Hunting for a Volunteer Position

Finding a volunteer position can be as time-consuming and draining as job hunting. However, in order to maximize your efforts and not spend time exploring opportunities that you are not interested in, it is important to be clear with yourself on what you want to do, where you want to do it, and how much time you can commit. This will make filtering down for the perfect volunteer position much easier and faster.

In this article, we will explore 7 steps that you can follow in order to land your dream volunteer position.

1. Do some self-reflection

Before you start looking for volunteer positions, it is important to understand your skillset, your professional and personal experience. You can think about three areas in order to get more of a sense on where you want to volunteer:

**Your motivation** – Make sure to ask yourself what is the reason that you are volunteering. It may be good to think of something that will make you motivated besides the reason that it will look good on your resume. Finding something you truly want to volunteer your time for can make the experience much more meaningful.
Your skills and strengths – Think about your past experience and skillset that you have been able to acquire. What do you have to offer while volunteering? What tasks would you be best at?

Your values – When searching for places that are looking to hire volunteers, make sure you find an organization whose values align with your own. In order to do this, you will need to do some self-reflecting and ask yourself: “What are my values?”.

2. Find out how much time you can commit

Many websites such as Volunteer Toronto, let you filter down their volunteer positions by the amount of time that you are willing to commit and your specific availability. Therefore, it is important to take a look at your schedule and make a realistic evaluation of the time that you can spend volunteering without interfering with your other commitments.

This can also help you in order to not make volunteering overwhelming. You can allocate a certain number of hours every week or every month and stick to your schedule, rather than picking up hours every now and then.

3. Define your goals
Once you have reflected on what you can bring to the position, you now need to have an understanding of what you are trying to achieve by volunteering somewhere. Are you trying to get more hands-on experience in your filed of study by volunteering at a hospital? Are you trying to work on your leadership and communication skills? Do you want to make a meaningful impact in your community? All this to say, that you need to find out on what you want to work on yourself when volunteering.

This will make it easier for you to filter down positions at the end of the day, as you can only look through those roles that will provide you with opportunities to accomplish the goals you have set for yourself and what you want to achieve by volunteering.

4. Brainstorm positions

Now that you have a more clear understanding of where you are and where you want to go, you can start searching for specific volunteer positions that you may be interested in. For example, if you are a student that has the following:

- Past skills and experience in graphic designing, running social media campaigns and is in a Media Studies program
Has the **goal** of gaining more experience in the world of media and taking on more leadership positions

Then, the following positions may be right for you:

- Social Media Marketing Intern & Graphic Design Volunteer
- Social Media Coordinator
- Graphic Artist/ Concept Artist

By filtering down on the specific roles that you may be interested in, you are saving yourself lots of time in the research process which is the next step in hunting for a volunteer position.

**5. Research the positions**

Now is the time to put it all together. Research the positions and whether you want to work for the organizations that are offering them. Make sure to do a little bit of background check on their workplaces and find if you see yourself volunteering a portion of your time there. As we mentioned in the beginning, it is very important for you to work somewhere that shares the same values as you.
6. Interview

The stage of interviewing comes later on in the process of searching for a volunteer position. Once you have applied and the organizations have asked you to interview with them, make sure to prepare for it like you would prepare for any other job interview. Wear formal attire and be confident in your past skills and experience. Before the interview, brainstorm some questions that you want to know about the role or the organization, so that you can ask your interviewer at the end and be more clear about where and what you are going to commit your time doing.