

## Tips for Volunteers

### Consider the skills you have to offer.

If you enjoy outdoor work, have a knack for teaching, or just enjoy interacting with people, you may want to look for volunteer work that will incorporate these aspects of your personality.

### Try something new.

Perhaps you would like to learn a new skill or gain exposure to a new situation. Volunteering can help you improve certain skills or simply offer a change from your daily routine.

### Don't over-commit your schedule.

Make sure the volunteer hours you want to give fit into your hectic life, so that you don't frustrate your family, exhaust yourself, shortchange the organization you are trying to help or neglect your job.

### Combine your goals.

Look for volunteer opportunities that will also help you achieve other goals for your life. For example, if you want to get in shape, pick an active volunteer opportunity, such as cleaning a park or working with kids.

### Consider volunteering as a family.

Think about looking for volunteer opportunities suitable for parents and children to do together. When a family volunteers together, the experience can bring them closer together, teach young children the value of giving their time and build wonderful family memories.

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*Tips for Volunteers* provided by Independent Sector.

## Additional Information

White House Office of the USA Freedom Corps  
[www.usafreedomcorps.gov](http://www.usafreedomcorps.gov)

Citizen Corps  
[www.citizencorps.gov](http://www.citizencorps.gov)

Neighborhood Watch—USA on Watch  
[www.usaonwatch.org](http://www.usaonwatch.org)

Community Emergency Response Teams  
[www.training.fema.gov/emiweb/CERT/](http://www.training.fema.gov/emiweb/CERT/)

Medical Reserve Corps  
[www.medicalreservecorps.gov](http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov)

Fire Corps  
[www.firecorps.org](http://www.firecorps.org)

Volunteers in Police Service Program  
[www.policevolunteers.org](http://www.policevolunteers.org)

Office of Justice Programs  
[www.ojp.usdoj.gov](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov)

Bureau of Justice Assistance  
[www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/)

International Association of Chiefs of Police  
[www.theiacp.org](http://www.theiacp.org)

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This project was supported by Award No. 2002-DD-BX-0010 awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice.



Volunteering with Law Enforcement:

## A Citizen's Guide



## Answering the Call to Service

International Association of Chiefs of Police  
515 North Washington Street  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

1-800-THE-IACP  
[info@policevolunteers.org](mailto:info@policevolunteers.org)

[WWW.POLICEVOLUNTEERS.ORG](http://WWW.POLICEVOLUNTEERS.ORG)





In his 2002 State of the Union Address, President George W. Bush announced the creation of the USA Freedom Corps, an effort to foster a culture of service, citizenship, and responsibility, building on the generous spirit of the American people. The Citizen Corps programs are part of the USA Freedom Corps initiative and share the common goal of helping communities prevent, prepare for, and respond to crime, natural disasters, and other emergencies.

Citizen Corps includes five program partners: Neighborhood Watch, Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT), Medical Reserve Corps, Fire Corps, and the Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS) Program.



The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) manages and implements the VIPS Program in partnership with and on behalf of the White House Office of the USA Freedom Corps and the Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice. The goal of the program is to enhance the capacity of state and local law enforcement to utilize volunteers.

*“...we should continue to strengthen partnerships between citizens and local law enforcement and work to engage more volunteers in public safety and emergency preparedness.”*

*-President George W. Bush  
May 9, 2003*

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is a volunteer in police service?

The VIPS Program defines a volunteer in police service as a community member who performs hours of service for a law enforcement agency without promise, expectation or receipt of compensation for services rendered. This may include chaplains, reserve officers, persons providing administrative support, interns and youth involved in a Law Enforcement Explorer Post.

### Are there requirements to volunteer with a law enforcement agency?

Policies for law enforcement-based volunteer programs will differ from agency to agency. Most volunteer programs will require a background check. There may also be requirements based on age, background and availability. You should check with the agency's volunteer coordinator to find out any special qualifications.

### How will I benefit from volunteering?

Volunteers have the opportunity to give back to their country, state, and local community through the hours they volunteer. Volunteers gain invaluable insights into our nation's law enforcement system and how it works. Volunteers have the opportunity to improve the quality of their local law enforcement service through their work, their attitude, and ideas for improving programs.

### How can I learn about law enforcement-based volunteer opportunities in my area?

Use our website, [www.policevolunteers.org](http://www.policevolunteers.org). You can identify agencies that have programs in your area. If our website does not contain information about a program in your area, contact your local, county or state police agency to find out if they have a program.

## The President's Volunteer Service Award



The President's Volunteer Service Award is a Presidential recognition program for Americans of all ages, who contribute a significant amount of time to volunteer service. The program recognizes individuals, families, and groups that have achieved a certain standard – measured by the number of hours served over a 12-month period. Given their ongoing service activity, many individuals, families, and groups may have already met the requirements to earn the President's Volunteer Service Award.

To earn an award, individuals, families and groups must keep a record of volunteer activities and hours served. This Record of Service may be kept as a diary or calendar or tracked online using the USA Freedom Corps Record of Service.



For more information on *The President's Volunteer Service Award*, visit:

[www.presidentialserviceawards.gov](http://www.presidentialserviceawards.gov)  
[www.usafreedomcorps.gov](http://www.usafreedomcorps.gov)