



# Community Service Office

Gephardt Institute for Public Service

## Tips on Navigating Your Volunteer Options St. Louis Non-Profit Agency Database

### Broaden your horizons

- Start your search broadly. One suggested method is to simply select a category of interest, click "Search," and view all agencies within that category. For example, start from the main page ([communityservice.wustl.edu/stlagencies](http://communityservice.wustl.edu/stlagencies)), select "Hunger & Homelessness," then click "Search." All agencies in this category will then appear as the results of your search.
- Consider going to an agency-sponsored event to learn a little bit more about the agency before deciding for or against a volunteer opportunity. For example, visit our listing of benefit walks & runs ([communityservice.wustl.edu/runwalk](http://communityservice.wustl.edu/runwalk)) to find upcoming walks and runs sponsored by or benefiting non-profit agencies.

### Do your research

- Our St. Louis Non-profit Agency Database is a great place to start, but does not necessarily provide comprehensive information about an agency and/or its volunteer opportunities. Do some additional research on the agency by searching online and/or calling the agency to inquire about current volunteer opportunities. Many agencies have volunteer coordinators who would be happy to talk with you about volunteer opportunities as well as the experience of volunteering with their agency.

### Be persistent

- Though much of today's communication is conducted through email, don't be afraid to call agencies directly to get the information you're seeking. Often, speaking with an individual at the agency may give you a more realistic picture of current opportunities.
- If an opportunity seems like a good fit, don't give up on it easily. Though staff at non-profits are often quite busy, many of these agencies could use your help, and will appreciate the initiative you take in getting information and beginning a volunteer opportunity there.

### Serve...and reflect

- To get the most out of your experience, be sure to discuss your experiences with others and allow yourself the time and space to reflect on what you've observed, learned, and felt. This reflective process is usually what inspires an expanded or changed perspective on the world.
- If you have questions or would like to discuss your experience, please don't hesitate to contact the Community Service Office.