

Time is our most precious resource. So if you are considering volunteering, but wondering if it's worth your time and effort, it's important to remember that even though you won't be earning a wage, the skills you gain are priceless.

Volunteers gain so much out of volunteering: new friends, a sense of purpose, a connection to the community and the satisfaction of helping others. You'll also pick up plenty of soft skills that you can use to help you land your dream job.

Before we get into the skills gained from volunteering, it's also worth highlighting the volunteer skills that organizations are looking for.

What qualities make a good volunteer?

Some of the key qualities that volunteer organizations look for are:

- Passion
- Compassion
- Strong work ethic
- Teamwork
- Time management
- Positive attitude
- Willingness to help

These soft volunteer skills are more important than any technical or special skills for volunteering, as anyone with the right attitude and a willingness to learn can be trained for specific tasks.

Now let's take a look at the skills you can learn as a volunteer. You may notice some of the same skills in both lists, reiterating the fact that the right attitude will take you a long way.

The 15 skills gained from volunteering

1. Punctuality

First on the volunteer skills checklist is punctuality. Working as a volunteer will teach you how to manage time efficiently so that you not only arrive at your shift on time, but you have the ability to finish tasks within given timeframes. Being punctual not only shows you are organized and committed, it's also a sign of respect and considered very important by employers.

2. Organization

Organization goes hand in hand with punctuality. Being organized begins with ensuring your details are up-to-date in a volunteer portal and completing your training on time. You should also keep up to speed with any changes to your role, and of course ensure that your uniform is washed and ready to go. Organization, and its importance to teamwork, is an extremely important skill learned from volunteering.

3. Communication

Many employers rate good communication skills as the number one skill they look for when hiring. Good communication is a major soft skill gained through volunteering. Speaking with children and older

people, in front of groups, over a microphone, or on the phone are all important skills that you can carry with you throughout your career.

4. Teamwork

Develop your volunteer skills working with teams of all shapes and sizes. Many job interviews will ask you for examples of when you've worked in a team, and volunteering will give you the perfect experience to discuss.

5. Relationship building

Volunteering attracts people of all ages and from all walks of life. So you will get used to interacting with people with diverse backgrounds and skills, who all bring something unique to the team. Community service teaches you how to work with anyone and is an important skill you'll need in the future.

6. Confidence

Stepping outside your comfort zone is the best way to improve your confidence, and volunteering is a great way to do this! The new opportunities, new environments and new people may be scary at the start, but you'll gain confidence over time.

7. Customer service

Every time you volunteer, you will be expected to deliver helpful and friendly customer service as a representative of an organization. This might be as simple as offering a friendly smile or going out of your way to help answer a question for a member of the public. Customer service experience is a wonderful volunteering skill to add to any resume.

8. Sales

Your friends and family will be interested to hear more about your role as a volunteer and the mission of the organization. You can use this opportunity to practice your volunteer skills as a salesperson and see if you can recruit more volunteers, sell tickets to a fundraising event or collect donations.

9. Problem solving

Running out of merchandise, dealing with bad WiFi, or being understaffed are all problems you may encounter as a volunteer. Learning to think on your feet, communicate clearly with other team members and customers, and ultimately finding a solution are important skills gained from volunteering that can't be taught in a classroom.

10. Training

With volunteer teams always welcoming new members, chances are at some point you'll be asked to teach others about certain tasks or processes. Using the teaching skills learned from volunteering, you'll be more prepared to train new colleagues in your future career.

11. Creativity

Creativity comes in all shapes and sizes. From making children laugh with a simple ball game, to designing posters for a non-profit event, creativity is a volunteer skill that you'll always need in your back pocket.

12. Perseverance

As rewarding as being a volunteer can be, you may occasionally encounter some long days in the pouring rain or freezing cold. And while you may want to quit and head home, pushing through and finishing the job at hand will be a great lesson in perseverance, and your efforts won't go unnoticed. Having perseverance is a special skill for volunteering in any field.

13. IT tools

With many organizations now using volunteer management systems to recruit, train and manage volunteers, it will give you a chance to improve your IT skills.

14. Leadership

Stepping up and taking initiative is what leadership is all about, and one of the skills learned from volunteering that you'll have plenty of chances to develop. Leaders are not born but made, so getting the chance to practice leadership will only make you a more confident and versatile leader.

15. The skills you want

If you are really keen on learning a certain skill, whether it be photography or event management, volunteering is a great way to pick up those skills. Speak to your volunteer manager about buddying up with an expert in that field, or ask about taking on additional tasks that will help you gain the skills you're after.

At the completion of your volunteer experience, it's important to reflect on your experience so you can update your resume with your new skills:

- What have you learned from volunteering?
- Are there volunteer skills you can add to your resume?
- What parts of volunteering did you enjoy most?