



## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. What is the Business Volunteer Council?

The West Virginia Business Volunteer Council (BVC) is a statewide initiative to strengthen the Mountain State and is open to all private sector businesses, labor organizations, and business and professional associations. The BVC is the way for the private sector to join government and non-profits in building a better West Virginia through volunteer service. The BVC is your primary resource for encouraging, educating, and connecting businesses that support employee volunteer programs as a business strategy.

The BVC partners with the WV Commission for National and Community Service, the state's volunteer agency, which provides critical administrative resources, guidance, and support, in addition to access to hundreds of non-profit agencies in the Mountain State through [.volunteerwv.org](http://volunteerwv.org). This interactive database connects people and companies who want to help with organizations that need volunteers.

### 2. My company already does a lot in the community. Why should I join the BVC?

You'll get ideas from what other companies are doing so it may take less time for you to be involved and you will be more effective. You'll also learn about what non-profit organizations are doing the best work, so you can get the most for your charitable dollars. By joining with other companies, you'll be able to leverage your contributions to make a greater impact in the community. You'll also be recognized as one of West Virginia's forward thinking companies on the BVC web site.

### 3. My company is in business to make money. There are many agencies that work with the needy. It's not my problem, is it?

Being seen by the public as community-minded is good for business. When your community thrives because every sector – government, private, and non-profit – does its part, it makes your community a better place to live, work, and do business.

### 4. My company has priority issues for our volunteering. Do we have to comply with a set program, or can we select our own priorities for our company's focus?

You choose your own focus, but may find it helpful to do what others have done, because they will have organized it for you already and you don't have to reinvent the wheel!

### 5. How will joining the BVC help me with my employee volunteer program?

The BVC provides regular training opportunities to get the most from your charitable dollars. It will also help you learn from your peers – companies who are the same size as yours – about how they reap business benefits from their community involvement. BVC membership provides benefits such as enhanced reputation, skill development for employees, and more motivated employees who stay with you longer.

## **6. How do I join the BVC?**

It's easy – fill out the application form in our brochure or on the web site [.volunteerwv.org](http://volunteerwv.org), and send \$25.00 to BVC, 710 Central Ave., Charleston, W.Va. 25302.

## **7. How do I start an employee program? What are some examples of how to get started?**

Ask your employees what they are interested in supporting, or what they are already doing for their communities. Start small by participating in a single day of service or a special event organized by a non-profit in your area. Notice what's being discussed in the newspaper or in your own circle about community needs and look for opportunities to take a step you are comfortable with. Don't forget to go to [.volunteerwv.org](http://volunteerwv.org) and check the Volunteer West Virginia matching database for your community or county. It's full of agencies looking for volunteers. You'll get many ideas!

The BVC pages of the web site [.volunteerwv.org](http://volunteerwv.org) have many examples from both within West Virginia and around the country of ways to get started. See who else in your industry is involved, and check with them on how they got started. You can call or email the BVC and we'll link you with a mentor who can share how their company got started. Tell us what you need and we'll hook you up!

Attend one of our webinars or the annual Business Volunteering Institute to learn how others in the state and nationally have gotten started, and how it has benefited their company.

## **8. How much does an employee program cost?**

That's up to you. Many companies find that the major cost is some staff time to organize and communicate with their employees. However, others have subsidized their employee community involvement with either release time or with "Dollars for Doers" donations to the organizations where their employees volunteer time.

## **9. Are there other companies in West Virginia who have been successful with employee volunteer programs? How do I connect with them?**

Check the BVC web site at [.volunteerwv.org](http://volunteerwv.org) for case studies of West Virginia companies and their contacts. You will also find the contact information for members of the BVC, who have considerable experience in employee volunteer programs.

## **10. Do other states have business volunteer councils?**

There are about 78 corporate volunteer councils in the country that are local or regional in scope, but West Virginia has been leading the way in developing a statewide Business Volunteer Council. The BVC was recognized in 2007 with the Fast Start Award from the National Points of Light Foundation for its innovation and for its record of achievement in a short time.