



Massage Therapy for the Underserved in Your Community: How to launch a successful and sustainable community service project

The Massage Therapy Foundation is committed to bringing therapeutic massage to people in need. It is our belief that community service projects can be the catalysts. We offer community service grants to massage practitioners who partner with local organizations to provide massage and bodywork to populations in need. Unfortunately, we have a limited budget and cannot fund every proposal we receive, therefore we have provided a set of resources to assist practitioners in starting and sustaining their own community service projects.

The outline that follows is a guide to assist practitioners along the path to providing massage in their communities. The Massage Therapy Foundation values philanthropy and seeks to motivate practitioners to volunteer in their communities to make a difference for people in need who may not be able to afford massage and bodywork.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions you may have at (847) 869-5019 or visit our website at www.massagetherapyfoundation.org for more resources.

Community Service Project Outline

I. Getting Started

- a. Identify your Goals
- b. What population do you want to serve?
- c. What are your resources?

II. Research your population

III. Design a Business Plan for your Project

- a. Define Measurable Objectives for your Project
- b. Establish a Timeframe
- c. Determine frequency and duration of Massage
- d. Determine Personnel Needs
- e. Develop a Budget

IV. Funding Opportunities

- a. Local or national private funders
- b. Grassroots funding opportunities

V. Marketing & Recruitment

VI. Safety and Confidentiality

VII. Program Evaluation

VIII. Ethics

Appendix A - Other Resources

I. Getting Started

a. Identify your Goals

The first step in planning a community service project is to think about your mission and identify your goals. Focus on what you want your project to accomplish, i.e., where would you like it to be in one year's time or two? It helps to specify your goals to keep you on track.

b. What population do you want to serve?

If you already work with a population that you want to dedicate more time to or if there's a population in your community that is underserved and needs attention, identify it at this time. Who makes up this community and how will you access them? What are their specific needs? Is there any specialized training needed to provide manual therapies to this group?

c. What are your resources?

Once you know which population you want to serve take a look at other community, religious, government, or medical organizations in your area that already serve this population. Many times you can create a collaborative partnership with an existing entity to provide massage in addition to the services they already provide.

II. Research your population

Once you have identified a need in the community and have decided on a specific population to work with, it helps to do more research on this group of individuals and the scope of their needs. What type of research has been done on this population, if any? Has research shown massage to be effective for this population?

A great online resource for free abstract and articles of published research is www.pubmed.gov. Pubmed is a free service of the U.S. National Libraries of Medicine and the National Institutes of Health. You can also look to the numerous trade publications on massage therapy like *mtj*, *Massage Today*, and *Massage & Bodywork* for stories that may have been done on your population.

Below are a couple of resources to assist in navigating the publication archives:

Making PubMed Searching Simple: Learning to Retrieve Medical Literature Through Interactive Problem Solving

Beatriz Vincent^a, Maurice Vincent^b, Carlos Gil Ferreira

<http://theoncologist.alphamedpress.org/cgi/content/full/11/3/243>

How to read a paper: The Medline database

Trisha Greenhalgh, *senior lecturer*^a

<http://bmj.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/full/315/7101/180>

III. Design a Business Plan for your Project

- a. Define measurable objectives for your project.

Determining project objectives are an important part in formulating your plan. Each objective should be measurable at the end of your project. An example of a measurable objective is *Reduce Pain in Cancer Patient through Massage*. This objective can be measured by assessing pain levels before and after massage is administered.

Once you've determined the objectives you can focus on the project logistics.

- b. Establish a timeframe

Determine the duration of your project. Is this a month-long project? One-year long?

How much time can you devote to this project on a weekly and/or monthly basis?

- c. Determine Personnel Needs (will you be providing massage therapy, requiring licensed professionals or other "touch therapies" that can be done by lay-people?)
- d. Develop a budget

Put together an itemized budget for each aspect of your project. A sample budget form is below.

Part of the need for creating a budget is to determine whether or not you need to seek an outside source of funding. A potential funder will want to know want to see an itemized list of expenses.

One major expense (unless the project will be strictly volunteer run) is personnel. How much will you need to be reimbursed for your time? Determine an hourly rate of pay. There should be an acknowledgement that the pay rate demonstrates some degree of volunteerism.

Sample Budget:

Personnel Costs	\$ _____
Materials, supplies and incidentals	\$ _____
Transportation	\$ _____
Other costs (specify)	\$ _____
Total Budget	\$ _____
- (minus) Existing Funds	\$ _____
Total Funds Needed from Other Sources	\$ _____

e. Determine frequency and duration of massage

Once you've established the amount of time you and your staff or volunteers will have to devote to this project, you should determine how many massages each client should receive on a regular basis and how long the massage treatments should be in order to be effective.

IV. Funding Opportunities

a. Local or national private funders

If your project needs additional funds start at the local level and look for community organizations with grant opportunities to help fund your project. Often times community groups that serve the same population might be interested in what you're doing.

Funding at the national level is another possibility but it may require some grant writing experience to write up an effective proposal for funds.

b. Grassroots funding opportunities

Consider fundraising events that will not only raise money but also consciousness. Entertainment/Concerts, garage sales, raffles and silent auctions are fairly easy to coordinate and profitable, if marketed to community organizations that would have an affinity for the project.

V. Marketing & Recruitment

Think about how you intend to reach out and recruit clients. Create flyers advertising your work and hang them in hospitals, store fronts, community organizations, or wherever appropriate to the population you want to reach. Consider placing an ad in a local newspaper, community newsletter, and/or Craigslist.org.

VI. Safety and Confidentiality

It's important to follow HIPAA guidelines for confidentiality to ensure your clients' safety and to ensure that clients' records will be confidential. The current HIPAA policies can be found at www.hhs.gov.

VII. Program Evaluation

Develop some ways to measure the successes and/or shortfalls of your program. This can involve surveying clients pre and post-massage treatments to determine how effective your treatment has been and following up with clients after treatments to see how lasting the effects of the treatment were.

VIII. Ethics

When designing your program be sure to include a plan on how to adhere to safety and confidentiality laws. For the most up-to-date HIPAA guidelines visit www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/.

Appendix A – Other Resources

American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA) Chapters – look to your local AMTA Chapter for community service opportunities or resources – www.amtamassage.org

ABMP - www.abmp.com

www.massagetherapists.com – create a group for local massage therapists and recruit them for your project.

www.serve.gov – find volunteer opportunities in your area

<http://www.serve.gov/toolkits.asp> - Serve.gov create your own projects 'toolkits'

http://www.nationalservice.gov/for_organizations/tta/index.asp - Corporations for National and Community Service: Tools, Training and Information

www.massagetherapyfoundation.org – view massage therapy community service project summaries and grant guidelines as resources