

Winston-Salem State University

PROJECT G.I.V.E.

(Getting Involved {through} Volunteer Experiences)



Enter to Learn – Depart to Serve



Project GIVE (Getting Involved {through} Volunteer Experiences) is the volunteer service program that matches members of the WSSU community with non-profit organizations and their service programs. Through Project GIVE students, faculty and staff has served as youth mentors, provided valuable health care information to the community, fed the hungry and participated in a wide range of service activities.

The Office of Career Development Services is proud to serve as the host office for Project GIVE. To learn more about this award-winning program and how you can create a stronger community through volunteer service, please contact Coordinator of Community Service Dana Walker at walkerd@wssu.edu or 336-750-2129.

Volunteer Definition

According to the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), a volunteer donates his or her time and energy without receiving financial or material gain. In addition, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the most common volunteer activities are fundraising, tutoring and teaching. Guidelines exist for volunteers in the public and nonprofit sectors in which payment of minimum wage or overtime would not be necessary. The individual would need to a) work toward public service, religious or humanitarian objectives; b) not expect or receive compensation for services; and c) not displace any genuine employees. Under FLSA regulations, an individual cannot volunteer services to a private, for-profit company.

To determine whether an individual is a true volunteer engaged in “ordinary volunteerism,” the [Department of Labor](#) considers a number of factors. No single factor is determinative. The factors include:

- Is the entity that will benefit/receive services from the volunteer a nonprofit organization?
- Is the activity less than a full-time occupation?
- Are the services offered freely and without pressure or coercion?
- Are the services of the kind typically associated with volunteer work?
- Have regular employees been displaced to accommodate the volunteer?
- Does the worker receive (or expect) any benefit from the entity to which it is providing services?

How Can Volunteering Help Me?

All WSSU students have talents that contribute in some way to make the world better, be it tutoring a youth in reading, assisting senior citizens, or helping the homeless improve their living conditions. Furthermore, volunteering gives you the opportunity to practice important common skills used in the workplace, such as communication, teamwork, problem solving, planning and organization. Most importantly, your talents can make a difference in the lives of others while you gain valuable experience that help strengthen your career preparations.

Student Commitment Before Volunteering

As a student volunteer, and a representative of Winston-Salem State University, it's important that you understand that your actions and attitudes while volunteering affect the outcome of your experience for yourself, the organization and community you serve. Therefore, before volunteering, you should acknowledge and agree to the following:

- I am a representative of WSSU, and my actions and attitudes reflect on the university community overall
- I want to volunteer from a genuine desire to help others and learn about the community, not solely for my own benefit
- I understand that nonprofit organizations may need to make changes and adapt to situations in their community, which may affect my volunteer assignment; I will take this opportunity to learn to be flexible and adaptable, and will keep an open mind to lessons I can learn
- I will be consistent, honest, and direct in communicating with the organization and fellow volunteers
- I will approach any volunteer experience as an opportunity to learn from the expertise and experience of nonprofit staff and community members; everyone I interact with has something to teach me
- I will encounter people who have life experiences, perspectives, and views different from my own, and I can learn from this diversity; I will be open-minded and respectful when interacting with and listening to people who are different from me

- I will do my best to communicate the limits of my time, experience, or skill to the organization and avoid committing myself to responsibilities I may not be able to successfully fulfill
- I understand that we are currently living in a pandemic and MUST follow all designated policies and procedures to ensure the safety of myself and others from COVID-19.
 - WSSU is a strong advocate for social distancing practices as a public service to our community. [The university strongly discourages in-person community service during this time](#). For latest updates regarding COVID-19 crisis, please visit [WSSU'S COVID-19](#) page.

However, if you choose to volunteer in person with an off-campus nonprofit organization, its strongly recommended that you follow the precautions listed below:

- I WILL follow all university safety protocols AND the safety protocols of the organization with which I am serving
- I WILL NOT attempt to volunteer if I have any of the symptoms identified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([CDC](#)) and the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services ([NC DHHS](#)).
- I WILL NOT volunteer if I live with or am in frequent contact with people in high-risk categories for the virus.
- I WILL ask about any risk that may be associated with the task. I WILL NOT take part if I feel uncomfortable with the risk level.
- I WILL follow the CDC recommended precautions, which are as follows:
 - Clean and wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds before and after volunteering (*or using hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol when unable to wash hands*)
 - Avoid close contact with others and maintain a social distance of at least six (6) feet
 - Cover nose and mouth with a face covering
 - Cover nose and mouth with a tissue or inside of the elbow when coughing or sneezing, then clean hands by washing or using hand sanitizer
 - Avoid touching my eyes, nose, and mouth
- I WILL learn about the organization's safety precautions before volunteering
- If an organization will need to screen all volunteers before the experience, I WILL arrive early to the site to give enough time to complete the screening process
- I WILL use my own personal protective equipment or the personal protective equipment that the organization offers me while I volunteer
- If up to fourteen (14) days after volunteering I experience any symptoms or test positive for COVID-19, I WILL immediately notify the organization and WSSU Student Health Services at 336-750-3301

The "Rules" of Volunteering

No matter your age, the relationships you build through volunteering can impact your professional future. It is important to approach your volunteering opportunity thoughtfully. The volunteer work you do demonstrates characteristics often sought after by potential employers and colleges. Any amount of volunteering can cause positive change, but you should go into the process with some "rules."

These rules are meant to be followed as general guidelines to ensure you are creating a positive effect and having a successful volunteer experience.

DO'S OF BEING A VOLUNTEER

- Do select an organization to volunteer with that appeals to your personal interests
- Do be willing to try new tasks outside of your previous experience
- Do show up on time to all commitments
- Do complete all necessary trainings

- Do follow directions and guidelines set by the organization
- Do provide any constructive feedback in a professional manner
- Do have an optimistic and open attitude when working under different circumstances
- Do express appreciation for other volunteers as well as those you may be helping
- Do have patience during difficult situations
- Do navigate ambiguity with thoughtfulness
- Do respect the privacy of those you work with
- Do think about how to continuously improve in your position to better your skillset and further the organization

DON'TS OF BEING A VOLUNTEER

- Don't be afraid to ask questions
- Don't select a volunteer opportunity that does not work with your schedule
- Don't be afraid to make mistakes as you learn how to do your job
- Don't forget to keep track of your hours
- Don't assume all processes and people operate the same; adapt to varying circumstances
- Don't show disdain or negativity while volunteering
- Don't forget to contact your organization in advance if you are going to be late or miss a commitment
- Don't be unsure of what is expected of you
- Don't force help on people or be intrusive
- Don't give false promises or hope
- Don't fear sharing constructive feedback to your organization in a professional, thoughtful manner

Where Can I Volunteer?

WSSU students have three options in selecting a volunteer site:

- **In the Community** – WSSU Career Development Services [CareerLink](#) contains a list of volunteer opportunities from local agencies that match your personal or professional interests. Opportunities are also listed on bulletin boards across campus or on video message screens. The Coordinator of Community Service can help locate an appropriate volunteer opportunity as well
- **On-campus** – Students visit the Career Development Services office, attend the Fall / Spring Student Fair to meet with local agencies, participate in virtual information sessions, speak with WSSU faculty/ staff members in various campus departments about volunteer opportunities on campus. Additionally, students can also participate in approved service activities sponsored by student organizations
- **In Your Hometown** – Volunteering with service organizations in communities outside of Forsyth County is an option but the organization must request approval prior to starting your volunteer efforts. *Please contact Winston-Salem State University Coordinator of Community Service (walkerd@wssu.edu or 336-750-2129) for agency approval before volunteering with an agency outside of Forsyth County*

Important Questions to Ask Before Volunteering

Logistical Questions

- Are there any age requirements for this volunteer position?
- Am I able to commit enough time to this volunteer position?
- How will I get to the volunteer site? Is there parking?
- How many volunteers will I be working with at a time?
- What should I wear?
- Do I need to bring ID?
- Do I need to be able to lift or carry things?
- Is the volunteer event weather dependent? Will it cancel if it rains?
- How will my time be tracked as a volunteer?
- How is this volunteering program funded?

Professional Questions

- Is there an orientation or training for this volunteer position?
- What skills will I learn through this volunteer position?
- Does this volunteer position further my professional development?
- What sort of duties will I be performing as a volunteer?
- Does the organization I'm volunteering with align with my academic pursuits?
- What education level is required to participate in this volunteering opportunity?

Personal Questions

- Am I excited about this volunteer opportunity?
- Do my personal beliefs align with the organization I am volunteering with?
- Do I feel motivated to commit to this volunteer position?
- Are there any privacy agreements or rules I must follow while volunteering with this organization? Am I comfortable following?

Volunteering for Non-Traditional Students

- I'm a non-traditional student — what should I do?

Utilize the resources at your school to get in contact with organizations that provide volunteering opportunities, such as:

- Visit WSSU Career Development Services to learn more about community engagement opportunities
- Attend the Fall and Spring Student Involvement Fair
- Use WSSU [CareerLink](#) to find volunteer opportunities
- Network with WSSU faculty or staff to learn more about service projects opportunities

- I'm an international student — what should I do?

As an international student planning to study in the US, volunteering can become an essential part of your campus experience.

- **Check your visa or entry clearance conditions** to make sure you are allowed to volunteer while studying because sometimes volunteering is described as “unpaid work” in documentation, and not all visa statuses allow this
- Visit the [WSSU Office of International Programs](#)
- Visit WSSU's Career Development Service to speak with the Coordinator of Community Services
- Reach out to student organizations that may be involved with giving back to the community

- I'm a US student and want to volunteer abroad — what should I do?

Current students who are interested in volunteering abroad should visit with [WSSU Office of International Programs](#). In addition, some volunteer abroad resources that may make these distinctions clearer include:

- US Department of Labor
- Immigrate to America
- Legal Q & A
- NAFSA

Once you determine the flexibility of your visa, you can invest in volunteer opportunities or look into certain volunteer organizations that cater specifically to those who want to volunteer abroad. Volunteering abroad is a great way to meet locals, practice the language, and give back to the community you're temporarily living in. Some international student volunteer organizations include:

- International Student Volunteers
- Global Volunteers
- Projects Abroad
- Cross-Cultural Solutions

Paying Off College Debt Through Volunteering

There are some programs that partner with organizations to help students pay off loans through volunteering. There are a variety of approaches to supporting loan repayment, such as crowdfunding, sponsorships, research, and residencies. While many programs are legitimate, make sure that the program you connect with has been vetted. Do not give out financial information before you are certain the program is reputable. While these programs can pay off your loans, they add extra steps in your volunteering process that make it more difficult and technically complex to get out and volunteer.

Sponsor Change

- **Year Program Established:** 2009
- **How much debt can be paid off?** You can raise up to \$1,000 per project. There is no cap to how many projects you can complete
- **Who is eligible?** Current students graduate with student loan debt
- **What is required?** Getting \$200 through sponsorships
- **Any downsides?** You must receive at least \$200 from sponsors before you are able to receive applications from Change Agents

Peace Corps

- **Year Program Established:** 1961
- **How much debt can be paid off?** It depends on the loan — some options include loan deferment, forbearance, cancellation, allowance, or forgiveness.
- **Who is eligible?** College graduates with certain loans.
- **What is required?** Having a loan that qualifies for one of the [Peace Corps loan forgiveness programs](#).
- **Any downsides?** Not all loans qualify.

National Institute of Health

- **Year Program Established:** 1887
- **How much debt can be paid off?** Up to \$35,000 per year.
- **Who is eligible?** Medical school graduates with loans.
- **What is required?** Conduct research for a nonprofit or government organization.
- **Any downsides?** Only certain NGOs or non-profits qualify.

National Health Service Corps

- **Year Program Established:** 1972
- **How much debt can be paid off?** Up to \$50,000 over two years
- **Who is eligible?** Medical school graduates with loans
- **What is required?** Primary care providers work in underserved areas
- **Any downsides?** Narrow location choices

Volunteering Remotely (Virtual Volunteering)

Virtual volunteering is the process of rendering your skills using the Internet while remaining off-site from the physical location of the business, organization, or project. On-line volunteering occurs in numerous forms, such as: tutoring, mentoring, counseling, research, social justice support, branding/ marketing, video creation, social media, volunteer tracking, virtual staff support and more.

Volunteering remotely is an effective way to work in community service to your existing schedule — particularly if you cannot physically commute to the organization you wish to serve. Check the organization's website or reach out to them directly to see if they have remote volunteer opportunities. This alternative mode of getting involved is well suited for those who need a flexible schedule, have a tough time getting around and/or want to volunteer at an organization outside of their community. Visit the following link to view virtual volunteer opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students: [Project GIVE Virtual Volunteer Opportunities](#)

How to Become a Virtual Volunteer

The demand for virtual volunteering is high mainly among non-profits organizations. Finding a suitable virtual volunteer position is possible only when you know the precise position. However, before beginning with the search process, it is important to follow these steps

- Figure Out the Cause of Support
 - Before you start exploring different volunteer options, take the time to explore your own interests. For example, if your goal is to work with underserve children for a year or more in the educational field, make sure you identify and create a list of agencies offers opportunities that meet your interest.
- Search Established Websites and Databases:
 - The next step is to search for reliable websites that offer potential openings. For this, you may use established databases and websites available online. Just make sure you end up your search with a reliable and renowned website offering such positions, as there is always a possibility to meet frauds under this position
- Check with Organizations for Which You Want to Volunteer:
 - If there is any specific organization with which you want to work, then you may check the website of the organization to identify any volunteer opening. The website of the organization must have a list of volunteer positions specific to their program
- Research the Organization(s):
 - Once you have shortlisted one or more organization to render your service, the next step is to begin researching with the reputation of the organization. Search for the company's website, social media, upcoming programs, and volunteer openings. All this will help you have a detailed idea about what the company exactly does and how working with them will be beneficial for your career
- Avoid collaborating with unstable and fraudulent organizations:
 - Large numbers of organizations out there are unstable and some of them might be even involved in fraudulent activities. For this reason, it becomes important to get reviews and feedback about the organization with which you are interested to work. If you find any fraudulent information about the company then you must avoid working with that company.
- Discuss all your expectations and needs to the fullest:
 - It is always wise to thoroughly discuss everything beforehand with an agency before committing to a position. You can talk about the hours of work needed, the type of responsibility that you would require, how to contact people when you require help, important dates, and deadlines to be met

For additional information regarding virtual volunteering or virtual opportunities, visit Career Development Services [Project GIVE](#) website or email the Coordinator of Community Services at walkerd@wssu.edu.

Documenting Service Hours

Submit your volunteer service hours on WSSU's [RAMSYNC](#) website. Below are the steps:

- Go to [RAMSYNC](#) and sign in
- Go to your account profile
- Select experience
- Click on Add Experience
- Select volunteer

- Complete the entire online volunteer form (*Upload signed volunteer documents, pictures, videos, etc.*)
- Click submit and approval would be completed within 24-48 hours

How Can I Learn More about Project GIVE?

Please visit Project GIVE website ([Project GIVE link](#)) or contact WSSU Coordinator of Community Service (walkerd@wssu.edu or 336-750-2129) to see how volunteering can bring out your best qualities while making a difference in the world.