

How to Get Started

1. Assess your interests and time by asking yourself the following questions?

- What things do I do well?
- What are some things I enjoy doing?
- What would I like to learn to do better?
- What is an activity I've never done, but have always wanted to do?
- Where do I like to be? • indoors • outdoors • close to home • far away
- Do I prefer to be: with people? • on my own
- What kind of people do I like to be with? old • young • like me • different from me
- Am I more comfortable with? • groups • individuals
- How will I get to a volunteer job? car • bike • bus • get a ride •
- When am I available to volunteer? • after school • evenings • weekends
- Do I want an ongoing (once a week) or a one-time volunteer assignment?
- What do I want to gain from volunteering?

2. Taking your interests into account, research the various opportunities available in your community.

- For example: Call One OC, a resource for volunteer opportunities, and ask for the youth coordinator, Ursela Walsh at **(714) 953-5757 Ext 215**. www.oneoc.org.
- See the last four pages of this packet for organizations that offer volunteer opportunities
- Ask your school counselor or community service coordinator for ideas
- See what volunteer activities friends and family are involved in
- Refer to the "Volunteers Needed" section of your local newspaper
- Contact your religious institution, youth club or school service groups for suggestions

3. Make a call to the organization (agency) you are interested in.

Ask for the volunteer coordinator or the contact person. Express your interest in volunteering and ask for more information on the position. Some agencies will have written material they can send or an application to be completed.



4. **Set up an appointment to visit the agency.**

Meet the contact person at the agency. Visit the agency to get a feel for the place and people there. It is important that you keep an appointment and arrive on time. If you are going to be late or cannot make the appointment, contact the agency - they will appreciate your sense of responsibility.

Find out all you can about what you will do as a volunteer there. Here are some questions to ask (it will be helpful to bring a list).

- What does your agency do?
- What kinds of services do you provide and how do you provide them?
- What sorts of things do you want volunteers to do?
- What kinds of work will I be doing?
- Are there job descriptions for the available positions?
- What type of initial and ongoing training is provided?
- When (which days, hours) do you need volunteers?
- Do you require volunteers to commit for a certain length of time (one time, 3 months, year, or more)?



5. **Make your decision.**

If, after your meeting, you are unsure about volunteering there, tell them you would like to think about it and get back to them. Be sure to let them know either way as soon as you have made your decision. If you know that you don't want to work at the agency, it's okay to be honest and say so. ("Thank you very much for talking with me, but this isn't quite the kind of work I had in mind.") Don't be discouraged, not every volunteer job is right for every person. It is important to give yourself time to explore a variety of opportunities within different agencies. While one particular job may not be ideal for you, dozens of other volunteer assignments may better meet your needs and expectations.



Contacting an Agency

A Sample Conversation!

"Hello, my name is _____
Is _____ (contact person) available?"

If yes:

"Hi, my name is _____

I was referred by the *One OC Youth Opportunity Directory*. I am interested in learning about volunteer positions at your agency. May I arrange an appointment to talk with you about volunteering?"

If you arrange an appointment:

"Thanks, I'll see you on _____ at _____ at _____.
date time place

Goodbye."

If the contact person is not available, ask the person who answered the phone if you can leave a message.

"Im _____ and I'm interested in volunteer opportunities at your agency. I can be reached at _____ after (3:00) pm. Thank you."

***It's not so hard!
Give it a try!!***