



# Volunteering for Under 16s

Finding the right volunteer opportunity can be a challenge, especially for participants under 16 who are eager to contribute to their communities but may face obstacles like age restrictions and lack of experience. Award Canada understands these difficulties and is dedicated to helping young volunteers navigate this journey. In this resource, you'll discover a variety of ideas for participants under 16 to complete your Voluntary Service section.

If you are required to complete mandatory volunteer service hours for graduation, you can apply these experiences towards your Award too!! Found an activity but not sure if it counts? Check our [Does Your Activity Count](#) resource [here!](#)

## 1. At school

Being a leader in a club, tutoring and mentoring younger students, and general voluntary service at school are just some ways you can get involved and contribute! Be creative! Know how to play chess and have a chess club at school? Volunteer to teach chess! Good at math and know others who struggle with it? Volunteer as a math tutor and help them out. Here are some ideas to get you started – but in principle – your creativity and applied thinking is the limit. Talk to friends, teachers, adults, peers, ask your Award Leader!

- **Tutoring peers or younger students** in subjects like math, science, or language arts.
- **Assisting in the school library**, helping to organize books, and supporting reading programs.
- **Joining the student council** or other leadership groups to plan and execute school events and initiatives.
- **Volunteering in environmental clubs**, leading recycling programs, or organizing campus clean-up events.
- **Helping with school sports teams** as a team manager, scorekeeper, or assistant coach.
- **Participating in school theater productions** by working backstage, managing props, or helping with costumes and sets.

- **Organize a lunchtime club** such as a book club, chess club, or coding club to engage fellow students in shared interests.
- **Lead virtual study sessions** or homework help groups using online platforms to support classmates with their studies.

Not sure what's available at school? Ask your Award Leader or school volunteer coordinator if you have one! They're there to help you. **Need an Assessor?** A teacher who supervises your activities at school, the school volunteer coordinator, or your Award Leader are all great options!

## 2. At home and your local community

Do you like dogs and have an elderly neighbour with a dog they have trouble walking? Ask if you can walk their dog for them – it's a great Voluntary Service activity you can do. Live in an area where there's lots of snow during the winter? Consider shoveling snow for the elderly, your next-door neighbour and perhaps help buy groceries or put out the garbage and tidy their yard. Helping those in need is a great way to do your Service section.

Don't limit yourself! The Award is a catalyst for a million possibilities - think about all the different ways you can contribute to people in your community. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- **Grocery shopping for elderly neighbors** who may have difficulty getting out, especially during bad weather.
- **Dog walking services** for elderly neighbors who are unable to walk their pets regularly.
- **Organize a neighborhood clean-up**, gathering a small group of friends to pick up litter and clean up local parks or streets.
- **Offer tech support to seniors**, helping them set up and use smartphones, computers, or tablets for staying connected with family.
- **Volunteer to mow lawns or do yard work** for neighbors who might need assistance, such as the elderly or disabled.
- **Organize a recycling program**, helping neighbors understand what can be recycled and assisting with sorting and disposal.
- **Offer babysitting services to neighbors**, providing a safe and fun environment for their children.

**TIP:** Search your local government’s website for volunteer opportunities. You’ll often find volunteer positions for teens 14 and older. Try Googling “City/town” government volunteer for students and see what’s available to you.

### **Stack activities at school and in your local community!**

It can be challenging to find one activity you can do for the length of your Award especially if you’re under 16 and don’t get the same opportunities as your friends and peers doing their Gold Award. If that’s the case, consider stacking a few activities into your Voluntary Service section!

### **3. Volunteer at school in a variety of different events!**

Schools have various events throughout the school year! Helping set up for a parent-teacher conference, Terry Fox runs, bake sales, parent council events, and student council events are just some events you can help with. Speak to your Award Leader or school volunteer coordinator for some help on making school volunteering your Service activity!

**Need an Assessor?** A teacher who supervises your activities at school, the school volunteer coordinator, or your Award Leader are all great options!

**TIP:** You can enter this in your Voluntary Service section on ORB with the Activity Type as Voluntary Service to Other People and the Activity as Other, Voluntary Service at School.

### **4. Do a couple different activities to get to your goal!**

Fun fact! **You can do up to 3 activities in your Voluntary Service section!** If you’re having trouble finding one activity to do for the length of your Award, consider doing a few different ones to get to your goal! Here’s an example of a Bronze Voluntary Service section a Grade 9 student could do:

- Activity 1: Reading Buddy at the library (6 weeks)
- Activity 2: Walking Dog of Elderly Person (4 weeks)
- Activity 3: Coaching Assistance for Grade 8 Basketball team (4 weeks)

And there you have it! 14 weeks of activity for your Bronze Award, more than enough to meet the requirements of your Bronze Award (13 weeks). Love volunteering? Make it your Major and finish 26 weeks for your Bronze Award. **Need an Assessor?** If you're having trouble finding one Assessor for this activity, your Award Leader can step in to help you as your Assessor!

### Places that offer volunteer opportunities

If you're lucky enough to be under 16 and can access a more conventional Voluntary Service activity, we would strongly encourage it. You will gain so much in the process and it may become the action you need to find a new lifelong interest, help you with your CV for a job application, find a reference for school, or be the connection to a future career. Not sure where to start looking for volunteer opportunities? Don't worry, we've got you covered.

- **Your local library:** One of the best kept secrets to completing your Voluntary Service section is your local library. Libraries will often accept volunteers 14 or older for various roles like a reading buddy, chess volunteer, visiting services, and more. They're also a great resource for other volunteer opportunities as well, so reach out to them! Search "*City/town name*" library volunteer on Google and see what opportunities you can find.
- **[Canada Service Corps:](#)** The Canada Service Corps offers various volunteer opportunities for youth under 16, focusing on community engagement, leadership, and skill development. These programs include environmental projects, social initiatives, cultural activities, and more.
- **Volunteer at a local community centre:** Local community centres are a great place to look for opportunities to volunteer. They'll often be open to volunteers under the age of 18. Like your local library, these community centre's often have great connections to help you find a volunteer opportunity if they don't have one for you already. Search "*City/town name*" community centre volunteer on Google and see what opportunities you can find.

- **Food banks and soup kitchens:** Food banks and soup kitchens are popular places to volunteer and often accept high school students from grades 9 to 12. Search your local community to see if there are any near you to get started! Be aware – these are popular places to volunteer so they sometimes have wait lists to work with them. Reach out early if you're interested! Search "*City/town name*" *food bank and soup kitchen volunteer* on Google and see what opportunities you can find.
- **[Airport Volunteer Program](#):** Live near the airport? Check out this unique opportunity to volunteer – such as for Toronto Pearson Airport! They have a few different volunteer opportunities so if you're in the area, this could be a great fit for you. Bonus – they accept high school volunteers, from grades 9 to 12.