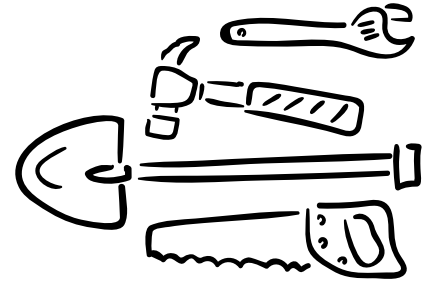


Conducting a Community Cleanup Fix-up Campaign



Tired of looking at the trash in the lot next door? A great way to get neighbors together and make some changes is to organize a community cleanup.

A community cleanup campaign can be broken down into seven planning areas:

- **Organizing** for success
- Establishing clear **goals**
- Developing a **plan**
- Advertising your **event**
- Recruiting **volunteers**
- **Project** execution
- **Sustaining** the effort

By investing in these seven areas, community cleanup efforts will be successful and sustainable.

Why Host a Community Cleanup Campaign?

- Improves the physical appearance as well as creates a sense of community and pride among the residents.
- Creates a good impression on prospective employers, professionals, and others who visit the community.
- Improves the health of the community by eliminating places for insects and rodents to live.
- Provides an opportunity for residents to get involved and show immediate, visible results.

Organizing for Success

A cleanup effort should begin with some creative planning and organizing. A community improvement/PRIDE committee, city council, or the county commission could take the initiative to form a core planning committee.

Committee members could include but are not limited to:

- Realtors
- Health professionals
- Parents
- Economic development organizations
- K-State Research and Extension
- Chamber of commerce
- Elected officials and departments
- Local media
- Civic organizations
- Youth organizations
- Local churches
- Student organizations and teams

As projects are identified, participation will increase and it will be necessary to develop shared leadership and involvement between cities and county. Identify leaders who are skilled in organizing publicity, equipment, transportation, communication, and volunteer coordination.

Establishing Clear Project Goals

Using the Cleanup and Beautification Checklist as a guide, make a list of projects. It may be necessary to take a tour to identify areas of concern. Take photos to document and to assist in the prioritization process. Before and after photos are helpful when reporting to those who donated resources or services to the cleanup effort. The First Impressions program through K-State Research and Extension is an excellent tool for identifying areas of concern. Contact other groups and public officials currently involved in beautification. Make a list of those projects and identify collaborative opportunities.

Once the projects and checklist have been reviewed, focus on the projects that are a priority for the community. Be sure to include public input. The larger the public voice, usually the larger the support in conducting the project. When ranking projects, consider health concerns, visual impact, safety, resources available, and the likelihood for successful completion of the project.

As the planning committee determines projects to address, it is important to identify specific cleanup goals. Keep the project scope within achievable, measurable parameters. For example, if the project states it is going to include home fix-up, painting, and/or demolition, people may be disappointed if resources do not allow for all potential houses to be worked on. However, if the committee sets attainable goals and creates a waiting list for other projects, the project success can be measured. Setting specific, achievable goals will help the planning group to focus resources and show clear results.

Developing a Plan

Develop a detailed plan that includes details of who will do what by when. If costs are involved, draw up a budget and possible methods of financing or raising money. It may be helpful to use a project planning sheet. The planning sheet on page 3 can be easily adapted for your needs and is available through the K-State Research and Extension PRIDE Program.

Cleanup and Beautification Checklist: Are the following adequate?

Yes	No	
_____	_____	1. Signs at edges of town are attractive.
_____	_____	2. Highway entrances landscaped, mowed, and maintained.
_____	_____	3. Abandoned automobiles or automobile graveyards removed or screened from view.
_____	_____	4. Church grounds well maintained and attractively landscaped with trees and shrubs.
_____	_____	5. Public and private areas free from trash, including water areas such as riverbeds and creeks.
_____	_____	6. Public buildings and areas attractively landscaped with trees and shrubs; grounds mowed and maintained.
_____	_____	7. Dilapidated houses removed or plans made for improvements.
_____	_____	8. Parks and playgrounds well maintained and attractively landscaped with trees and shrubs.
_____	_____	9. Streets cleaned.
_____	_____	10. Railway right-of-way through city mowed and maintained.
_____	_____	11. Refuse containers adequate and refuse areas clean and well kept.
_____	_____	12. Waste receptacles conveniently located in all business districts and emptied regularly.
_____	_____	13. Dead trees properly removed from parks, streets, and private property.
_____	_____	14. Cemeteries attractive and well maintained.
_____	_____	15. Vacant lots and unoccupied areas mowed and kept free of weeds and litter.
_____	_____	16. Elderly or handicapped homeowners assisted with property improvement and maintenance.
_____	_____	17. Tree board or committee identified diseased trees and encouraged planting of trees and shrubs in the community.
_____	_____	18. Storefronts attractive.
_____	_____	19. Business and residential sidewalks in good repair.
_____	_____	20. Parking lots screened with trees or shrubs.
_____	_____	21. Equipment in parks and playgrounds in good repair.

Other noted project possibilities:

Advertising the Event

After project selection, it is time to start publicity. A good publicity program will demonstrate to the public that people are concerned about city beautification and understand the need for a cleanup effort. Following are some tips on what to include when planning your publicity:

- Take plenty of pictures of the project area to show the need (these can be used to show the effect of “before” and “after”).
- Announce the endorsement of the effort by public figures such as elected officials, civic club leaders, and others before the campaign.
- Prepare a handout explaining the project with a map.
- Contact local media and encourage them to carry public service announcements or stories several days before the event.
- Post pictures and stories on social media.

- Prepare posters and place them in conspicuous places in the community.

Recruiting Volunteers

Consider your methods of contacting individuals and ask the core team, “Who from the core group should be involved with contacting the individuals? What friendships, family networks, co-worker relationships, etc., provide helpful links to make contacts? Who would be the most influential connection? Would multiple contacts be desirable?” Create a plan for who/how to follow-up and contact key individuals to seek their support.

Be prepared to accommodate individuals who hear about the project and show up to assist. Make them feel welcome and give them a job to do.

Ask appropriate local businesses to furnish transportation, gloves or tools, soft drinks, and snacks. Elected officials, farmers, or others may provide trucks or other equipment.

Project Planning

Goal: _____

Date: _____

Project: _____

Projected completion date: _____

Strategies	Person responsible	Resources needed	Target date	Proposed budget	Follow-up required
1.				\$	
2.				\$	
3.				\$	
4.				\$	

Ask the workers to bring tools that may be needed for the job. Check with local units of government concerning liability insurance.

Project Execution

If your plans have been well laid and your preparations are in order, the actual cleanup is the easiest part of your job.

Safety of volunteers should be first and foremost. If working in warm weather, have water or drinks available. If working near highways or busy streets, road signs and orange vests should be used. Encourage workers to come appropriately dressed and to wear sturdy shoes and gloves. Have first-aid kits available for cuts or scrapes.

Establish a central base of communication or a cleanup headquarters. As groups report to headquarters, provide team captains with maps showing assigned areas to clean. Provide assignments based upon the age and capabilities of the groups.

Make certain each team knows where to bring the litter collected. Recycle whenever possible. Recycling information may be obtained from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Kansas Recycles. If collecting appliances or scrap metal, consider contacting a scrap metal dealer and turn the project into a fund-raiser.

Household hazardous wastes such as oil-based paints and stains, gasoline or other fuels, used oil, antifreeze, pesticides, and fertilizers must be kept separate from regular household trash. These wastes can only be disposed of at an authorized household hazardous waste facility. To find the nearest household hazardous waste collection site, contact your county government or check with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment.

Stick to the established timeline in the plan to maintain interest and enthusiasm. After the event, coordinate a gathering to celebrate the success and to show appreciation for the volunteers. A simple meal and entertainment are a great way to show appreciation and develop social capacity within the community.

Sustaining the Effort

For lasting effect and to maintain community pride, it is important to sustain the cleanup effort. Participants will be interested in seeing their investment preserved or maintained. Capitalize on the effort and start planning now for future events and maintenance.

Sustainability of this effort begins with the original cleanup project by reporting its successes. Using the same means used to advertise the event, report back to the community the project successes as measured against the

goals that were established. Use the “before” and “after” photos to make sure the community sees the effect.

Make certain that everyone involved is publicly thanked and recognized. Thank cooperating businesses that loaned equipment or donated supplies or refreshments, volunteers who participated, and representatives of the media who gave assistance or free publicity. Use every means available to recognize those that participated — media, thank-you cards, certificates, or public mention. The recognition of participants will bring current volunteers back and may attract new volunteers next time.

Identify methods for continued maintenance of the physical environment. Establishing dates, times, and

responsibilities for ongoing cleanup and maintenance efforts can help provide structure to sustain efforts. The development of a recognition or award program such as “Yard of the Week,” “Most Improved Property” or “Recycling Volunteer of the Month” can also help sustain efforts.

A community cleanup is also the ideal time for local government to review or establish codes or policies relating to community appearances and upkeep. The review or development of codes is easier when community support is high and residents are interested in maintaining a successful project.

Task List for Conducting a Community Cleanup

Date Completed

1. Identify and contact core committee members	_____
2. Secure permission and support from city and property owners	_____
3. Seek donations of equipment and supplies	_____
4. Coordinate waste pick-up arrangements with waste haulers and/or landfill	_____
5. Advertise cleanup event date, time, and meeting location for volunteers	_____
6. Plan appreciation activities	_____
7. Identify photographer and take “before” pictures	_____
8. Prepare needed supplies	_____
9. Event photographer takes photos	_____
10. Establish “headquarters” location	_____
11. Identify and brief cleanup team leadership on cleanup plans and how to document success measurement	_____
12. Establish and share communication plans	_____
13. Prepare first-aid supplies and provide to team leaders	_____
14. Set up water coolers/cups where needed	_____
15. Take photos of project success	_____
16. Follow up with project reporting/publicity	_____
17. Thank all volunteers	_____
18. Develop sustainability plan	_____

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Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

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