

ULink49

Community Partner User Guide

ULink49 is your gateway to partnering with San Francisco State University's Institute for Civic and Community Engagement (ICCE)! Whether your organization is based in the city or elsewhere in the Bay Area, we're glad you're here!

ULink49 is a custom database that connects community partners like you with SFSU students and faculty. It facilitates fruitful connections that help nonprofits and public agencies achieve their goals and help students grow as citizens and scholars. ULink49 lets you access valuable volunteer services from motivated and passionate SFSU students, who come with a range of backgrounds, interests, and talents.



SFSU is a significant resource for volunteers—from interns to envelope-stuffers—right in your community. Find them with ULink49!

With ULink49, you can:

- 1) **Create a profile** that showcases your organization's mission, activities, and relationships with other organizations and SFSU faculty
- 2) **Add searchable service opportunities** for students—ongoing, short-term, or one-time
- 3) **View and accept applications** for service and select the strongest candidates
- 4) **Approve and track volunteer hours**, capturing valuable, report-ready data

Create a profile.

Creating a ULink49 profile gives you access to hundreds of SFSU students who are eager to serve their community and support your mission. It also lets you promote your organization to SFSU faculty, who may be interested in developing long-term collaborations with nonprofits and public agencies for research and coursework.

- Go to www.ulink49.org and click “Organization” in the upper left corner.

You will be taken to a new website called coMesh, which is the host site for ULink49.

- Complete all fields with a red asterisk on the Organization Registration form.

If a red circular “i” icon appears when you enter your email address, this means that the address belongs to an existing ULink49 account. Please contact ICCE in this event.

- Select SFSU as the university you would like to be affiliated with (you can select additional universities if you’d like).

- Complete the Learning Site Assessment Rubric.

Every organization that is new to partnering with SFSU must host a site visit by ICCE staff. This visit is for risk management purposes, but it also enables your organization to develop a personal relationship with ICCE. The better we know your site, the more likely we are to send high-quality student volunteers your way.

- Review the additional service learning documents listed below the rubric. These forms are not mandatory—they are meant to provide resources on how to supervise your student volunteers.

- The **CE (Community Engagement) Learning Plan** is the document students must sign for their professor in order to receive credit for volunteering.
- You can use **Student Sign-in Sheet** as a template for tracking hours, unless you have an existing internal system.
- The **Student Performance Evaluation** is an optional tool you can use if your organization does not have its own volunteer evaluation rubric.
- The **Student Orientation Checklist** gives an overview of helpful ways to get your new volunteer situated.
- The **Protocol for Termination of Student** is a guide for dealing with inappropriate student behavior.
- The **CSL (Community Service Learning) Project Planning Checklist** is a document that faculty members use to get their service projects approved. Faculty might ask you some of these questions if they are partnering with your organization on a class service project.
- The **CE Photo Release Form** is required in the event that SFSU faculty, staff, or students would like to use your client’s still or video image.

- Under “Interest Areas,” click on each category to find the subcategories that best describe your organization’s mission and activities, and check them off.

If you have an interest area that does not exist in the current list, you can add one by clicking the “+” symbol beside the appropriate category.

These interest areas will be visible to students and faculty members who view your organization’s profile.

- Click “Register” at the bottom of the page to submit your completed profile.

After you submit your profile, you will receive two emails: one confirming receipt of your registration, and another notifying you that it has been approved by ICCE. Once your profile is approved, you can start posting service opportunities and accepting new volunteers!

Add searchable service opportunities.

Now that you have an organizational profile, it's time to add individual opportunities for volunteer service and internships at your site.

The basics

- In the "Manage Opportunities" box on your dashboard, click "Add an Opportunity."
- Complete all fields with a red asterisk.
The contact information for individual opportunities might be different than what you entered in your organizational profile—for instance, you might have a specific supervisor or an off-site location. Here's the chance to let volunteers know who's in charge and where exactly they will be serving.
- Estimate and enter an hourly value for the volunteer work to be performed.
Please visit https://www.independentsector.org/volunteer_time to find the current average hourly value for volunteer work in California. You can use this figure unless you feel that your opportunity is analogous to a more highly-skilled (and highly-paid) position, or to an unskilled minimum-wage job, for instance.
- Estimate and enter the approximate number of individuals to be served by this volunteer position.
Along with the hourly value, this number is very useful for grantwriting/reporting purposes—both for your organization and for ICCE. Please make every effort to estimate and submit this information.
- Click "Save & Proceed" (NOT "Save").
- In the "Opportunity Schedule" tab, enter the start and end dates of your opportunity, as well as the specific time commitment. Alternatively, check the box indicating "All Day Opportunity."
If you'd like to make the opportunity open-ended or repeating, please contact ICCE.
- Click "Save & Proceed" (NOT "Save").
NOTE: Your opportunity will save automatically as you create it, so if you don't want to publish it right away, you can always come back to it.

The specifics

- In the "Search Criteria" tab, make your opportunity more searchable by clicking "Edit Criteria."
Add as many criteria as you can—the more details you provide, the more easily students can find your opportunity!
- Select a general category to bring up tags associated with the content of the volunteer opportunity.
Categories and tags align with the "interest areas" and subcategories that you specified while creating your organizational profile (you will see these already populating the opportunity description). But perhaps your opportunity has more specific content than your organization does—for instance, it's a pilot project working with a different population than the one you typically serve. You can add such information here by selecting tags.
- Specify the age group and population type associated with this service opportunity, as well as any particular skills required of the volunteer.

Add searchable service opportunities (continued).

- Select the district in San Francisco (or other municipality) where the service will take place.

You can look up the district here: http://sfelections.org/tools/districts_lookup/

- Select the corresponding neighborhood from the dropdown menu.

The extras

- Click “Proceed” to further enhance your opportunity with these optional steps:
 - In the “Organization Association” tab, select any partner organizations relevant to the opportunity and specify how long the collaboration has been happening.
 - In the “Manage Documents” tab, upload any relevant documents, such as your organization’s internal volunteer application, handbook, brochure, etc.
 - In the “Manage Pictures” tab, upload an album of images that show the service opportunity in action. This is a great way to “sell” the experience to potential volunteers.

Publishing, editing, and deleting your opportunities

- Each opportunity is saved automatically as you create it. If you’re ready to publish it, click through all the tabs to the “Publish Opportunity” tab. Your opportunity will automatically publish upon proceeding to this tab.

Once you publish the opportunity, ICCE staff will receive an email. They will approve the posting (or contact you for more information), and you will receive another email confirming its publication.

- To see all your existing and expired opportunities, click on the “Manage Opportunities” tab at the top of the screen.
- To edit an opportunity, hover over it and click the pen icon.
- To delete an opportunity, hover over it and click the “X” icon.

View and accept student applications.

Once you publish a volunteer opportunity, students will be able to search and apply for it. If a student chooses to apply, you will receive an email with the student's name, email address and phone number. Reach out to the student via email or phone, following your organization's pre-existing volunteer application process. You must conduct an in-person or phone interview with the student; if it's a fit, proceed to accept them in ULink49:

- In the "Manage Volunteers" box on the dashboard, click "Approve/Reject Volunteers."
- In the "Pending Volunteers" tab, click on the arrow to the left of the opportunity name, then click the green "thumbs up" icon to see all applications submitted.
- To accept a volunteer application, click the box next to the student's name, as well as the box that says "All requirements related to this opportunity have been met," to certify that you have vetted the volunteer through your organization's internal process. Then click "Approve."
- You will be shown a default email message for the accepted student; if you'd like to write a custom email, click "Configure Email."
- Click "Approve & Send Email."
- To reject an application, click the box next to the student's name and click "Reject."
- Specify the "Reject Reason," then click "Reject" to send a default rejection email to the student.

Approve and track volunteer hours.

ULink49 helps you capture valuable, report-ready data on your volunteers' service—most importantly, the number of hours they've completed. Once you accept a student volunteer, they will begin submitting the hours they're completing for your organization. You get the benefit of easy volunteer tracking; in exchange, you must verify that students completed their hours so that they may receive academic credit for their work.

- In the "Manage Volunteers" box on the dashboard, click "Approve/Reject Volunteers' Work."
- In the "Pending Hours" tab, click on the arrow to the left of the opportunity name, then click the green "thumbs up" icon to see all hours submitted.
- Click the arrow on the far right of each "Total Pending Hours for Approval" to see a breakdown of hours the student submitted.
- For each batch of hours submitted, you must enter a comment—either approving or giving a reason for rejecting the hours (for example, the student claimed ten hours but really only completed six).
- To get an overall snapshot of your organization's total volunteer numbers and hours, look at the "Volunteers Information" box on your dashboard.
- You can export this information to an Excel document by clicking the "Manage Opportunities" tab at the top of the home screen, then clicking the printer icon on the far right.

ULink49 has other capabilities, but for the purposes of this user guide, we've pointed out only the essentials.

If you have questions or would like to learn more about ULink49's additional features, please email icce@sfsu.edu or call 415-338-6419.