

Virtual Volunteering Opportunities

Offering a variety of volunteer opportunities is one way to ensure that employees find at least one thing in which they'd feel comfortable participating. Has your company thought about incorporating virtual activities for your remote staff or those who have difficulty getting out of the office?

When you think about volunteers, the typical image of a team planting a community garden, revitalizing a local park or painting a lively mural at a school comes to mind. Yet all around the globe, at any given time, thousands (if not millions) of engaged citizens volunteer *virtually* — using their computers, the Internet, even their smart phones.

Virtual volunteers can complete short-term or long-term tasks, in whole or in part, typically off-site from the organization or person being assisted. If you've got access to a computer, thousands of different volunteer projects and roles are available to you — from your home, the library, a coffee shop, anywhere with an Internet connection.

Below is a robust resource list categorized by activity, impact area or beneficiaries.

ARCHIVES, GENEALOGY & MAPS

[Ancestry.com's World Archives Program \(AWAP\)](#) provides free software to its volunteers to access already-scanned images and transcribe them into a common, publicly-searchable database. The Ancestry World Archives Project's online volunteers use their passion for genealogy to help others discover their roots.

[Carnamah Historical Society virtual volunteering initiative](#) uses online volunteers to help with transcription and indexing projects to make historical records more discoverable and searchable.

[Map Rectifier Project](#) by the New York Public Library. This geo-rectification toolkit creates layered digital maps utilizing all the information available about a certain geography from sources as varied as Google's satellite imagery and centuries-old fire insurance land maps. Volunteers index information that records how many floors a building once had or what a street was named at different points in time, and the resulting layered digital map shows the aggregate results.

[The National Map Corps \(TNM Corps\)](#), part of the U.S. Department of the Interior, asks citizen volunteers to collect data on structures and use it to add new features, remove obsolete points and correct data for The National Map database.

[OpenStreetMap](#) is a free editable map of the whole world. It is made by online volunteers. Anyone can contribute to its geographical database.

[Smithsonian Archives of American Gardens](#) is an online database of thousands of images in the Smithsonian's Collections Search Center. By correctly tagging an image regarding the types of plants in the image, the structures, objects, people, or any details you notice, you help make that image more useful to professional catalogers in museums, archives and libraries.

The [Smithsonian Digital Volunteer program](#) engages the public in making its collections more accessible. Digital volunteers transcribe historic documents and collection records to facilitate research and preserve these valuable assets for future generations.

DISASTER

The [American Red Cross](#) always has needs for volunteers to act as digital advocates. Volunteers can help generate donations to the Red Cross while shopping for themselves online or by setting up online fundraisers. Volunteers can also help spread awareness by re-post their social media content.

[Humanitarian Data Exchange \(HDX\)](#) Key data needed by humanitarian workers addressing critical needs during a crisis, such as a natural or man-made disaster, as well as data needed by other development workers and researchers, is often trapped in PDF documents. Volunteers extract this data into a database so that it can be easily found, helping anyone to visualize trend lines across regions or countries and compare this data to other indicators.

[Humanity Road](#) volunteers use Internet and mobile communications technology to collect, verify and route information online during disasters. They provide public safety information as well as directing the public to governmental and aid agencies that are providing assistance for the disaster.

Each year, disasters around the world kill nearly 100,000 and affect or displace 200 million people. Many of the places where these disasters occur are literally 'missing' from any map and first responders lack the information to make valuable decisions regarding relief efforts. [Missing Maps](#) is an open, collaborative project in which you can help to map areas where humanitarian organizations are trying to meet the needs of vulnerable people.

ENTREPRENEURS AROUND THE WORLD

[Bpeace](#) is a U.S. nonprofit that recruits business professionals to help entrepreneurs in countries emerging from war to create and expand businesses and employment (particularly for women). Volunteers need a particular area of expertise regarding business development or project management and pay a monthly membership fee.

[Cherie Blair Foundation Online Mentors](#) Online mentors are successful businesswomen in the U.K., and mentor online women entrepreneurs in developing countries.

[Grow Movement](#) recruits online volunteer business consultants from around the world to work via Skype, phone and email to empower African entrepreneurs in Uganda, Rwanda and Malawi, helping them with business skills, enabling them to run their organizations more effectively, increase profitability and create jobs in their communities.

GENERAL SKILLS

[Doe Network](#) Devoted to assisting official law enforcement agencies in solving cold cases concerning unexplained disappearances and unidentified Victims from North America, Australia and Europe. Online volunteers also help translate documents into various languages.

[Mozilla/Firefox](#) Did you know that this web browser is produced by a nonprofit organization? "We believe in the power and potential of the Internet and want to see it thrive for everyone, everywhere." Mozilla involves hundreds of online volunteers, and "you don't have to be a C++ guru (or even know what that means!)" to contribute as an online volunteer.

[Nabuur](#) is an online volunteering platform that links volunteers with local communities in Africa, Asia and Latin America so they can learn about each other, share ideas and find solutions to local issues.

The [OpenMRS](#) community is a worldwide network of volunteers from many different backgrounds including technology, health care, and international development. Together, they are working to build the world's largest and most flexible technology platform to support delivery of health care in some of the most challenging environments on the planet.

[Wikipedia](#), the largest online volunteering initiative in the world. To volunteer, you simply find an article you have some knowledge of and add information to the entry. Note that Wikipedia now strongly encourages all additions to any entry be attributed to a verifiable source. Available in Spanish, French, German, Polish, Italian, Dutch, Portuguese and more!

The [Zooniverse](#) is the world's largest and most popular platform for people-powered research. This research is made possible by volunteers. With our wide-ranging and ever-expanding suite of projects, covering many disciplines and topics across the sciences and humanities, there's a place for anyone and everyone to explore, learn and have fun in the Zooniverse. To volunteer with Zooniverse, just go to the [Projects](#) page, choose the one you like the look of, and get started.

HEALTH, WELL-BEING & EMPOWERMENT FOR ALL

[Crisis Text Line](#) is a free 24/7 national crisis-intervention and counseling service conducted exclusively through SMS text. Volunteers use the nonprofit's web-based platform to provide emotional support to texters who are dealing with a wide range of issues- bullying, self-harm, suicidal thoughts, and more. Prospective volunteers go through screening and a lengthy self-paced training. Once completed, volunteers sign up to take one four-hour shift each week for a year.

[IMAlive](#) is a live online crisis network and a project by the Kristin Brooks Hope Center, To Write Love On Her Arms and PostSecret. Online volunteers must be at least 18 years old (16 with parents notarized consent), complete at least 20 hours training and a series of tests and screenings, and willing to commit to responding four hours a week for one year, or eight hours a week for six months. They also must pay, or fundraise, a fee to cover training and support costs.

The [Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network](#) (RAINN) is the nation's largest anti-sexual violence organization, and operates the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 1.800.656.HOPE and the National Sexual Assault [Online Hotline](#). Online volunteers who staff the online hotline must complete a training course facilitated by RAINN, complete a background check, and be on time for shifts.

TED Translators are a global community of volunteers who subtitle TED Talks and enable the inspiring ideas in them to crisscross languages and borders. Bring TED into your language! [Join the global community of volunteers.](#)

[Trevor Project](#) is an online, social networking community for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth ages 13-24, and their friends and allies. Online volunteers monitor the TrevorSpace site in an effort to maintain a safe online space for young LGBTQ people. Trainings for online volunteers are provided quarterly.

Help to bring personalized voices to people with speech impediments or who have lost their voice! VocaliD is aimed at designing personalized synthetic voices so that people with severe speech impairments can use a voice that fits their body and personality. Share your voice and help drive innovation in voice technology through [VocaliD](#).

LITERACY

[BookShare.Org](#) offers thousands of books to people with reading disabilities. As an [online volunteer](#) you can either scan books to be added to the collection or edit books that have been scanned.

[Distributed Proofreaders](#) These online volunteers turn public domain books into online books, mostly for [Project Gutenberg](#). Many volunteers work on a book at the same time and proofread each other's work.

[IntoBooks](#) is an online mentoring program where students and their adult mentors read the same books and then discuss them online. It's part of the [ePals](#) program.

[Learning Ally](#) Many audiobooks are created with text-to-speech software that scans text from computer files and uses synthesized human voices to read the text aloud. However, illustrations or figures used throughout the books are not included. Online volunteers type those figure descriptions into the text, enabling students to receive ALL book material, not just the text.

[LibriVox](#) is a nonprofit that coordinates online volunteers to record audio versions of public domain books.

[Translators Without Borders](#) recruits volunteers who want to translate texts into different languages for NGOs and nonprofits.

MENTORING/TUTORING

[Career Village](#) An online platform where students ask career questions that are answered by people working, or that have worked, in that field. All you need is a LinkedIn account to start helping students become better informed about the career decisions they are facing.

[icouldbe.org](#) is meant to connect the energy and expertise of mentors from various professions with the most vulnerable students in the U.S. educational system.

[Infinite Family](#), an online mentoring program matching adults and families in the U.S. with at-risk, impoverished children in South Africa.

[MicroMentor](#) matches small business owners with business mentors. Volunteer mentors should have three years of business ownership experience, or five years of management

experience, or several years of professional experience in a specialized skill. The program is part of [MercyCorps](#).

[MentorNet](#), a division of Great Minds in STEM (GMiS), strategically matches STEM students and professionals in compatible online mentoring relationships.

TECHNOLOGY & ENGINEERING

Volunteers are a key element of [NPower's](#) program success. As part of preparing our students for a career in technology, we engage tech professionals throughout our program to share their knowledge, experience, insight, and advice. Interacting and learning from professionals in the industry is a crucial part to our students becoming well rounded professionals. Connect with NPower students in-person or virtually, in small or large group settings, and for short or long-term projects. NPower can create a customized volunteer experience suited to your team's needs that readies each student for career success.

[Crisis Commons / CrisisCamp](#) mobilizes technology volunteers to work together to create disaster response and learning events with volunteers, who collaborate to aggregate crisis data, develop prototype tools and train people on how to use technology tools to aid in disaster response. Online volunteers need to be experienced, credible IT experts and need to sign up before a crisis.

[FOSS Manuals](#) online volunteers produce free manuals about Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) in their own language. To date, they have completed 120+ manuals in more than 30 languages, such as French, English, Farsi, Dutch, and Finnish.

[Geeks Without Bounds](#) is an international coalition of passionate problem solvers working together using technology to assist people whose survival is threatened due to violence, neglect, or catastrophe. Online volunteers need to be experienced, credible IT experts and need to establish a relationship with this organization before a crisis.

[TechSoup](#) has a series of discussion groups where nonprofits ask questions about technology. You can log into the community at any time and try to help nonprofits and volunteers with questions about software, databases and more. TechSoup also needs volunteers to [transcribe its most popular archived webinars](#).

VETERANS

[American Corporate Partners](#) provides veterans with mentoring through [ACP AdvisorNet](#) - an online network of volunteer Advisors who commit to sharing their business expertise and advice with military veterans and their immediate family. Veterans can post questions related to employment, career development and small business

[Hire Heroes USA](#) works to create job opportunities for U.S. military veterans and their spouses. Most of their volunteers participate remotely helping with mock interviews, career counseling, or providing guidance on job searches, preparing resumes and filling out applications.

SEARCH ENGINES FOR VIRTUAL VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

[All for Good](#) is Points of Light's database of thousands of volunteer opportunities, many of which can be completed remotely. To find virtual opportunities, make sure to put "virtual" in your keyword search under "More options" when searching.

[Catchafire](#) uses their website to match professionals with nonprofits based on their skills, cause interest and time availability. You'll find tons of skills-based volunteering opportunities, many of which can be completed virtually.

[Create the Good](#) is an initiative by AARP to help its members get connected with nonprofits and causes. *Anyone* can use the site to find virtual volunteering activities in support of a variety of organizations. Enter either "virtual" or "online" in the keyword search, chose *any* for distance and date, and leave your postal code blank.

[Crowd4U](#) is a micro volunteering and crowdsourcing platform, an all-academic open and generic platform for "Crowdsourcing for Good," providing a task pool for microtasks for academic and public purposes. Crowd4U also serves as a testbed for developing advanced crowdsourcing technologies.

[Help From Home](#) has a mix of volunteering activities you can do from home, both online and without a computer. Most are micro volunteering – tasks that require just a few minutes or a few hours.

[Idealist](#) has many volunteer tasks listed on its site that can be completed online.

[Skills for Change](#) is a great way to find online volunteer opportunities to use your "skills and wits to battle the world's toughest challenges."

[Taproot+](#) is a new marketplace for short-term, individual pro bono consulting projects, curated by the Taproot Foundation. Many of these volunteer projects can be completed remotely.

[United Nations Volunteers'](#) online platform connects volunteers with organizations working for sustainable human development. Volunteers contribute their skills online to help organizations address development challenges.

[VolunteerMatch](#) uses their website to bring good people and causes together. Search through their database of thousands of volunteer opportunities and be sure to look for those opportunities that are virtual.