

New York State Grange
Community Service Programs
2023-2025



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Participating in various Community Service projects has many benefits to the participants. Research has shown that people who perform community service projects receive many physical, social, and emotional benefits. These benefits commonly help a person to live a much happier and healthier life.

Anyone that actively participates in community service projects receive multiple benefits to help improve or maintain their physical health. One aspect of physical health is having fewer illnesses, diseases, and injuries. Volunteering is beneficial to persons of all age, but especially to older adults. The more an older adult volunteer and helps other people and organizations, the less likely they are to have chronic pain or heart disease.

Emotional health is feeling positive about oneself. Volunteering on a regular basis, be it weekly, bi-weekly, or even monthly, improves one's happiness by up to 16%. The happier one is, the more positive they feel about themselves. Also, volunteering is a great way to explore a person's interests. While participating in various volunteer opportunities, a people can have a relaxing escape from their day-to-day life, which can help to reduce stress. It can also give a person renewed creativity and motivation which could carry over into one's personal and professional life.

Social health is feeling positive about interactions with other people and the world in general. Sometimes shy people have a hard time interacting with others. By participating in a community service project close to one's heart, this allows a person to practice and/or continue to develop their social skills. This happens when people that come together for a common purpose spend time together. Once a person starts to spend more time with different people, the easier it will be for them to branch out even more and perhaps overcome their shyness.

Community Service projects make your Grange a prominent part of your community, while also being beneficial to the participants. The participants are able to improve the community around them as well as themselves physically, emotionally and socially.

Annual Community Service Report

The Annual Report is a record of the community service projects your Grange sponsored during the year. It also records the time your Grange members volunteer in your community. You may have one large project or several small ones, but your involvement in the community is important. Involve your members in planning your Grange projects. Generate one new project for the year. A well thought out plan means “success” for your Grange.

Projects should involve members and non-members working together. Partner with other groups to generate new ideas to give back to your community. The media is often more receptive to stories about projects involving several groups working together.

New York is one of the few states that does not require non-profits to report volunteer hours to maintain their non-profit status, but with rules becoming tighter for non-profits, this could soon be a requirement. There have been instances where a Grange has been able to protect its non-profit status because they had information on their volunteer hours.

“Everything counts’ as volunteer hours on your annual report whether you volunteer for your Grange or within your community.

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Subordinate/Community and Pomona Granges are encouraged to do projects and report annually.

Annual Report:

- The period for the Community Service Report is **September 1 – August 31**.
- Select a project or projects.
- Have a goal of one new project for the year.
- Keep an accurate record of hours spent by members and non-member on your project(s). Total the number of Grange members and non-members who participated and the number of hours worked for each group. You may want to print the Community Service Volunteer Log (download-able from the Community Service page of the State Grange website), make copies, and distribute them to your members to record their volunteer hours once a month.
- Take photographs of your events and activities.
- Get publicity for your project (social media, newspapers, Grange Bulletin, etc.).
- Complete the Annual Community Service Report Form, which can be downloaded from NYS Grange Website.
- If you are entering a yearbook, be sure to make a copy of your report and include it in your yearbook.
- Mail the report form to the State Community Service Director postmarked no later than **September 15**.

Community Service Yearbook

The Annual Community Service Report lists your projects with the number of members and non-members participating and the number of hours donated by each. A Community Service Yearbook shows graphically through photographs, newspaper articles, and other documents each project and its impact. The yearbook is not a history of everything your Grange did during the year. It can be a great tool for recruiting new members because it shows what you did in your community!

Community Service Yearbooks must be mailed to the Community Service Director **POSTMARED SEPTEMBER 15**. Judging will occur prior to NYS Grange Annual Session by a committee of grangers and non-grangers determined by the Director.

Yearbook Organization:

- Put the name of your Grange on the cover.
- Include a copy of your Annual Community Service Report in its own page protector.
- Include a one-page description of your Grange and community.
- Include a Table of Contents with a summary of each project.
- Use a tab to mark each section to match the Table of Contents.
- Limit large projects to four pages and smaller projects to two pages.
- Only include one or two thank you notes from your project.
- If you held a fundraiser **as a project**, include where the money was donated.
- Place all pages in page protectors.

Don't Include:

- An officer or member roster or meeting minutes.
- Obituaries when a family used your hall after the funeral.
- Mowing the grass at your Grange hall; that's maintenance, not community service.
- Fundraisers that were not directly earmarked for a cause. (if funds were used for general service projects and other grange expenses you may list in your report but do not include in your yearbook)

Awards:

- 1st place: \$100, 2nd place: \$75, 3rd place: \$50, 4th place: \$25.
- All entries will receive a recognition certificate.
- The first-place winner will be sent to National Grange.
- New York's judging guidelines will be available on the NYS Grange Website.

Firefighter, Law Enforcement Officer and Teacher of the Year Awards

The persons you nominate can be a paid professional or a volunteer. Your Grange can and should recognize anyone else in your community (first responders, medical personnel, etc.) at an open house, Grange meeting or public event.

Send the National Grange FF/LEO/Teacher of the Year Award form to the State Community Service Director postmarked no later than **September 15th**. The form can be downloaded from the National Grange or NYS Grange Website or contact the State Director to request the form to be mailed or emailed. Please attach photos, newspaper articles and any other supporting paperwork you have.

The first-place winner in each category will be recognized at the NYS State Grange Session and sent to the National Grange Convention in November.

Junior Grange Community Service Contest

Each Junior Grange or 1+ member would enter a short report/booklet not to exceed 3 pages (front and back). These should include an information page about the submitting JG, which would mirror what the subordinate Grange submits for their state Grange report book.

*****New Community Service Project Planning Guide Form:** The new Community Service Project Report Form will help you track your service project as you do them. There is a fillable version on the NYS Grange Website. The main purpose of the new form is to give you a tool to help you record the information while it is still fresh. Then when the time comes for the report or notebook you will be ready. This does not replace the annual report.

**** Information and materials in this handbook were borrowed from the National Grange Community Service Department and the Oregon State Grange Community Service Department.*

New York State Grange Service Projects

School Backpack Programs

We collect food or monetary donations for a backpack program in a school district in the area that the Annual State Grange Session is held. This program allows students in need to take home bags of food, either each weekend or over long breaks, to ensure that they have enough to eat while not in school.



“C” Bills for Cancer

Granger Nancy Henderson began collecting ‘C’ bills while she was battling cancer to show her appreciation to local Hematology and Oncology treatment and research centers. Under the guidance of Allan (her husband) and Heidi (her daughter), New York State Grange continues to carry on this endeavor in memory of all members who have passed away from cancer. The money is donated to a Hematology and Oncology Treatment Center near the Annual State Grange Session each year.

