**Guide to Community Service Learning**

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**Community Service Graduation Requirements**

**Board Policy 2410:**

Students are required to complete 20 hours of community service as part of their high school graduation requirements.

The project may be completed through participation in school activities (e.g., National Honor Society, Key Club, athletic teams, etc.) as well as other acceptable community activities.

* Community service hours are typically completed outside of school time. Additionally, the work must be voluntary in nature and not tied to any classcredit or pay.
* It is recommended that the community service be related to the student’s career exploration or to a cause about which the student feels passionate.
* Written requests for waivers shall be addressed to the Principal and will be granted when appropriate, in accordance with Procedure 2410

**Superintendent’s Certificate of Merit**

A Certificate of Merit will be issued to high school students meeting the requirements below. This recognition is designed to honor those students who demonstrate a deep commitment to serving their community by going far above and beyond the graduation requirement for community service. Community service hours may be accumulated annually or throughout the high school career. Students will keep a written log and hours must be verifiable.

* A bronze-level designation on the certificate is earned for completing 80-99 hours of community service.
* A silver-level designation on the certificate is earned for completing 100-119 hours of community service.
* A gold-level designation on the certificate is earned for completing 120+ hours of community service.

**The Basics for Volunteering**

**Why Volunteer? 10 Excellent Reasons to Volunteer**

1. You’ll feel empowered about the positive impact you’ll make in our community!
2. Your sense of ownership of our community and ability to make change in it will increase!
3. Nearly all volunteer opportunities are free, making it accessible to all! While a tiny portion of volunteer opportunities require fees to participate to cover costs of materials, if you need to, you can always inquire about scholarships and/or financial assistance.
4. Volunteering gives you a chance to expand upon and practice your skills or even learn new ones!
5. The giving of your contributions, such as time and skills, demonstrates your character and positive qualities. This makes a great way to begin building your professional network and relationships, with people who can support you with your future goals and success.
6. Volunteering can expand your world! You may meet new people from all aspects of life, explore other cultures and even make new friends!
7. Whether you are just beginning to explore your career options or have narrowed your interests down, volunteering can provide you with a chance to explore potential educational or career pathways.
8. Many scholarships and college admissions are granted to students who demonstrate service to other people through volunteering.
9. Earn an award through the Renton School District by earning the Superintendent’s Certificate of Merit.
10. RSD students must complete a minimum of 20 hours of community service as part of the district’s

**Forms Needed for Volunteer Work**

Time Logs

You are strongly encouraged to track your volunteer hours after each volunteer shift on the RSD Community Service Time Log. You can find the time log [here](https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1564513133/rentonschoolsus/zfisrmzqp5k3e2lvfdvi/CommunityServiceTimeLog.pdf). Doing so will help ensure you accurately record the actual number of volunteer hours completed. Do not “keep track” of your hours in your head. It is too easy to not remember the dates and actual number of hours volunteered. Why shortchange yourself? Don’t do it! Record as you go!

The assigned person responsible for recording of RSD Community Service Time Logs forms, may differ in each RSD high school. Your high school’s Career Center, Counseling Office, or Main Office will be able to direct you to where to submit your RSD Community Service Time Logs.

**Volunteer Database- Find a volunteer opportunity**

This site is a beginning place for RSD high school students seeking volunteer opportunities in our local community to fulfill the 20-hour community service graduation requirement. Our community is a dynamic place offering an endless supply of volunteer opportunities that can benefit from your contributions, skills, and talents!

This site strives to provide accurate information. However, opportunities or requirements are continually changing. Always contact an organization directly for their most current volunteer information and requirements.

There are almost 100 locally serving organizations included on this site! They each offer volunteer opportunities that RSD high school students are eligible for. Due to the requirements and/or availability of volunteer positions, some organizations may appear in this guide one schoolyear and not in another schoolyear’s edition. This reflects their current volunteer opportunities and how they align to the needs of RSD high school students.

Visit your high school’s Career Center for various post-secondary support and resources, including volunteer opportunities! Additional volunteer opportunities may also be shared in your high school’s daily announcements, posted on bulletin boards around the school or made available through a high school club.

Countless additional opportunities exist to be uncovered through your own exploration! If you participate in a volunteer opportunity not included on this site, please share this information with your high school’s College & Career Specialist, who operates the Career Center so we may include the organization on our list for future students.

Download the Excel spreadsheet and do your own search by organization name, age requirements, or number of volunteer hours available. Click below to download. [DOWNLOAD HERE](https://resources.finalsite.net/files/v1564514480/rentonschoolsus/uybjsuhi4nvm0epurncm/CommunityServiceDataBase.xlsx)

**Frequent Questions and Answers about Volunteering (FAQ’s)**

**Getting Started**

You are strongly encouraged to volunteer on an on-going basis, beginning as soon as a 9th grader and to finish more than the minimum requirement of 20 hours.

* Volunteering more than the minimum requirement reflects an individual’s character and can become an important aspect of a scholarship, job and college/university application that can help distinguish a student from other applicants.
* If you do not have employment experience, regular volunteering may provide you with a reference.
This is a non-family member who can speak of your experience, personal character and qualifications that can lead to a job. Volunteering can also be a fun and unique way to spend time as a class, sports team, club or with a group of your friends!
* You can become involved in a short-term project or a onetime event that is only a few hours.
Other volunteer opportunities are long-term and may require a commitment of multiple hours per week or month.
* Organizations may have needs for volunteers during the day, weekends, afternoons, evenings and/or holidays.
 Some organizations will not be able to accommodate your schedule needs due to type of service they are providing, while some organizations or specific volunteer opportunities can be flexible around your schedule. Make sure to consider your other commitments when scheduling your volunteering. You’ll also want to plan for transportation and the time it takes to commute somewhere.

**What do volunteers do?**

Volunteers perform a variety of unpaid tasks for nonprofits, faith communities, organizations, and groups that often depend on the support of volunteers to sustain and continue their services.

Volunteers perform a wide range of tasks. These tasks can include stuffing envelopes, feeding animals, tutoring children, and other youth, building homes, serving as a museum guide, collecting donation items, fundraising, or even painting fingernails at a senior center! Volunteers are of all ages and all aspects of life, coming together to support and strengthen our community.

It is important to remember that when you accept a volunteer position, you are making a personal commitment to be there for that organization. Volunteers that show up late, cancel at the last minute, or provide poor quality effort, can end up harming the organization and preventing it from the work it provides to our community. Please honor your commitments.

**Deciding where to volunteer- First 3 Steps**

Step 1: Talk with your friends and family members

* What kind of volunteering do they do? Does this appeal to you?
* What type of experiences have they had? What skills have they gained?
* Are there openings available and/or do they have a contact person?
* Consider volunteering together with friends and family. Many organizations will host groups. In fact, some volunteer opportunities are specifically for groups!

Step 2: Review an organization’s website

* Read about an organization, their mission statement and current efforts. Does their work align with your beliefs and values? Do you want to support the services that they provide?
* Learn about current volunteer opportunities
* Access volunteer application and other required forms

Step 3: Determine a service area to focus on

* Animal shelters/zoos
* Arts/Music
* Children/Youth
* Civil Rights/ Social Justice
* Community engagement
* Environment
* Families
* Homelessness
* Holiday assistance
* Hunger/Food insecurities
* Minority groups
* People with disabilities
* Religious institutions
* Seniors

**Deciding where to volunteer- Things to Consider**

* Are you a member of a sports team, youth club, faith community or a similar group that already offers volunteer opportunities or will allow you to volunteer with them? Or, who are wanting to volunteer together at another organization? Most organizations offer group volunteer opportunities but do have different requirements about the size of the group.
* Can you take your skills, both learned in and outside of school and share them with other people? For example, as a player of a sport you already know the importance of being a team player, leadership and communication skills and working towards a common goal. These skills can be transferred into leading a group of people preparing and serving a community meal.
* Do you speak more than one language? Consider asking if an organization can utilize your language skills. For example, the Asian Counseling and Referral Services provides services to its clients in their preferred language.
* Use this guide for research and then connect with an organization that interests you. They may have a Volunteer Coordinator, who is the person who will guide you on the process of volunteering with their organization. If unsure of who to contact, use the general phone number or email address of an organization and communicate your intentions of volunteering.
* Consider the location of where you will be volunteering, and the transportation required to get there. Most organizations cannot assist you with your transportation needs. There are ways to reduce transportation costs, such as carpooling with a group of friends to cut down on gas costs or even volunteer within your neighborhood to remove transportation costs all together.

Many organizations have established volunteer programs in place:

* Animal shelters
* Art organizations
* Children/Youth Services
* Environmental groups
* Food pantries/banks
* Hospitals/medical clinics
* Religious institutions
* Schools
* Senior Centers
* Services to people with disabilities

**Volunteer Applications**

Many organizations require you to complete a volunteer application as part of their orientation process. This allows an organization to collect your contact information and parent/guardian permission. In some cases, it also collects your areas of interest, any relevant experience you may have and/or teacher/coach references. Those may be required by highly sought after but limited volunteer positions, such as those in the medical field. Make sure that you still complete all application and paperwork professionally and neatly.

A Washington State background check may also be required for certain organizations due to type of service they provide. If so, it will be free of charge to you. However, it can take a few weeks to process background checks. So, make sure to plan accordingly, as it will need to be processed prior to the start of your volunteering.

A volunteer application has a different purpose than a job application. The volunteer application, and any other forms you may be asked to complete as part of an orientation process with an organization, are for their own records and documentation purposes. So, don’t stress about not being accepted as a volunteer or not when you complete a volunteer application.

If you are 17 years and younger, there may be additional paperwork required of you and/or limitations to the type of volunteer positions you may do. This is only a reflection of the needs and limitations of an organization, not of you. So, don’t get discouraged! Remember, volunteering provides growth opportunities and can be a helpful aspect in gaining paid employment and/or acceptance in educational majors and/or schools.

**Skills & Training**

Consider your skills and interests when deciding where to volunteer. You can select a volunteer opportunity where your current abilities and skills can be strengthened, or you can try out a volunteer opportunity where you’re gaining new skills. In the end, you’ll gain some type of experience for all the volunteering you do, so make it meaningful for yourself!

Ask about the training provided to you as part of an orientation process and the timeline required to begin volunteering. Questions to ask about include what items you should bring with you. For example, some park restoration projects provide gloves and shovels while some projects will need you to provide your own. If unsure of what to ask, you can always ask the organization’s Volunteer Coordinator if there is any information that you will need to know. Asking questions will help prepare you for a great, rewarding volunteering experience!

**Internships: when these hours count as volunteer hours**

An internship can be paid or not. If an internship is not paid, yes, you may count the hours towards your volunteer hours. If an internship is paid, no, you can’t count these hours. This is because you’re already being compensated for your time.

**Additional Resources to Assist You**

**Career Cruising**

RSD provides access for RSD students, in grades 6th – 12th, to use Career Cruising. This online platform grows with you and supports the development of your lifelong dreams and goals by allowing you to take assessments on your areas of interests, explore colleges and majors, learn about career pathways including required education, earning outcomes and more!

To access your Career Cruising account, use the below login information and visit:

www.careercruising.com

Career Cruising Login information

1. Username: It is your RSD computer login with the added prefix of “RSD-”

RSD-fir.las000

Example: RSD-kev.ngu018

1. Password: Use your RSD lunch ID

This is also your RSD student number

Example: 000000

Need Career Cruising help? Ask your College & Career Specialist in your Career Center.

**Website Search Engines for Volunteer Opportunities**

**Just Serve:** Use their free app to locate volunteer opportunities on the go!
[www.justserve.org](http://www.justserve.org/)

**Seattle Works:** Featuring volunteer opportunities primarily within City of Seattle.
[www.seattleworks.org](http://www.seattleworks.org/)

**United Way of King County:** Always featuring hundreds of local events, you can even register to make signing up for events simple!
[www.uwkc.org/volunteer/](http://www.uwkc.org/volunteer/)

**Volunteer Match:** Create a free profile to be notified of local volunteer opportunities that match your areas of interest. Make sure to indicate your city or zip code to find local opportunities.
[www.volunteermatch.org](http://www.volunteermatch.org/)