

## 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, 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.

## 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.