

Create a Volunteer Resume

What is it?

A summary of your volunteer experience, skills and training, just like the one you'd prepare of your work experience if you were seeking a job.

Why do it?

Other than the lack of a paycheck, volunteering is very similar to employment. Both involve matching a person and a task. We take employment more seriously because it is our livelihood, but the work we do freely is important, too. Writing a volunteer resume can give us a new perspective on that work.

Who should do it?

- You – if you're wondering about where to volunteer; if you lead volunteers; if you're going to ask others to create a volunteer resume; or if you're just curious.
- Anyone who is wondering about where to volunteer
- Leaders of volunteers (those who coordinate specific ministries; a church's board of directors, etc.): to gain perspective on their own experience and to help them realize the wealth of gifts God has given his people for use in His service
- You can also ask any group of volunteers to do this as an exercise in getting to know their own gifts, as a way of helping the church get to know them better, or as a way of helping them get to know each other better by exchanging the resumes.

How do you do it?

- Start with the "experience" section of the resume. Think of all the ways you've volunteered: in churches, community groups, your children's school or other activity groups; when you were in college or high school or even grade school; on a regular or one-time basis; in a group or on your own; with your family or within your family. You may need to continue on the back side of the paper – and fill it!
- Move to the Skills and Education & Training sections. What actual skills did you develop or use in these experiences? Did you receive any specific education or training while volunteering? Training includes classes, one on one mentoring, books or materials they read, conferences, etc.
- Summarize by listing several Significant Accomplishments at the end. Begin to evaluate what these experiences have meant to you, and also how God might use those experiences for the future.
- Finish up by writing a Summary at the top. The type of summary will vary depending on the purpose the resume is being written. An individual looking for a place to serve will write a summary of their desire. If you are asking a group to do this, you might have them write a summary of their gifts and experiences, or how they feel God has worked in their life through their volunteering.
- Showing people several samples will help them in the process. Having small groups of 2-3 people do it together will help, as well as helping them get to know each other in new ways.



What about someone who has little or no previous volunteer experience?

Think more broadly about what it means to volunteer, to do a task freely, without receiving compensation. We all do a lot of informal volunteering in daily life. As parents, it is our obligation to feed and clothe our children, but we don't "have" to teach them how to skip rocks on a lake, or take them camping, or "play house" with them. We help our parents as they age, but we don't "have" to handle their financial paperwork or clean the gutters on their house or help them with their errands. These are all volunteer tasks, as is fixing a meal for your neighbor, helping your brother-in-law fix their dishwasher, teaching your nephew to play the guitar or baking a cake.

See www.theequipper.org/resources/resume.asp for a blank volunteer resume form which you can copy, and for a sample volunteer resume.

