



Benefits of Volunteering for Job Seekers

Job seekers are often advised to volunteer. As part of the Minnesota Association for Volunteer Administration's initiative to provide resources and support to volunteer programs for engaging job seekers as volunteers, the broad extent of the benefits of volunteering have been explored. Here is a list of those benefits, contributed by advisors for this initiative.

Self esteem and a positive attitude

- Supports a positive attitude
- Builds and keeps confidence
- Builds self esteem
- Keeps the mind busy
- Helps create a positive mental attitude

References and contacts

- Adds a current source for references
- Builds connections and give opportunity to network
- Can offer a direct connection to jobs - a portion of people end up with job at agency where they volunteer
- Makes gaps in employment on a resume look much different if they are filled with volunteering
- Speaks to the ambition, passion, dedication, motivation and discipline of the individual
- For positions in nonprofits, shows how they will fit into the nonprofit culture of giving back

Developing skills

- Builds soft skills - basic work skills such as being on time, answering phone, interacting with co-workers
- Improves work social skills
- Adds real job skills in new areas
- Reminder and strengthening of skills that have developed earlier in work life.
- Positions to be better able to sell skills they have if used them recently when volunteering

Exploring areas of interest and learning about careers

- For those entering the job market for the first time, a chance through volunteering to see if this is a field they wish to do – especially for junior volunteers
- Give opportunity to learn if likes a field when consider a career change
- For those laid off close to retirement, gives a chance explore new areas and test getting fulfillment from volunteering while deciding whether to retire or seek a new position

Thank you to the Initiative Foundation in Little Falls for funding this effort. For contribution of ideas, thank you to the Central Minnesota Advisory Taskforce Members: Alison Dahlin, St. Cloud Hospital; Julie Guth Mid-Minnesota Women's Center; Sue Hilgart, Rural MN Concentrated Employment Program (CEP), Inc.; Linda Johnson, Unity Family Healthcare; Beth Knutson-Kolodzne, St. Cloud State University; Mary Krippner, United Way of Central Minnesota; Monique Mendyke East Central MN-RSVP; Beth Nelson, Department of Employment and Economic Development; Gregory Reigstad, St. Cloud Technical and Community College, Angela B. Theisen; Tri-County Action Program, Inc. Renee Wittenberg, Experience Works, MAVA VISTA Members Nicole Burg and Danielle Schminkey, and members of Volunteer Bridge in Elk River.