

2014-2015 Varsity Letter in Community Service

United Way of Pierce County partners with Pierce County schools to recognize and reward students for their volunteer efforts in the community. For the 2014-2015 school year the requirements have changed. Please review this document for details.

BASIC REQUIREMENTS

A minimum of **145** total community service hours, with:

- At least 45 United Way-aligned service hours
- At least 1 school-related activity (no specific hour requirement)
- General Volunteer Hours (no minimum)

UNITED WAY ALIGNED HOURS (45 minimum)

What Counts as United Way Aligned Hours?

- Hours with a United Way program or project:
 - ✓ Hours with a volunteer project coordinated by United Way
 - ✓ Youth Leadership Council Hours
- Hours with a United Way Funded Partner:
 - ✓ A list of currently funded agencies can be found here <http://www.uwpc.org/PartnerAgencies.htm>
- Hours with an agency that is aligned with United Way of Pierce County's strategic focus areas:

Early Childhood Development:

501c3 Non-Profit program that focus on Kindergarten Readiness (Cognitive, Social & Emotional, Physical).

Examples:

- *SPECIAL Families of Pierce County*
- *Children's Museum Play to Learn*

Early Grade Excellence:

501c3 Non-Profit program that focus on Reading at Grade Level, Summer Learning Loss, The Effect of Attendance on Grade Level Reading, Tutoring/Mentoring children 0 – 10, and projects that align with early childhood education.

Examples:

- *Peace Community Center – Elementary Program*
- *Communities in Schools – Mentoring Program*
- *Creating Math/Reading/ABC United Way To-Go kits*

Strengthening Families:

501c3 Non-Profit programs that focus on supportive and basic-needs services for families to help provide a stable and nurturing environment for their children.

Examples:

- *Lindquist Dental Clinic for Children – Children's Dental Program*
- *Power Pack Programs (Backpack food programs)*

Basic Needs & Supportive Services:

501c3 Non-Profit programs that focus on supportive services and basic needs (i.e. housing, food banks, emergency services/disaster response, etc.)

Examples:

- *FISH Food Banks of Pierce County – Food Bank Program*
- *L'Arche Tahoma Hope Farm and Gardens – Farm and Gardens Program*

GENERAL VOLUNTEER HOURS

ALL volunteer work MUST be served with a 501(c)3 non-profit organization or school/school district. All hours must be BEYOND what is required for graduation, a class, credit, or homework.

What are some examples of general volunteer work that counts but doesn't fall into the United Way-aligned category?

- Hospitals (any hospital hours including Mary Bridge Children's Hospital)
- Non-profit Animal Services (i.e. Tacoma Humane Society, animal shelters)
- Any healthcare/illness related non-profits (ex. American Cancer Society – Cancer Action Network)
- Non-profit environmental agencies (ex. CHIP in!, Puget Creek Restoration Society, MetroParks Tacoma, general park cleanups)
- Senior Centers/Assisted Living Non-Profits

- City beautification projects (i.e. Paint Tacoma Beautiful)
- Museums
- Veterans services (Washington Soldiers Home, American Lake VA, etc.)
- Sport related community service hours (at a recreation-based non-profit)
- Mission Trips

NEW GUIDELINES:

The following hours will NO LONGER COUNT towards the Varsity Letter Hour Requirements:

- Church Related Hours if not serving the outside community:
 - ✓ In general, for church hours to count towards the Varsity Letter, they must benefit the external community of the church. Examples of this include volunteering at a church-run food bank, volunteering with church members at an external non-profit, running a food drive within a youth group, volunteering on a mission trip (that is not based solely in evangelizing/proselytizing), etc.
 - ✓ Church hours that benefit only the congregation of the church will NO LONGER COUNT towards the letter, such as:
 - *Volunteering in the church choir, band, or any performances*
 - *Volunteering to usher in Church*
 - *Volunteering in the church nursery or Vacation Bible School*
 - *Volunteering to doorbell, proselytize, run a booth to pass out church information, etc.*

SCHOOL-RELATED VOLUNTEER HOURS

At least one activity must be school related

There is 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.

What School Hours Count?

In general, any school hours that build capacity for the school or serve an outside population will count as school hours. School hours must be BEYOND what is required for graduation, a class, credit, or homework. For SOTA/SAMI students, hours completed through Mini Term will NOT count – only hours that are above and beyond the general internship/volunteering minimums set by the school.

Some examples of these are:

- *Volunteering before or after school for a teacher, administrator, or staff member (not a family member)*
- *Volunteering with a school service club (i.e., Key and Interact, Community Service Club, etc.)*
- *Volunteering with a school club (not necessarily service focused) for a service/volunteering activity (i.e., If the Spanish Club does a fundraiser for Centro Latino)*
- *Volunteering with a lower level school (i.e.,volunteering with Middle or Elementary School teacher, administrator, or staff member)*
- *Volunteering with a class BEYOND what is required (i.e., an optional volunteering event that does not provide extra credit)*

NEW GUIDELINES

These hours will NO LONGER COUNT towards the Varsity Letter Hour Requirements:
School Performance Hours

- Hours with band, orchestra, or pep band performances
- Theater departments/productions or performances

VARSITY LETTER IN COMMUNITY SERVICE FAQ

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 hours per day, you may submit it with your application and will be credited with these hours if we are able to verify them with your provided contact.

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 with your provided contact.

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. ALL hours are subject to your supervisor's discretion.

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 your time is spent with younger students (i.e. You are in High School helping with Junior High or you are in Junior High helping with Elementary) or a community sports group your hours will most likely count. Please call us if you are unsure.

Can I count time spent volunteering on political activities?

Volunteering for a political campaign for an individual or for-profit organization does not count for this award. Time spent in political efforts through a non-profit or school can be counted, for example -time spent lobbying for a school bond can count.

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

*Some babysitting, yard work or house work performed with a non-profit 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 this criteria.

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 complete 30 hours then we will only be able to count 10 of your hours toward this distinction.

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 what is required for a class.

I participated in Nurse Camp. Can I count these hours?

There is a volunteering component to Nurse Camp but you cannot count all of your hours spent there. You may only count the actual volunteer hours spent with the camp.

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 non-profit or school organization.

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

Unfortunately, no you cannot. If the company is not a non-profit organization we cannot count these hours. This includes many childcare facilities that are not non-profit organizations. Be sure to check with the organization you are volunteering with ahead of time to ensure they meet the guidelines.

I volunteered with my family. Can my parent be the contact for my verification of hours?

Unless your parent works for the organization you volunteered with, you may not have your parent sign off on 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 preferable to have someone unrelated to you as your contact.

Who do I contact for more information?

If your college/career counselor at your high school cannot answer your questions, feel free to contact us at (253) 597-6685 or youthunited@uwpc.org.