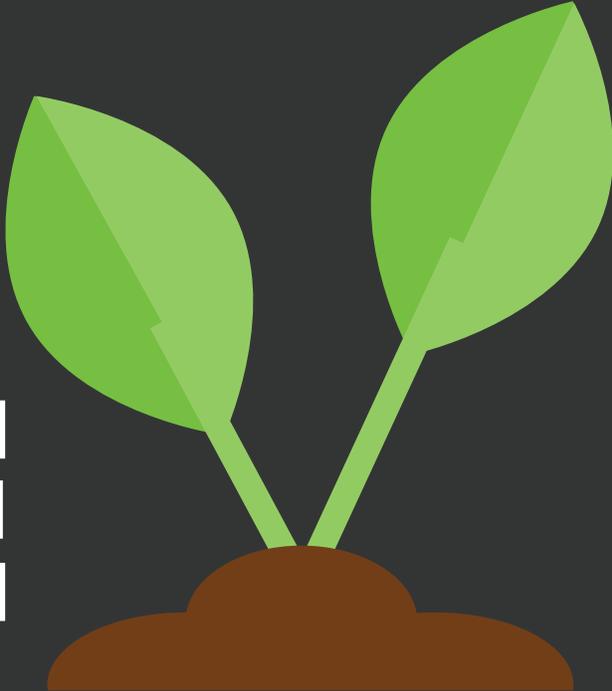


## INTRODUCTION

# WE PLANT SEEDS



*A How-to Guide for Effective Jewish  
Service-learning Programs*

Brought to you by Repair the World, in partnership  
with AVODAH: The Jewish Service Corps



# INTRODUCTION

## WE PLANT SEEDS: A HOW-TO GUIDE FOR EFFECTIVE JEWISH SERVICE-LEARNING PROGRAMS

### ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT

This toolkit was developed by Repair the World in partnership with Avodah using material developed by both organizations over many years of leadership in the Jewish service-learning field. The purpose of this toolkit is to help you plan activities that enrich the service-learning experience, ensuring that volunteering is meaningful and effective for both the volunteers and the community with which they are working. In order to do their jobs well, volunteers need to be oriented to the mission of the organization they're working with and understand the context in which they are serving. This toolkit offers guidance and activities to help you include in your programs three important steps to contextual learning: investigating the social issue, exploring Jewish values, and reflection.

### INVESTIGATING THE SOCIAL ISSUE

Volunteers are more effective in their work when they understand the social, economic and historical context in which the service occurs. For example, if you are serving food at a soup kitchen, learn about the causes of hunger in your community. Are people earning wages too low to afford food? Is there a lack of access to quality food in the neighborhood? By understanding the context of the issue, participants will better understand the complexity of the situation and can take action to address the systemic causes as well as the immediate problems.

### EXPLORING JEWISH VALUES

Volunteering and service are inherently Jewish actions and Judaism has a lot to offer as we grapple with and think about our role as volunteers. By exploring and reflecting on Jewish ideas and values that relate to service and specific social issues, your participants may come to realize that they are living Jewishly by engaging in service.

### REFLECTION

At its best, service should spark some uncomfortable questions and challenges about injustice, inequality, and our own role in perpetuating them or bringing about change. Create opportunities for your participants to reflect upon their service, so that they can “think out loud” before, during and/or immediately after the volunteer activity. This allows participants to contemplate their service experience in the greater context of their values and life decisions.

### CONTACT US!

We hope this toolkit enriches the volunteer experience for you, your participants, and the community partner organizations with which you are volunteering. We'd like to hear from you if you have any questions or feedback. Please contact us at [training@werepair.org](mailto:training@werepair.org) for feedback or to discuss a training or workshop for your community. Please see our website [werepair.org](http://werepair.org) to learn more about Repair the World's work.

Thank you to the following professionals who contributed to the production of this toolkit: Beth Cousens, Suzanne Feinspan, Talya Gillman, Amy Goldsmith, Rachel Kutcher, Mordy Walfish

# INTRODUCTION

## WE PLANT SEEDS: A HOW-TO GUIDE FOR EFFECTIVE JEWISH SERVICE-LEARNING PROGRAMS

### HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

This toolkit consists of seven modules:

#### MODULE 1: CREATING EFFECTIVE SERVICE LEARNING PROJECTS

Describes the core elements of an effective service learning project, including a planning worksheet.

#### MODULE 2: FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

Contains tips and tools for the facilitator, as well as activities to build a strong volunteer team.

#### MODULE 3: CONTEXTUALIZING AND UNDERSTANDING SERVICE

Provides tools to explore the impact of service, motivations to volunteer, different types of service, and Jewish perspectives on service.

#### MODULE 4: POWER AND PRIVILEGE

Explores issues of power and privilege, and provides tools for volunteers to reflect on their own role in this dynamic within the volunteer experience.

#### MODULE 5: FOOD JUSTICE

Provides tools for volunteers to explore in-depth the issues of food access and food insecurity, justice for food workers, and urban agriculture.

#### MODULE 6: EDUCATION JUSTICE

Provides tools for volunteers to explore in-depth the issue of inequity in education as well as perspectives on teaching and mentorship.

#### MODULE 7: REFLECTION

Contains activities to support volunteer reflection on the service experience.

Modules 2 through 7 contain a selection of activities that you can use with a group of volunteers to enhance the effectiveness of the service experience and to contextualize service within both social issues and Jewish traditions. While you may use all of the activities when working with a group long-term, the activities are independent of one another. Therefore, for short-term projects you may choose one or a handful of these activities, depending on time, group size, and other group characteristics. The length of time required for each activity and any materials that you need to prepare in advance are noted for each activity.