



Amate House

About our Program

Who We Are

Amate House is the young adult volunteer program of the Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago. Our program is dedicated to transforming the lives of young adults, and fostering leadership for the church and world. The name "amate" comes from the Latin imperative "to love". Each year, we invite 20-30 participants to come to Chicago and put "love into action". During their year with us, the Volunteers serve full-time at nonprofits and schools, live together in intentional community, and participate in a formation program that encourages their personal, professional, and spiritual growth.



What sets Amate House apart from other service programs is the combination of programming and individualized support that Volunteers receive. Regular speakers, evenings of reflection and discussion, workshops, retreats, ongoing spiritual direction, and one-on-one staff support are hallmarks of the Amate House program, which aims to support and encourage women and men to "make service a way of life," to become more capable and compassionate leaders, to grow personally and professionally, and to make a stronger connection between their faith and their personal and professional lives. For many of our Alumni, the Amate House experience is foundational and indispensable. In a recent survey for our 30th Anniversary, we learned:

- 90% of our Alumni work in helping professions (social services, education, religious/faith based work, medicine, or legal)
- 75% have earned or are pursuing a graduate degree
- 94% of our Alumni agree that Amate House helped them become who they are today
- 96% of our Alumni would recommend Amate House to others

Our Volunteers are the lifeblood of the program – they are passionate, enthusiastic, and dedicated. In this past year alone, the Volunteers completed over 50,000 hours of service and directly impacted the lives of over 20,000 Chicagoans. Since Amate House first opened its doors in 1984, over 800 participants have completed our program, providing service to nearly 200 agencies total!

Partners in Service

Each year, Amate House partners with schools, parishes, and social service nonprofits throughout the city of Chicago. We seek out organizations with a deep commitment to service and justice. In exchange for the services of a Volunteer, our partner sites pay a contribution of \$15,000, which allows Amate House to provide housing, food, transportation, health insurance, a living allowance, and ongoing staff support for the Volunteer communities. Our Volunteers work in a diverse range of fields, including:

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|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • Teaching or assisting in classrooms | • Legal aid |
| • After-school tutoring and mentoring | • Youth and campus ministry |
| • Health education and outreach | • Service to the elderly |
| • Social work and case management | • Community organizing |
| • Hunger and homelessness outreach | • Nursing and physical therapy |

Time and again, our Site Partners discover that Amate House Volunteers represent an outstanding return-on-investment. At a fraction of the cost of a traditional employee, our Volunteers make meaningful, impactful contributions. Our Site Partners consistently say that they would be unable to provide the same level of care and services to their clients without the work of their Volunteer. Most telling is the fact that so many of our Sites have hired Amate Volunteers as employees after their year of service.

Volunteers complete an extensive application and screening process with the Amate House Staff before they enter the site placement process. During the matching process, Sites have the opportunity to review resumes and conduct interviews of their own to ensure that a candidate is a good match for their organization. Both Site and Volunteer mutually agree to a placement before it is finalized. Throughout the course of the year, our Staff maintains a close relationship with each Volunteer and regularly checks in with Site Supervisors to make sure that the experience is a quality one for all parties. We boast a 95% retention rate of Volunteers over the past 30 years.

The best part about Amate volunteers is their sincere desire for service, their loving attention to the clients we serve, and the "spark of life" they bring to the staff.

***Sr. Kathy Brazda,
former Executive Director***

Ultimately, the value of Amate House lives in the unique way our program successfully serves those in need, transforms the lives of young adults, and creates positive social change in the church and the world. In the words of one of our recent Volunteers, "Amate House has completely changed my life. I have become more compassionate and willing to serve in small but meaningful ways, I am less judgmental, and much closer to God." We hope that you can join us and our Volunteers in our mission to put God's love into action.



Amate House

Criteria for Volunteer Service Sites

2017-2018

The criteria stated below were developed in light of the Amate House Mission Statement: "Amate House, the young adult volunteer program of the Archdiocese of Chicago, fosters the transformation of its Volunteers by providing experiences of full-time service to people in need, community living, and faith formation. Amate House develops future leaders for the church and world who are committed to building a more just and loving society."

To be considered for Site Placement, a site must be willing to provide or be committed to...

- **Full-Time Service:** Amate House Volunteers are expected to serve an average of 40 hours per week. Volunteers should start work at their service sites on **August 14, 2017** and complete their service term on **June 8, 2018**.
- **Service to the poor or marginalized:** The site must serve a community that would benefit from the assistance of a Volunteer in providing its service or ministry. The site must clearly demonstrate its service to people at or below the poverty level or to a defined marginalized population. The site must also be working within Chicago city limits or in the adjacent suburbs.
- **Direct Service or Community Involvement:** The site must offer a placement and job description involving at least 80% direct service/ministry or direct community involvement (as opposed to clerical tasks). Direct service is activity that addresses education, health, public safety, the environment, or other human needs. Direct service means working directly with people (clients, beneficiaries, communities, etc.) to make a tangible impact. It can be outreach, case management, training, teaching, tutoring, mediating, cleaning, counseling, recruiting volunteers, completing administrative tasks that facilitate client care, preparing for class, coaching, listening, cooking, serving, providing health care, food or clothing. Volunteers may also perform capacity-building activities as direct service that improve the organizational and financial capability of nonprofit organizations and communities to meet those local needs by achieving greater organizational efficiency and effectiveness, greater impact and quality of impact, stronger likelihood of successful replicability, or expanded scale. Examples of capacity-building activities include but are not limited to:
 - enlisting, training, or coordinating volunteers
 - conducting outreach & securing resources in support of service activities that meet specific needs in the community
 - conducting research, mapping community assets, or gathering other information that will strengthen the sponsoring organization's ability to meet community needs
 - developing organizational systems to improve efficiency and effectiveness (not clerical work)

Please note: as a program of the Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago, Amate House Volunteers cannot distribute contraception or teach students or clients about how to use it.

- **Detailed Position Description:** The Site must prepare and submit a detailed position description as part of the Site Application. This description shall identify a position title and general duties and responsibilities specific to the Volunteer at his/her site. Sites with multiple positions available must provide a detailed description of each position. It is expected that these position descriptions will not change significantly without consultation with Amate House and the Volunteer. If for some reason significant changes do occur to a position, the Amate House Program Director must be notified as soon as possible.
- **Flexibility:** The site must be willing to be listed as a possible volunteer option on the Amate House Service Site list and participate in the interviewing of potential Volunteers without a guarantee of having a Volunteer. Due to our site placement process, which requires that both the site and the Volunteer mutually agree to a placement, it is possible that a site may not receive an Amate House Volunteer every year.
- **Site Supervisor Orientation:** All Site Supervisors are required to attend an orientation meeting in summer 2017. At this meeting, Amate House Program Staff will present a calendar for the year (including dates that Volunteers will need to be excused from work), policies and procedures, and discuss best practices for supporting and working with the Volunteers.
- **Orientation/On-boarding:** A comprehensive orientation for the Volunteer must be planned and implemented by the Site Supervisor or other staff members upon the Volunteer's arrival in August. Onboarding should include introducing the Volunteer to his/her coworkers, orientation to daily duties and responsibilities, clarifying expectations for the year, reviewing any applicable organizational policies that the Volunteer will be expected to follow, instructions on how to request vacation and sick days, and discussion of any modifications to the original position description.

- **Supervision:** The Site agrees to provide a direct supervisor who will provide ongoing support and development of the Volunteer. The Site Supervisor identified must be committed to the terms outlined in this document and be willing to work with Amate House Staff in supporting the Volunteer and their experience in the program. Site Supervisors are expected to meet formally with the Volunteer on an ongoing basis to discuss performance, concerns, needs, challenges, and goals. Amate House strongly recommends biweekly supervision meetings. For School Sites that list the Principal as the Site Supervisor, Amate House requires assigning an additional teacher or staff mentor for the Volunteer. This mentor should be introduced to the Volunteer upon his/her arrival to the school.
- **Workspace.** An adequate workspace must be identified at the school or organization where the Volunteer serves.
- **Site Visits.** The Site Supervisor and Volunteer should be available to meet at most twice a year with an Amate House Staff member. These meetings provide an opportunity to reflect on the Volunteer's experience of service, and ensure that the Volunteer is receiving adequate support.
- **Professional Growth/Leadership Development:** The site must show an interest in providing opportunities for the personal and professional growth and leadership development of the Volunteer.
- **A Financial Commitment:** The site must be able to pay a site contribution in exchange for the services of a Volunteer. These contributions assist Amate House in providing housing, food, health insurance, and other resources for our Volunteers. Standard site contributions are \$15,000 per Volunteer, per Program Year. If your Volunteer has an advanced/skilled degree (i.e. R.N., Physical Therapist, L.C.S.W.) the site contribution is \$18,000/year.
- **Amate House Commitments:** In addition to full-time service, Volunteers live in intentional community and participate in faith formation throughout the Program Year. These commitments include weekday community dinners, Wednesday evening Community Nights, fall and winter retreats, and 3 in-service days throughout the year. Sites are expected to work with their Volunteer and the Amate House Staff to ensure the Volunteer's full participation in the program experience, including early dismissals or excused absences when necessary. A full calendar of commitments will be provided to Sites prior to the beginning of the Program Year so that Sites can plan accordingly.
- **Work Hours.** Amate House Volunteers are expected to serve an average of 40 hours per week. Evening hours extending past 7:00pm should not occur more than once per week. Due to the weekly Community Night commitment, Volunteers are expected to arrive at their home no later than 4pm on Wednesdays. Additionally, Volunteers should not work more than 1-2 weekend days per month. If a Site requires the Volunteer to work outside of these parameters, it should be clearly expressed in the position description and during the Volunteer interview.
- **Vacation/Sick Time.** The Site must allow the Volunteer 10 days of vacation and 3 sick days (13 days total) during the volunteer year. This may coincide with preexisting breaks (such as Christmas vacation for schools). Amate House asks that the Volunteer not be granted more than 13 days off total, regardless of the organization's policies; sick days are only used for illness and cannot be transferred to vacation days. Supervisors should notify their Volunteers at their orientation of the policies of the organization for requesting vacation time or reporting sick time. The Site assumes the financial risk if the Volunteer, for medical or personal reasons (death of an immediate family member), be absent for more than the allotted 13 days. Volunteers should not be expected to use vacation days for the following holidays: Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's Day, Easter, and Memorial Day. If the nature of the site's work would require the Volunteer to work any of these holidays, that expectation should be communicated during site interviews.
- **Transportation:** Amate House provides Volunteers with transportation via Amate House vehicles, carpooling with other Amate House Volunteers, or monthly CTA passes. The site must reimburse Amate House for use of Amate House vehicles for work purposes at the current federal reimbursement rate (ex: travel within the course of the work day to a meeting or different site). This does NOT include transportation to and from work. Sites must also reimburse Amate House for a Volunteer's regular use of Amate House CTA passes within the workday (ex: traveling via bus or 'L' to another work site within the work day). Again, this does NOT include transportation to and from work. Please note that Amate House strongly discourages Volunteers from transporting clients. If this is necessary, the Site must collect signed permission slips for any children under 18.
- **Conflict Mediation/Termination:** After a Volunteer and Site have signed their respective agreements, a Volunteer's decision to quit that Site or a Site's decision to terminate a Volunteer must be done in consultation with the Site Supervisor and the Amate House Program Director. The Volunteer and Site Supervisor are expected to make a good faith effort to resolve conflicts directly, if they arise. If necessary, the Amate House Program Director will attempt to mediate any conflicts that persist, working toward an agreeable resolution for all parties involved. In the case of a Volunteer-Site relationship that is terminated for any reason, it is expected that a pro-rated site contribution will be made to Amate House for the service rendered up to the point of the termination.



Amate House

Site Interview and Placement Timeline

2017-2018

- February 1, 2017: Service Site Applications Due – please submit in .doc format to aarcher@amatehouse.org.
- By February 15: Volunteer Applicants that applied by the early deadline will be notified of their status (accepted, waitlisted, or denied.) Those who are accepted will receive a list of available sites that fit their interests and skills.
- February 15-22: Applicants will send Amate House a list of their preferred placement choices, ranked by preference.
- February 22-29: Sites will receive the resumes, personal statements, and character reference forms of Applicants that expressed interest in their position(s). Sites will determine which Applicants they would like to interview and inform Amate House.
- By February 29: After taking into consideration preferences received, as well as feedback from Site Supervisors, Amate House will send Applicants a list of interview sites. Most applicants will have three options.
- March 1-15: Applicants will conduct interviews with prospective Site Supervisors. It will be the responsibility of the Applicant to contact the Sites and schedule each interview. Some interviews may be conducted in person, but most will be occur over Skype or phone call, due to time constraints, distance, or inability to afford the travel to Chicago. We encourage Site Supervisors to conduct the interview in the manner in which they would normally interview any applicant for employment. This is a time for the Site Supervisor to evaluate the candidate as well as share information about the position available and the organization itself. (See “Suggestions for Volunteer Interviews” handout for more information.)
- By March 15: After all interviews are completed, both the Applicants and Sites will provide feedback to Amate House regarding matching preferences. If either a Site or an Applicant objects to a potential match, that option will be removed from consideration.
- March 15-31: Amate House Staff will match Applicants and Sites, based on the feedback received. The turnaround speed on matching may vary from site to site, depending on the interest shown to each given site. Because multiple Applicants will likely be interviewing for some positions, Volunteers may not receive their top placement choice.
- By March 31: Applicants inform Amate House whether they accept or decline their placement offer. Once an Applicant accepts an offer, the Volunteer’s Service Site will be notified and a Site Financial Agreement will be sent.

Sites that are not successfully matched with a Volunteer from our Early Applicant pool will have the opportunity to be matched with Applicants who apply by our Final Deadline. The timeline for that interview/placement process is:

- By April 15 – Final Applicants informed of their status; those accepted will receive site placement options
- April 15-22 – Applicants send in site interview preferences
- April 22-29 – Sites receive applicants’ resumes, personal statements, and references; Sites inform which candidates they are willing to interview; Applicants receive their interview sites by April 29
- May 1-15 – Applicants and Sites conduct interviews; feedback/preferences due back to Amate House by May 15
- May 15-31 – Amate House matches Applicants with Sites based on feedback
- By May 31 – Applicants inform Amate House of their accept/decline decision; Service Sites are informed

Due to the nature of our site placement process, we cannot guarantee that all sites will receive a Volunteer.

Amate House Volunteers will begin work on August 14, 2017 and end on June 8, 2018.

If you have any questions about the Site Placement Process, please don’t hesitate to contact Alison Archer at aarcher@amatehouse.org or call the office at 773.376.2445.



Amate House

Suggestions for Volunteer Interviews

2017-2018

In response to a few requests from our Service Sites, here are some recommendations for your Site Interviews with our Amate House Volunteers. They will be screened first through an extensive interview process with the Amate House Staff, but it is good practice for them as young professionals to be interviewed at their service sites as if they were applying to be a regular employee.

Prior to your interview, you will receive the following materials from Amate House:

- The Volunteer's resume
- The Volunteer's Personal Statement from his/her Amate House Application
- Three Character Reference Forms (two professional, one personal)

If you wish to request any additional materials, such as a writing sample or college transcript, please indicate this in the Placement Information section of your Site Application.

Information to Communicate During the Interview

Job duties: Volunteers are most interested in knowing what their duties will be and what their work life will look like on a day to day basis. This can be difficult to explain at some service sites due to the nature of the job. We find it helpful to have them talk about this with an employee or Amate House Volunteer who is currently in the position or in one similar to the placement they are interviewing for. It is important to let the Volunteer know the degree of flexibility, autonomy, and self-direction involved in the position. Will the Volunteer be expected to fill in for other employees who are absent? Will the Volunteer have some choice in their work duties and how they accomplish them? Will the Volunteer be working independently most of the time or will they be doing a lot of collaborative work? It's important to clearly communicate the needs of your organization and its work style to the Volunteer.

Vacation policy: Amate House's vacation policy is that a Volunteer receives 10 vacation days and 3 sick days (13 days total), but your organization determines how those are taken. Please communicate what your policy is to the Volunteer. For example, schools have a set vacation time so Volunteers may not be able to take vacation days whenever they want.

Holidays: Amate House policy states that Volunteers should not be expected to use vacation days for the following holidays: Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's Day, Easter, and Memorial Day. If the Volunteer would be required to work any of these holidays due to the nature of the site's work, please communicate this in the Placement Information section of the Site Application, as well as the interview. Volunteers working the above-listed holidays should be granted compensatory time off.

Work schedule: The position should be approximately 40 hours a week, Monday-Friday. If their position requires them to work one night a week (past 7:00pm) or on occasional weekends, make sure that is communicated during the interview. (Please note: Volunteers are expected to arrive home by 5pm on Wednesdays for Community Night.)

Support systems: Explain to the Volunteer who will be supporting them in the work and how...is there a direct supervisor that they will be meeting with regularly? Will they be collaborating extensively with other co-workers or administrators? If they are working in a school, who would be their mentor?

Opportunities for professional growth: If there are opportunities for professional development (workshops, in-services, trainings, etc.) let the Volunteer know about those. Many of our Volunteers are excited and interested in developing their work skills and learning more about the field they will be working in.

Some Suggested Questions

Some suggested questions are listed below, divided into different skill categories. While it certainly is not required that these questions be asked, we do find it helpful to address these skill areas when interviewing a Volunteer for a full-time service placement.

Motivation

- Describe the work environment or culture in which you are most productive and happy.
- What do you look for in a supervisor? What type(s) of supervision best complements your working style?
- What goals, including career goals, have you set for your life? What goals do you have for your own professional development?

- How would you define “success” in your work? In your work, what must be present for you to feel as if you are successful at what you do?
- Describe a work situation in which you can demonstrate that you motivated another person?

Teamwork

- Give an example of a successful project you were part of. What was your role? Why was the project successful?
- What actions and support, in your experience, make a team function successfully?
- Have you been a member of a team that struggled or failed to accomplish its goal? If so, what assessment did you make of the reasons for the failure?

Leadership Ability

- During your work experiences over the past few years, tell me about a time when you demonstrated that you have leadership ability and skill.
- If I were to ask your reporting staff or your peers to comment about your leadership style, your leadership strengths, and your leadership weaknesses, how would they respond? What would this discussion tell me about you as a leader?

Interpersonal Skills

- Tell me about a time when you had to work closely with a coworker whom you disliked or with whom you had trouble working. What did you do to make the relationship work so that your work projects or tasks succeeded?
- Tell me about a time when you disagreed with the actions or decisions of your manager or supervisor. How did you approach the situation? Was the situation resolved to your satisfaction or did nothing change?
- Describe a conflict you were involved in at work. How did you resolve the conflict? What happened next with that coworker or team?
- During your work experiences while attending college, tell me about a time when you demonstrated that you have the ability and desire to work effectively with your coworkers.

Communication

- Rate your communication skills on a scale of 1 to 10. Give me a couple examples from your past work experiences that demonstrate the selected number is accurate.
- Give me an example, from your past work experience, about a time when you were part of a project or team and you never knew what was happening with the other action items or participants. How did you handle this situation?
- When you have had a boss, in the past, who fails to adequately communicate with you, how have you handled this?