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Federal Employment Information Fact Sheets

EI-20

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## Volunteer Service

### VOLUNTEER SERVICE OFFERS OPPORTUNITIES

#### A WIN-WIN EXPERIENCE

Have you ever applied for a job and been told that they are looking for people with "experience"? Have you ever wondered what it is really like to work in a particular career field? Have you ever been curious about how the Federal Government works?

If your answer is "yes" to any of these questions, Volunteer Service may be right for you. Below is a general description of Volunteer Service and the Student Volunteer Service.

#### **VOLUNTEER SERVICE (including Student Volunteer Service):**

Generally speaking, Federal agencies are prohibited by law (section 1342 of title 31, United States Code) from accepting volunteer service. No person may provide unpaid service to the Government or provide service with the understanding that he or she will waive pay. Exceptions to this prohibition are provided only for:

- (1) employment in emergencies involving the protection of life or property;
- (2) employment of assistants to handicapped employees;
- (3) employment of experts and consultants; and
- (4) employment of students to further their educational goals (see below).

In addition, some Federal agencies, such as the National Park Service and the Forest Service, have specific authorities to accept unpaid services for specific jobs or functions. Individuals who are interested in volunteering their services to the Federal Government should contact the agency of most interest to inquire about specific opportunities.

#### **STUDENT VOLUNTEER SERVICE:**

Federal agencies and departments offer unpaid training opportunities to students in high school and college. These opportunities provide work experience related to your academic program. The program allows you to explore career options as well as develop your personal and professional skills. As a student volunteer, you will be exposed to the Federal work environment and will learn about the missions and responsibilities of various Federal agencies and departments.

#### **WHY WOULD YOU WANT TO BE IN THE STUDENT VOLUNTEER SERVICE PROGRAM?**

Student Volunteer Service can enrich your future. Some of the benefits include:

- Career exploration early in your academic studies.
- Exposure to new and emerging occupations and professions.
- Academic credit for the work you perform. (This is determined by your academic institution.)
- Work experience which will enhance your ability to obtain paying jobs in the future.



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### ARE YOU ELIGIBLE?

You are eligible to participate as a Student Volunteer if you are enrolled, at least half-time, in:

- an accredited high school or trade school;
- a technical or vocational school;
- a junior or community college;
- a four-year college or university; or
- any other accredited educational institution.

### WHAT TYPES OF POSITIONS ARE AVAILABLE FOR STUDENT VOLUNTEERS?

Student volunteers are involved in professional projects and work activities related to their academic studies. These activities run the gamut from developing computer skills to policy or research oriented projects involving such diverse topics as wildlife initiatives, environmental concerns, and congressional issues. Depending upon the employing Federal agency or department and the student's academic pursuits, student volunteer assignments will differ, but all promise to be stimulating and rewarding.

We recommend that student volunteers develop a work agreement in collaboration with their school and host Federal agency. The agreement should outline the responsibilities of each partner. It may also identify the type(s) of assignment(s) and the conditions under which you will work.

### FOR HOW LONG AND WHEN WOULD YOU WORK?

Most student volunteers will work for a Federal agency or department for three to four months. Your work may be performed during the school year and/or during summer or school vacation periods. The nature of your volunteer assignment as well as your weekly work schedule should be part of your work agreement.

### HOW DO YOU BECOME A STUDENT VOLUNTEER?

If you are interested in becoming a student volunteer with the Federal Government:

- Contact the Personnel Office at the Federal agency or department for which you wish to work. The Departments of Defense (Army, Air Force and Navy), Commerce, Health and Human Services, Interior, Justice, State, Treasury, and Veterans Affairs have utilized the largest number of student volunteers. Telephone numbers for Federal agencies can be found in your telephone directory under "U.S. Government."
- Visit your school's guidance office, career counseling, placement, or internship office for further information.

### Thank you for your interest in the Federal Government.

Hiring and advancement in the Federal Government are based upon qualifications and performance regardless of your race, color, creed, religion, sex, age, national origin, or disability.



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