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## **ServeOhio Funds 10 Statewide Service Projects Taking Place on MLK Day**

*These grants support 312 volunteers engaging in local community service projects across eight Ohio cities*

**Columbus, OH** – ServeOhio, the Governor-appointed commission on service and volunteerism, announces grant awards to support 10 local Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service projects on January 18. Much like Dr. King’s legacy, these grants will help nonprofits across the state improve their communities through service and volunteer activities. The grants will fund service projects in eight Ohio cities led by more than 300 volunteers.

To ensure the safety of all volunteers, all grantees have safety procedures in place and are following recommendations from the Ohio Department of Health to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Each project commits to bringing volunteers together to create or improve community assets or infrastructure and supports local community engagement and impact. Additionally, every project includes an education component based on Dr. King’s message of peace, unity, and service to create long-term, sustainable change.

“Following a year of hardship and uncertainty, volunteers statewide remain dedicated to leaving their communities better than they found them,” shared William Hall, ServeOhio executive director. “We are proud to support projects like these that have a lasting impact and remind us all that Dr. King’s legacy of service continues to live on.”

ServeOhio awards these grants with support from their 2020-2021 partners American Electric Power Foundation and AmeriCorps. Each grant totals between \$600 - \$2,000.

- **1DivineLine2Health, Columbus** – 10 volunteers will build a new creative arts space in the Drop-In Center that serves women in the Hilltop area of Columbus. Volunteers will paint the space, set up repurposed tables and chairs, and set up a repurposed storage container stocked with colored markers, paints, adult and children’s coloring books, art paper and journals.
- **Columbus Outdoor Pursuits, Columbus** – 20 volunteers will honor the legacy of MLK Jr. and Rev. James P. Poindexter by beautifying the Second Baptist Church (the oldest black Baptist church in Ohio) and Greenlawn Cemetery. Volunteers will collect litter in the surrounding neighborhoods of these two historical landmarks.
- **City of Hamilton, Hamilton** – 25 volunteers will create a Pollinator Pocket Park in two adjoining vacant, city-owned lots in Hamilton. Volunteers will clear the site of shrubs and small trees, remove litter, and build five raised garden beds in the lot.
- **Community Food Initiatives, Athens** – 10 volunteers, in partnership with the COMCorps AmeriCorps program, will assemble 50 “Seeds of Change” MLK Day kits containing a pamphlet about MLK, locally grown popcorn, locally produced corn chips and salsa, recipe cards, and

gardening instructions. The kits will be distributed to residents in the Hope Drive housing development.

- **Women for Recovery, Athens** – 17 volunteers, in partnership with COMCorps AmeriCorps program, will build and install four blessing boxes packed with free household items for individuals in need in Athens County. The blessing boxes will be placed in community spaces, reducing barriers in access by limiting the need to travel to a pantry or grocery store for an immediate need.
- **Food Strong, East Cleveland** – 15 volunteers will beautify the Learning Garden in East Cleveland, a community garden that enhances fresh food access by guiding youth and families through growing their own fresh foods and cooking them in a healthful way. Volunteers will create a sign for the learning garden which will help residents take pride in this community asset and attract new members of the community.
- **Ohio Valley Youth Network, Steubenville** – 150 volunteers will assist older adults in Steubenville by cleaning up, painting, and performing simple repairs outside their house. Additionally, volunteers will clean up the local community garden to prepare it for planting in the spring and assist at the local food pantry (The Urban Mission) and the Sycamore Youth Center.
- **The RIDGE Project, McClure** – 30 volunteers from the student leadership group Ohio Youth Congress will collect personal hygiene items to donate to Cherry Street Mission and the Path Center. Students will also make fleece-tie blankets to donate to support the homeless population in their community.
- **United Way of Van Wert County, Van Wert** – 20 volunteers will assemble school grab bags to support food insecure students in Van Wert. Volunteers will pack bags and place them in the school closest to be distributed to students in quarantine.
- **Wilmington College Center of Service and Civic Engagement, Wilmington** – 15 volunteers will acquire, deliver and assemble a new shelving structure to the Clinton County Homeless Shelter, who recently experienced severe water damage to their existing storing and shelving structures.

In addition to these service projects funded by ServeOhio, thousands of individuals across the state will volunteer in their communities on January 18 in remembrance of Dr. King and his life of service. Volunteers interested in serving in their community this MLK Day or at any time throughout the year can visit [Get Connected](#), ServeOhio's recently launched statewide volunteer engagement platform.

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### **About ServeOhio**

ServeOhio, Ohio's Governor-appointed commission on service and volunteerism, strengthens Ohio communities through AmeriCorps and volunteer engagement. Through programs and initiatives funded and supported by ServeOhio, thousands of Ohioans of all ages engage in and are recognized for their service. Interested participants may learn more about ServeOhio at [www.serveohio.org](http://www.serveohio.org), or on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).