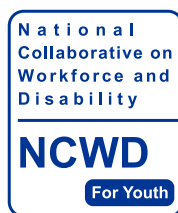




# FOSTERING INCLUSIVE VOLUNTEERING AND SERVICE LEARNING



Navigating the Road to Work

The National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth) is composed of partners with expertise in disability, education, employment, and workforce development issues. NCWD/Youth is housed at the Institute for Educational Leadership in Washington, DC. NCWD/Youth is charged with assisting state and local workforce development systems to integrate youth with disabilities into their service strategies. To obtain this publication in an alternate format please contact the Collaborative at 877-871-0744 toll free or email [contact@ncwd-youth.info](mailto:contact@ncwd-youth.info). This report is part of a series of publications and newsletters prepared by NCWD/Youth. All publications will be posted on the NCWD/Youth website at [www.ncwd-youth.info](http://www.ncwd-youth.info). Please visit our site to sign up to be notified of future publications. This document was developed by the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth, funded by a grant/contract/cooperative agreement from the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy (Numbers OD-16519-07-75-4-11 and OD-23804-12-75-4-11). The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U.S. Department of Labor. Nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply the endorsement by the U.S. Department of Labor. Individuals may reproduce any part of this document. Please credit the source and support of federal funds.

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# Introduction



Volunteering is deeply embedded in our culture. Volunteers serve in many capacities, contributing their time, energies, and talents to help fulfill the missions of a wide variety of organizations. Individuals of all ages, ranging from youth to seniors, volunteer for organizations that are diverse in their size, mission, structure, and length of opportunities offered. The types of volunteering activities available also vary widely and include community service, civic engagement, education, emergency assistance, economic development, and environmental protection. Individuals may encounter these opportunities in a vast array of volunteer systems,

some national in scope and others managed by states, cities, localities, private groups, or foundations. While this guide focuses on youth participation in volunteering, individuals may access and benefit from service opportunities throughout their lifetime.

For all individuals to access and benefit from volunteering, the widespread practice of inclusion is key. Volunteering can be a force for the inclusion of many individuals or populations that often face exclusion from community life (United Nations Volunteers, 2011). An inclusive service environment actively fosters the engagement of all youth,

including youth with disabilities, those involved in foster care or juvenile justice, and other disconnected youth. These efforts expand beyond accessibility or compliance as recognized in the law in that they recognize, seek, value, and support the full participation of everyone through thoughtful, flexible, and welcoming policies and practices (United Nations Volunteers, 2011).

Volunteering and service learning involve a range of opportunities, some of which may be more inclusive than others. For youth with disabilities and other disconnected youth, the willingness of the host organization to be amicable, supportive, and accommodating may factor into where they choose to volunteer or if they choose to volunteer at all. Youth service professionals have an important role to play in helping these youth select an opportunity that matches their needs, interests, and goals, and, if necessary, assisting them in advocating for their inclusion and addressing potential barriers that could get in their way. By effectively addressing these issues, youth service professionals and youth are helping to create, access, and experience the benefits of a system of volunteering and service learning that includes everyone.

## **Key Benefits of Service**

Youth can benefit both personally and professionally by volunteering and by taking advantage of service opportunities as they prepare for and manage the challenges associated with growing up and transitioning from edu-

cational settings to the workforce. All youth, including youth with disabilities, can benefit from service because all youth need access to high quality, standards-based education, information about career options, and exposure to the world of work. These work experiences include internships and opportunities to develop social, civic, and leadership skills, strong connections to caring adults, access to safe places to interact with their peers, and support services to allow them to become independent adults (National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth [NCWD/Youth], 2005). Participation in a volunteer opportunity can assist youth in meeting many of these needs.

One way volunteering can assist youth is by engaging them in the three important phases of career development: self-exploration, career exploration, and career planning and management (NCWD/Youth, 2014). Volunteering allows youth to engage in self-exploration and career exploration as they search for and identify organizations and opportunities that are aligned with their interests, skills, and preferences. Through volunteering, youth can learn if they enjoy working within a particular profession that initially interests them and get a sense of the different kinds of jobs within a career cluster. For example, youth interested in healthcare can learn about the different roles of doctors, nurses, x-ray technicians, and nurse assistants through volunteering in a hospital, and then can make an informed decision about which of those professions they would like to pursue.

By performing volunteer activities such as doing a job search, completing an application or resume, building interview skills, and developing other hard and soft skills, youth gain key career planning and management skills. These are important work habits and behaviors that will maximize their employability across their lifespan.

For example, youth can learn what skills and attributes employers value and expect from their employees as the youth volunteers fulfill responsibilities, solicit feedback as applicable, and participate in the functions of an organization or work setting. Research shows that “employers seek out employees who demonstrate they are able to adapt to new environments and are willing to learn new skills” (Volunteer Action Centre of Kitchener Waterloo and Area, n.d., p.5). Volunteering can help youth acquire these qualities, which can set them apart in a competitive job market (Brooks, 2013). It can also promote the development of independence and self-advocacy skills as well as foster social connections and personal growth. In short, volunteer opportunities can offer youth a head start in their professional lives.

Volunteer experiences offer a number of other benefits for youth associated with positive youth development and leadership. They can help youth connect what they are learning in school to a work setting, which makes

school more relevant and increases student engagement. According to Maria de Guzman, extension adolescent specialist, personal gains from volunteering also include identity development, increased self-esteem, and increased empathy for others (2007). Volunteerism also benefits the broader community. Youth that volunteer are often more engaged in their own communities, contributing to a greater sense of community vitality (de Guzman, 2007).

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**Youth can learn what skills and attributes employers value as they fulfill responsibilities, solicit feedback, and participate in the work setting.**

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Service empowers youth to learn and exercise personal leadership because it promotes increased self-awareness, self-determination, and self-advocacy. In choosing and pursuing

a volunteer opportunity, youth must analyze their own strengths and weaknesses, set personal and vocational goals, and develop the self-esteem to carry them out. It can also assist youth in developing important communication and interpersonal skills that will help to make them more effective in guiding or influencing others by example or through delegation (Wehmeyer, Agran, & Hughes, 1998). Through service, youth can also learn to identify community resources and use them, not only to live independently, but also to establish support networks to participate in community life and to impact positive social change (Adolescent Employment Readiness Center, Children’s Hospital, n.d.).



Although all youth receive benefits from volunteering, youth aging out of foster care, youth in the juvenile justice system, youth with disabilities, and other disconnected youth may realize even greater benefits. These sub-groups often experience challenges that lead to greater isolation or exclusion from educational, employment, and civic opportunities.

Volunteering can facilitate the sort of connection that could be crucial for keeping marginalized youth engaged and mindful of their future career and life goals.

In addition, youth with disabilities frequently face barriers to employment that lead to poor social, health, educational, and employment outcomes. The social and health challenges often faced by youth with disabilities may increase their dependence on public programs as they transition to adulthood, which increases the risk of lifetime poverty (Fraker, 2013). However, the skills and experience gained through volunteering can help improve their chances for academic and professional success. Service can facilitate meaningful connection and allow youth with disabilities to gain a sense of self-worth associated with being service providers rather than beneficiaries (CNCS, n.d.-c). Volunteer experiences may be the first time these youth are exposed to professional work environments, which can complement their educational pursuits, provide direction

for employment options in the community, or provide access to needed services. In addition to fostering other forms of skill-building

discussed earlier, service may appeal to some youth with disabilities who are learning to advocate for inclusion, whether for themselves or others, which will be useful for navigating personal and professional contexts

in the future, including the process of disclosure and requesting accommodations. These benefits will be discussed in greater detail later in the guide.

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**Service can facilitate meaningful connection and allow youth with disabilities to gain a sense of self-worth associated with being service providers rather than beneficiaries.**

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### **How the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Supports Volunteerism**

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA), which supersedes the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, represents an extraordinary opportunity to improve job and career options for our nation's workers and jobseekers through an integrated, job-driven public workforce system that links diverse talent to businesses. It supports the development of strong, vibrant regional economies where businesses thrive and people want to live and work. WIOA supports volunteerism in a variety of ways, including the following:

- Community service is recognized as an activity designed to develop

leadership and employment skills that may be provided as a service using Title I Youth formula funding or through YouthBuild [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, 29 U.S.C. § 3164(c)(2)(F)].

- Although, in general, the period of enrollment under Job Corps is not to exceed two years, WIOA provides an exception for individuals who participate in national service programs, as authorized by the Civilian Conservation Center program, allowing additional time for a period equal to the period of national service [WIOA of 2014, 29 U.S.C. § 3196(b)].
- Local workforce investment boards must make opportunities available for past participants, including youth, who have successfully completed a program to volunteer their expertise through mentoring, tutoring, or other formats [WIOA of 2014, 29 U.S.C. § 3164(c)(8)].
- Work-based learning is also an integral part of serving youth under WIOA. Under Title I, at least 20 percent of youth formula funds at the local level must be used for paid and unpaid work experiences that have as a component academic and occupational education and may include: summer employment opportunities, other employment opportunities available throughout the school year, pre-apprenticeship programs, internships and job

shadowing, and on-the-job training opportunities [WIOA of 2014, 29 USC § 3164(c)(4)].

Moreover, the Act also requires that youth with disabilities receive pre-employment transition services under Title IV so they can successfully obtain competitive integrated employment, which may include in-school or after-school work-based learning opportunities or experiences outside the traditional school setting, including internships, which are provided in an integrated environment to the maximum extent possible [WIOA of 2014, 29 U.S.C. § 733(b)(2)]. Volunteering can be an integral part of these activities.

## **Purpose of this Guide**

Although targeted primarily to youth service professionals, this guide provides information useful to educators, counselors, practitioners, parents, and others interested in facilitating youth engagement in volunteer activities. It provides an overview of how youth can benefit from volunteering and describes different types of volunteer opportunities and the youth service professional's role in assisting youth to prepare for, access, and learn from their experiences. It also explains how participation can help youth develop important knowledge, skills, and abilities that can help them successfully transition into adulthood and increase the likelihood of their future success in the workplace, community, and life. Finally, this guide provides relevant resources and tools that can enhance and foster successful outcomes.



# Key Definitions

*What do we mean by volunteering, community service, service learning, and inclusive service?*

## Volunteering

A volunteer is someone who offers himself or herself for a service or undertaking and performs that service willingly and without pay.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, under the regulations that govern the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), the legal definition of a volunteer is “an individual who performs hours of service for a public agency for civic, charitable, or humanitarian reasons, without promise, expectation or receipt of compensation for services rendered” (29 CFR § 553.101, 2013). FLSA also states that “Individuals shall be considered volunteers only where their services are offered freely and without pressure or coercion, direct or implied, from an employer” and “An individual shall not be considered a volunteer if the individual is otherwise employed by the same public agency to perform the same type of services as those for which the individual proposes to volunteer” (29 CFR § 553.101, 2013).



## Community Service

Community service consists of “services, including direct service, planning, and applied research” that are “designed to improve the quality of life for community residents... or to solve particular problems related to the needs of such residents” [20 U.S.C. § 1070(c)(4)]. Community service is unpaid; however, it can be a valuable way to develop work readiness skills through hands-on experiences.

Performing community service is not the same as volunteering because it is not always done voluntarily. It may be done for a variety of reasons, including in lieu of or in addition to criminal justice sanctions, or schools may mandate it such as in the case of service learning requirements to graduate. However, the terms “volunteering” and “service” are

generally used interchangeably to refer to the voluntary and unremunerated contribution of an individual’s knowledge and skills to an activity that promotes the well-being of other people and the environment. Whether the reason stems from a desire to learn, from faith, or from a sense of civic responsibility,

the intended outcomes must be positive for both those providing and receiving the service (Menon, McBride, & Sherraden, 2003).

Voluntary community service has a long tradition in the U.S. and is continued today through religious groups, such as churches and mosques, and youth organizations, such as Boys and Girls Clubs. Over time, community service has become a common requirement for students in secondary and postsecondary education (Thomas & Hunninen, 2008). It has also been consistently used as a service strategy to promote employment for people who experience significant barriers to entering the workplace (NCWD/Youth, 2011).

In contrast to voluntary community service, community service can be mandated. Mandated community service enables an offender to participate in a community as part of their sentence and should be designed to benefit the community as well as the offender. Ultimately, both voluntary and mandated community service offer the same social and cognitive benefits to participants and the community. Thomas and Hunninen explain that some of the benefits for participants are connections to positive adults and peers, development of critical thinking skills, a sense of individual effectiveness, and the acquisition of employability and life skills (2008).

## **Service Learning**

Service learning falls into the category of community service. Service learning is a

teaching and learning strategy that incorporates instruction and reflection into meaningful community service to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities (Find Youth Info, 2014). The following definition can be found on the U.S. Department of Agriculture's website: "Service-learning combines service objectives with learning objectives with the intent that the activity change both the recipient and the provider of the service. This is accomplished by combining service tasks with structured opportunities that link the task to self-reflection, self-discovery, and the acquisition and comprehension of values, skills, and knowledge content" (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, n.d.).

Service learning can increase students' personal, interpersonal, and social development along with their motivation, student engagement, and school attendance (Billig, 2002).

## **Inclusive Service**

As defined in the introduction, an inclusive service environment actively fosters the engagement of all youth, including youth with disabilities, those involved in foster care or juvenile justice, and other disconnected youth. These efforts expand beyond accessibility or compliance in that they recognize, seek out, value, and support the full participation of everyone through thoughtful, flexible, and welcoming policies and practices (United Nations Volunteers, 2011).

# Why Youth Volunteer

Youth participate in volunteer experiences for many reasons. As discussed previously, sometimes they do so to fulfill requirements needed for graduation, and sometimes they are mandated to perform community services for restitution, as is often the case for youth in the juvenile justice system. Frequently, however, youth simply want to align themselves with a cause they believe in or to try to make a difference on their own or alongside peers in their community. When asked why they volunteer, youth shared the following motivations:

- Showing compassion for people in need
- Affecting a cause in which they believe
- Believing that if they help others, others will help them
- Positively impacting their communities
- Gaining important job skills and experience while exploring career options
- Expanding their social circle and enhancing their social awareness (Latham, n.d.)
- Being approached/asked by an organization, someone in their school, or relatives or friends (de Guzman, 2007)



These reasons were also cited in Rehnborg, Bailey, Moore, & Sinatra's 2009 guide on volunteer engagement. In fact, "being asked" is one of the top reasons why volunteers participate in service work (Rehnborg et al., 2009, p. 13). Another common reason for volunteering, also noted by Latham, is being aligned with a specific cause or belief (Rehnborg et al., 2009). Understanding

these motivations can help coordinators recruit and retain more volunteers while also helping volunteers feel fulfilled in their work.

Youth with disabilities and other disconnected youth may be particularly motivated to volunteer to help

others by positively impacting their communities. For example, youth with disabilities may pursue service geared towards advocating for the accessibility or inclusivity of local spaces or may want to increase disability awareness in existing projects or programs around them. Similarly, youth who have exited foster care may want to volunteer to lend support to other foster care youth. Youth service professionals should discuss an individual's motivation for volunteering with them as it is likely to be an important factor in helping them choose the right volunteer opportunity.



# How Youth Benefit From Volunteering



As was highlighted in the introduction, service opportunities benefit youth in a number of ways. Research released by the Corporation for National and Community Service (Martinez) in June 2013 provides empirical evidence that shows a positive relationship between volunteering and future employment in the United States (See more details at: <http://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/upload/ODEPCNSPolicyMemo.pdf>). Key findings indicate that a connection

exists between volunteering and employment, particularly for vulnerable communities and communities who experience barriers to employment, as well as the following connections:

- 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 (Martinez, 2013).

CNCS also found that volunteering is associated with an increased likelihood of finding employment for all volunteers regardless of a person's gender, age, ethnicity, geographical area, or the job market conditions (CNCS, n.d.-c).

Youth may reap many other personal and professional benefits from volunteering. Volunteering contributes to maximizing personal growth, helps specific populations to identify and address barriers, fosters career development and skill-building, exposes youth to new networks and relationships, increases academic success, and improves health and well-being.

## Maximizing Personal Growth

Volunteering is one way for youth to develop important personal growth assets identified by the Search Institute as integral to their success in life. There are two major types of assets, external assets and internal assets, described by the Oregon Commission on Children and Families as follows:

- “External assets include positive experiences that young people receive from people and institutions in their lives.”
- “Internal assets focus on nurturing the internal qualities of young people

to guide choices and create a sense of self, purpose, and focus (e.g., commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, positive identity).” (Oregon Commission on Children and Families, n.d., p.4)

Volunteering supports internal asset development by providing opportunities for self-exploration and for developing self-knowledge. As young people prepare to transition to adulthood, they begin to focus on acquiring the skills and abilities needed for independence. Starting at around 14 years of age, a young person is in a stage of exploration, focusing on self-examination, role try-outs, and learning about different possible occupations. Youth can explore these different possibilities in school, during leisure activities, and through part-time work. During this stage, it is important for youth to consider their needs, interests, capacities, values, and opportunities when making tentative choices about work roles and vocations (Pennsylvania Career Education & Work Standards, n.d.). According to Donald Super's conception of life stages and developmental tasks, the three major tasks of this stage are to determine work preferences, develop a realistic self-concept, and become aware of and explore real-world experiences (Pennsylvania Career Education & Work Standards, n.d., p. 11).

To succeed in the world of work, young people need to know who they are, identify and build strengths, acknowledge and address any limitations, know how they learn best,

and identify their interests, values, and preferences. Volunteer opportunities are an excellent way to gain this knowledge and may also open their minds to a range of possibilities to which they otherwise may not have been exposed.

Studies suggest that volunteering impacts positive youth development by providing opportunities for youth to gain personal insight, learn new skills, access new networks, and develop friendships, all of which prepare them for and enhance their transition to adulthood and independence. Youth, with and without disabilities, who experience social isolation or estrangement can especially benefit from volunteer opportunities that connect them to peers and communities (Amado, n.d.). For youth with disabilities who often face additional barriers to independence and community integration, research shows that service learning directly increases civic efficacy—the belief these youth hold about themselves that they can engage in their communities and have a positive impact (Miller, 2008). Challenging and empowering all youth, including youth with disabilities, to participate in meaningful service programs gives these youth a sense of purpose, self-efficacy, and “mattering” within the larger community (Smith, Mavis, & Washenberger, n.d.).

Similarly, volunteering increases self-confidence, self-esteem, and life satisfaction. Doing good deeds for others and the community provides a natural sense of accomplishment, which can instill a sense of pride and identity (Saison, Smith, & Kemp, 2014).

Service also provides youth with opportunities to develop leadership skills, which will be useful for managing the challenges and decisions youth face when growing up as well as throughout their lives. All the internal and external assets gained through volunteering are positive contributors to personal growth.

## Identifying and Addressing Barriers

Disconnected youth, including those in the juvenile justice system, those aging out of foster care, and youth with disabilities, often face barriers that may impact their participation in service. These barriers can include negative stereotyping, discrimination, lack of transportation, stable shelter, and clothing, poverty, poor health, and inaccessibility, among other factors. These youth may also have limited access to services, social networks, and supports from family, peers, or other community members.

For individuals with disabilities and youth with life complexities that might impact workforce participation and future employability, volunteering offers a forum where they can learn to identify and put into practice strategies that can help them succeed, including but not limited to accessing natural supports (e.g., friends, peers, co-workers) and self-advocacy related to accommodations and workforce flexibility. Participating in service also increases engagement in the community, which could result in connecting marginalized youth to the services or support networks they need. As indicated by

the research released by CNCS discussed previously, volunteers without a high school diploma, a common situation among disconnected youth, are 51 percent more likely to find employment (Martinez, 2013).

Further information on how to address barriers can be found in the section of this guide on the role of the youth service professional in helping youth to navigate obstacles.

## **Fostering Career Development and Skill-Building**

Volunteering can also have a positive impact on career development, the individualized process through which youth prepare for employment by participating in a series of self-exploration, career exploration, and career planning and management activities. As youth progress along this continuum, it is important that youth service professionals engage and support youth in understanding and applying what they are learning, particularly as it relates to identifying and leveraging volunteering opportunities that can help them in gaining skills compatible with their interests, needs, and career goals.

Volunteer opportunities often include training and skill development on essential work duties commonly referred to as hard skills, and effective work habits, known as soft skills. The component of skill development found in service supports all youth, including those with disabilities, in honing and contributing their diverse perspectives, talents, and attributes (Smith et al., n.d.).

Volunteer opportunities help youth build upon skills they already have and use them to benefit the greater community (Saison et al., 2014). It is also an excellent way for youth to build a resume. When young people volunteer to fill a role within an organization, they build skills and can use the volunteer opportunity to record and showcase their experience. Even though uncompensated, a successful volunteer experience can help open doors to future paid employment.

In addition to the acquisition of hard skills, volunteer opportunities also provide youth with the chance to develop soft skills—essential skills to succeed in today’s workplace that include a positive work ethic (Latham, n.d.). Participation in a volunteer experience exposes a young person to employer expectations that can lead to the development and application of responsible work behaviors, such as showing up on time, performing to the best of one’s ability, being honest and considerate of others, and treating the workplace with respect. Teens say volunteering teaches them to respect others, be helpful and kind, understand people who are different, develop leadership skills, become more patient, and better understand the meaning of citizenship (Latham, n.d.). For youth with disabilities, participating in volunteer experiences also provides an opportunity to practice disclosing their disability to receive accommodations that can help them to be more effective in the workplace.

While hard skills are the qualifications applicants need to land the interview and get the

job, soft skills enable employees to keep the job, perform their duties, and interact with their coworkers effectively (West Virginia University, n.d.). Some of the most important skills, such as interpersonal and self-management abilities, are soft skills rather than hard skills. These abilities can often have more of an impact on an individual's performance and overall career success, compared to specific technical skills applicable to a single industry (Bush, 2012). For examples of soft skills and how to work with all youth, including youth with disabilities, to foster them, see Step 7 in the section of this guide on assisting youth in finding and securing a volunteer opportunity.

## **Exposing Youth to New Networks and Relationships**

According to de Guzman, "Often, volunteer endeavors facilitate the development of significant relationships. Through these activities, youth are able to meet like-minded individuals, as well as a possible range of people they would otherwise not encounter" (2007, para. 4). Volunteering can help individuals get experience in their area of interest and increase their network by introducing them to individuals associated with or working in their area of interest. Through volunteer events, youth may also discover fun activities and peers with common interests. Ultimately, youth are able to connect to individuals and neighborhood resources that can serve to generate a support network (Saison et al., 2014). Through volunteering, youth with disabilities may also become con-

nected to programs, services, activities, and supports, such as workforce development, public transportation, vocational rehabilitation, and healthcare, which they may find useful in the future as they pursue their chosen post-school options.

## **Increasing Academic Success**

Youth can often earn high school or college credit by volunteering, which makes it a valuable, alternative method to keeping youth engaged and on track to graduate (Cobb, 2013). As Latham noted, "youth who volunteer are more likely to do well in school, graduate, and vote" (n.d., p. 2).

## **Improving Health and Well-Being**

Research indicates that volunteering provides individual health benefits in addition to social ones. In general, "those who volunteer have lower mortality rates, greater functional ability, and lower rates of depression later in life than those who do not volunteer" (CNCS, n.d.-a). Volunteering also has a positive effect on social psychological factors and may enhance a person's social networks to buffer stress and reduce the risk of disease. Youth volunteering is also correlated with lower rates of unhealthy behaviors, such as tobacco or alcohol use and a lower likelihood of teenage pregnancy (Latham, n.d.). A "happiness effect" has also been demonstrated among those who volunteer more often than others (Saison et al., 2014, para. 9).



# The Role of the Youth Service Professional

Youth service professionals have a major part to play in facilitating youth participation in volunteer opportunities. Their role includes engaging and bringing youth on board, educating them about and involving them in the process of identifying and securing a volunteer opportunity, and providing support. Youth may have many questions about volunteering and may also have some preconceived notions about what participation might entail. By discussing volunteering, the reasons why people participate, the benefits associated with volunteering, and the range of opportunities and choices available, young people can see what they can gain by volunteering and understand their options and choices. What follows are some important issues for consideration and topics for conversation with youth and young adult participants.

## Ask Youth about Whether They Have Considered Volunteering

Many youth say they did not think of volunteering because they were not asked (de Guzman, 2007). Given that one of the biggest reasons people volunteer is because they are asked, youth service professionals can open the door to volunteering by simply asking youth whether it is something they

have considered. A discussion should then follow that provides the youth with an overview of how their participation may benefit them, including how it fosters their career development now and into the future. The need to ask youth about whether they have considered volunteering may be particularly important for youth with disabilities and other disconnected youth who may not have been encouraged to volunteer previously.

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**Many youth say they did not think of volunteering because they were not asked.**

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To the extent that youth service professionals are involved in developing individualized planning documents, they should consider tying

service learning to these plans. For example, youth with disabilities can utilize service learning as a component of their Individualized Education Program (IEP) transition plan. Individualized Learning Plans (ILPs) are career development tools currently being implemented for in-school youth in many states as well as in some out-of-school settings, and they can also include service learning. Likewise, volunteer experiences can be integrated into re-entry plans for youth in the juvenile justice system and transition plans for youth exiting foster care.

## **Help Youth Understand How Their Participation Can Make a Difference**

People volunteer because they are passionate about a cause or belief system and want to make a difference in their community (Rehnborg et al., 2009). Youth service professionals can help youth identify which causes or organizational missions matter most to them and help them realize how their participation may make a difference.

As part of this conversation, youth may or may not feel comfortable discussing all of their closely held beliefs or identities. Even though this information could contribute to a young person's passion for volunteering in a specific organization or cause, this is very personal information that the individual may choose not to disclose. It is also important that youth service professionals not assume that just because a young person has a disability or a history of involvement in foster care they are automatically interested in a cause related to disability or child welfare. Rather, youth service professionals should support all youth in exploring a wide variety of causes and options and should help them in identifying an opportunity that is compatible with their passions and interests.

## **Help Youth Understand the Personal Benefits of Service**

It is important for youth to see the value in service. Whether it is to develop a skill, learn about an occupation firsthand, devel-

op a social network, make a difference for a cause they support, or meet an educational or mandated requirement, youth service professionals have to make service relevant to each individual. It is imperative that youth understand that volunteering can be a contributor to their personal career development by helping them to gain skills that might improve their marketability, enhance their resume, and make them more attractive to future employers or colleges (de Guzman, 2007).

Youth service professionals can review some of the benefits discussed in the previous section as they see fit. Understanding the motivation of the individual youth being served, however, is the best way to ensure that the information being provided about the benefits of service is relevant and meaningful to the young person.

## **Identify and Address Any Perceived or Potential Barriers to Participation**

In the literature on volunteering, the universal reason given for not engaging in a volunteer activity is time. The top five reasons for not getting involved were: "not enough spare time," "put off by bureaucracy," "worried about risk/liability," "don't know how to find out about getting involved," and lacking "the right skills/experience" (Low, Butt, Paine, & Smith, 2007).

The top reasons, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, include:

- Lack of time and other responsibilities
- Practical concerns (lack of information, lack of transportation, or expenses)
- Lack of interest or viewing it as non-enjoyable
- Not being asked (de Guzman, 2007)

Other common barriers to engagement include concerns about childcare or other care considerations, barriers like language or cultural differences, or beliefs youth may hold about themselves, such as not having anything worthwhile to contribute. As discussed previously, youth in the juvenile justice system, youth in foster care, and other disconnected youth often face multiple barriers, which are complicated by the fact that there is considerable overlap across these youth populations, with a high prevalence of disability in all disconnected youth populations.

Youth service professionals can assist youth in identifying potential barriers and connecting them to resources that help manage barriers and opportunities that minimize their impact. For youth in the juvenile justice system, barriers may include dealing with the stigma of incarceration or seeking work in occupations that prohibit employment for those with a history of criminal activity. Youth with disabilities may encounter physical, atti-

tudinal, and programmatic barriers to participation in service. For example, facilities may not be physically accessible, or the structure of some service learning opportunities may focus on providing services to people with disabilities but not encouraging their participation as volunteers (Gent & Gurecka, 2001). Attitudinal barriers, like the perception that people with disabilities cannot succeed in competitive employment or service, may also hinder participation.

Youth service professionals will need to work with service learning program sponsors and youth to remove or minimize potential barriers and ensure that the

service learning experience will be a positive one for the participant.

This process is likely to involve sharing resources and educating the different parties involved. For example, youth service profes-

sionals can explain how youth interested in AmeriCorps, a large network of service programs through the Corporation for National and Community Service, may benefit from the program's income exclusions for Social Security Beneficiaries, which prevent living stipends from affecting Social Security benefits (CNCS, n.d.-c). A series of course modules from CNCS (available at <http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/disability-inclusion>) could also be shared with programs looking to proactively engage and include people with disabilities in service. To effec-

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**To bring in people with disabilities, service learning programs need to consider accommodations, disability awareness, negative stereotypes, and treating everyone with dignity and respect.**

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tively bring in people with disabilities as volunteers, service learning programs will need to consider some important issues such as the use of low-cost and practical accommodations, disability awareness, dispelling negative stereotypes, and treating everyone serving or being served with dignity and respect (Gent & Gurecka, 2001). Youth service professionals can learn more about ways to support youth with disabilities by visiting the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy website at <http://www.dol.gov/odep/categories/youth>.

Youth service professionals will also need to work with youth and their families to address any fears, preconceived notions, or any other hesitation they may have about volunteering. It is important that youth service professionals let youth know that they hear their concerns and then provide information to the extent possible to help allay those fears. Addressing their concerns, identifying solutions, and engaging youth in meaningful conversation can encourage participation.

### **Discuss Organizational Structure, Time Commitment, and Participation Preferences to Enable Youth to Identify What Works for Them**

Because everyone's goals and needs are different, it is important that youth service professionals discuss the different types of volunteering opportunities available to youth. It is important to explain that there are organizations with informal and formal vol-

unteer opportunities, activities that take only a few hours as well as opportunities that are longer term, and a wide range in between. In addition, there are different ways of participating, including on-site and off-site, independently of others, or in a group. Once they identify the types of opportunities that suit them, the service practitioner will be able to find an opportunity that best matches their goals and needs.

### **Organizational Structure**

Organizations with *formal volunteer programs* typically have written rules and regulations for volunteers. They educate their volunteers through formal orientation, and they provide job descriptions, supervision, and feedback. They frequently have well-established volunteer programs, and sometimes employ someone to manage the volunteer program. These organizations rely heavily on volunteers to meet their needs. Formal volunteering often consists of the delivery of specific services, a structure of supervision and well-defined roles, and a commitment to be involved for a specific length of time. Volunteer programs that are formal typically have set policies and procedures aimed at ensuring quality management of the service activities (Volunteering Qld, n.d.).

Benefits of formal, structured programs include a clear understanding of expectations and skills to be developed, feedback about performance, and set rules and responsibilities. This structure may be a good fit for youth who prefer clearly defined roles, expectations, and support.



In contrast, non-formal volunteering has fewer structures, less defined roles, and participants are less likely to be compensated. Still, there are many benefits of non-formal volunteering, including the opportunity to address specific, local community needs. Volunteering in a non-formal environment also provides the opportunity to work with others who share similar interests and may not require as significant of a time commitment (Volunteering Qld., n.d.).

Volunteering in an informal, non-structured program may provide greater independence and flexibility to define the nature of the commitment. It therefore may be suitable for individuals interested in exploring a variety of roles, tasks, and outcomes. Individuals who gravitate towards this type of commitment are often motivated and comfortable working without well-defined rules and support.

### ***Time Commitment***

Volunteer opportunities differ in length and time commitment, ranging from short-term to long-term. Each one has its benefits. Short-term commitments may allow the youth to sample a variety of different organizations, industries, and activities to determine their interests and abilities, to learn about educational requirements and potential career paths, to sample and identify preferred work environments, and to practice responsible work behaviors. Longer commitments, in addition to the benefits listed above, provide the time for youth to delve into a specific job, build hard and soft skills, and enhance their resume.

Examples of short-term commitments include the following:

- *Episodic volunteering* refers to participation in a charity event or one-time function, disaster relief, or a community clean-up day. By participating in this type of volunteer opportunity, youth may sample several different career interests or work settings, which can ultimately impact career direction by allowing them to pursue career development.
- *Alternative breaks* allow students to use their time off from school to participate in volunteer opportunities. They can volunteer locally or may choose to participate in other areas or countries. Many organizations, including faith-based institutions, community-based organizations, and schools, offer volunteer opportunities in a variety of areas to meet a particular need in a specific location.
- *Unpaid internships* are a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting. Internships give students the opportunity to make connections in professional fields they are considering for career paths and give employers access to new talent and fresh thinking that they can guide and evaluate for recruitment into full-time positions (National Association of Colleges

and Employers [NACE], 2011 & The University of Vermont, 2010). Unpaid internships must be accepted voluntarily and benefit both the intern and the organization; situations in which this is not the case may be exploitative to interns. For more information, see the U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division *Fact Sheet #71: Internship Programs under the Fair Labor Standards Act* (available at <http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs71.htm>).

Youth may articulate varying goals for participation and availability, which will dictate the preferred time commitment. Youth with disabilities or chronic health conditions and other disconnected youth with family or work constraints may benefit from volunteer opportunities that offer flexible schedules to accommodate fluctuating or pressing needs. For those with disabilities, flexible volunteer arrangements can be discussed as an accommodation, a process that will be covered in Step 4 about assisting youth in finding and securing a volunteer opportunity that fits.

### ***Participation Preferences***

Youth also have a choice about *how* they would like to volunteer. Depending on their goals for participation and other factors such as logistics, availability, or support needs, they may choose to participate on an *individual basis* or as *part of a group*. They may also participate *on-site* or *off-site*, and may even volunteer virtually.

Individuals who would like to volunteer as part of a group may want to consider *family volunteering*. Family volunteering may be an option for individuals who would like to have more family time or who would like to venture into the world of volunteering with family support as a way to gain confidence and move on to an independent opportunity. The benefits associated with such volunteering include:

- Applying and demonstrating shared values and beliefs
- Giving adults opportunities to serve as positive role models
- Providing new skills and developing new interests for family members
- Cultivating new relationships
- Creating stronger familial bonds by developing shared memories
- Actively modeling good citizenship and community engagement for young people (WGBH Educational Foundation Programming and Outreach & United Way of Massachusetts Bay, 2002)

They may also consider *faith-based volunteering*. The term "faith-based service" generally refers to institutional programs that can either include service in a faith community or by a congregation that serves the community together as a group. Evangelical missions are another type of faith-based service (Energize, Inc., n.d.). This is the most popular type of volunteer service due in part to the desire by the members to serve others, the belief that what they do is making

a difference, and because they are usually working alongside others with similar beliefs and goals (CNCS, 2009).

Volunteering with *fraternal organizations* is another way in which individuals can participate within a larger group. The structure is usually informal. Examples of fraternal organizations include the Elks Clubs, Fraternal Orders of Police, Garden Clubs, Granges, Kiwanis, Knights of Columbus, Lions Clubs, Masons, Moose Lodges, Rotary Clubs, Scouting, Singles Clubs, fraternities and sororities on college campuses, and many more. Many of these chapters have branches specifically for youth and are prevalent all across the country.

Youth should also determine if they would like to participate *on-site* with others in a formal or informal setting or *off-site*, which allows them to perform a needed function from home. Disconnected youth, including youth with disabilities, considering on-site volunteering may encounter barriers related to physical access or transportation. Youth who would prefer to collaborate on-site should not be encouraged to pursue alternative options if such barriers arise. Rather, youth service professionals should work with youth, the program itself, and with other service providers, if needed, to address these issues and allow interested youth to participate.

Some youth, however, may actually prefer off-site volunteering such as *virtual volunteering*, which allows them to perform a one-time service (e.g., revise an organization's

website) or to sign on for an extended time commitment, such as serving as an online mentor (Rehnborg et al., 2009). Online volunteering makes it possible for individuals to volunteer for different organizations in different countries from their home or office and at their convenience. Projects may involve helping with social media, designing a website or other material, mentoring youth, or proof-reading articles, translations, or other text. Online volunteering might be a good choice for youth that have scheduling difficulties or face transportation or mobility challenges, have job or family commitments, or want to contribute to an organization in a different geographic location.

*Micro-volunteering* is a subset of online volunteering. Micro-volunteering combines small actions by many people to create big impacts. They are typically short projects

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**Micro-volunteering combines small actions by many people to create big impacts, typically short projects done online.**

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that are done online (Volunteer Weekly, 2012). Micro-Volunteering Day occurs every year on April 15, and youth can learn more about opportunities associated with it by visiting the website at <http://microvolunteering-day.weebly.com>.

## Steps to Assist Youth in Finding and Securing a Volunteer Opportunity that Fits



Youth service professionals can help youth identify their needs and preferences and select the option that works best for them. Once they have determined the organizational structure and time commitment that best matches the youth's preferences, they will be able to better identify an organization that meets their needs. After laying the foundation for youth participation in service by discussing benefits, opportunities, and barriers to be mindful of throughout the process, youth service professionals can begin to assist youth in find-

ing and securing a match that meets their interests and goals. Following the steps described in this section can help youth service professionals engage and educate youth to gain insight, skills, and information that can be useful now and in the years to come.

The individualized nature of this process means that youth service professionals should engage youth in making decisions about executing all or some of the steps below depending on their needs and interests. For example, if a youth with a disability



needs to access accommodations in a volunteer setting or during the planning steps below, he or she should be consulted about what types of supports are preferred. In general, youth service professionals should lay the foundation for a successful match by fostering trust and communication with the young person and by encouraging them to express their voice throughout the process.

Important steps include:

1. Coordinating Self-Exploration Activities (gauging a young person's skills, interests, values, goals, learning styles, etc.)
2. Conducting Organizational Research
3. Understanding What, When, and How to Disclose
4. Identifying Accommodations or Work Support Needs
5. Completing an Application and Developing a Resume
6. Preparing for the Interview
7. Discussing Job-Keeping Skills (soft skills)
8. Fostering Independence and Self-Advocacy Skills
9. Establishing Goals and Monitoring Progress

See the Resources section (p. 32) for additional information that can be useful when implementing each step.

## Step 1: Coordinating Self-Exploration Activities

There are many ways that youth service professionals can help young people figure out who they are and what they want to do. They can start by asking youth to answer some basic questions such as:

- What issues are important to me?
- What type of contribution and impact would I like to make?
- What would I like to gain/learn/ accomplish with my experience?
- What skills do I want to use or learn?
- What are my interests and preferences?
- Are there specific activities I am not interested in doing?
- What types of careers have I considered? How could I use the volunteer opportunity to explore a specific type of work or industry?
- How do I learn best?
- Do I like to work independently or be part of a team?
- Would I like to meet and learn from people in a special field as a way to find mentors or build a professional network?
- What type of time commitment am I able to make?
- Are there any potential issues or barriers that need to be handled before I can participate?

Spending time up front getting youth to answer these types of questions helps youth

find a volunteer opportunity that fits who they are and what they hope to gain from the experience. It is important to remember that youth with disabilities and those with low levels of literacy or education may need accommodations or assistance in completing assessments, and that the purpose of all assessments and their results should be communicated in plain language and terms that the individual can understand. Many assessments and resources are available for reference during this step, including those found in the Resource section (p. 32).

## Step 2: Conducting Organizational Research

Information and insights gained from self-exploration assessments position youth to think about what they might like to do and the type of organization and setting that best meets their needs. With this information in mind, youth service professionals can brainstorm with youth to identify potential places to volunteer. This is also an excellent opportunity to help youth develop important career management and planning skills by researching organizations for their volunteer opportunity and understanding how they can use these skills in the future when they seek employment as they move forward in their careers.

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**Civically responsible people recognize themselves as members of a larger social fabric and therefore assume ownership of some social problems.**

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Most organizations work to meet a specific need. Understanding the *mission* of the organization, its purpose, and how it carries out its work can help young people identify an organization that matches what is important to them and what they hope to accomplish. When working with youth, youth service professionals can discuss basic types of organizations and missions, such as those that focus on civic engagement, community development, or those that are community-based, to help them select the best fit.

Some organizations' missions focus on *civic engagement*. CNCS and the National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC) use the terms "civic life" and "civic engagement" interchangeably to describe diverse activities using collective resources, skills, expertise, and knowledge of citizens to improve a community's quality of life. The methods and the focus used can be political or non-political. The five main categories of civic engagement are service, social connectedness, group participation, connecting to information and events, and political action (CNCS, n.d.-b).

Civically responsible people recognize themselves as members of a larger social fabric and therefore assume ownership of some social problems (Ehrlich, 2000). In an educational context, civic engagement can

consist of “those activities that reinvigorate the public purpose and civic mission of higher education and action by individuals and institutions to create a society characterized by justice and dignity for all” (Bowley, 2003, p.8).

Some organizations focus on *community development*. Community development is “a process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems” (United Nations, n.d.). Organized community development works on specific issues or introduces the concept of community development to communities that have no history of it and no shared identities. Experience and research have, over time, taught volunteers (from outside the community) the necessity and value of viewing community members as equal partners with the ability to affect changes within their community themselves.

Some organizations are *community-based* and provide a wide array of services at the local level to improve life for residents. A community-based organization (CBO) is a public or private nonprofit, including religious organizations, that “is representative of a community or a significant segment of a community, and is engaged in meeting human, educational, environmental, or public safety community needs” (National Network of Libraries of Medicine, n.d., para. 1). CBOs often work in under-resourced communities to provide services in a variety of arenas, such as healthcare or education. Local community members typically staff these orga-

nizations because they are keenly aware of the needs within the community. Some examples of the arenas in which CBOs work include neighborhood revitalization, food security, humanitarian response, or medical relief, in addition to many others (CBOs – Introduction, n.d.)

Youth service professionals can guide youth as they move forward in researching organizations of interest. This research should include the identification of selection criteria used by the organization when choosing volunteers (Dunkle, 2012). They may also want to determine if the organization has a formal volunteer program and if the culture of that program is inclusive and one that the youth would feel comfortable participating in. Answering these questions helps youth select an organization whose mission and structure matches their needs.

See Appendix 1 (p. 40) for information on federal volunteer and service programs and Appendix 2 (p. 44) for other privately and publicly funded service organizations.

### **Step 3: Understanding What, When, and How to Disclose**

Once youth have had a chance to perform self-exploration activities and research compatible organizations, youth service professionals should broach the topic of disclosure, as applicable.

Disclosure is a personal decision. Youth must make individual choices about what, when, and how, if anything, they want to reveal about their disability or other parts of their identity or life experiences. The role of youth service professionals in this process is to assist youth by offering information and guidance—it is not to make these decisions on behalf of youth. Reviewing the advantages and disadvantages of disclosure at various points in the application process can help youth “fine-tune” if, how, and when to disclose when talking with others. It is important that youth with disabilities understand that disclosure is necessary if the young person requires accommodations to participate in the program. Even though a service learning program does not equate to an employer under the law, youth service professionals can still help youth learn about their rights and legal protections under applicable laws and can help them think through the range of possibilities for accommodations (NCWD/Youth, 2012).

Another experience youth service professionals may encounter concerns guiding youth through disclosing prior involvement in the juvenile justice system. It is important for youth to understand that an employer may, and likely will, conduct a background check before or soon after hiring applicants. For this reason, youth should be encouraged to be honest with employers so that they will not be fired for lying if their history with the juvenile justice system is later discovered. Youth service professionals should help youth understand their rights regarding dis-

closure and help youth determine how they can disclose their record in a positive way (Mulqueen, 2013).

The question of disclosure may also apply to other aspects of the youth’s identity. When determining what to tell employers or volunteer managers, youth should consider the impact that such disclosure may have. For experiences like sexual orientation, gender identity/transition, or prior drug use, youth may or may not choose to disclose depending on their personal preferences, their desire to experience acceptance or belonging, and the culture of the organization. Where their identity aligns closely with the organization’s mission and/or philosophy, youth may find that communicating such information in the application or the interview process is something that can give them a competitive edge and actually set them apart. Youth service professionals should be prepared to discuss different options with youth as they make these important decisions.

Although disclosure is a conscious decision, youth service professionals should also alert youth about the potential for unintentional disclosure. Search sites like Google, social networking sites like Facebook, and micro-blogging sites like Twitter have added a new element to disclosure. It is possible to disclose disability or other aspects of identity and experience on the internet without even being aware of it by uploading a picture using a wheelchair, posting a comment on a friend’s blog about disability, or creating a profile on a disability organization’s web-



site (NCWD/Youth, 2010). It is important for youth to consider how these virtual forms of disclosure might play a role in the application process and adjust their privacy settings and online activity accordingly.

See the Resources section (p. 32) for guides that can help walk youth through the topic of disclosure, along with information relevant for youth service professionals, families, peers, and other concerned individuals who play a role in this process.

#### **Step 4: Identifying and Implementing Accommodations or Work Support Needs**

For youth with disabilities, determining the what, when, and how of disclosure may lead to a discussion about accommodations. In order to succeed on the job, all individuals must know how they learn best and about the types of support they need to perform most effectively. In this way, youth with disabilities need to know about the types of accommodations they need to perform their essential job duties and how to communicate their needs and have accommodations put in place. Youth service professionals can assist young people in gaining these insights and, in the case of youth with disabilities, in identifying the types of accommodations they will need to succeed. Most accommodations are not expensive or difficult.

Youth with other identities or experiences may find additional support resources useful for their participation in a volunteer or work

setting. Public transportation that is accessible and affordable may be a concern for many youth, so youth service professionals should map out options in the surrounding area. Some youth may benefit from formal or informal orientation and mobility training that helps them practice getting around, including by using public transportation. Young adults who are parenting may be interested in childcare services or family engagement supports that allow them to more effectively participate in service. Disconnected youth may need assistance obtaining appropriate clothing or uniforms for the desired position.

Youth with and without disabilities who require accommodations or other work supports to participate in a volunteer opportunity may need to educate their prospective supervisor or peers about these needs and how they can best be supported. Being able to effectively communicate about the benefits of inclusion and about how having the right types of supports in place maximizes their ability to contribute their talents to the organization is an important skill that they will use repeatedly throughout their lives. Youth service professionals can find information on accommodations and inclusion at the following sites: Job Accommodation Network (available at <https://askjan.org>), National Service Inclusion Project (available at <http://serviceandinclusion.org/index.php>), and Pathways to Employment (available at <http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/pathway-to-employment>).

For youth with and without disabilities, volunteer experiences generally aid their transition to adulthood. Natural supports are the relationships that exist to support growth, independence, and an overall positive experience in a wide variety of environments. These relationships develop organically and are responsive to the youth's goals, needs, and interests, ultimately nurturing them throughout their transition into adulthood. Understanding the importance of natural supports at an early age prepares youth to continue to develop natural supports in a variety of contexts, as well as serve as a support to others (Department of Developmental Services, n.d.).

Although there is no prescriptive method for developing natural supports, there are several important considerations of which youth service professionals and youth should be aware. Youth service professionals should learn about the youth as much as possible to help determine the environments and communities that will likely offer the most nurturing networks, help the youth make the necessary connections to be included in that community, and maintain and develop the youth's family as a natural support network. Youth must also understand the persistence often required to develop a support network within a community and when transitioning to new communities. They must learn how to communicate their needs and desires (Department of Developmental Services, n.d.). For this reason, youth service professionals should discuss the key role of natural supports in order to prepare youth with and

without disabilities for successful volunteer experiences.

## **Step 5: Completing an Application and Developing a Resume**

Many youth have no experience completing applications or developing a resume. This process is an opportunity to familiarize them with questions typically asked on an application, teach them how to assemble needed information, and showcase their skills and abilities in a properly completed application.

Preparing to volunteer is also an opportunity to introduce the concept of developing and formatting a resume. Because many youth have limited or no work experience, youth service professionals can help them identify courses, extracurricular activities, family responsibilities, and other activities that demonstrate responsibility, organization, time management, and leadership skills. They may also want to document activities that demonstrate their ability to complete projects and work well with others as part of a team. Once they have identified this information, they can show them how to organize and format it into a resume.

## **Step 6: Preparing for the Interview**

For youth who often have little or no interviewing experience, an interview can seem like a difficult and scary experience. Since most organizations want to meet youth before bringing them on board, youth service professionals can help youth prepare for interviews, build confidence, and reduce fears.

They can describe the interview process and discuss the importance of being on time or early to the interview, maintaining hygiene, choosing appropriate clothing, reviewing interview behavior, and practicing potential questions. Acting out an interview is a good way to fine-tune responses and ease concerns. There are many resources that offer common interview questions for practicing.

As part of their preparation for the interview, youth can also draw upon the personal assessments from Step 1 in order to formulate a response as to 1) why they are seeking the volunteer opportunity, 2) why they chose this particular organization, 3) what skills they bring or they would like to develop while volunteering, and 4) what they hope to gain from the experience. Although all youth have their own reasons for volunteering, as with any job interview, it would be helpful for youth service professionals to coach youth on the value they bring to the organization and help them practice articulating a response. Learning how to prepare for and ace an interview is a skill that will serve youth for years to come.

For youth who have circumstances that may need to be addressed, such as youth with disabilities who may need an accommodation to participate in the interview or perform a task or youth who have been involved in the juvenile justice system, youth service professionals can help them think through how they can advocate for themselves or respond to specific questions about their experiences. For youth service professionals

working with youth with a history in the juvenile justice system, it is important to both understand and communicate the laws to the youth (Juvenile Sanctions Center, 2005). This same information is helpful to youth seeking a volunteer opportunity, whether they need to disclose a disability or a history with the juvenile justice system. The Juvenile Sanctions Center encourages anyone working with youth to learn about the laws in their state by visiting the National Center for Juvenile Justice's website (available at [www.ncjj.org](http://www.ncjj.org)) (2005).

## **Step 7: Discussing Job-Keeping Skills (Soft Skills)**

Once youth have interviewed and landed a volunteer opportunity, it is a good time to discuss expectations for job-keeping skills, also known as soft skills. Those with little or no work experience or volunteer experience, as well as those with experience, can benefit from an overview of the important soft skills needed to succeed in the workplace. Youth service professionals can explain the importance of these skills and discuss with youth how to demonstrate them in the workplace.

The U.S. Department of Labor has developed a Soft Skills Curriculum (available at <http://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/soft-skills>) that youth service professionals can reference to pull activities focused around six key areas:

- Communication
- Enthusiasm and Attitude

- Teamwork
- Networking
- Problem Solving & Critical Thinking
- Professionalism

The Soft Skills Curriculum is designed in modules that are flexible, adaptive, and do not have to be completed in sequence. Youth service professionals should consider the individual needs of all youth when selecting activities. Youth service professionals may also want to educate youth about additional soft skills related to:

- Decision-Making
- Time Management
- Independence
- Self-Advocacy
- Taking Responsibility
- Leadership
- Setting Goals
- Prioritizing Tasks
- Having Empathy
- Practicing Self-Worth and Confidence in One's Ability to Do the Job

By learning to work effectively with others and succeed in a professional environment, youth can increase their employability and build their networks. At the end of the day, a positive recommendation from a volunteer experience can open the door to future employment.

### **Step 8: Fostering Independence and Self-Advocacy Skills**

For many youth, participation in a volunteer experience may propel them into situations where they have limited or no experience. Navigating public transportation, asking for help, advocating to have needs met, whether by asking for accommodations or other support, may be new and a bit daunting. Youth service professionals can help youth prepare for their volunteer experience by encouraging them to think through the different aspects of participation and assisting them in identifying potential needs. They can also work together on strategies for how they might handle situations or even practice those strategies. For instance, once a volunteer opportunity is lined up, they can practice using public transportation to get to the workplace on time.

### **Step 9: Establishing Goals and Monitoring Progress**

After youth have completed the process of searching for and securing a volunteer opportunity, making decisions about disclosure, and exploring the skills that will contribute to their success, it is important for youth to reflect on the specific goals they have for what they hope to gain from service learning. It is also important to monitor their progress toward achieving them over the course of the experience. Youth should also be encouraged to recognize the skills and attributes they are gaining throughout the process and to take pride in their achievements and the meaningful impact they are having on the lives of others (Smith et al., n.d.).



## Conclusion



In summary, volunteering is an excellent way for all youth to identify their interests, skills, abilities, values, and goals. They can explore careers, learn how to research organizations, understand how to match who they are with what they want in order to find their organizational fit, and be prepared for the application and interview process. It is also an excellent way to acquire and practice hard and soft skills, grow their social skills and social network, build a resume, develop their work ethic, practice independence skills, and be exposed to new people, ways of doing things, and different cultures.

For youth, including youth with disabilities, who may have barriers or special considerations related to employment, the experience can also provide them with an opportunity to learn about and practice disclosure, to identify and access accommodations, and to foster the development of self-advocacy and self-efficacy skills. The information learned and the skills developed through their participation in this process will not only help them succeed in their volunteer opportunity in the short term, but will also benefit them for years to come by preparing them to successfully navigate the world of competitive employment.

## COMMUNITY SERVICE

### ***National 4-H Council***

<http://www.4-h.org/get-involved/volunteer>

4-H is the nation's largest youth development and empowerment organization, reaching more than six million 4-H youth in urban neighborhoods, suburban schoolyards, and rural farming communities. 4-H offers volunteer opportunities.

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### ***SERVEnet***

<https://ec.volunteernow.com/custom/1267>

Servenet.org is a national portal for volunteers. Access this site to search for volunteer opportunities.

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### ***Youth Service America (YSA)***

<http://www.ysa.org>

YSA offers youth an opportunity to serve the community. YSA helps young people find their voice, take action, and make a vital impact on vital community issues.

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### ***The Points of Light Foundation***

<http://www.pointsoflight.org>

Points of Light connects people to their power to create positive change and address the critical needs of their communities.

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### ***National Youth Leadership Council***

<http://www.nylc.org>

NYLC provides programs and services that develop young leaders, support educators, and advance the field of service learning.

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### ***Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS)***

<http://www.nationalservice.gov>

The Corporation for National and Community Service is a federal agency that engages more than five million Americans in service through its AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, Social Innovation Fund, and Volunteer Generation Fund programs, and leads the President's national call to service initiative, United We Serve.

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## ***Make a Difference Day***

<http://www.usaweekend.com/diffday>

USA WEEKEND Magazine, in collaboration with Points of Light, offers Make a Difference Day, the largest national day of community service, bringing together millions of volunteers across the nation united by a common mission – to improve the lives of others.

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## ***America's Promise – The Alliance for Youth***

<http://www.americaspromise.org/promises>

The collective work of the Alliance involves keeping Five Promises to children and youth that form the conditions they need to achieve adult success. The Alliance promises to young Americans that they will grow up with the help and guidance of caring adult relationships, healthy childhoods, safe surroundings, effective education, and opportunities to serve others. The Alliance offers information on different programs, advocacy, and funding.

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## **SERVICE LEARNING**

### ***National Service-Learning Clearinghouse***

<http://gsn.nylc.org/clearinghouse>

The Clearinghouse is a library of service learning resources. The Clearinghouse offers thousands of free online resources for

K-12, higher education, community-based organizations, and tribal communities.

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### ***National Service-Learning Partnership***

<http://www.service-learningpartnership.org>

The Partnership is a national network of members dedicated to advancing service learning. The Partnership focuses on strengthening the impact of service learning on young people's learning and development, especially their academic and civic preparation. Their website includes service learning tools, resources, and best practices, along with monthly updates with news, resources, and opportunities to take action.

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## **VOLUNTEERING**

### ***Energize, Inc.***

<http://www.energizeinc.com>

Energize, Inc. is an international training, consulting, and publishing firm specializing in volunteerism. It offers information including articles on volunteer management, e-books, and links to other research and websites.

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### ***HandsOn Network***

<http://www.handsonnetwork.org>

The HandsOn Network is the largest network of local volunteer centers around the world. Their 250 HandsOn Volunteer Action Cen-

ters engage 21st century volunteers to use their time, talent, voice, and money to create change in their communities. Their website offers information on volunteerism in different settings, including business, non-profit, faith-based, and government. They also have information for different audiences, including youth, families, and older adults.

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### ***Helpguide.org***

[http://www.helpguide.org/life/volunteer\\_opportunities\\_benefits\\_volunteering.htm](http://www.helpguide.org/life/volunteer_opportunities_benefits_volunteering.htm)

Helpguide.org is an advertisement-free non-profit resource for supporting better mental health and lifestyle choices for adults and children.

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### ***Service Leader***

<http://www.serviceleader.org>

Service Leader offers information on volunteer engagement, community engagement, volunteerism, and other online volunteer resources.

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## **VIRTUAL/ONLINE VOLUNTEERING**

### ***Wikipedia***

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virtual\\_volunteering](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virtual_volunteering)

Wikipedia is a free, online encyclopedia. It defines virtual volunteering and provides ex-

amples of the different types of activities in which one can engage as a virtual volunteer.

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### ***Micro-Volunteering Day***

<http://microvolunteeringday.weebly.com>

Micro-Volunteering Day occurs every year on April 15 and connects people to short, on-line projects they can help out with virtually.

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## **ASSESSMENT**

### ***National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth)***

<http://www.ncwd-youth.info/topic/assessment>

NCWD/Youth offers publications focused on assessment for transitioning youth.

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### ***U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration***

<http://www.doleta.gov/jobseekers/youth.cfm>

The U.S. Department of Labor offers free online resources related to career development for youth.

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### ***Building Blocks for Youth Volunteer Engagement: A Guide for Parents, Teachers and Guidance Counsellors and More***



<http://volunteer.ca/content/building-blocks-youth-volunteer-engagement>

This guide was released by Volunteer Action Centre in Canada and includes information such as Skills Self-Assessment, Skills Matching Matrix, and Steps for Getting Started.

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### ***My Next Move (O\*Net)***

<http://www.mynextmove.org>

This site lets users perform a career search with key words, browse industries, or match work interests with careers.

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## **CAREER EXPLORATION**

### ***O\*Net***

<http://www.onetcenter.org/tools.html>

O\*Net provides self-directed career exploration/assessment tools to help workers consider and plan career options, preparation, and transitions more effectively. The tools also are designed for use by students exploring the school-to-work transition. The assessment instruments, which are based on a “whole-person” concept, include: O\*NET Ability Profiler, O\*NET Interest Profiler, O\*NET Computerized Interest Profiler, O\*NET Interest Profiler Short Form, O\*NET Work Importance Locator, and O\*NET Work Importance Profiler.

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### ***Quintessential Careers***

<http://www.quintcareers.com>

Quintessential Careers provides information to assist individuals in all stages of career development.

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## **CAREER DEVELOPMENT**

### ***Engaging Youth in Work Experiences: An Innovative Strategies Practice Brief***

<http://www.ncwd-youth.info/innovative-strategies/practice-briefs/engaging-youth-in-work-experiences>

This brief, published by the NCWD/Youth, provides examples and resources to engage youth in work experiences.

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## **HOW TO LOCATE ORGANIZATIONS OF INTEREST**

### ***Columbia University, Center on Education***

<http://www.careereducation.columbia.edu/resources/tipsheets/finding-a-job-researching-organizations>

The Center on Education provides a tip sheet on finding a job and how to research organizations.

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**NationalService.gov**

[http://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/VIA\\_tips\\_volunteering\\_college.pdf](http://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/VIA_tips_volunteering_college.pdf)

This brief, *Tips for Volunteering: Tips for College Students Who Want to Volunteer*, provides tips for college students to research and acquire volunteer opportunities.”

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## **APPLICATION COMPLETION/RESUME DEVELOPMENT**

**Quintessential Careers, Job Applications**

[http://www.quintcareers.com/job\\_applications.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/job_applications.html)

Quintessential Careers provides this guide on successfully completing job applications.

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## **INTERVIEW PREPARATION**

**Washington State Government**

[http://www.wa.gov/esd/guides/jobsearch/strategy/interview\\_effective.htm](http://www.wa.gov/esd/guides/jobsearch/strategy/interview_effective.htm)

The Washington State Government offers an article describing how to prepare for a job interview.

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**Quintessential Careers, Interviews**

[http://www.quintcareers.com/job\\_interview\\_preparation.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/job_interview_preparation.html)

Quintessential Careers provides this guide on preparing for job interviews.

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## **SOFT SKILLS**

**Missouri Department of Mental Health, Division of Development Disabilities**

<http://dmh.mo.gov/docs/dd/dmhtipsheet-softskills.pdf>

This soft skills tips and resources publication explains what soft skills are, why they matter, and ways to develop them.

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**U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy**

<http://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills/>

ODEP’s curriculum “Skills to Pay the Bills: Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success” provides activities for soft skill development in the following areas: communication, enthusiasm and attitude, teamwork, networking, problem solving and critical thinking, and professionalism.

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## DISCLOSURE

### ***National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth***

<http://www.ncwd-youth.info/topic/disability-disclosure>

This NCWD/Youth site offers information on disability disclosure, including cyber disclosure, for youth, families, advocates, and youth service professionals.

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## ACCOMMODATIONS

### ***Job Accommodation Network***

<https://askjan.org>

The Job Accommodation Network provides information on workplace accommodations and disability employment issues, helps people with disabilities enhance their employability, and shows employers how to capitalize on the value and talent that people with disabilities add to the workplace.

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## INCLUSION

### ***National Service Inclusion Project***

<http://serviceandinclusion.org>

This project houses online resources for service programs to learn about including youth with disabilities in their initiatives.

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### ***Serve Illinois, Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service***

<http://www2.illinois.gov/serve/Pages/Inclusive-Programs-Guide.aspx>

The Serve Illinois's Guide to Creating Inclusive Volunteer Programs provides information for employers on creating inclusive work environments, including tools for training staff on recruiting, interviewing, and retaining people of all abilities.

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## ACCESSIBILITY

### ***Community Life on Disability.gov***

[http://www.disability.gov/community\\_life](http://www.disability.gov/community_life)

This U.S. federal website provides information and resources on accessible community engagement and links to disability organizations that provide advocacy and services nationwide.

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### ***National Clearinghouse on Disability and Exchange***

<http://www.miusa.org/ncde>

The Clearinghouse is a Mobility International global site with comprehensive resources on accessible services worldwide with the ability to search for disability organizations and international exchange programs, strategies to make international service more accessible, and personal stories and blog links.

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## **Tarjan Center, FAQs**

<http://www.semel.ucla.edu/tarjan/faq>

The Tarjan Center is a project of the University of California-Los Angeles (UCLA). The FAQ page offers answers to frequently asked questions as well as information guides for both individuals looking for accessible volunteer opportunities and organizations seeking to make their programs more inclusive.

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## **Institute on Community Integration**

<https://ici.umn.edu>

The Institute on Community Integration at the University of Minnesota provides this issue of Impact focused on strategies and ideas for greater inclusion of volunteers with developmental disabilities.

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## **DISABILITY RIGHTS**

### ***U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division***

<http://www.ada.gov/cguide.htm>

The *Department of Justice's Guide to Disability Rights Laws* provides an overview of federal civil rights laws that pertain to inclusion of people with disabilities. This guide also provides contacts for agencies and organizations that can assist employers and employees with disability civil rights issues.

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## **JUVENILE JUSTICE LAWS/STATE**

### ***National Center for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ)***

<http://www.ncjj.org/publications.aspx>

NCJJ is a private, nonprofit organization whose mission is effective justice for children and families through research and technical assistance. Their website offers information, including information by state.

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## **INDEPENDENCE/SELF-ADVOCACY SKILLS**

### ***Teaching Self-Advocacy Skills to Students***

<http://teachingselfadvocacy.wordpress.com/teaching-self-advocacy-skills>

This online resource kit provides ways for educators to teach students self-advocacy skills, especially for the transition from high school to postsecondary education.

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### ***California State Council on Developmental Disabilities***

<http://www.scdd.ca.gov/ssanwebsites.htm>

This California State website provides links that may be of interest to self-advocates. The full database is also accessible from this page, where links can be filtered by topic, county, or keyword.

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## PARTICIPANT EXPECTATIONS

### *Volunteering Australia*

<http://www.volunteering.nsw.gov.au/volunteers/volunteer-rights>

This Australian State government website provides a framework for best practice in volunteer management and offers an approach to volunteer management that supports the recognition of minimum obligations and expectations for volunteers and volunteer-engaging organizations.



# Appendix 1: Federal Volunteer and Service Programs

The most important federal laws promoting national service include the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973, as amended, and the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended. Most recently the National and Community Service Act was reauthorized in 2009 with the passage of the Kennedy Serve America Act. This major federal legislation provides opportunities for all Americans to give back to their communities through service and volunteering. It is managed by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). The mission continues to be that of improving lives, fostering civic engagement, and strengthening communities through service and volunteering.

## The Programs of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS)

The two structured volunteer service opportunities provided through CNCS are: 1) AmeriCorps and 2) Senior Corps.

*AmeriCorps* is made up of three main programs: *AmeriCorps State and National*, *AmeriCorps VISTA*, and *AmeriCorps NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps)*. Each year, AmeriCorps offers 80,000 opportunities for adults of all ages and backgrounds to serve through a network of partnerships with thousands of nonprofits, public agen-

cies, faith-based and other community organizations, and national organizations. The grant applicant designs service activities for a team of members serving full- or part-time for one year or during the summer. The entities that receive grants are responsible for recruiting, selecting, and supervising AmeriCorps members to serve in their programs. AmeriCorps members address critical needs in communities all across America. The variety of service opportunities is almost unlimited.

*AmeriCorps State and National*: The purpose of AmeriCorps State and National is to engage AmeriCorps members in direct service and capacity-building to address critical community needs. Members also mobilize community volunteers and strengthen the capacity of the organizations where they serve.

AmeriCorps members may:

- Clean parks and streams
- Tutor and mentor disconnected youth
- Teach literacy and computer skills
- Improve health services
- Build affordable housing
- Manage or operate after-school programs

- Help communities respond to disasters
- Build organizational capacity

Other activities mentioned include providing job placement assistance to unemployed individuals, addressing childhood obesity through in-school and after-school physical activities, and weatherizing and retrofitting housing units for low-income households.

*VISTA:* AmeriCorps VISTA is the national service program designed specifically to fight poverty by eliminating illiteracy, improving health services, creating businesses, and strengthening community groups. Founded as Volunteers in Service to America in 1965, VISTA was incorporated into the AmeriCorps network of programs in 1993. VISTA members commit to serve full-time for a year at a nonprofit organization or local government agency.

*National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC):* AmeriCorps NCCC is a 10-month, full-time, and residential program for men and women ages 18–24. Members serve in teams of eight to twelve and are assigned to projects throughout the region served by their campus. They are trained in CPR, first aid, public safety, and other skills before their first service project.

AmeriCorps NCCC is built on the belief that civic responsibility is an inherent duty of all citizens and that national service programs work effectively with local communities to address pressing needs. The mission of

AmeriCorps NCCC is to strengthen communities and develop leaders through direct, team-based national and community service. AmeriCorps NCCC serves communities in every state with members based at one of five regional campuses and traveling to service projects throughout those regions. The five campuses are located in Denver, Colorado; Sacramento, California; Perry Point, Maryland; Vicksburg, Mississippi; and Vinton, Iowa.

The Serve America Act reinforces the CNCS commitment to the inclusion of individuals with disabilities. CNCS is obligated under federal law to ensure nondiscriminatory environments, practices, and procedures for qualified persons with disabilities. Section 129(k) of the National and Community Service Act, as amended, reserves funds to “increase the participation of individuals with disabilities” in national and community service. Funds are currently offered to AmeriCorps State or National Programs to reimburse grantees for costs associated with reasonable accommodation of a member with a disability. Additionally, grant funding is available to expand AmeriCorps State and National Programs that are filling the new member spaces with members with disabilities. For individuals with disabilities who may be considering a commitment to a service program, it is most important that they contact their Social Security office or a disability benefits counselor to become informed as to how it can affect their benefits.

The Act states that the grantees [organizations, not people] receiving funds must:

- “...collaborate with organizations with demonstrated expertise in supporting and accommodating individuals with disabilities, including institutions of higher education, to increase the number of participants with disabilities...”; Sec. 193A(b) (16) of the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended.
- “provide and disseminate information regarding methods to make service-learning programs and programs offered under the national service laws accessible to individuals with disabilities”; Sec. 198O(b)(b)(6) of the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended.
- “...ensure that students of different ages, races, sexes, ethnic groups, disabilities, & economic backgrounds have opportunities to serve together”; Sec. 113(a)(2)(C) of the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended.

AmeriCorps became more accessible to people with disabilities when President Bush signed into law H.R. 6081, the Heroes Earnings Assistance and Relief Act of 2008 (“the HEART Act”). Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is a Federal program that provides a monthly cash benefit, based on the individual’s payments into the insurance program, to low-income individuals who are aged, blind, or who have a disability (42 U.S.C. § 1382).

For more information, please visit <http://www.nationalservice.gov/site-policy-and-notice/website-policies-procedures/accessibility>.

The new law directs the Social Security Administration to ignore an individual’s receipts of AmeriCorps benefits for purposes of SSI eligibility [42 U.S.C. § 1382a (b)]. The AmeriCorps living allowance, health insurance, and child care subsidy are not counted as earned income for SSI.

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) is a Federal program that provides money to individuals with disabilities based on their payments into the insurance program. For more information, please visit <http://www.nationalservice.gov/site-policy-and-notice/website-policies-procedures/accessibility>.

Even if a person has other health coverage, people with disabilities may need Medical Assistance (MA) to cover high prescription drug costs and special health expenses, such as personal care assistance. Persons on SSI can receive MA at no cost. As long as FICA taxes are withheld, the AmeriCorps living allowance is counted as earned income, thereby allowing AmeriCorps members with disabilities to meet the work requirement for Medical Assistance for Employed Persons with Disabilities (MA-EPD). For more information, please visit

[http://www.nationalserviceresources.org/files/legacy/filemanager/download/inclusion/inclu\\_11.pdf](http://www.nationalserviceresources.org/files/legacy/filemanager/download/inclusion/inclu_11.pdf).

The AmeriCorps living allowance does not



affect eligibility for Food Stamps. Although AmeriCorps rules allow members to waive their living allowance, people with disabilities should use caution in doing so. The 2008 AmeriCorps provisions state: “Even if a member waives his or her right to receive the living allowance, it is possible—depending on the specific public assistant program rules—that the amount of the living allowance the member is eligible to receive will be deemed available.” Moreover, it may not be necessary to waive the living allowance if the person qualifies for certain work incen-

tives that can be used to reduce the amount of income counted by public programs.

Note: If a participant loses or is told that they will lose federal aid, they should contact the General Counsel at CNCS at 202-606-5000 x312 (voice), 202-565-2799 (TDD), or [eo@cns.gov](mailto:eo@cns.gov).

## Senior Corps

For more information about Senior Corps, please visit <http://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/senior-corps>.



## Appendix 2: Other Service Organizations

The following is a list of other service organizations of possible interest. These are funded by both private and public funds.

### Service and Conservation Corps

The Service and Conservation Corps was launched in California in 1976. Corps, as it is now called, are state and local programs that engage young adults, ages 16-25, in full-time community service, job training, and educational activities. The participants are individuals who have not completed high school and/or who have been involved with the criminal justice system, or face other barriers to success. Corps annually enrolls more than 30,000 young people. These participants provide communities with nearly 13.5 million hours of service in year-round and summer programs. Corps annually mobilize 289,000 community volunteers who work with the youth and young adults. Corps allows the latter to accomplish important conservation, community restoration, and human service projects, while also developing employment and citizenship skills. There are 151 Corps operating in multiple communities across all states and the District of Columbia. Small crews of 8 to 12 carry out environmental and energy conservation, urban infrastructure improvement, and other service projects intended to benefit local communities. These crews are guided by adult leaders who serve as mentors and role models. All participants receive educational

training, in addition to a variety of job training and support services. Corps members receive: 1) a living allowance; 2) classroom training to improve basic competencies and, if necessary, to secure a GED or high school diploma; 3) experiential and environmental service learning based education; 4) generic and technical skills training; 5) a wide range of supportive services; and in many cases, 6) an AmeriCorps post-service educational award.

The Corps program is a proven success story. For more information, please see the report “YOUTH CORPS: Promising Strategies for Young People and Their Communities,” available at <http://www.abtassociates.com/reports/Youth-Corps.pdf>.

### Peace Corps

The Peace Corps' mission is to serve our nation in the cause of peace by living and working in developing countries. Peace Corps Volunteers have long helped people build better lives for themselves through their work in villages, towns, and cities around the globe. Peace Corps Volunteers are working in AIDS education, emerging technologies, environmental preservation, new market economies, and more. Since 1961, over 210,000 Americans have served in the Peace Corps, and they have worked in 139 countries. The Peace Corps is an independent agency within the executive branch of



the federal government, and the annual budget is determined by the congressional budget and appropriations process. For more information, please visit <http://www.peace-corps.gov>.

## Teach for America

Teach for America's goal is for members to make a short-term impact on their students in addition to becoming lifelong leaders in pursuing educational equality. Members do not have to be certified teachers, although certified teachers may apply. Unlicensed/un-certified members receive alternative certification through coursework taken while completing the program.

The organization was founded in 1990 and since then more than 20,000 members have completed their commitment to serve for two

years. It receives federal and state funding and has a long list of corporate donors. Members are usually placed in schools with other Teach for America members.

Teach for America recruits attend a five-week summer program to prepare for their commitment. Teachers are placed in schools in urban areas, such as New York City and Houston, as well as in rural places, such as the Mississippi Delta. Teach for America teachers are full faculty members at their schools, receiving the normal school district salary and benefits as well as a modest AmeriCorps "education voucher" (which can be used to pay for credentialing courses, cover previous student loans, or fund further education after the two-year commitment). More information on Teach for America is available at <https://www.teachforamerica.org>.



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20 U.S.C. § 1070

29 CFR § 553.101

42 U.S.C. § 1382

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Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, 29 U.S.C. §§ 733, 3164, 3196



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