



# Spotlight on System Office Employee Volunteering

By Jackie Billhmer

What better way to kick off the New Year than a spotlight on volunteering? In September 2019, the System Office wellness committee sent out a survey to gauge what areas of wellness you were interested in receiving information on and having coordinated activities around. Volunteering accounted for 48.8% of responses, making it one of the top five activities. We then sent a survey out in December 2019 specifically to find out how employees are [currently volunteering](#).

Of the 105 responses we received, 63.8% of respondents currently volunteer! You volunteer in your churches, schools, local communities and organizations, serve on boards and coach sports teams. All of these things go far in supporting our local communities. Volunteering can provide a sense of purpose and be beneficial in developing leadership skills and learning how to work in teams.

There are several resources for employees to learn about volunteering at each of our universities. In Urbana, the [Office of Volunteer Programs](#) in the Illini Union hosts donation drives, such as the Thanksgiving Meal Drive and Holiday Toy Drive. The office also coordinates a campus and community day of service event, which occurs in April. While their office focuses primarily on student volunteering, UIUC faculty and staff are welcome to volunteer as well. Another resource for Urbana is the [CU Volunteer Portal](#) that serves as a data warehouse of volunteer activities moderated by the Office of Volunteer Programs. The [Illinois Administrative Professionals](#) have philanthropy events and activities. In February, they have invited community members to a mini-expo to share information in the area that could benefit from the group's involvement.

In Chicago, a [volunteer portal](#) lists opportunities for volunteering at the university or in the community. The portal allows UIC students and employees to locate and sign-up for volunteer opportunities, as well as track the number of hours they volunteer. The [President's Volunteer Service Award](#) provides recognition for volunteer efforts. For those that complete 4,000 hours or more of volunteer service over their lifetime receive a certificate, memento and a congratulatory letter from the President of the United States. In addition, the [UIC Center for Literacy](#) and [UI Health](#) have their own volunteer services and resources.



Springfield has many opportunities to volunteer through the Volunteer and Civic Engagement Center. The [Center](#) works with many of the student service organizations, lists [news and events](#) for opportunities to volunteer and has specific resources for [faculty and staff](#) to get involved and volunteer. The [Performing Arts Center](#) also has volunteer opportunities for their entertainment and events.

In addition to these university-based volunteer resources, there are broader resources available to employees. [Volunteer Match](#) allows you to search for opportunities by location and [Serve Illinois](#) has resources for ways to volunteer across the state. Make sure to check out all of these resources and sign up to volunteer today!

The System Office wellness committee is committed to providing you with information and resources around volunteering. We appreciate the ideas you submitted in the survey about ways we can coordinate a volunteer effort at our universities and in our communities. We will be working on volunteering and so much more in 2020 so stay tuned for further updates! ■