



ucmagency.org

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United Way #8199 CFC #37839

Frequently Asked Questions

Here are answers to some frequently asked questions about volunteering at UCM. If you have other questions or concerns, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Marcos Castillo, at 571-255-8979, or send an email to marcos.castillo@ucmagency.org.

If you have questions or ideas on how, when, or where you would like to volunteer, please bring them up when you attend a Volunteer Orientation.

Why should I volunteer?

Our volunteers come from diverse ethnic and economic backgrounds, from students to older adults. Each individual brings a set of unique and valued skills. The rewards of volunteerism are many, including:

- Satisfaction from helping others and making a difference
- Opportunities to use skills you enjoy, or to learn new skills
- The chance to meet energetic and involved individuals in your community
- Opportunities to gain career advice and experience in the work force

A British survey found that volunteer activity in the community is associated with better health, lower crime, improved education performance, and greater life satisfaction. When we focus on the needs of others, we also reap the benefits ourselves.

Why should I volunteer at UCM?

Volunteering at UCM makes you special! You are at the heart of community, giving your time to build your community. Community means we are more than just individuals living in a defined area. Instead, we are people who are connected to each other and who care about each other. Together, we are building community and changing lives.

Can I be a virtual volunteer?

Yes. Opportunities to volunteer from remote locations will be discussed at orientation.



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Do I have to commit to a full day?

No. You can volunteer for as few or as many hours as your schedule permits.

Can I bring my smart phone?

In order to maximize each volunteer's experience, repeated use of cell phones and other personal communication devices is not allowed. Except in an emergency, such communication must be done during breaks and lunch time. Additionally, we ask that personal conversations be held away from the work area and in a manner that will not disturb other staff and volunteers.

Will I be reimbursed for mileage or for meals or other expenses incurred during volunteering?

UCM cannot reimburse you for your mileage or other expenses associated with volunteering. However, you are encouraged to keep a record of your hours, mileage and other expenses using our forms. That way you can itemize these on your taxes and get the proper tax credits.

Can I volunteer at more than one location or for more than one program?

Yes. There are many volunteer opportunities in various locations. The [Volunteer Handbook](#) provides information on opportunities available at each of our sites.

My classmates and I want to do a community service activity. How do we set up a day for my classmates to do service hours for our class?

Contact the Volunteer Coordinator at 571-255-8979 or email marcos.castillo@ucmagency.org for more information.

What if I want to volunteer with a group?

We welcome groups! There's nothing the staff enjoys more than hearing a group of volunteers laughing and building relationships as work gets done!

I volunteered with a group and want to return on my own. How does that work?

We welcome folks looking to get involved as individuals! Visit UCM's volunteer page at <http://www.ucmagency.org/volunteer.html> to find out how to get started.



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I'm available a few days a week. Can I volunteer on a more regular basis?

We welcome volunteers looking to make a regular commitment! At the volunteer orientation, you will learn about opportunities and positions that work best for your skills and schedule.

When and where do you have opportunities?

UCM operates year-round at seven sites in southeastern Fairfax County. The [Volunteer Handbook](#) provides the location and hours of each site.

I'm interested in keeping people from going hungry. How do I sign up to volunteer at the Food Pantry?

Visit UCM's volunteer page at <http://www.ucmagency.org/volunteer.html> to find out how to get started.

I have a disability or I am recovering from surgery. Are there any volunteer opportunities for me?

We have volunteer opportunities in the office, which may be a possibility for someone who is temporarily or permanently immobile. Contact the Volunteer Coordinator, at 571-255-8979, or send him an email at marcos.castillo@ucmagency.org to discuss your particular situation.

I am retired and still want to volunteer. Are there ways for me to get involved?

We love our retired volunteers! There are many opportunities for able-bodied adults interested in volunteering. Visit UCM's volunteer page at <http://www.ucmagency.org/volunteer.html> to find out how to get started.

Do I have to attend an orientation before I can start volunteering?

Yes.

I can't make the orientations listed on the website. Is there another one that I can go?

Contact the Volunteer Coordinator at 571-255-8979 or at marcos.castillo@ucmagency.org to set up a separate time to meet, if you cannot make any of the scheduled orientations we have.



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What should I wear to volunteer?

That depends on the type of activity you are participating in and its location. We ask volunteers to meet a reasonable standard of professional appearance that reflects favorably on our agency and respects all clients. Most sites ask you to wear comfortable, neat work clothing. The [Volunteer Handbook](#) outlines recommendations and prohibitions for different sites.

Will I have to wear a badge?

For safety reasons and proper identification by others, volunteers and staff must wear name badges (or smocks) at all times. Any volunteer without a name badge will be asked to immediately obtain one and keep it on while at the site.

Do I have to get a background check?

Any program which connects volunteers with youth or children requires a signed Disclosure Statement, signed Volunteer Guidelines, criminal background and Child Protective Services checks (paid for by UCM). These programs include: Creekside Community Center, Sacramento Neighborhood Center, Basic Needs, and Journeys. Other programs, such as the Bryant Early Learning Center, may have additional documentation requirements.

How old do I need to be to volunteer for the Food Pantry?

For safety and legal reasons, volunteers at the food pantry must be at least 16.

I have required community service hours to do and need to get them done soon. How do I get started?

Visit UCM's volunteer page at <http://www.ucmagency.org/volunteer.html> to find out how to get started. You can contact the volunteer coordinator, Marcos Castillo at 571-255-8979, if you need immediate assistance.

I would like to volunteer on Sundays, Thanksgiving, Christmas, or other holidays. Is that possible or are you closed?

While the main office is closed during evenings, weekends and holidays, there are many UCM activities occurring in and around the community.