Demystifying civic and community engagement

The premise sounds ambitious and maybe even intimidating, but civic engagement is finding ways, small or large, to participate in your community, however you define it. It's finding an outlet for the issue you care about. It can be as personal or as public as you want to make it. It's realizing you're capable of bringing positive impact to your environment. There's a good chance that if you've noticed a situation worth investing in, your neighbor has too!

How you can make a difference

Volunteering does not necessarily mean spending a lot of time on a project. If you can't engage in long term volunteering or feel like an opportunity might be too much of a commitment at a given time, keep in mind that participating even in a one-time volunteer activity can bring positive change and influence to others, even if it's only for a couple of hours! Start small and find something you genuinely care about, that you'd *enjoy* working on. We're all busy, it's OK to be honest with yourself about what you can do.

For example, you can:

• Attend a meeting of your local civic association and engage with the community in some problem-solving projects
• Donate a design book to the school district
• Become a mentor to help a student or emerging designer succeed
• Take part in a short term service project

Join the Civic + Community Engagement Committee in their effort to build a stronger community!

AIGA Philadelphia's mission is to activate, support, empower, and amplify designers and to advance the discipline of design as a professional craft, strategic advantage, and vital cultural force within the Philadelphia area.

The C+CE Committee seeks to connect our membership of creative thinkers and problem solvers to a wide range of giving opportunities in the communities in which we live.

Five reasons why you should volunteer

1. To find and serve your community

Volunteering is about sharing, mutual help, and the desire to make a difference.

It's about benefiting local communities and society at large one action at a time.

2. To build new skills and use your talents to benefit others

Designers are natural problem solvers and communicators. They can articulate specific goals and build the path towards achieving them.

Volunteering is a great way to improve your social and communication skills while bringing your expertise and showcasing your own skills to benefit others.

3. For personal fulfillment

Volunteering can help individuals to flourish, to gain different perspectives, and better understand and appreciate the unfamiliar.

Volunteering can also help you face new challenges and get out of your comfort zone.

4. To meet new people and expand your network

When you commit to volunteering, you often join a group of other dedicated people. As a volunteer, you can meet new people from diverse backgrounds and expand your social and professional network, often leading to new opportunities over time.

5. A great addition to the resume

Employers value candidates who spend their free time helping a cause or community and learning new skills.