

Answers to FAQ by Charities Seeking Help from PMD (as of 5/13/24)

1. If I want an organized group of volunteers to help my charitable organization, what do I need to do?

Please “lurk” on our private email list to become familiar with typical PMD projects and/or peruse examples of PMD projects listed at <https://www.pmd.org> and then CALL Executive Director Lori Tsuruda at PMD’s office, (*82)1-781-963-0373, to discuss your specific needs and timetable at least a few months in advance. If a potential project sounds feasible, then she will schedule a site visit and the project date.

As of May 2024, PMD has engaged nearly 10,500 volunteers in 1,438+ service projects assisting 156 local charities. PMD volunteer projects that can potentially be repeated annually or semi-annually assisting underserved communities in Greater Boston are of particular interest.

Please note that PMD is unable to post or forward announcements requesting volunteers for non-PMD projects. (See Q&A#13 below.)

2. What kinds of tasks can PMD volunteers perform for my charity?

PMD service projects can involve gardening, painting, landscaping, visiting, cooking, face painting, assisting with crafts, setting or cleaning up tables and chairs for associated activities for which we have assisted, etc. for charities in Greater Boston, Massachusetts.

PMD projects generally serve organizations with limited volunteer resources, engage 12 or more volunteers, are hands-on, do NOT require specialized/licensed skills or careers, and do NOT entail fundraising, clerical tasks, or solely moving heavy objects. Project sites must be accessible by public transportation (including commuter rail) unless carpooling can be organized, generally within Route 128.

PMD owns specific tools and has expertise/certifications in managing volunteers who landscape, improve trails, cook, paint, help kids carve pumpkins, face paint, make balloon animals, serve food safely, etc. Please speak with PMD Executive Director Lori Tsuruda at (*82)1-781-963-0373 to discuss your specific needs and interests.

3. When and for how long are PMD volunteers available?

PMD’s core service projects involving groups of unrelated individuals take place on weekend days and occasional weeknights. *(PMD’s corporate partnership projects take place on weekdays during business hours, but companies must first select your charity’s activity. See Q&A#12.)* Typically, PMD projects last two to seven hours, with fifteen minutes at the start and 15 minutes at the conclusion of the project for orientation and evaluation, respectively.

4. What do I need to provide for the volunteers who come to do work at my organization?

Charities must generally provide project materials, but this is dependent on specific project tasks and scale, so will be mutually determined after a site visit.

Charities must have at least one staff person on-site during the entire project time span to welcome and thank the group as well as to educate volunteers about the mission, operations, and clients through a brief presentation, Q&A, and handouts. We recommend that you encourage interested volunteers to sign up personally for your organization's mailing list since PMD cannot provide any personal contact information. Following the project's completion, a willingness to discuss how the project went is helpful.

5. How do I contact or thank PMD volunteers?

PMD's confidentiality policy allows us to share only volunteers' names and towns (*if you request them*), but prevents us from sharing their personal contact information with you.

Based on your project's specifics, PMD prepares a detailed document with map and background information, which is emailed to volunteers no less than three days before your project is scheduled to take place.

Afterward, usually within two days of the project, PMD will create a public photo album on facebook and email the link to you to *Like* and post a "thank you" Comment by your organization's facebook page and/or your personal account. Alternatively, within 48 hours of the project's conclusion, you may email a message addressed to "PMD Volunteers" that we can forward to volunteers. Your thank-you email should cite the tasks completed in context with your charity's mission and may include opportunities or links for further involvement.

6. What is the liability of the agency if volunteers are injured?

The agency is subject to the same liability and policies and procedures (e.g., incident report forms) if any visitor is injured on agency premises. Although PMD names the charity and staff in the waiver forms it requires from all participants, this serves only as evidence of knowledge should litigation ensue.

7. Am I required to supervise volunteers?

No, unless the volunteer activity requires your specific skills (and certifications).

A trained PMD volunteer Project Manager leads and coordinates groups of PMD volunteers to accomplish the needed tasks. PMD Project Managers

- Are trained by PMD and certified in First Aid and Adult CPR/AED
- Run PMD projects from start to finish.
- Account for all volunteers and give them proper training, support, and supervision so that they are comfortable with their work assignments.
- Keep the group focused.
- Take photographs throughout the project.
- Ensure that volunteers learn about the charity/clients and the broader context of their work.
- Prepare to address the unexpected.
- Represent PMD to the community and to the volunteers.
- Lead PMD volunteers in group reflection, for which they also bake cookies, unless the project includes cooking.

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For first-time projects, PMD Executive Director Lori Tsuruda usually serves as the project manager, particularly if food service or painting is involved.

8. Does PMD conduct background checks on the volunteers who will come to my charity?

If your charity routinely requires criminal history and/or sexual offender background checks on its volunteers, PMD will collect written volunteer authorization forms for you if you provide the blank forms and lead time compatible with our recruitment schedule.

If your agency does not routinely perform checks for one-time volunteers but PMD volunteers will be working directly with clients who are elderly, disabled, or minors, then PMD will perform its own criminal history record checks and screen according to state health & human services standards, but cannot share any record checks with you since they are confidential.

9. How far in advance do I need to request PMD volunteers?

As much as one year in advance for popular Saturdays, but usually three to four months in advance if you have scheduling flexibility for smaller projects on Sundays (and only two months in advance for weeknights). PMD has annual commitments for several events which take place on the same weekends each year.

10. Is there any charge for PMD services?

No, although if you have budgeted resources for volunteers, then we appreciate your applying them to PMD volunteers for things like appropriate tools or their rental, project supplies, and educational materials about your organization's mission and its clients, NOT refreshments. As we advise all volunteers to prepare by consuming and/or bringing meals and snacks with them, plus provide homemade cookies for them at the conclusion for non-cooking projects, please do not spent agency resources to feed PMD volunteers.

11. I want to organize volunteer projects that involve corporate employee volunteers.

Can PMD assist in this effort?

Yes, PMD assists companies and charities with developing successful community involvement programs. PMD's Corporate Partnership Program works with companies on individual volunteer projects and those who engage 12-100 employees in half-day projects during business hours, with the goal of organizing high quality projects completed needed tasks helping worthy charities with whom working relationships can be continued and expanded. Companies rely on PMD's extensive experience working with local charities to identify and plan service projects that align with their goals and values. Companies recruit participants and pay for any tools and materials required (varies according to projects selected). We are particularly interested in short (2-3 hour long), hands-on volunteer projects we can accomplish in corporate conference rooms, so please call PMD to discuss your ideas for inclusion in PMD's proposals.

12. Can PMD help me advertise my group's non-PMD volunteer opportunities?

No. PMD only posts its own volunteer projects to its private email list, not others, since we are not a clearinghouse and subscribers to our email list consider non-PMD email messages spam.

We recommend that you advertise your volunteer opportunities to your charity's own email lists, on your charity's web site and facebook page, and at <https://www.volunteermatch.org>. Other good sites may be <http://www.idealists.org> and <http://boston.craigslist.org>.

To take advantage of social networking web sites, you may also consider creating a public profile for your charity in Facebook, joining related Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and MeetUp interest groups to communicate with your supporters and potential supporters.

13. Can PMD loan its tools to my charity?

No. PMD only provides tools for its volunteers to use during PMD-organized and -supervised service projects. *(Past tool loans ended poorly, with lost and broken tools, plus poor-quality replacements.)*

14. What is PMD doing to minimize the spread of covid-19?

PMD actively encourages volunteers with any signs of illness to cancel as little as four hours in advance to prevent disease transmission. We actively screen for symptoms commensurate with the level of client contact and indoor settings, i.e., symptoms of foodborne illnesses within 24 hours of preparing and/or serving meals.

High-quality mask wearing, washing hands, staying at least 6-feet apart if possible, and consuming post-volunteer cookies independently off-site are common for PMD's indoor volunteer opportunities.

Operational changes have been made/added to ensure the safety of volunteers, charity staff, and, of course, of the people we aim to help.

All volunteers and staff must wash their hands (or use hand sanitizer) after using a restroom, blowing/wiping one's nose, touching one's face/eyes/nose/mouth, and/or eating/drinking.

Project managers will require all volunteers wear required clothing and footwear for safety, and this may include high-quality masks.

As before the pandemic, PMD will modify or even cancel PMD service projects should conditions be(come) unsafe for volunteers.