

Volunteerism, Service and Service-Learning Helps Your Job Search

Volunteering, service and service-learning can open doors in a career or job search with companies, businesses, non profits, government or associations. Although you are not getting paid for your time, energy, and effort, volunteer activity is real work, which often results in some sort of final performance, accomplished task, or level of exerted force. It is through various achievements that volunteers complete real work tasks that others may get paid to do. Similar to a internship, job or classroom project, volunteerism, service or service-learning can give you experience that is valuable to employers in all sectors.

Regardless of whether you are seeking your first job, need a new career path, or have been replaced by what some may view as a more accomplished employee, volunteering may give you the extra boost you need to get on the right path. Volunteering and service can also help fill in the gaps of a resume when you have been out of work or need to reestablish a new crop of networking options.

When it comes time to prepare a resume for potential employers, volunteer labor counts as work experience, which appears as a positive aspect to those reviewing your credentials, skills, and know-how. Also, well-rounded individuals who have experienced a wealth of different job fields through volunteering, increase their marketability as the practice expands their overall scope of knowledge and skill.

Volunteering also comes back to you in ways that boost your chances of gaining paid employment. Most volunteer work results in providing a good reference, which is much needed when filling out job applications. The volunteer also learns valuable skills, such as communication, teamwork, and motivation that will carry on wherever their next job experience takes them. Volunteering also helps to build a professional network that can help future job searches.

Making the Most of Volunteering and Service

When it comes to volunteering with the aim towards further job experience, there are two different ways to approach this matter. The first is to interact with the people and familiarize yourself with the job setting of the career you hold the most expertise in. The more experience you receive in your field, the better your chances for landing the job of your dreams.

The second approach is to find a challenge that is outside of your normal range of skill. By picking up a different perspective within the work field, you may discover a career calling you never thought of. Plus, no matter where you volunteer, the skills and knowledge you acquire can be used in any setting. For example, volunteering at the Salvation Army Thrift Store may enhance your people skills, which can come in handy when you apply for a job as an emergency room nurse.

Where to Find Volunteer Opportunities

College Students: Contact your community service director or service-learning director on campus. To find a list of these individuals visit: *CSD List on our web page.*

Also visit the *Michigan Service Scholars Program* to learn how to early scholarship money for your volunteering and service.

Michigan Residents: Call 1-800-Volunteer or contact the closest Volunteer Center. To find a volunteer center near you visit: *VCM Directory on the web.*

Resources on Jobs in the Nonprofit Sector:

How to find a job in the Nonprofit Sector

Current Job Postings: *MNA postings?*

Sections of this page were directly quoted and modified from an article by by Fei Lim titled: *When Volunteering Helps Your Job Search* @ <http://bucarotechelp.com/articles/findjob/93090102.asp>