion for the cause Determine how much time the project warrants
- > Determine which skills are needed for specific effort
- > Set a date and location
- > Create job descriptions
- > Take "before" photos

### Day of Event

- > Set up an assembly area for volunteers to gather prior to and after the event
- > Ensure you have all tools needed for specific project Assign volunteers responsibilities
- > Have a first-aid kit on hand
- > Apply any necessary safety parameters and take "during" photos
- > Record results, i.e. acres of parks cleaned & improved, and take "after" photos

### Tips to get you started:

- > Think about what types of activities you want to happen in your park to help you decide what equipment you'll need or changes you want to implement
  - o i.e. if you want it to be a place for relaxing, gardens and benches may be a best suited project; if you want it to be place for socializing, picnic benches may be more desirable
- > When you have gathered your team and started brainstorming your project, bring pictures and videos to show people the possibilities
- > Learn your community's needs. You may have had a need for a playground 10 years ago, but now those children are grown; talk to your community members and those who regularly use the park to ensure your project meet their current needs

*Once you've decided on your project contact a Keep America Beautiful staff member and/or your local affiliate for project support.*

