

Why Volunteer?

- **Volunteer to Make a Difference** - Explore and live your passions. Get to know your community and offer your support.
- **Volunteer to Grow as a Professional** - Show up at your first job interview ready to explain how you've been volunteering locally with an afterschool program in addition to studying policies that impact youth. Build skills in collaboration and working across differences. Gain skill in writing, analysis, data entry, and more.
- **Build Your Network** - Connect with other professionals and learn from them. Gain a possible reference by excelling in your role.
- **Volunteer to Clarify Your Goals** - Use this opportunity to learn about yourself, what you like and don't like and where your strengths lie. It may help you figure out what area of policy or the nonprofit world you want to explore first.

Selecting a Volunteer Site

Find a place to volunteer that genuinely aligns with your passions. You will grow much more from the experience as you will be self-motivated to engage more deeply and to bring your enthusiasm with you to your service experience. Think about ways you might contribute. Could you help with social media? Data entry? Advocacy work?

Some of the organizations even offer internships or work-study opportunities that are paid. Keep in mind that many locations do background checks, so the time between your inquiry and first day on site may take some time.

Opportunities to Volunteer Locally

* Those opportunities listed below with an asterisk should be within walking distance or less than a 20 minute PVTA bus ride from campus.

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Advocacy

*[UMass Amherst MASSPIRG](#): Promote awareness of critical issues from clean energy to voter registration to protecting the bees.

*[UMass Amherst Sophomores-Serve](#): Open to members of the Commonwealth Honors College. Work individually or in small groups to explore connections between service, research, and public policy. The service sites and service projects provide experiences that have a connection to the food environment, such as housing, transportation, food marketing or farming practices. Current service sites include Amherst Survival Center, Amherst Senior Center, and Not Bread Alone.

Education

*[A Better Chance Amherst](#): Assist with this national residential high school program that prepares academically talented and highly motivated, diverse students from educationally underserved school districts to find success at Amherst Regional High School and in their college pursuits.

*[America Reads/America Counts](#): Tutor children in reading or math.

*[Amherst Public Schools](#): The closest school district to campus has volunteers to help with tutoring and more. Be sure to share what your skill sets are to see what opportunities might best suit your interests and their needs.

*[The Literacy Project](#): The Literacy Project relies on approximately 100 community volunteers each year to take part in all aspects of our program, from tutoring students to maintaining our computers to raising much-needed funds.

Individuals with Special Needs

*[Boltwood Project](#): The Boltwood Project is a student-run civic engagement and leadership program designed to provide enrichment, recreation, and socialization for adults and children who are intellectually or physically challenged.

*[Special Olympics Club](#): Provides year-round sports training and athletic competition for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Goals include developing physical fitness, expressing courage, and experiencing joy.

[Stavros](#): Helps people with disabilities and/or who are deaf to develop the tools and skills they need to take charge of their own lives. Volunteers can help people to access the outdoors or work as advocates, explaining how to fill out the necessary paperwork to live independently. *Not currently accepting volunteers due to the pandemic.*

[Whole Children](#): This organization in Northampton helps to provide recreational, social, and enrichment programs for children and teens of all abilities, specially designed for those with special needs.

Seniors

*[Amherst Senior Center](#): While there is not much information online about the Center, it is a very active place for seniors that offers a breadth of low to no-cost activities. Call 413-259-3060 or visit at 70 Boltwood Walk to learn more.

[Highland Valley Elder Services](#): Volunteers can assist in a breadth of activities: providing educational trainings for disease management, delivering meals, serving as advocates for seniors, helping to manage money, and more.

Youth

*[Amherst Boys and Girls Club](#): Mentor youth and serve as a positive presence for them in a variety of capacities—everything from art to athletics to education.

*[Amherst Hockey Association](#): This non-profit hockey league relies on volunteers for coaching teams of all levels, including teaching children how to skate. Contact the Board for opportunities to volunteer.

*[Amherst Recreation](#): The town of Amherst runs a number of programs for people of all ages—day camps, swim lessons, academic support, sports, arts, and more. Reach out to see if they need volunteers in an area in which you are skilled. The eBrochure also will often list volunteer opportunities.

[Amherst Youth Soccer Association](#): This non-profit soccer league relies on volunteers for coaching teams of all levels.

[Berkshire Children & Families](#): This expansive organization strives to improve early education and care as well as child and family well-being. It also offers intensive foster care and adoption services and an intensive classical music program for social change.

*[Big Brothers Big Sisters](#): Serve as a mentor to a local youth. You can do this by joining Big Brothers Big Sisters directly or going through the UMass chapter, which offers guidance and support to volunteers.

*[Capacidad After-School Program](#): A nearby after school program that serves elementary-aged children.

[Head Start & Early Learning Programs](#): This organization works with infants through pre-school-aged children from low-income families to be sure they have access to high quality care from the earliest stages of life.

[Homework House in Holyoke](#): This organization provides free, individualized tutoring and mentoring for children at-risk.

[Reader to Reader, Springboard Program](#): Five College students are able to develop and implement their own international or domestic literacy project with guidance from this non-profit.

*[Student Bridges](#): This organization works to increase college access and success for underrepresented students by partnering UMass with local schools.

Financial Disadvantage

*[Amherst Community Connections](#): This non-profit works to find housing for those in need and accepts interns to work directly with their participants for case work. Interns can also learn about web design, social media, fundraising, grant writing, and more.

*[Amherst Survival Center](#): Volunteers help those in families in need to select food, produce, and personal care items in addition to stocking pantry shelves, sorting donating clothing, picking up donations for retail shops, and more. Northampton also runs a [Survival Center](#).

*[Craig's Doors](#): Volunteers are needed to assist at the shelter and the community breakfast. They also accept volunteers who can help them with everything from marketing to case management operations.

[Family Outreach of Amherst](#): This organization is a safety net for low-income families in Amherst, addressing mental health, domestic violence, housing and life skills. Volunteers assist in planning events, participating in client services, and more.

[Horizon's for Homeless Children](#): Playspace Activity Leaders lead activities for children residing in homeless shelters, giving them an opportunity to engage while their parents take classes and pursue permanent housing solutions.

*[Not Bread Alone](#): This organization welcomes everyone to help prepare and enjoy fresh, nutritious, and family-style meals that are free to those in need.

[The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts](#): Volunteers assist with organizing and sorting food for distribution.

Immigrant Populations

*[Center for New Americans](#): Volunteers can assist in the classroom, as ESOL tutors, citizenship tutors, immigration legal services (training required), or drivers. They can also offer professional mentoring or childcare.

*[Jones Library ESL & Citizenship Program](#): This award-winning program offers volunteer tutors, English and citizenship classes, and other services to adult immigrants in the Amherst area.

Legal Support

If you are eligible for Federal Work Study, talk to the Financial Aid Office to see if you can use your federal work study funding to be paid for your volunteer work.

*[Center for New Americans](#): Volunteers can assist in the classroom, as ESOL tutors, citizenship tutors, immigration legal services (training required), or drivers. They can also offer professional mentoring or childcare.

[Court Appointed Special Advocates](#): The Franklin/Hampshire CASA Program provides a voice for the best interests of children involved in abuse, neglect and other challenging cases. Friends of Children is a member in good standing with the [National CASA Association](#) and the [Massachusetts CASA Association](#). CASA volunteers meet children where they are, identify their specific needs, and ensure their ongoing well-being with the goal of permanency in a safe, stable home. Our volunteers, through their advocacy, provide a consistent presence in each child's life. CASAs truly do change the course of the lives of vulnerable children. CASA volunteers must be 21 years of age or older, have transportation, and pass a background check. Our CASA volunteers are provided with an extensive training and orientation program. Following training, they are appointed by a judge to step in to advocate within the courtroom and the community. Volunteers also receive regular supervision and opportunities for future inservice trainings.

[Community Legal Aid](#): Community Legal Aid and Affiliate accepts law student and undergraduate interns during the academic year (fall and spring semester), but primarily accepts interns for our summer internship program. Academic year interns are expected to work a minimum of 10 hours per week, to be arranged according to their class schedule. Community Legal Aid and Affiliate also encourages students participating in a co-op program to consider working with us for a semester or school year. Summer interns work full-time (35 hours a week) for 10 weeks and also participate in weekly learning sessions that introduce the different types of legal aid work at the organization. Main offices are located in Fitchburg, Northampton, Pittsfield, Springfield, Worcester, and Greenfield, MA.

[De Novo](#): De Novo offers volunteer opportunities for lawyers, interpreters, paralegals, intake workers, law students and non-legal professionals interested in supporting the Legal Program. Non-attorneys provide interpretation, support screening and intake, conduct research, and provide office support. Their involvement frees attorneys to devote their legal expertise to clients.

[Greater Boston Legal Services](#): Greater Boston Legal Services (GBLS) is offering a variety of legal internships for the Summer term. Please note: Due to budgetary constraints, all positions described below are unfunded unless otherwise specified. We are seeking interns who can secure external funding or plan to work on a for-credit basis. Many former interns have successfully obtained funding through work-study programs and public interest fellowships.

[Northeast Legal Aid](#): Northeast Legal Aid recruits student interns for spring, summer, fall, and winter internships. Our interviews typically take place via Zoom. We welcome students from all schools with an interest in interning in our service area to apply. We have offices in Lynn, Lawrence, and Lowell.

[South Coastal Legal Services](#): South Coastal Counties Legal Services, Inc. (SCCLS) and its subsidiary the Justice Center of Southeast Massachusetts (JCSM), are non-profit legal services programs providing free civil legal assistance to eligible low-income and elder residents with various legal issues throughout the region. Our core mission is to achieve justice for our clients through community-based advocacy through the delivery of high quality, time sensitive assistance to at-risk people. Both agencies accept applications for interns (including, but not limited to, law and undergraduate students) on a rolling basis across their field offices which are based in the cities of Brockton, Fall River, New Bedford, and Hyannis. The sort of work, and depth of the experience, will depend on the candidate's availability and experience. We do consider work study applications and review them based on the same process and for the same sorts of work. SCCLS also hires college graduates as AmeriCorps volunteers.

*[UMass Amherst Student Legal Services](#): Legal assistants play a vital role at the Student Legal Services Office. Our undergraduate legal assistants are selected from applicants each fall and spring semester. They work up to 34.5 hours per week and receive 12 academic credits for their work. In addition, they will earn one extra academic credit for partaking in Positivity and Relaxing Training (PART) course scheduled during the internship hours as part of the SLSO internship curriculum.

[Volunteer Lawyers Project](#): This nonprofit based in Boston has a need for [bilingual volunteers](#). Their interpreter panel supports their limited English proficient clients by assisting on full-representation cases, translating documents, lending a helping hand at our clinics, and more! Undergraduates may also apply to volunteer to support staff and volunteer attorneys at clinics – often in courthouses – as well perform intake and observe proceedings. [Learn more](#); be sure to scroll toward the bottom of the page and read “Other Ways to Get Involved”.

[Legal Services Center of Harvard Law School](#) - Every year, the Legal Services Center of Harvard Law School accepts applications from law school and undergraduate candidates to serve as interns during the summer. Located at the crossroads of Jamaica Plain and Roxbury, LSC welcomes college students and recent college graduates to apply for summer internship positions. Interns are unpaid, but are welcome to seek funding from their schools or other sources. These positions entail assisting clinical professors and instructors, legal fellows, and law student interns in representing and advising low-income clients in one or several substantive areas of public interest law practice. Tasks typically include assisting with or conducting: client intakes, legal research, court records searches and filings, client correspondence, case memoranda, and record keeping. Undergraduate interns are invited to attend all of the LSC summer internship programming and events. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until all positions are filled.

Women and Girls

*[Center for Women & Community](#): The Center provides community education, general counseling, rape crisis services, and more to the Five Colleges and Hampshire County, relying heavily on interns and volunteers to do so.

*[Girls on the Run](#): Girls on the Run has fun, evidence-based programs that inspire all girls to build their confidence, kindness and decision making skills. Dynamic lessons instill valuable life skills including the important connection between physical and emotional health.

[Girls Inc. of Holyoke](#): Girls Inc. empowers, educates, and guides girls forward, helping them to navigate the challenges in their lives on the way to becoming strong, smart, self-reliant women.

[Girl Scouts of Central and Western Massachusetts](#): Volunteers can be assistant troop leaders or serve as mentors to young girls.

***Eureka!:** This is a five year journey for teenage girls, preparing them to participate and excel in cutting-edge, dynamic STEM careers. The program relies on volunteers to lead intensive STEM programs at UMass during the summer.

[Women of Color Health Equity Collective:](#) This organization, which is based in Springfield, MA, uses volunteers and interns to research and advocate for health equity initiatives.

Health

[Baystate Health:](#) The largest hospital in the area, Baystate has a number of facilities and locations ranging from Springfield to Greenfield, each of which has its own need for volunteers.

- Baystate Medical Center & Children's Hospital
- Baystate Mary Lane Outpatient Center
- Baystate Franklin Medical Center
- Baystate Hospice
- Baystate Noble Hospital
- Baystate Wing Hospital

[Cooley Dickinson:](#) This hospital in Northampton accepts volunteers for hospice, the cancer center, and more. Volunteers primarily focus on making patients comfortable and transporting them around the hospital.

***[Hospice of the Fisher Home:](#)** After extensive training, volunteers help to put patients and their families at ease during a time that is full of questions.

[Compassus:](#) Volunteers are trained before being matched with patients in the area who receive hospice care. They support patients and their families by listening and providing comfort.

Arts or History

***[Amherst Historical Society:](#)** This non-profit seeks volunteers of all ages interested in history and offers training with flexible hours.

***[Emily Dickinson Museum:](#)** Volunteers can assist with community programming that promotes poetry and the works of Emily Dickinson.

***[Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art:](#)** Volunteers assist in the museum, often working directly with the public in the Art Studio or the Reading Library.

[Starlight's Youth Theatre:](#) This theatre based in Sunderland runs programming for youth in the community to develop their creativity through drama. Reach out to see if they need any volunteers.

[Yiddish Book Center:](#) Volunteer docents help to support the Field Trip Program staff, assisting in leading student groups on visits of the Center and facilitating interactive activities and tours. Docents also greet and orient visitors.

Nature and the Environment

***[4-H Youth Development UMass Extension:](#)** Work with and mentor young people ages 5 to 18 to develop life skills outside of formal education settings.

[Hitchcock Center:](#) Volunteers can teach the public and special groups about the sustainability of the buildings on site, greet visitors, share the live animals, and answer phones.

Additional Resources

[Five Colleges Volunteer Website:](#) Another list of local non-profits that seek volunteers.

[GuideStar](#): A database of registered non-profits throughout the country.

[Idealist](#): This website is a primary place where jobs and internships in the non-profit arena are posted.

[UMass Civic Engagement and Service-Learning](#): Provides formal opportunities for UMass students to engage in their communities.

[UMass Student Activities and Involvement](#): Since many RSOs on campus do volunteer work, this office can share how you might get involved in service by joining a campus club.

[VolunteerMatch](#): This website is a place for non-profits throughout the country to post for volunteers.