

Volunteering After Graduation

Why do I want to volunteer?

What is your motivation for seeking a volunteer opportunity (i.e. professional, idealistic, and/or spiritual)? List and explain the reasons you feel that volunteering is the right option for you.

“There is a call to all of us,
a call to service — that we join
with others to try to make
things better in this world.”

- Dorothy Day

“It is how we use our lives that
determine what kind of people we are.
It is my deepest belief that only by
giving our lives do we find life.”

- Cesar Chavez

“Love cannot remain by itself —
it has no meaning. Love has to
be put into action, and
that action is service.”

- Mother Teresa

How will volunteering affect my career plans and goals?

It's likely that volunteering will enhance your future career options, but it does postpone those options as well. What gains or losses might you experience with regard to entering graduate school or starting a career in the future? How can you personally benefit by volunteering? What types of work/experience do you want (e.g. medical, youth, elderly, home repair...)?

What's the application process like for a full-time service (volunteer) position?

In addition to the questions listed on the “Interviewing Questions” handout, be prepared to answer questions along the lines of:

- General questions about your **motivation** (e.g., Why are you interested in volunteering full-time?; Why are you interested in volunteering with _____ - name of org.?)
- Questions related to **resources** (e.g., Describe experiences that have prepared you to volunteer at a site that may be very limited in terms of resources?)
- Questions related to **populations** (e.g., What has prepared you to work with _____ - insert population descriptors?; What concerns do you have about working with _____ - insert population descriptors?)
- Living in **community** (e.g., Why are you interested in living in a community?; What has prepared you to live in an intentional community such as ours?; What will you be able to contribute to the intentional living community?)
- **Learning** (e.g., What do you hope to take from your year or more of volunteer service? What are your future goals and how does the volunteer experience fit into those goals?).

Resources: Check out the volunteer directories/files, and websites available on our homepage:
<http://www.csbsju.edu/career/students/postgrad/default.htm>

Some Web sites for Volunteer Organizations:

- Association of Voluntary Service Organizations:
<http://www.avso.org>
- Volunteer International: <http://www.volunteerinternational.org/>
 - St. Vincent Pallotti Center (Connections):
<http://www.pallotticenter.org>
- Catholic Network of Volunteer Services (Response Directory):
http://www.cnvs.org/volunteers/response_directory.php
 - Peace Corps: www.peacecorps.gov/index.cfm
 - Americorps: www.americorps.org

What about the Volunteer Program?

To evaluate if a program is right for you, you should know as much about it as possible. Read organizational literature and talk with organization representatives/volunteers. Things to investigate:

Goals and Philosophy: Do the organization's goals and philosophy coincide with your ideas and your lifestyle? Is the volunteer organization Christian, Catholic, or secular based? Is there programming in place to process your volunteer experience?

Qualifications: Are there age or gender requirements? Do you need to be able to speak another language? What other skills will be required of you as a volunteer? Can you still volunteer if you are married? Have dependents?

Work: Are there choices concerning work opportunities and if so, who will be making the final decisions? Is the work described clearly by the volunteer organizations? How much direct service (i.e. working with clients, building, and teaching) vs. indirect service (i.e. clerical work) will you be doing?

Living: Are you interested in a rural or urban setting? Will you be living alone, with a family or with other volunteers in community? If you live alone, will there be other volunteers in the area? If there is a volunteer community, what is the living situation (i.e. house, other building type, and roommates)? Is the neighborhood safe? Is there a community car for traveling in the area? If not, what form of transportation is available?

Finances: Is there a personal stipend? If so, how much? Will the stipend cover your expenses (e.g. housing, food and transportation)? Is there community money for food and other bills? If there is not a stipend, how will the costs be covered?

Fund-raising: Will you be required to raise funds? Who will help you in this process? Are donations tax deductible?

Loans: Can student loans be deferred (check with your lending agency)? Will the volunteer organization help with any paperwork? Is the organization part of the Americorps Education Grant program?

Health: What type of health insurance does the organization provide, if any? Before volunteering, what immunizations are required? Will your organization have medical facilities nearby? Are there health issues you need to consider?

Training: Is there an orientation and training program? What does it consist of? Will job training be available? Will language training be involved?

Support: Does the program have a volunteer director on hand or easily accessible to you? Will the organization provide support at the work site or in the form of site visits? Who can the volunteer contact if concerns or emergencies arise or just to discuss the volunteer experience? Is there also an end of the year closure program?

Dates: How long is the full volunteer term? When does the orientation begin and how long does it last? When does the service work start and end? What happens if you decide to end your volunteer service early? Can the volunteer term be extended?

Safety: What are the safety concerns regarding the area in which you will be working, traveling through and living?

Former Volunteers: Can the organization provide you with names of former volunteers for you to contact and talk about their experiences? This is a great resource for learning more about the program and about the different work options you may have. Discuss with them any questions you may have about the program as well as their highlights/challenges.

Application Process: What is involved in applying? What are the deadlines? How long will the process take?

Travel: Who pays for travel to and from the volunteer site? If there is an emergency at home, can you take leave and travel back home? Is there a community car for traveling in the area? If not, what transportation is available?

Other Questions for International Experiences: What health issues should you be aware of in your country? Are there other volunteers in the area for support and friendship? Is the political situation stable? Is there a network of people to contact if there is a problem or emergency? What is the length of training? What is the length of work commitment? What preparations are needed before you go abroad? Will you be able to travel around the area during my term?

For more information on volunteer organizations, sample resumes, and interviewing strategies, visit Career Services at www.csbsju.edu/career or at our campus locations.

For additional information on volunteering, contact:
CSB Campus Ministry, Haehn Campus Center, 320-363-5603
SJU Campus Ministry, Mary 100, 320-363-2790
Web site: www.csbsju.edu/sjucampusministry