

Community Involvement & Educational Opportunity News



VANCOUVER HOUSING AUTHORITY

Volume 1, Issue 2

July, August, Sept 2010

VHA's Community Involvement & Education Program: What Is It?



By now, you have probably received letters and/or phone calls to inform you of the VHA's Community Involvement and Education Program, which is

based on HUD national requirements.

Whether you are on Section 8 or live in public housing, **every person in the household** must participate in this program and perform eight hours of community service (volunteer work), educational and/or self-help activities PER MONTH with a few exceptions. *You risk losing your housing assistance if you do not participate.* The

VHA will try to help you find activities that interest you and which meet requirements. To show that you are participating, you will need to keep track of your activities and report them to the VHA.

You are exempt from service if:

- You are under 17 years old
- You are over 62 years old
- You are disabled or caring for a disabled family member
- You are working 25 hrs/week or more

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Make Your Time Spent Volunteering More Rewarding!

When you are beginning your quest for a volunteer opportunity, the choices can seem daunting. However, here are some thoughts to help you find an opportunity that is as rewarding for you, the volunteer, as it is for the organization you're helping:

1. **Think about who you are.** What are your skills, interests, and hobbies? What organizations do you already work with? What things would you like to learn? If you are having trouble with this step, ask family and friends who know you well to help brainstorm.
2. **Think about who you aren't.** If you don't find working with people as rewarding as other tasks, or if you have something in your background which prevents you from doing certain work, recognize these facts. Also, recognize your own physical limitations or transportation issues.

3. **What time(s) are you available?** Are you always available at a certain time each week? Is your schedule unpredictable or flexible?
4. **What do you already do?** Do you volunteer at your church? Are you taking a neighbor to doctor's appointments? Do you spend quality time with (mentor) a needy or neglected child? *You may already be a volunteer, and not even know it!*

Volunteer work is a great way to bring your passions to the community at large. If you are passionate about the outdoors, environmental cleanup might be your thing. Or, if you already have skills that are very specialized, such as language skills in Russian, Cambodian, or ASL, you can translate for neighbors who need this considerable talent. Perhaps you are home-bound or have social anxiety; there are even activities like stuffing envelopes that you

can do from home!

Volunteering can be as rewarding for yourself as it is for the organization you are gifting your time to. Every volunteer opportunity will introduce you to new people, teach you new skills, and give you new insight into your community. *Remember, your volunteer time and the skills you learn during that time belong on your résumé as much as your work history does!*

Find opportunities:

www.1-800-volunteer.org

Or call the Human Resources Council:
360-694-6577

"We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give." -Winston Churchill

AmeriCorps: It's Your World, Your Chance to Make it Better

Each year, AmeriCorps offers 75,000 opportunities for adults of all ages and backgrounds to serve through a network of partnerships with local and national nonprofit groups—including the VHA! Whether your service makes a community safer, gives a child a second chance, or helps protect the environment, you'll be getting things done through AmeriCorps!

AmeriCorps members address critical needs in communities all across America. As an AmeriCorps member, you can:

- Tutor and mentor disadvantaged youth
- Improve health services
- Build affordable housing
- Teach computer skills
- Clean parks and streams
- Manage or operate after-school programs

- Develop disaster response
- Empower minority or immigrant communities

Benefits of Service

As an AmeriCorps member, you'll gain new skills and experiences—and you'll also find the satisfaction that comes from helping others. In addition, full-time members who complete their service elect to earn a cash award or Segal AmeriCorps Education Award of \$4,725 to pay for college, graduate school, or to pay back qualified student loans; members who serve part-time earn a partial Award. Some AmeriCorps members may also receive a modest monthly living allowance, childcare assistance, basic health-care coverage, housing assistance, bus passes and opportunities for professional development during their term of service.

In accordance with 42 U.S.C. § 5044, AmeriCorps income (including subsistence allowances) shall not in any way reduce or eliminate the level of, or eligibility for, public assistance or services (TANF, Medicaid, child care subsidy, SSI) that they may be receiving or are eligible to receive under any governmental program.

AmeriCorps is a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service, an independent federal agency whose mission is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering.

To apply, visit
www.americorps.gov



Story of Service—Gale Nation (Not pictured)

Gale is an outstanding member of the Legacy Corps and an outstanding citizen. Through his work with the Eagles Lodge, Gale has provided Seeing Eye dogs for visually impaired individuals in the community and emergency financial assistance for needy families. Through Legacy Corps, Gale provides companionship and respite care to frail elderly. Gale also serves on the Advisory Council for his local Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion programs.

Free ESL Groups (Russian)

Кружки будут проводиться в разных местах Выберите наиболее удобное для вас:

Vancouver Community Library

Library Hall,
1007 E. Mill Plain Blvd,
Vancouver 98663

Каждый вторник с 10:00 до 11:30
утра
(Для дошкольников будут
проводиться игры)

Cascade Park Community Library

(рядом с *Firstenburg Community Center*)
600 NE 136th Ave.,
Vancouver, WA 98684
Каждую среду с 7:00 до 8:30 ч.
Вечера
За дополнительной информацией
обращайтесь
в библиотеку по телефону
(360)256-7782

Battle Ground Library

1207 SE 8th Way
Battle Ground, WA 98604
Каждый вторник с 10:00 до 11:30 ч.
утра
(занятия по грамматике)
Каждый четверг с 10:00 до 11:30 ч.
утра телефоном:
(360)687-7690 или (360)687-2322

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Other exemptions (for Section 8 ONLY):

- You are a full-time student at a state-recognized school (including High School), college, or vocational school
- You are participating and compliant with a state welfare to work program, or a VHA self-sufficiency program like the Family Self-Sufficiency Program (see page 4 for details)

If you're exempt, please send in proof such as enrollment records, paystubs etc. If you aren't exempt, we'd like to remind you that participation IS

EASY! In fact, you might already be participating without knowing it!

Acceptable activities include:

- Helping at your church or kids' school or daycare
- Providing childcare to other VHA participants who are attending school or volunteering
- Getting needed mental health services
- Taking a neighbor to medical appointments
- Taking classes at a VHA Community Center
- Taking classes in budgeting or credit management

- Providing translation services to a neighbor, or taking ESL classes

It is important to meet all of the program requirements and to turn in your records every three months. Don't skip a quarter and do extra later without calling first. If your life changes and you believe you are exempt, let us know to prevent an unintended interruption to your housing assistance. *If you have questions about this program or your exemption, please call or email Bridgette Fahnbulleh, the program specialist at 360-993-9556 or bfahnbulleh@vhaus.com.*

'Check out' these FREE classes at your community library

The Stitchery Group

A free, informal weekly drop-in get-together. Any stitchery-type hobby is welcome including projects like knitting, spinning, crocheting, quilting and mending.



Wednesdays 10 am -1 pm
Ridgefield Community Library

English Conversation Circle

Practice your English in a comfortable setting, everyone is welcome. Children's activities are provided. For more information, call Amy L. at (360) 699-8831.

Tues 10am - 11:30 am
Vancouver Community Library

Disorder2Order Presentation:

Learn how to control paper clutter and organize your household! Bring questions, pictures of your organization challenges.

Tuesday, June 22 6-8pm
Stevenson Community Library



"Bocaditos" (a snack):

Practice your Spanish-speaking skills with other adults. Two native Spanish speakers will help you remember long-forgotten conjugations and correct your pronunciation. Bring your lunch, ¡ándale!
Tuesdays 12-1pm
Cascade Park Community Library

Неоплачиваемые трудовые возможности для русско-говорящего населения.

All Agencies have Russian-speaking staff

Russian Oregon Social Services

New Youth Perspectives: Youth mentorship program and parenting workshops.
(360) 694-5624, ext. 17,
or
alexpavlenko@lcsnw.org

Help Hotline

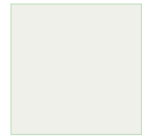
Free consultations for Slavic youth and families with serious problems.
(360) 903-7882

Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization:

Young Women's Equity Project: Helps Slavic women ages 14 to 23 prepare for careers
(503) 253-4042.

Lutheran Community Services Northwest:

Mental health counseling, family therapy, treatment for substance abuse
503-231-7480, ext. 644,
oparker@lcsnw.org



VANCOUVER HOUSING AUTHORITY

2500 Main Street, Suite 100
Vancouver, WA 98660-2697

“Our mission is to provide opportunities to those who experience barriers to housing because of income, disability, or special needs in an environment which preserves personal dignity and in a manner which maintains the public trust. “

The Community Involvement and Education Program

July's Pick: VHA's Family Self-Sufficiency program

I'm really excited to tell you about the VHA's program that will help you to get training and education for the job of your dreams! Even if you don't know what the job of your dreams is... the VHA's Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program can help you! Receive a personal case manager to help you explore your interests and skills, set goals for your future, help with education and training, job search, savings, even homeownership if you want to pursue it. Your FSS case manager will help you every step of the way. The VHA even has a special savings account for you while you're working! Don't hesitate... give us a call for details, questions, and to sign up!

Public Housing residents should contact Mary Hopkins at 993-5301 x. 126

The Section 8 FSS program has a short waiting list. Please contact Cydney Velez at 993-9577 to sign up.

Keep on keeping on,

Bridgette Fahnbulleh

Community Involvement and Education Program

