

The CS101 Complete Guide to Community Service.

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Introduction

Thank you for ordering the CS101 Guide to Community Service.

This guide has been prepared to help you with the process of completing your required community service. If you have been required to do community service hours either by a court order or school requirements this guide will help you to get started and answer some of the most frequent questions about community service.

This guide has been written by the staff of CS101 and is designed to be an online resource for individuals facing community service assignments as well as a resource for those who supervise these individuals.

The information within this guide has been obtained from many experts who have many years experience working with community service projects. We would like to thank the many Probation Officers, Court Employees, Caseworkers, Guidance Counselors, Worksite Supervisors, Lawyers and even the community service workers themselves who have contributed to this guide.

Your name, address and email have been forwarded to one of our community service specialist when you ordered this guide. They will take your address and search our database for additional community service projects near your home. They may also contact you within a few days with the results and follow up with your progress as needed until you have completed your hours.

Getting Started

Looking for a CS assignment is like looking for a job. The only difference is that you are not going to get paid for the work you do. You will need to search for a place to do your hours. You will need to ask for work. You will need to convince them to "hire" you and you will need to show up on time and do a good job after you are "hired"

The place you are working is called your "Worksite" and The person at the "Worksite" who supervises you is called your "Worksite Supervisor" This person could be anyone who works for the non-profit who has the authority to verify your hours.

You will need to report your hours worked to someone at the courts. This is usually your Probation Officer but many times it could be a Judge, Lawyer, Deputy, Court Officer or Caseworker. The important thing to remember is that you need to have your hours documented in writing by your Worksite Supervisor and you need to have proof of your progress each time you meet with someone regarding your case.

Background Information

The first thing you want to do when preparing for CS is to put together some information about yourself and why you are looking for CS. You may be contacting several places and asking them if you can do CS for them and many of them will have questions for you.

Please keep in mind that you will be contacting Worksite Supervisors. They will want to know what you were charged with but most of them will not care if you were innocent or guilty. I understand that you may have gotten a bad deal and had to plead guilty just to stay out of jail but most worksites have heard this story over and over and they will be much more likely to accept you if you convince them that you can help their organization. Of course if they want to hear about your situation they will ask you. Then of course you can feel free to give them all the details.

Where to Apply

As a general rule you can work CS hours anywhere that is classified as a Non-Profit organization. This usually includes most churches, libraries, fire depts., park depts., animal shelters and many government organizations.

If you are not sure a worksite is Non-Profit, you should always check with your PO or the courts to make sure your hours will be counted. Some courts can be very picky about where you can work and it is always better to check after you have completed a few hours. Please remember the Courts who assigned your hours will always have the final say if there are any questions.

Many probation officers will have a list of approved worksites where you can go to complete hours. We have also noticed that many times your probation officer will not mention that they have a list available until you ask them so always be sure to check with your probation officer and ask if they have a list of worksites. Many times you will not be able to reach your probation officer and in this case you should ask the secretary or receptionist working at your local probation office if there is a list of community service locations available.

Restrictions

Look on your court papers and see if you have any restrictions on where you can work. As a general rule, any non-profit can provide hours but your court may have restrictions. You should always check. Also ask your probation officer if you can work in multiple locations. Some probation officers will allow this and others will not so you should always ask. If they do allow you to work multiple locations, you can get your hours done much quicker.

Don't wait to get started. If your local church has hours available, get over there and start doing them. As long as you keep an accurate timesheet and have it signed by someone at the worksite your PO will most likely accept the hours. You can always check with them on your next visit and the courts will be glad you are making some progress.

Here is another tip: Don't apply where you don't fit! You know your record. Use common sense. For example, If you have an arrest record for cruelty to animals then don't apply at the local animal shelter. You may get your foot in the door but you won't last long. Better just to avoid those types of organizations. There will be plenty more to choose from.

How to Apply

You should take the sample below and change it to fit your situation. As soon as you have entered your information, you can start calling non-profits in your area and start asking for the fax number, phone number or email address of the person who works with community service. If you can't get a name, just send it to the non-profit fax or email address. Many times it will get to the right person who will contact you back.

Here is a sample of what Worksite Supervisors want to hear.

My name is John and I need to complete 50 hours of community service for Orange County. I got these hours for retail theft and I really just want to get the community service hours done so I can put this court case behind me and go on with my life. I work Monday-Friday 9-5 and I am available for Community Service on weekends or after 6pm every evening. I am willing to pick up trash, clean toilets, paint, mow lawn, water flowers or whatever other tasks you may need me to do.

I can work on projects without direct supervision as long as I am told what to do and I will do my best to help your organization with 50 hours of free labor if you will give me a chance. You may contact me by phone or by email which I check daily.

Don't give up. Just like sending out resumes, you may have to contact several non-profits before you are accepted.

Timesheets

Most worksites will already have a timesheet for you to fill out. Many times this is a form with the non-profits letterhead and information on it which may be required by court services. Your probation officer may also have an approved timesheet that you need to use anywhere you work. Please be sure to ask if there is a required timesheet when you go to court or visit your probation office. If your probation office does not have a required form for recording your hours worked, you can contact us at CS101 and we will help you to print out a blank timesheet with spaces already pre-printed where you can fill in your information as well as record the hours where you work and get the form signed by your worksite supervisor.

Remember, It is important to enter your hours on your timesheet each time you work and also make sure your timesheet entries are approved and verified by your worksite manager. This signed timesheet is your proof that you are completing your hours as required.

Online Timesheets

Online timesheets are an electronic version of your timesheet kept on our servers. These timesheets will automatically create a Date and Timestamp with each entry as well as recording a local IP address.

Online timesheets can be viewed by community service workers, worksite supervisors, probation officers and court officers with 24/7 access to authorized users. These online timesheets may not be available in all jurisdictions depending on the preference of probation and court officers. Most worksites will supply you with a timesheet and or letter of completion which you will need to present to your court services or probation to prove you did the assignments. If they do not supply a timesheet, please contact Records@CommunityService101.com to request a blank timesheet or access to online timesheets and reports.

Rules and Regulations

You should always be sure to follow all rules of not only the courts but also the worksite where you are working. Many worksites have specific rules which need to be followed as well as specific areas that are off limits to visitors, volunteers or CS workers. These areas may include Offices, Daycare areas, Storage closets and/or other areas of worksite. Please be sure to discuss this with your worksite supervisor so you can avoid these areas.

Cell Phones - Most worksite managers do not want to see you on the phone or texting during your shift. If you want to make a good impression, just tell your friends you are not available during your scheduled CS hours and leave your phone in the car.

Other Rules - Some rules are just silly but you should always make it a point to follow all rules no matter how silly they may seem while you are at a worksite. You are only there to get your hours done and sometimes you will have to put up with a few inconveniences in order to get your hours done.

Virtual Assignments

Virtual Assignments or online assignments are projects that you can do at home. These assignments usually consist of data entry, writing press releases for non-profits, making phone calls for non-profits or editing videos on the internet. (adding captions to videos etc.)

Many probation officers do not approve of virtual assignments therefore you should check with your individual probation officer or court services before accepting a virtual assignment. If online assignments are approved by your probation officer or court services, please see the list of resources below. This list contains online assignments that may or may not be available for your area. New projects will be added as they become available and some projects may expire after a period of time.

To visit any of the resources listed as online projects, you may need to copy and paste the address into your address bar. Most of the resources listed will supply you with a timesheet and or letter of completion which you will need to present to your court services or probation to prove you did the assignments. If they do not supply a timesheet, please contact Records@CommunityService101.com to request a blank timesheet or access to online timesheets and reports.

If you would like to receive updated lists of virtual opportunities as they become available, please update your profile/email address with CS101 and edit your interests to include virtual assignments. This will allow us to send you an email when new online projects or assignments become available.

Online Projects

http://support.msassociation.org/site/PageServer?pagename=Resource_Detectives

Description - The Resource Detectives program is a great way to earn some community service hours or simply volunteer your time. The online based program gives you the freedom to contribute from home or anywhere you have internet access. **Volunteer Hours:** Available. Volunteer hours are accrued based on 20 minutes per resource reported to MSAA, subject to the resource information being complete and accurate. As a Resource Detective, the information you research and report will be used by MSAA's client services department, which handles the organization's toll-free Helpline.

www.firstbook.org/volunteer

Description - First Book Advisory Boards are committees of volunteers, representing a community or campus, that come together to raise awareness and funds in order to provide new books to local literacy programs serving children from low-income families. There are more than 270 Advisory Boards nationwide.

http://www.ourprayer.org/_pvaVolunteer/

Description - If you have an hour or two a week to spare, you can become an OurPrayer volunteer. We pray for each request individually by name and need, so we need your help.

<http://www.KidsAndCars.org>

Description - Volunteers pull data from news articles provided by KidsAndCars.org and enter information into an Excel spread sheet. Volunteers can do this from the comfort of their own home. Simply use our database key as a guide to enter the required information.

We are easy going and flexible. Volunteers decide how much time they are able to invest. Must have access to Microsoft Excel.

Online Projects Continued

<http://globallifeworks.org> Not Available for Community Service hours at this time.

~~Description – Global Lifeworks is cooperating with AIDSvideos.org to make scientifically and medically accurate HIV/AIDS prevention education available for free online. We want to provide captions for our online videos so that the deaf, those with hearing impairments and other disabilities, and non-native speakers of English can more easily understand the videos.~~

~~No experience or special skills required! You just watch the video and type the words you hear into a text file! You can volunteer in this way from home on your own computer at your own pace!~~

for an updated lists of online projects as they become available, please be sure to update your profile/email address with CS101 and edit your interests on our mailing list to include virtual assignments. This will allow us to send you an email when new online projects or assignments become available.

The Last Word

If you follow the techniques and concepts we have laid out in this guide and combine the information here with the list of Non-Profit locations we are going to provide for you it will be very easy for you to complete your hours. If you read this guide and then put it down without implementing any of the techniques contained within, then you will be trying to catch up as your deadline approaches. The two main things you will need to remember are don't wait to get started or you will run out of time and always be sure to keep in contact with your probation officer and/or court services to let them know what you are doing. If you follow these suggestions and you have read this guide, you should have no problems getting your hours completed on time.

The ball is now in your court. Be persistent, be smart and utilize the information we have provided and get ready to get your hours done so you can put these community service hours behind you.