

## Contacting Community Agencies: Getting the Most Out of your Call or Visit

Remember to be professional, polite and courteous in all your discussions and inquiries.

Ask to speak to the person who coordinates volunteers or service for the organization in the beginning of your conversation.

Briefly explain: 1) who you are (name), 2) where you are from (USF) and 3) why you are interested in this service opportunity (respond beyond "it is a class requirement"—why this agency, why does this interest you). Name the course, describe its focus, and offer to provide a copy of the syllabus and contact information for the Program Coordinator.

Be prepared to share your talents, previous service experiences, skills, etc. that would contribute to the community partner.

Ask what opportunities are available and for a short description of service options.

Make sure you are clear about expectations of time commitment (what they encourage or require) and know your own schedule (or have it in front of you) so you can begin to make decisions with a timeframe in mind. Determine what kind of transportation you'll use to get there and factor this in to the scheduling.

Be aware that organizations may require orientation meetings, applications, interviews, training, workshops, fingerprinting, background checks, etc. (especially working with children). It is good to ask ahead of time so you can make time in your schedule.

Find out if there is a facilitator or other primary person and get their name and contact information.

At the end of the contact, re-confirm dates, times, appropriate attire and expectations as well as offer your contact information.

### ADDITIONAL TIPS:

Treat this like a job in terms of conduct and maturity. For example:

Once you commit, stick with it! Be there when you say you will be there. Be on time and focus on your service. In other words, if you are giving your time, give your mind and your heart.

If something comes up and you cannot make it for a service session, be sure to contact the organization and the facilitator.

NOTE: Repeatedly missing service sessions, having problems with consistency, and/or unprofessional behavior has an effect not only on you, but also on the people with whom you are working AND it impacts the lives of the clients served by the organization. It also extends to the reputation of USF.