

Volunteer Tips: Becoming a Volunteer

1. Research the causes or issues that are important to you. Look for a group that deals with issues about which you feel strongly.
2. Look for opportunities that meet your skills and interests. Consider serving in an organization that can benefit from your particular personal and professional skills. Your experience and knowledge can be a great asset to an organization that is working to serve in your community. Similarly, you may want to think about your specific personality and how your organization skills or communication style might fit with different organizations or activities.
3. Think outside the box! Many community groups that are looking for volunteers, like neighborhood programs, disaster volunteers at Volunteer Center, youth organizations, intergenerational programs, and park services may not have occurred to you but could just be the perfect fit.
4. When you find an organization that is in line with your interests, request an interview and plan for it in much the same way that you would plan for a job interview. Be ready to describe your interests, qualifications, and background, and also be prepared to ask your interviewers about their organization and the benefits they offer to their volunteers. An interview will allow you and the organization to find the right match for your skills and interests.
5. Check into doing a short-term volunteering experience. Many organizations have opportunities that will fit with different time commitment needs so you can find the volunteer activity that fits your schedule.
6. Volunteer with friends or as a family. Think about looking for a volunteer opportunity that would be suitable for parents and children to do together, or for husband and wife or a group of friends to take on as a team. Volunteering with others can be a great way to get to know people better and can help keep you excited about volunteering.
7. Stay active and strong—volunteer! With a few extra moments of your time, you can change our community and you can also change yourself. Research shows that there are a number of health benefits that come from volunteering, including lower risk of heart disease and depression, and even longer life-span.
8. Not sure where to start? There is no need to wait to be asked. The website www.volunteercenterjwc.org will help you locate opportunities in our area, as well as your area of interest. Contact the United Way Volunteer Center to learn more about opportunities and ways to get involved.
9. Virtual Volunteering- yes, there is such a thing. If you have computer access and the necessary skills, some organizations now offer the opportunity to do volunteer work over the computer. This can be a great way to get started in volunteering, and can also provide a way to volunteer at home on a flexible schedule.
10. Look into volunteering events in order to get a taste of volunteering if you're not sure about committing right away. Make a Difference Day, Summer of the Arts, FRY fest and many other one-day events are scheduled throughout the year.