

# GIFT – President Volunteer Service Award Information Sheet

## ***What is the President's Volunteer Service Award?***

The President's Volunteer Service Award is a highly coveted award that recognizes the contributions of volunteers who have demonstrated outstanding volunteer service and civic participation over the course of a 12-month period.

## ***What are the service award levels?***

The table below shows the award level earned by service hour totals.

Age Group	Bronze	Silver	Gold
Teens (11–15)	50–74 hours	75–99 hours	100+ hours
Young Adults (16–25)	100–174 hours	175–249 hours	250+ hours
Adults (26+)	100–249 hours	250–499 hours	500+ hours

## ***How do I apply for a service award?***

To earn an award, submit an application package that includes one Summary Page plus a Verification Form for each service activity. Start using the forms now to collect signatures for completed work. Be sure to keep a time log of your service hours to allow the verifying supervisor to sign off on your hours.

All hours must be verified and signed by an authorized representative of the organization. **The student's parent(s) may not verify their own child's hours.**

## ***When do I apply for a service award?***

Submit applications including 'Summary Page' with attached Verification Form(s) to GIFT officer by 30<sup>th</sup> May of the calendar year

## ***What if I had a birthday which increased my volunteer hourly category?***

Age category is determined by the age a volunteer is for at least 7 months out of a designated 12-month award period. <https://polcommunities.force.com/PVSAFAQ/s/?tabset-e605f=2>

## ***Volunteers will receive?***

- Personalized certificate recognizing their highest level of achievement (Gold, Silver, or Bronze);
- Letter signed by the President of The United States of America; and
- Choice of Pin, Coin or Medallion <https://www.presidentialserviceawards.gov/award-packages>

## ***What hours count and what hours do not count for the awards?***

- Service hours must be unpaid and must not earn school credit.
- Service hours must not include court-ordered community service.
- Service hours related to political lobbying or political campaign work do not count.
- Service hours for religious instruction or worship do not count.
- Service hours must be for an organization that is U.S./Puerto Rico-based. Service outside the U.S. can qualify if the service is for a U.S./Puerto Rico-based organization.
- The President's Volunteer Service Award is awarded only to U.S. citizens and legal residents

### ***Are there guidelines around what service activities qualify?***

Below is some guidance on whether an activity qualifies for volunteer service hours (as opposed to an extra-curricular activity for the student's benefit):

- Volunteer hours count as long as they are **active volunteer** hours. Hours for simply attending meetings for team building, skill learning or status updates do NOT count
- You will NOT receive credit for hours worked by others supporting your project
- Athletic program time is considered extra-curricular and does NOT count
- While singing in the choir, practicing an instrument, participating in sports or dancing are all worthwhile activities, their primary focus is skill development rather than being altruistic in nature. Performance at a community event if there is no school credit and no payment may count. Performing at church or school musical or assembly does NOT count
- Internships, apprenticeships, orientations, and trainings do NOT count as volunteer hours since their primary purpose is to provide experience for the participant, not to benefit others.
- Time spent sleeping, eating, praying, socializing while on a Mission/Volunteer trip does NOT qualify
- Extended Travel time (Ex Flight time for international travel to build homes) does NOT count however reasonable Commute time to get to/do your service activity counts. For Travel/Commute time use judgment

If you are unsure that your activity qualifies, confirm with Hope Avenue Directors or GIFT Officers in advance. Please see the "PVSA What Counts" chart below for examples of the types of activities that qualify or do not qualify.

### ***Examples of "WHAT COUNTS" towards the PVSA***

<b>COUNTS</b>	<b>DOES NOT COUNT</b>
Volunteering to play an instrument/sing at nursing home. Time spent at nursing home with residents performing, and visiting	Practice time to prepare to volunteer and perform at the nursing home
Volunteering as a peer mentor when no payment or grades/extra credit given	Helping a friend or classmate with homework or to study for a test Working as Teachers Assistant for a Class Credit
Participating in 5K as long as it is for <i>fundraising event</i> either as a runner/walker OR as a volunteer to help out at the event.	Participating in a 5K that is not a fundraiser (for example "The Color Run").
Time spent raising money for a cause (lemonade stand, etc.)	Donating money to a cause.
Service hours spent on helping community (Habitat for Humanity, Operation Sandwich) or individual through <b>Youth Groups</b>	
Service hours spent on helping community (Soup Kitchen/vegetable garden/Faith based summer camp in the church) or individual (tutoring children in church community) through <b>Religious Organization</b>	Proselytize (to try to persuade people to join a religion, cause, or group). Participation in religious rituals (for example: serving as an altar server, preparing or giving sermons, assisting clergy with religious rituals or services, lighting candles in synagogue, singing/dancing/performing during a religious service)
Service hours spent on helping community (fundraising/donation drive for warm coats) or individual (mentoring/tutoring student) through an <b>After-School clubs</b> (Ex NHS, Science Club, Leadership Club)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Time spent in leadership club, student council/govt body at School</li><li>• General meeting time not specific to Service project/hours</li></ul>

Babysitting in a faith-based nursery, daycare, women or men's shelter, or <b>City Community center</b>	Babysitting for friends or family, or for any compensation. Participating in a training program, learning to be a camp counselor or youth leader (CIT, LIT)
Volunteering with language club	Hosting a foreign exchange student
Preparing and delivering food or other necessities to others in need with a <b>Community Based Organization</b> (Eg SEWA, GIFT)	Helping a friend, family member, or neighbor in crisis does not qualify as "volunteer work" in the community.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth Achievement (ex. tutoring, mentoring)</li> <li>Parks and Open Spaces (ex. parks and recreation)</li> <li>Healthy Communities (ex. performing volunteer work at a hospital, nursing home, Sunday/Bible school)</li> <li>Public Safety (ex. fire/rescue official business)</li> <li>Emergency Response (ex. Red Cross, crisis hotline)</li> <li>Homelessness/Hunger (ex. homeless shelter, soup kitchen)</li> <li>Mission trips</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School spirit-related activities (hall decorating, float decorating, helping with homecoming events, etc.)</li> <li>Providing a direct benefit to a for-profit entity</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performing at a charity event, or for a disadvantaged group (disabled, senior citizens home)</li> <li>Performing/marching at a Veteran's Parade, July 4th parade, Memorial Day etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performing at School parades (such as Homecoming)</li> <li>Performances where admission is charged</li> <li>Performances required as part of a class</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All time spent volunteering with the PTSA counts, as PTSA fundraising benefits ALL students and teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Team-building activities</li> <li>Helping family members</li> <li>Fundraising for any group where the student is a member (Baseball player fundraising for the baseball team)</li> <li>Fundraising to cover student's costs for a School trip</li> <li>Fundraising for scouting activities (GS Cookie Sales, Boy Scout Popcorn Sales)</li> <li>Any activity where the student is paid</li> <li>Any activity required for a grade in class</li> </ul>
<p>In the Community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helping at voter registration or a polling place</li> <li>Volunteering to help set up, organize, hand out pamphlets, hand out water, etc. for non-profit organization</li> <li>Volunteering at any non-profit charitable organizations or event (Ex Habitat for Humanity, Salvation Army, Red Cross, Goodwill Industries, Special Olympics, JDRF Walk, Relay for Life, Breast Cancer Awareness, Stop Hunger Now, etc.)</li> <li>Assisting a disadvantaged person with a chore (cleaning out their garage, gardening, repairing their home, etc.)</li> <li>Volunteering at a non-profit hospital or at a non-profit animal shelter</li> <li>Volunteering at either the school library or town library</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helping a candidate campaign</li> <li>Volunteering at a profit-based business (includes internships and job shadowing)</li> <li>Helping a family member or any able-bodied person with a chore</li> <li>Working at a doctor or veterinarian's office</li> </ul>

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Service projects/Award as part of Boy Scouts (Eagle Award) and Girl Scouts (Bronze/Silver/Gold Award)</li></ul> |  |
|---|--|

Please note ultimately it is up to Hope Avenue Directors and GIFT officers to determine which activities qualify for the PVSA. Hope Avenue is the certifying organization and will determine which types of activities may count towards this award. Volunteering is generally considered an altruistic activity, intended to promote good or improve human quality of life.