

# COMMUNITY SERVICE

## When can I do community service?

If you cannot pay your fine, you can request community service instead of paying. A judge will decide whether or not to approve your community service request. You must do your community service in the community where you live. Here are the steps:

1. File a motion with the judge to request community service.
2. Once the judge approves your community service plan, your license suspension will be lifted.
3. Once you complete the community service, your fine will be dismissed.

It is important to remember that some of these procedures can vary from court to court so it is generally a good idea to ask a clerk at the court if you have questions.

## How do I do community service?

### What paperwork is required?

You will file a motion or request for community service with the same court that issued your suspension. [Here](#) is a sample template. If you are asked to pay a filing fee and you can't afford to pay, you can fill out a form to show that you are unable to pay. [Here](#) is the form (CV-410A Petition for Waiver of Fees and Costs - Affidavit of Indigency). You will need to find your own community service project and the judge must approve the project. The judge will generally give you a form to have the supervisor sign to show the hours that you completed.

### Where can I do my community service?

You can volunteer at any public agency or a nonprofit charitable organization, but they must agree to let you volunteer and your site must be approved by the judge. If you are unsure if an organization qualifies, you can always ask at the clerk of courts office or ask the organization. Most charitable non-profits or government agencies can supervise your volunteering.

**How do you choose which one will be right for you?** You may want to begin with organizations you know. Or, ask a friend or family member that volunteers often. Are you a member of a church or faith community? Is there a need for extra hands at your child's elementary school? These are good places to start.

The cities and counties sometimes list such opportunities. For example, the city of [Madison has volunteer needs listed here](#). An online search yields tons of services designed to match people to volunteer opportunities as well. [Sites like this one](#) exist to do just that.

### **How much community service will I have to do?**

The maximum number of hours a judge can order you to complete is equal to the amount of your fine divided by the [minimum wage of Wisconsin](#), which is currently \$7.25 per hour. Note most fines carry considerable “[surcharges](#)” or administrative fees that have nothing to do with the fine for your particular offense and the judge gets to decide whether or not to include this amount in your service requirement. If you divide the amount you owe by 7.25 you will get the highest number of hours you will have to perform.

For example, if you owe \$301.50 (a typical amount for a first OWI in Wisconsin) at a maximum you would need to serve 42 hours of community service because  $\$301.50 / \$7.25 = 41.6$ . Remember that judges have a lot of decision-making power in this context and can order considerably less volunteer time if they so choose.