

List your work experience below, starting with your present or most recent position. Include paid or *UNPAID*, full- or part-time, military, summer jobs, etc. If additional space is needed, use the space provided on the back of this form or attach supplementary sheets. Explain your duties and responsibilities in detail.

1. Present Title:

Present Salary

Describe your present duties:

Number and kind of employees supervised:

2. Employer (if different)

Address

Previous Title

Starting Salary

Last Sal

Your Duties

Number and kind of employees supervised:

3. Employer (if different)

Address

Previous Title

Starting Salary

Last Sal

Your Duties

Number and kind of employees supervised:

4. Employer (if different)

Address

Previous Title

Starting Salary

Last Sal

Your Duties

Number and kind of employees supervised:

5. Employer (if different)

Address

Previous Title

Starting Salary

Last Sal

Your Duties

# HOW TO TRANSLATE VOLUNTEER SKILLS INTO EMPLOYMENT CREDENTIALS



This material may not be reproduced in whole or in part without written permission from the Maryland Commission for Women, 1100 N. Eutaw Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21201, 301/383-5608

HOW TO TRANSLATE  
VOLUNTEER SKILLS  
TO  
EMPLOYMENT  
CREDENTIALS

Maryland Commission for Women\*  
A Commission of the Department of Human Resources

MARYLAND COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

Task Force on Volunteerism

Toni Buckson	Barbara Kingston
Rosemary Brozena	Mirian Lennig
Linnea Dittmar	Carolyn Males
Pat Case	Ann McConaughy
Sylvia Eggleston	Babti Ruskin
Carol Finn	Phoebe Tobin
Eleanor Glauser	Kitty Smith
Ellestine Grant	Mona Wood

Elizabeth S. Morrison  
Chairwoman

Organizations Represented

Baltimore City Health Department, R.S.V.P.  
Baltimore New Directions for Women  
Church Women United of Maryland  
CIVICS, Citizens in Volunteerism in City  
Schools  
Federation of Jewish Women's Organizations  
of Maryland  
Harford Council of Community Services  
Junior League of Baltimore, Inc.  
League of Women Voters of Maryland  
Maryland Department of Health and Mental  
Hygiene  
Scotty's Skills Exchange, Inc.  
Social Security Administration  
Urban Services Agency  
Voluntary Action Center of Central Maryland  
Womanscope, Columbia, Maryland

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Maryland Commission for Women acknowledges assistance of the following individuals for their efforts in preparing this publication:

Elizabeth S. Morrison, Chairwoman,  
Task Force on Volunteerism  
Sylvia Eggleston  
Shoshana S. Cardin, Chairwoman,  
Maryland Commission for Women  
E. Dolores Street, Acting Director,  
Maryland Commission for Women  
Vicki T. Wilson, Secretary,  
Maryland Commission for Women  
Cynthia Williams, Secretary,  
Maryland Commission for Women  
Sheila Winett, Executive Director,  
Maryland Commission for Women

*"Volunteers have become the backbone of many important organizations and businesses. It would be unfair not to consider their skills learned through volunteer work as solid job training and experience."*

*Paul S. Sarbanes, United States Senator*

## PREFACE

Options for women in the world of work have grown in the last decade. Women's groups, legislators, and employers have worked to improve pay scales and promotion possibilities, and to increase benefits and opportunities for women in employment. However, in this effort toward equality, the more traditional roles of women have been overlooked. Many women have had vast experience in the volunteer sector, but little in paid employment. When these women re-enter the job market, they often find that their volunteer work does not qualify as work experience.

In 1976, the Maryland Commission for Women formed a Task Force on Volunteerism which took as its first assignment the issue of employment credit for relevant volunteer work. This brochure, the result of the task force's research, provides both a brief overview of how employers in Maryland presently consider volunteer experience, and serves as a guide to both the employer and the volunteer on how to translate volunteer experience into paid employment credentials.

We believe that the recognition of volunteer experience not only benefits volunteers and business, but will also serve to strengthen our valuable and vital volunteer sector and enhance its relationship to the business world.

Shoshana S. Cardin, Chairwoman  
Maryland Commission for Women

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Statement of Purpose.....	2
Findings.....	4
How to Evaluate Volunteer Experience.....	6
How to Make Volunteerism Work.....	
..... For the Employer.....	16
..... For the Volunteer.....	17
Local Maryland Resources.....	18

## Statement of Purpose

In 1969, the Maryland General Assembly passed a law, Article 64A of Section 18, that directed the State Department of Personnel to give credit on job applications for "valuable experience, including volunteer experience gained in civic, service or organizational activities".

The Personnel Management Association, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, and the 1976 National Governors' Conference, also endorsed the inclusion of relevant volunteer experience on employment application forms and consideration of unpaid experience when evaluating potential employees.

In addition, the 95th Congress in Concurrent Resolution II stated, ".....experience in volunteer work should be taken into account by public and private employers in the consideration of applications for employment."

Despite these resolutions and endorsements, many Maryland employers do not value or assess volunteer experience when hiring or promoting employees. In researching current practices in the State of Maryland, the Maryland Commission for Women's Task Force on Volunteerism found: (1) Few employers had policies pertaining to the assessment of volunteer experience; (2) The majority of job application forms in use do not provide for the inclusion of non-salaried skills or positions, and (3) Many employers do not permit consideration of volunteer work when evaluating the experience of job applicants.

Because the primary work experience for many women has been in the volunteer sector, the MCW is concerned about the task force findings. As volunteers, women frequently develop new skills - skills such as fund-raising, marketing, public relations, supervisory and interpersonal skills,



and managerial techniques - all of which can be useful in paid employment but are often overlooked by personnel departments.

The Maryland Commission for Women is firm in its belief that applicants should be encouraged to include relevant volunteer experience in the same manner as salaried work when completing job applications.

*"Our employees have the option of documenting their volunteer involvement as an extracurricular activity or as work experience if related to the job for which the employee is applying. Through our SSA Volunteer Program employees have developed and expanded skills that were transferable to the work setting. We believe the benefits of the Volunteer Program to our employees and to the Agency far exceed the benefits and services we have provided to the community."*

*Don I. Wortman, Former Acting Commissioner  
Social Security Administration*

## FINDINGS

As part of its study, the task force sent 1000 questionnaires to Maryland government agencies. The questionnaire asked if current job application forms used by the business or agency contained space to list pertinent volunteer experience. The returns indicated that only a small percentage of businesses or government agencies provide for documentation of unpaid experience on applications.

In addition, interviews conducted by task force members revealed that most businesses did not understand the value of volunteer experience and were not concerned about evaluating skills in unsalaried roles. Although some company job application forms did allow space to discuss volunteer skills, the companies regarded this type of experience as being of minimal importance.

Some businesses interviewed felt that their application forms had adequately covered volunteer experience when they asked applicants to list community activities or organizational affiliations. The task force believes that these applications do not adequately distinguish between job-related skills and knowledge acquired in non-salaried positions and memberships in clubs or organizations. Membership shows community involvement but may have minimal relationship to the potential job position.

The task force was encouraged, however, to find that over 80% of the businesses returning questionnaires indicated an interest in learning more about the process of evaluating and recognizing volunteer experience on job application forms.

Interviews with business representatives indicated that very few companies considered volunteer experience when making hiring decisions. Some companies regarded volunteer experience as evidence of an individual's maturity and leadership capacity; others focused on a potential employee's skills and didn't care where those skills had been acquired. When company promotion policies were discussed, some companies did indicate that an employee's volunteer activities were a consideration in making such decisions. While some companies did participate in "employee lending" programs to provide assistance to non-profit organizations, companies did not have formal release-time policies to permit employees participation in community volunteer activities.

Interviews with representatives from several government agencies revealed that these organizations did more actively encourage employee volunteerism and did formally recognize volunteer experience on job applications. Some agencies maintained active volunteer placement services for employees, while others used recognition programs to highlight employees' community contributions. Flextime work schedules facilitated employees' participation, while federal employment applications treat unpaid and paid experiences equally for evaluation purposes.

## HOW TO EVALUATE VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

While the MCW Task Force encourages businesses to accept volunteer experience, volunteers, in turn, must be prepared to produce specific information about their unsalaried positions. Frequently job titles of volunteer positions do not give sufficient information to potential employers about skills, levels, responsibilities and qualifications.

Businesses and volunteers should consider the following when evaluating unsalaried experience:

What was the range of the volunteer experience?

Was the volunteer experience occasional or long-term?

Was the volunteer closely supervised or did the volunteer work independently?

Is there evidence of growth in skills?

Was the volunteer in a supervisory or managerial capacity? If so, what were the duties and how large was the group?

Was the organization highly structured or informal?

Volunteers and potential employers could evaluate unpaid experience by using the following categories:

Direct Service to Clients. Refers to one-to-one relationships, focusing mainly on and utilizing interpersonal skills, communication, teaching and counseling skills, e.g., work with disadvantaged or handicapped persons, hospitals, and other community agencies.

Planning and Administration. Refers to decision-making and/or active involvement in management such as program development, planning budget, standing or ad hoc committees, fund raisers, e.g.,

Task force members conducted interviews with individuals who had worked as volunteers prior to employment. These former volunteers presented a very positive image of volunteerism; most reported that their volunteer experiences had enhanced their careers.

A partial list of skills developed through volunteersim included:

- . Administrative skills
  - Record keeping
  - Facilitating meetings
  - Program design and implementation
  - Design and organization of agency
  
- . Communication skills
  - Teaching
  - Counseling
  - Public relations
  - Proposal writing
  - Disseminating information
  - Listening skills
  - Speaking in front of groups
  - Acting as liaison between groups
  - Writing
  
- . Supervisory skills
  - Supervising, coordinating and supporting volunteers
  - Recruiting volunteers
  
- . Evaluating skills
  - Pinpointing problem areas
  - Evaluating client problems and doing client intakes
  
- . Public Relations skills
  - Knowledge of community services
  - Lobbying
  - Dealing with crisis situations
  - Knowledge of printing and layout for materials

leadership positions with groups, neighborhood associations, community organizations, PTA's, churches, and United Ways.

Advocacy. Refers to researching, lobbying, surveying, speaking, and/or active issue-oriented participation with civic groups interested in historical preservation, urban renewal, the environment, taxes, consumer interest and senior citizens.

Public Information. Relies mainly on writing, speaking and interpersonal skills. Examples of these activities include guides for school tours, museums, historical buildings, public relations work for community organizations, reporting for newspapers, alumni groups, etc.

*"With the increasing role of women in our work force, greater value should be given to that experience which many women gain through volunteer work. For women entering the working world for the first time, it is a rude awakening to find that consideration is generally not given to long years of volunteer work. This discovery only adds to injury when those unpaid hours of administrative, project management, personnel, public relations, and many times, technical experience go unrecognized. I have attempted to remedy the financial situation of homemakers not employed outside the home by providing them with Social Security coverage. As an employer, you can offer similar help to our growing female work force by including space on your job applications for documentation of skills learned in the volunteer sector."*

*Clarence D. Long  
Member of Congress*

## CASE HISTORIES

In order to illustrate the transferability of volunteer skills to paid employment on the employment application, we present the case histories of three women who succeeded in making the transition as examples of how the skills they gained through volunteerism might be entered on an actual job application.

## RUBY

At age 36, Ruby found herself a widow with four children to raise. Although lacking a high school diploma, Ruby worked as a post office mail clerk, and at the same time volunteered to work in a women's prison. Her first assignment was to talk and visit with each woman prisoner individually. Later, Ruby organized other volunteers to participate as speakers and perform in singing groups to entertain the prisoners.

The staff at the prison encouraged Ruby to speak to community and church groups about raising funds for a prison half-way house program designed to help released prisoners cope with readjustment to society. Ruby helped research and write a proposal that resulted in a three-year funding for a half-way house. She subsequently became a charter member of the advisory board.

Ruby later returned to complete high school, earned an Associate of Arts degree in Law Enforcement and Corrections, and went on to complete her Bachelor's and Master's degrees. At the same time she continued to do volunteer work with half-way houses and old-age homes, and designed socialization programs for their residents. She also spent a year as a VISTA volunteer.

Today Ruby is Community Coordinator for the Teacher's Corps, a job which involves coordinating tutors, volunteers and community speakers, developing workshops for parents, and counseling and designing programs for disruptive or incarcerated young people.

"I discovered," said Ruby, "through my volunteer activities that I make an impact and help people actually change their lives."



## APPLICATION FORM

List your work experience below, starting with your present or most recent position. Include paid or unpaid full or part-time, military, summer jobs, etc. If additional space is needed, use the space provided on the back of this form or attach supplementary sheets. Explain your duties and responsibilities in detail.

1. Present Employer: Maryland State Department of Corrections  
Salary: Volunteer Title: Program Coordinator  
Describe your duties: Develop social programs, organized volunteers to implement programs and meet goals, spoke to community groups, raised funds, helped research and write grant proposals resulting in three year funding of programs.  
Number of employees supervised: 10 volunteers.  
Reason for leaving: To seek paid employment.
  
2. Employer: ACTION  
Salary: Volunteer  
Previous Title: VISTA Volunteer Program Coordinator  
Your duties: Designed programs for socialization of patients in halfway houses and old age homes. Planned activities, coordinated volunteers, helped with counseling and rap sessions.  
Number of employees supervised: 6 volunteers  
Reason for leaving: Program ended.

## RUTH

Ruth describes herself as a "product of the late 50's". She married while still in college, and upon completing her education, spent the next few years raising her family in California.

When Ruth was pregnant with her second child, the family moved to Maryland. While looking for a method of baby delivery that was family-centered, Ruth researched the LaMaze method of natural childbirth. She soon became a volunteer speaker for the movement and lectured to pregnant women and their families. Eventually, Ruth joined the Childbirth Education Association of Baltimore.

After the birth of her child, Ruth began volunteering with a university's annual book sale. Through her work with this project, she learned how to appraise and research rare used books and how to market them.

Ruth eventually expanded her volunteer activities to include work at the Maryland Center for Public Broadcasting, where she researched articles from newspapers on consumerism. When funds were allocated for a program on consumerism, Ruth was chosen for a paid position doing research and preparing packets of material on consumer subjects for the station. Ruth went on to a full-time paid position as staff researcher and then research supervisor.

## APPLICATION FORM

List your work experience below, starting with your present or most recent position. Include paid or UNPAID full or part-time, military, summer jobs, etc. If additional space is needed, use the space provided on the back of this form or attach supplementary sheets. Explain your duties and responsibilities in detail.

1. Present Employer: Maryland Center for Public Broadcasting  
Salary: Volunteer Previous Title: Research Supervisor Your duties: Researched consumer issues, collected data, wrote reports, developed packets of materials on consumer issues for broadcasts and dissemination to public.  
Number of employees supervised: \_\_\_\_\_  
Reason for leaving: To seek paid employment.
  
2. Present Employer: Baltimore City Public School System  
Salary: Volunteer Previous Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
Your duties: Served on task force investigating recruitment process, hiring and assigning teachers; researched and developed program for gifted students; helped initiate first gifted student program; reviewed budgets; recommended fund allocations; and participated in selection of new school superintendent.  
Reason for leaving: To seek paid employment.

## VERNA

During World War II, Verna went to work as a file clerk at the Social Security Administration, and at the same time, volunteered in several community organizations. Her volunteer activities, admits Verna, gave her the impetus and desire to move beyond her file clerk job.

As a member of the Maryland Council of PTA's, Verna spoke on school-related issues to the community. She also joined the Woodlawn Toastmistress Club and continued to develop her speaking ability and her poise. Soon she was addressing community groups as a volunteer for the local Meals on Wheels Program. Her work so impressed the State office of Meals on Wheels that she was asked to do volunteer work with them.

Verna, who has also served as Toastmistress for the United Fund's Social Security State Awards Banquet, has received several citations for her volunteer speaking. In 1975, Verna became the first Black woman to win the Toastmistress World International Speech Contest.

At age 40, Verna returned to school to complete her high school degree and continued on to earn college credits.

Verna's twenty years of theatrical work with the Arena Players and her acting, speaking, and producing experience with the Arena Players has given her some of the background and skills needed for her present paid position as an employee development specialist at the Social Security Administration. As a member of the training staff, she develops training films for employees and managers. Verna credits her five-year climb from lower level supervisor to her present middle management position to the skills and talents she developed through her volunteer work.

APPLICATION FORM

List your work experience below, starting with your present or most recent position. Include paid or UNPAID full or part-time, military, summer jobs, etc. If additional space is needed, use the space provided on the back of this form or attach supplementary sheets. Explain your duties and responsibilities in detail.

1. Employer: Maryland Council of PTA's.  
Salary: Volunteer (unpaid staff)  
Previous Title:  
Your duties: Reviewed and evaluated school curriculum, served on sub-committee to oversee school programs and budget, spoke to community groups. Number of employees supervised: Reason for leaving: To seek paid employment.
2. Employer: Arena Players Salary: Volunteer  
Previous Title: Actress, Production Assistant  
Your duties: Played various roles, specialized in character roles, produced video tapes. Number of employees supervised: Reason for leaving: To seek paid employment.

*"Managerial skills, office experience, special technical abilities and competence in dealing with many kinds of people are but a few of the qualifications gained through volunteer service. All of these attributes are equally important in the business community."*

*Marjorie S. Holt, Member of Congress*

## TO THE EMPLOYER

### HOW TO RECOGNIZE AND EVALUATE VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE:

- . Develop personnel application forms which give equal weight to relevant volunteer experience and to paid employment.
- . Develop hiring and promotion policies which encourage recognition of volunteer experience.
- . Foster active employee participation in volunteer community efforts.
- . Recognize and spotlight the contributions of employees as volunteers.
- . Encourage employees who do volunteer work on personal time to list experiences with personnel officer.
- . Credit relevant volunteer experience when considering employees for promotion.

### HOW TO PROFIT BY RECOGNIZING AND FOSTERING VOLUNTEERISM:

- . Increase productivity and efficiency by acquiring highly motivated and skilled employees.
- . Help reach affirmative action goals by identifying qualified potential employees.
- . Reduce on-the-job training costs.
- . Enhance corporate image in the community.
- . Improve employee morale.

## TO THE APPLICANT FOR PAID EMPLOYMENT

### HOW TO MAKE VOLUNTEERISM WORK FOR YOU:

- . Identify and analyze skills gained through volunteering.
- . Be aware that they are bona fide work skills that you can claim.
- . Make sure the volunteer skills you claim toward paid employment are relevant to your career objective.
- . Request documentation from the volunteer agency in the form of:
  1. Job descriptions.
  2. Record of time spent on the job.
  3. Duties performed.
  4. Evaluation of performance.,
  5. References.
- . Write "Volunteer" in space provided for salary.
- . When developing a resume treat volunteer experiences and skills as you would paid experiences.
- . Highlight the skills you've acquired by developing a functional resume.

Your functional resume should include:

1. A statement of work history which presents relevant volunteer experience and paid work experience chronologically.
2. A description of work history which highlights skills acquired as a volunteer.
3. A description of past volunteer duties which uses action verbs and specific accomplishments.

Staple this resume highlighting skills to any job application for you are requested to complete.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES FOR JOB HUNTING AND RESUME  
WRITING:

Karen Abarbanel and Connie McClung Siegel, Woman's  
Work Book.

Richard Bolles, What Color is Your Parachute?

Richard Irish, Go Hire Yourself an Employer.

Richard Lanthrop, Who's Hiring Who?

Tom and Dandyne Jackson, The Hidden Job Market.

LOCAL MARYLAND RESOURCES. For assistance in trans-  
lating volunteer skills to employment credentials:

Maryland Commission for Women

1100 North Eutaw Street

Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Baltimore New Directions for Women

2517 North Charles Street

Baltimore, Maryland 21218

Voluntary Action Center of Central Maryland

711 West 40th Street, Suite 317

Baltimore, Maryland 21211

Metropolitan YWCA

128 West Franklin Street

Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Womanscope

222 Long Reach Village Center

Columbia, Maryland 21045

Maryland Service Corps

1123 North Eutaw Street

Baltimore, Maryland 21201

New Alternatives

201 Addison Road South

Seat Pleasant, Maryland 20027



LOCAL MARYLAND RESOURCES (CON'T)

New Phase  
50 Monroe Street, Room B-06  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Women's Center  
167 Duke of Gloucester Street  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Community Colleges  
(Check with your local Community College)

\*\*\*\*\*

*"More and more, institutions of higher learning are giving academic credit for valid work and other types of experiences outside the traditional classroom. Why, then should not business, in turn, be giving credit for skills acquired outside the office or plant?"*

*Parren J. Mitchell,  
Member of Congress*

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

MARYLAND COMMISSION FOR WOMEN  
1100 North Eutaw Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

COMMISSIONERS

Shoshana S. Cardin  
Chairwoman

Kathleen M. Carter  
Vice-Chairwoman

David M. Dean  
Bernita Fuller  
Barbara J.A. Gordon  
Jill Moss Greenberg  
Hattie N. Harrison  
Winifred Helmes  
Robert A. Jacques  
Barbara O. Kreamer  
Dixie J. Miller  
Elizabeth S. Morrison  
Stewart Oneglia

Jo-Ann Orlinsky  
Ada R. Pena  
Betty Pike  
Octavene H. Saunders  
Dolores J. Snyder  
Ann C. Stockett  
Emily Taylor  
Esther S. Vines  
Lindsay S. Waite  
Thomas D. Washburne  
Diane H. Weaver

STAFF

Sheila Winett  
E. Dolores Street  
Connie Beims  
Vicki T. Wilson  
Cynthia Williams  
Joan E. Williams

Executive Director  
Assistant Director  
Administrative Spec.  
Secretary  
Clerk Typist  
Secretary

*"I am proud to represent a State whose law mandates recognition of relevant volunteer experience when applicants are being considered for state employment. I would not hesitate to recommend a similar practice in the private sector. Volunteerism demands dedication and organization, both qualities to be treasured in an employee."*

*Gladys Noon Spellman, Member of Congress*