

Jump-Start Your Volunteer Search

In this section you will find a sample of the exercises from the “Create Your Volunteer Experience” workshop.

Try out these tools to help you with your transition into volunteering.

Your Strengths and Interests

Instructions: Review the list of skills below and put a check next to any (1) you consider to be one of your strengths and (2) you *might* want to use in your volunteer experience.

Which of these are strengths or interests?	Notes(Leave Blank)
<input type="checkbox"/> Writing	
<input type="checkbox"/> Editing	
<input type="checkbox"/> Networking	
<input type="checkbox"/> Mentoring	
<input type="checkbox"/> Training	
<input type="checkbox"/> Teaching	
<input type="checkbox"/> Data gathering	
<input type="checkbox"/> Marketing	
<input type="checkbox"/> Negotiating	
<input type="checkbox"/> Organizing	

Which of these are strengths or interests?	Notes (Leave Blank)
<input type="checkbox"/> Accounting	
<input type="checkbox"/> Financial Planning	
<input type="checkbox"/> Budgeting	
<input type="checkbox"/> Budget Analysis	
<input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Planning	
<input type="checkbox"/> Fund Raising	
<input type="checkbox"/> Interviewing/ Hiring	
<input type="checkbox"/> Administrative Skills	
<input type="checkbox"/> Public Speaking	
<input type="checkbox"/> Coaching	

<input type="checkbox"/> Scheduling	

<input type="checkbox"/> Counseling	

Your Strengths and Interests

(continued)

Which of these are strengths or interests?	Notes (Leave Blank)
<input type="checkbox"/> Working with children	
<input type="checkbox"/> Physical labor	
<input type="checkbox"/> Biology	
<input type="checkbox"/> Preserving/protecting the environment	
<input type="checkbox"/> Advocacy	
<input type="checkbox"/> Purchasing	
<input type="checkbox"/> Working with legislators	
<input type="checkbox"/> Policy making	
<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer management	
<input type="checkbox"/> Library services	
<input type="checkbox"/> Animal care	
<input type="checkbox"/> Cataloguing	

Which of these are strengths or interests?	Notes (Leave Blank)
<input type="checkbox"/> Analyzing	
<input type="checkbox"/> Record Keeping	
<input type="checkbox"/> Researching	
<input type="checkbox"/> Taking Inventory	
<input type="checkbox"/> Data gathering	
<input type="checkbox"/> Developing processes and procedures	
<input type="checkbox"/> Event Coordination	
<input type="checkbox"/> Customer Service	
<input type="checkbox"/> Business Development	
<input type="checkbox"/> Conflict Resolution/Mediation	
<input type="checkbox"/> Graphic Design	
<input type="checkbox"/> Illustrating	

Your Strengths and Interests

(continued)

Which of these are strengths or interests?	Notes (Leave Blank)
<input type="checkbox"/> Packaging	
<input type="checkbox"/> Business Planning	
<input type="checkbox"/> Financial Reporting	
<input type="checkbox"/> Cross-cultural Communications	
<input type="checkbox"/> Driving	
<input type="checkbox"/> Project management	
<input type="checkbox"/> Managing people	
<input type="checkbox"/> Leading Change	
<input type="checkbox"/> Healthcare	
<input type="checkbox"/> Analyzing Investments	
<input type="checkbox"/> Event Planning	
<input type="checkbox"/> Decorating	

Which of these are strengths or interests?	Notes (Leave Blank)
<input type="checkbox"/> Auditing	
<input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Development	
<input type="checkbox"/> Selling	
<input type="checkbox"/> Telemarketing	
<input type="checkbox"/> Public Relations	
<input type="checkbox"/> Production	
<input type="checkbox"/> Fitness	
<input type="checkbox"/> Insurance	
<input type="checkbox"/> Web Design	
<input type="checkbox"/> Photography	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	

Values: Another Piece of the Story

Step 1: From the list below, check off any values that are important to you to use in your volunteer experience. Complete the sentence “I place a high value on.....”

Accomplishment
Achievement
Adventure
Affection
Affiliation
Autonomy/Independence
Security
Technical/Functional
Competence
Service
Assisting Others
Authority
Contribution to others
Control
Collaboration
Fame/high visibility/name recognition
Friendship
Structure
Improving society
Innovativeness
Creativity
Order
Personal development/learning
Pleasure
Power
Recognition
Spirituality
Stability
Status
Success
Taking risks

Teamwork
Happiness
Advancement

Balance
Being part of a group
Building something
Competition
Entrepreneurship
Equality
Excitement
Family happiness
Financial security
Fun
Harmony
Health
Integrity
Leadership
Physical activity
Respect
Safety
Variety
Influencing Others
Efficiency
Making Influential Decisions
Beauty, aesthetics
Fast pace
Moral fulfillment
Physical challenge
Mental challenge
Preserving the planet
Other:_____

Other:_____

Other:_____

Values: Another Piece of the Story (continued)

Step 2: Select 5 values that you especially want to build into your volunteer experience. Write each on a separate post-it (e.g., one value per post-it.)

Here are some tips for picking your Top 5 values:

Ask yourself:

- Is this value something that made you happy in the past?
- Is this value something that you would miss a great deal if it were absent from your life?
- Is this value something that would make you very happy if it were present in your life?

Step 3: List each value in the chart below and decide to what extent it fits with the strengths you identified.

Values	How does this fit with your strengths and interests?
Value #1:	
Value #2:	
Value #3:	
Value #4:	
Value #5:	

Where Does Volunteering Fit?

Instructions: Complete the charts on pages 13-14 to determine how much time you have to spend on volunteering.

Activities	How much time do you currently spend on this activity?	Expected Changes? <i>(List any changes you would like or expect that will affect your ability to volunteer)</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Travel	<input type="checkbox"/> ____ Weeks/year <input type="checkbox"/> ____ Weeks/month <input type="checkbox"/> ____ Months/year <input type="checkbox"/> Other time frame:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Paid work	<input type="checkbox"/> During the day <input type="checkbox"/> In the evening <input type="checkbox"/> Which months of the year? <input type="checkbox"/> ____ Days/week <input type="checkbox"/> ____ Days/month <input type="checkbox"/> ____ Hrs/week <input type="checkbox"/> ____ Hrs/month <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Hobby	<input type="checkbox"/> Seasonal _____ <input type="checkbox"/> ____ Hrs/day <input type="checkbox"/> ____ Hrs/week <input type="checkbox"/> ____ Hrs/month <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer work	<input type="checkbox"/> During the day <input type="checkbox"/> In the evening <input type="checkbox"/> Which months of the year? <input type="checkbox"/> ____ Days/week <input type="checkbox"/> ____ Days/month <input type="checkbox"/> ____ Hrs/week <input type="checkbox"/> ____ Hrs/month <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	

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Where Does Volunteering Fit?

(continued)

Activities	How much time do you currently spend on this activity?	Expected Changes?
<input type="checkbox"/> Family	<input type="checkbox"/> Seasonal _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ Hrs/day <input type="checkbox"/> _____ Hrs/week <input type="checkbox"/> _____ Hrs/month <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Friends	<input type="checkbox"/> Seasonal _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ Hrs/day <input type="checkbox"/> _____ Hrs/week <input type="checkbox"/> _____ Hrs/month <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Routine activities (e.g., shopping, sleeping, cooking, household maintenance, financial management)	<input type="checkbox"/> Seasonal: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ Hrs/day <input type="checkbox"/> _____ Hrs/week <input type="checkbox"/> _____ Hrs/month <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Fitness	<input type="checkbox"/> Seasonal: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ Hrs/day <input type="checkbox"/> _____ Hrs/week <input type="checkbox"/> _____ Hrs/month <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Seasonal: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ Hrs/day <input type="checkbox"/> _____ Hrs/week <input type="checkbox"/> _____ Hrs/month <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	

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Where Does Volunteering Fit?

(continued)

Now What?

1. Review your time commitments.
2. Based on your current time commitments, how much time do you have to spend as a volunteer?
3. Reality Check: Is that about the amount of time you'd like to spend as a volunteer? If not, what can you adjust to make more time?
4. What other factors are a consideration for you in choosing a volunteer experience?
 - Time of the day
 - Length of commute
 - Ease of parking
 - Physical environment
 - Length of commitment (e.g., one day/week, four months, fall only)
 - Other: _____
 - Other: _____

Intersection Interview: With an Organization

Instructions: Before you go to speak to an organization about becoming a volunteer, review the questions below and select several to ask at the interview to ensure that there is an intersection between you and the organization.

- What is the organization's strong suit?
- What is the organization focused on right now?
- What's the purpose of the organization?
- What works well?
- What has been a highlight in the last year?
- What's on the organization's wish list?
- What doesn't there seem to be time to do?
- What's on your to-do list that never gets done?
- What's on [name of senior manager in the functional area you are interested in] to-do list that there never seems to be time to do?
- Who is one volunteer that's made an impact in this organization?
- Why do you think that is?
- Who is another volunteer that's made an impact in a different way?
- Why do you think that is?
- How do you usually get your volunteers?
- Who else could I talk to get more information?
- How has the organization been able to utilize volunteers that have a special area of expertise?

Intersection Interview: With a Potential Collaborator

Instructions: When you are considering collaborating with another person on a volunteer project, review the questions below and select several questions to ask your potential collaborator to insure that

- What's important to you about this idea or project?
- What brought you to this point in your thinking? (e.g., What's their story?)
- What's important to you in a working relationship?
- What outcomes would you like to achieve?
- How do you see us working together to make that happen?
- When you have successfully collaborated with another person, what has worked?
- What have you done that's similar to this?
- What do you want to know about me?

Sample Agreement

To: Carol Greenfield and Shirley Selhub
From: Chris White
Date: November 15, 2006
RE: Finding Sponsors for the March 15th Forum

I put this together just to be sure I'm clear on what I've agreed to do for DWN.

Project: From December 1 through February 15th, I have agreed to find sponsor(s) for the March 15th Forum.

Tasks I'll perform:

- Work with Exec Directors and Fundraising Chairperson to identify potential sponsors.
- Contact prospects or people who know the prospects.
- Explain to the potential sponsors how the money would be used.
- Keep track of my calls and the responses that I hear from the sponsors.
- Follow up with Exec Director to be sure a thank you note is sent to sponsor.

What DWN will provide:

- A practice session to make sure I know as much as possible about DWN and the Forum.
- A packet of info on DWN and the project.
- The amount of money desired from sponsor.
- An explanation of how the money will be used.
- Access to the DWN phone and computer on the days and times when I am in the office to work on this project.

Checking in:

- I'll send you an email once a week to let you know how I'm progressing.
- I'll call or email with questions.
- I'll report back to the ED and FC if the prospect asks for more information, or if a prospect would like to meet with them.

Please let me know if this captures everything we've talked about.

Developing Your Agreement

Use a simple four-step process to develop your agreement.

Step 1: Make a list of everything you've already agreed on with the organization.

Possible Areas to Agree on	Description of the agreement
What tasks have you agreed to do?	
What have you agreed to produce (e.g., a report, an event)?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What resources (e.g., staff time, money, work space, access to information, access to people) have you agreed will be needed? 	
What procedures and/or formats have you agreed to use?	
What time frame have you agreed on? (e.g., start and end dates, number of hours)	
What approvals (e.g., process, who, by when, final decision maker(s)) have you agreed on?	
What kind of check-ins (e.g., frequency, method—phone, email, written, face-to-face) have you agreed on?	

Step 2: Make a list of everything you still need to gain agreement on.

Step 3: Have a discussion with your contact about the two lists.

Step 4: Summarize your conversation in writing and send it to your contact.

Criteria for a High-Quality Volunteer Organization

Note: The list of criteria was identified by the participants in the Creating Your Own Volunteer Experience Workshop

- History of satisfied volunteers
- Organization's values, purpose, goals, and aims
- How long the organization has been around
- Financials
- Transparency
- Website that ranks organizations (GuideStar)
- Annual Report
- Biographies of Leadership Team
- How much respect and support is provided to volunteers (e.g., Is the organization ready to invest in you?)
- Data on volunteer retention
- Integration of volunteers into organization's activities
- Who your direct contact would be? (e.g., Is the person welcoming?)
- Organization that will tell you early on whether or not you are qualified to volunteer