



Volunteering

The Benefits of Volunteering

In today's competitive labour market, it can be challenging to gain the experience and develop the skills that employers are seeking. You need experience to get a job, and you need a job to get experience. How can you break this cycle? One solution is simple: volunteer.

Gain Skills and Experience

- ✓ Many volunteer roles offer the opportunity to develop the same skills as paid roles
- ✓ You can develop the communication, interpersonal, organizational, problem-solving, and computer skills, among countless others, that employers are seeking

Explore Careers

- ✓ Volunteering affords an opportunity to investigate a career area and to discover the skills necessary for success in that field
- ✓ Volunteering offers a hands-on approach to self-assessment and allows you to explore career options prior to looking for employment in a new field
- ✓ You will be volunteering in the non-profit sector, however you will be acquiring the same skills that make you a valuable employee in the private and government sectors

Connect with Organization Representatives

- ✓ Up to 80 percent of all work opportunities are never advertised, so you must either be in the right place at the right time or have contacts who can alert you to openings before they are advertised
- ✓ In addition to job openings, contacts can provide critical information about work that allows you to make informed career choices

Participate in Your Community

- ✓ Volunteering affords us the opportunity to give back to our communities and help others. Through this practice, we can strengthen both our communities and ourselves
- ✓ The sense of satisfaction we experience from helping allows us to balance personal and professional needs

Stay Sharp While Unemployed.

- ✓ A lengthy job-search can be discouraging, especially if you are isolated most of the time
- ✓ Volunteering can help you to keep your skills sharp, as well as to stay confident about your abilities—something that employers will notice during your interviews

Tips for Finding Volunteer Positions

Volunteering is a commitment on your part. To make the most of the opportunity, consider the followings tips:

- ✓ Set clear and realistic goals for your volunteer experiences
- ✓ Remember that you are trying to meet specific career exploration, skills development, contact development and community goals
- ✓ Tailor your volunteer position to your specific needs and wants
- ✓ As with any employment search, the most important factor is research and preparation
- ✓ Have some fun! Volunteering can provide you with skills, contacts and opportunities. It can also be a source of satisfaction and accomplishment

Volunteer Opportunities

Applying for advertised volunteer opportunities can be as competitive as applying for paid positions. Remember to tailor your resume and cover letter for each position.

U of T Resources

- ✓ **Career Learning Network** – cln.utoronto.ca
Click on Jobs, then On-Campus or Off-Campus
- ✓ **Centre for International Experience (St. George)** – www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/cie
- ✓ **International Student Centre (UTSC)** – www.utsc.utoronto.ca/utscinternational/global-learning
- ✓ **Scarborough Campus Student Union Volunteer Network Program** - scsu.ca/vnp/

Community Resources

- ✓ **Charity Village** – <https://charityvillage.com>
- ✓ **Global Volunteer Network** – <https://globalvolunteernetwork.org>
- ✓ **Volunteer Canada** – <https://volunteer.ca>
- ✓ **Volunteer Centre of Toronto** – www.volunteertoronto.ca
- ✓ **Directory of Community Services in Metro Toronto** – www.211toronto.ca

Questions?

See our other tip sheets and meet with a Career Counsellor or Employment Coach

Key Strategies

Many volunteer opportunities are not advertised.

- ✓ Be creative, resourceful, organized and open to all possible options
- ✓ Tell EVERYONE you know you are looking to volunteer in particular areas
- ✓ Attend AA&CC events like the, Networking Events, Volunteer Fair, Industry Talks, and Company Information Sessions – they are all listed in [CLN](#) under Events and Workshops
- ✓ Research specific organizations with employer directories in the AA&CC and online directories
- ✓ Use LinkedIn to research companies and potential opportunities
- ✓ Attend on-campus and off-campus conferences and network

Please note: While every effort is made to avoid errors, requirements do change. This tip sheet is intended as an informational document only.