



Audiologists Make a Difference

Did you know that the American Academy of Audiology (the Academy) is supported by approximately 350 volunteers? These volunteers are audiologists and audiology students with varied responsibilities and busy lives. These volunteers perform a wide variety of services for the Academy. Some give just a few hours here and there, while others are putting in some serious time for the benefit of the Academy and its members. Why would they do this? What's in it for them?

Perhaps they volunteer because of the passion audiologists have for serving the hearing and balance impaired. Maybe they choose to serve because it makes them feel good or possibly they just enjoy connecting with other audiologists. Whatever the reason, our profession and our Academy depend upon each and every available volunteer.

What would happen if these 350 or so volunteers decided not to volunteer any longer? One day they might find themselves simply too busy with work and home to serve the Academy.

If that happened, we wouldn't have an Academy any longer. The Academy is comprised of layers upon layers of volunteers. We depend upon each and every one, and all of their contributions, whether large or small.

A Helping Hand

You might be wondering, what do these volunteers actually do for the Academy? Simply put, they squeeze time out of their work days, and sometimes weekends, to do a little (or sometimes a lot) more work for audiology.

If you are a busy audiologist, it can be difficult to find the time and opportunity that allows you to give back. The Academy has a number of volunteer opportunities, including serving on committees, task forces, special working groups, and participating in short-term projects, such as authoring articles, presenting on special interest topics, or serving as a subject matter expert. It's actually not difficult work and every audiologist is already well equipped to do the job. Some commitments are very short and others are longer. The experience of volunteering is really dependent upon what you

make of it. Some audiologists choose to just try a little volunteering at first to see if they like it, while others jump right in. Either way works to the benefit of all audiologists.

We All Benefit

Volunteering offers help to the profession of audiology and the people we serve, but the benefits can be even greater for the volunteer. Studies have shown that volunteering and helping others can help reduce stress (Thoits and Hewitt, 2001), combat depression (Lum and Lightfoot, 2005), keep you mentally stimulated, and provide a sense of purpose (Greenfield and Marks, 2004). Sometimes we just need a break and volunteering gives us a way to create more balance in our lives.

When we volunteer for our professional organization, we can help grow our profession. We are able to support both new and future audiologists. We can work together to direct the future of audiology.

Volunteering is a great way to meet new people and to also strengthen your network of colleagues as you build new

relationships both personal and professional.

It gives you the opportunity to develop and sharpen skills used in the workplace, such as teamwork, communication, problem solving, project planning, task management, and organization. Volunteering is a perfect environment to try out new skills and build your self-confidence. A volunteer role can perfectly compliment your professional position and you may find yourself taking on new roles within your current work setting as a result of what you've learned as a volunteer. Sometimes a volunteer experience can lead to a career opportunity that you may have never even considered.

Join the Team

A larger pool of volunteer audiologists will bring new, diverse perspectives,

voices, and influence to the Academy. You fit the bill perfectly.

Volunteering is a win-win situation. Would you like to volunteer? We have both long- and short-term commitments. You can easily sign up to volunteer on the Academy's Audiology Community. Sign in to community.audiology.org, click on Volunteer and opt in to the Volunteer Pool to get started. We would love for you to join us! 🎧

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Illustration by Johanna van der Sterre.

References

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VOLUNTEER

WE NEED U

Move your profession forward. Volunteer to serve on an Academy Committee or Task Force to contribute your ideas, solutions, and strategies.

NEW this year, opt-in to our Volunteer Pool on the Audiology Community.

For more information and to submit your interest online, visit community.audiology.org and click on 'Volunteer.'

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