



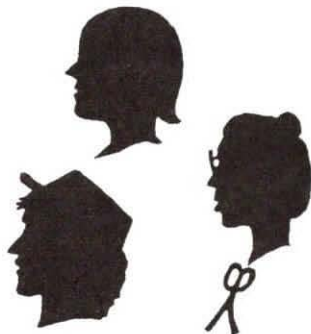
**TAC**

Technical Assistance Center  
Denver, Colorado

**EMPLOYEE  
VOLUNTEERISM  
GUIDE**

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## ABOUT THIS BOOK



This book will help you decide if you want to become part of the 55% of American adults who volunteer. If you are already a volunteer, this book will help you assess how to increase the impact of your volunteer contribution by achieving a better match between your talents, interests and time and the volunteer opportunity you choose.

## WHY SHOULD 'YOU' VOLUNTEER?

Volunteering can provide you with many benefits. Perhaps you want to gain a new skill. Trying a volunteer opportunity gives you a low risk way to use the new skill so later you can apply it to a competitive job situation. This can also apply to refreshing an old skill.

Perhaps you need to expand your social life. Selecting a volunteer opportunity where you work closely with people opens the door to new friendships and reduces loneliness and isolation. It can also broaden your life when you meet people from different backgrounds and view points.

Sometimes the benefit gained is directly related to progressing on the job. In executive and professional positions, many companies expect volunteering as a sign that the individual is willing and able to represent the company in the community.

A company may have a specific goal it wants to achieve through its community involvement. Among the benefits sought may be improved image as a good corporate citizen, increased business volume and development of employee skills. Find out if your company has adopted a community involvement goal. If you are volunteering to enhance your value to the company, knowing their goals can help you make a decision which has benefit to the company, as well as, to yourself and others.

Knowing you made a contribution to the well-being of others is perhaps the greatest benefit. Whether you work with a community arts group or in a soup kitchen, you can get a real sense of fulfillment from your volunteer work. For some, volunteering fulfills a belief that they should give something back to society as they themselves benefit.

## WHO VOLUNTEERS AND WHAT DO THEY DO?



You know the old adage, ask a busy person if you want to get something done? It fits here. The typical volunteer today is under fifty-five, has children at home, earns over \$20,000 per year, and lives in a suburban or rural setting. Roles of men and women have changed in society and that change is reflected in volunteerism. Only slightly more women than men volunteer and both sexes choose from a wide of opportunities. There are many different volunteer variety opportunities available to you. Some examples are:

- Being a friend to a troubled youth or homebound elderly
- Teaching others a skill you have, such as financial management, sports or photography
- Filling in as a receptionist in an office
- Stuffing envelopes or selling raffle tickets

See section IX of this guide for many more examples of what volunteers do.

## VOLUNTEERS IN AMERICA

Volunteerism is a unique characteristic of American society. It began of necessity, as our early settlers struggled to survive in a hostile environment. They accomplished together what they could

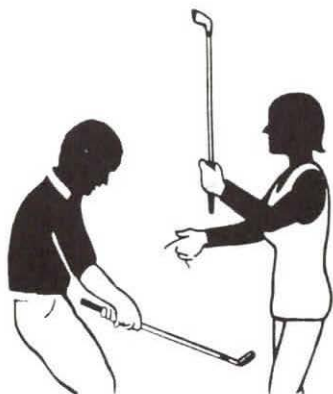
not do alone; it was in their self-interest to do so and all benefited. Other factors that contributed to our nation of volunteers were our Judeo-Christian heritage and our fear of concentrated power. We spread power through many institutions and kept the leadership with the people, thus creating a participatory society. We sought freedom but understood that to maintain freedom there is a need for each citizen to become involved. A leader of volunteerism, John Gardner, capsulizes this idea: "Freedom—Responsibility, Liberty—Duty, that's the deal."

In almost every case, volunteering will help you both give and grow if you select your volunteer opportunity wisely. The next sections of this book will assist you in choosing the right volunteer opportunity for you.

## KNOWING YOURSELF

Choosing a volunteer opportunity is a very personal thing. Answers to the following questions will help you to match "YOU" to a volunteer opportunity:

### I. CHOOSING THE BENEFIT YOU WANT FROM VOLUNTEERING



In addition to helping others, there are specific things you may want to gain as a result of your volunteer work. Below are listed some potential benefits for you personally. At the end of this section, you will select the benefit you seek for yourself.

- A. Personal Benefit—Select a 1st priority and a 2nd priority and fill in the blanks below.

1. Sense of Accomplishment (seeing specific results of time given.)
2. Feeling Needed (making contribution to welfare of others)
3. Application of skills (utilizing an existing skill or developing a new one)
4. Power and Influence (in leadership role, getting others to believe in and/or support your cause and to follow you)
5. Socialization (meeting and getting to know other people)
  - 1st priority benefit \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2nd priority benefit \_\_\_\_\_

**B. Company Benefit**

1. Is my company encouraging me to volunteer \_\_\_\_ yes  
\_\_\_\_ no?
2. If yes, what is the company's goal for its community involvement?  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **II. SKILLS**

Analyze your job related and other total life skills that you have or want to develop through volunteering. As you consider the items in Section A & B below, please prioritize those skills by filling in the blanks at the end of the section.

- A. Job Related Skills—Add to this list if your skills do not appear.
  1. General Management (supervision)
  2. Financial Management
  3. Sales/Fund Raising
  4. Legal
  5. Information Systems

6. Marketing
7. Public Relations
8. Personnel
9. Clerical
10. Planning
11. Research
12. Evaluation
13. Organizational Development
14. Training
15. Other — (please specify)

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**B. Other Total Life Skills**

1. Art Work
2. Athletic
3. Writing
4. Interpersonal
5. Cooking
6. Sewing
7. Repairing/Building
8. Other — (please specify)

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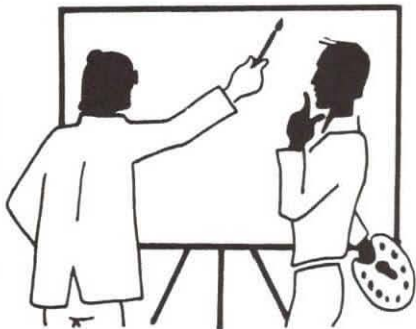
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List priorities using skills from Section A & B above.

- 1st priority skill \_\_\_\_\_
- 2nd priority skill \_\_\_\_\_
- 3rd priority skill \_\_\_\_\_
- 4th priority skill \_\_\_\_\_

### III. INTEREST AREA



Listed below are specific causes on behalf of which you may volunteer. Prioritize your choice of causes by filling in the blanks at the end of this section.

- A. Art, Culture (museums, music, dance groups)
- B. Civic (governmental agencies, commissions, city committees)
- C. Education (private and public schools, colleges, special cause public education agencies)
- D. Environment (animal species preservation, air, water, land protection)
- E. Health (hospitals, clinics, mental health)
- F. Human Services (services aimed at helping people with particular problems such as disadvantaged and handicapped)
- G. Legal (juvenile offenders, legal services to poor)

1st priority cause \_\_\_\_\_

2nd priority cause \_\_\_\_\_

### IV. POPULATION

In this section, please identify the age category with which or on behalf of which you want to volunteer. Prioritize your choice of age groups by filling in the blanks on the next page.

- A. Age
  - Infants
  - Children 3 - 12
  - Adolescent



Adult  
Elderly

1st priority age group \_\_\_\_\_

2nd priority age group \_\_\_\_\_

## V. SUMMARY

At this point it will be helpful to integrate the decisions you have made in the previous sections. Please read the following paragraph and fill in the spaces which will summarize your decisions.

The personal benefit I want as a result of my volunteering is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

My company's goal for community involvement is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The skills of \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ are those I want to apply to volunteering.

\_\_\_\_\_ is the cause that I am most interested in.

The age group I want to volunteer with or on behalf of is:  
\_\_\_\_\_

## VI. PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are other factors about the volunteer work environment which will influence your choice of volunteer activities. Read through and put a check on the line in front of the choice which would be the best circumstance for you.

A. How do I want to be involved? (check those that fit your circumstances.)

1. Schedule

Provide an ongoing regularly scheduled service.

Work on specific projects periodically as need arises.

Work only in set period of year.

2. Type of Work

Work directly with clients or patients.

Not work directly with clients or patients but, rather, provide assistance behind the scenes.

3. Degree of Responsibility

Have a leadership role.

Be given a specific task to perform.

B. Best work environment for me

Work alone

Work in open space

Work with another person

Work in separate office

Work with a group

Work at home

C. Amount of Responsibility you want to assume

1 2 3 4 5 (1 = None; 5 = A Great Deal)

D. Amount of Supervision Needed

1 2 3 4 5 (1 = None; 5 = A Great Deal)

E. Where do you want to volunteer? (Geography)

\_\_\_\_\_

F. Describe the kinds of staff or other volunteer people you want to work with

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- G. Time Factor—How much time do you have available and when? Your commitment will vary according to what you do. As a volunteer, you can plan to work as much or as little as you choose. Many volunteers carry full time jobs. You may do some volunteer work in the evenings or on weekends.

Total amount of time able to give per month \_\_\_\_\_

Days of the week available \_\_\_\_\_

Time of year \_\_\_\_\_

## VII. RESPONSIBILITIES OF VOLUNTEERS

Being a volunteer for a not-for-profit organization requires certain responsibilities and commitments on the part of every volunteer. Read through the following section and answer yes or no to the questions. An answer of yes to the majority of questions is a positive indication you are ready to volunteer now.

Can I accept the following responsibilities of volunteers?

- |                              |                             |   |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no | 1. Consider volunteering a serious commitment           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no | 2. Be supportive of the organization I volunteer for    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no | 3. Take part in training                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no | 4. Observe rules and policies of organizations          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no | 5. Follow job description and accept supervision        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no | 6. Be dependable, follow through and fulfill commitment |

- yes    no   7. Protect confidentiality in all issues pertaining to clients as applicable  
 yes    no   8. Commit some personal resource to volunteer opportunity  
 yes    no   a. use of my car  
 yes    no   b. gasoline  
 yes    no   c. parking  
 yes    no   d. cost of meals while volunteering  
 yes    no   e. contributions  
 yes    no   f. materials

Even though you may not be able to answer yes to all of those in number VII, you can still volunteer. You just need to tell the agency what your limitations are.

## VIII. CASE STUDIES



Listed below are examples of how individuals made decisions as you have in this booklet and chose a volunteer opportunity that matched their needs.

- A. Jack Jones works for XYZ corporation that encourages employees to volunteer in order to create a positive image for the XYZ company. In addition, the personal benefit Jack wanted from volunteering was a sense of

accomplishment. His primary skill was selling. Jack decided he wanted to help an agency actually sell some of their products to raise funds. This would meet his need of working periodically on a specific project. It also met his need to work only during the summer months. He liked working with a group and so served on the fund

raising task force. Jack needed little supervision and would make sales calls on his own. He selected agency X which provided residential treatment for mentally retarded adolescents which he was concerned about due to an experience he had with a nephew who was retarded.

- B. Mary Casey works for a consulting corporation B whose goal for community involvement is to gain an increase in contacts. Her preferred personal benefit was feeling needed and her primary skills were public relations and art work. She decided she would do the graphics and layout for a newsletter for an agency. This met her need of periodic involvement and providing assistance behind the scenes.

She liked working alone and would do this work on evenings and weekends. She selected agency Y, a museum, because it was in the art/culture interest area and its population was adults from the upscale social-economic community who were potential clients. Mary's name and that of her company were printed in the newsletter each month and circulated to 10,000 potential clients.

- C. Sue Hall worked for corporation C which encouraged volunteers to contribute on their own, but they didn't have a specific company goal. She wanted socialization as her benefit and her skill was clerical. She wanted to volunteer on a regular basis, to work directly with clients and to be given a specific task to perform. She liked working with others. She chose to fill in as a receptionist at a mental health clinic Saturday mornings. In order to do that she took training with other volunteers for the clinic, participated in several social events connected with the clinic, and, over time, found she had gained some new friends.

## IX. SAMPLE OF VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES



The following list will give you an overview of the kinds of volunteer opportunities which are available. Put a check in front of those that might be of interest.

### A. Training/Teaching Opportunities

- 1. Tutor children ages 5—12
  - 2. Tutor youth ages 12—18
  - 3. Give advice to students in planning for college, career, or training
  - 4. Teach a special skill such as homemaking, repairs, or photography
  - 5. Be a tour guide at a museum
  - 6. Be a member of speakers bureau for an agency
  - 7. Be a recreation leader or coach
  - 8. Be a consultant in marketing, personnel, financial management, etc., providing assistance to not-for-profit organizations
  - 9. Other (please specify)
- 

### B. Counseling/Support

- 1. Act as a big brother or sister by taking a youngster to a museum or a ballgame
- 2. Provide counseling and support to a troubled youth

- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Help handicapped by doing something they cannot do for themselves (like shopping, repairs, etc.)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Provide friendship to home bound people
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Provide entertainment/companionship for nursing home residents
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Deliver meals to the elderly
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Answer the hot line of an agency doing emergency service
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Participate in telephone reassurance for home bound
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Other (please specify)
- 

C. Administrative Services

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Serve on the Board of Directors
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Work in hospital gift shop
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Do clerical work in agency's office
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Serve on committee of agency
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Work on special event
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Do fund raising (selling) for organization
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Be an advocate or participate in lobbying for a cause
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Do graphics or layout for publications
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Write articles for publications
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Do research or evaluation for an agency
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Other (please specify)
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## **X. FINDING OUT MORE ABOUT THE AGENCIES**

Now let's assume you're ready to go out and make things happen so you can volunteer. Contact any of the following in your community for more information on local volunteer outlets.

### **A. General Sources**

1. Your company may have a person or department such as community affairs, public relations, or CEO's office that has information about agencies that the company knows about or with which it is involved.
2. Talk with people you know who are already volunteering.
3. The Chamber of Commerce may have information about not-for-profits.
4. Local United Ways may have lists of agencies needing volunteers and descriptions of volunteer opportunities.
5. Churches usually help support charities.
6. Public libraries in department of social science may have a volunteer directory.

### **B. Specific Sources**

1. The yellow pages has listing of all hospitals, health clinics or mental health agencies. Look under health, hospitals or mental health. Also use yellow pages for museums, art centers or theater groups.
2. Check local school districts for information about opportunities in education.
3. Contact the League of Women Voters and political party offices.
4. Governmental programs are usually listed together in a special section of your phone book. Contact the one that fits your interest area.



## **XI. CONSIDERATIONS IN INVESTIGATING THE AGENCIES**

There are over 400,000 not-for-profits. They are characterized by a volunteer Board of Directors, have a charitable, religious, cultural or educational purpose and have a tax-exempt status.

Below are listed a few questions that might help guide you when visiting an agency to see if it matches your needs. These questions will help you determine how volunteerism is viewed and dealt with in the agency. Do be choosy. You have lots to give and a right to expect that the organization will support you well by good administration of their volunteer program.

1. Does the volunteer program have full approval and ongoing support of staff and administration?
2. Is there a staff person who, as a regular part of his or her job, manages the volunteer program?
3. Are there funds available for the volunteer programs?
4. Are there clear job descriptions for volunteers?
5. Is there orientation and ongoing training for volunteers?
6. Are the volunteers supervised on a regular basis and is feedback on performance provided?
7. Are records kept of volunteer's service, hours donated and performance?
8. How are volunteers recognized for their contributions?
9. How many volunteers are working with the agency and are there means for them to get together?
10. How do current volunteers feel about their experience?
11. What is the current financial status of the organization?
12. How does the Board of Directors operate and who are they?

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## **XII. CONCLUSIONS**

It is our hope that this booklet has inspired you to join the 55% of Americans who are currently volunteering or to recommit yourself as a volunteer.

A well chosen volunteer experience will expand and enrich your life.

We hope this workbook has helped you choose well and will guide your search for the right volunteer opportunity. Approach this search for a volunteer opportunity very much like you would a job search: get information, interview and negotiate the terms of your involvement.

Enjoy your volunteer experience!



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