



Standards of Excellence for Volunteers

The Standards of Excellence for Volunteers and for Host Organizations have been created to articulate and to clarify key elements that contribute to mutually successful, volunteer experiences.

1. CONSIDER YOUR MOTIVATION

Whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave, just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve. (Matt. 20:26-28)

- Why do you want to volunteer?
- Why did you choose this particular project?
- What do you expect to learn from this experience?
- What do you think you can contribute to it?
- What greater good might happen to the world because of this?

2. INFUSE THE PROCESS WITH PRAYER

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone. (1 Tim. 2:1)

Depend on the Lord for every step of your journey. Pray:

- For wisdom and discernment in your call to service
- For the people served, your hosts, and fellow volunteers
- For your own volunteer experience
- For the impact on the community

3. BE CONSCIENTIOUS

Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not humans. (Eph. 6:7)

Have a responsible attitude about volunteering:

- Be organized
- Be on time
- Dress appropriately
- Bring needed materials and tools
- Be hardworking and energetic
- Be considerate of others
- Recognize the importance of your work
- Recognize your own limitations

4. BE FLEXIBLE

Do everything without grumbling or questioning . . . and shine like lights in the world. (Phil. 2:14-15)

- Expect the unexpected
- Go where the need is
- Do whatever is asked of you
- Value every task, however small
- Be content with giving a cup of cold water

The Peace Prayer of St. Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace.

Where there is hatred,

Let me sow love;

Where there is injury, pardon;

Where there is error, truth;

Where there is doubt, faith;

Where there is despair, hope;

Where there is darkness, light;

And where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that

I may not so much seek to be consoled

As to console;

To be understood, as to understand;

To be loved, as to love;

For it is in giving that we receive,

It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

5. EXPECT TO SACRIFICE

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. (Rom. 12:1)

Volunteering will challenge you to change many things:

- Your time
- Your strength
- Your abilities
- Your money
- Your “rights”
- Your desire for compensation and recognition
- Your assumptions about yourself and others
- Your assumptions about how the world is supposed to work

6. HAVE A LEARNER'S ATTITUDE

Let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance. (Prov. 1:5)

- Make an honest assessment of your gifts and abilities
- Take advantage of any opportunity to learn new things
- Listen for God's voice in the midst of your work
- Don't be a “know-it-all”

7. CARE ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS

If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. (1 Cor. 13:3)

Volunteering is more than just accomplishing a task; it's about working with people.

- We serve out of love, for God and for others
- We serve not only to help but to be a blessing to others
- We serve together with others: no one can do it alone

8. RESPOND TO YOUR EXPERIENCE

Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth, and teach me . . . (Psalm 25:4-5)

Reflect: How has this experience changed you?

- What did you learn: about yourself? About others? About your expectations and what transpired?
- What did you do well? Poorly?
- What did you enjoy?
- What did you learn about the larger context of the project and the community it serves?
- Did it give you a new vision for service and ministry?

Act: How might you have been motivated to take further action?

- Would you do it again? At the same place?
- Would you share your experience with others, such as your small group?
- Are you motivated to get more involved, such as in a different position or by bringing a friend?
- Would you consider making a donation, either financially or of needed materials?
- Are you impassioned to support the cause through voting or advocacy?

These standards were developed by a team of representative from The Boston Project Ministries (www.tbpm.org), People Making a Difference® (www.pmd.org), Pine Street Inn (www.pinestreetinn.org), Park Street Church's City Works Ministry (www.parkstreet.org/ministries/cityworks.shtml), and the Emmanuel Gospel Center (www.egc.org). For hard copies or electronic files (PDF and MS Word) of these standards to adapt them for your own organization's use, please contact Michele Mitsumori at CityServe@egc.org or 617-262-4567.

CITYSERVE, a ministry of the Emmanuel Gospel Center, is dedicated to serving the Kingdom of God by recruiting, training, and connecting volunteers and organizations in and around Boston. CityServe's core values: reciprocity, cooperation, Christ-centeredness, and a safe environment.

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