



COMMUNITY SERVICES, INC.
A Community Action Agency

10 Big Ways to Impact Your Community

(and possibly Change Your Life!)

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You may be looking at ways to impact your community. There are many reasons why people want to give back, but often people don't realize the service that they are providing to themselves while helping others.

Contrary to what marketing agencies would have you believe, the secret to happiness is not through the latest consumer goods. Yes, material things can improve your quality of life, but true [secret to happiness is helping others](#). In a Time Magazine article, I found this Chinese saying, *"If you want happiness for an hour, take a nap. If you want happiness for a day, go fishing. If you want happiness for a year, inherit a fortune. If you want happiness for a lifetime, help somebody."* But this theme isn't just found in ancient Chinese quotes, it is pervasive in psychology journals, mental health circles and of course, religion.

So how can you impact your community and change your life at the same time? Here are some ways we suggest:

1. Volunteer
2. Give Money
3. Be a Counselor – Listen
4. Serve on a Board
5. Run for Public Office
6. Vote for leaders who support causes you are passionate about
7. Take care of yourself
8. Get to know your community
9. Mentor students
10. Support Minority Businesses

Volunteer

There are many ways that you can volunteer your time. Some people prefer to give of goods and services that they create, but you could also sign up to help hand out food to those in need or [build a house](#). From working with many organizations over the years I have found that working alongside other volunteers is one of the most rewarding things I can do.

According to an article from [WCSU.edu](#), "Volunteering is a great way to meet new people, especially if you are new to an area. Volunteering also **strengthens your ties to the community and broadens your support network**, exposing you to people with common interests, neighborhood resources, and fun and fulfilling activities." The article goes on to say that volunteering is great way to combat depression, build self-confidence, and help you stay physically healthy. With all of these great benefits, everyone should volunteer!

Give Money & Donate Food

Giving money is a simple way to help impact your community. Even small donations can go a long way. Many charitable organizations having donor matching partners and by combining funds, these organizations can buy in bulk and create economies of scale. While handing out money to a person on the street may help that one person, handing \$5 to an organization can help multiple people. Tight on funds or not sure how much to give? Check out [these great tips](#) that not only help with your budget, but help you know when you should give and help you determine how much.



Many charities are also in need of food, so donating food is another great way to give back to your community.

Be a Counselor

Are you a good listener? There are a number of [hotlines](#) you can sign up for to volunteer your time and help others in crisis. [Click here to become a crisis hotline volunteer](#). You never know, you could be the one person that saves someone's life.



Serve on the Board of a Nonprofit

Want to get involved in a big way? Help lead a nonprofit by serving on the board. There are many nonprofit boards where you can volunteer your time and services. The [Dash Network](#) is a nonprofit that provides shelter for those seeking asylum in the Dallas/Fort Worth area.

Run for Public Office

Did you know that you can run for the planning and zoning committee in a city? Perhaps running for school board is more your speed. There are many positions that even run uncontested and so if you are passionate about politics then we suggest trying your hand at running for office. Not sure where to get started? Look up your [local elections](#) and check out [this site](#) for more help.

Go Vote

One way you can make a change in your community is to understand the people you are voting for and making informed decisions when you vote. Not sure if you are registered? [Click here](#). Once an official is elected, you can [write them](#) letters. You never know if your letter could be the one that changes the course of history.

Take Care of Yourself

One way to help impact the community is to take care of yourself. When researching content for this publication, this was a recurring topic. Too many people who volunteer and give experience burnout because they are not focusing on taking care of their own health and the health and wellbeing of those in their immediate circles. By taking care of yourself you can better take care of your community.



Get to Know Your Community

There are often several projects within a city or community. This could be anything from getting involved in the PTA to assisting in a song writer's guild. Often people get stuck in the rut of doing the same thing without realizing there is a world of opportunity around them in their own backyard.

Mentor Students

Have you ever had the opportunity to mentor? If so, you know it can be very rewarding. I was once offered the opportunity to mentor high school students through a program called "[Reach](#)". When I first started in the program, I was told that basically just showing up consistently and on time was 90% of the job. The other 10% was listening and asking questions. The biggest challenge was knowing that it was going to end at the end of the school year. While I was on campus at a school in McKinney there was a student who committed suicide. It was such a tragedy to lose a student at such a young age and it inspired me to continue to give back to students, they need encouragement more than we know.

Support Minority Businesses

Another way you can impact your community is to support small businesses, especially small minority owned businesses.

According to Lendio.com, “Minority-owned businesses likely play a significant role in your local economy. According to the [US Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship](#),

there are over 4 million minority-owned businesses in the United States, with sales totaling \$700 million.



Over the last 10 years, these businesses accounted for 50% of the 2 million businesses started in the US, and they created 4.7 million jobs. Look around—the reason your city continues to grow is likely because of the success of these minority-owned small businesses.”

It’s not hard to give back to your community and impact it in big and small ways on a daily basis.

We hope you find one or many of these ways to impact your community and in the process that it changes your life!



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Thank You!

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this helpful guide and for supporting
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