

Varsity Letter in Community Service

School Year Application

Frequently Asked Questions

If you don't find the answer to your question here, please contact Brooke Smith, Volunteer Coordinator at United Way of Snohomish County, at 425.374.5553 or brooke.smith@uwsc.org

1. **There is an application fee of \$15 that is required of all applicants. What is this fee for? Can I sponsor a student? Or what if I can't pay?**

The application fee that was instated in 2016 is to help cover costs toward the ordering of the school patch letter, patch bars, community service patch and the award packet.

If you are interested in sponsoring an additional student(s), please let us know or make checks payable to United Way of Snohomish County (3120 McDougall Ave. Ste. 200 Everett, WA 98201) Attn: Varsity Letter. If you are not able to pay this fee, please contact Diana at 425.374.5542 or brooke.smith@uwsc.org with the reason and any documentation you may have around financial aid.

2. **The Varsity Letter in Community Service Program requirements state that I have to complete at least 70 hours of "United Way aligned service work". What type of volunteer work counts as a non-school activity?**

United Way's new focus and mission is to build a community where all families have access to opportunity for generations to come. Our approach places children birth to age 8 and their families with low income at the core of our work. By focusing on the well-being of both the child and the adults in their lives together, we are creating long-term solutions that will unlock access to family success.

All volunteer work must be completed with a nonprofit organization that has a 501(c)3 status. Below are a few examples. If you have further questions please contact us and you can also find aligned options by visiting <http://getconnected.uwsc.org/>

United Way aligned work i.e. low income families with young children examples include:

- Helping with your school's Stuff the Bus event
- Mentoring a child through an official mentoring program
- Volunteering with any nonprofit organization whose mission is to alleviate poverty for families, feed the hungry or provide services to young children
- Serving food at a homeless shelter (that serves families)

If you see something missing from the list, please contact us ahead of time to verify.

Here is a list of United Way partner agencies that work with low income families with young children:

Catholic Community Services
ChildStrive
Cocoon House
Darrington Youth Coalition
Friends of Youth
Hand in Hand
Housing Hope
The Family Shelter at Interfaith Association of Northwest Washington
Kids Place Early Learning Center
Lutheran Community Services Northwest
Mercy Housing Northwest
Parent Trust for Washington Children
Clothes for Kids
Volunteers of American Western Washington
Habitat for Humanity
YMCA of Snohomish County
Youthnet
YWCA

3. The Varsity Letter in Community Service Program requirements state that I have to complete at least one “school activity.” What type of volunteer work counts as a school activity and how many hours do I need?

The following is a list of activities that can be done in school. These are just a few ideas; this is not a complete list. If you are uncertain if an activity counts, please contact us.

- Participating in a community service project through a school club (Honor Society, Key Club, etc.)
- Volunteering with a parent/teacher organization within the school or school district
- Tutoring peers through a school tutoring program
- There are NO hour requirement for school-related activities

Sometimes work done through a school group can be counted as school-related OR non-school-related work if the work was done with an outside organization (i.e. Key Club participating in Relay for Life). You may count the hours where you need them.

4. I volunteered on a mission trip through my church. How do I count these hours?

If you volunteer on a mission trip or other volunteer vacation, the hours are calculated as follows:

- During the school year: 10 hours per day
- During the summer: 15 hours per day

If you have documentation proving that you served more than these number of hours per day, you may submit it with your application and will be credited with these hours if we are able to verify them through your provided contact.

5. I volunteered as a camp counselor, how do I count those hours?

If you volunteer as a camp counselor, the hours are calculated as follows:

- During the school year: 10 hours per day
- During the summer: 15 hours per day

If you have documentation proving that you served more than these hours per day, you may submit it with your application and will be credited with these hours if we are able to verify them through your provided contact.

6. Can I count hours from club meetings?

If you participate in a school service club, you may count any hours that are spent organizing and implementing a service project. If you are in a club that uses meeting times to discuss other club business, you may not count those hours. Only hours spent planning and participating in a service project will count as community service hours.

7. I volunteer as a sports manager with my school's team. Do these hours count?

Typically, you are able to earn a sports management letter if you volunteer with a varsity-level team, so these hours do not count if this option is available at your school. If your time is spent with younger students

(i.e. you are in high school and you help with a junior high or with an elementary school team) or with a community sports group, your hours will most likely count. Please contact us if you are unsure.

7. Can I count my time babysitting or helping with yard work or house work?

Any babysitting, yard work or house work performed with a nonprofit CAN be counted for this award. In cases where you are assisting an individual on your own, we require the individual have a documented need and they cannot be a related to you. To qualify, the recipient must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Receive Medicaid benefits (low-income senior citizen)
- Receive SSDI (individual with a disability)

United Way volunteers will need to contact the recipient and verify that they meet the above criteria.

8. I have to complete community service hours so that I can graduate. Can I count these hours towards my varsity letter?

Any community service or volunteer hours done to meet a graduation requirement DO NOT count towards your varsity letter in community service. Volunteer hours that are counted for the varsity letter are to be done above and beyond what is required for graduation. If, for example, you are required to complete 20 hours of service as part of your project but you wind up volunteering for 30 hours instead, then we will be able to count only the 10 additional hours you worked toward earning your varsity letter.

9. I have to complete community service hours for a class. Can I count these hours?

Any community service or volunteer hours done as a requirement for a class DO NOT count towards your varsity letter in community service. Volunteer hours that are counted for the varsity letter are to be done above and beyond class requirements.

10. I job-shadowed. Can I count these hours?

No. Hours spent performing a job shadow does not count for this award, even if it is with a nonprofit or school organization.

11. I volunteered with a local company but wasn't paid. Can I count these hours?

No. Hours must be volunteered with a nonprofit agency or school.

12. I volunteered with my family. Can one of my parents be the contact for the verification of my volunteer hours?

Unless your parent works for the organization you volunteered with, you may not have your parent sign off on your hours. You will need to get the contact information for the organization representative who can verify your volunteer work. In cases where your parent does work for the organization, it is still preferable to have someone unrelated to you as your contact.

13. I volunteered several hours with an organization I am a member of i.e. my church, Rainbow, Boy Scouts etc... do this hours count?

Since you are a member, hours can only be counted when you are doing service for other people or an outside group like a nonprofit. If your organization was hosting a food drive or spaghetti night feed that benefited an outside agency then hours spent setting up and collecting or serving the food would count. However, hours spent benefiting the organization itself such as singing choir at your own church, setting up an event for your own Boy Scout troop, ushering at your own organization's event etc... would not count. If you aren't sure, please contact us ahead of time.

14. I volunteered as a foster “parent” for a non-profit animal agency. Do these hours count?

And if so, how do I count them?

Since the organization is a non-profit and by fostering an animal you are in turn helping the community by getting them ready for adoption, then yes these hours count towards the non-aligned United Way hours.

Here is how you can count your hours:

- 2 hours a day for a healthy adult animal
- 4 hours a day for a healthy litter of kitten or puppies
- 4 hours a day for a sick or recovering adult animal
- 6 hours a day for a sick litter of kittens or puppies
- 6 hours a day for mom and baby