

DIRECT SERVICE EVENTS

BEST PRACTICES GUIDE



This best practices guide serves as a resource for all law enforcement officers and their agencies on how to implement and volunteer for direct service events within their community.

Direct service events such as clinics, camps, and other specialized one-day events encourage youth to succeed and envision their futures while having fun in healthy, productive ways. These opportunities encourage youth participation retention and interest in the program while also giving law enforcement officers the chance to connect with youth, break down barriers, and build relationships in a positive environment. As a law enforcement officer and/or agency, we encourage you to host direct service events in your community or volunteer as a mentor while partnering with a local youth-serving organization such as a Boys & Girls Club, YMCA, or school.

DIRECT SERVICE EVENTS WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT PARTICIPATION:

- **One-Day Events**

- Provide one-day events to bolster participation of youth and community-based organizations. These events can consist of several different stations with a wide variation of activities.
- Station Ideas:
 - Sports
 - Soccer shooting
 - Football relay
 - Baseball hitting
 - Dodgeball
 - STEM
 - Arts & Crafts
 - Ice Breaker Games
 - Law Enforcement Presentations
 - K9 Demonstration
 - Helicopter landing
 - Presentation of cars, trucks, equipment, etc.



- Having a variety of different activities fosters an inclusive environment. Not every participant will be interested in sports so it is important, to ensure retention, to have other activities such as: face painting, teambuilding activities, board games, interactive online learning, etc.
- Upon arrival, separate youth by age. This will create a safer environment by keeping youth of the same age together that are similar in size and ability.
- Set up the direction you would like the youth to rotate through each station (i.e. clockwise or counter-clockwise), as all youth should have an equal and fair opportunity to participate in each activity. Set a timer for the length of each station and ensure to leave enough time for youth to rotate.
 - o For example, each station will last 15 minutes. At the end of the 15 minutes, include two minutes to rotate to ensure youth get to the next activity.
- During direct service events, it is important to have additional volunteers, mentors, and/or coaches to help manage the stations and interact with youth. Encourage community-based organizations as well as students and student athletes from local high schools, colleges, and universities to volunteer at your direct service event.
 - o Another resource to recruit volunteers is to reach out to local professional sports teams and invite their staff or players to serve as mentors.
 - If a local community-based organization such as a Boys & Girls Club, YMCA, or school is hosting a one-day event, reach out to see how your agency can volunteer. Possible volunteer opportunities can include:
 - o Offer to attend the event with additional officers as volunteers/mentors
 - o Create a law enforcement presentation for the event. Examples include:
 - K-9 demonstration
 - o Equipment show-and-tell
 - o Food donation and distribution
 - o During these events, it is important to have a paramedic, EMT, or athletic trainer on site in the event of injury or an emergency. Reach out to local fire departments for EMT or paramedic volunteers. Local high schools may also have athletic trainers on staff that are willing to volunteer. However, if you are already trained in this field, the need to hire an outside party may not be necessary.

• **College Day Experiences**

- College Day Experiences, direct service events that are part of the *Badges for Baseball* program, introduce at-risk youth to a college campus and encourage kids to continue toward a path of educational attainment. Many youth never experience anything outside of their communities, so this event gives them an up-close-and-personal glimpse at higher education led by college professionals and student athletes as their guides.
- Reach out to local community colleges and universities. Most collegiate athletic teams have a set number of volunteer hours they need to complete each year. Contact the coach of a team or the operations director of the athletics' department to discuss participating in this opportunity.
- Important elements of each College Day Experience include:
 - o Campus tours introduce youth to college life. Tours give kids the ability to see a college campus, the inside of a college classroom, dorm rooms and more.
 - o Interaction with both students and student athletes is important for youth to get firsthand knowledge of the college or university.
 - Set up a student panel where youth can ask questions about college life to current students.
 - o Expose youth to educational and athletic activities. Introduce kids to additional activities that colleges and universities have to offer which may include:



**CAL RIPKEN, SR.
FOUNDATION**

TRANSFORM COMMUNITIES, CHANGE KIDS' LIVES

- NCAA-sanctioned events
- College/University Club events
- Guest speakers and special presentations give youth an opportunity to discuss how to plan for attending college.
 - Admissions department
 - Professors and/or coaches

- **Camps**

- Multi-sport and activity camps are an extended version of a one-day event. These can be multi-day, weekend, or overnight camps for youth. Camp activities can include:
 - Sports and activities
 - Inflatables
 - Law enforcement presentations
 - Swimming
 - Zip lining
 - Rock climbing, etc.
- To get involved with hosting or volunteering at camps, start with pre-existing camps hosted by local community-based organizations. Partner together to plan and execute a camp, utilizing their youth and if needed, their facility. Most community-based organizations have implemented camps of their own, so they are able to provide great insight as well as a pool of participants.
 - Camps give law enforcement officers the opportunity to spend more time with youth in a variety of rolls to create positive relationships.
 - Keep in mind, overnight camps and trips require very specific parameters. Before planning and implementation, ensure your camp or trip follows your state guidelines.



SCREENING/BACKGROUND CHECKS:

When hosting direct service events, it is important to ensure the safety of youth participants, volunteers, mentors, and coaches involved. Any adult interacting with youth during an event or any program must successfully pass a background check screening. As a Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation partner, all employees, volunteers, mentors, and coaches must successfully pass a background check screening annually. This is designed for partners and youth-serving organizations to keep children safe from sexual predators and those who seek to harm them.

The Ripken Foundation has a first-of-its-kind resource that includes a newly developed Child Protection Policy, affordable background checks, and child safety training videos available to any organization in America at no cost to all who register online at www.ripkenfoundation.org/resource-portal.

EVENT LIABILITY WAIVERS:

When hosting direct service events, it is important to supply any participating community-based organization with proper liability waivers prior to attending any clinics, camps or one-day events. This waiver verifies the following:

- Participating organization(s) consents to participating in the event.
- Allows the use of photographs, videos and use of likeness of participants to be used by hosting organization (i.e. social media posts, media exposure, etc.).
- Gives the right to remove any participants from the event if necessary.
- Directs all liability to the participating organization.



**CAL RIPKEN, SR.
FOUNDATION**

TRANSFORM COMMUNITIES, CHANGE KIDS' LIVES