Volunteer, and make a difference in our community and on campus

There are many organizations, on campus, locally and across the country, that seek the expertise and support of retirees. Here are a few places to start.

HR Retiree Engagement Advisory Committee (HRREAC)

Collaborate and advise on issues, priorities, opportunities, etc. related to faculty and staff transitions to retirement as well as the post-retirement engagement of retirees. The Committee is comprised of representatives from Cornell retiree associations/committees and campus departments charged with retiree initiatives.

Employee Assembly

Cornell retirees are represented on the Employee Assembly (EA). The EA advocates for staff interests and identifies concerns, working with the university administration and other key stakeholders to seek solutions. The retiree seat is shared by two volunteers in staggered terms to reduce the overall time commitment and provide continuity.

Community ESL: English conversation classes

Cornell provides informal conversation classes for visiting scholars and accompanying family members each semester through Community ESL. The program seeks local retirees as class instructors. Prior teaching experience is not required. For more information, visit the Community ESL website or email the coordinator.

Cornell Botanic Gardens

Cornell Botanic Gardens is always looking for volunteers to work in a variety of capacities. Most opportunities are during weekday business hours and can be short or long term. Benefits include free training, discounts on educational programs and membership, and a year-end recognition event.

Cornell Companions

Cornell Companions is a pet visitation program sponsored by the College of Veterinary Medicine at Cornell University. Volunteers and their pets visit children with disabilities, nursing home patients and hospital patients, with the belief that animals enhance the lives of all people.

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County

Volunteers play an integral part in the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County. Through duties as diverse as teaching others to prune trees or make compost, answering callers’ questions on consumer or gardening issues, mentoring young people as they acquire new skills, or serving as board members or on committees that guide our work, volunteers represent Extension's far-reaching roots in our community.

Cornell Lab of Ornithology

If you love birds and want to be around others who share your interests, join the Lab of Ornithology’s Visitor Center volunteer corps! Volunteers of all abilities assist with the programs and operations of the Visitor Center. Lead guided tours, help with youth education programs, assist with outreach, and so much more!
Johnson Museum of Art

The Johnson Museum of Art has a highly active school-age program and is looking for individuals who enjoy teaching and working with school-age children in a museum setting. The museum is always looking for docents - docents are volunteers who help lead interactive tours with school-age groups from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Tuesdays to Fridays. Other volunteer opportunities include program volunteers, who assist educators during large family programs, including Art-Full Family Days on Saturday mornings, and afternoon weekend programs like concerts and poetry events.

Browse local listings online

United Way of Tompkins County has a great online tool to help you easily browse local volunteer opportunities. Sort alphabetically or by date posted; and filter by topics like interest, distance, or agency. Find out more on their website.