

# VOLUNTEERING IN NYC: DONATE YOUR TIME

By Simon Clark | January 18, 2013

Tweet Facebook



HOBY NYE volunteers. Photo by [nyalumniadvisor](#)

In a city of more than eight million people, there are plenty who have need of help - be it food, a place to stay, or counseling. Superstorm Sandy has only added to the pressure on resources and staff at the city's charities, and the ongoing recovery efforts are set to continue for years

New York City is a busy place for those working here, but even with all the time constraints – the commuting, the work, the rush of daily life – many New Yorkers will take time to volunteer on a regular basis.

Why should you volunteer? NYC volunteering is a great way to give back to the city and the people in it, but for new New Yorkers and internationals it's also a way to meet people, to understand the underlying infrastructure of the city, and to see a different side of New York than you might be used to. The opportunities are here, so it's up to you to get involved.

## NEW YORK CITY VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteering in NYC goes far beyond food drives. There are so many areas you can get involved in: education, sports, environmental issues, emergency preparation ... the list goes on. A great centralized source is [NYC Service](#). Providing year-round volunteer opportunities in a whole range of locations and programs, NYC Service makes it easier than ever before to find a way to use your particular skills to make a difference. The Parks Department, the Mayor's Office, and the Office of Emergency Management all need eager New Yorkers to offer their time and services. From acting as a judge for the NYC Debate League to helping with the Boys' Club of New York Culinary Program, to snow removal when needed, [nycservice.org](#) has tons of opportunity

You can also find information on the [NYC.gov website](#) about becoming a mentor, supporting NYC's youth, joining the auxiliary police – acting as trained eyes and ears on the ground, aiding the police department - and a range of other official programs where you can make a difference in others' lives.

Helping out in your community matters just as much in New York City as it does in small town USA. [New York Cares](#) gives you the chance to meet community needs through volunteering. Particularly

## RELATED ARTICLES



**Top 15 Fun Things to Do with Kids in New York City**  
See these suggestions of things to do to take your kids in NYC for the story contest winner Alex...



**The Best Beaches in New York City**  
Whether you prefer the kid-friendly Coney Island or the car-free, peaceful ambiance of Fire Island, NYC has a beach that's right for you.



**Election Fever in New York City**  
Find out the best ways to celebrate the presidential election and how to do on election night in NYC.

Again staying local, **TimeBanksNYC** has locations in all five boroughs, and gives you the opportunity to swap your talents and skills with others, helping out where you can in order to learn something new. Skill sharing and volunteering can earn you "time credits" to be redeemed from someone else in the network – a fantastic community sharing project which has at its heart the idea of connecting people and group education. It's perfect even if you don't feel particularly talented – you're sure to have a skill to swap and some great experiences to share.

## FOOD BANKS IN NYC

Food banks – organizations that collect and distribute food and other essential supplies for families and those who don't have enough – are a familiar sight around NYC. Working hand in hand with nutritional education programs, they aim to relieve hunger and help the estimated 2.9 million New Yorkers who have trouble affording food. **Food Bank for New York City** has been working for almost 30 years to help relieve hunger, provide income support, and educate New Yorkers about diet and nutrition. They provide vital aid to millions and their research programs go hand in hand with their work. There are several ways you can help: volunteers are needed to serve hot meals at community kitchens, as well as staff to attend any events or public awareness campaigns they run. Plus, if you have a financial background, their tax assistance program and income services do require some knowledge. You can see their [volunteer Site](#) to read what's available, as well as to search by area and date.

**The Food Bank of Central New York** has [opportunities to volunteer your time](#) in several ways – whether assisting at a donation point or helping with community garden projects. Serving eleven central New York counties, they focus on supplying much needed food along with education and encouraging self-sufficiency.

**Feeding America** has a great, [searchable database](#) of food banks throughout the city and the state, including contact information. Remember to search each organization's website before phoning or taking up other volunteers' time with questions.

## SHELTERS IN NYC

Shelters – providing beds and meals for those who are homeless, services for the needy, and transitional resources – are a vital part of humanitarian aid in the city. There are plenty of chances to get involved in NYC: you can start by looking at the **NYC Department of Homeless Services website**. Their focus is to help the thousands of homeless individuals and families, and they have programs already in place to help those who need it most. Their "[How you can Help](#)" page is a great guide to the best ways you can get involved. As ever, there's a difference between just jumping in with what you think is best – which can actually be detrimental – and helping in the ways the organizations most need. The [Homeless Shelter Directory](#) gives you a list of shelters by area within the city – that way you can volunteer your time in your own community, building relationships where they matter.

**New York City Rescue Mission** has been active since 1872 providing spiritual help, food, shelter, and clothing to the needy of NYC. Every year they have more than 1200 volunteers – serving meals, leading weeknight chapel services, tutoring in the Learning Center, even providing medical services. You can fill out a [volunteer application online](#), even specifying the dates you'll be available.

All these opportunities are about getting out and about in New York City and plugging in to the lives of the people you live around. Whatever volunteer position you find, it's great to have the chance to help others and continue to make NYC such a great place to live.

*See also - [Volunteering After Superstorm Sandy](#)*

[Tweet](#)   [Facebook](#)   [Yahoo](#)   [Email](#)   [ShareThis](#)

