

Presenting Volunteer Work on Resumes

Volunteers do many different types of unpaid work to help support the well-being of others and make a difference in the world. Through their service, volunteers also benefit by gaining real-world work experience and developing career-related knowledge, skills and abilities, attitudes, and other qualities.

Not sure where to include volunteer work and learning on your resumes? For ideas, review the following examples of presenting volunteer work in different resume sections: Skills Categories, Work Experience, and Activities. Of these three options, which one(s) best suits your purpose?

Option A: “Skills Categories” Section

Customize each resume to address the specific requirements of each job of interest (functional resume):

- a) Analyze the job posting to identify the specific requirements (e.g., skills)—note the keywords.
- b) Sort the requirements into categories and name them—these can be used as headings.
- c) Under each heading (e.g., Administration, Computer, Leadership), write concise descriptions of your related volunteer work. Include some examples from your academic and/or employment experience.

Relevant Knowledge, Skills & Accomplishments (*Other heading: e.g., Related Skills*)

Program Development

- As a _____ volunteer, collaborated with team members to develop _____
- Assisted with planning and organizing a program for Indigenous youth with a focus on learning traditional values, practices and ceremonies, and _____ (Association Volunteer)
- ___ years of volunteer experience developing and facilitating programs for _____

Client / Patient Support

- Responded to distressed clients over the phone: listened to concerns and provided support, assessed risk, and completed referrals to appropriate community services (Crisis Line Volunteer)
- Interacted with patients (all ages) to provide companionship during convalescence from surgery (Respite Home Volunteer)

Administration

- As Treasurer (Community Association), accurately entered membership information into databases, processed donations (cash, cheques, credit card), and prepared related reports
- Utilized Excel to create record keeping and accounting databases for a non-profit association (Robotics Association Volunteer)

Communication, General Skills & Attitudes

- Communicate and interact respectfully with people of diverse backgrounds (Event Volunteer)
- As a Museum Volunteer, demonstrated the ability to engage youth and facilitate school groups
- Commended for quick thinking and maintaining composure when resolving team conflicts (Volunteer Referee)
- Empathic, responsible and resourceful when assisting new patients in a hospital environment (Admitting Volunteer)

For each resume, revise the headings and descriptions to best present your relevant strengths and abilities with some supporting details!

Option B: “Work Experience” Section

Some volunteer work is like an unpaid job. It requires ongoing commitment, as well as specialized knowledge and skills (e.g., program development, event planning, coaching, communicating).

- a) Analyze the job posting to identify the specific requirements (e.g., skills)—note the keywords.
- b) When writing a resume, consider presenting and describing related volunteer activities in the work experience section of your resume.
- c) Note a title for the “job” (volunteer) and briefly describe your key responsibilities.

Relevant Work Experience (*Other heading: e.g., Related Experience*)

Program Assistant (volunteer) Sept. 20XX – present
Mental Health Support Services, Somewhere, SK

- Assist the Coordinator with facilitating workshops for youth on stress management and _____
- Effectively engage and provide support to youth who have a mental illness (e.g., depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia)
- As a member of the Organizing Committee, planned activities for Mental Health Awareness Week

Marketing Coordinator (volunteer) April 20XX – present
Annual Fun Day Festival, Somewhere, SK

- Oversee marketing and promotions including _____
- As Chair of the Promotions Committee, serve as the media representative in interviews (newspaper, radio, television)

Activities Assistant (volunteer) May – Aug., 20XX & 20XX
Respite Services, Somewhere, SK (summers)

- Assisted the Program Coordinator with facilitating recreational and social activities for children and youth with disabilities (e.g., autism, Down’s syndrome, cerebral palsy)
- Aided with bathing, personal hygiene, dressing and grooming

Program & Fundraising Coordinator (volunteer) Aug. 20XX – Dec. 20XX
Indigenous Cultural Council, Somewhere, SK

- Collaborated with schools and community organizations to plan recreational programs for Indigenous children and youth, including sports camps and tournaments (e.g., Canoe Challenge)
- To help raise funds, delivered presentations to 15 community groups and businesses; successfully raised \$_____

Soccer Coach (volunteer) May – Aug. 20XX
Northwest Tigers, Prairie Junior League, Somewhere, SK

- Planned and conducted a safe training program for 15 children (9 – 13 years of age)
- Introduced motivational strategies for facilitating team development (e.g., goal setting, _____)
- Recognized with league award: “Most Improved Team 20XX”

Junior Counsellor (volunteer) June – July 20XX
Summer Camp, Somewhere, SK (summer)

- Supervised 8 campers (7–9 years of age), ensuring their safety and well-being in all activities
- Assisted with planning and leading a variety of social and recreational activities for campers (e.g., crafts, canoeing, campfires)

Option C: “Interests & Activities” Section

If your volunteer work is *not* directly related to the job that you’re applying for, consider briefly presenting it in a listing of activities at the end of your resume. Be selective—don’t list all of your volunteer work. Highlight your more recent and notable volunteer experience.

Even if not directly related to the job requirements (essential skills), many employers are interested in reviewing your volunteer work for more evidence of valued skills and qualities, for example:

- a) Personal assets of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values (e.g., leadership, planning, diversity).
- b) Shared interests and values (e.g., community development, health and wellness).
- c) Ability to maintain a work/life balance and not get burned out.

Memberships, Interests & Activities (*Other Heading: e.g., Volunteer Work & Interests*)

Memberships

- Association Name – Student Member Jan. 20XX – present
- Association Name – Member Mar. 20XX – present

Volunteer

- First Nations University Spring Pow Wow – Security, Regina, SK Apr. 20XX
- South East Daycare – Board Member, Somewhere Jan. 20XX-present
- Community Association – Newsletter Committee, Somewhere Apr. 20XX – present
- North American Indigenous Games (NAIG) – Event Assistant July 20XX
- Summer Exhibition – Day Trip Attendant, Sun Valley Homes, Somewhere Aug. 20XX

Interests

- Biking, camping, travel, reading, languages

Practice: Writing Descriptions of Volunteer Work

Analyze an example of your volunteer work and give it an appropriate title. Indicate that it is unpaid work by noting “volunteer.” Describe the work by writing phrases about the related knowledge (nouns), skills and abilities (verbs), attitudes (adjectives) and other qualities (e.g., motivations, values).

<i>Position Title</i>	(volunteer)	<i>Dates</i>
<i>Name of Organization</i>		<i>Location</i>
• _____		
• _____		
• _____		
• _____		
• _____		