Welcome to Volunteer Solutions!

Office of Community Service

www.gsu.edu/service

www.volunteersolutions.org/gsu

Volunteer Solutions is a large, Web-based database that stores and displays data on users, agencies, and volunteer opportunities. Like any state-of-the-art database, Volunteer Solutions offers efficient retrieval of information and robust safeguards to protect sensitive user information.

The application can be thought of as consisting of three sections, but you will use only the first:

1. The student/volunteer section, which students use individually and for student groups.
2. The agency section.
3. The administrator's section.

CONTENTS

3 Using the Top Navigation Links
5 The Volunteer Homepage
6 Search for a Volunteer Opportunity
9 Inquire about an Opportunity
10 Register as a Volunteer
12 Select Email preferences
12 Log Your Volunteer Hours
15 Write a Reflection
16 Create Your Student Profile
18 GLOSSARY
There are two versions of your page: that seen by new volunteers, and that seen by volunteers who have registered. Pictured below is the Unregistered Volunteer Home screen. The Registered screen includes additional information, but is otherwise identical to that below.

- The Opportunity Quick-Search tool allows you to perform a quick search for volunteer opportunities available:
THE TOP NAVIGATION MENU

- Clicking the links on the Site Navigation Menu (pictured below) allows you to navigate into and out of the different pages of information available.

- The Login section is where you can register and then log in. After signing in, you will be able to use several advanced tools not available to non-registered volunteers.

By clicking the Login link on your home page, you will be taken to the Login page, which will allow you to access your accounts, assuming you’ve registered with Volunteer Solutions. It includes links to the registration page and technical-support links to help you recover lost passwords and troubleshoot logging-in errors.

- The Search page allows you to perform a more detailed search for volunteer opportunities than can be executed from the Home page. You can search by any combination of location, opportunity type (ongoing or one-time), keywords, opportunity availability, social group(s) served, and categories of service.

- The Spotlight page is used to highlight the diversity of opportunities available from the agencies who are partnered with the Office of Community Service.

- The Calendar page offers a view of upcoming and past opportunities displayed in a calendar format that allows you to search by date.

- The Organizations page lists the active agencies that have registered on the site, allowing you to navigate through them using the alphabet-style navigation bar at the top of the page or search for a specific agency by keyword. You can link from this page to the agency's website, or read a detailed listing of the agency. From the detailed agency listing, you can print out the information, email the agency's information to another person, view the agency's active opportunities, and add the agency to your list of favorite agencies (if you're a registered user). You can email agency contacts from the agency listing page. This gives you multiple people to get in touch with if one contact proves unresponsive.

- The Opportunities page lists all active opportunities, allowing you to navigate through them using the alphabet-style navigation bar at the top of the page or search for a specific opportunity by keyword. Clicking on an opportunity allows you to view more detailed opportunity information and then inquire about the opportunity (by clicking the I'm interested in this opportunity link), print it out, send it to another person via email, and add it to their list of favorites (if they are a registered user and are logged in).
The Opportunities page displays opportunities available from approved agencies

1. ACCESS database expert needed
Medford, MA 02155 • www.smlc.org
Sponsored by Eastern Massachusetts Literacy Council
Our literacy volunteer organization, the Eastern Massachusetts Literacy Council, needs to track a great deal of information regarding volunteers, students and other organization members. Our ACCESS database was written just a few years ago, but we need a few more updates. We would appreciate the donation of about 20 hours of work to update the format of our database and add some fields (with follow-up if there are any additional problems.) You would also be asked to train our able Technology Coordinator how to create such changes in the future.

This volunteer must have experience in writing ACCESS databases.

This opportunity is sponsored by Eastern Massachusetts Literacy Council

We need volunteers who are free at these times:
• Occasional

This opportunity is available to the following types of volunteers:
• Young Adults (18-25)
• Adults (55+)
• Adults (26-54)
• Individual

As with an agency entry, if you are viewing an opportunity entry, you can email multiple agency contacts listed for the opportunity (if provided), should the primary contact prove unresponsive. If you click the View all agency contacts link on the opportunity page, you will be taken to the Contact manager for the agency, where you can locate and email another contact at the agency by clicking on an entry’s Email this person link. In all cases, if you contact an agency contact that is not the primary opportunity contact, Volunteer Solutions will still log the referral for the opportunity. This ensures that referrals are logged for the specific opportunity in which you were interested.
Clicking the View all agency contacts link will display the agency's Contact manager

- The About Us link displays information about The Office of Community Service.

Volunteer Home Page for a Registered Volunteer

USING THE SECTIONS ON YOUR HOMEPAGE (Blue Heading Bars)

- The Home page of a registered user who has logged in is called myHome, and contains additional features, as well as extra links on the Site Navigation Menu.

- You will see Spotlight items displayed in a Spotlight section. The Your Hours section displays the number of hours you have worked on opportunities, and provides links to allow you to add or change your volunteer hours.

- The Your Inquiries section records your inquiries to an agency regarding an opportunity the agency had posted. This allows you to quickly view the opportunities you had requested information on. The New Listings section lists volunteer opportunities that have recently been posted by agencies.

- The Retrieve Results From Your Student Profiles section contains one or more sets of customized search criteria that Volunteer Solutions will apply to new opportunities submitted by agencies. If the new opportunity matches the profile you have created, Volunteer Solutions will email information on it to you.

- The News section of the myHome page displays News items about events or opportunities the Office of Community Service wants you to know about.

- If you want to change your profile information, or delete your Volunteer Solutions record from the database, you can click on the Your Profile link on the Site Navigation Menu to open the Profile Manager, where changes to your general information and profiles can be made.

- When you are finished modifying account information or searching for opportunities, clicking the Logout link on the Site Navigation Menu to log out of the account.
COMMON VOLUNTEER ACTIONS

Search for a Volunteer Opportunity

There are about 14 different ways that you can search for an opportunity in Volunteer Solutions. Three of the more commonly used methods of locating opportunities are described here.

Look for an Opportunity Using Opportunity Quick-Search

Registered and non-registered users alike can quickly search for opportunities using the Opportunity Quick-Search tool found on the Home or myHome pages. To search for opportunities, you will:

1. Navigate to the Home or myHome page.

2. Input search criteria specifying what sort of volunteer opportunities you are interested in. Any of the three criteria - Keywords, ZIP, and Issue/Interest - can be used separately or in combination with the other to produce a list of available opportunities. The ZIP criterion allows you to specify how far from your home ZIP Code you would be willing to travel to volunteer.

3. Click Go! to obtain any opportunities that meet the criteria.

4. View any results that were returned.

5. Click on the link of a promising opportunity to view more detailed information.

TIP: If you are registered, you can save the results of this search in a profile. This will allow you to retrieve the search results at any time.
Search for an Opportunity Using the Full Search Tool

Volunteers (registered and non-registered) can refine their searches by executing a Full Search. This advanced search tool includes the Keyword and ZIP search criteria found in the Quick-Search tool, along with a more explicit breakdown of Opportunity Availability, Social Groups, and Interest Categories. To use the Full Search tool:

1. Navigate to the Full Search page by either clicking on the Search link in the Site Navigation Menu, or by clicking the word "search" that appears under the Social Issue drop-down menu on the Opportunity Quick-Search section of Home or myHome.

2. Refine the search criteria using the checkboxes available on the Full Search page.

3. Click the Go! icon.

4. View the results.
Results of a detailed search

5. As in the Quick-Search, click on the link of a promising opportunity to view additional details.

Registered users also can save the results of a Full Search in a profile for later retrieval.

Browse for an Opportunity

If you would prefer to simply browse all opportunities available from the Office of Community Service you can:

1. Click on the Opportunities link in the Site Navigation Menu.

2. Browse the listing of opportunities, using either the alphabet-style Navigation Bar to page through the listings, or by narrowing the displayed listings using the Keyword Search tool.
3. As with the Quick and Full searches, click on the link of an opportunity that seems promising to view additional details.

**Inquire About an Opportunity**

Once you find an interesting opportunity, you can submit an inquiry to the agency contact person listed for that opportunity. An inquiry is simply an email sent to the contact person; however, it's an "official" email sent using your Volunteer Solutions inquiry Web form. An inquiry is created by completing the following steps:

1. Search for an opportunity using the Quick Search, Detailed Search, or by browsing. When a desirable opportunity is identified, click on its link in the list of search results to display its detailed information.

2. Find the I'm interested in this opportunity link and click on it.

3. In the Contact Agency page that appears, provide the contact information requested. If you have searched for the opportunity while logged into your account, the form will already be populated with your contact information.
4. When finished completing the form, click the Send email message button. You will then see a message confirming that your email has been sent. As suggested, you can click the your inquiry management link to view it and any other inquiries that you have already made. Clicking the Back to where you were link will return you to the details page for the opportunity you just completed inquiring about.

Register as a Volunteer

While volunteers are not required to register in order to use the site, there are features that are available only to registered volunteers. The benefits of registering include:

- The ability to save searches.
- The ability to post reflections on your experience for other potential volunteers to view.
- The option to build a Favorites list of preferred or interesting opportunities or agencies.
- The option to receive notification when a particular opportunity becomes available.

The volunteer registration process was designed to be straightforward. A minimum number of steps are required to activate your account. How you go about registering depends on actions you have taken while browsing the Volunteer Solutions site. For example, if you attempt to perform an action, such as saving a search that is reserved for registered users, you will be prompted to log in. If you do not have an account, you can click on the register link below the username and password boxes.
A user attempting to perform a task reserved for registered users will be prompted to log in

This is only one way in which you can begin the account-creation process. The example below describes a more "formal" means of creating a user account. The steps in this process are:

1. From the **Home** page, click on the **Register** link underneath the **username** and **password** text boxes.

2. Fill in the appropriate account and user information on the first page that is displayed. A **progress bar** displays how many steps in the process you have to complete, and where in the registration process they are currently. If the registration form used in your specific implementation of Volunteer Solutions is only one step, you will not see the progress bar. You must provide at least a username, password, first and last names, an email address, and a region where you reside.

3. Click the **Next** link at the bottom of the form. If you do not include a required piece of information, or if you fill out the form incorrectly, the system will prompt you to return to the form and add/update the account information. The system will also require you to specify a different username and/or email address if the ones you submit are already being used by another user.

4. Select whether or not you wish to be contacted via email regarding upcoming or special opportunities, and then whether or not you wish to complete a user survey.
Volunteer Solutions asks if you want to receive updates or participate in a survey.

5. View the results. You can now proceed to your own customized page (myHome), create a profile, or browse volunteer opportunities.

_**Log Volunteer Hours**_

Of particular concern to agencies and Volunteer Centers is the number of hours of service volunteers you contribute. To help keep track of your volunteer activities, we ask that you use the **Log Hours** feature to record and update the number of hours you work on each service opportunity.

There are three ways you can log hours in Volunteer Solutions:

1. If the organization you volunteered with is one to which you had sent an inquiry, you can call up the inquiry record for that organization and log hours on it.

2. You can log hours for an agency and/or one of its opportunities that are stored in Volunteer Solutions but to which you did not submit an inquiry.

3. You can record hours you worked for an agency that is not currently listed in Volunteer Solutions. To do this, you will need to provide the name of the organization with which you volunteered, including the name and email address of your contact there.

In the example that follows, suppose you would like to record volunteer hours for an agency you have volunteered with but to which you did not sent an initial inquiry. In this case, you would:

1. Open a Web browser and navigate to the Volunteer Solutions website.

2. Log in to your account.

3. From the myHome page, click on the Log hours link in the Hours section of your myHome page.

4. Since you did not send an inquiry to the agency for which you will record hours, you would click the **Find existing agency** link listed on the Log hours page.

5. In the **Find an agency** page, type in the name or portion of the name of the agency for which hours will be recorded, then click **Search**.
6. In the list of agencies resulting from the search, click the link of the desired agency.

7. Selecting one of two methods to record hours. In the first method (most useful for recording hours for an ongoing opportunity), select the number of hours to log from the **Select Number of Hours** drop down list, then select whether the service was performed on the day the hours are being recorded or in the previous week or month. Finally, click either of the **Okay** buttons.

8. Alternatively, you can use the **Start date**, **End date**, and **# of hours** settings as another way of recording hours. The calendar icons next to the **Start date** and **End date** can be used to quickly locate and record dates of your service. Click either of the **Okay** buttons to save the hours. In both methods, you will see a new hours entry in a **timecard**. You can click the **Details** link for a **timecard** entry to view additional details of the opportunity you participated in. You can also download a listing of your volunteer hours in **PDF** format by clicking the **Create PDF** link at the top of the timecard.

![The second method of recording volunteer hours for an opportunity](image)
8. Log additional hours by clicking the Log hours link on the timecard, or click the myHome link at the top of the page to be returned your myHome page. You can click on the View details link in the Your Volunteer Hours section of your myHome page to go directly to the timecard to view details on the hours you have logged, log additional hours, and view a summary of their volunteer hours.
Registered volunteers who are logged in can record a reflection for an opportunity they worked on. These reflections can help other volunteers decide if they would enjoy volunteering for a particular opportunity or agency, and they also provide a useful feedback mechanism for agencies and administrators. The Office of Community Service administrator must approve reflections before they are posted in Volunteer Solutions for viewing by other volunteers. You would follow the following steps to create a reflection for an opportunity or agency:

1. Open a Web browser and navigate to the Volunteer Solutions Website.
2. Log in to your account.
3. Search for an opportunity using the Simple Search, Detailed Search, or by browsing, or locate an agency to reflect on by searching for it by clicking on the Agencies link in the Site Navigation Menu and then browsing or searching for the agency. When the desired opportunity or agency is identified, click on its link in the list of search results to display its detailed information.
4. When the details page of the agency/opportunity is displayed, click on the Add Reflection link in the upper right-hand corner of the page.
5. Fill out the fields of the Reflection Form
6. Click the Finish link.
7. Read the confirmation page to see if the reflection was recorded successfully.
8. Click the Back to where you were link to return to the agency/opportunity listing.
Create Your Student Profile

Once you have registered, one of the options available to you is the ability to create profiles. These allow you to create and store a set of preferences that make searching for opportunities more efficient. You can create a profile from many different screens within Volunteer Solutions. The following example illustrates how you might create a profile from the myHome page:

1. Once logged in, from myHome, click on the Your Profile link on the Site Navigation Menu.

   Clicking the Your Profile link displays a screen allowing you to create a new profile.

2. Once in the Profile Manager, click on the create a new volunteer profile link in the Profiles section.

3. Fill out the first page of information displayed by the Profile Manager for the new profile. A progress bar is provided to help you understand how many steps remain to be completed in the process of creating a profile. There are five sets of criteria that you can use to refine your profile. The part of the Create a Volunteer Profile page listed under Number 2 asks you which sets of criteria you would like to use in creating your profile. By default, all sets of criteria will be provided. If you would like to skip one of the criteria sets, you can deselect one or more criteria sets by removing the checkmark next to the set(s) in Number 2.

4. In the following steps of this exercise, only the When you want to volunteer criteria set has been selected. Click the Next link.

5. In the second screen that prompts you for information, specify if you want the profile to look for volunteer opportunities by Keyword, by ZIP Code, by Opportunity Type (Any, One-Time, or Ongoing), or any combination of these three. (Note: Depending on how many criteria sets you select to include in your profile in Step 3, more or fewer steps will be displayed in the progress bar at the top of the profile creation page. The minimum number of steps displayed on this page will be three, which occurs if you opt not to use any of the criteria sets in Step 3. As was indicated in Step 3, for the purposes of this exercise only the When you want to volunteer criteria set was selected. Thus, there are four steps displayed in the progress bar in the following image.)

6. Click the Next link.

7. If you have specified in Step 3 that you would like to include one or more of the five search-criteria sets, you will be presented with the first of these optional sets to select your desired criteria. Make selections from the criteria sets as you see fit, clicking the Next links at the bottom of pages to move between criteria-selection pages. For the purposes of this example, only the When you want to volunteer criteria set had been selected in Step 3, so the next page displayed will be the When you want to volunteer page.

8. When you have completed filling out all of the criteria sets you opted to utilize in building your volunteer profile, you will be taken to a Set Email Alerts page. Specify whether or not you would like Volunteer Solutions to email you occasionally with information on opportunities matching your profile, Spotlight items, and News items from your community. This information will be emailed out at the time intervals (e.g., weekly or monthly) specified in the How often would you like to receive an email alert? drop-down list. Information will be tailored to conform to the criteria specified in each of the profiles you have created, which are listed under Number 2. If you would prefer not to receive any emails containing information screened to match one or more of their profiles, you can select Never from Number 1. If you would like to receive periodic emails but would like to limit the number of opportunities sent to one or more of your profiles, you can list the number of desired listings in Number 2. Selecting no listings from the drop-down list will prevent Volunteer Solutions from providing any listings for that specific profile in the periodic email.
Selecting **Never** in Number 1 prevents Volunteer Solutions from sending profile-specific emails to any user profiles.

The number of opportunity listings you wish to receive for each profile, if any, can be specified.

9. Click the **Next** link to finish.

You will be returned to the **Profile Manager** page, where you should see the newly created profile.

You are free to create multiple profiles. When you are logged in and at the **myHome** page, you can choose a desired profile from the drop-down box in the **Retrieve Results From Volunteer Profile** of the page. You then simply click the **Go!** button to find opportunities that match that particular profile.
**Agency** - An organization that creates and posts volunteer **opportunities** in Volunteer Solutions so as to recruit volunteer assistance from interested persons. Before an agency can post its **opportunities**, it must create an agency listing providing general information about itself and key contacts that is submitted to an administrator for approval.

**Group organizer** - In Volunteer Solutions, a **group organizer** is you who signs up a group of volunteers to participate in an event or on a particular project of an event. The **group organizer** serves as the main contact person for the group, receiving and distributing to the members of your group any communications sent from Volunteer Solutions administrators.

**Inquiries** - An **inquiry** is an email a potential volunteer sends to an agency to inquire about an opportunity he/she sees the agency has available. From the agency side of Volunteer Solutions, this **inquiry** is known as a **referral**, but they are essentially the same thing.

**Opportunity** - You event that has been created by an **agency**, approved by an **administrator**, and posted for viewing by volunteers. These opportunities can be just one-time occurrences, or can take place on a regular basis.

**PDF** - Stands for **Portable Document Format**. This is a document format developed by Adobe Systems Incorporated to allow for the transmittal of information across the Internet. Information stored in a **PDF** format can be distributed on Web pages or through email, and can be read by virtually any computer as long as it has Adobe's free Acrobat Viewer software installed. Volunteer Solutions may offer you an opportunity to download information in this format.

**Profiles** - **Profiles** are a feature volunteers who have registered with Volunteer Solutions can use to facilitate their searches for **opportunities**. A profile allows you to create a collection of preferences for volunteer opportunities into one place that can then be used to search for opportunities that match the preferences. You can create multiple profiles to capture different varieties of opportunities. You can manually run a profile search, or set up the profile to automatically conduct its search and report back any opportunities to You via email.

**Property** - A **property** is a characteristic of an agency, opportunity or volunteer. While Volunteer Solutions contains standard properties - i.e., an agency is asked to provide its **EIN** as it is creating a new agency listing - you can customize properties on volunteer, agency, or opportunity listings so as to better capture information or target volunteers.

**Roster** - A list of names and emails for a group of volunteers that has been signed up by a **group organizer** for an event or a specific opportunity linked to an event.