

Tips for Volunteering

TIPS FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS WHO WANT TO VOLUNTEER

1. Ask around: Word of mouth is the best way to learn about opportunities. If you find an organization that interests you, call and get information on what you can do to serve.
2. Use volunteer time as an opportunity to explore career options, and gain training and professional development. Volunteering is a great way to experience first-hand what a potential position in a particular career field could be like.
3. Contact different organizations to see about one-time events happening every so often. Participating in an event of that sort will provide you with an introduction to the organization and also to opportunities available for volunteering in the future.
4. Commit to a project, but don't over-commit yourself. Make sure you come through as a dependable volunteer; organizations can serve as great references for potential full-time employers.
5. Check out www.volunteer.gov for opportunities in your area. If you're not sure where to start or are in a new city, go online and see what opportunities await you. You can also check with your local volunteer center to determine opportunities in the area that fit your needs and interests.
6. Work with your local Student Services office to find opportunities on campus. Your college or university always has events happening that need volunteers, from concert security to game day ticket-taking.
7. Take an Alternative Spring Break. Volunteer in a place with special needs, such as the hurricane-ravaged Gulf Coast, or in some part of the country or world you've never been. Help out while learning about the local economy, local needs, and cultural differences. Contact your Student Service Office for more opportunities.
8. Meet new people! Volunteering provides a great atmosphere to meet people with similar interests.
9. Ask your friends to help. Studies show that the number 1 reason that people volunteer is because they were asked. So go ask someone to volunteer with you and make a difference together.
10. Utilize your *skills*. Whatever you are good at – computers, working with youth, environmental work – can be put to good use with nonprofits and local agencies. It can also be a way to hone those skills into something marketable for future employers.
11. Ask your religious leaders about volunteer opportunities. If you are involved with a religious organization or congregation, they may be an excellent resource to determine organizations that are in need of your assistance in the area. Your religious congregation may even have programs of it's own to give back to the community.

12. Look into courses which include a service component. You can learn a great deal, earn college credit, and serve the community all at the same time! If there is not a class with service as a component that is in line with your interests, sometimes it is also possible to create an independent study course for yourself based on your service activities.

13. Serve with your campus clubs, fraternities, or sororities. If you are involved in a group, look into what they do to reach out to the community. If there is nothing planned yet, it may be fun to organize an activity or fundraiser together. If you live in on-campus housing, you could also organize your dorm-mates to contribute together.

14. Ask professors and academic counselors about opportunities that are specific to your field of study and your academic interests. If you are thinking about going on to graduate study, getting involved in your field as a volunteer is a great step towards becoming an expert.

15. Check scholarship listings to see if any scholarships are available for volunteers. There are a number of awards for students who show a great deal of commitment to students who work to create positive change. Some programs may even offer education awards for service, for instance, AmeriCorps offers an education award of \$4,725 in exchange for a year of service.

16. Talk to your professors, counselors, or campus groups about Learn and Serve America. Learn and Serve provides grants to fund high quality service-learning projects on higher education campuses.

17. If you don't find the opportunity that fits your needs and interests, start your own project! College is a time to try new things, so figure out what you can do, and go ahead and do it!