

# VARSITY LETTER IN COMMUNITY SERVICE

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: Applications

### What counts as a 'reflection piece'?

This could be a short essay, a presentation, a poster, a video, a poem, a painting, drawing, other piece of artwork, or a recording of a speech, a spoken poetry piece, a rap or a song, or even an interpretative dance... *something* you feel represents what you're taking away from the 100+ hours of experience volunteering and serving in the community that includes:

- what you have learned about yourself during the experience
- what you have discovered about your community through the experience
- what you enjoyed most about the experience
- how you feel this experience has shaped you and your worldview

### What counts as a 'form of verification'?

- A photograph (or selfie) of the Varsity Letter in Community Service applicant volunteering during one of the activities with each agency,
- A video of the applicant participating in one of the volunteer activities with each agency,
- An email, video recording, recommendation letter, or signed letterhead from the volunteer supervisor verifying the volunteer experience with each agency.

### Do I have to use the 'volunteer hour tracker' provided by United Way?

No. You are required to turn in a tracker and are welcome to use the one we have created or make your own. It must include all of the necessary information:

- Dates of Service
- Name of Agency/Organization
- Name of Volunteer Supervisor
- Type of Activity
- Community Impact Area (financial stability, health, education, community resiliency, or other)
- A Brief Description of the Volunteer Work you performed or the activities you participated in
- The # of Volunteer Hours

### Who should I list as my 'volunteer supervisor'?

Your volunteer supervisor should be the adult supervisor, mentor, or advisor that supervised your volunteer work and can verify that you volunteered with their group or organization. You MAY NOT list a student, peer, or family member as your contact supervisor.

### Who can I contact for more information about the Varsity Letter in Community Service application?

Sonja Sommerfeldt, *Impact Program Coordinator at United Way of Olmsted County*

Email: [sonjas@uwolmsted.org](mailto:sonjas@uwolmsted.org) Phone: 507-535-5509



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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: Volunteering

The requirements state that I must have at least one school related volunteer activity. What is considered a “school related activity”?

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. *For example, if the work was done with an outside organization (e.g. Participating in Relay for Life as a Key Club member), you may count the hours where you need them.* The following is a non-exhaustive list of activities that can be done in school:

- Community service projects through school clubs (i.e. National Honor Society, Key Club)
- Assisting a teacher before, during, or after school, or during the summer
- Assisting at sporting events, concerts, theater productions (if not required for a class)
- School tutoring programs (If tutoring hours are performed, please list the school volunteer supervisor as the contact, not the tutee or the tutee’s parent/guardian).
- Hosting a collection drive for a school’s resource room or the like.

I must complete at least 40 hours in a “non-school activity”. What type of volunteer service counts as a ‘non-school activity’?

Volunteer service is intended to support local non-profit organizations. Listed on the Volunteer Resource form are just a few ideas, but there are many ways to volunteer in your community! If you have further questions or need ideas, please visit Get Connected at: <http://volunteer.uwolmsted.org/> or reach out to the Program Coordinator.

I must complete at least 60 hours ‘locally’. What does ‘locally’ mean...?

Locally in SE MN. United Way of Olmsted County now serves Dodge, Fillmore, Olmsted, and Winona Counties, and we encourage applicants to volunteer in our service area for the benefit of the communities in which we live, work and play!

I volunteered as a camp counselor (unpaid); Can I count those hours?

The Varsity Letter in Community Service program aims to support volunteer efforts locally in or near one of the four counties we serve. If you volunteer as a camp counselor and were not paid for your time, the hours are calculated as follows:

- Up to 10 hours per day
- No more than 40 total hours outside SE MN

Can I count my time helping with yard work or housework?

Any yard work or housework performed with a qualified non-profit (such as Family Service Rochester’s Neighbors Helping Neighbors program) CAN be counted for this award.

- In cases where you are assisting an individual on your own (not related to you or living in the same household) please photograph the experience and communicate with the Program Coordinator about including them as your Volunteer Supervisor for that activity.

I volunteered with a local company but wasn’t paid. Can I count these hours?

Only non-profit volunteer hours are eligible for this award. Unfortunately, we cannot count any hours volunteered with for-profit organizations. This includes many childcare facilities that are for-profit organizations. Be sure to check with the organization you are volunteering with ahead of time to ensure they meet the guidelines.

Who can I contact for clarification about volunteering for the Varsity Letter in Community Service program?

If you are uncertain if an activity counts, please reach out to the Program Coordinator, Sonja Sommerfeldt [email [sonjas@uwolmsted.org](mailto:sonjas@uwolmsted.org); phone 507-535-5509] to verify before you start.