

Teacher's Guide

Volunteering and Community Service

A Workbook for Students

A resource for the Community Service Module
and Career and Life Management (CALM)



**Teacher's Guide for Volunteering and Community Service: a Workbook for Students.
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Introduction

This guide accompanies the resource “Volunteering and Community Service: A Workbook for Students”.

The student workbook is meant to be, for the most part, self-directed. However, some students may need more help or guidance, especially with the self-assessment and goal-setting activities. All students would benefit from some instructional time that addresses the topics, activities, and questions in the workbook. Instructional time can help to provide direction, assist with learning activities, and focus reflection. The NWT Senior Secondary School Handbook suggests that “teachers should build in a 'time of reflection' around the student's community service experiences” (Section 12-2) to help students understand and appreciate the importance and effect of their community service activity.

This guide suggests ideas and approaches for assisting and guiding students as they complete the workbook, thereby helping them to make the most of their community service hours. It also describes how the activities in the workbook relate to the Career and Life Management (CALM) (2002) curriculum, and can help to fulfill many of the Learning Outcomes in the Career and Life Choices module (General Outcome 3) of CALM.

Purpose of Student Workbook

The Student Workbook is intended to:

- help students make the most of their community service, so it will become a learning opportunity that benefits both the student and the community;
- show how volunteering relates to the Community Service Module and the Learning Outcomes of Career and Life Management (CALM).

Ideally, if the workbook helps students to have a positive experience completing their community service hours, they will be encouraged to continue serving their community as volunteers.

The NWT Senior Secondary School Handbook outlines the responsibilities of the student in completing his/her community service (Section 12-1). The student is expected to:

- determine what project s/he would like to do;
- contact the person(s) responsible for that project;
- determine goals and objectives;
- write an action plan and a project plan;
- keep a log of activities and work completed.

Information and activities included in the workbook should help students to fulfill most of these responsibilities.

Organization of Student Workbook

The Student Workbook consists of information, learning activities, and reflection questions. Learning Activities are indicated with a ◊ followed by an italicized highlighted heading, for example, ◊ *To get you thinking...about volunteering*. Reflection questions follow the heading *****Reflection Questions***** and are highlighted.

Although many of the learning activities can be completed in the workbook itself, some of them, as well as the reflection questions, will require additional pages for responses. Students should either put the workbook in a binder and add pages as needed, or keep a separate notebook or journal.

The workbook is organized into four sections, as described below.

Getting Started: A brief section of introductory material explaining the context, purpose, objectives, and approach of the workbook. The section ends with the first set of reflection questions. These are intended to get students thinking about the idea of volunteering, as well as introduce topics that are covered in the workbook.

Planning Your Community Service: This section includes numerous learning activities and reflection questions meant to help students through the process of finding, choosing, and applying for community service work. Topics covered include a definition of volunteering, examples of work done by volunteers, finding volunteer opportunities, and choosing the “right” community service activity. This last topic consists of a number of learning activities and reflection questions involving self-assessment, goal setting, and the application process.

Doing Your Community Service Work: This section should help students track their own learning and skill development during the course of their community service hours. It also includes an activity involving an interview with a volunteer in the community.

Learning from Your Community Service Work: In this section, students look back and look forward. They are asked to complete learning activities and reflection questions to rate their skill development, re-assess their goals, connect their community service activities to the next step in career planning, and reflect on the significance of their community service experience.

Suggestions for working with students

It is not possible to specify here an instructional plan for guiding students through the workbook, as each school—and possibly each student—will have unique circumstances and needs. The workbook is meant to be flexible and to be adapted as needed. The following suggestions are meant as starting points, guidelines, and possible approaches. School staff responsible for supervising the Community Service Module will need to develop an instructional plan appropriate for each situation.

If possible, instructional time should be arranged for at least the following activities to assist students working on their Community Service Module:

- **Orientation:** Introduce the purpose and contents of the workbook. Review the Learning Activities and Reflection Questions so that students will know what's expected, and how the workbook can help them.
- **Check-in:** Designate times for students to report on progress, ask questions, and receive help with learning activities as needed.
- **Reflection time:** Designate times for individuals or groups of students to address the reflection components of the workbook. This aspect of the community service experience is especially important. Instructors should encourage and assist as much as possible. Opportunities for reflection can be provided through:
 - group discussions where students can “reflect” out loud and share ideas and thoughts;
 - pair and share sessions;
 - interactive journals (with teacher's comments);
 - dedicated quiet time and space for students to work individually on reflection questions.

Where more instructional time can be arranged, further attention can be focused on these learning activities:

Planning Your community Service

- **Identifying and finding volunteer opportunities:** Hold brainstorming and discussion sessions to help students identify possible volunteer activities in your community, and how/where to find them. Remind students that community service may take many forms, from helping an elder to volunteering for a major non-profit organization.
- **Identifying interests, values and passions:** These are important personal questions, requiring serious attention. Provide opportunities for reflection, as described above.

- **Assessing skills:** Help students to focus on and identify the skills they have, and those they'd like to develop. Assist students, as needed, to complete the "Skill Areas" table.
- **Setting goals:** Hold brainstorming and discussion sessions to identify possible goals of community service work. Help students to define personal goals by reviewing answers to learning activities already completed (especially "Why Volunteer?" and self-assessment activities). Encourage students to use their Career and Program Plan (CPP) to guide their selection of community service work.

Doing Your Community Service

- **Tracking skill development:** Help students, as needed, to fill out the "Rate your skill development" table. Emphasize that this rating is to be done by the student for his/her own benefit, and should be an honest self-appraisal. Provide guidance and suggestions to students about keeping regular personal notes on their community service work. Even if they keep a log of their activities on an official school form, emphasize that detailed personal notes may benefit them later in their careers.

Learning from Your Community Service Work

- **Updating the Student Career and Program Plan:** Make sure students update their CPP with details about their community service work. Help them to connect their community service experience with their career goals, and to recognize that skills they develop doing community service are transferable to other work situations.
- **Reflect on Community Service Experience:** This could be considered the most important activity in the workbook. For students to truly benefit from their experience, they need to reflect on what they've learned, what difference they may have made, and how it might affect their future goals and decisions. Encourage serious reflection, and provide opportunities to facilitate this. As a more ambitious extension activity, ask students who have completed their community service hours to hold a panel discussion or give presentations to students who are just beginning their module.

Some notes on cultural perspectives

It is important to keep in mind that there are different cultural perspectives on helping out or volunteering, and on self-assessment.

One example is the way we assess and present our accomplishments to others. Often, speaking out about one's skills, qualities, and accomplishments is encouraged as the best way to secure a job or a training position—it may even be necessary. However, in some cultures, in particular aboriginal cultures, such behavior may be seen as boasting, and would be discouraged as an undesirable character trait. Traditionally, aboriginal youths would be encouraged to recognize that many people in their community help them to find and develop their strengths and gifts. They would ask those who know them well to assess their gifts, strengths, and skills. Of course this is a generalization; but the point is that it's important to learn about and be sensitive to a range of cultural perspectives.

This cultural perspective is addressed in two learning activities in the workbook: the Reflection Question after “To get you thinking...about the benefits of volunteering,” and the first learning activity/Reflection Question in “Assess your skills.”

Links to CALM curriculum

Working through the Student Workbook while completing the Community Service Module can help students fulfill many of the Specific Learning Outcomes in the Career and Life Choices module (General Outcome 3) of the CALM curriculum. The most relevant links are to the following Specific Learning Outcomes:

- C1. “examine the components of effective career development as a lifelong process”--relate present experiences to career aspirations; ongoing self-assessment and self-appraisal
- C2. “update and expand a personal profile related to potential career choices”-- self-assessment
- C3. “examine the relationship among career planning, career decisions and lifestyles”--making decisions; setting goals
- C4. “develop strategies to deal with the transition from senior high school to post-secondary education/training and/or the world of work”--explore employment opportunities in the community; acquire work experience
- C5. “develop a quality career portfolio”--update CPP
- C8. “determine skills, attitudes and behaviors necessary to getting a position”--job search strategies for volunteer and paid positions.

Details of the CALM (2002) curriculum may be found at:

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bySubject/healthpls/calm.pdf

Resources and references

Web sites of interest

Volunteer NWT

www.volunteernwt.ca

Imagine Canada

www.imaginecanada.ca

Volunteer Canada

www.volunteer.ca

Municipal and Community Affairs, Government of the Northwest Territories

www.maca.gov.nt.ca

Canada World Youth (designs and delivers international educational programs for youth aged 17-29 with a focus on volunteer work and community development in a cross-cultural setting)

www.cwy-jcm.org

Global Youth Service Day (an international celebration of youth engagement and volunteerism)

www.volunteer.ca/volcan/eng/content/youth

Katimavik (offers youth 17-21 the opportunity to spend seven months volunteering in three different provinces in Canada)

www.katimavik.org

Youth Abroad Program, Nunavut and Northwest Territories

www.nyaponline.org

Online Volunteering Service, UN Volunteers Program (volunteer arm of the United Nations)

www.onlinevolunteering.org

Youth Challenge International (a Toronto-based organization provides youth 16-25 with international volunteer experience in community development, health promotion and conservation projects)

www.yci.org

Youth Cyberstation, Volunteer Zone:

www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/special/cyberstation/html/vzone_e.htm

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