

**VOLUNTEERING VERSUS UNPAID EMPLOYMENT/INTERNSHIP**

<u>VOLUNTEERING</u>	<u>UNPAID EMPLOYMENT/INTERNSHIP</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Services are performed for a non-profit organization for public service, religious or humanitarian objective</b></li> <li>✓ No expectation of compensation whatsoever (including free housing, gift cards, food, stipend, expense reimbursement, etc.)</li> <li>✓ The volunteer cannot displace a genuine employee</li> <li>✓ Services provided by volunteer should not be the same services for which he or she was previously paid and/or expects to be hired and paid for in the future</li> <li>✓ Services are offered freely and without coercion</li> <li>✓ Examples of volunteering include volunteering at a homeless shelter, charitable food pantry, or American Red Cross</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Unpaid internship/employment can be for private sector, for-profit entity or non-profit</b></li> <li>✓ <b>Must relate to field of study</b></li> <li>✓ No compensation is provided, including other types of compensation other than pay (e.g., free housing, gift cards, food, expense reimbursement, stipend, etc.)</li> <li>✓ Training duties complement, rather than displace, the work of paid employees</li> <li>✓ Unpaid employment/internship is tied to formal education program</li> <li>✓ Unpaid employment/internship corresponds to academic calendar</li> <li>✓ Intern is not entitled to a job at the conclusion of unpaid internship/employment</li> <li>✓ Unpaid internship/employment experience is for the benefit of the intern, not the employer</li> </ul>

According to the Department of Labor, a volunteer is an “individual who performs hours of service...for civic, charitable, or humanitarian reasons, without promise, expectation or receipt of compensation for services rendered.” We recommend you also take a look at the Department of Labor’s test for Unpaid Interns and Students: [DOL Test](#)

**Obtaining employment authorization for unpaid internships/employment is strongly recommended!**

**Working without authorization is a serious violation to your F-1 student status. ISSS is required to report this type of violation to the government and terminate your Sevis record/I-20. This means you would have to leave the U.S. immediately to avoid accumulating unlawful presence.** Please #TalkToUs if you are unsure about how this could affect your status.