



Tips for getting started

First, ask yourself if there is something specific you want to do.

For example, do I want...

...to improve the neighbourhood where I live

...to meet people who are different than me

...to try something new

...to do something with my spare time

...to see a different way of life and new places

...to have a go at the type of work I might want as a full-time job

...to do more with my interests and hobbies

...to share something I'm good at

The best way to volunteer is to find a match with your personality and interests. Having answers to these questions will help you narrow down your search.

How to find the right volunteer opportunity

There are numerous volunteer opportunities available. The key is to find a position that you would enjoy and are capable of doing. It's also important to make sure that your commitment matches the organization's needs. Ask yourself the following:

- Would you like to work with adults, children, animals, or remotely from home?
- Do you prefer to work alone or as part of a team?
- Are you better behind the scenes or do you prefer to take a more visible role?
- How much time are you willing to commit?
- What skills can you bring to a volunteer job?



- What causes are important to you?

Consider several volunteer possibilities

Don't limit yourself to just one organization or one specific type of job. Sometimes an opportunity looks great on paper, but the reality is quite different. Try to visit different organizations and get a feel for what they are like and if you click with other staff and volunteers.

How much time should you volunteer?

Volunteering doesn't have to take over your life to be beneficial. In fact, research shows that just two to three hours per week, or about 100 hours a year, can confer the most benefits—to both you and your chosen cause. The important thing is to volunteer only the amount of time that feels comfortable to you. Volunteering should feel like a fun and rewarding hobby, not another chore on your to-do list.

Getting the most out of volunteering

You're donating your valuable time, so it's important that you enjoy and benefit from your volunteering. To make sure that your volunteer position is a good fit:

Ask questions. You want to make sure that the experience is right for your skills, your goals, and the time you want to spend. Sample questions for your volunteer coordinator might address your time commitment, if there's any training involved, who you will be working with, and what to do if you have questions during your experience.

Make sure you know what's expected. You should be comfortable with the organization and understand the time commitment. Consider starting small so that you don't over commit yourself at first. Give yourself some flexibility to change your focus if needed.

Don't be afraid to make a change. Don't force yourself into a bad fit or feel compelled to stick with a volunteer role you dislike. Talk to the organization about changing your focus or look for a different organization that's a better fit.

If volunteering overseas, choose carefully. Some volunteer programs abroad can cause more harm than good if they take much-needed paying jobs away from local workers. Look for volunteer opportunities with reputable organizations.



Enjoy yourself. The best volunteer experiences benefit both the volunteer and the organization. If you're not enjoying yourself, ask yourself why. Is it the tasks you're performing? The people you're working with? Or are you uncomfortable simply because the situation is new and unfamiliar? Pinpointing what's bothering you can help you decide how to proceed.

Where to find volunteer opportunities

If you are still unsure why not contact Community Action Derby.

Their volunteer centre can help you find the perfect volunteer opportunity for yourself.

www.communityactionderby.org.uk