



Steps to Organize a Banks Make a Difference Project

Organizational Meeting

Invite all banks operating in the community to attend.

1. Discuss project objectives.
 - Identify current civic/charitable needs in the community.
 - Identify capability of banks/bankers to meet those needs.
 - Build level of awareness of policymakers and local opinion makers of banks/bankers' contributions to meet those needs – improve image of banks as community leaders.
2. Create organizational structure around project.
 - Steering Committee for overall project management
 - Project Selection Committee
 - Marketing/Public Relations Committee

Identify Community Needs

1. Nonprofit groups or agencies within a community are a likely source to identify needs. Those agencies could include:
 - Local Community Helpline (e.g., 211 Helpline in Sioux Falls)
 - South Dakota Community Foundation
 - Agencies who don't receive funds from local United Way chapter.
2. City parks or public works departments are another likely source for community betterment hands-on projects.
3. Bank employees might be aware of community needs that aren't currently being met and potential projects.
4. Steering Committee members can be assigned to initiate contact with the identified agencies, gather a list of needs and report back to the committee.

Identify Capability of Banks/Bankers to Meet Needs

Most projects will require a combination of volunteer hours and funds to accomplish.

1. Bankers in a smaller community (main bank of community institution combined with branch employees from a larger institution) could work together to accomplish a collaborative project.
2. Larger banks in larger cities could provide manpower to meet a need in a smaller community where the local bank lacks the critical mass of people to take on a larger project.

Structure and Execute Marketing/Public Relations Plan

The banking industry has a current and ongoing need to create awareness, both among policymakers and public opinion makers, of the charitable and civic development efforts supported by banks and bankers. The elements of a PR/marketing campaign could include the following elements:

1. Community Campaign: led by bank marketing officers
 - Bank marketing officers can collaborate on a local theme for each Banks Make a Difference campaign. Said theme can be incorporated into local news stories or paid advertisements in local newspapers.
 - Community campaign leaders can approach local media outlets (radio, TV, newspapers) about air time and coverage to promote Banks Make a Difference projects in their communities.
 - It is important that the banks involved in the project document the work that is being done by assigning someone to take pictures. Photos can be sent to local media along with press releases and could also be used in advertising or promotional efforts of the banks.

2. Statewide Campaign: led by South Dakota Bankers Association
 - SDBA will aggregate data from each community-level campaign to be used in a statewide marketing piece. This would be used by the SDBA during the annual State Legislative Session. Similar information could be used by individual bankers to build relationships with their local elected officials and state legislators.
 - SDBA can assist member banks in developing their own Banks Make a Difference campaign by incorporating participating banks logos within the South Dakota Banks Make a Difference corporate logo. These banks can be used by participating banks to brand and promote their projects with local news, media and advertising outlets.

For more information on how to conduct your own local Banks Make a Difference project, contact SDBA at (800) 726-7322 or (605) 224-1653. Or send an email to Alisa DeMers, SDBA, at ademers@sdba.com.