

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

for VOLUNTEERS

Where can I volunteer?

There are many organizations in York County for which to volunteer. Almost any non-profit and many for-profits have volunteer opportunities. Areas of service include: aging, healthcare, children and youth, environment, community support, basic needs, clerical, animals, special events and fundraising. Visit www.unitedway-york.org to search the e-Volunteer database.

What should I consider first in deciding where to volunteer?

What do you enjoy doing or what causes are important to you? Is there an area in which you'd like to learn or gain experience? Where do you feel you can help the most with the talents or skills you can share with the agency (e.g., computer/internet services, graphic design, peer mentoring)?

Also consider the time you are able to commit to volunteering. Will it be evenings and weekends only? Your availability will be important in determining the opportunities in which you can participate.

Can you get transportation to an agency or do you need to provide a service "offsite"? Examples of helping offsite include: collecting food, clothing, or blankets for food banks or shelters; making decorations for bulletin boards, or residents in a nursing home; help with a newsletter, special event or fundraiser; or provide computer/internet services.

How do I know if people my age are eligible to volunteer with particular agencies?

Simply call the agency and ask if there is an age restriction. Some agencies require a person to be 16 or 18 years old depending on insurance regulations or to protect the confidentiality of their clients.

In agencies whose minimum age is not regulated by law or insurance, this can change from year to year depending on the current staff in charge. There may also be some flexibility depending on the maturity and experience of the person applying.

Where do I call?

Call the agency and ask for the Volunteer Coordinator or person who works with volunteers. You could also call the Volunteer Engagement Coordinator at the United Way of York County at (717) 771-3809, who may be able to provide a contact name and more information.

Important Note: Because it is rare for an agency to be able to take a volunteer immediately, call well in advance of your desired start timeframe. Normally, there is a required process of applying, filling out an application, scheduling an interview and completing orientation and training. Think about the questions you want to ask before you call.



What do I say when I call?

Explain that you are interested in their organization and would like to find out about their various volunteer opportunities. Tell them who you are, why you want to volunteer and if you have a required number of hours to perform. Mentioning how old you are is also helpful because some positions have a minimum age requirement. You may also want to ask about training, parking, required minimum hours, when positions are available and if there is a dress code.

Volunteer Managers are very busy so you may have to leave a message. Speak clearly when you leave your name, number and why you are calling. You can also provide a good time to be contacted and your address to receive information by mail if necessary.

What happens after the call?

The agency contact may talk to you about their positions, schedule an interview with you, or send you information on their agency and volunteer positions by email or mail.

How should I dress for an interview with an agency?

You should wear clean, neat clothes that give a good first impression. When in doubt, dress “up” rather than “down”.

Will employers look favorably on someone who has volunteered and not been paid to do something?

Yes, in fact, employers are happy to see that you have done something without being paid to do it. It shows that you are motivated by caring and compassion – not just money.

What is the best time of the year to volunteer?

Some organizations are extremely busy during holidays and summers; others are busier at the beginning of the month rather than the end; and many have special programs or events that determine volunteer needs. There are opportunities throughout the year.

Can I receive credit in school for work done as a volunteer?

Some schools have classes about Volunteering and Community Service, while others require a minimum number of volunteer hours for graduation. All schools encourage students to be involved in volunteer activities.

Check with your school to find out if they participate in such volunteer initiatives.

Are there other ways to check on volunteer opportunities?

The best way to find local volunteer opportunities is to visit www.unitedway-york.org and search on the e-Volunteer database. The information provided will tell you a little about the duties and requirements, as well as provide the agency’s contact information.

In addition, many local newspapers and media resources provide articles on local volunteer opportunities.

Making your decision:

After you have researched a few agencies and reviewed their volunteer needs, decide what will work best for you and make the commitment to volunteer! The opportunity can be very rewarding to you, the agency, the community and the people you help directly or indirectly!!

A Special Note to Parents:

Agencies are not equipped to take youth ‘full time, 5 days a week’ during the summer. Contact PA-211/FIRST: (717) 755-1000 or 1-800-673-2529 for information on child care, summer programs and activities.

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