

BEFORE VOLUNTEERING

Things to think about before you begin volunteering

Use this as a guide to form a clear idea of your preferences and the outcomes you envision from your volunteer experiences. Hundreds of volunteer opportunities are available, some addressing community issues, others building on community assets. For a comprehensive list, go to www.bloomington.in.gov/volunteer. City of Bloomington Volunteer Network staff is available for individuals wishing to discuss qualifications and interests in their search for a suitable and rewarding volunteer position.

What motivates you?

- Belief in a particular cause or issue
- Closeness to an issue because you have been personally affected by it.
- Desire to learn new skills (fundraising, technical, organizational, communication)
- Desire to utilize your skills and experience
- Wish to explore your strengths
- Desire to fulfill religious obligations or beliefs
- Desire to be with friends who volunteer
- Desire to meet others with like values or make new friends
- Wish to improve your job opportunities
- Desire to address a pressing community problem or build on a community asset
- Desire to help someone or feel needed
- Desire to give back
- Wish to use free time productively
- Part of effort to build a resume or make professional contacts
- Need to gain academic credit
- Desire to increase knowledge about issues
- Other

What do you enjoy doing?

- Local vs. state vs. national vs. international
- Direct service vs. behind-the-scenes
- Indoors vs. outdoors

- Working with children, people with disabilities, senior citizens, other)
- Researching, writing, editing, organizing, filing, data entry, advocacy, other

What knowledge/skills/resources do you have?

- Organizational, maintenance, event production, companionship, artistic, athletic, professional (legal, accounting, medical, teaching), transportation, personal contacts in the community, other

Dos and Don'ts

- Be flexible.
- Attend orientation meetings prior to making a commitment.
- Take the necessary training classes.
- Be responsible. Be on time. Follow through.
- Start where the organization needs assistance; work your way into areas of particular interest.
- Plan to pay for incidental expenses (transportation, parking, child care)
- Make a realistic time commitment