



VOLUNTEER PROJECT LEADERS

FACTS, QUESTIONS AND TIPS FOR VOLUNTEERING

VOLUNTEER AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT FACTS AND STATISTICS

From the Volunteering in America 2008:

- » 60.8 million Americans volunteered in 2007
 - » That's 26.2 % percent of the adult population
 - » That's 8.1 billion hours of volunteer service
 - » That's worth \$158 billion invested back into the community!
 - » Over a 1/3 of volunteers (34%) serve intensively, volunteering 100 or more hours in a year
 - » About 5.2 million people also volunteer informally to help their communities
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- » Data since 1989 show that religious organizations have consistently remained the most popular organizations for volunteers to serve through, followed closely in recent years by educational or youth service organizations.
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- » The West had the highest number of volunteer hours served per resident, with an average of 38.8 hours.
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- » The biggest increase in the number of volunteer hours served could be seen in Colorado; between 2006 and 2007, the number increased by 73 million hours, from 123 million to 196 million hours.
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- » Fort Collins is rated 7 out of the Top 10 Mid-Size Cities for Volunteer Rate.
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- » 40.2% of Fort Collins residents volunteer.

From the United States Department of Labor:

- » About 43.7 percent of volunteers became involved with their main organization after being asked to volunteer, most often by someone in the organization.
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- » A slightly smaller proportion, 40.8 percent, became involved on their own initiative; that is, they approached the organization.

TOP 6 QUESTIONS TO ASK A POTENTIAL VOLUNTEER

1. Why do you want to volunteer? What are your goals? Is this volunteer work required?
2. When and where are you available to volunteer? Do you have reliable transportation? Is your schedule flexible?
3. What issue or population would you most like to serve? ex: homelessness, disabilities, youth, animals, health, seniors
4. What activities would you most like to participate in? ex: fundraising, clerical, construction, direct service, board member
5. What skills/knowledge/talents can you share? ex: arts, foreign language, music, crisis counseling, event planning
6. What would make you feel like your volunteer work was a good experience?

VOLUNTEER AREAS OF INTEREST

Art and Culture	Women Issues	Disasters
Building Projects	Substance Abuse	Animals
Children and Youth	Teen Pregnancy / Parenting	Senior Citizens
Environment	Hunger and Homelessness	Legal Issues
Family Services	People with Disabilities	Health and Wellness
Business and Finance	Government Programs	Community Resources

TIPS FOR VOLUNTEERS

\\Plan Ahead

- » Give the agency enough advance notice of your interest to volunteer in order for them to plan for your arrival. This is especially important for group projects (Typically 2-4 weeks or more is appreciated). Let them know your time commitment, as well.
- » Get to know the organization and employees where you wish to volunteer. The more you know about their services and operations, the better fit it will be.
- » Make your interests and skills known to the volunteer manager. Expressing these will help to ensure that your volunteer assignment is appropriate and meaningful.

\\Be Flexible, Patient, and Open

- » Do not get discouraged if a volunteer opportunity does not work out for you. The particular circumstances or agency needs at the time may not have been the right fit.
- » Try, try again. If a volunteer job does not work, don't be afraid to look for something else. If you can find a good match, it might be something you enjoy doing for years to come.
- » Be prepared to go through an orientation or training before you can actually volunteer. These can range from a few minutes to several hours or even days. Some agencies may also require background checks of all potential volunteers.
- » Be open to new experiences, perspectives, and people. Stepping out of your comfort zone may show you things about yourself that you never knew existed.

\\Follow Through on Your Commitment

- » The agency and those they serve will strongly rely on your time, skills, and energy to keep the organization operating. They will be counting on you!
- » Do not over estimate the time commitment you can make.

\\Be a Good Volunteer

- » Follow the rules, dress code, safety measures and other policies of the agency.
- » Respect the privacy and confidentiality of clients you may encounter while serving with an organization.
- » Don't try to be a hero. Your role as a volunteer is to serve the agency and their clientele within the boundaries and expectations of the organization.

\\Have fun!

- » Volunteering should be an enjoyable activity that can be shared with family and friends.

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<http://www.firstcall211.org/volunteer/VolunteerProjectLeaders.html>