

Building A Community Blessing Box

A step by step guide to creating and adapting a community blessing box in your neighborhood.

**last revision 10/19/17 by Heath*



Project Name: Community Blessing Box

Group Size: 5-10

Cost: \$400-\$600

Timeline: 6-8 hours, or spread out over 1-2 months

Purpose:

Community Blessing Boxes bring communities a tool for neighbors to help their neighbors, as well as create an opportunity for the community to express their neighborhood's personality through artwork and symbolism on the outside of the box.

Requirements for CBB's:

- Partner with church or nonprofit
- Build the box & Paint the outside
- Have fun

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Introduction

So you're ready to build a blessing box for your neighborhood! You are about to embark on an exciting journey that will challenge you to perform outreach within your community, learn how to construct a mini-sized building from start to finish, and use your imagination & creative skills to create art on the outside of the box.

The ideal end result of your project is a box able to withstand harsh weather conditions, is covered with your art, and is used & adopted by the community.

This project will undoubtedly and positively impact your community, which is just one reason these boxes are so awesome. I wish you the best of luck in your endeavour! - *Heath Rost*

Assembling Your Team

When building a community blessing box, everyone is a leader. To complete this community engagement project it's ideal to start with a group of 5-10 volunteers, supplies & materials equalling \$500, and a timeline of 1 to 3 months start to finish.

As project leader, you'll want to focus your energy on what you most enjoy: building the box, painting the box, and community outreach. Everyone in your group can volunteer for the role or roles they want. For instance, you might have one scout interested in building/constructing the box, another scout who wants to paint the box, and another ready to go door to door fundraising and raising awareness in the community the box will be in.

Below is one example of how to split the leadership roles. All the roles work together as a team to complete the project.

1. Building the box
 - a. Supplies & Materials Leader
 - b. Phase 1 & 2 Leaders
 - c. 1-4 Construction Workers
2. Painting the box
 - a. Art Director
 - b. 1-4 Artists
3. Performing community outreach
 - a. Location
 - b. Fundraising & Awareness
 - c. PR Officer & Party Planner

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First, partner with a church or non-profit, & determine where the box will sit.

Pick a church/nonprofit, and partner with them to adopt your community blessing box on their land.

When you partner with churches often times after you approach them with the project they will take your request to the church elders and outreach leaders before giving you the green light.

Once you have the green light, locate where the box will sit on their property.



*Tip: If you own the property, check with your insurance company that you're covered, most insurance companies have no problem with these.

Second, community buy-in & fundraising.

You need supplies and materials to get started. Depending on how many power tools and construction supplies you already have on hand, \$500 should be enough for you to build your own blessing box. Local business that can donate hard materials is a win-win.

Financing your box is a great opportunity to fundraise, get community buy-in, and raise your community's awareness of the new blessing boxes arrival.

If you fundraise more than you need, put it toward filling the box with supplies for the next month, donate it to the church/nonprofit's outreach ministry, or build another box!

Needs:

*Donation form/letter

*Flyer to ask for \$10/\$20/\$30 + gifts in kind from local businesses

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Third, getting the supplies & building the box.

You are welcome to go about getting your supplies and building your community blessing box however you want. Have fun with it, use the outline below to aid you as necessary.

Supplies List:

- 1 Gal White Paint + Primer
- 1 Caulk gun
- 1-2 paint rollers, 2-4 paint brushes
- 1 door handle, 2 door hinges, 1 door latch
- 1 Plexiglass pre-cut (32x20)
- 1 long board to create doorframe (or use spare wood)
- 6 pre-cut boards + enough left over wood to create 2 additional boards for shelves, or buy them pre-cut
- 1 Jigsaw + 1 Power drill + 1 nail gun + nails & screws
- Roof shingles

Boards (6x): You can start building the box with as little as 6 pre-cut boards from Home Depot. Here are the supplies you'll need and dimensions for the boards.

Regular Sized Box Dimensions

Sides (2x) : 12 x 42

Back : 28 x 36

Front : 28 x 42

Top/Bottom : 20 x 35 (will trim later)

Door frame : 2-3 inch board, cut (2x)
23.5in w/ 45 degree cut, (2x) 35.75in
w/ 45 degree cut

Plexiglass : 20 x 32 (stock/precut,
do not recommend cutting plexiglass)

Shelves (2x) : 27 x 11



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Extra Large Sized Box Dimensions

Step 3

Pick Up (6) pre-cut boards

① Front 43" x 36"

② Back Square 36" x 36"

③ Side 43" x 20"

④ Side 43" x 20"

⑤ 36" + 3or4" x 20" + 3or4"

⑥ 36" + 3or4" x 20" + 3or4"

Roof/Base

1	36" x 36"	back/canvas
1	43" x 36"	front
2	43" x 20"	sides
2	40" x 24"	roof/base

Side 1

Side 2

With a digisaw
Measure Twice
Cut once

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Building Phase 1: Initial form / building your canvas

Connect Your Sides (2) to your Back Canvas: Cut your side boards first.

Connect Canvas to Base: The oversized base will allow for 1-2 inches on all sides, which you can trim off later.

After you get to what the picture looks like, take a break!



Building Phase 2: Door, Roof & Shelves

In the second phase of the build you're doing a lot more measuring, so remember measure twice cut once.

Shelves: Trim/Cut (2) two shelves, making three rows in your box. Mount your shelves however you want. We used only two shelves to maximize the space inside the box, but you can add as many shelves as you like.

Door: You need a door with a latch. Build the frame for your door, then secure your pre-cut plexiglass to it. Attach your door handle, hinges & latch and you're done.

Box Front: Take the largest board you pre-cut, the 43x36in board, and measure where you'll be cutting your hole for the door. You will need a jigsaw to make this cut.

*Tip: Leave a 4-6 inch space above the door frame for the sign you create in the next step.

The door latch: position it high enough on the door so a child can't open the box without an adult.

Roof: Make your roof even larger than your base. A larger roof allows you to have more protection for your artists' canvas, allowing the outdoor art to last a little longer.



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Fourth, getting the box ready for outdoor conditions.

4A) Paint & Assemble: Take your white paint/primer, paint brushes & rollers, and paint the interior and exterior of the entire box with your primer paint.

After you're finished painting, reassemble all pieces, and attach your door.

4B) Seal the box. After reassembling, take your caulk gun and fill in any gaps.

4C) Add Roof Shingles: This can be done last as a fun, short project.



4D) Name your box

Before you put your box in public view, make sure you put your name on it. You could put a completely white box in your neighborhood and see what happens (it might surprise you). However, I recommend at least printing off the words "Blessing Box" and taping it above the doorframe. Initially, it helps to make the purpose of the box very obvious. Remove any extra signage after a month or two. (Boards in photo = 13.5 x 3.5 in)



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Fifth, painting the box!

What arts and crafts project would be complete without you? Your new community blessing box is powerful. The function it serves for the community speaks volumes. Now you have the opportunity to add meaning to the box through your art. Have fun & be creative!



Lastly, invite the neighborhood over for a “Fill The Box” celebration

Thanks for being awesome & doing something that will impact your community for years to come!

Ongoing engagement

- Partner with other nearby food pantries, no cost grocery programs, and food rescue programs to keep the box stocked.
- Partner with families in the community and nearby organizations to fill the box one Saturday or Sunday every month
- Let your neighborhood know the box is there for everyone
- Clean the interior of your box once a month
- Take what you need, leave what you can :-)

[For more information, visit communityblessingbox.org]