



EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

## Guidelines for Describing Volunteer Activities

*Volunteering is as American as apple pie and has always been an integral part of the Foreign Service lifestyle. Many posts have volunteer award programs to recognize the contributions of those people who donate their time to improve the quality of life for their colleagues and/or to help the needy in the host country.*

*Today, you can apply your volunteer experience to your professional life. Volunteer work enhances a resume; some corporations eliminate candidates for executive positions who do not show community involvement on their resumes. The Federal Government accepts job-related volunteer work as qualifying experience for Civil Service positions - it counts the same as paid experience.*

### Develop Your Outline of Volunteer Activities

The Outline of Volunteer Activities is a composite of the experiences of many Foreign Service family members. It is divided into four skill areas that you may have developed while doing volunteer work at posts abroad or in the United States. Under each skill area, there are phrases that you can edit and supplement based on your individual experience adapting them to your career area or a specific job. Use the Action Verb List, available on the FLO Internet website under Resumes (<http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c21568.htm>) to help you choose strong words to describe your work.

The Outline of Volunteer Activities can be used to draft a resume or a government application form. Two types of resumes are described here. The functional resume is a good format to use if you are just out of college, have little work experience, are reentering the job market, or are changing careers. It focuses on abilities or skills, not on job titles or dates. The chronological resume lists work experience starting with the most recent job. It shows where and how experience was acquired, plus the accomplishments of each job. It should be used by those with steady and increasingly responsible work experience.

If you are using these guidelines to prepare a government application form, explain skills in greater detail. For example, instead of writing “Organized \_\_\_\_\_,” detail what was involved: “chaired meetings, initiated programs, recruited workers, and interviewed \_\_\_\_\_.”

In describing volunteer work abroad, mention the number of countries in which you have served, the years invested, and the hours spent weekly in a particular function. Where pertinent, detail

the amount of money handled and the number of people supervised. It may also be useful to highlight foreign language competency, especially if you acquired or used it in volunteer activities, e.g., “fluent in written and spoken French, which was used extensively in working with host country nationals.”

Foreign Service family members can have their language skills tested by the Foreign Service Institute. Eligible family members of Department of State employees can schedule testing at no cost. A fee is charged family members of employees of other agencies. Call to make an appointment:

Language Testing Unit (SLS/TU)  
National Foreign Affairs Training Center  
4000 Arlington Boulevard, F4221  
Arlington, VA 22204-1500  
Telephone: 703-302-7125

The Outline of Volunteer Activities and the Action Verb List (on the FLO website) are designed to help you get started describing your volunteer accomplishments. Professional counselors at the Career Development Resource Center (CDRC) will help you refine your resume or application. Their services are free to Foreign Service family members. Contact them at:

Columbia Plaza (SA-1), Room L321  
2401 E Street NW  
Washington, DC 20522-0108  
Phone: 202-663-3042  
Fax: 202-663-3146  
Email: [CDRC@state.gov](mailto:CDRC@state.gov)

## **Outline of Volunteer Activities**

### ***Management / Administration***

- Managed \_\_\_\_ United States Government official residential property(ies).
- Hired and supervised household staff of \_\_\_\_.
- Maintained household and representational accounts and records.
- Supervised budget of \$\_\_\_\_\_ making recommendations for budget revisions and allocation of funds.
- Kept inventory of property contents.
- Planned and supervised rebuilding, redesign, or redecoration of \_\_\_\_ Embassy residence(s), chancery(ies), garden(s). Consulted with Embassy on contracts.
- Coordinated program to provide welfare and housing support to American evacuees from neighboring country.

### ***Community Relations/ Community Liaison***

- Organized system for welcoming newly arrived personnel and families to post.
- Planned and developed orientation programs for newly arrived personnel and families.

- Assessed and responded to the needs and problems of American families within the Embassy.
- Provided family counseling and basic health care guidance on problems of handling domestic staff, including information on local customs and cultural differences.
- Identified community problems and developed programs to find solutions. Give details, e.g., coordinated establishment of Community Liaison Office.
- Encouraged better relations among members of different agencies within the official American community.
- Mediated \_\_\_\_ dispute(s) among differing factions within the \_\_\_\_\_ community leading to satisfactory conclusion.
- Chaired or served on the board of executive committee of \_\_\_\_\_ school, commissary, club, church, or hospital.
- Developed close contacts between Embassy and families of American business community.
- Organized \_\_\_\_\_ American or international community projects or programs: teen club, community council, recreation association, summer work program for teens, book discussion group, sports program, or Scout group.
- Provided recreation or community center at Embassy residence for American Embassy employees and their families in the absence of other adequate facilities.

***International Relations / Public Relations / Non-Media Public Relations***

- Planned, implemented, hosted \_\_\_\_\_ official representational functions monthly (for \_\_\_\_ guests) for the United States Government. Represented United States Government at official local government functions.
- Planned and coordinated schedules and events for VIP visitors, official groups, Congressional delegations, and special occasions (4th of July, conferences, seminars, cultural programs).
- Selected art works for the official residence from the Art in Embassies program. Arranged exhibitions. Wrote or supervised the writing of exhibition catalog.
- Participated in radio and television programs on American life, customs, or art.
- Served as a member of official U.S. team on visits of various field projects: urban renewal, family planning, schools, hospitals, and factories.
- Briefed on implementation of project and reviewed goals.
- Organized or chaired international fund-raising projects for \_\_\_\_\_. Proceeds of \$\_\_\_\_\_ were used to \_\_\_\_\_.
- Served on board of international or bi-national club(s).
- Used specialized knowledge to advise on establishment of \_\_\_\_\_ local schools, health care facilities, English language programs, social services, cottage industries, craft shops.
- Organized recitals or exhibitions of local craftsmanship. Advised on design. Initiated liaison among local American designers.
- Directed orientation and hospitality for local and/or American student groups participating in \_\_\_\_\_. (Examples: American Field Service, Crossroads, or other educational programs.)

- Advised student groups and international clubs. Arranged briefings, lectures, and interviews.
- Planned social functions.
- Assisted foreign diplomatic families assigned to Washington or New York adapt to life in the United States.
- Developed interpersonal relationships and communicated on cross-cultural basis with \_\_\_\_\_.

### ***Research / Writing***

- Researched through publications, lectures, briefings, and visits the history, politics, economics, institutions and culture of \_\_\_\_\_ (area of assignment).
- Organized and updated reports on local living conditions and prices that resulted in a change in cost of living allowances.
- Strengthened professional and personal interests by studying and researching:
- Programs of following agencies involved in overseas development - AID, Peace Corps, USIA, UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF (write out name of agency);
- Programs sponsored by private voluntary organizations (PVOs) in developing countries -- CARE, Ford Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, Asia Foundation,
- Church World Service, Catholic Relief, Red Cross, American Field Service, in \_\_\_\_\_(country).
- Researched and wrote booklet on living conditions and services in \_\_\_\_\_(country) for the American community.
- Interviewed and wrote articles on foreign cultural programs and activities of American women abroad for \_\_\_\_\_.

### ***Resources***

- *The Resume Doctor: How to transform a Troublesome Work History into a Winning Resume* – John J. Marcus, 1996.
- *Dynamite Resumes (3rd Edition)* – Ron Krannich, Ph.D. and Caryl Krannich, Ph.D., 1999.
- *The New Perfect Resume* by Tom Jackson and Ellen Jackson. New York: Doubleday, 1996.
- *The Complete Idiot's Guide to the Perfect Resume* – Susan Ireland, 2000.
- *Reinvention: Federal Resumes* by Kathryn Troutman. Washington, DC: The Resume Place, 1997.
- *101 Quick Tips for a Dynamite Resume* – Richard Fein, 1998.
- *The Federal Resume Guidebook: A Step-by-Step Guidebook for Writing a Federal Resume in Accordance with the Office of Personnel: Management's Flyer* - Kathryn K. Troutman, 1999.
- *The Damn Good Resume Guide: A Crash Course in Resume Writing (3rd Edition)* – Yana Parker, 1996.

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