



Hospitals use many volunteers in many different roles at any given time. Volunteering at a hospital is a great way to donate to a cause. Many patients are nervous about their hospital stays and value a sympathetic ear. Volunteering in a hospital offers many benefits that can extend beyond your volunteer activities.



You'll reap many rewards by volunteering at a hospital. You get to see the smiling faces of the patients you're helping and know that the work you are doing is making a difference. Along with the feel-good rewards, you can also receive additional benefits, depending on your hospital.

Service pins for VFW Auxiliary members. and non-members can be earned for volunteer hours of service.



Hospital volunteers provide support services to hospital staff. Their roles range from administrative support to friendly patient visits.

Volunteering at a hospital is one way many retired people stay active and involved in the community. It is also a popular activity for high school and college-aged students seeking to gain experience.



Hospitals encourage young people to get involved with their volunteering programs. Volunteering is a great way for high school students to beef up their college applications, and volunteering at the college level will look great on any résumé.

Each year the Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) National Advisory Committee (NAC) awards scholarships to student volunteers.

Contact your local VFW Auxiliary to learn about volunteer opportunities in your area.

Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary

Department of Kansas



Benefits of Hospital Volunteerism



Aside from the tangible benefits of volunteering, which may include performing clerical duties or organizing a clothing bank, the intangible benefits of volunteering are numerous. A volunteer may benefit from an improved sense of self-worth, pride and accomplishment while improving the lives of others. Hospital jobs provide the added benefit of interacting with those you are helping so you can see the difference you make in the lives of others.



HOSPITAL VOLUNTEER POSITIONS

Hospital volunteers specifically assist patients and their families during their time in the hospital. Volunteers may choose to provide administrative support by providing data entry, clerical duties and customer service. If volunteers wish to provide hands-on support to patients and their families, they may choose to visit or read to patients, provide transportation services, assist with bingo parties, run small errands, or visit patients with a service animal or comfort cart.

BENEFITS FOR VOLUNTEER

Volunteering at a hospital benefits the volunteer, the patients, the families and the hospital staff. The volunteer often benefits from meeting new people, learning new skills, gaining experience and improving self-worth. Meeting new people helps improve social skills and increases the individual's social network. The volunteer may become friends with fellow volunteers or patients. Friendships are important for individuals. They help individuals get through tough times and contribute to a greater sense of confidence. Learning new skills is also a valuable benefit for the volunteer. The skills may help the volunteer with everyday tasks, such as operating a computer, or with career-related tasks that will help the individual obtain a job. Individuals wishing to go to medical school and work in hospitals will also gain relevant experience and boost their resumes.

BENEFITS FOR HOSPITAL PATIENTS

Some hospital patients may not have family or friends in the area to visit them. It can be a very lonely experience to combat an illness or procedure alone. Therefore, some hospital patients may significantly benefit from someone there to talk to them. Patients may benefit from individuals playing games with them, reading to them, having volunteer entertainers visit, crafting parties or learning to play an instrument. Patients may also benefit from visits by service animals and their caretakers. Many hospitals allow certified dogs, cats or miniature horses to visit patients.



HOW TO VOLUNTEER

To become a volunteer for the Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) contact the Department of Veterans Affairs facility nearest you, and ask for Voluntary Services. Tell the staff your interest in becoming a VAVS volunteer and inquire about available positions. Once you have a list of the positions, evaluate them to determine which area you are passionate about. You may prefer working directly with patients or in a clerical type of position. If you choose a position you will enjoy, then you and the patients will receive greater benefits. After you have made your choice, contact the Voluntary Services staff and they will take care of everything else! You may also contact your nearest VFW Auxiliary and ask to shadow one of our volunteers. This will allow you to 'try out' volunteering and assist you in finding the best volunteer position for you.

To volunteer in non-VA facilities, contact the facilities directly and ask for the Volunteer Program Director.

CONSIDERATIONS

Some hospitals may have an age limit for volunteers. Also be aware of the fact that many may require tests or vaccinations before volunteering for safety reasons. If you are unable to volunteer because of an age limit, the VFW Auxiliary has volunteer opportunities for individuals of all ages.