

A Quick Start GUIDE



ADVENTIST COMMUNITY SERVICES

A Quick Start Guide for Adventist Community Services

Editor: May-Ellen Colon
Managing Editor: Sung Kwon
Design and layout: Alan Eno

Available from:
AdventSource
5040 Prescott Avenue
Lincoln, NE 68506
800.328.0525
www.adventsource.org

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Introduction

Adventist Community Services (ACS) is a humanitarian relief and individual and community development ministry designed to fulfill the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the United States and Bermuda by serving communities in Christ's name. ACS aims to develop continuing leadership education, build collaborative partnerships and expand the scope of community services.

Social action ministries are important to the mission of the church because they reveal a belief that faithfulness to Jesus Christ includes compassion for the poor, the hurting, and the victims of injustice. They demonstrate the Advent Hope and make a practical contribution to church growth.

The Mission of Adventist Community Services

ACS is a key tool in helping Adventist congregations become visible within the community and known as an asset to the neighborhood. Through ACS, local Seventh-day Adventist churches can identify and address the needs of their community, neighborhood or city. An ACS program motivates, trains, equips and mobilizes church members at a grassroots level. The mission of ACS can be stated very simply: To serve communities in Christ's name.

Churches involved with ACS must serve communities without discrimination. ACS works directly with community groups to effect desired change, cooperating with other agencies and organizations in fulfilling their primary goals.

ACS history

- 1879 – Local churches begin humanitarian work through the Dorcas Society. Groups of women provide clothing, food, and money for families with temporary needs in the church or immediate community.
- 1953 – The General Conference broadens the concept of service to address the needs of an increasingly urbanized society. This new organization is named Health and Welfare Services by Seventh-day Adventists.
- 1970 – The name is shortened to Adventist Community Services.
- 2005 – Adventist Community Services International (ACSI) is reactivated in time to support and partner with the “Tell the World” initiative of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Values and Guiding Principles

ACS aims to develop continuing leadership education, build collaborative partnerships and expand the scope of community services. Community-based program development includes a wide range of activities leading to improved health, economic and social well-being, and increased self-reliance. Through formal and non-formal education and training, ACS volunteers develop competence and skills in areas appropriate to community needs.

Community needs can be met through the creation of small-scale organizations which deliver essential services in areas where they are inadequate or nonexistent. Churches with a strong disaster response capability and a track record of effective response can often develop community service centers or other permanent programs in the aftermath of major disasters such as fires, floods, hurricanes or tornados, as well as the results of major civil disorder, epidemic or environmental pollution. Your church can also partner with community organizations and other churches to provide for day-to-day needs in the community.

Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) and Adventist Community Services

People often ask, “What is the difference between ACS and ADRA?” “Why can’t we call ourselves ADRA or merge our efforts into one organization?” While ACS is the channel through which local churches address the needs of their immediate community, ADRA is the official non-government organization (NGO) sponsored by the Seventh-day Adventist Church to provide international relief and development. ADRA receives funding and support from governments and companies that require it to maintain a separate administrative, financial, and program management structure from the church and its other institutions.

Five Types of Community Services

Relief. Church volunteers usually work at the level of relief, providing immediate supplies and services to meet basic needs such as water, food, shelter, blankets, clothing, etc. Relief can also include attending to the emotional and spiritual needs of persons responding to traumatic stress. In some emergencies, meeting these needs makes the difference between life and death. Volunteers serving in disaster response teams, refugee camps and homeless shelters are necessary to the survival of suffering people.

Economic Development. Churches may run a thrift store where used clothing and household goods create jobs and provide a method of distribution that protects the dignity of the poor.

Systemic Change. ACS volunteers can act as advocates, seeking to change the institutional policies and laws that encourage unjust or unhealthy conditions. For example, volunteers could work to impact laws to make housing affordable and work and living conditions more humane, or help disadvantaged people gain access to resources and opportunities to improve their lives.

Community Action. Relief, economic development, and systemic change are brought together at the community action level. This is where a coalition of organizations creates and implements a strategy to make a neighborhood a better place to live.

Individual Development. Training individuals to become independent, helping people identify and utilize available resources, and mentoring.

Program Priorities

Each local church ACS must decide at which level it can best serve the community. If a church group becomes involved in too many areas, it runs the risk of having a presence but no programs or services, insufficient resources to be a reliable neighbor in the community, difficulty recruiting volunteers, and establishing priorities based on the preferences of those providing funds rather than community need.

ACS supports communities through:

- Food pantries
- Soup kitchens
- Clothing distribution
- Thrift stores
- Drug and alcohol abuse and prevention assistance
- Disaster response
- Crisis intervention
- Tutoring and mentoring
- Career training
- Job placement
- Refugee resettlement
- Health screening and education
- Family life and health education
- Elder Care Ministry for seniors and caregivers
- Primary health care for the medically indigent
- Ministry to the homeless and people with disabilities
- AIDS education
- Youth Empowered to Serve
- Community chaplains
- Urban ministry
- And more

The success of ACS and its impact as a credible ministry of compassion depends on finding a balance between:

- Community and local church expectations and needs
- Availability of competent people to manage the operations

- Quantity of resources available
 - o Volunteers
 - o Finances
 - o Facilities
 - o Goods
- Degree of donor interest and support
- Quality programming that meets local needs

Items to consider:

1. Community needs
2. Potential for change in people's lives
3. Available expertise
4. Management capability
5. Existing organizations and structures
6. Needs of the church
7. Potential for sustaining programs

Organization

The following pages outline a number of formats for providing services to the community.

Remember that an organization is not a building; it is a network of people who combine their resources to help their neighbors by giving their time, abilities, money and/or donated goods.

What Structure Will Work Best?

In addition to choosing how to serve the community, there is also a wide range of choices for developing a local ACS organization. Each local church can select the structure that best fits its needs and resources.

Local Church ACS Department – Departments operate under the authority of a committee appointed by the local church. The local church elects a community services director who plays a key role in discovering the needs of the community, mobilizing a response from the church, program development, communication and inter-organizational cooperation. In smaller churches, the community services director is the primary worker in this ministry. In larger churches, he or she is a facilitator, helping other members function as leaders in specific programs or activities.

Adventist Community Services Center – A center is an established facility that provides organized services to the general public on a regular, posted schedule. It can be located in the church building or in a separate building, but it must have regular hours of business and a public sign identifying it as a community service organization. A center operates programs that address specific community needs, in addition to providing food and clothing, such as

health screening and cooking classes. A center should have a private interview room where trained personnel can talk with people about situations, needs and available resources. The center is an organizational hub of individuals, small groups and programs.

Adventist Community Services

Agency – An agency is a program sponsored by two or more local churches which operates from a neutral location and has trained paraprofessional or professional leadership. Like a center, an agency should have a private interview room where trained personnel can talk with people. An agency, like a center, is an organizational hub of individuals, small groups and programs.

Is Your Community or Church Rural or Urban?

The challenges and opportunities for churches serving in small towns and rural areas versus larger cities or urban areas are very different. In rural areas the needs may be more obvious and basic. In urban areas needs may be far more complex and obscure. While urban areas have more people and more resources, they are far more dispersed. In urban areas your ministry must compete with many others for volunteers, money and goods.

Adventist Community Services Federation – A federation is a training and empowerment network formed to support frontline leaders in community service ministries. Constituents of ACS federations represent ACS units, centers and other ACS entities in a geographic area of a local conference. The federation goes beyond inspirational or ceremonial occasions and becomes actively involved in empowering leaders. Federation meetings should include a time for training and encouraging leaders. They should also include a time for sharing successes and challenges and creative problem solving.

How to Build Your Local Organization

Experienced community service professionals have found a number of important sequential steps in building a viable organization. These steps may need to be scaled according to church or program size. Following the steps outlined here will assure the best opportunity for success.

The project leader will need to perform a visual survey of the potential geographic area to be targeted. This survey identifies the obvious problems in a community, the kinds of places people live and work, etc. The project leader will also need to contact community leaders and other community organizations in the area. These contacts will be helpful in providing information on community needs and existing programs and resources. They also may be interested in collaborating in the future. In addition, they can be helpful in providing technical support or consultation and evaluating your program.

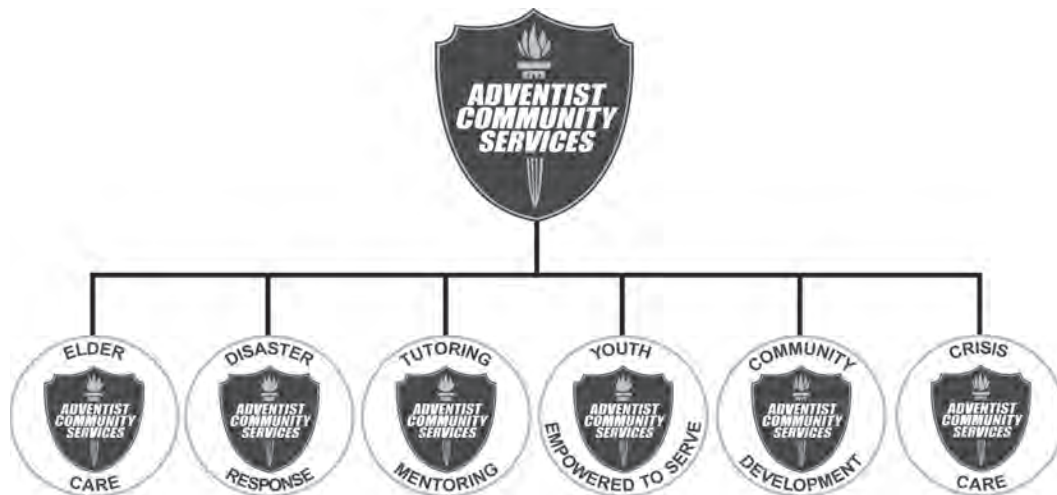
All information should be reviewed by a small group of trained persons accustomed to analyzing and interpreting data. The information should be compiled into a brief report that describes the geographic area, its people, the most pressing social issues, and a menu of possible programs for consideration. Thought should be given to whether proposed programs may appear to compete with or enhance existing programs. The planning committee should use the information to decide what services the new organization may provide in the beginning.

The Role of Needs Assessment

ACS is a needs-driven organization. Unless good information has been gathered through a careful process, local leaders cannot really know community needs and will not have the compelling vision and rationale necessary to organize an effective program.

Community Service Programs

Adventist Community Services provides services such as Disaster Response, Adventist Crisis Care Network (ACCN), Community Development/Urban Ministry/Inner City Ministries, Elder Care Ministries, Youth Empowered to Serve (YES) and Tutoring and Mentoring Programs.



Each ACS organization will determine which programs to offer after praying for God's leading and completing a study of community needs and resources. Here is a description of the most common programs and services provided by ACS organizations:

Community Development/Urban Ministry – ACS Community Development Ministries provides assistance to individuals and families by addressing their physical, social, mental and spiritual well-being. The basic need for food and clothing exists in many communities. In the Adventist church the Dorcas Society has historically focused on these basic social services. The Dorcas Society is still a part of Adventist Community Services. Most churches of every denomination provide this essential service to the chronically poor, victims of disaster, or those in temporary crisis. Food or clothing needed to help people can be purchased or collected from drives. In some cases, food banks collect overstock, dented or mislabeled food in large quantities and make it available for non-government organizations to distribute. Such distributions are most effective when recipients have an opportunity to choose the type and quantity of food their family needs from what is available. Clothing can also be collected and distributed this way.

These essential services should not be provided without the added assistance of interviewing and referral service. Those who can't meet their needs for food and clothing have other longer-term needs. ACS organizations must strive to provide personalized service through carefully listening to each person's set of complex needs. A combination of programs providing needs assessment, information, referral, follow-up, and teaching advocacy and life skills will best address these needs.

This skilled personal attention is part of a basic service that everyone who seeks help from your community services organization should receive. Listening is important for understanding people's situations and truly knowing their needs. It affirms a person's value and demonstrates caring. Through asking active questions you can discern people's needs and help create a plan for meeting those needs.

Referral to other organizations helps people connect with resources they need that go beyond what your organization provides. People are often unaware of services that could benefit them or do not know how to access those services. Once you have made a referral, you should follow up to see what happened. Did the person receive the help they were seeking? Was it adequate? Often the process breaks down and you need to be an advocate for people to help them address any issues of unfairness or lack of attention.

Finally, the interview situation provides unlimited opportunity to minister to people: to share about your own struggles, to provide encouragement and, if appropriate, to share Scripture and pray with them.

These basic services (food, clothing and interviewing) serve as a foundation for all other helping programs.

Disaster Response – Natural and man-made disasters daily affect individuals and entire communities. Survivors need the assistance of others to relieve their immediate suffering and assist with their recovery. Compassionate people are invaluable in providing aid if they are properly trained and affiliated.

Adventist Community Services has a well developed and respected Disaster Response (DR) Ministry in the United States. ACS DR partners with other nonprofit organizations, governmental agencies and the private sector to coordinate, cooperate, communicate and collaborate in response to disasters. All disaster response and recovery entities recognize the necessity for individuals to receive appropriate training prior to responding to a disaster. Spontaneous unaffiliated volunteers often are more of a second disaster than a help.

If you or your church are considering a Disaster Response Ministry, first learn more about who responds, what roles everyone plays, when assistance is needed, where you can be effective, and how you or your church can get involved by attending an ACS DR training session. This training will provide information about the specific roles and responsibilities of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in disaster response. Next, work with your community to identify needs and determine what resources are available to you. Finally, recruit and train DR teams that will be equipped to promote disaster preparedness and provide aid to disaster response survivors and responders in an efficient and effective manner.

ACS operates within a Statement of Understanding with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the emergency management agency of the U.S. government, the American Red Cross and many state emergency management agencies.

Adventist Community Services is also a founding member of the inter-agency compact called National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) and the affiliated state VOADs.



Tutoring and Mentoring

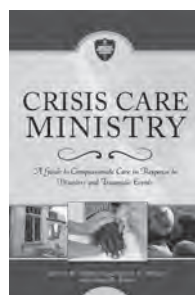
An early intervention program that impacts the lives of children and their

families by providing volunteer tutors who supply the individual attention a child needs to achieve academic excellence. Learn how to assess community needs, acquire funding, recruit and train volunteers, and more. Available from *AdventSource* at www.adventsource.org or 800-328-0525. *Catalog #113330*

National VOAD is the primary forum used by more than 40 national voluntary organizations, emergency management and business partners to exchange and share information, network and coordinate activities with each other before, during and after disasters, resulting in less duplication and gaps in service and better collaboration and cooperation. ACS DR directors are encouraged to participate with their local county DR VOAD.

Tutoring & Mentoring – Educational success is vital to finding jobs in adulthood that pay enough to survive. Tutoring and mentoring programs can help students have success in school. Tutoring programs include volunteers who work in school or after-school study centers to help students learn basic concepts and complete their assignments. Mentoring means helping students find opportunities for growth and development as individuals. Study centers that are well equipped with tables, chairs and reference books are inexpensive to set up and maintain. Adult tutoring and mentoring programs may also benefit the uneducated and working poor.

ACS Tutoring and Mentoring seeks to assist with the needs of communities by providing services such as teaching basic reading, writing, English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, math and computer skills. The program also provides mentoring models to address growth opportunities as it relates to individual development. This program collaborates with the North American Division Office of Volunteer Ministries (OVM).



Crisis Care

Your guide to crisis care ministry, which trains volunteers to provide emotional and

spiritual care for survivors of disasters and traumatic events. Available from AdventSource at www.adventsource.org or 800-328-0525. *Catalog #113325*

Crisis Care/Community Chaplain (Disaster Response) Initiative – Crisis intervention is a type of psychological first aid used to help enable coping among survivors of a disaster, terrorist attack, assault or other traumatic event. It is a short-term helping process designed to facilitate stabilization, reduction of symptoms, return to adaptive functioning, and/or facilitation of access to continued specialized care. Interventionists may also serve as companions and advocates to assist survivors to receive available resources after a traumatic event.

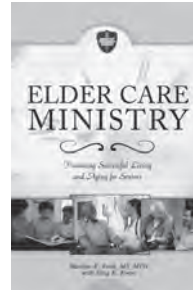
Crisis intervention volunteers must be trained in this special ministry. Such training runs the gamut from psychological first aid, designed as a baseline

training for all ACS volunteers, to individual, group or pastoral crisis intervention for those qualified to provide more in-depth intervention to individuals or serve as part of crisis intervention teams. The ACS program's primary training modules are developed by organizations such as the National Child Traumatic Stress Network and the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, Inc. ACS trainers are approved instructors with these organizations.

Elder Care – Elder Care Ministries coordinate education and services related to aging, health, finance and social issues for seniors and their caregivers in the church and community in collaboration with community-based elder care programs. It provides services to seniors and those who work with seniors that nurture body, mind and spirit. Its purpose is to encourage the active participation of leaders in thinking, dreaming and planning about programs by, with, for and to seniors.

Youth Empowered to Serve – Involving youth and young adults can enhance your ministry. Working with teachers and Pathfinder and Adventist Youth leaders to encourage an attitude of service in young people will not only benefit the community, but will add a tangible dimension to a young person's relationship with their Savior. These experiences can contribute to a strong and enduring faith throughout a young person's life.

In some regions teens and young adults are trained in community service programs such as disaster response. Youth service units can be organized through conferences, educational institutions, community service centers or agencies, and local churches. In North America this program is called Youth Empowered to Serve (YES!).



Elder Care Ministry

Your church can reach this growing segment of the population by starting an

Elder Care Ministry to seniors and those who work with them. Learn how to support and encourage caregivers, assess the needs of older adults in your church and community, recruit volunteers, and more. Available from *AdventSource* at www.adventsource.org or 800-328-0525. *Catalog #113315*

Youth Empowered to Serve Website

Visit the Youth Empowered to Serve website at www.AdventistYES.org to learn more about YES, find sample service projects and resources for your ministry, and more.

Other Opportunities for Outreach

Whether large or small, every community has outreach opportunities. Listed below are ideas for programs and services that can be used worldwide:

- Adopt a family – assist with food, clothes, household items, furniture, transportation, utility bills
- Child care – give single parents an evening to go shopping or provide after-school care
- Back-to-school supplies – provided for a child
- Community kitchen – hands-on, small group, low-cost cooking (participants take food home to use during the month)
- Clothing program for prisoners on release
- Drug abuse prevention – especially among youth in the middle grades
- Sewing and mending service – includes quilt-making for those in need
- Family finance seminar/counseling
- Emergency food pantry
- Free medical clinic – dental, eye, podiatry
- Health screening – provide free blood pressure reading, BMI, grip-strength test, health age, stress profile, healthy lifestyle tips
- Health seminars on topics such as healthy lifestyle, smoking cessation, depression recovery, grief recovery, cooking and nutrition, weight management
- Homemaker services – for seniors, single moms, the homebound
- Skills training – for those on social assistance or the working poor
- Phone a friend – for seniors or latchkey kids
- Baby layettes – for teens, single moms
- Meals on wheels – for seniors or the homebound
- Homeless initiatives – clothes, food, sports activities, mobile clinic
- Community gardens – teach the economically challenged how to grow and preserve food
- Home renovation – for working poor, single parents, seniors, disabled
- Healthy eating club – monthly vegetarian potluck with health tips
- Furniture bank – repair and recycle furniture

Meeting Spiritual Needs Through Community Services

Through the ministry of community services, we often encounter individuals with spiritual needs. They may have concerns about whether there is a loving God, whether others still care and even whether they are still persons of worth and value. These and similar matters often arise in conversation, and we are afforded opportunity to help people address these needs. In this task, however, we must remember that we often work with vulnerable people; the critical faculties that they need for responsible decision-making are often undermined and we must not impose our beliefs. Even so, it is during times of crisis that people are often open to receiving spiritual nurture. Meeting those needs, however, must be done in a way that is respectful and ethical.

We are counseled to serve people in the manner of Jesus, who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. He provided care that was unconditional, care that simply came from a heart of love and concern for those in need. He utilized a method of ministry that was intentional and ethical at the same time. It is outlined in the following quotation:

“Christ’s method alone will bring true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘follow me.’” *Ministry of Healing*, p.143

Jesus’ life was bathed in a prayerful relationship with His Father in heaven; it saturated His life with a selfless love for others. Such an experience will also prepare us for a similar life of service. Jesus’ ministry was always aimed at caring for the whole person; thus He always incorporated these principles:

- 1. Friendship first.** Jesus always began by simply being a friend to people in need; He liked being with people and socializing with them. As we take time to be with people, we verbally and nonverbally communicate our care and demonstrate God’s love for them.
- 2. Connecting with the heart.** While Jesus possessed great powers of intellect, He also connected with the human heart at an emotional level as He sympathized with those who hurt. We too are called to a ministry of compassion for the hurting. Our active listening and responses can also help create connections with both mind and heart.

- 3. Practical and relevant help.** Jesus' responses to others were specific to the needs exhibited. He fed the hungry, comforted the grieving, healed the sick and always responded with the practical help that people needed. As we care for the basic felt needs of individuals, we are often paving the way for people to deal with the higher issues of the mind, heart and soul.
- 4. Building trust.** Because of His unconditional love for people, they learned to trust Him. A spirit of inquiry often was aroused and they wanted to know more about Him and His message. While this was never a pre-condition, it was often the natural overflow of a connection that had been established. Similarly, in our work with people the creation of this bridge of trust is the foundation of an ethical approach to spiritual needs care.
- 5. Meeting spiritual needs.** Through various means Jesus invited people to know and follow Him. In the Gospels we see Jesus doing this through prayer with people, conversation, words of encouragement, the counsels of Scripture and so on. We too have a supply of interventions that can be utilized to meet spiritual needs; these include:
 - Biblical/scriptural insight and education
 - Prayer (individual, joint and intercessory)
 - Faith-based answers to the “why” questions
 - Faith-oriented social support systems
 - Assurance of God's presence and intervention
 - Assurance of divine forgiveness
 - Religious rituals and ceremonies
 - Spiritual and religious literature
 - And others...

As relationships are formed, you can often ask people about their spiritual and religious needs and resources. Be willing to accept their lead, responding to need and not imposing your agenda. Opportunity may arise, however, where you can use faith-based interventions, such as those above, to bring words of encouragement and speak a word of witness to a caring God.

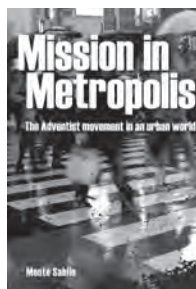
Remember to follow Christ's sequence of ministry, and the Holy Spirit will guide you into opportunities for service and sharing of God's love through deed and word. There may be times when you won't be able to share verbally all you want to, but you can still live out a witness for Christ. Other times people may signal that they are desirous of learning more that will enable them to cope, and you can use Scripture or another intervention. Whatever the situation, however, be respectful and ethical and always follow Jesus' way of ministry.

Conclusion

When we are led by Jesus and have a sincere compassion for others, we will have many opportunities to offer God's encouragement, support, comfort and unconditional love. Start where you can and He will multiply your unselfish efforts.

Additional Resources

The following resources are available from AdventSource. For a complete list, call 800-328-0525 or visit www.adventsource.org.



Mission in Metropolis: The Adventist Movement in an Urban World

By Monte Sahlin

This volume includes practical ideas for pastors, ministry directors and congregational leaders. In a world where most people now live in a metropolitan area, this book provides a wide range of essential information for anyone serious about the mission of Christ in contemporary contexts.

Catalog #420395



Quick Start Guide for Senior Adult Ministries

By Brenda Dickerson

The 65-plus age group is currently the fastest growing segment of our nation's population. How is your church reaching out to older generations? This book is full of great ideas for starting a senior adult ministry in your church.

Catalog #420746

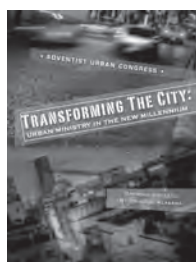


Sharing the Good News in the 21st Century

Featuring Sung Kwon

“It’s a different world” is a common response to the challenge of sharing the gospel today. Methods once practiced no longer work as well, yet the commission has not changed. In this volume of Adventist Preaching, Sung Kwon shares effective ways to live the gospel.

Catalog #660026



Transforming the City: Urban Ministries in the New Millennium DVD set

Directed by Sung Kwon

This 8-disk DVD resource will help equip pastors, church administrators, and lay leaders on every level who are looking to acquire innovative skills and unconventional tools for leading congregations in community development.

Catalog #119150



Understanding Your Community Book and CD

By Monte Sahlin

A complete kit of tools for your community services program. Topics include: increasing the visibility and impact of your ministry, how to know the needs of the people in your community, how to use demographics to improve your outcomes, and more.

Catalog #420455

Websites

Adventist Community Services North America
www.communityservices.org

Adventist Community Services International
www.sabbathschoolpersonalministries.org

Follow Adventist Community Services on Facebook. Log into your Facebook search for “North American Division Adventist Community Services.”

Youth Empowered to Serve
www.AdventistYES.org

Organizations

The Center for Metropolitan Ministry (CMM) is a resource center for pastors and lay leaders in urban and suburban Seventh-day Adventist congregations. CMM provides customized demographic reports for use in planning community outreach ministries, consultant and training services, and other information services.

Center for Metropolitan Ministry
HMS Richards Hall
Washington Adventist University (formerly Columbia Union College)
Takoma Park, MD 20912
Telephone: (301) 891-4037
Fax: (301) 891-4189

Adventist Community Services Code of Ethics

- 1. Caring in the Spirit of Christ.** ACS workers are committed to caring for persons in need in the spirit of Christ who came not to be ministered to, but to care for others.
- 2. Prepared for Competent Service.** ACS workers are committed to obtaining appropriate training and certification, as applicable, for the specific work to which they are assigned. They will never misrepresent their qualifications in order to obtain personal advantage and will work within the limits of their training, experience, and expertise.
- 3. Respect for the System and Its Boundaries.** ACS workers understand that they are accountable within a system where there is oversight and supervision, and they are ready to mentor and support colleagues as appropriate. They observe the rules and protocol of Adventist Community Services, and the cognate private or public organizations with which they collaborate. They respect the roles and work of others in the chain of command, and will not seek to fulfill responsibilities assigned to others – unless requested to do so by a person with appropriate authority.
- 4. Privilege of Serving Others.** ACS workers remember that it is a privilege and honor to serve in a ministry of care for persons in need; they do not serve for financial reward or any other personal gain. They never use the authority of their role to intimidate, abuse, or harass colleagues or those they are helping in any way. Nor do they make demands or ask for special favors when providing care and services.
- 5. Confidentiality.** ACS workers hold in confidence personal information shared with them, unless the person in need gives permission to transmit this information in following ACS policy in delivering services and care. When information must be reported in compliance with the law, they will do this in the spirit of confidentiality and in consultation with only the appropriate authorities. In the case of urgent and needed referrals, they will transmit only information relevant to the situation at hand, and in consultation with the person in crisis.
- 6. Respect for Choice in Matters of Faith.** ACS workers respect the beliefs of all individuals and will not take advantage of individuals during vulnerable periods of crisis or try to impose their beliefs upon them. Care will never be conditioned upon another person's religion or their response to faith issues.
- 7. Interfaith and Public Collaboration.** ACS workers respect and respond to the need to collaborate with persons of other faith groups, and various community and public agencies, in order to serve the urgent needs of the broader community.
- 8. Recognition of Limits.** ACS workers understand that they are trained in specific modalities of helping, and that there may be limitations to what they can competently do; when assessment indicates, they make referrals to specialists for further care.
- 9. Self Care.** ACS workers recognize their own vulnerability when exposed to stressors and are alert to signs of compassion fatigue. They will care for themselves at all times, participate in team planning and support meetings, and accept care from colleagues.
- 10. Attitude of Joyful and Solemn Responsibility.** ACS workers joyfully accept their calling, while maintaining an attitude of solemn responsibility; they remember that they are asked to care for people during trying times, to serve in the spirit of Christ, and to act to benefit the entire community.

Permission to copy for local church use.

Questions to Ask Community Leaders

1. What are the biggest assets in our community?
2. My church wants to help with some of the most important needs in our community. What are some of the important needs you think it might be a good idea for us to focus on?
3. What could a church group do that would really be helpful in meeting the needs you have listed? (Go through the list point by point to get specific suggestions for each item.)
4. Who are some of the influential leaders in the community we should interview with the same questions? Do you have contact information for them? May I tell them you referred me?
5. What do you know about my church? What is your impression of its contributions to the community in the past?

Community Services Survey

Dear Friend:

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in your community is endeavoring to become more involved in community life. We want to be of service to you and to the community by responding to your expressed needs. Please help us to identify these needs. Add any needs not listed. Thank you!

1. In which of the following services would you have an interest?

Please check the appropriate items below:

- Nutrition and vegetarian cooking classes
- Weight control seminar
- Visiting and praying for the sick
- Care for the elderly
- Clothing and food assistance
- Ministry in crisis (bereavement, grief, midlife, other)
- Marriage enrichment seminar
- Parenting skills for children and adolescents
- Youth and peer pressure management
- Mentoring and counseling program for youth
- Substance abuse counseling
- Classes on the meaning of life/my relationship with God
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

2. In your own words, identify the three most urgent needs in your neighborhood.

- (1)
- (2)
- (3)

3. If the services and activities you indicated were offered in your neighborhood, would you participate? Yes No

Community Services Director Ministry Description

Introduction

In His earthly ministry Christ worked out a pattern for His followers to copy. He “went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed” (Acts 10:38). Christ identified with the poor and oppressed. “He fed the hungry and healed the sick. . . By the good He accomplished, by His loving words and kindly deeds, He interpreted the Gospel to men,” comments Ellen White. “Christ’s work in behalf of man is not finished. It continues today. In like manner His ambassadors are to preach the gospel and to reveal His pitying love for lost and perishing souls. By an unselfish interest in those who need help they are to give a practical demonstration of the truth of the gospel” (*Welfare Ministry*, pages 56-57).

When a church serves the world it is an expression of the love of Christ to the world. It is the body of Christ serving the world’s needs and being used by the Holy Spirit as an agency of salvation.

The church was created for service. It serves the Lord in praise, serves one another in love, and serves the world in humility. “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works” (Ephesians 2:10).

Duties of the Community Services Director

The major functions and tasks of the local church community services director include the following:

- 1. *Discovering the needs of the community.*** A needs assessment of your area should be completed every two or three years by visual inspection; using public, private and human services agencies such as police, fire, mental health and human services; by reviewing the news media; and by conducting surveys.
- 2. *Mobilizing a response to specific concerns.*** It is your responsibility to help your church identify social concerns to which it feels called to respond. Usually this decision will be made in the outreach or personal ministries committee. Once the decision is made you will have the task of getting the word out and rousing the congregation to action.
- 3. *Organization of programs.*** You will be asked to recruit volunteers and arrange details of entry events (activities through which non-members participate for the first time in a church-sponsored activity) and other social action projects. These will include health screening, aid for the poor, literacy and employment assistance, and inner city programs. You or a church-elected Disaster Response Coordinator may be responsible to coordinate disaster-related activities.
- 4. *Establish cooperation.*** The community services director is asked to work with other organizations in the community so the church does not duplicate services. Memorandum of Understanding have been established at national levels with non-profit organizations and private sector parties specifying what Adventist Community Services will do in the event of major disasters and related to certain social problems. Similar agreements are needed in

your area. This may mean that you, or someone you appoint, will meet regularly with inter-agency committees to represent the Adventist Church.

5. Communication. You are the person the congregation expects to keep it posted about Adventist Community Services activities, as well as provide information on current issues. This means that you will want to utilize the personal ministries time once a month (as outlined in denominational policy), prepare announcements for the bulletin and church newsletter, and distribute a comprehensive statistical report at least once a quarter. Since the yearly “Hope for Humanity: Ingathering” and “Disaster Famine and Relief” appeals are a major source of funds for community services, the community service leader will want to be involved.

6. Reporting. You are the person responsible to document community service statistics. Keeping records of the clients you serve, services you provide, volunteer statistics and financial records is important to you, your local church and the Adventist Church in North America. This information can provide operational transparency and assist with grant opportunities, volunteer recruitment and donation requests. With free web-based software, you can quickly and easily maintain these records.

ACS hosts free web-based reporting software to help you document your community service statistics. To learn more about the E-Reporting software, register your church, or join an instructional webinar go to the ACS website: www.communityservices.org

Recommendation: It is recommended that newly appointed directors participate in the Nonprofit Leadership Certification Program (NLCP).

The NLCP is designed to prepare successful executives and pastors for general management responsibilities and social evangelism. This intensive two-week program is taught by an outstanding group of professionals who teach attendees how to operate and minister effectively by emphasizing the distinctive character of nonprofit organizational operation and urban ministries. See www.communityservices.org for more details.

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Adventist Community Services

This Quick Start Guide for Adventist Community Services is full of important information to help you start or revitalize a ministry at your local church. This guide contains a job description, instructions for getting started, tips for maintaining a successful ministry, troubleshooting suggestions, recommended resources, and more. Whether you're new to this ministry or a seasoned volunteer, this Quick Start Guide will inspire you with lots of great ideas you can immediately put to use in your local church.

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