

Path Serve

From Volunteerism To Employment

Path Serve

Path2Serve is a new initiative from Serve DC - The Mayor's Office on Volunteerism.

The new program is based on the 2013 release of *Volunteering as a Pathway to Employment* from the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). The research provides evidence of a relationship between volunteering and finding employment.

The Key Findings of the research showed:

- Volunteers have a 27 percent higher likelihood of finding a job after being out of work than non-volunteers
- Volunteers without a high school diploma have a 51 percent higher likelihood of finding employment
- Volunteers living in rural areas have a 55 percent higher likelihood of finding employment

There are a number of rewarding benefits to engaging in service to your local community—including investing in solutions to problems, building relationships and making a difference. Research shows that we can add workforce development, job skills development and career experience to that list.

If you are unsure on how that is possible, allow this booklet to serve as a guide.



Benefits of Volunteering

When volunteering, you have the ability to gain valuable workforce development and job training skills.

These skills and resources can be helpful in gaining paid employment in numerous fields such as healthcare, education or public service.

These are just some of the benefits available to volunteers:



Contacts to use as references for job applications or college recommendations



Ability to learn firsthand about a particular career field



Tangible experiences that you can use to develop your resume, college application or scholarship essay



Content and stories to share as answers during the behavioral interview process about your abilities



Success in Progress

Brian Kovalick

How did you serve as a volunteer?

I volunteered for several political campaigns as a canvasser and phone banker. It is rough and usually unsatisfying labor. I also did the same for several housing organizations locally. I also served in two volunteer positions for the Young Democratic Socialists, on their national governing body. All the work I did for that in terms of outreach and organizing was voluntary.

What skills, if any, do you think you gained as result of volunteering?

I have gained understanding and experience in canvassing, organizing, outreach and advocacy.

Do you believe that volunteering can be a pathway to employment?

Depends mostly on how exploitative the organization or company one volunteers for is in their labor and hiring practices. So yes in some circumstances it is. However, in others, no it is not.

What advice would you give to those considering volunteering in order to learn a new skill set?

Do it if it can help you grow professionally or as a person. Even if it cannot, do it for the socializing it affords you.





Volunteering as a **Pathway** to Employment

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Volunteering can be a useful career development tool as you are job hunting or looking to transition to a new career field.

Volunteering offers many benefits to persons in exchange for their gift of time, service and expertise. These benefits include skill development, workforce development and professional development, among others. Although there is no way a volunteer can be paid for the value they offer to an organization, it can offer a benefit to your career search.

Why **Volunteering** Can Help You Get Hired

Networking

One way volunteering may be able to help gain paid employment, is through helping individuals to grow their professional networks. According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 70 percent of all jobs are found through networking. When individuals volunteer, they have the opportunity to connect with employees, senior level staff and organizational board members. Imagine how a hiring manager will view your resume if they receive it from one of their trusted friends or imagine if they received it from several sources. This will give your application instant credibility above other applicants, as the hiring manager would feel that their personal network has already properly vetted you as a candidate.

Skills Development and Filling in Gaps

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Enhance your Resume

Hiring Managers do not only want to know that you are familiar with a particular skill or technology; they want to know that you have used the skill for an organization and what was the benefits or results that occurred because you effectively utilized that skill. If there is a training or certification that you recently received, then volunteering is a great way to get some experience to backup that knowledge. Volunteering will give you the confidence to apply for higher paying jobs that require you to demonstrate understanding and mastery of new technologies.

Volunteering Does Make A Difference

Volunteers have a
27%
higher likelihood of
finding a job after
being out of work than
non-volunteers

*Corporation for National and Community Service

Many community organizations throughout your local area with various program focuses have a need for skilled volunteers to help them. Look at your volunteer experience as a mutually beneficial relationship; as you are offering your service also consider how they might be able to assist you with your career search process.



Positioning Your Resume

Volunteer work experience can be an excellent way to sharpen job skills, gain understanding of new technologies and add experience to education. Through volunteering, you can gain knowledge in such areas as event planning, fundraising or patient care. This experience should most certainly be integrated with other work experiences on your resume.

How you relate your volunteer work experience on your resume, will depend heavily upon the position for which you are applying. You should always reformat your resume for each job you are applying. Make sure to read the entire job announcement and apply your volunteer experience to those points.

For instance if the job announcement says the recruiter is looking for someone who is a self-starter, has attention to detail and enjoys working in a team environment; then as you are working on your resume seriously think about those times during your volunteer experience when you completed an assignment with little direction, made certain to check over your work before it was submitting and completed a project using help from multiple sources. These activities are directly related to what the recruiter is looking for and should be highlighted.

Always make sure that you are doing your very best work at your volunteer location so that you have a great work product to highlight in your resume, cover letter, and portfolio. Allow the following pages to serve as an example.

Resume
John Doe
1234 Main Avenue
City, State, ZIP

Job Description

(Example)

Digital Communications Manager **Random Creative Company - Washington, DC**

An education-focused association in Washington, DC is seeking a freelance Digital Communications Manager to join their team through the end of November.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Write and edit content for weekly internal newsletter
- Assist with pulling together research for media requests and drafting talking points for review by director
- Handle selected writing assignments as assigned for the monthly online newsletter and other projects
- Serve as a member of a cross-divisional team that promotes a national awards program and handles logistics for a November awards luncheon and reception

EXPERIENCE:

- A bachelor's degree in journalism, English or a related field and previous writing and editing required
- 3+ years of work experience in communications, public relations or journalism preferred.

SKILLS:

- Strong writing and editing skills; demonstrated ability to write under deadline and write for many platforms, including news releases, e-newsletters, among others
- Knowledge of media tracking and reporting
- Knowledge of existing social media platforms and experience using them also a plus

Cover Letter (Example)

Dear Contact Person:

As an experienced communications professional, I am very interested in the Communications Manager position with the American Organization.

I have a proven record of accomplishment in almost all of the competencies you are seeking. Here are a few highlights:

- Handled a wide range of creative services, collaborating with creative services peers, subordinates and vendors to produce marketing and other print communications, as well online communications and video projects
- Exceptional writing and editing skills honed over the past 13 years in public relations and corporate communications; from press releases to newsletters to video scripts to web sites and yes, guest columns
- Developing and implementing communications strategies for reaching employees and other stakeholders
- Providing communications counsel and expertise to executives and managers for issues management, benefits communications and employee relations

In my current role at Company A, I have worked closely with nonprofits while administering our corporate marine conservation donation program. This is the most rewarding part of my job, helping connect worthy organizations with funding. I will call in one week to follow up and find out if I can answer any questions or provide any work samples.

Sincerely,
Jane Doe

Resume (Example)

JANE DOE
JANE.DOE@EMAIL.COM
1234 STREET LANE NE APT #25
WASHINGTON, DC 20017

WORK EXPERIENCE

Agency XYZ January 2006 – Present
Web Editorial Associate
Responsibilities: Web site design and maintenance, writing, and editing web content

Company 123 June 2004 - January 2006
Web Assistant
Responsibilities: Web site maintenance, web content editing, photo editing and publishing

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Nonprofit XYZ March 2008 – Present
Responsibilities: Web site design and maintenance, image editing, and content creation

Association 123 June 2004 - Present
Responsibilities: Web site management, newsletter and email communications with staff, volunteers and applicants

Success in Progress

Trevor Hamman

Why do you feel that volunteering is important?

It is a good way to interact with the community that you live in and to make a difference. I would rather make better use of my time by interacting with people who may need assistance or help

How did you serve as a volunteer?

In the past, I have coach youth sports, served as Vice President for a Collegiate non-profit, and volunteered at my church. Currently I am training to be an English literacy tutor as well as a Youth for Understanding area representative.

What skills, if any, do you think you gained as result of volunteering?

Foremost I have gained an appreciation for community service. I have also learned how to properly interact with children as well as non-English speaking residents. Skills that are more technical include proper teaching techniques, understanding volunteer recruitment, interacting with board members, principles of fundraising, among many others.

What advice would you give to volunteer managers about to assist those considering volunteering in order to learn a new skill set?

First they should ask what the volunteers feel comfortable doing. It is not productive to ask someone to do a task they may not know how or feel comfortable doing. Secondly, they should match volunteers to volunteer positions based skills the volunteer currently possesses and skills the volunteer wants to grow.



Volunteering Opportunities

There are literally hundreds of volunteer opportunities throughout the District of Columbia and across the metro area. Make sure to research the organization, the location and the cause to make sure that you are connecting to an opportunity that meets your needs and fits who you are or one-day hope to become

The following are a few links that will help you start your search toward a great volunteer opportunity:

- serve.dc.gov
- volunteermatch.org
- idealist.org
- washingtondc.onebrick.org
- yelp.com
- createthegood.org
- craigslist.com
- volunteer.linkedin.com



Questions to Ask

Questions to ask **YOURSELF** before volunteering :

- What volunteer experience am I looking for?
- Who is managing the program?
- What do I most want to learn from the experience?
- What projects do I want to work on?
- What are my professional interests?
- What are my professional skills?
- Do I want an ongoing assignment, a short-term assignment, or a one-time assignment?
- Do I want to work alone, or with a group?

Questions to ask the **ORGANIZATION** before volunteering :

- What types of volunteer experiences are available?
- Who is managing the volunteer program? What experience do they have? What support will they offer?
- What is the commitment for volunteers?
- What types of assignment or projects will I be working on?
- What will I gain from this volunteer experience?
- Are you willing to serve as a reference for future employment?

