

Professional Communication and Service in a Non-Profit Organization

This experiential project has several objectives. Some instructors will use it as a service component for the course, giving you the opportunity to serve your community while also gaining valuable experience in business communication. Through this project, you will gain hands-on experience in serving a local, nonprofit organization of your choice (some instructors might assign the nonprofit). In the process, you will also be practicing important skills such as interpersonal business communication, developing your networking skills and business etiquette, delivering a brief status report, and learning how to write a letter of introduction and request. This project consists of three parts:

- Letter of introduction and request
- Volunteer work and record of fulfillment
- Oral status report
- Thank you card or email message

Letter of Introduction and Request

Select a nonprofit organization where you would like to volunteer for some event or activity during the semester. Research the organization and find out the name and contact information of the person(s) who recruits volunteers. Write a letter of introduction and request to this person: introduce yourself and ask for the opportunity to volunteer. Keep in mind that you have to perform this volunteer service before the semester is over. *You must provide a minimum of eight hours of volunteer work to your selected organization (get pre-approval from the instructor regarding the type of service you will do).* You may do the volunteer work all in one day or divide the service into various days throughout the semester.

Use the formal letter format and include the following:

Introduction: State who you are and why you are writing: (“my name is ____ and I am doing a service project for my business communication course at XYZ University. For this project, I must volunteer at a nonprofit organization in some capacity during this semester, which ends on ____”).

Mention why you are passionate about the work of this nonprofit organization and what skills, experience, and interests you possess that would make you a good candidate for volunteer work with this organization.

Request: Ask for the opportunity do some kind of volunteer work for the organization. If you do not have a concrete idea of what you would like to do, ask the person to suggest a volunteer opportunity that might fit your interests.

You may submit your letter to the organization via email or via their website, using the comment/contact link. However, the letter you submit to the instructor for a grade must be in formal letter format and complete with all features of a personal letterhead.

Volunteer Work and Record of Fulfillment

After selecting an appropriate volunteer activity, provide service to that organization as a volunteer throughout the semester. Remember that *you must provide a minimum of eight hours of volunteer work to your selected organization and get pre-approval from the instructor regarding the type of service you will do.* You may do the volunteer work all in one day or throughout various days during the semester. Before

your volunteer work ends, cut out and fill in the Record of Fulfillment form (below) and have it signed by the nonprofit representative who oversaw your work. You will submit this form to the instructor, along with a copy of your “thank you” message (described below). Some universities may also require a release form for experiential learning events off-campus (check with your instructor).

Five-Minute Oral Status Report (optional)

Your instructor may also assign a brief, five-minute oral status report towards the end of the semester so that you can update the class on the status of your volunteer project. This brief report may include answers to the following questions:

1. What nonprofit did you choose for your experiential project?
2. Who does this nonprofit serve? What do they do?
3. Have you already done your volunteer hours? When?
4. What did you learn about service, professional communication, and/or networking as a result of volunteering at this organization?

Thank You Message and Recommendations

After you volunteer, send the organization a thank you card, letter, or email, expressing your gratitude for the volunteer opportunity provided. Be sure to mention what you learned, how you learned it, and what contribution you feel you made. In this message you may also share insights with the nonprofit about the positive aspects of your service experience and the areas where you feel the nonprofit could improve the experience for other volunteers in the future. You may also suggest process improvements or changes you believe would make the nonprofits' operation more effective. Provide these comments constructively and in the form of recommendations that are viable and realistic for the nonprofit to implement. Provide a copy to your instructor, attached to the record form below (some instructors may accept electronic copies of the thank you messages by allowing students to BCC the instructor or forward the sent thank you message to the nonprofit).

**EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROJECT RECORD OF FULFILLMENT FORM
Professional Communication and Service in a Non-Profit Organization**

Name of student/volunteer _____
(Print your name)

Name of nonprofit where you volunteered _____

Name of the person who oversaw your work _____
(Print that person's name)

Dates you did volunteer work _____

Hours of volunteer work completed _____

Type of volunteer work you did _____

Student/volunteer's signature _____

Signature of the person who oversaw your work _____
(this must be the same person listed above as overseeing your work)

Today's date _____