

Continuing the Connection: A Guide to Virtual Volunteer Opportunities during COVID-19 for Building and Supporting Community

Did you know that this week, April 19th - 25th, is National Volunteer Week? This makes it a great time to renew your commitment to community engagement.

In a typical year, the Student Engagement Center connects hundreds of student volunteers with organizations in the Walla Walla Valley. This year is anything but a typical year, however, the SEC remains committed to providing opportunities for Whitties to connect, volunteer, and assist Walla Walla and other communities during these unprecedented times.

While Whitties find themselves socially distanced -- some in Walla Walla and many not, we know that a lack of physical presence does not diminish their desire to remain connected and active in their community. Many people expressed a desire to do something to help, but are unsure what that might be. We hope this guide will be a resource that fuels your creativity and action. We are confident that Whitties will continue to serve and contribute in new and creative ways with fortitude, care, and compassion, wherever they are.

Many community organizations have needed to change how they support their community and many have faced difficult challenges as a result of COVID-19. The needs in the community that organizations met before did not disappear and they may need our support now more than ever. *Sheltering in place is our duty.* You can still make a difference when in-person interaction isn't an option. Please consider volunteering your time as soon as you are able, for as long as you are able.

At this time, with the current shelter in place directives, you should not participate in any in-person volunteer activities. When shelter in place directives are lifted, if you choose to volunteer in-person at that time, you should still follow all recommended protocols by the [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#) and [Whitman's Social Distancing and Wellness Guidelines](#).

Many thanks to Jim Russo, the Whitman Wire and The Sherwood Trust for their contributions to these resources.

Please see below for information on approaches to community engagement during COVID-19, best practices, and local, national & global opportunities to volunteer and donate.

We suggest 3 basic approaches to community engagement during COVID-19:

1. Virtual
2. Do It Yourself (DIY)
3. Philanthropic opportunities

Virtual volunteering and DIY activities support our communities through actions that you can do from wherever you are currently sheltering in place. Philanthropy refers to providing financial support to an organization or cause to support its operations.

If your considering virtually volunteering, remember these 5 “Best Practices for Virtual Volunteering”

1. **Keep Your Commitment.** Carefully consider any virtual volunteer opportunity and ensure that you are able to fully commit to the entirety of the project. Everyone has a lot to juggle at this time so honor your personal capacity. Organizations will appreciate even a few hours of volunteering toward a larger project.
2. **Be a Good Representative.** Remember that you are not only representing yourself, but also Whitman College. Ensure that you are doing so in a positive light.
3. **Learn the Why.** Take the time to learn about the organization you will be volunteering with and ensure that you understand why the project is important. What is the impact of the project?
4. **Remember the Circumstances.** Any community partner with whom you volunteer is in unprecedented times responding to the outcomes of COVID-19, please take time to understand these special circumstances and how they impact the organization’s ability to support the community.
5. **Make the Connection.** You have the power to make a difference. Utilize your special skills, knowledge, and talents for good through virtual volunteering. Take time to reflect on this experience and how it fits into your story, your experience as a Whittie, and your future endeavors. Don’t forget the folks in the SEC are here to help you with your next steps. Reach out today!

Don’t forget to share your experiences, photos and thoughts as a virtual volunteer using **#whittievirtualvolunteer!**

Here are some ways to get involved remotely...

Description:

Volunteer Opportunities:

Philanthropic Opportunities:

in Walla Walla

The Walla Walla community where we reside, learn, and form lasting relationships has been changed by the rapid spread of COVID-19 in recent weeks, as have the other communities we are involved with. Our community partners and other organizations in the Walla Walla Valley need help as they strive to serve those with greater need due to the coronavirus.

- [American Red Cross](#) is looking for a variety of local virtual volunteers
- SEC Adopt-a- Grandparent program is looking for virtual volunteers, here is the interest form [link](#)
- [Make masks](#) for medical professionals in Walla Walla

- [Blue Mountain Action Council](#)
- [Walla Walla Mutual Aid Network](#)
- [Christian Aid Center](#)
- [Operation Face Mask](#)
- [YWCA of Walla Walla](#)
- Blue Mountain Community Foundation ([COVID-19 Response Fund](#))

in your local Community

The Community where you now reside has been changed by the rapid spread of COVID-19 in recent weeks. Community partners in your community need help as they strive to serve those with greater need due to the coronavirus.

- [American Red Cross](#) is looking for a variety of local virtual volunteers
- Make masks for medical professionals in your community
- Check out your city or town's local government web page for opportunities to volunteer virtually.

- See if your area has a local Community Foundation through [this link](#). Many of these philanthropic organizations around the country are offering a directory of ways to help in your area.

Nationally/ Globally

On a broader scale, communities and organizations from around the globe are also in need of volunteer assistance. Many new virtual volunteer opportunities have been created as a result of COVID-19. We have included many in the volunteer opportunities columns. However there are many more. Here are a few places to look for other such opportunities:

- [Citizens Task Force](#)
- [UN Volunteers](#)

- [Points of Lights](#) - a variety of opportunities for different interests
- [Quarantine Chat](#) - talk to individuals isolated due to the virus
- [Idealist](#) - links to a few established virtual volunteer programs
- [Students Rebuild](#) - snap a picture of an artful recipe you created and the Bezos Family Foundation will donate to hunger relief
- [Project Gutenberg](#) - proofread books and help contribute to an online eBook database
- [LibriVox](#) - record audiobooks for a public audiobook database
- [Smithsonian](#) - help transcribe
- [You will Rise Project](#) - create artwork for COVID-19 patients

Resources for assistance

Organization:

[Walla Walla Mutual Aid Network](#) is a coalition of nonprofits, over 150 volunteers, and community members coming together to help our neighbors through the current COVID-19 crisis to ensure that all are fed and have the ability to pay for and access other necessities.

[Walla Walla Mutual Aid Network](#) es una coalición de organizaciones sin fines de lucro. Más de 150 voluntarios y miembros de la comunidad se han unido para ayudar a nuestros vecinos durante la crisis actual de COVID-19. Trabajamos juntos para garantizar que todos tengamos alimentos y otras necesidades.

Assistance:

- Right now, we are offering \$50 grocery runs, \$50 monetary stipends, and errand runs for local families. If you know a family who could benefit from this work, please send them our bilingual website and application. We try to process every request within 72 hours! We cover Walla Walla, College Place, Milton-Freewater, Waitsburg, and Dayton.
- En este momento, ofrecemos tarjetas de \$50 para comestibles y dispensas monetarias de \$50. Nuestro voluntarios tambien pueden hacer mandados para familias locales que no pueden salir de sus casas. Si conoce a una familia que podría beneficiarse de este trabajo, envíeles nuestro sitio web y solicitud bilingüe. ¡Intentamos procesar cada solicitud dentro de las 72 horas! Cubrimos Walla Walla, College Place, Milton-Freewater, Waitsburg y Dayton.