



United Way of Treasure Valley | DIY Volunteer Opportunities

These rewarding experiences are wonderful ways to turn your generosity into lasting change. Below you'll find a list of ideas so that you can volunteer for United Way of Treasure Valley on your own time and at your own pace.

These projects will serve thousands of students experiencing homelessness and living in low-income families across the Treasure Valley. They can be done by one person, a family, or a larger team from your office, your place of worship, or any other group or club you belong to.

1. Hygiene Kits

We have approximately 3,500 students experiencing homelessness in the Treasure Valley. These kids are still going to school, but do not have stable housing at night. They are often couch surfing, sleeping in cars, or sharing an apartment with multiple families.

Can you imagine being in high school and not having access to a shower, toothbrush, or deodorant? Sadly, SNAP benefits/EBT cards do not buy these types of products. You can help kids feel confident and send them to school with dignity by running a Hygiene Drive to build Hygiene Kits.

Here is everything you need to know to successfully build Hygiene Kits!

- Decide how many hygiene kits you're doing. Please do an equal amount of male and female kits.
- All items in the kits should be full-sized, brand new, and things like toothbrushes and razors should be sealed for safety and sanitation.
- Consider using gallon bags or grocery type bags to pack your materials and clearly mark if the bags are male or female.
- Tape the tops of shampoos, conditioners, and body washes closed to prevent hard-to-clean explosions inside backpacks of the children who may receive these kits.
- Collect or purchase items for kit assembly.

All kits should include:

- Shampoo
- Soap or body wash
- Toothbrush
- Toothpaste
- Dental floss

- Razor
- Deodorant
- Laundry detergent (pods are typically easiest; place 2-4 pods in separate small baggies)

Male kits should also include:

- A comb
- Shampoo can be a shampoo/body wash combo, in which case you do not need to add an additional soap

Female kits should also include:

- Conditioner
- A brush
- Feminine hygiene supplies (8 tampons & 8 pads; various sizes and absorbencies are encouraged but not mandatory—place items together in an individual baggie)

Other things you could include in kits but are not required:

- Band-Aids
- Chapstick
- Sunscreen
- Ponytail holders
- Nail clippers or a file

2. Snack Packs

Over 40% of Idahoans struggle to make ends meet. Many of these people are families with parents working two or three jobs. Unfortunately, due to low wages, astronomical housing costs, and other rising costs, these folks are not able to meet their basic needs, including food.

Snack packs fill the gap between Friday when school lets out until Monday when school is back in session. We know many children in our community rely on resources provided by their schools to ensure proper meals and nutrition. We believe no child should ever go to bed hungry or not know where their next meal is coming from.

Here is everything you need to know to successfully build Snack Packs!

- Decide how many snack packs you're making.
- Decide on 5-6 different items per bag that are easy to eat with little to no preparation.
- All items should be individually sealed for safety and sanitation.
- Use a gallon bag to contain each set of snacks.

List of ideas for Snack Packs

- Protein bars
- Granola bars
- Breakfast bars
- Beef jerky
- Nuts & seeds
- Trail mix
- Chips

- Popcorn
- Pretzels
- Cheese & crackers
- Peanut butter & crackers
- Fruit leather
- Applesauce pouches
- Tuna pouches
- Cookies
- Crackers
- Bottled water
- Shelf stable protein shakes

3. School Supplies Drive

In July and early August, we see a huge need from our area schools for supplies. Many teachers purchase items for their students out of their own pockets. It's our hope to help every student finds success in the classroom without asking teachers to dip into their own bank accounts. Host a school supplies drive to give these kids the start they need for a successful school year!

List of ideas for school supplies

- Paper
- Pencils
- Pens
- Markers
- Crayons
- Safety scissors
- School glue/glue sticks
- Rulers
- Erasers
- Binders
- Notebooks
- Backpacks

These items can be delivered as a bulk delivery and do not require special packaging.

4. Letter Writing (homeless students)

We like to distribute encouraging notes to students experiencing homelessness. We supply hygiene kits and snack packs and support a variety of programs to help these students get out of poverty and succeed. Make a student's day with a note that lets them know their community cares!

Instructions for letter writing

- Gather paper, pens, markers, stickers or any supplies you wish to use. Create encouraging notes that will fit into a Ziploc bag or that can be folded to help a student feel supported, special, cared about, and hopeful.

Examples:

"Your community cares about you!"

"You got this. Keep going!"

"You are special and you matter."

"You are loved!"

5. Be an Advocate!

United Way of Treasure Valley fights for kids and families in a variety of ways, one of which is advocating for them at the local and state levels. Take a few minutes to learn about a community issue from [United Way's 2020 Community Assessment](#) and the possible solutions listed in the comprehensive report. Record yourself advocating for the affected population and a proposed solution and post to your social media accounts to spread the word! Don't forget to tag #UWTV and #LiveUnited.

Contact Michael Hercus: mhercus@unitedwaytv.org or 208-807-2938 with questions or if you need help coordinating your DIY project! Completed projects can be dropped off Monday through Friday at our offices located at 3100 S. Vista Ave., suite 100. Please be sure to make an appointment.

