



VOLUNTEER SERVICE AT GRINNELL

So You Want to Volunteer While at Grinnell...

What exactly is volunteer service?

Volunteer service is usually defined as part-time, unpaid work designed to serve the common good. Volunteers are essential to our community and the opportunities you will encounter while at Grinnell are endless. Advisers from the Center for Careers, Life, and Service will help you find a volunteer opportunity that fits with who you are.

NOTE: If you hold an F-1 visa, you should review the gray areas surrounding volunteer service. You do not want to embark on a project that could potentially threaten your visa status: talk with an Service & Social Innovation team member first.

Why might you consider volunteer service?

- Volunteer service allows you to serve and become an integral part of a community—better understanding your role as an ally in the local community.
 - Volunteer service allows you to make a difference through challenging, community-driven work.
 - Volunteer service provides you the opportunity to
 - » Explore your civic values,
 - » Expand your perspective,
 - » Learn from community experts,
 - » Use what you are learning in the classroom, and
 - » Build a network of people who share your passion for making a difference.
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Fabulous Facts about Volunteering:

1. Many charitable nonprofits have no paid staff and are run entirely by volunteers.
 2. Volunteers are worth on average \$24.14 an hour according to an [Independent Sector Study](#).
 3. [Volunteerism improves participants' health](#) by strengthening the body, improving mood, and reducing stress.
 4. Volunteering can give you a sense of belonging in the community.
 5. If you are the kind of person that has a hard time entering new social situations, volunteering and working alongside others with a shared purpose, can help!
 6. Volunteering can inspire new creative ideas about how you may help change the world in positive ways.
 7. Intentional volunteering helps you refocus your values and priorities. It might just lead you down a new personal or professional path!
 8. People who began volunteering when they were young are twice as likely to volunteer as independent adults.
 9. Sixty percent of hiring managers see the act of volunteerism as a valuable asset when making recruitment decisions according to a [study performed by Career Builder](#).
 10. Many folks choose to volunteer because a trusted friend or someone close to them suggested the idea. Invite a friend to volunteer with you!
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What questions should you ask yourself before you volunteer?

1. What issues do I most care about?
2. What do I want to learn about my local community?
3. What are my areas of expertise?
4. What kind of work am I currently qualified to do?
5. What is ethical/legal for me to do?
6. Given my qualifications, in what issue areas might I make the most difference?
7. What might I make a habit?
8. Where might I want to be a follower?
9. Where might I want to be a leader?
10. With whom in the community might I partner?

Your CLS adviser can help you explore the questions above and more!

How do you learn more about our local context?

The community Social Justice Tour, sponsored by the Center for Careers, Life, and Service, offers an opportunity to gain an awareness of the unique social justice issues facing the larger Grinnell area. In addition to introducing participants to the local community, the tour presents collaborative opportunities for service and the unique innovation that occurs in the ecosystems of small towns. Focused on some of Grinnell's core community players, this tour ventures the conventional to encourage participants to grapple with challenging ethical concepts and begin to identify distinctive volunteer opportunities in the fabric of the community as a whole. To request tours and accompanying workshops please contact a member of the Service and Social Innovation team at the CLS.

How do you get to your volunteer site?

The CLS offers [funding and logistical support](#) for carpool transportation to and from your service site. Transportation is not guaranteed and must be requested at least five business days prior to the day transportation is needed. In order to qualify for transportation support students must:

- Have met at least once during the academic year with a CLS exploratory or community adviser;
 - Be traveling in a group of 2 or more;
 - Be in good conduct standing;
 - Be traveling more than 20 minutes walking distance from campus.
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How might you fund your volunteer project?

Both the Center for Careers, Life, and Service and the Student Government Association offer funding for service projects. Your CLS adviser can help you navigate the [CLS service funding](#) application process.

What kinds of volunteer opportunities have been most interesting to past Grinnellians?

1. Volunteering with Mid Iowa Community Action's food pantry
2. Volunteering with animals at PALS, our local animal shelter
3. Adopting a grandparent at the Mayflower Community
4. Creating enrichment activities for animals at Blank Park Zoo
5. Volunteering at Iowa River Hospice in Marshalltown
6. Being a homework helper in the local schools
7. Being a "Big" with Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Central Iowa
8. Cooking dinner for Community Meal
9. Testing waterways with IOWATER
10. Creating art after school with middle school students

What is important to you? Create a personal guide!

Answer the following questions on the left and then, on a scale from 1 (not at all important) to 5 (very important), rate the following factors and make notes in the box that matches your rating.

	(1) Not important at all	(2) Not that important	(3) Neutral	(4) Somewhat important	(5) Very important
Commitment to a cause What issues do you care about—education access; environmental justice; animal rights; immigration, diversity, equity & inclusion?					
Time Commitment How often can you realistically volunteer—twice a week, once a week, once a month, every once-in-a-while?					
Service Environment What kind of environment do you work best in—collaborative, independent, competitive, passionate, laid back, indoors, outdoors, etc.					
Using your skills What skills do you want to share—writing social media content, persuasive writing, volunteer recruitment, cooking, growing things, mentoring, tutoring, etc.?					
Skill Development What might you want to learn—grant writing, issue advocacy/lobbying, program management, etc.?					
Community as Expert What do you want to learn about the local community—its history, its challenges, its innovative initiatives, etc.?					

Based on what you learned from the table above and using CLS resources, you are now better able to identify organizations that best fit your criteria.

Coming Soon—*What are my volunteer options in and around Grinnell?*

In the very near future the CLS will be partnering with the Greater Poweshiek County Foundation on a volunteer database that will list various local volunteer opportunities. In the meantime, check out some of our community partners on the CLS's Service & Social Innovation page. If you would like more information about any of the listed partners or if you'd like to explore a new partnership, please contact the Service & Social Innovation team.

Service & Social Innovation @ Grinnell: Where do you Start?

- Values
- Interests
- Skills
- Knowledge Base
- Experience
- Capacity
- Next Steps



- What might you want to make a civic habit?
- Where might you want to be a civic “worker bee” or follower?
- How might you want to be a civic leader?

- A Mindset?
- A Volunteer Opportunity?
- A Cause?
- A Project?
- An Organization?
- To Solving a Problem?
- To Learning More?

Sample Opportunities

Volunteering (w/over 80 local partners)

Alternative Break Service Trips

Service Learning Work-Study

Activism & Issue Advocacy

SSI Conferences & Workshops

Social Innovation Research

Community Based Learning Classes & MAPS

Service Learning & Study Abroad

Grinnell Innovator in Social Justice Prize

AND MORE!!!