



Student Action Board: Service Project Planning Guide

This is a step-by-step guide to help SAB Student Groups effectively plan projects with all group members involved in the process.

Timeline: All project proposals are due a full month before the project is scheduled to take place. That means **steps 1-5 should take place at least two months before the project is set to take place.** (Ex. If you are planning April's project, begin outreach in February so you can present details at the March meeting). Nonprofits often take a while to respond, so you want to allow plenty of time.

Working Document:

- Make a copy of the [SAB Project Report Template](#)
- Share it (be sure to [allow edit access](#)) with all group members, the SAB Vice President & President, the SAB Advisors & TNVLC SAB Coordinator
- Use it alongside this document to guide your planning process

Step 1: Identify Community Need

- Each group member should take 1 minute to write down 2-4 community issues they care about (Ex: food insecurity, sustainability, literacy, education, equity, etc.), then 30 seconds to circle the 2 needs you most want to address
- Each student shares the 2 needs they identified with the group
- Decide together on the ONE need you will address with your service project

Step 2: Assign Group Member Roles

To make sure all group members contribute to the project, each member should have a specific role with duties they are responsible for. If there are only 2 group members, combine the PR & IPC roles. If there are more than 3 group members, designate multiple EPCs. See following steps for more details on each Role and their specific responsibilities.

Roles: *Preliminary Researcher (PR), External Project Coordinator(s) (EPCs), Internal Project Coordinator (IPC)*

Preliminary Researcher (PR)

This group member will research Triangle Nonprofits which address the need your group has chosen to focus on. The PR will list on the Project Report (linked above) *5 nonprofits* and their contact information for the EPC to use in their outreach.

External Project Coordinators (EPC)

If your group is larger than 3 students, this is the role that should be doubled up on. The EPC(s) will take the list from the researcher and send emails to staff at each nonprofit explaining what SAB is, what you all want to do, the date/dates you are looking for, and the approximate size of the group. If there are multiple EPCs, split up the nonprofits!

Internal Project Coordinator (IPC)

This person will be responsible for sharing project information with the larger SAB group as well as the SAB Leadership team. They will:

- Email the SAB Advisors/Coordinator Updates
- Share information w/ all students during SAB Meetings
- Make sure SAB students complete any training/ forms needed before volunteering

Step 3: Preliminary Research (PR)

This group member will research Triangle Nonprofits which address the community need your group has chosen to focus on. The preliminary researcher will make a list of *at least 5 nonprofits* with the following information on the SAB Project Report (linked above):

- Nonprofit Name
- Email Addresses & Phone Numbers for Volunteer Coordinator, Executive Director, and other appropriate staff members
 - You can usually find this on the “staff” or “leadership/team” page on their website (often under the “about” tab)
 - other appropriate staff members include people who deal with community access, youth events, education, etc.

Step 4: Share Plan with SAB Advisors & Board (IPC)

At this point in the process, the IPC should email the SAB Advisors, SAB President, VP, and TNVLC SAB Coordinator the following:

- A link to your working project report
- A short description of the need your group is addressing
- Which student is taking on which role
- The list of nonprofits your group plans to contact. If there are multiple EPCs, include which student will be contacting which nonprofit.

Step 5: Outreach to Nonprofits (EPC)

The External Project Coordinator(s) should use the Preliminary Research on the SAB Project Report and send an email to staff at each nonprofit explaining what SAB is, what you all want to do, the date/dates you are looking for, and the approximate size of the group. Email 2-3 Nonprofits to start, and if you haven't heard back in a few days, email the remaining nonprofits on the list. Make sure to specify that the group contains minors.

- CC all group members, SAB President & Vice President, and TNVLC Advisors on each email
- Keep the interests and schedules of the group in mind. If no one is available most Friday nights, this would probably not be a good time for a project.
- Make sure the group meets the requirements (i.e. age requirements, skill levels, etc.) for the project. If there is training involved with participating in the opportunity, make sure the group is in agreement to attend the training.

A Note on Email Etiquette:

- Every email needs a relevant subject line, details go in the body, and be sure to sign off appropriately at the end ([Visit this page](#) for more tips)
- Maintain one email thread with each organization and keep the cc going (meaning click “reply all” to continue communications instead of just “reply” or starting a new email)

Step 6: Follow up (EPC)

A week after initial email outreach:

If a nonprofit has already confirmed that they are in for the project:

- Reply to all other nonprofits you contacted thanking them for their potential partnership but letting them know you found someone else.
- Be sure to get the address, parking information, any required forms, what to wear/bring, etc. And update the project report
- Keep in contact with the agency representative. Reply back the week prior to the project and again a few days before the project to remind them that SAB is coming, provide an approximate number of members attending, and to confirm project details.

If you are still waiting for a nonprofit to confirm with you:

- CALL any nonprofit which hasn't responded (we know phone calls can be scary, but you can do it! If you're struggling, ask group members for help here.)
- If no one picks up, leave a message with your name, number, and objective
- Reply to your initial email after the call with a recap of the conversation or the message
- If NO ONE has responded to you, ask the PR to find 3 more nonprofits for you to contact!

Step 7: Share Project with Full SAB Body (IPC)

- **Be ready to share project information at the SAB Meeting the month BEFORE the project (ex. If you're planning November's project, it should be fully planned by the October SAB meeting).**
- A project reminder should be sent to all SAB members/Coordinator the week prior to the project and a second email the week of the project.
 - Include details: Address (as well as any special directions such as where to park, arrival time, what to wear -include special requirements such as closed-toed shoes, what to bring if special supplies needed, and approximately how long the project will last.
- The IPC may want to send some project details the day before or day of through GroupMe or other chat channels in addition to the email (not in lieu of)

Project Day & Wrapping Up

- At the project site you will act as the project leader(s). Arrive early, locate the representative and make sure all SAB members sign in to ensure their volunteer hours are recorded.
- After the project, the EPC should send a thank you note to the agency representatives and the PR should finish up the project report (linked at the top of this document).