

One Day Work Project Guidelines

The following information is provided for groups to better plan their day with Widows Harvest Ministries. To schedule a project, call (423) 266-0260, or email us at info@widows.org.

Generally, our workday begins at 8:00 am. If possible, please consider serving at least six hours, if not longer, in order to complete the project on the widow's home that we have arranged for you to serve. Most groups, typically, will only be able to serve until noon, and we understand this, but if the project is not completed by then, this means that the widow, who often, has already been waiting a long time to get help, will have to wait even longer for the work that has begun to be completed.

If an orientation has been given for our Ministry prior to the scheduled workday, which we recommend, then the group will meet at the work site. By doing orientation before the workday (either Andy Mendonsa, the Director, or Dick Mason, The Projects Coordinator will be glad to come at your convenience and speak with your group), it will give more time for actually working at the project site.

For groups that plan to stay past lunchtime, please consider eating lunch at the work site. Our preference would be to either bring lunch with you or send someone in your group out to pick lunch up for everyone.

Our projects are planned around the age, size, skills and leadership of your group. Some of our projects include:

- Roof replacement
- House painting, inside and outside
- Raking leaves
- Cutting, splitting and delivering firewood

Although we have a supply of tools, you may want to bring some of the following items (depending on your project):

- Safety glasses
- Dust mask
- Work gloves
- First-aid kit
- Water cooler
- Hand cleaner
- Personal hand tools
- Hammer
- Pry-bar
- Tool belt or nail apron
- Razor knife
- Carpenter's pencils

- Chalk line
- Circular saw
- Extension cords

In most instances, Dick Mason, will be leading your project. If you have other skilled leaders in your group, the project may go faster or we may be able to work on two different projects at one time.

Although, as a group, you will spend the majority of your time doing the actual home repairs, it is equally important not to overlook the widow that you have come to serve. Over the years we have discovered that it is just as important, if not more important, to spend time with the widow who owns the home you are working on as well as to do the actual work, itself. Sometimes we forget, in the process of trying to help someone, that the person we are trying to help needs to be affirmed and honored for who they are. One way that this can be done is to have different individuals in your group take the time throughout the day to spend some time with the widow. One of the best ways to get a conversation going is to just ask questions. Once you start asking a widow about herself and show that you are really interested in her, in most instances that is all it takes to begin a, sometimes, really meaningful conversation.

The cost of the materials for each project that we do must be raised either by us, or the volunteer groups. In the planning process with your group we will provide you with a full description of the project as well as all costs involved. If you cannot provide any of the funding to help offset the costs for the project that does not mean that we can't work together. We have just learned over the years that by spreading the costs of a project out in this way means that a widow's need(s) will be met much quicker, which also means that we will over the course of a year be able to help more widows.

Just to give you an idea of what it takes to get to the place where a group actually comes out on a scheduled workday a brief description will be given for that process. First, a widow who is in need of help must personally (or in rare occasion an advocate for her) contact us by phone and request help. Next, our Administrator, Lisa Eames, will make an assessment as to whether this widow meets our guidelines for help and once she determines that she does, then she will make contact with that widow, fill out a brief interview form with her and then schedule an appointment for our Director, Andy Mendonsa, to do an in home interview with her. At that time he will make an initial assessment of her needs as well as look for other needs that she may not have made a request for. Sometimes, a widow will call about one thing, because it is much more urgent for her to get repaired, but she may have other needs as well that might be equally pressing, but just not as urgent in her mind. In other words, if she calls because her toilet is leaking around the base causing damage to the floor around it, she is probably not thinking about the exterior of her house and it's need to be scraped and painted.

Once an assessment has been made, which usually includes documenting them with pictures as well, a report will then be written up and given to both Lisa Eames and Dick Mason. Based on this report Dick Mason will then schedule an appointment with the

widow and do an complete construction assessment, both for what she called about in her initial request as well as other needs that were discovered in the first interview. After Dick Mason has completed his assessment he will then write up a report of that assessment which will include the costs of the materials.

After we have a full construction report from Dick Mason, Lisa Eames will add this to the rest of the widows construction needs that we have in order to then begin the process for matching up volunteers and volunteer groups with these needs. Sometimes a need for a widow can be met within a few weeks from the time that a final report has been made for her needs and sometimes it can, unfortunately, take as much as a year to meet those needs. This completely depends on being able to get both the volunteers we need as well as the funds that it will take to meet her needs.

The reason for explaining this process in such detail is to let anyone volunteering with us, and/or considering making a contribution to our ministry, an understanding for the overall costs that are involved with every widow's home repair need that we begin the process for trying to meet. The actual costs for meeting that need goes way beyond the costs of the construction materials themselves, to include the cost of funding all of our staff who are involved in the process that will finally lead to a widow getting her home repair needs met.

This system has been a very workable system for us as well as those who come out to serve with us in order to meet some of the greatest needs that exist among us, the needs of widows. It is our desire to make this process as easy and fluid as possible for our volunteers, and in order to do this a lot of time, energy, expense and discernment is required on our part. So, that all a group really has to do is, first decide that this is where the Lord is leading them and then commit to carry out that leading by volunteering to meet a widows need. Once that desire is made known to us and a project has been decided on and a date has been set for starting that project all a group really has to do is just show up on that date really to start working. We will have done everything else in order to make that possible, including having all of the necessary materials, tools and equipment onsite a head of time.

Once a project is either completed on a work day, or time has run out for a group to work any longer, we ask that you allow enough time before you leave the project site to help clean up and put all of the tools and equipment away.